

### Observations about “Back to the Land”

Below are some observations that we listed on the board in the last class period (and I added a few of my own). It will help form an interpretation of “Back to the Land” if you try to explain some of these observations as choices. For each observation, try to explain it as a choice by asking, —Why might she have done that?, —How might that further her purpose?, —Given what she seems concerned about in the world around her, and what she sees in her audience, why might she have chosen to do that?, and —What effects do you think her choices might have on her readers? Please keep in mind a few things:

- observations do not have “one meaning” or “one correct interpretation,” as we learned in class on Monday. Observations are always multivalent and *interpretations are only as convincing as the evidence you present*.
- in observing things, we ask “what do I notice?” In making implied meanings into explicit statements, we ask “what does it say?” Finally, in explaining observations as strategies, we ask “why did the author choose to do this?”
- All of your observations will not be easy to explain as choices, so determine if it makes more sense to ask “what does it say?” instead of “why did Kalman do this?” Asking “what does it say” can help uncover assumptions buried in the author’s thinking and logic. Assumptions are not always “choices,” but they can be useful to interpretation.

Repetitions: George Washington (also in a painting at the end) and Thomas Jefferson

Repetitions: image of fatafat pills – also maybe an anomaly?

Repetitions: soda for breakfast (113 and 119)

Strand: photos of children

Strand: photos of food

Strand: democracy/healthy eating/farming/gardening/families/children

Binary strands:

city life	vs.	country life
fast		slow
large		small
on a schedule		taking one’s time
uniformity (84)		?
inequality (113)		(equality?)

Binary strands:

healthy	vs.	(unhealthy?)
organic		simulated/fake/mass-produced
nutritious		less nutritious

(difficult? or a skill you have to learn)	easy
growing/DIY/cooking	(buying? dinner-in-a-box?)
doing things together (113)	(isolation? separateness?)
local (94)	?

Binary: farmer's market (elitist) vs. fast food (available to the masses?)

Binary: natural vs. man-made/constructed

Binary: Giant agribusiness (capitalism?) vs. true small farms (socialism?) (113)

Binary: joy/happiness vs. ?...

Binary: west coast (Berkeley, California) vs. east coast (New York City)

Binary: Older generation vs. younger generation

Binary: the society of the founding fathers vs. society today

Binary: walking vs. flying

Binary: wealthy vs. less affluent (88)

Binary: Should we **or** shouldn't we eat cows?

Binary: Soda for breakfast vs. organic egg on toast with homegrown lettuce

Anomaly: F.T. Marinetti's futurist cookbook (94)

Anomaly: images of boots – and "in my head" (why show boots if she's not really walking)

Anomaly: The woman who looks up at the leaves (118) – and the way this detail is placed/arranged in the essay

Anomaly: Little Bo Peep reference (88)

Anomaly: mention of dropping out in the '60s (113)

Anomaly: Girl and two boys philosophizing (110-111)

Anomaly: photograph of / background information about the egg spoon (114-115)