

The Industrialisation of Fake Food

Industrial, imperial food systems have reduced food to a commodity, to 'stuff' that can then be constituted in the homogenised lab.

By [Dr. Vandana Shiva](#)

Global Research, June 19, 2019

[The Ecologist](#) 18 June 2019

Region: [Asia](#)

Theme: [Biotechnology and GMO](#)

Food is not a commodity. It is not 'stuff' put together mechanically and artificially in labs and factories. Food is life.

Food holds the contributions of all beings that make the food web, and it holds the potential for maintaining and regenerating the web of life.

Food also holds the potential for health and disease, depending on how it was grown and processed. Food is therefore the living currency of the web of life.

Industrial agriculture

As an ancient Upanishad reminds us: "Everything is food, everything is something else's food." Good food is the basis for good health. But bad food, industrial food, fake food is the basis for disease."

Hippocrates said: "Let food be thy medicine". In Ayurveda, India's ancient science of life, food is called 'sarvausadha' the medicine that cures all disease.

Industrial food systems have reduced food to a commodity, to 'stuff' that can then be constituted in the lab. In the process both the planet's health and our health has been nearly destroyed.

As much as 75 percent of the planetary destruction of soil, water, biodiversity, and 50 percent of greenhouse gas emissions come from industrial agriculture, which also contributes to 75 percent of food related chronic diseases.

Chemical agriculture does not return organic matter and fertility to the soil. Instead it is contributing to desertification and land degradation. It also demands more water since it destroys the soil's natural water-holding capacity.

Food security

Industrial food systems have destroyed the biodiversity of the planet both through the spread of monocultures, and through the use of toxics and poisons that are killing bees, butterflies, insects, birds, and leading to the sixth mass extinction.

Biodiversity-intensive and poison-free agriculture, on the other hand, produces more nutrition per acre while rejuvenating the planet. It shows the path to Zero Hunger in times of climate change.

The industrial agriculture and toxic food model has been promoted as the only answer to economic and food security. However, globally, more than a billion people are hungry. More than three billion suffer from food-related chronic diseases.

Industrial agriculture is based on fossil-fuel intensive, chemical-intensive monocultures, and produces only 30 percent of the food we eat despite using 75 percent of farmed land. Meanwhile, small, biodiverse farms using 25 percent of that land provides 70 percent of the food.

At this rate, if the share of industrial agriculture and industrial food in our diet is increased to 45 percent, we will have a dead planet. One with no life and no food.

GM

The mad rush for fake food and fake meat is a recipe for accelerating the destruction of the planet and our health. It's ignorant of the diversity of our foods and food cultures, and the role of biodiversity in maintaining our health.

[Pat Brown](#), CEO and founder of Impossible Foods, stated in a recent article, 'How our commitment to consumers and our planet led us to use GM soy', that:

"We sought the safest and most environmentally responsible option that would allow us to scale our production and provide the Impossible Burger to consumers at a reasonable cost."

Using GMO soya is hardly an "environmentally responsible option" given the fact that 90 percent of monarch butterflies have disappeared due to pesticides including Roundup Ready Crops, and we are living through what scientists have called an 'insectageddon'.

In writing this, Pat Brown reveals his total ignorance that weeds have evolved resistance to Roundup and have become superweeds now requiring more and more lethal herbicides.

Bill Gates and DARPA are even [calling for](#) the use of gene drives to exterminate amaranth, a sacred and nutritious food in India, because the Palmer Amaranth has become a superweed in the Roundup Ready soya fields of the USA.

At a time when the global movement to ban GMOs and Roundup is growing, promoting GMO soya as 'fake meat' is misleading the eater both in terms of the ontology of the burger, and on claims of safety.

Ontological confusion

Recent court cases have showcased the links of Roundup to cancer. With the build up of liabilities related to cancer cases, [the investments](#) in Roundup Ready GMO soya is blindness to the market.

There is another ontological confusion related to fake food. Fake meat is about selling meat-like products.

Pat Brown declares:

“We use genetically engineered yeast to produce [heme](#), the ‘magic’ molecule that makes meat taste like meat—and makes the Impossible Burger the only plant-based product to deliver the delicious explosion of flavor and aroma that meat-eating consumers crave.”

I had thought that the plant based diet was for vegans and vegetarians, not meat lovers.

Indeed, the promotion of fake foods seems to have more to do with giving new life to the failing GMO agriculture and the Junk Food Industry, and the threat to it from our increasing awareness that organic, local, fresh food regenerates the planet and our health.

In consequence, investment in plant-based food companies has soared from near zero in 2009 to \$600m by 2018. And these companies are looking for more.

Profits and control

Pat Brown declares:

“If there’s one thing that we know, it’s that when an ancient unimprovable technology counters a better technology that is continuously improvable, it’s just a matter of time before the game is over. I think our investors see this as a \$3 trillion opportunity.”

This is about profits and control. He, and those jumping on the Fake Food Goldrush, have no discernible knowledge, or consciousness about, or compassion for living beings, the web of life, nor the role of living food in weaving that web.

Their sudden awakening to ‘plant-based diets’, including GMO soya, is an ontological violation of food as a living system that connects us to the ecosystem and other beings, and indicates ignorance of the diversity of cultures that have used a diversity of plants in their diets.

Ecological sciences have been based on the recognition of the interconnections and interrelatedness between humans and nature, between diverse organisms, and within all living systems, including the human body. Ecology has thus evolved as a systems science, not a fragmented and reductionist pursuit of profit.

Food imperialism

Diets have evolved according to climates and the local biodiversity the climate allows. The biodiversity of the soil, of the plants and our gut microbiome is one continuum.

Technologies are tools. Tools need to be assessed on ethical, social and ecological criteria – they need to be deployed in service to our wellbeing.

Through fake food, the web of life is being redefined as an “ancient unimprovable technology”. This view is ignorant of the sophisticated knowleges that have evolved in diverse agricultuaral and food cultures, and in diverse climate and ecosystems, to sustain and renew biodiversity and health.

The Eat forum which brought out a report that tried to impose a monoculture diet of chemically grown, hyperindustrially processed food on the world [has a partnership through FrESH](#) with the junk food industry, and Big Agriculture such as Bayer, BASF, Cargil, Pepsico amongst others.

Fake food is thus building on a century and a half of food imperialism and food colonisation of our diverse food knowledges and food cultures.

Food cultures

Big Food and Big Money is behind the [fake food Industry](#). [Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos](#) are [funding startups](#).

We need to decolonise our food cultures and our minds. The industrial west has always been arrogant, and ignorant, of the cultures it has colonised. Fake Food is just the latest step in a history of food imperialism.

Soya is a gift of East Asia, where it has been a food for millennia. It was only eaten as fermented food to remove its anti-nutritive factors.

But recently, GMO soya has created a [soya imperialism](#), destroying plant diversity. It continues the destruction of the diversity of rich edible oils and plant-based proteins of [Indian dals](#) that we have documented.

Women from India's slums called on me to bring our mustard back when GMO soya oil started to be dumped on India, and local oils and cold press units in villages were made illegal.

That is when we started the 'sarson (mustard) satyagraha' to defend our healthy cold pressed oils from dumping of hexane-extracted GMO soya oil. Hexane is a neurotoxin.

Food sovereignty

While Indian peasants knew that pulses fix nitrogen, the west was industrialising agriculture based on synthetic nitrogen which contributes to greenhouse gases, dead zones in the ocean, and dead soils.

While we ate a diversity of dals in our daily dal roti, the British colonisers, who had no idea of the richness of the nutrition of pulses, reduced them to animal food. Chana became chick pea, gahat became horse gram, tur became pigeon pea.

We stand at a precipice of a planetary emergency, a health emergency, a crisis of farmers livelihoods.

Fake Food will accelerate the rush to collapse. Real food gives us a chance to rejuvenate the earth, our food economies, food sovereignty and food cultures. Through real food we can decolonise our food cultures and our consciousness. We can remember that food is living and gives us life.

Boycott the GMO made Impossible Burger. Make tofu. Cook dal.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above or below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

[Vandana Shiva](#) is an Indian scholar, environmental activist, and food sovereignty advocate. Read a response from Impossible Food [here](#).

Featured image is from News Ghana

The original source of this article is [The Ecologist](#)
Copyright © [Dr. Vandana Shiva](#), [The Ecologist](#), 2019

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Dr. Vandana Shiva](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca