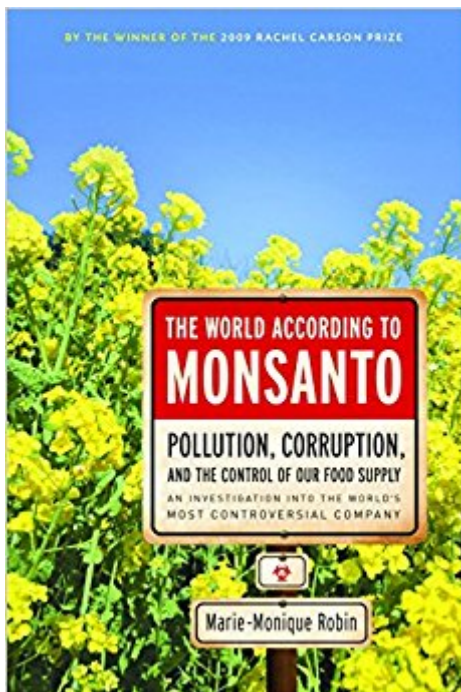


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The World According To Monsanto



Synopsis

Published to stellar praise worldwide, *The World According to Monsanto* charts award-winning journalist and documentary filmmaker Marie-Monique Robin's three-year journey across four continents to uncover the disturbing practices of multinational agribusiness corporation Monsanto. The book exposes the shocking story of how the new "green" face of the world's leading producer of GMOs (genetically modified organisms) is no less malign than its PCB and Agent Orange-soaked past. Monsanto currently controls the majority of the yield of the world's genetically modified corn and soy ingredients found in more than 95 percent of American households and its alarming legal and political tactics to maintain this monopoly are the subject of worldwide concern, with baleful consequences for the world's small-scale farmers. Selected as a finalist for the New York Public Library's 2011 Helen Bernstein Book Award for Excellence in Journalism, *The World According to Monsanto* is positioned to increase awareness of a serious threat to our food supply.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"No one who cares for their freedom and health can afford to ignore this very important book."—Vandana Shiva, author of *Earth Democracy* and *Stolen Harvest*
"A truly eye-opening view of how American business-as-usual really works."—Daily Kos
"Robin's outrage is well supported by wide-ranging scientific evidence . . . even lay readers are prodded to wise up and increase their awareness of what has become a serious

threat."#151;Kirkus Reviews "Sends chills down the spine. . . . After reading this, we can no longer afford to turn a blind eye."#151;Le Point "Passionate and truly rich reporting."#151;Library of America "[An] incredibly documented work."#151;L'Espresso Express

Truly noble journalistic work . . . Robin informs, enlightens, unveils, and begins the work of alerting the public. --La Marseillaise --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

For the author's investigative comprehensivity (and travel) I'd give the book five stars. But it seemed that the "evidence" she presented really overwhelmed, and at times obfuscated, the issue -- is Monsanto's GMO creating a disaster. Fewer interviews and more data (even graphs and charts) would have better presented the comparative facts. I found few actual facts other than Monsanto's somewhat Feudalistic control of patents and even persecution of even those whose fields sprout "blown-over" seeds that they didn't buy from Monsanto. To me, the clear presentation of issues concerned Agent Orange and other defoliants and their devastations. Also, the danger of monoculture crops, genetically modified or not. An excellent book, perhaps too inclusive of people involved. Not conclusive enough by actual data (and correlations and comparisons) cited. But it should be read.

This book is no lighthearted romp through the grain fields. It is well-researched and meticulously documented, and the tale it tells is horrifying. Here in America, and to some extent in Canada, Monsanto, Dow, and other large corporations have managed to buy our so-called regulatory agencies. The result is that there have been essentially no long-term safety tests of GMO's on humans. Monsanto buys and silences any agencies (or researchers) inclined to challenge bioengineering. However, Monsanto can't hide the clear and indisputable evidence of the effect of GMO's on the environment, or the disasters arising from Round-up Ready crops. The book covers events from Saskatchewan Canada to the pampas of Brazil. Monsanto and Dow poured millions of dollars into the recent fight against Proposition 37 in California which would have required labeling of food products containing GMO's. GMO's are largely banned throughout Europe and the rest of the world, but here in the land of the free [market], we don't even have labeling! The corporations ran misleading and dishonest ads that were, unfortunately, effective, and Prop. 37 was defeated. The "World According to Monsanto" may not be a "fun read," but it should be required for anyone interested in the future of humans on this planet.

I have worked in industry my entire career, and tend towards a libertarian viewpoint of society and how things should be. That said, this book highlights the epitome of corporate greed, crony capitalism, and government/corporate collusion, all to crush competition, and of course make tons of money. Sadly the knee-jerk response of many people to this sort of activity is to pass laws, or to encourage more government intrusion. This never works, and it generally makes the problem even worse. I do not profess to have all the answers to problems of this sort, but certainly each individual should take responsibility to make themselves as informed as possible. Abuses like this and all the other similar evils that are going on take place best in the shadows, and an uninformed populace makes this easy. This book will open your eyes on a number of things that affect all of us and in many cases we all take for granted. You will never look at: Round-Up Agent Orange Growth hormones used in animals Genetically modified plants (corn, and many others) that we all end up consuming the same way again.

The patenting of living things - good, bad, or a combination of the two? Monsanto, without question, is a cutting-edge company. Whether or not this avant garde direction of patenting is beneficial for the human family is the question Marie-Monique Robin asks and subsequently answers in the negative, after weighing the pros and cons. Interestingly, it was difficult for me to find a thoroughly-researched and scholarly treatise on Monsanto Corporation as I was doing research for my own book, "Just a Little Bit More: The Culture of Excess and the Fate of the Common Good" (Blue Ocotillo/ACTA, 2014). Few American authors have been willing to take on Monsanto; this French author, with a healthy lack of fear, does so admirably. Robin covers Monsanto's history with PCBs and other chemicals it has produced over the years (including rBGH, now eliminated in some of the milk sold in the US), the GMO debate, biodiversity and monoculture, government regulation on agribusiness and its employee "revolving door" between the two entities, and other critical topics. If you're familiar with farming practices in the US, you know that Monsanto's patented soy beans have revolutionized the way farmers work their fields (and in other parts of the world, including - significantly - Brazil and Argentina). Before, "walking beans" (pulling out large weeds) was a necessity prior to harvesting. Nowadays, with Monsanto's "Round Up Ready" soy beans, there's no need. Soybean fields in the Upper Midwest are relatively clean from weeds. But we know that nature always adapts - biodiversity, thankfully, has always ruled and will rule. Weeds will modify themselves and Monsanto will counter by continuing to tweak its product. This dance between nature and this for-profit corporation, Robin argues, ultimately is not beneficial for the well-being of the human family. As an example, the Green Revolution (roughly 1945-1975) was produced by a

public-private partnership helping feed many millions, with important initial funding coming from the Rockefeller Foundation. The Gene Revolution--mostly a private venture, Monsanto at the lead--has similar potential to nourish millions, but the inherent conflict between private profit and social returns obstructs its success. Farmers in poorer countries (especially African)--hindered by exorbitant pricing by for-profit seed companies like Monsanto--are essentially excluded. Robin's interview with Vandana Shiva, an Indian physicist and ecologist, on the comparison of Monsanto's efforts in India with its patented herbicide-proof cotton seed and the colonial age - "the patenting of life is a continuation of the first colonization" (p. 312)- is wrought with significance and consequence. Highly recommended.

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