

From Agrarianism to Transhumanism: The Long March to Dystopia

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by [Colin Todhunter](#), [Global Research](#)

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“A total demolition of the previous forms of existence is underway: how one comes into the world, biological sex, education, relationships, the family, even the diet that is about to become synthetic.”

– Silvia Guerini, radical ecologist, in ‘From the ‘Neutral’ Body to the Posthuman Cyborg: A Critique of Gender Ideology’ (2023)

We are currently seeing an acceleration of the corporate consolidation of the entire global agri-food chain. The big data conglomerates, including Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook and Google, [have joined traditional agribusiness giants](#), such as Corteva, Bayer, Cargill and Syngenta, in a quest to impose their model of food and agriculture on the world. [1]

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and big financial institutions, like BlackRock and Vanguard, are also involved, whether through [buying up huge tracts of farmland](#), pushing [biosynthetic \(fake\) food](#) and [genetic engineering technologies](#) or more generally [facilitating and financing the aims of the mega agri-food corporations](#). [2]

The billionaire interests behind this try to portray their techno-solutionism as some kind of humanitarian endeavour:

saving the planet with 'climate-friendly solutions', 'helping farmers' or 'feeding the world'. But what it really amounts to is repackaging and greenwashing the [dispossessive strategies of imperialism](#).

It involves a shift towards a '[one world agriculture](#)' under the control of agritech and the data giants, which is to be based on genetically engineered seeds, laboratory created products that resemble food, 'precision' and 'data-driven' agriculture and farming without farmers, with the entire agrifood chain, from field (or lab) to retail, being governed by monopolistic e-commerce platforms determined by artificial intelligence systems and algorithms.

Those who are pushing this agenda have a vision not only for farmers but also for humanity in general.

The elites through their military-digital-financial (Pentagon/Silicon Valley/Big Finance) complex want to use their technologies to reshape the world and redefine what it means to be human. They regard humans, their cultures and their practices, like nature itself, as a problem and deficient.

Farmers are to be displaced and replaced with drones, machines and cloud-based computing. Food is to be redefined and people are to be fed synthetic, genetically engineered products. Cultures are to be eradicated, and humanity is to be fully urbanised, subservient and disconnected from the natural world.

What it means to be human is to be radically transformed. But what has it meant to be human until now or at least prior to the (relatively recent) Industrial Revolution and associated mass urbanisation?

To answer this question, we need to discuss our connection to nature and what most of humanity was involved in prior to industrialisation – cultivating food.

Many of the ancient rituals and celebrations of our forebears were built around stories, myths and rituals that helped them come to terms with some of the most fundamental issues of existence, from death to rebirth and fertility. These culturally embedded beliefs and practices served to sanctify their practical relationship with nature and its role in sustaining human life.

As agriculture became key to human survival, the planting and harvesting of crops and other seasonal activities associated with food production were central to these customs.

Humans celebrated nature and the life it gave birth to. Ancient beliefs and rituals were imbued with hope and renewal and people had a necessary and immediate relationship with the sun, seeds, animals, wind, fire, soil and rain and the changing seasons that nourished and brought life. Our cultural and social relationships with agrarian production and associated deities had a sound practical base.

People's lives have been tied to planting, harvesting, seeds, soil and the seasons for thousands of years.

Silvia Guerini, whose quote introduces this article, notes the importance of deep-rooted relationships and the rituals that re-affirm them. She says that through rituals a community recognises itself and its place in the world. They create the spirit of a rooted community by contributing to rooting and making a single existence endure in a time, in a territory, in a community.

[Professor Robert W Nicholls](#) explains that the cults of Woden and Thor were superimposed on far older and better-rooted beliefs related to the sun and the earth, the crops and the animals and the rotation of the seasons between the light and warmth of summer and the cold and dark of winter.

Humanity's relationship with farming and food and our connections to land, nature and community has for millennia

defined what it means to be human.

Take India, for example. Environmental scientist [Viva Kermani](#) says that Hinduism is the world's largest nature-based religion that:

“... recognises and seeks the Divine in nature and acknowledges everything as sacred. It views the earth as our Mother and hence advocates that it should not be exploited. A loss of this understanding that earth is our mother, or rather a deliberate ignorance of this, has resulted in the abuse and the exploitation of the earth and its resources.”

Kermani notes that ancient scriptures instructed people that the animals and plants found in India are sacred and, therefore, all aspects of nature are to be revered. She adds that this understanding of and reverence towards the environment is common to all Indic religious and spiritual systems: Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.

According to Kermani, the Vedic deities have deep symbolism and many layers of existence. One such association is with ecology. Surya is associated with the sun, the source of heat and light that nourishes everyone; Indra is associated with rain, crops, and abundance; and Agni is the deity of fire and transformation and controls all changes.

She notes that the Vrikshayurveda, an ancient Sanskrit text on the science of plants and trees, contains details about soil conservation, planting, sowing, treatment, propagating, how to deal with pests and diseases and a lot more.

Like Nicholls, Kermani provides insight into some of the profound cultural, philosophical and practical aspects of humanity's connection to nature and food production.

This connection resonates with agrarianism, a philosophy based on cooperative labour and fellowship, which stands in stark

contrast to the values and impacts of urban life, capitalism and technology that are seen as detrimental to independence and dignity. Agrarianism, too, emphasises a spiritual dimension as well as the value of rural society, small farms, widespread property ownership and political decentralisation.

The prominent proponent of agrarianism [Wedell Berry says](#):

“The revolution which began with machines and chemicals now continues with automation, computers and biotechnology.”

For Berry, agrarianism is not a sentimental longing for a time past. Colonial attitudes, domestic, foreign and now global, have resisted true agrarianism almost from the beginning – there has never been fully sustainable, stable, locally adapted, land-based economies.

However, Berry provides many examples of small (and larger) farms that have similar output as industrial agriculture with one third of the energy.

In his poem ‘A Spiritual Journey’, Berry writes the following:

“And the world cannot be discovered by a journey of miles,
no matter how long,
but only by a spiritual journey,
a journey of one inch,
very arduous and humbling and joyful,
by which we arrive at the ground at our feet,
and learn to be at home.”

But in the cold, centralised, technocratic dystopia that is planned, humanity’s spiritual connection to the countryside, food and agrarian production are to be cast into the dustbin of history.

Silvia Guerini says [3]:

“The past becomes something to be erased in order to break the thread that binds us to a history, to a tradition, to a

belonging, for the transition towards a new uprooted humanity, without past, without memory... a new humanity dehumanised in its essence, totally in the hands of the manipulators of reality and truth”.

This dehumanised humanity severed from the past is part of the wider agenda of transhumanism. For instance, we are not just seeing a push towards a world without farmers and everything that has connected us to the soil but, according to Guerini, also a world without mothers.

She argues that those behind test-tube babies and surrogate motherhood now have their sights on genetic engineering and artificial wombs, which would cut women out of the reproductive process. Guerini predicts that artificial wombs could eventually be demanded, or rather marketed, as a right for everyone, including transgender people. It is interesting that the language around pregnancy is already contested with the omission of ‘women’ from statements like ‘persons who can get pregnant’.

Of course, there has long been a [blurring of lines](#) between biotechnology, eugenics and genetic engineering. Genetically engineered crops, gene drives and gene editing are now a reality, but the ultimate goal is marrying artificial intelligence, bionanotechnology and genetic engineering to produce the one-world transhuman.

This is being pushed by powerful interests, who, according to Guerini, are using a rainbow, transgenic left and LGBTQ+ organisations to promote a new synthetic identity and claim to new rights. She says this is an attack on life, on nature, on “what is born, as opposed to artificial” and adds that all ties to the real, natural world must be severed.

It is interesting that in its report [Future of Food](#), the UK supermarket giant Sainsburys celebrates a future where we are microchipped and tracked and neural laces have the potential

to see all of our genetic, health and situational data recorded, stored and analysed by algorithms that could work out exactly what food (delivered by drone) we need to support us at a particular time in our life. All sold as 'personal optimisation'.

Moreover, it is likely, according to the report, that we will be getting key nutrients through implants. Part of these nutrients will come in the form of lab-grown food and insects.

A neural lace is an ultra-thin mesh that can be implanted in the skull, forming a collection of electrodes capable of monitoring brain function. It creates an interface between the brain and the machine.

Sainsburys does a pretty good job of trying to promote a dystopian future where AI has taken your job, but, according to the report, you have lots of time to celebrate the wonderful, warped world of 'food culture' created by the supermarket and your digital overlords.

Technofeudalism meets transhumanism – all for your convenience, of course.

But none of this will happen overnight. And whether the technology will deliver remains to be seen. Those who are promoting this brave new world might have overplayed their hand but will spend the following decades trying to drive their vision forward.

But arrogance is their Achilles heel.

There is still time to educate, to organise, to resist and to agitate against this hubris, not least by challenging the industrial food giants and the system that sustains them and by advocating for and creating grass-root food movements and local economies that strengthen food sovereignty.

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Notes

[1] See [Food, Dispossession and Dependency: Resisting the New World Order](#).

[2] See [Sickening Profits: The Global Food System's Poisoned Food and Toxic Wealth](#)

[3] A debt of gratitude is owed to Paul Cudenec and his article [Truth, reality, tradition and freedom: our resistance to the great uprooting](#) on the Winter Oak website, which provides quotes from and insight into the work of Silvia Guerini.

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**GM Golden Rice in the
Philippines Stopped: The**

Deception of Development and the Politics of Progress

[GM Golden Rice in the Philippines Stopped: The Deception of Development and the Politics of Progress](#)

by [Colin Todhunter](#), [Asia-Pacific Research](#)

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On 19 April 2024, the Philippines Supreme Court issued a [cease-and-desist order](#) on the commercial propagation of genetically modified (GM) Golden Rice and GM eggplant in the country.

The [Stop Golden Rice Network](#) says that the court decision is a victory for farmers and consumers everywhere as the decision goes beyond Golden Rice and insecticidal eggplant and covers “any application for contained use, field testing, direct use as food or feed or processing, commercial propagation, and importation of GMOs.”

The court recognised that government agencies and other proponents of GM Golden Rice and GM eggplant “failed to submit proof of safety and compliance with all legal requirements.” The order remains indefinite until GMO proponents can fulfil all the mandated steps and provide concrete evidence that these GMOs are indeed safe.

A network of farmers, consumers and civil society organisations, Stop Golden Rice emphasises the need to address hunger and malnutrition through securing small farmers’ control over resources such as seed, appropriate technologies, water and land.

The campaign group says:

“We believe that GM crops are primarily pushed by global monopoly capitalists in food and agriculture... there is already irrevocable evidence of the failure of GM crops and how it has contributed to further indebtedness, crop failures, hunger and loss of biodiversity.”

It states that the court’s decision shows that ordinary people can prevail in the face of corporate power.

The Story of Golden Rice

Vitamin A deficiency is a problem in many poor countries in the Global South and leaves millions at high risk of infection, diseases and other maladies, such as blindness.

The agritech industry has long argued that Golden Rice is a practical way to provide poor farmers in remote areas with a subsistence crop capable of adding much-needed vitamin A to local diets. Lobbyists say that Golden Rice, developed with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation, could help save the lives of around 670,000 children who die each year from Vitamin A deficiency and another 350,000 who go blind.

Such claims, however, are based more on spin than reality, and, over the years, the interests behind Golden Rice have wasted no time in attacking anyone who questioned it.

As Britain’s Environment Secretary in 2013, the now disgraced [Owen Paterson claimed](#) that opponents of GM were “casting a dark shadow over attempts to feed the world”. He called for the rapid roll-out of vitamin A-enhanced rice to help prevent the cause of up to a third of the world’s child deaths. He claimed:

“It’s just disgusting that little children are allowed to go blind and die because of a hang-up by a small number of people about this technology. I feel really strongly about it. I think what they do is absolutely wicked.”

On Twitter, The Observer’s Nick Cohen chimed in with his

support by tweeting:

“There is no greater example of ignorant Western privilege causing needless misery than the campaign against genetically modified golden rice.”

The rhetoric [took the well-worn cynically devised PR line](#) that anti-GM activists and environmentalists are little more than privileged, affluent people residing in rich countries and are denying the poor the supposed benefits of GM crops.

Despite these smears and emotional blackmail, in a 2016 article in the journal [Agriculture & Human Values](#) Glenn Stone and Dominic Glover found little evidence that activists were to blame for Golden Rice’s unfulfilled promises.

Researchers still had problems developing beta carotene-enriched strains that yield as well as non-GM strains already being grown by farmers. It was questionable whether the beta carotene in Golden Rice could even be converted to vitamin A in the bodies of badly undernourished children. There had also been little research on how well the beta carotene in Golden Rice would hold up when stored for long periods between harvest seasons or when cooked using traditional methods common in remote rural locations.

In the meantime, Glenn Stone noted that that, as the development of Golden Rice crept along, the Philippines had managed to slash the incidence of Vitamin A deficiency by non-GM methods.

So, whose interests were really being served in the push for Golden Rice?

In 2011, Marcia Ishii-Eiteman, a senior scientist with a background in insect ecology and pest management, answered this question:

“An elite, so-called Humanitarian Board where Syngenta

sits – along with the inventors of Golden Rice, Rockefeller Foundation, USAID and public relations and marketing experts, among a handful of others. Not a single farmer, indigenous person or even an ecologist or sociologist to assess the huge political, social and ecological implications of this massive experiment. And the leader of IRRI's Golden Rice project is none other than Gerald Barry, previously Director of Research at Monsanto.”

Sarojini V Rengam, executive director of Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific, called on the donors and scientists involved to wake up and do the right thing:

“Golden Rice is really a ‘Trojan horse’; a public relations stunt pulled by the agribusiness corporations to garner acceptance of genetically engineered (GE) crops and food.. money and efforts would be better spent on restoring natural and agricultural biodiversity rather than destroying it by promoting monoculture plantations and GE food crops.”

To tackle disease, malnutrition and poverty, you have to first understand the underlying causes – or indeed want to understand them.

Renowned academic [Walden Bello notes](#) that the complex of policies that pushed the Philippines into an economic quagmire over the past few decades is due to ‘structural adjustment’ that included the restructuring of agriculture and export-oriented production.

And that restructuring of the agrarian economy is something touched on by Claire Robinson of GMWatch who notes that leafy green vegetables used to be grown in backyards as well as in rice (paddy) fields on the banks between the flooded ditches in which the rice grew.

Ditches also contained fish, which ate pests. People thus had access to rice, green leafy veg and fish – a balanced diet that gave them a healthy mix of nutrients, including plenty of

beta-carotene.

But indigenous crops and farming systems have been replaced by monocultures dependent on chemical inputs. Green leafy veg were killed off with pesticides, artificial fertilisers were introduced, and the fish could not live in the resulting chemically contaminated water. Moreover, decreased access to land meant that many people no longer had backyards containing leafy green veg.

Blindness in developing countries could have been eradicated years ago if only the money, research and publicity put into Golden Rice over the last 20 years had gone into proven ways of addressing Vitamin A deficiency. However, instead of pursuing genuine solutions, what we have seen is [pro-GM spin](#) in an attempt to close down debate.

Technology and Development

If the discussion so far tells us anything, it is that technology is not neutral. It is developed and promoted by people who want to cement their control over a sector and stand to financially gain from its rollout.

All too often, politicians, corporations and the media equate new technology with 'progress'. And those who question it, as we see with GMOs, are called Luddites or anti-science in order to prevent proper debate over the social, economic and ethical concerns of rolling out a given technology.

Take the Green Revolution, for instance. There was nothing progressive, inevitable or neutral about its seed, chemical and related infrastructure technology.

Despite it being rolled out under the banner of 'progress', it underperformed, was exploitative and has had devastating social, ecological and environmental impacts (see the writings of [Prof. Glenn Stone](#), [Vandana Shiva](#) and [Bhaskar Save](#)). It served US geopolitical, financial and agribusiness interests

and prioritised urban-industrial expansion at the expense of rural communities and a more diverse, healthy and nutrient-sufficient agriculture.

But the Green Revolution became integral to the 'development' agenda.

[In a recent article](#) on the Winter Oak website, Paul Cudenec says that 'development':

"... is the destruction of nature, now seen as a mere resource to be used for development or as an empty undeveloped space in which development could, should and, ultimately, must take place. It is the destruction of natural human communities, whose self-sufficiency gets in the way of the advance of development, and of authentic human culture and traditional values, which are incompatible with the dogma and domination of development."

Cudenec argues that those behind 'development' have been destroying everything of real value in our natural world and our human societies in the pursuit of personal wealth and power. Moreover, they have concealed this crime behind all the positive-sounding rhetoric associated with development on every level.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in India.

The World Bank, the World Trade Organization, global agribusiness and financial capital [are working to corporatise](#) India's agriculture sector. This 'structural adjustment' policy and process involves displacing the current food production system with contract farming and an industrial model of agriculture and food retail that serves the above interests.

The plan is to displace the peasantry, create a land market and amalgamate landholdings to form larger farms that are more suited to international land investors and export-oriented

industrial farming.

The demand is that India sacrifice its farmers and its own food security for the benefit of a handful of billionaires. This is all passed off as 'development'.

It involves the state facilitating the enrichment of a wealthy elite and privileging a certain model of social and economic development based on urban sprawl, centralised power and dependency on global finance, corporations, markets and supply chains. All legitimised under the banners of innovation, technological progress and 'development'.

There are other pathways that humanity can take. Anthropologist Felix Padel and researcher Malvika Gupta [offer some insights](#) (based on their work with India's Adivasi communities) into what the solutions or alternatives to 'development' might look like:

"Democracy as consensus politics rather than the Western model of liberal democracy that perpetuates division and corruption behind the scenes; exchange labour rather than the ruthless, anti-life logic of 'the market'; law as reconciliation rather than judgements that depend on exorbitant legal fees and divide people into winners and losers... and learning as something to be shared, not competed over."

However, we see more 'development' being proposed: more rural population displacement and human dislocation, more mining, port and other big infrastructure developments and the further entrenchment of corporate interests and their projects.

While many have a different vision for the future, self-interest and consumerism underpinned by economic neoliberal dogma continue to seduce the masses into accepting the prevailing 'development' agenda.

Corporate industrial agriculture is integral to that agenda. A model that took hold half a century ago in the Western nations

and which has resulted in nutrient-deficient food, narrower diets, the massive use of agrochemicals, food contaminated by hormones, steroids, antibiotics and a wide range of chemical additives, the eradication of many smallholder farmers, spiralling rates of ill health, degraded soil and contaminated and depleted water supplies.

That's 'progress'? Well, agribusiness interests aside, perhaps so for the many private health clinics that have sprung up in India in recent years.

The introduction of GMOs represents a further entrenchment of the prevailing 'development' agenda.

The decision by the Philippines Supreme Court called out government agencies and those behind the Golden Rice agenda for key failures. This is important for India, whose Supreme Court is about to decide on whether to sanction the commercial cultivation of GM mustard. It would be India's first GM food crop (of which there are many more in the pipeline).

Will India's Supreme Court come down on the side of reason and stop GM mustard on the basis of there being [no need](#) for GMOs in Indian agriculture and the well-documented [fraud and regulatory delinquency](#) that has surrounded this issue for many years?

That remains to be seen.

Many of the issues presented above are discussed in the author's free e-book [Food, Dispossession and Dependency. Resisting the New World Order.](#)

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