

# Ignoring Reality, Subverting Morality: GMOs and the Neoliberal Apologists

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*Monsanto is often called one of the most 'evil' companies on the planet. It has a history of knowingly contaminating the environment and food with various poisons, cover ups and criminality (see [this](#), outlining the company's appalling history). In recent times, there has been much focus on its promotion and patenting of GMOs, the deleterious impacts of its glyphosate-based herbicide [Roundup](#) and how GMOs pose a threat to human and animal health, ecology and the environment (see [this](#), for example).*

Campaigners and activists [have described](#) how global agribusiness players like Monsanto are threatening food security and food democracy. Monsanto and others have been able to capture or unduly influence government [regulatory/policy agendas](#), important [trade deals](#) and [global trade policies](#) via the WTO. Monsanto is a [major player](#) and wields enormous political influence and receives [significant political support](#).



Photo credit: AFP Photo / Robyn Beck

Little wonder then that we now have campaigns specifically targeting Monsanto. While it is laudable and correct to highlight the actions of Monsanto and indeed its partners like The Gates Foundation, we should not be side tracked from developing a wider analysis to understand the underlying forces that drive companies like Monsanto.

A recent piece by [Christina Sarich](#) shows that any shares held by Gates or the individuals at the top of the Monsanto corporate structure like CEO High Grant or CTO Robb Fraley are

dwarfed by those held by institutional shareholders, such as Vanguard, Capital Research and State Street.

While it is difficult to specify the individuals behind these entities and others like them in the financial-corporate world, existing research (and in the absence of data, informed speculation) indicates the name Rothschild crops up time and again along with Goldman Sachs, Loeb's Kuhn, Lehman's, Rockefeller, Warburg, Lazard and Israel Moses Seif. Moreover, the eight largest US financial companies (JP Morgan, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Citigroup, Goldman Sachs, US Bancorp, Bank of New York Mellon and Morgan Stanley) are entirely controlled by 10 shareholders and four companies appear as shareholders in these many of these: Black Rock, State Street, Vanguard and Fidelity. In fact, these four appear to be major stock holders in many major US and European companies. (See this broader breakdown of [big money and ownership](#).)

Some try to divert your attention from these highly concentrated and overlapping patterns of ownership and the influence it brings by saying it all belongs in the realm of conspiracy theory and merely mouth tired clichés about 'democracy', but many of the families and individuals who own or control the world's biggest corporations have not been sitting idly by. In some cases, they and their ancestors have been amassing wealth and exerting their power over a period of centuries. They haven't appeared overnight, it's taken them a long time for them to get to this stage and mold or set up [institutions like the IMF, World Bank or WTO to do their bidding](#). So much so in fact that David Rothkopf estimates there are between 6-7,000 individuals who now form a global superclass.

Rothkopf is former managing director of Kissinger Associates and deputy undersecretary of commerce for international trade policies. In 2008, he published his book 'Superclass: the Global Power Elite and the World They Are Making':

"The superclass constitutes approximately 0.0001 percent of the world's population. They are the Davos-attending, Gulfstream/private jet-flying, money-incrusted, megacorporation-interlocked, policy-building elites of the world, people at the absolute peak of the global power pyramid. They are 94 percent male, predominantly white, and mostly from North America and Europe. These are the people setting the agendas at the Trilateral Commission, Bilderberg Group, G-8, G-20, NATO, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. They are from the highest levels of finance capital, transnational corporations, the government, the military, the academy, nongovernmental organizations, spiritual leaders and other shadow elites. Shadow elites include, for instance, the deep politics of national security organizations in connection with international drug cartels, who extract 8,000 tons of opium from US war zones annually, then launder \$500 billion through transnational banks, half of which are US-based." [Project Censored](#) (Exposing the transnational ruling class)

Although we must not assume that this elite is a unified entity, there is an interlocking directorate of state-corporate entities that have a unity of interest in maintaining its wealth, power and the economic and political structures that facilitate this, while eradicating challenges to its power.

Through its control or membership of [powerful think tanks](#), directorships, board memberships, horizontal and vertical integration of parent/sister corporate entities and

cross-ownership, this club ensures the [corporate media](#) says what it wants it to say, [opposition](#) is muzzled, controlled or subverted, wars are fought [on its behalf](#) and the corporate control of every facet of life is increasingly brought under its influence – and that includes food: what is in it, who grows it and who sells it. Fail to understand the set up described here and you will fail to grasp that companies like Monsanto are but a tentacle of elite interests.

[Jon Rappaport](#) highlights how this interlocking directorate works on a company level by looking at Monsanto and Whole Foods. He shows that five out of the top 10 shareholders for each company – the holders of the most stock – are the same. The five are investment funds and they buy stocks in many companies. But this should not be regarded as some kind of conscious conspiracy to control the food market, although such a practice should not be discounted. Rappaport says these funds make automatic purchases of stocks, based on computer calculations and based on the rankings of companies.

The point is that when you focus solely on Monsanto, you may be failing to grasp the fact that if it weren't Monsanto, or if Monsanto were to disappear, another company would appear because in a world of vulture corporations, profit compulsion and market capture, there is money to be made from GMO technology, markets to be 'exploited' and indigenous agriculture to be uprooted. The Rockefeller family and US agribusiness corporations realised this when they [facilitated the 'green revolution'](#) just as institutional speculators in [land](#) or [commodity](#) crops know it today.

Monsanto is integral to a system of globalisation that benefits Western oligarchs, which is underpinned by an increasingly powerful military-industrial complex that ensures these interests are served if other means fail (watch John Perkins [here](#) discussing his time as an economic hitman). And the result has often been highly profitable on the back of economic and social devastation. Look no further than Michel Chossudovsky's analysis of [Somalia](#) or [Ethiopia](#) to see how agribusiness made a killing from policies that destroyed local economies and farming. The US and its corporations, facilitated by the IMF and WTO, effectively dismantle agrarian economies and then offer the problem as the cure.

Ultimately, the GM issue is not about 'marching against Monsanto', labelling or 'choice' – as important as all of that is – it is about the [geopolitics of food and agriculture](#) and challenging an increasingly integrated [global cartel](#) of finance, oil, military and agribusiness concerns that seek to gain from war, debt bondage and the control of resources, regardless of any notions relating to food security, good health and nutrition, biodiversity, food democracy, etc.

Instead of being informed about any of this, the public must listen to slick corporate mouthpieces like media-savvy Mark Lynas, or watch TV programmes like BBC Panorama that play fast and loose with facts and viewers' emotions that tell us all is safe with GMO and this technology can rid the world of hunger. You see, it's all about the 'science' (or [debasement](#) of it) and 'helping the poor' (while betraying a [colonialist](#) mindset) and nothing else, so we should just put up and shut up.

That's the way they like it. Because any type of critical analysis that links the GMO issue with the system these neoliberal mouthpieces defend and which touches on the concerns outlined in this article is met with mockery and name calling from them – it's all 'anti-capitalist' twaddle or conspiracy theory mouthed by a bunch of 'green blob', immoral, self-serving hippies, so they say.

They seem to think projection passes for debate. It doesn't.

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