

Why Vandana Shiva is so right and yet so wrong

Romantic environmentalists tend to get the big-picture problems right, while fudging the details. Rationalists nail the details, but sometimes become so immersed in the minutiae that they lose sight of the big picture.

Michael Specter's *New Yorker* [profile](#) of Vandana Shiva, the environmentalist and crusader against globalization and Big Agriculture, is a portrait of someone who understands the big-picture concerns of green-inclined young people with great clarity.

Even larger than the threat of climate change (or the thing that makes climate change a threat) is the threat of deadening uniformity and the loss of diversity, beauty, and enchantment.

The problem is that, when Shiva gets to the details (what's really driving these trends? What are the best solutions?), she frequently gets her facts very wrong. ... There's a real danger when a big-picture romantic fixates on one particular devil as the root of all problems. ... There just isn't good evidence that GMOs are the cause of the problem, though there is plenty of evidence pointing to other causes.

When I look for leaders, I look for people who are able to keep those soft, big-picture goals squarely in focus while they grapple with the nitty-gritty details. It's the people with a combination of romantic and rationalist traits — with the heart of a poet and the mind of a mathematician — that make meaningful progress.

Read full original article: [Why Vandana Shiva is so right and yet so wrong](#)