

## 'Delusion' key to effectiveness in Vandana Shiva's activism

The ultimate objective of Vandana Shiva is dear to all sane people — the world is beautiful and it has to be preserved. Her ideas to achieve this end have endeared her to many, especially in the West.

Others see her as yet another affluent Third World savant who is inconvenienced by the progress of the poor because it is not aesthetic, it brings with it the visual uniformity of the changing times, the destruction of pretty folk cultures, the cute old ways.

A hero is in need of an arch-villain and she has found her foe in a large corporation with a terrible reputation but one that has transformed farming in most parts of the world.

Shiva has attacked any research that she does not agree with and has claimed that Monsanto controls “the entire scientific literature of the world”. She has said that three of the most reputed science journals in the world — Nature, Science, and Scientific American — “have just become extensions of their propaganda.”

Last year, when the environmentalist Mark Lynas, who was a fierce opponent of GMOs, recanted and became a supporter, she tweeted.

“#MarkLynas saying farmers shd be free to grow #GMOs which can contaminate #organic farms is like saying #rapists shd have freedom to rape.”

Lynas, in the New Yorker story, arrives at an analysis of Shiva that is true for many strident activists like her.

“When you call somebody a fraud, that suggests the person knows she is lying... I don't think Vandana Shiva necessarily knows that. But she is blinded by her ideology and her political beliefs. That is why she is so effective and so dangerous.”

What Lynas is saying, when stripped of polite language, is that Vandana Shiva is deluded.

Activism is not filled with the deluded, but it has a special place for them. They do well there because the balance of neutrality does not provide the intensity and drive that a powerful conviction does. An open mind is useless to a revolutionary. An open mind cannot convert other open minds. Activists have to stay with a cause for years, for decades, as the science changes, as the circumstances change, as the economy, people and the times change.

They cannot do this if they have not given themselves completely to an idea. It is the belief that makes them special and sustains them. To allow even a germ of doubt is to demean their whole lives.

**Read the full, original article:** [Activism and the gift of delusion](#)