

The story behind *Seeds ...of Germination ...or Termination*

Two years ago, I read *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply* by Vandana Shiva and learned about terminator seed technology. It was then that a seed for this story was planted in my heart. I was shocked and appalled by man's audacity to terminate the germinating wonders of nature in his strive for money, power and control.

And what on earth are we thinking when we put dioxin into the very seeds from which a harvest will grow, a harvest—food—that will nourish us? Isn't it bad enough that mothers' milk today already contains such toxins? When do we learn, and what happened to the precautionary principle? This moral and political guideline should protect the public and environmental health against serious and irreversible damage from actions not proven completely safe by science. It seems this principle, which should protect our citizens and our country, now only gets brought up when certain economic powers are being threatened.

The term "terminator seed" sounds diabolic to me. A seed should be producing new life. It is the essence of creation, and it contains all the germinating power of life on earth. How can we even consider terminating that power? How can we consider poisoning the miracles of creation? And for what do we do so: money, power and control? While the mutating variations of the terminator seeds as I described them in the *Seeds ...of Germination ...or Termination* don't exist (just yet), the terminator seed technology does exist and has already threatened the environment in field trials, just like corporate ownership of seeds through patenting has already impacted poor farming communities around the world.

In the novel I make a link between the metaphor of seeds and people's dreams. I developed this perspective through my involvement in youth leadership programs—something which I have enjoyed over the last ten years. What has always struck me is that the dreams adolescents have are no different from the dreams I had when I was sixteen, seventeen and eighteen. As a matter of fact, from my presentations I've learned that most people hold the same kind of dreams in their hearts. But if we all have had the same dreams for decades, as so elegantly described by William McDonough when he said: "*I dream of a delightfully diverse, safe, healthy and just world, with clean air, clean water, clean soil and clean power—economically, equitably, ecologically and elegantly enjoyed by all children of all species of all times,*" why have we not created a reality that mirrors those dreams? This question made me realize that we allow our dreams to germinate or terminate by the choices we make and the actions we take.

The idea of setting the story in the future came when I read *Endgame* by Derrick Jensen last year. It was a book that shook me to the core and made me question aspects

of our society that I hadn't considered before. Endgame inspired the character of the protagonist's grand-mother and the organic rising up of people in search of a sustainable way of life.

Many of the insights in *Seeds* I developed by spending lots of time in nature and contemplating design based on the unfolding universe in front of us. When I say design, that doesn't only include the tangible necessities of our current culture like energy and buildings but also the intangibles like the structures of our organizations and society itself. It's not my intention to sell my ideas, but to make people think and at least consider nature to be our teacher.

In the end, I wrote *Seeds* with four goals in mind: First, to create awareness of the existence of terminator seed technology; second, to make the reader think about the values, motives, results and sustainability of the society we've created; third, to provoke debate around possible solutions; and lastly, to invite readers to listen to the voice of their soul, grab hold of their dreams and allow those dreams to germinate.

In wonder and with gratitude,

Hugo Bonjean, June 19, 2008