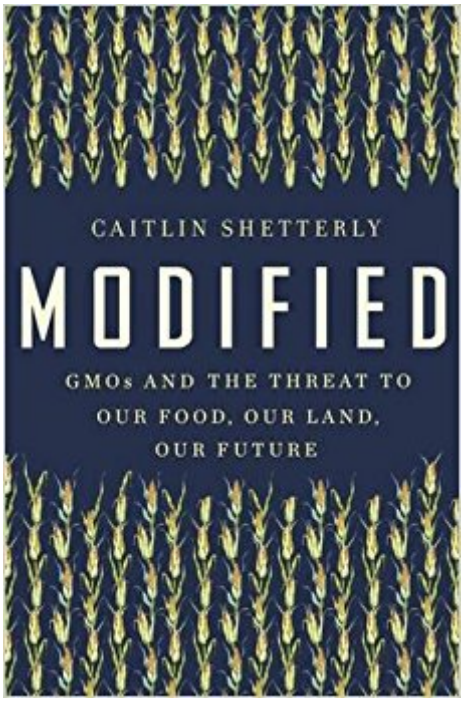
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Modified: GMOs And The Threat To Our Food, Our Land, Our Future



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Synopsis

A disquieting and meditative look at the issue that started the biggest food fight of our time--GMOs. From a journalist and mother who learned that genetically modified corn was the culprit behind what was making her and her child sick, a must-read book for anyone trying to parse the incendiary discussion about genetically modified foods.*One of Publishers Weekly's Best Books 2016*"More so than definitive answers, the questions that Shetterly advances are a persuasive reminder of how important the continued fight for true transparency in the food industry is." --GoopGMO products are among the most consumed and the least understood substances in the United States today. They appear not only in the food we eat, but in everything from the interior coating of paper coffee cups and medicines to diapers and toothpaste. We are often completely unaware of their presence.Caitlin Shetterly discovered the importance of GMOs the hard way. Shortly after she learned that her son had an alarming sensitivity to GMO corn, she was told that she had the same condition, and her familyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s daily existence changed forever. An expansion of ShetterlyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s viral Elle article Ã¢â ¬Å“The Bad Seed,Ã¢â ¬Â• Modified delves deep into the heart of the matterÃ¢â ¬â •from the cornfields of Nebraska to the beekeeping conventions in BrusselsÃ¢â ¬â •to shine a light on the people, the science, and the corporations behind the food we serve ourselves and our families every day. Deeper than an exposÃƒÂ©, and written by a mother and journalist whose journey had no agenda other than to understand the nuance and confusion behind GMOs, Modified is a rare breed of book that will at once make you weep at the majestic beauty of our Great Plains and force you to harvest deep seeds of doubt about the invisible monsters currently infiltrating our food and our land and threatening our future.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Praise for Modified"Caitlin Shetterly has written a passionate, provocative book that undoubtedly will be studied and scrutinized for the history it presents, and the stand it takes. It offers us ShetterlyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s own intimate journey, sparked by personal desperation and real curiosity. And like the best of books, it mixes the domestic with the global, the scientific with the quixotic in an attempt to understand the dangers of the food we eat. Intrepid, urgent, prescriptive, and ultimately revelatory, Modified is important for our times."Ã¢â ¬â •Michael Paterniti, author of The Telling Room and Love and Other Ways of DyingÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Caitlin ShetterlyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s powerful new book, Modified, through dogged research and with the fierce determination of a mother, exposes, in elegant prose, the wholesale genetic modification of our food supply. Her personal odyssey pursuing the truth, colored with clear scientific and historical context, is a clarion call about the dangers of corporate control of our food supply and, importantly, what people can do about it."Ã¢â ¬â •Amy Goodman, host and executive producer, Democracy Now! Ã Â ModifiedÃ Â is the intriguing and compelling story of one womanÃ¢â ¬â„¢s brave pursuit of her own healthÃ¢â ¬â •and the facts about the food we eat. A thoroughly consuming read.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Lily King, author of EuphoriaÃ¢â ¬Å“Riveting from beginning to end, ModifiedÃ Â reads like a hard-hitting investigative thriller. Shetterly is a thorough, even-handed journalist and a clear, persuasive writer. Ground-breaking and explosive, this is a book for everyone who wants to understand what they are feeding themselves and their families. Reading it has opened my eyes and changed the way I buy food.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Kate Christensen, author of The Great Man and Blue Plate Special"Sometimes people ask me why activists oppose GMO crops. This bookÃ Â by Caitlin Shetterly, bothÃ Â personal and provocative, provides as clear and detailed an answer as I’ve seen.Ã Â No matter your take on this issue, you’ll want to read and considerÃ Â Modified."Ã¢â ¬â •Bill McKibben, author ofÃ Â EaarthÃ Â andÃ Â Deep EconomyÃ¢â ¬Å“Intensely personalÃ¢â ¬Â|a compelling case that consumers worldwide need more education on this important issue.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œPublisherÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Weekly, Most AnticipatedÃ Â Book for Fall 2016"ShetterlyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s accessible, well-researched, and damning work brings clarity to an often fuzzy debate.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â œPublisherÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Weekly, starred reviewÃ¢â ¬Å“[ShetterlyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s] passionate advocacy, combined with descriptions of multiple research studies and interviews with scientists, doctors, and farmers, makes a compelling case that

consumers worldwide need more education on this important issue."Ã¢â ¬â •Library Journal, starred reviewÃ¢â ¬Å“[E]ye-openingÃ¢â ¬Â|. Modified is [ShetterlyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s] passionate and rather horrifying account of what is happening in the heartland and to our food supply.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •VoguePraise for ShetterlyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Made for You and MeÃ Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“[A] beautiful, moving, haunting, and funny memoir about what really counts . . . a sublime gift of a book.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Scott Simon, host of NPRÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Ã¢â ¬Å“Weekend Edition SaturdayÃ¢â ¬Â•Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Resonant and richly detailed.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Kai Ryssdal, host of NPRÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Ã¢â ¬Å“MarketplaceÃ¢â ¬Â•

Caitlin Shetterly is the author ofÃ Â Made for You and Me: Going West, Going Broke, Finding Home and the bestselling Fault Lines: Stories of Divorce. Her work has been featured in The New York Times Magazine, Elle, and Self, and on Oprah.com and Medium.com, as well as on "This American Life" and various other public radio shows.Ã Â She lives with her family in Maine.

As a person with a background in biochemistry and a passionate interest in issues of public policy, I cut my GMO teeth on "Seeds of Deception: Exposing Industry and Government Lies About the Safety of the Genetically Engineered Foods You’re Eating," "GMO Myths and Truths: A Citizen’s Guide to the Evidence on the Safety and Efficacy of Genetically Modified Crops and Foods, 3rd Edition," "Genetic Roulette: The Documented Health Risks of Genetically Engineered Foods," and "Altered Genes, Twisted Truth: How the Venture to Genetically Engineer Our Food Has Subverted Science, Corrupted Government, and Systematically Deceived the Public," as well as many audio and video lectures on the technical science of recombinant-DNA genetic engineering and its drawbacks and potential consequences. I’m drawn to writing that uses a straight here’s-the-facts-and-laws approach, with an index to help the reader keep track of details.Caitlin Shetterly’s "Modified: GMOs and the Threat to Our Food, Our Land, Our Future" isn’t that kind of book. It is more in the mold of many modern issues-related documentaries, a first-personal form of narrative nonfiction where the author/director plays a significant, sometimes central, role in the story being told. And as such, the book undoubtedly has a broader appeal to many who are not strict GMO-nerds like I am, and in that sense she seems successful at what I believe she is trying to achieve -- a presentation of the issue that is both personal and "balanced."Parts of the book are like a journal of a road trip, focusing on the surroundings and the author’s feelings about them and the present situation. Parts of it are akin to feature journalism, where in an interview with a source it is not just the substance that is worthy of mention, but also the ambience of the place, the food, and

the clothes, personality, and tastes of the interviewee.Hers is a quest story, rooted in horrendous/relentless health problems that were plaguing both her and her young son. She is, in a way, the poster child for the deadly ambiguity inherent in the chronic nature of the threats posed by recombinant-DNA foods and their evil twin, the herbicide RoundUp: the connection is so non-immediate and so widespread that people don't recognize it.After much searching, she discovers an allergy to corn, and does an excellent job of showing how stunningly difficult it is to avoid corn products. Only later does she realize that it isn't the corn so much as it is the fact that almost all corn is GMO. But once that connection is made, she embarks on a quest to find out more about GMOs.The subtitle of her book indicates her position on the GMO issue by the time she reaches the end of her quest. But she goes to great lengths to demonstrate her open mind on the subject, and emphasizes her ambivalence about it as she talks to people involved on both sides of the issue, explicitly finding it hard to avoid being swayed to whichever side was taken by the latest person she's talked to. It's a fascinating dance to watch, and (I admit) frustrating for someone as polarized on the subject as I am. It's undoubtedly one of the great strengths of the book -- an ambivalence that will be recognizable to many readers coming on the topic for the first time.A related strength is her ability to get inside the perspective of the people she talks with, seeing the issue from their side. She does the most outstanding job of this with Zach Hunnicutt, a Nebraska corn farmer, a salt-of-the-earth true believer in GE corn (who later begins to hedge his bets). She brings who he is as a person fully to the fore as she gets to know him, riding in his tractor, and talking with him for hours. The same is true for Dave Murphy and his wife Lisa, Iowa-based activists running the organization FoodDemocracyNow! [http://fooddemocracynow.org], and, to a slightly lesser extent, a number of other scientists, farmers, and activists. There's a real sense here of personal involvement and drama, which isn't so widely the case in the books to which I'm more accustomed and attuned.Another powerful section of the book concerns an issue totally new to me -- the threat of GMOs to honey, both to the bees themselves and to the livelihood of bee-keepers. It epitomizes the all-too-common economic threat posed by GMOs, in which farmers who are not growing GMOs can lose large chunks of the international market when countries that reject GMOs find GMO contamination in those farmers' exports.Ms. Shetterly raises aspects of the larger GMO issue throughout the book, and frequently fleshes these out with good footnotes. But for someone like me, having these woven into all the personal aspects of the story makes them somehow less accessible and less connected, and thus less memorable, particularly in the absence of an index.I missed some of the historical people and aspects of the issue that seem to me essential to understanding the GMO saga, though without an index I can't know for sure if that's just due to a

poor memory. (And in any case, there is only so much an author can cram into a book.) These include:a) British researcher Armand Pusztai, one of the first to stumble on the health problem of GMO foods and to have his career instantly demolished as a result;b) author Jeffrey Smith (Seeds of Deception), whose work has increased GMO awareness around the world;c) British genetic engineer Michael Antoniou (GMO Myths and Truths), whose work with proteomics has clearly demonstrated the significant difference and attendant risks between GMO and non-GMO plants in their metabolism and content;d) a clear description of the recombinant-DNA process and the details of why it is so dangerous;e) the 1989 GMO tryptophan-caused epidemic that killed hundreds and injured thousands and gives the lie to the "GMOs never hurt anyone" myth, andf) the fraud and illegality documented by Stephen Drucker (Altered Genes, Twisted Truth) in both the history of genetic engineering and the FDA's 1992 declaration of GMOs as "substantially equivalent" to other foods.Despite these reservations, I think the book is important for all those curious or concerned about GMOs. It has something for everyone. For newcomers, it is a "soft-landing" but thorough-enough entry into the issue. For hard-liners like me, it is a wonderful peek into the lives of people we've heard of (and not) on both sides. For pro-GMO people, one would hope its attempt at balance might give them a bit better sense of why their opponents are concerned about GMOs. Though perhaps that's asking too much...

Good information. it wouldn't be the only book you'd want to read on GMOs. but that is with anything. Multiple sources of information are important when reading or research on a topic.

Scientific facts are way more heavier than personal narratives. I don't know. It's just not my dish.

For anyone needing definition on GMO's - read this book. It's incredible and enlightening. Should be required material in every University in the USA.

Still reading. Hard to hear this information, but so important!

In today's world, we pay a gruesome price for letting others do our thinking for us.This book got me meditating on what it means for a work to merit five stars. Usually, I award five stars if the prose, the actual quality of word usage, is superlative in some way. Like Roger Ebert once said about movies, it's not WHAT it's about, but HOW it goes about it. The prose quality in "Modified" really only deserves about three stars. "Modified" flipped my usual standard completely upside down.The book

is padded out (it really only needed to about half the length), fascinating information is presented in an odd way (we are treated to a paragraph about Shetterly swimming in a hotel pool but important information about the American Bird Conservatory is reduced to a footnote), and they reallly should have hired someone who could draw to do the sketches that pop up throughout the book. But when Shetterly gets down to facts, she really gets down to facts. While it's true that other authors have written about GMOs, as some reviewers point out, no one has yet done it quite like this. I know because I worked in the grocery industry for over a decade, and weighed in on policies for GMOs for a company with $400 million in annual sales (our policy on GMOs ultimately boiled down to "Ah, NO."). I had to read reams of information on the subject, and Shetterly managed to bring out a lot of points I did not know.The money at stake in this issue is almost beyond comprehension--the misinformation that is pumped into our culture beyond belief (there was an article in the New York Times recently about fake "Mommy" blogs Monsanto has set up to counter real Moms blogging about the dangers of GMOs). But all you have to do is think. Does is make sense that a single kernel of GMO corn with its pesticide sprayed on top can kill a songbird, but that it won't harm you and your family? Does it make sense to ingest something day in and day out with a pesticide built-in that cannot be removed? An expert can say whatever they want (and both sides of the issue have plenty of experts saying contradictory things), but they will not pay the health price for your decision. You will.So then, five stars for the actual information sprinkled throughout this book. It's important information, and an important story. If you suffer from persistent, mysterious health problems that just won't go away no matter what you do, this is a must-read. I wish it was better structured, but it's not. Shetterly got viciously attacked online for her original article, and she is probably in for more of the same with this. So is anybody influential who dares to say they think it's a bad idea to ingest Round Up.Does that make sense to you?GRADE: A

This book is chock-full of commissions of the naturalistic fallacy, as well as anecdotal observations being substituted for scientific research and travelogue being substituted for logically presented story line, those last two noted by others.The naturalistic fallacy begins, of course, with the idea that non-GMO is better than GMO, and that organic is better than non-organic. Since there's no index to this book, I have no idea if Ms. Shetterly knows that she's probably eating mutagenic foods; that is, her Rio Star or Ruby Star grapefruit, barley in bread or beer and other things have been created by RADIATION!!!This narrative reaches almost comic levels with her description of Nebraska farmer Zack Hunnicutt and his apple-pie, all-American looks. One almost expects to find out she thinks Monsanto has maade him into a Manchurian farmer. (Beyond that, a lot of this part of the story has

comments about him that come off as patronizing.)Otherwise, while I feel for whatever caused her health symptoms, looking for GMO-related corn proteins in something like corn starch, let alone corn syrup, seems gnat-straining.

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