

Because You Can, You Should: A Beauvoirian Ethics of Food

By Annie Lazarski

Thesis

The freedom to act in humans and the inability to act in nature imposes the moral responsibility on humans to return to nature that which they have used or ruined and improve upon it for future generations and the preservation of nature itself; in order for this to happen, humans must constantly be willing their freedom to create a more free and less destructive food system.

What is an ethical society?

An ethical society is one in which there is a clear and continuous effort to make decisions with the potential to improve the situation and the degree of freedom in the society.

What is an ethics of food?

An ethics of food is a system which feeds, treats well, and provides adequate nourishment to both nature and humanity. It strives for a more ethical system that is sustainable for future generations and is also an improvement on the conditions of humanity and nature.

What is the problem?

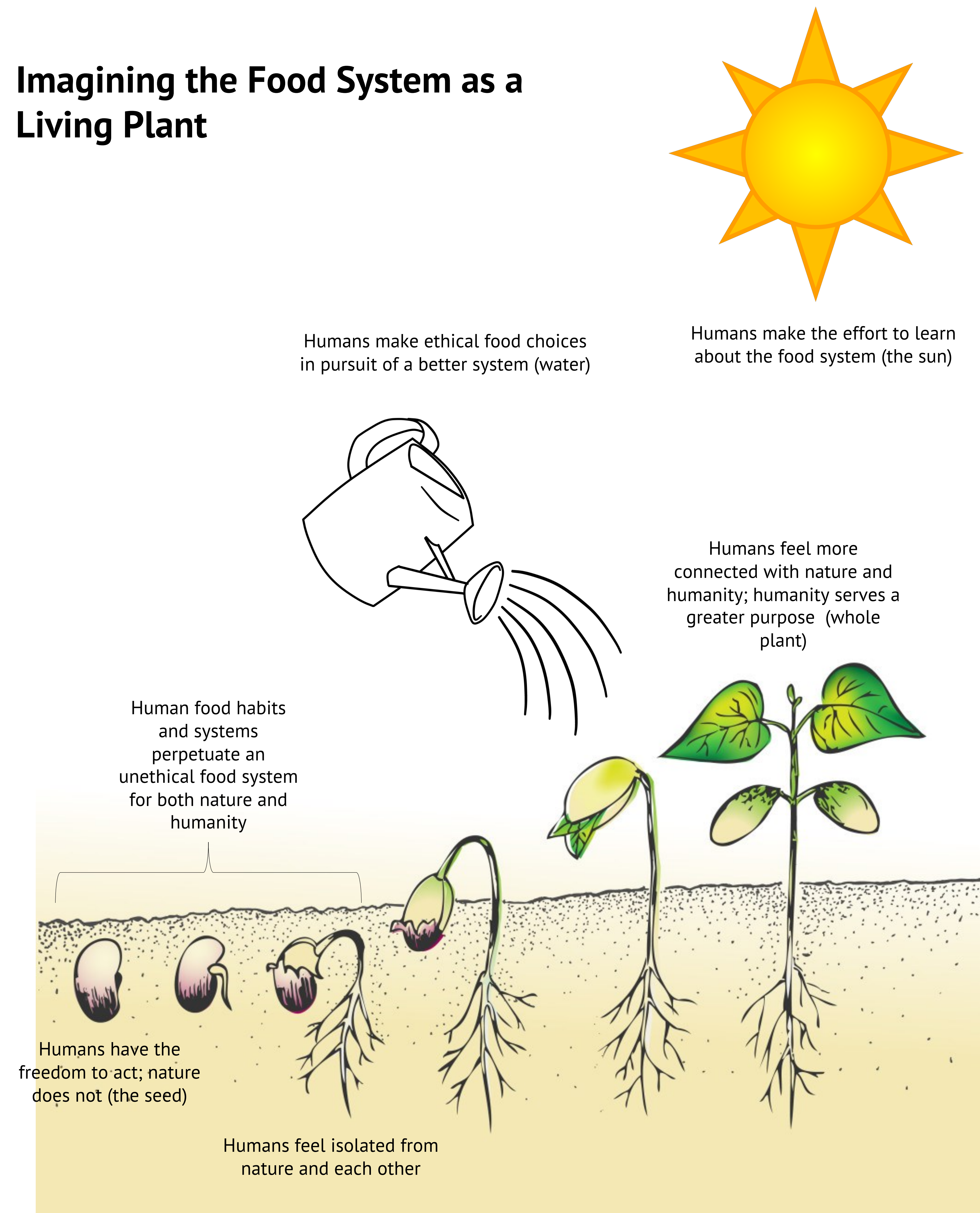
The global food system is unethical in its destruction of nature and its unfair treatment and inequality.

The human-nature relationship has become one of disconnect, leading humans to abuse nature and regard themselves as superior.

What can you do?

- Look into where your food is coming from
- Buy food that is ethically and sustainably sourced
- Inform others of the issues
- Grow your own food or buy local
- Eat and share stories with loved ones

Imagining the Food System as a Living Plant



Beauvoir's Ethics and Freedom

In situations where individuals have the freedom to act, they have the moral responsibility to act ethically. This consists in an active willing of freedom rather than a passive freedom.

Hegel's Cycle and Spirit

The individual struggles to remain identified as the part of a whole and as an individuated individual.

Why do we need to act?

We have duties to both humanity and nature. Many people are suffering and being treated unjustly as workers in the food system. There are also many people who do not receive enough food to live. Nature is being degraded through agricultural practices that are justified by consumer habits. Soil erosion, deforestation, carbon emissions, and water usage are all negative effects attributed to the food system.

How will this ethics help the individual?

Individuals, through reconnecting with the food system, will feel less isolated, purposeful, and free to take charge of their lives.

How will this ethics help humanity?

Humanity will become more interconnected as it grows to better understand the individuals. Reconnecting with food will bring humanity closer to its ancestors and make it think more ethically about future generations. In pursuing an ethics of food, humanity will see itself reflected in work that does good for humanity, allowing itself to see its own good.