

THE METABOLIC RIFT AS METAPHOR IN THE CONTEXT OF IRISH AGRI-FOOD

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INTRODUCTION

- Metabolic rift: disruption of cycles between agro-ecosystem & society
- Forms of ecological rupture:
 - Agro-ecological depletion: unsustainable production
 - Stressed human metabolic states: massification
 - Erosion of multidimensional attributes of food

THE IRISH METABOLIC RIFT

- The parallel world of Bord Bia's 'Origin green'

- Agroecological depletion:
 - 7.2m cattle + 5.2m sheep = mucho CH₄
 - N requirements for dairy pasture → water quality
 - Biodiversity loss; poor state of protected habitats
- Stressed human metabolic states
 - Poor diet leading risk factor in burden of disease
 - Consumption trends driven by Big Food interests & public subsidy
 - Rise of food banks as 'win-win' solution to poverty & waste

CONCLUSIONS

- Metabolic rift & commoditisation of food
 - Physiological, social & cultural significance of food
 - Agroecological depletion: soils, habitats, water, climate
 - Stressed human metabolic states & food poverty
 - Erosion of food sovereignty, culinary culture [IE net food importer]
 - Alienation from nature: physical & mental wellbeing
- To mend the metabolic rift we must rethink the place of food in social reproduction & ecological limits. Metaphor may be a vital tool in this.

