

IS IT GOOD TO BE EATEN?

UNDER THE FIG TREE
 BY AADIYAT AHMAD



If you're trying to live a long and successful life as things in nature often are, getting eaten is possibly one of the last things on your mind. We might quite reasonably expect that being lunch is quite literally a dead end. And even if one is consumed partially, it's likely to be unhealthy and, depending on which body parts are missing, reproduction would be out of the question. But not all of nature's creatures are hell bent on trying to escape the metaphorical dinner table. Can being eaten then be a good thing?

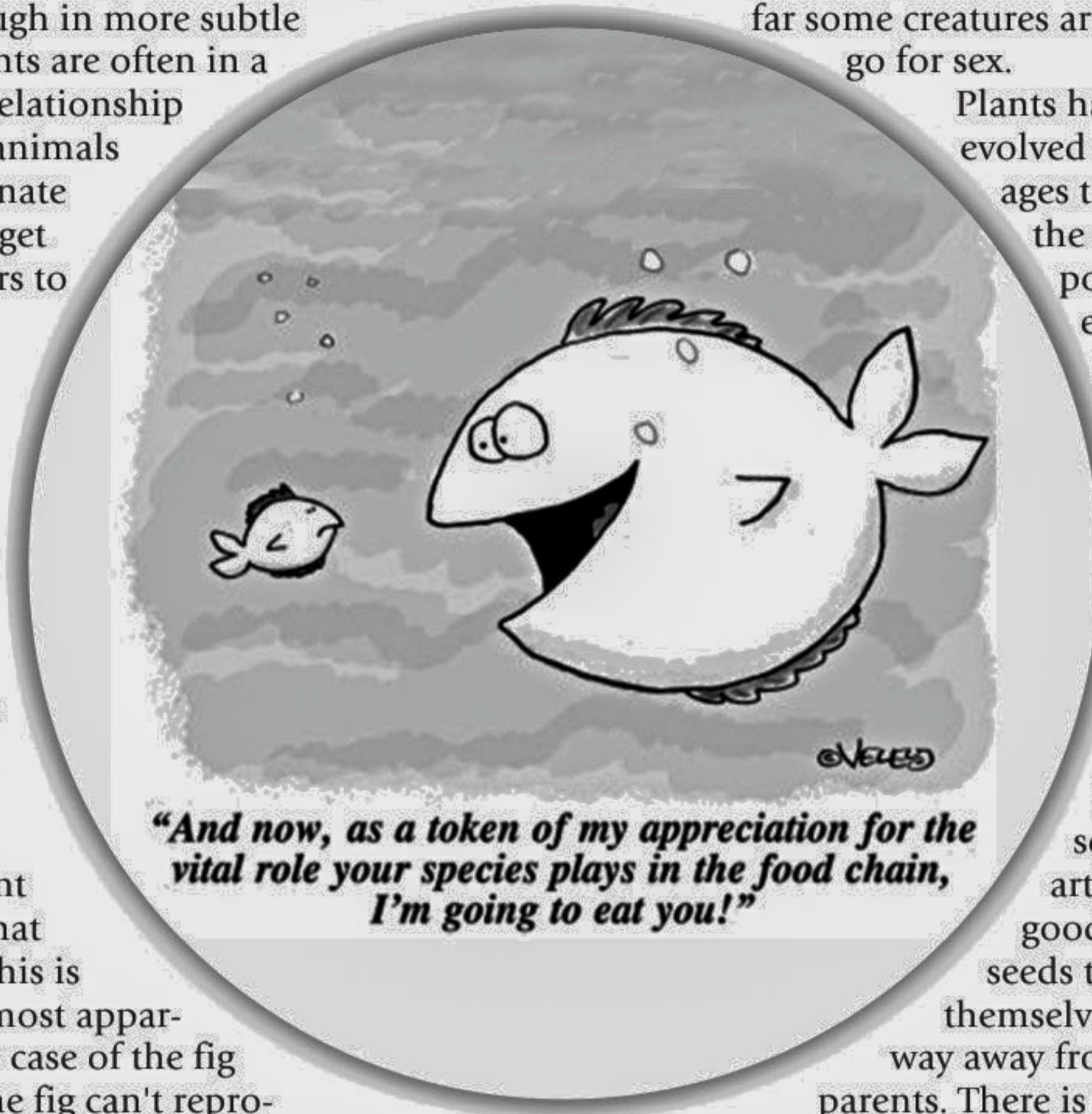
Having something take a nibble out of you might not be as bad as it may seem if you were a plant. Unable to run and unable to hide, plants have developed some unconventional defences to keep them going in case of an attack; one of these being tolerance. Tolerant plants shrug off herbivory with a disinterested "Whatever" as they are simply able to regrow lost parts and don't suffer any ill effects for it. A neat trick, but you can take it a step further. The Scarlet Gilia is an example of a plant that has done just that. These plants overcompensate for damage dealt by a herbivore and end up with more flowers and fruits than plants that hadn't been damaged. As a result, whereas most plants are expected to do everything in their disposal to keep herbivores away, the Scarlet Gilia might be

more likely to be caught holding up a "All you can eat buffet" sign.

Being eaten might be useful for plants without a superpowered healing factor as well, though in more subtle ways. Plants are often in a difficult relationship with the animals that pollinate them. To get pollinators to visit, the plant needs to present some sort of reward, and the pollinators often claim the pollen itself, or other plant parts as that reward. This is perhaps most apparent in the case of the fig plants. The fig can't reproduce without its sole pollinators, the aptly named fig wasps, but the wasps only seek out figs to lay eggs in them. Eggs that hatch into voracious larvae that

eat the figs' flowers inside out. Loss of body parts today for children tomorrow is a trade that the fig is willing to take (to an extent). Which just goes to show how far some creatures are willing to go for sex.

Plants have even evolved appendages that exist for the sole purpose of being eaten. Such is the case with fruits. Fruits hold seeds, and for a variety of reasons that are beyond the scope of this article, it's a good idea for seeds to plant themselves some way away from their parents. There is but one snag: seeds can't walk. Fruits solve this problem by strategically being eaten by something more mobile, most commonly birds and small mammals. Fruits



turn up in their highest numbers in synchrony often when fruit eaters are also at peak presence, they present bright colours to catch the eye, and if they could speak the forests would certainly be filled with the cries of "Eat me!" The seeds themselves are indigestible and therefore complete the journey from one end of the gastrointestinal tract to the other relatively unscathed. They are then deposited some distance away and that too in a handy patch of fertiliser. Ingenious.

So if you ever find yourself about to be served for lunch, ask yourself one question: "Am I a Scarlet Gilia, a fig or a fruit?" If you answer yes to one of those, then don't worry, you'll be okay.

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POT OF GOLD AT THE END OF THE LINK

Internet Industry Revenue Explained

ADIT HASAN

It is no secret that the software industry holds the potential for immense revenue and profits. With Facebook raking in revenue of \$7.8 billion in 2013 and Twitter being valued at \$18 billion, the internet industry seems to be a land of promise and fortune. But how do they convert internet traffic to profits? How is Mark Zuckerberg one of the wealthiest entrepreneurs in the world? How can Larry Page afford that 193-foot yacht?

Social networking websites like Facebook, Twitter and Google+ along with most other internet companies have multiple sources of revenue, but the bulk of it comes from digital advertising. With 3.02 billion active internet users, digital advertisements have become an incredibly effective solution for advertisers looking for a way to market their products and services. The larger the user base of a particular social media website, the more advertisers they attract. Such websites seek to generate a model to display advertisements in a way that doesn't obstruct the users from their activities while still making sure the ads are adequately visible. Striking the right balance determines whether the model is effective and is prone to attract marketers.

It is worth noting that credits sold for games like FarmVille and CityVille also

account for a significant portion of Facebook's revenue, although digital advertising still reigns supreme, standing at 82% of total revenue in the first quarter of 2012. Websites like LinkedIn also sell subscriber data. While that may not be valuable to other users, it is precious to advertisers seeking to maximize the effi-

digital advertising as well, although Hulu also obtains a substantial portion from its paid subscribers. Popular Youtube channels can receive compensation for placing ads in their videos after Youtube takes its 45% cut of the profits. Ever wondered how some of the more popular videos can afford such elaborate set ups and immac-

PewDiePie has the highest estimated income of \$8.47 million a year (which makes me rethink my life decisions).

What about apps like Whatsapp and Snapchat then? How do they make the big bucks? Why was Instagram worth \$1 billion to Facebook?

Honestly, other than through premium services and paid subscription, they are not profitable. Their objective is to garner enough popularity and inflate the number of users until they are acquired by someone who can monetize their assets. Back in April 2012, when Instagram was bought by Facebook, it had over 100 million users. That massive user-base and their data was what Facebook bought, that was worth \$1 billion. Although arguably the threat of competition also played a part in influencing said decision. For those curious about how your favorite tech company not covered in this article makes money, the following link neatly summarizes the sources of revenue of popular tech companies and presents them in a user-friendly way.

Source:

<http://rcs.seerinteractive.com/money>

Adit Hasan likes to dabble, making him jack of all trades, master of none. The only constants in his life are penguins and mangoes. Send mixtape to facebook.com/adit.hasan.3

cacy of their advertisements. Knowing what kinds of ads attract what kinds of users could prove vital in ensuring optimum engagement.

Search engines like Google and Bing and video sharing sites like Youtube and Hulu derive most of their profits from

ulate special effects? How that lunatic could afford to sacrifice a brand new iPhone 6 for a drop test? That's because top Youtube stars can earn six-figure incomes every year because of their enormous fan-base. In fact, according to YouTube analytics company SocialBlade,

