

Courage My Friends Podcast – Episode 6
COVID, Capitalism, Climate: The Way Forward

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ANNOUNCER: This is a rabble podcast network show.

VOICE: New voices in your head. It's radio...free...

[music transition]

COURAGE MY FRIENDS ANNOUNCER: COVID. Capitalism. Climate. Three storms have converged and we're all caught in the vortex.

STREET VOICE 1: How do I feed my kids and protect myself from this virus?

STREET VOICE 2: I'm safe here in Canada, but I'm worried about my family back home.

STREET VOICE 3: I'm scared about the future. When this pandemic is over, we still have the climate crisis to deal with.

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COURAGE MY FRIENDS ANNOUNCER: What brought us to this point? Can we go back to normal? Do we even want to?

Welcome to this special podcast series by rabble.ca and the Tommy Douglas Institute (at George Brown College) with the support of the Douglas-Coldwell Foundation.

VOICE 4: Courage my friends; 'tis not too late to build a better world.

COURAGE MY FRIENDS ANNOUNCER: This is the *Courage My Friends* podcast.

RESH: Welcome to the *Courage My Friends* podcast. I'm Resh Budhu, co-producer and host of this special 6-episode series and coordinator of the annual Tommy Douglas Institute at George Brown College.

In our 6th and final episode, *COVID, Capitalism, Climate: The Way Forward* eco-feminist, scientist, author and celebrated global climate justice leader, Dr. Vandana Shiva speaks with us from India in early May at the start of the devastating 2nd wave of Covid-19.

Our discussion takes us beyond borders to the global realities of this pandemic, a pandemic that is most acutely felt by low-income nations. From structural violence - fomented through centuries of conquest and colonization,

decades of exploitative structural adjustment, debt, climate destruction and continuing plunder by the Global North, its corporations and “philanthro-imperialists” - to the current vaccine apartheid; Dr. Shiva speaks to how the Global South stands at the forefront of the converging crises of COVID, Capitalism and Climate.

Named an Environmental Hero by Time Magazine in 2003, one of the five most powerful communicators of Asia by Asia Week and identified as one of the top Seven most Powerful Women on the Globe by Forbes Magazine in 2010, Dr. Shiva combines sharp intellectual enquiry with courageous activism. In 1982, she founded the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology in Dehra Dun, to address the most significant ecological and social issues of our times. In 1991, she founded **Navdanya**, a national movement to protect the diversity and integrity of living resources, especially native seed, the promotion of organic farming and fair trade. In 2004 she started Bija Vidyapeeth, an international college for sustainable living in Doon Valley in collaboration with Schumacher College, U.K.

Dr. Shiva has received numerous awards, including the Alternative Nobel Prize (Right Livelihood Award,), Order of the Golden Ark, the Global 500 Award of the United Nations, the Earth Day International Award, the Sydney Peace Prize, the Doshi Bridgebuilder Award, the Calgary Peace Prize, the MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity, and the International Environment Summit Award.

A prolific writer of over 40 publications, Dr. Shiva's most recent book is *Oneness Vs. The 1%: Shattering Illusions, Seeding Freedom*

In this age of borderless pandemics, climate destruction and global capitalism, is this a moment of reckoning and redress of the very systems that brought us to this point?

Where the well-being of one is intertwined with the well-being of all, can we finally engage in a meaningful solidarity within and also between nations? If so, can we begin to build regenerative economies that protect the planet and all of its peoples?

Here is my conversation with the incomparable Dr. Vandana Shiva.

RESH: Dr. Shiva. Thank you so much for joining us. I especially want to thank you for joining us at this particular moment. You are connecting with us from India that is now caught within a devastating second wave of this pandemic. So first, how are you?

VANDANA SHIVA: I am personally safe, I'm locked down in my childhood home in Dehradun, not in Delhi. But around me there's a lot of sickness. I

think at least 10 of my colleagues' families are all down, because this time around it's taking entire families. And a lot of people we know personally lost their lives; many after the second vaccine dose, which is the more problematic.

RESH: I can't imagine what it's like to be there. I know how saddening and how infuriating it is to watch what's happening there from half a world away.

VANDANA SHIVA: And to be living in it, Resh. We had a very severe lockdown when we'd lost very few people and we had just 500 infections. And at that time it was being called the disease of the rich that comes on airplanes. The lockdown made 400 million people lose their livelihoods. This particular - they just call it the second wave, but it's a new wave of a new beast. This virus is not like the old virus; it's affecting people very, very differently and much more fatally in organs that were not impacted. We did not see a rush for oxygen in the last round, the way we are seeing it now. So, something has mutated in a very serious way. And what has actually outraged me from the beginning of the COVID crisis is we've never had an authentic epidemiological analysis of it. Never. The medical experts have been put on the side. The Big Pharma, and those who they work with, are the ones who shape the narrative.

So we have been kept ignorant about what are the true causes and what are the real solutions. What are the real treatments.

RESH: There are so many elements that have converged in what we are seeing in India right now. What led to this particular point?

VANDANA SHIVA: From my reading and my own evolution, particularly my dedication to try and understand the processes of globalization, beginning with the "poison cartel", as I call them, wanting to own life. Pretending that they had created life. Wanting to own seed through patents. That is what really started me on my journey to save seeds. Reclaim seed as a Commons. Spread seeds of love and compassion and generosity.

Now the three agreements of the WTO, which have brought us to this crisis, added to the structural adjustment programs imposed by the World Bank and IMF in 1991. - In a strange way the neoliberal reforms are called "reforms" when they should really be called "recolonization" because that's what they really are.- What we saw then with the World Bank is destroy India's food sovereignty.

And one of the other aspects of what's happening in India is that for more than four months now, our small farmers have been on the streets defending their food sovereignty against the implementation of laws that were written in '91. The framework of these goals was written in '91 by the World Bank. They've

just now been implemented, because under the lockdown and under the COVID crisis they thought they wouldn't be farmers protests. But the farmers have managed to come out and sustain their movement for defending their right to livelihood and food sovereignty.

But then the World Trade Organization's Dunkel Draft was leaked in '91. And that's what started me on working on the details of the World Trade Organization agreements. What are the three parts of the agreement that are beyond the trade system, pre-WTO? First, intellectual property. Intellectual property on seeds, intellectual property on medicines. India was colonized and the British had a patent law that treated even imports of drugs as an infringement of the patents. And then it took 10 years, 20 years of democratic debate in the country. What should a sovereign country's patent laws look like? And this is how a 1970 patent law was framed, which said we cannot have product patents on medicine, only process patents. And on agriculture and seed you can't have any patents at all. Not only because you don't create this, but this is the basic livelihood of our people. Now I've dedicated myself to preventing patents on seed. But what I notice is three things related to the issue of patenting that have brought us to this crisis.

When a corporation like Monsanto owns GMO soya, it will push the planting of GMO soya because behind each planting is a royalty payment. It's today's rent collection. And this is why they will invade the Amazon. To grow more GMO soya and destroy the forest, which are contributing up to 20% of the greenhouse gases. But while Monsanto shaped the intellectual property, agribusiness shaped the agricultural agreement. No limits to interfering in your agriculture. No limits to dumping. No limits to forcing people to import. That is a treaty written by Cargill, the world's biggest green-trader, and they are the ones who traded the GMO soya, which is used primarily for biofuel and animal-feed and not for food at all. So of course we have climate change. We have hunger.

The invasion into forests has been recognized by the UN. That this is the main cause of a series of epidemics now, from Ebola to HIV to Zika to SARS to H1N1. These new diseases are really a result of invasions into forests. And then the invasion into bodies by a junk food industrial food system, which wrote the third treaty, the Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures, which was basically dismantling food safety and forcing unsafe, unhealthy food. All the research shows that in these 30 years of globalization, we've had an explosion of junk food, because this is subsidized, this is promoted. And the artificial myth of cheap food means the people who were already being punished through inequality and injustice are now depending on extremely unhealthy diets.

And I remember clearly in the first round, the big discussion was co-morbidities. Most of the people who died in New York City had co-morbidities. If you have diabetes, which is caused by a junk food diet and a chemical diet, you have a 9.2% increase in risk of dying. If you have cancer because of poisons in your food, you have a 7.6% increase in risks. And all of this added up to create the crisis of vulnerability. And another dimension of putting everything under trade liberalization markets for corporations, everything a commodity, is privatization of public systems. Inclusions of the Commons of the Seed, but the privatization of health.

That is the disaster we are witnessing in India. The dismantling of a generic drugs industry by assault, after assault, after assault by the multinationals; even though we have two clauses in our patent law - 3D, which says evergreening is not an invention and 3J says plants, animals and seeds are not inventions. And I had a lot to do with working with my parliamentary committee and shaping this. Big pharma lost again and again on their patent claims.

But if you notice now, not only had there been patents taken on the coronavirus. Now, what kind of mind would want to have a monopoly on a virus that's spreading disease? They had patents. 2 7 9 3 2 7 2 patent on the recombinant coronavirus, a genetically modified coronavirus. This is a big debate on gaining function research that makes these infections much, much more virulent. On testing, monopolies on testing. And then the big debate in WTO right now, the whole issue of patents on vaccines and denying people the right to survive; therefore, writing their death-knell.

This to me is genocide. Because genocide in the UN definition is deliberately harming and posing harm to a group of people. And when the Big Pharma deliberately causes harm, they are engaging in genocide. It's nothing less than a genocide.

RESH: This is the conversation that is more and more happening. Saying that this is indeed a genocide; that this is indeed a crime against humanity. And this really sort of evokes what you have written about, even before the pandemic, that we are caught within an anti-life economy. And you were speaking about the anti-life economy as happening within that intersection between capitalism and climate, in terms of what our present economic systems do to both people and planet. So could you just elaborate more on what you meant by an anti-life economy?

VANDANA SHIVA: You know, I've never found a day when capitalism was born. I have found a process in which it was grafted. And that process is colonialism. Basically creating a civilizing mission. Giving yourself the right to invade other countries. And then declaring the land, the wealth, the

economies as yours. And collecting rents and revenues from it. This is what colonialism was. All that the so-called capitalist theory did, was formalize what had been happening under colonialism. And let me give you a few examples of this.

First of all, colonialism was about commerce. But commerce by force, commerce with military might. And commerce with a letter patent - you know, it was a patent in involved! Columbus was given a letter patent, which according to the King and Queen, they had the power to do this from the Pope who got it from God directly. And the difference between that colonization and this colonization is the billionaires are the gods. The billionaires are the Popes; they write the religions. The billionaires are the Kings and the Queens. They rule the world. And they are also the merchant adventurers whose private jets are flying around the world, as everyone else's mobility has been stopped.

The first aspect of colonization, declaring superiority- a constructed superiority - along race, along gender, around religion. All of these problems we face individually, separately in a fragmented way, are borne of a justification to rule through a civilizing mission based on an assumption - false assumption - of superiority and the violence that went with it.

The second false assumption is basically of improving things. When you look at the shift from Terra Madre, the Earth as living, to Terra Nullius, the Earth as an empty land to be colonized. If you look at Locke writing during the Enclosures of the Commons in England, but pretending to justify the takeover of lands of the Indigenous people of the Americas, he's talking about them not improving the land. And then he goes on to say, value is created when you basically colonize. But it's not the work of the woman or the peasant or the horse or the mule that creates the value. It's the spiritual labor. Can you imagine how false and fictitious the entire theory is? The spiritual labor of the one who owns the capital, who owns the man, the woman, the slave, the serf, the mule, the bullock.

And then you have Descartes defining us as living human beings. We're part of the Earth. As mere machines; mindless in ability to think. And he had a mind and his mind existed outside the body. So there was a colonizing of the human being. There was a colonizing of our bodies. And with it went to the entire theory that human beings don't create value. And this is of course behind the whole extraction of surplus value. And again, the fiction of capital creating them. Capital is a totally dead construct, can't create anything. Or Bacon who defined the masculine birth of time and said, nature must be subjugated and tortured. So that smart men, masculine men can rule the world.

You know what Bacon was also doing at the same time? Torturing witches. And there's such an intimate connection between three things that we don't see together - The colonization of the South. The burning of witches. And the enclosures of the Commons and the depositization of England and Europe. This was all part of one process. And this is why the foundations of whatever theories we have of knowledge, of science, of technology, of economy, of commerce - Adam Smith actually writes a whole book, saying we we are born with competition. My God, if a baby was born in competition, it will have to kill the mother, wouldn't it? Cooperation is the way life is.

That's why I talk about this as an anti-life ideology that has been kept in place by force for over 500 years. And now at the time where the pandemic should be making us put life and care and mutuality and cooperation at center stage, that's precisely the time where this anti-life philosophy is being put on fast-forward. And basically we are being made to believe that the only thing that is safe is a computer screen. Everything living can spread a contagion.

RESH: It seems that COVID has really triggered a disaster that was waiting to happen through 500 years of colonization, through the structural violence that has been left in its wake through 40 or 50 years of neoliberalism.

This podcast is really looking and has been looking at this convergence of Covid. Capitalism and Climate. And I just want to quote the Navdanya International Report that you also co-authored, Gates to a Global Empire Over Seed, Food, Health, Knowledge, and the Earth: "Thanks to the coronavirus crisis, the rot that existed in our current world structures came further into evidence. Compounded with an already ongoing climate and ecological crisis and inequalities, we found ourselves at the boiling point of multiple pre-existing world problems."

And you very much speak to this, especially in what's happening - Yes, within the inequality that we're seeing within nations. But also, as you say, the inequality we're seeing between nations, especially between the Global North and the Global South. And this really seems to be crystallized within the grossly unequal access to vaccines. Could you, speak about what is happening in terms of this particular struggle over who gets the vaccine and who doesn't?

VANDANA SHIVA: Well, on the issue of the access to vaccines, I remember right from the beginning and particularly at the Doha Ministerial, we had lost 400,000 farmers. We have lost 400,000 farmers to suicide because of debt linked to GMO BT cotton.- In most places 85% of the suicides are in the BT cotton areas. And so I had brought the suicides issue to Doha and the people fighting against the Big Pharma monopoly on HIV/AIDS, had brought the right of access to medicine. And it was an Indian company that had offered

retrovirals at \$200 a treatment, whereas the patented option was \$2,500. The company is called Ciplar - very, very, very enlightened company, came out of our Freedom Movement and the fight against patent monopolies. The South African people were sued by the Big Pharma for importing this. And this went all the way to the WTO debate. And then there was so-called concession made, but it wasn't truly a concession. It said governments could buy the patented HIV treatment and subsidize it for people. So the corporation still got the super profits.

What's happening right now is first and foremost - The race for vaccines started even before the vaccines were there. Never before have we had such rushed introductions. And all vaccines have been given emergency approval without adequate safety tests.

The two from America, the Pfizer and Moderna are actually RNA vaccines. They are based on genetic modification. They talk about it being a messenger, but the messenger modifies through its message. And these are the most aggressive patent-holders. From what I was reading, Pfizer has \$3.5 billion profits in just three months. And meantime, they're trying to get access to markets.

India was the biggest vaccine-producer of the world, till this gold-rush started. And we had already given approval to two vaccines, Covaxin and Covishield. And then the threats started. And sadly the Serum Institute is being forced to move out because of these threats.

The intellectual property debate is becoming a total block to any kind of justice, any kind of access. And that's why we are seeing new movements emerge all over the place. But this issue of intellectual property is an issue that is at the heart of WTO. And I want to remind you that in WTO there is a clause that says, four years after the coming into force of WTO - which is 95 - so by 99, there should have been a review of the World Trade Organization Intellectual Property Agreements. And there are mountains of submissions from the South of how you must have waivers under public health emergency. How must not allow patents on seeds. And you must not allow bio-piracy. The United States has singularly blocked this review, which is a mandatory review. And sadly right now today, a person who is very much part of the trade establishment of the United States has been appointed as Deputy Director General of the World Trade Organization.

So an organization created for recolonization is putting its foot fast-forward to make today's denial a denial a double problem. First you spread, in irresponsible ways, these new pandemics, because of a globalized neoliberal limitless greed system. And then you deny people treatment. This is what's happening right now. And, you know, instead of governments being able to

take care of their national health systems, they're having to fight patent battles at WTO. And that's not all. The Big Pharma and Big Biotech and Bill Gates, with his digital genomic mapping, is trying to knock down whatever South Africa, India, Brazil, Argentina had gained at the WTO in the Trips Agreement.

RESH: And we're seeing this in terms of vaccine hoarding by some of the world's wealthiest nations. And even our own nation of Canada, that is a wealthy nation took vaccines from the Covax scheme. - It was the only of the G7 nations that did that.- On the other side, we're hearing that this is resulting more and more in what's being described as a "vaccine apartheid" between high income and low income countries. I understand that a number of Global South nations won't be fully vaccinated until at least 2023.

So where is the logic in that ? We understand by this point that the virus anywhere is the virus everywhere. That if the virus is permitted to grow because of poverty or bad policy - most likely both - in any part of the world, this will eventually spread and impact everyone; North, South, rich, poor. So what is the logic in perpetuating the very inequality that sooner or later endangers us all?

Oxfam has called this the Inequality Virus. It seems nihilistic. It seems like a self-defeating madness. How would you explain this? I know I'm asking you to put on the cap of capitalists, but I think you probably understand, or at least have heard their arguments a great deal. So how would this be explained?

VANDANA SHIVA: Well, I can only explain it through the virus of greed combined with a virus of impunity and of indifference. Greed, because you started to take patents before you have the vaccine. Impunity, because you've put in place systems that you can never be put on trial no matter what injury and harm you cause. And indifference, because you just don't care. - For those who get troubled by thinking, oh my gosh, but people are dying.

You know we are living in times where the Big Tech giant - there's a handful of them and they're individuals. They're rogues. They stole software and they stole programs and they stole economies. The Jeff Bezos and the Bill Gates and the Zuckerbergs, they basically have said again and again and again - Zuckerberg said 99% of people are useless, because in a world of a digital economy they think the algorithms will run the show. They basically see most humanity as useless. And for them getting rid of a large chunk of humanity is part of their thinking. Disposability of large numbers of human beings. And then the beginning of neoliberalism I used to say, the old slavery needed the slave. The new slavery can get rid of the slave.

Of course, that whole digital assault has made this go much, much, much faster. The place where they are wrong - and this is what years and years and years of my own experience and studies have shown - they assume

determinism. They assume certainty. They assume perfect engineering and perfect control. But every time they create these invasive colonizing systems, they create new problems. And normally the pattern has been, they leave it as a problem created by their victims.

I'll give you two examples. So the World Bank created the water crisis by forcing India to have the Green Revolution, chemical farming and mining our water, because chemical-farmed crops and -bred crops use 10 times more water. Then it writes a report, India's Turbulent Water Future. It's created a problem in Punjab. It's created a problem in Maharashtra. Created a problem here. It's created a problem there. In everyone of those places I have studied, it was caused by the World Bank. So they have a very, very good way to say it's caused by the stupidity of the Third World; they can't think they can't manage, they can't organize. And sadly, that is part of the narrative that's being created by Big Pharma about India too.

What India is going through is a huge tragedy. And what India is going through is an irresponsibility of governance. But to then turn around and say, we'll take over and we will trash every one of your Pharma companies, your generic drugs. We will trash every one of your vaccine makers, till our intellectual property monopolies are accepted is exactly how Monsanto took over the seed sector. Monsanto had not made a single seed. But it took the patents. And then it attacked companies till it defeated them. And got them so fed up with court cases that they said; Okay, you want to take us over, take us over. And then the web of Monsanto group. Today Bill Gates controls the seeds of the world. So they trash you and trash you and trash you, until the monopolies are established.

That's why we have to rise together and not just around vaccines. The patent monopoly question is affecting our food systems. Patent monopoly question will force us - If 30 years of neoliberal globalization created sickness and disease and chronic epidemics; the billionaires, the tech billionaires, Silicon Valley is finding in fake food made in lab, the biggest promise in a future where - of course they will have their organic food and they will have real food - but the rest of us ordinary human beings, who are mere machines, should be eating lab-made food. And it will be subsidized. And they'll have a monopoly. There are 14 patents on Impossible Burger. So it is time to wake up to the patent monopoly question in seed, in food, in medicine, in vaccines, and really fight for ,not just justice, but de-colonization. Because nothing less than a deep de-colonization is going to protect humanity for the future.

RESH: And is this what you mean when you speak of the need for a pandemic solidarity?

VANDANA SHIVA: When I talk about a pandemic solidarity, I mean, first that we need to see the multiple pandemics right now. The pandemic of COVID. But there's a pandemic of hunger. There's a pandemic of unemployment and shutting down of small local businesses. There's a pandemic of heartlessness and fear.

You know families are not taking bodies. And interestingly at a time where there's so much divide and rule and so much hate, Muslim brothers and Muslim strangers are taking bodies and doing the rituals for the Hindus. The Sikhs who have always done a langar for food - you know, the Sikh Gurdwaras are the most amazing places for the culture of sharing - they're doing langars of oxygen. Can you imagine? That is where we need to counter the pandemic of indifference with a resurgence of solidarity. A resurgence of a fight for justice and the new awareness that every harm we cause to the Earth, we cause harm to ourselves. That the health of the planet and our health are not two separate healths.

And there is no possibility to constantly invade into the last forest and not expect pandemics to grow. There is no way we can keep chopping down trees and expect the net-zero nonsense of - you know, they've created... they first commodified food. Now they want to commodify carbon through carbon markets and carbon farming. And I say, no, you got to pay farmers the fair price and get rid of the rules of unfair trade that prevents farmers from having a full share of what the consumer pays. Only 5% of what a consumer pays is reaching a farmer under corporate rule. The rest is taken by the traders, by the Walmarts, by the Amazons, by the Cargills, by the Pepsis.

Pepsi, you know, sells you a 20 gram pack of chips. A ten gram pack of chips gives you obesity and diabetes and leaves nothing for the farmer - suicides happening among potato farmers. And then they sued Indian farmers, \$10 million each for saving potato seeds. But we have this in our law. I wrote the law with my government. Farmers have been the breeders and they have a right to save seed and no law can take this right away. And Pepsi sued the farmers. And when I sent my book with all the details of the laws to the lawyer fighting for the farmers, they were forced to withdraw their case.

So we need a new solidarity. And the pandemic solidarity is a solidarity with the Earth. Solidarity between different sectors. We have had a comfortable time when governments were responsible, when governments were welfare governments. When the governments were democratic governments. You know it was fine for labour to fight as labour, for women to fight as women, for children to defend their rights. But today all the rights are being trampled on in the name of the market.

And the other thing that's happening is while the pandemic's going on, there's a green-washing of a rate I haven't seen it. And I've lived through a lot of green-washing in my lifetime. But this green-washing of net zero will continue to pollute. But your forest and your land will be our sinks. And we will decide the fake accounting and the fake science through which we will colonize you again.

We are calling this the "new carbon slavery". At this point, we need to be awake. There's living carbon that gives us food. Living carbon in the soil, that is the soil organisms. Every leaf on this planet is living carbon. We need a new solidarity with the Earth. We need a new solidarity with Indigenous people. And most importantly, wherever Indigenous cultures were colonized; we need to say not only were they treated unfairly, but at this point humanity needs a leadership of Indigenous cultures. The leadership of women. The leadership of working people to bring us out of these multiple crises, which have only one outcome - Extinction of humanity and collapse of ecosystems. And it's not a surprise that those who have brought us to this brink, they cannot see that this is the living planet. There is no Planet B. They think they have so much power, they can green Mars. They think they have so much money, that money will turn into water and plants on this desertified planet. And they call this the new planetary civilization. No, this is colonialism continued. You colonized other lands; now you want to colonize other planets. But colonization must end and liberation of all life, liberation of all people is the solidarity we have to create.

RESH: And in speaking of this, what's happening now - and as you said, this pandemic solidarity is really about building connections. Building connections to each other, to the earth, between nations, as a counter to the almost deliberate fragmentation that has happened under neoliberalism; which again, this pandemic, as you have so powerfully spoken of, has really spotlighted. The system that for decades, or longer for centuries, has prioritized profit over people, has weakened socially responsible and responsive government and has routinely handed more and more of our public resources over to the private interests of the super rich. And again, you have spoken of the growing power of these billionaires, who have been doing remarkably well during the pandemic. They have collectively made over \$4 trillion just during this pandemic.

In your book, *The Oneness vs. the 1%*, you speak though, of this role that billionaires have also taken on, in terms of philanthropy. As they have helped to further marginalize and impoverish the poor and the poorest in our world, they have also taken on this mantle of philanthropy. And you refer to them as "philanthro-imperialists". Can you tell us what is a "philanthro-imperialist"?

VANDANA SHIVA: A philanthro-imperialist is an imperialist who pretends to be giving when they're actually grabbing. If the civilizing mission of the first colonialism was religion; the civilizing mission of philanthro-imperialism is technology as religion and pushing unnecessary technologies. For example, GMOs. They have absolutely failed. But Bill Gates is financing golden rice, when there are hundreds of ways to get Vitamin A-rich food. And if we weren't spring round-up and killing the plants that bring us Vitamin A. Gates add one is his dream. He has taken over the public systems that were created for the Green Revolution, the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research and their seed-banks. And he's now trying to converge the IT sector and the biotechnology sector and the Big Farm sector, into one. To do in a cleverer way what Monsanto did.

Now, the reason I took on Monsanto was they said, we've made a new organism. I said, no, you only shot a new gene and a gene doesn't make an organism. In fact, your gene is a toxic. It's a round of resistant or a BT toxic gene. So in fact, you're a polluter. You are not a creator. And that is the basis of so many of my legal struggles. And most of the time, whenever we faced Monsanto in court, we've defeated them because their whole structure was based on lies.

Now basically what is Gates doing? He is taking the seeds of the world by giving a tiny amount of money to the CGIAR system. And then taking all these seeds and the exiddu collections then have the passport data. They said, this is a drought resistant crop or this is salt resistant, flood resistant variety, it's all there. Then they run these through computer systems and do a genomic map. And just like the colonizers made maps of land, he is making genomic maps and taking patents. He is the one leading digital genomic mapping. And he is on record to say that regulation comes in the way. So you have to destroy regulation that protects biodiversity, protects public health, protects people's livelihoods. He has spent huge amounts of money trying to deregulate Europe's biosafety to push his gene edited crops, which are GMOs through.

This is philanthro-imperialism. Where you give a little bit of money, take over society's entire public endowments, turn them into your profit system and your monopoly and impose your deregulation on the world so that you are literally the only law-maker left in the world. This is philanthro-imperialism. And this is the time, this is the reason - you know, we organized the tribunal to try Monsanto for crimes, again, because I noticed my Argentinian friends were fighting them in Argentina. Sri Lankans were trying to ban round-up. Percy Schmeiser of Canada was fighting them on the patent issue - you know, they had sued Percy and there's a beautiful film out called "Percy" now and I'm glad that people have gone on record. He is no more, but at least his life's contribution are there. - All of this was so fragmented. And I said, if we don't

bring it all together on one platform and put Monsanto on trial, people will not know the scale of harm. So we organized the Monsanto tribunal.

I think it is time. It is time to organize Nuremberg-style trials for the ecocide and genocide that's on the way. And that means we have to do serious homework to understand the processes, to understand the processes of power and profits at any cost. To understand the processes by which our governments and democracies are being hijacked. And instead of being useful to us, are becoming the instruments through which the new colonization is taking place. It is a Nuremberg moment for humanity. Not just because people are dying, but also the crimes are being perpetrated with the assumption that the criminals will never be touched.

Humanity needs to rise in its ingenuity of the search for freedom. The search for sovereignty. The search for solidarity to say, we will find new ways to put you to trial.

RESH: So this is a moment for redress and justice.

VANDANA SHIVA: Absolutely!

RESH: And it's also a moment for a reset, because it's hard not to realize that this could also be an opportunity to create something better, a better new normal, and you speak of a "circular economy". Could you tell us what you mean by a "circular economy"?

VANDANA SHIVA: Colonialism and the commerce it gives rise to, which is called capitalism, was basically an extractive economy. It took from nature, reduced nature from being a living renewable system and turned nature into a supply of raw materials, of iron ore and minerals and logs and timber and hydroelectric dams and uranium. It was just a deposit of raw materials. And then extract from people who actually create value. The value they create through the illusions of the spiritual labor of the capitalist.

For me, circular economies are a) recognizing that we owe it to the Earth to give back. This in ecological agriculture language is called the Law of Return. You've got to give back. Got to give back. If you don't give back organic matter to the soil, you will have desertification. You don't get back organic matter to the soul, there is no way to draw down that excess carbon and nitrogen from the atmosphere. There is no way. Only the healing of the cycle. So, the Law of Return and circular economies are based on the awareness that life is about recycling and regeneration. But it is also giving back to society; because the architecture of colonialism, it's commerce, neoliberal economics with its fakeness and now the new economics that's being created through things like net-zero through the World Economic Forum's Great Reset, which is very different from what I think you mean by the reset. What is

being put in place is a continuation of extraction. And we need a giving back to society. We need a giving back to Nature. That is what creates ecological sustainability on the one hand and social economic justice on the other.

RESH: In our last couple of minutes, Dr. Shiva to know what to do is one thing, but to have the will to do it is another. What do you say to people who want change, but are feeling overwhelmed by the enormity of this moment of COVID and capitalism and the climate crisis? What would you say to them?

VANDANA SHIVA: Well, what I would share with them is the way I have always addressed issues that look too big to address. Like when I heard this poison cartel talk about owning patenting seed and pushing GMOs; saying there will not be a single seed that will be left in farmers' hands by the year 2000 and all seeds will be GMOs and all seeds will be patented. And that's when I thought, how do you deal with this biological imperialism over life? And I thought with the deeper reflection of the seed that I can begin with saving seeds. And take on the empire with a little seed.

I think each of us has to find our seed. Because in an interconnected world where everything is connected, your little actions are connected. And then, you know, I did my PhD in Canada on the foundations of quantum theory. And the beauty of quantum theory is it makes you wake up to the fact that we are not unthinking beings in a thoughtless universe. We are not things isolated from each other. We are non-separable. And there's non-locality. And what is called in physics "action at a distance" Actions that you engage in are systemic actions, if they are done with the awareness and consciousness of the system. You don't begin by taking on the system. You understand the system and create another system. And the reason I have dedicated so much of my life to saving seeds, protecting biodiversity, growing Gardens of Hope. - and I invite all your listeners to start a Garden of Hope. It could be a little pot on your windowsill. It could be your backyard. It could be a community garden. There's a lovely Canadian singer who says, turn the parking lots into gardens; first they took our garden and turned them into parking lots. Now's the time to turn the parking lots back into gardens.

And why is this important? I don't mean it in a trivial way. If we are seeing a convergence of crises, as you've mentioned; the COVID crisis linked then to the chronic disease crisis. The livelihood crisis and the meaning crisis with it and the climate crisis.

Now that little Garden of Hope is a climate solution, because millions of gardens can draw down all that carbon. You can be a climate-solver through earth-care. Growing your own food. Growing food locally. Reclaiming your food sovereignty. Not only are you growing health; you're growing resilience and immunity. And you're building immunity and resilience against the future

system of farming without farmers, food without farms and societies without democracy.

So the Gardens of Hope to me, is growing democracy. Is growing community. Is growing health. Is growing solidarity. Is growing love.

RESH: This podcast is named for the famous quote by great Canadian Tommy Douglas who told us, Courage, my friends; 'tis not too late to build a better world. And your words, Dr. Shiva, your activism, writing, and global leadership really truly exemplify this message. It has been a pleasure and a privilege. Thank you, Dr. Shiva, and please stay safe.

VANDANA SHIVA: Thank you. Thank You.

RESH: That was eco-feminist, scientist, author and global climate justice leader, Dr. Vandana Shiva.

Thank you for joining us for this very special 6-part series where we have explored vital issues in the intersection of COVID, Capitalism and Climate. The conversation however is far from over. And as we continue to move forward into an uncertain future at this very unique moment in our collective history, keep an ear and an eye out for the return of the Courage My Friends podcast.

I'm Resh Budhu, host of today's episode of the *Courage My Friends* podcast. Thanks for listening.

COURAGE MY FRIENDS ANNOUNCER: This special 6-part series, the Courage My Friends podcast, has been a co-production between rabble.ca and the Tommy Douglas Institute at George Brown College, with the support of The Douglas Coldwell Foundation. Produced by Victoria Fenner of rabble.ca and Resh Budhu of the Tommy Douglas Institute and TDI planning committee: Ashley Booth, Chandra Budhu, John Caffrey and Michael Long.

For more info about the Tommy Douglas Institute and this series, please visit georgebrown.ca/TommyDouglasInstitute.

This has been the Courage My Friends podcast.
Thank you for joining us.