

## **Resisting imposed metaphors of value: Vandana Shiva's role in supporting Third World agriculture**

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### **Abstract**

Vandana Shiva, engagierte Physikerin und Umweltaktivistin aus Indien, war eine der sechs Vortragenden zum Thema 'Respekt für die Erde', der berühmten BBC-Rundfunkvorträge, "Reith Lectures", im Jahr 2000 (Shiva 2000a). In diesem Beitrag werden ausgewählte Aspekte von Shivas Arbeit anhand von linguistischen Textanalysen mit Hilfe computererstellter Konkordanzan untersuchen. Shiva erörtert, wie eine nachhaltige Lebensweise in der dritten Welt im Namen der Modernisierung und Wissenschaft zerstört wird. In ihren Vorträgen, Aufsätzen und Büchern analysiert Shiva die Metaphorik, die der sogenannten modernen Landwirtschaft zugrundeliegt. Sie belegt, wie dieser Prozess nur den westlichen Großkonzernen, die ihn vorantreiben, zugute kommt. Shivas Ansatz wird auf zwei Ebenen betrachtet. Zuerst wird eine faktische und politische Analyse darüber ersichtlich, wie ländliche Traditionen in Indien abgewertet werden und wie den Menschen zu helfen ist, sich gegen diesen Prozess zur Wehr zu setzen. Auf einer zweiten Meta-Ebene macht Shiva eine kritische Bestandsaufnahme von den Mythen, die in Zusammenhang mit neoliberalen Projekten und 'Lösungen' formuliert werden. Wie in der kritischen Diskursanalyse belegt Shiva hierbei die Rolle der Sprache. Insbesondere werden sich gegenseitig ausschließende Metaphern für WERT oder REICHTUMSSCHÖPFUNG ('Marktkonkurrenzfähigkeit und Markteffizienz' versus 'Nachhaltigkeit, Kooperation und Überleben') aufgezeigt. Es wird gezeigt, wie die von außen aufoktroierten Weltanschauungen als Ursache der ökologischen Katastrophen, die gleichzeitig gesellschaftliche Katastrophen für Kleinbauern in Indien und anderswo werden, fungieren.

Vandana Shiva is a committed scientist and environmental activist from India. As a physicist she has played a leading role in an Indian movement called "Navdanya" which is working for the conservation of biodiversity. She is Director of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology, and Ecology and also a Recipient of the Alternative Nobel Prize. She uses her analytical ability to uncover the semantic engineering that goes on when global corporations colonize and destroy traditional agriculture in the Third World. This is evident in her 2000 BBC Reith lecture (Shiva 2000a). It is a sustained critique of how global corporations, with the active support of many politicians, are forcing genetic engineering and commercial agriculture on rural communities. It was part of the "Millennium" BBC Reith lecture series entitled "Respect for the Earth". Chris Patten talked on governance, Tom Lovejoy on biodiversity, John Browne on business, Gro Harlem Brundtland on health & population, Vandana Shiva on poverty & globalisation and His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales on sustainable development. The Reith lectures are an influential, annual BBC institution, named after the first director of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), Sir John Reith. Bertrand Russell gave the first Reith lecture over 50 years ago. They are broadcast on the BBC World Service radio frequencies in addition to the domestic transmission and are now also published on the Internet. In her lecture Shiva denounces the eradication of a sustainable way of life in the name of modernization and science. Shiva's work (2000b and 2002) uncovers the metaphors and the models underlying the so-called modernization of agriculture. This is designed to benefit no one but the western corporations which are pursuing it. This process parallels one already far developed in Europe (Trampe 2001). Shiva's approach can be read on two levels. First we have the factual, objective analysis of how rural traditions in India are being dismantled and the call to resist physically and politically. Then, on the meta-analytical level, Shiva critically delineates how the myths associated with neo-liberal projects and 'solutions' are being formulated. From a critical discourse analytical standpoint it is significant to note that Shiva is a discerning observer of how language is employed in this process. As Shiva (2000a) says: "The global free trade economy has become a threat to sustainability and the very survival of the poor and other species is at stake not just as a side effect or as an exception but in a systemic way through a restructuring of our worldview at the most fundamental level. Sustainability, sharing and survival is being economically outlawed in the name of market competitiveness and market efficiency."

## 1. Statement of the intention of her lecture: an argument

The phrase “restructuring of our worldview at the most fundamental level” recalls the ‘structural’ metaphorical level and the well-known truism uttered by Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 157): “[W]hether in national politics or in everyday interaction, people in power get to impose their metaphors”. This is what her (2000a) Reith lecture goes on to demonstrate. That a worldview is in part a metaphorical conceptual system seems to be beyond doubt. The interaction between cognitive systems and language to construct such features of human existence is likewise beyond dispute nowadays.

Generalizing her specific theme on poverty and globalisation Shiva states the intention of her lecture:

“It is experiences such as these which tell me that we are so wrong to be smug about the new global economy. I will *argue* in this lecture that it *is time to stop and think about* the impact of globalisation on the lives of ordinary people. This is vital to achieve sustainability.”

The first two pivotal sentences capture the gist and mode of operating she sets out to pursue in her lecture. In stark summary: she sets out to *argue/stop/and think about something*. Later she reiterates the gist of her lecture and underlines her approach:

“I want to argue here tonight that we need to urgently bring the planet and people back into the picture.”

Again we may note the verbs of saying and inert cognition used: *argue/bring people back into the picture*. They are a key to her intention and also the clue to her achievement.

## 2. On the nature of Shiva’s achievement

This paper investigates how language is used in argument and how Shiva actively focuses on this very feature. The ‘content’ of her Reith lecture (2000a) does not necessarily, or even mainly, treat facts about the world. It seems instead to be about *ideas*. She uses terms like *myth*, *worldview*, *view*, *claim* and others. Her Reith lecture is peppered with verbs of reporting, saying and related modes. Her interest is equally directed at the linguistic structure of the ideas which she is criticizing. The actions which she is opposing, she suggests, are linked to worldviews. Hence to combat them we need to re-formulate or unpack some of the semantic processing that is involved. The next step is to present counter-concepts, alternative metaphors and a different view of the world.

Shiva manifests a critical capacity to see through language employed in the service of industrial and commercial agriculture. She uncovers the ideologies and values which specific terminological or lexical choices encode. Shiva's lecture is a sustained, committed and very eloquent analysis of what the impact of globalisation means for the poor peasants and especially the women of India. She begins her lecture with a very dramatic opening paragraph:

“Recently, I was visiting Bhatinda in Punjab because of an epidemic of farmers' suicides. Punjab used to be the most prosperous agricultural region in India. Today every farmer is in debt and despair. Vast stretches of land have become water-logged desert. And as an old farmer pointed out, even the trees have stopped bearing fruit because heavy use of pesticides have killed the pollinators - the bees and butterflies.”

The restructuring of the worldview on the part of multi-national companies like Monsanto and Cargill affects these people. It results in the ecological degradation and destruction of their natural resources and hence the material bases of their lives. Shiva's is an exposition which is unusual for such Reith lectures: it is committed, it represents the interests of women, the poor, the down-trodden. She is not oblique and evasive in pinpointing where the causal agent for certain developments are concerned. She names names, for example Cargill and Monsanto. We find five instances of Monsanto and two of Cargill. The concordances for Monsanto and Cargill allow us to rapidly access the critical points she makes about the actions of these global multinationals. She makes her partiality and partisanship clear. The other Reith lecturers all represent the rich and powerful and claim to be speaking for the whole world. Unlike them Shiva is direct and polemical. She says uncomfortable things, calls a spade a spade and unearths the hypocritical stance of the vertically integrated global pesticide, seed and biotechnology corporation, Monsanto, as in this passage:

“***The recent announcement*** that Monsanto is giving away the rice genome for free ***is misleading***, because Monsanto has never ***made a commitment*** that it will never patent rice varieties or any other crop varieties.”

Shiva critiques the ‘announcement’ (a reporting verbal noun) made by Monsanto. She questions the very language used by Monsanto and its intention, calling it ‘misleading’. She also interrogates the related verb of saying ‘commit’ calling into question the sincerity of the commitment!

### **3. Conceptual analysis in Vanadana Shiva's writing**

What do we call it when in addition to arguing a case writers start to scrutinize the language used especially by their (supposed) opponents? Is it meta-discourse analysis? Looking at the terms used? Critiquing the terminology, the wording chosen? In Shiva's work we encounter semantic analysis as well as objective political and scientific reasoning. In Shiva (2000a) this can be seen by highlighting how often she talks about 'defining' or by focusing on a number of lexical items which can serve to uncover the 'linguistic' and 'conceptual' praxis she can be shown to be engaged in. Taking issue with definitions, sense, meaning and the 'values' assigned to terms, words and concepts is to contest, argue against and to present alternatives. Fairclough (1992: 122) discusses a related and complementary activity:

“Metadiscourse is a peculiar form of manifest intertextuality where the text producer distinguishes different levels within her own text, and distances herself from some level of the text, treating the distanced level as if it were another, external, text.”

One way this is achieved is to paraphrase or reformulate an expression or to mark sections as being metaphorical. Fairclough comments: “Metadiscourse implies that the speaker is situated above or outside her own discourse, and is in a position to control and manipulate it.” This basically is what a major portion of Shiva's Reith lecture is about.

For our purposes a convenient way of tapping into this metadiscourse analysis took the 'as' concordance (Table 1) as a starting point. This uncovered a number of verbs of saying, reporting or inert cognition like 'define', 'characterise', 'promote', 'project', 'treat', 'count', 'perceive' and 'redefine' as the concordance for 'as' shows.

**Table 1: Concordance for ‘as’**

by the seed merchants	as	"white gold", which were supposed
local and handmade	as	a health hazard. Human hands are
<b>defined</b> in such a way	as	to make the food production on
are <b>characterised</b>	as	unproductive because they produce
<b>constantly promoted</b>	as	the only alternative available for
to <b>be projected</b>	as	creation. Take the case of the
are <b>treated</b>	as	'non-productive' and
itself is <b>counted</b>	as	growth. And women themselves
do it and is <b>projected</b>	as	dependent on global agribusiness
are <b>defined</b>	as	"wealth creators", something has
are being <b>defined</b>	as	the worst contaminants, and work
are being <b>perceived</b>	as	parasites, to be exterminated for
theft is <b>defined</b>	as	creation, and saving and sharing
seed is <b>defined</b>	as	theft of intellectual property.
has been <b>redefined</b>	as	a crime. This makes us all poor.
<b>defines</b> pollination	as	"theft by bees" and claims

What the narrow concordance does not reveal can be shown by consulting the text more closely. In the broader co-text of the first instance (1.) we find ‘referred to’ just to the left of ‘by’.

- (1) “pulses and millets and paddy have been lured by seed companies to buy hybrid cotton seeds **referred to** by the seed merchants **as "white gold"**”

While for the second instance (2.) ‘defining’ can be found five words to the left of ‘local’.

- (2) “A global monoculture is being forced on people by **defining** everything that is fresh, local and handmade **as a health hazard.**”

If we now look more closely at the concordance for ‘define’ (Table 1), it is clear how Shiva takes issue with the way certain concepts and propositions are interpreted by corporations. Here Shiva engages in the meta-communicative, ‘metadiscourse’ or meta-linguistic level of analysis (see Fairclough 1992: 122). The preponderance of this dimension in Shiva’s (2000a)

lecture is most striking. I have located numerous instances of this meta-level. Running through Shiva's work is a sharp insight into the fact that *what people say* or the propositions they advance are closely inter-related, if not always dependent on *how* they say things, or how they package their concepts, *what words they choose* to encapsulate their thoughts and ideas, right down to the very definitions of the words they are using.

**Table 2: Concordance for 'defined'**

food. <b>Yields</b> have been	defined	in such a way as to make the
and <b>speculators</b> are	defined	as "wealth creators",
hands are being	defined	as the worst contaminants,
of basmati, <b>theft</b> is	defined	as creation, and saving and
and <b>sharing seed</b> is	defined	as theft of intellectual
A worldview that	defines	<b>pollination</b> as "theft by bees"
forced on people by	defining	<b>everything that is fresh,</b>

A closer examination of the broader co-text of these items brings out the systematic fashion in which Shiva analyzes the conflicts of interest between the rural agriculture of India and global corporations propagating 'modernization'.

Passage (3.) skilfully takes issue with the term 'yield'. Shiva argues for the re-definition in an ecologically sustainable fashion of this term as the highlighted elements show.

- (3) "Planting only one crop in the entire field as a monoculture will of course increase its individual yield. Planting multiple crops in a mixture will have low yields of individual crops, but will have high total output of food. **Yields have been defined in such a way as to make the food production on small farms by small farmers disappear.**"

Passage (4.) stakes a claim for the validity of human labour as paramount in the agricultural process against the chemical and machine-driven process being thrust upon the third world producers.

- (4) "Human hands are being defined as the worst contaminants, and work for human hands is being outlawed, to be replaced by machines and chemicals bought from global corporations."

Passage (5.) deals with ‘wealth creation’ addressing directly the conceptual and categorial level. This turns out to be a central issue in Shiva’s writing and will be examined more closely below.

- (5) “More food is being traded while the poor are consuming less. When growth increases poverty, when real production becomes a negative economy, **and speculators are defined as "wealth creators", something has gone wrong with the concepts and categories of wealth and wealth creation.**”

Passage (6.) discusses definition issues and addresses in two instances the structural metaphorical level of wealth creation. Shiva acknowledges that production of sense is taking place here. Firstly with wealth being metamorphosed or metaphorized as patents—a clear case of ‘theft’ for Shiva! Secondly, by contrast, the sharing of seed is criminalized as theft of intellectual property with sense transformation being involved again!

- (6) “When patents are granted for seeds and plants, as in the case of basmati, **theft is defined as creation**, and saving and **sharing seed is defined as theft of intellectual property.**”

Shiva discusses in (7.) the topsy-turvy world of global corporations that defines pollination as “theft by bees”. The re-sensing of the world accompanies the industrialization of agriculture and provides the justification for subsequent actions. I return to the ‘theft’ metaphor below.

- (7) “A worldview that **defines** pollination as **"theft by bees"** and claims biodiversity **"steals" sunshine is a worldview which itself aims at stealing nature's harvest** by replacing open, pollinated varieties with hybrids and sterile seeds, and destroying biodiverse flora with herbicides such as Roundup.”

A further example of Shiva’s meta-analytical method can be seen in (8.). For Shiva it is evident that force and persuasion (via definitions) are close comrades in the globalizing of agribusiness. This reminds one of Humpty-Dumpty semantics (see Alexander 2002a); it all depends on who is master.

- (8) “A global monoculture is being forced on people by defining everything that is fresh, local and handmade as a health hazard.”

This kind of examination of ‘define’ could be extended to other items. Lack of space does not allow us to observe Shiva’s close meta-discursive analysis of ‘name’, ‘refer’, ‘call’, ‘basis’ and ‘pseudo’. Taking issue with definitions, senses and the ‘values’ assigned to terms is to contest people’s categories of thought and to present alternatives. As we see a major portion of Shiva’s Reith lecture is about conceptual analysis.

#### 4. Metaphorical blindness: a mode of sense production

Sometimes Shiva comments on the semantic veracity or the truth value of a proposition differently, saying ‘X is not Y but Z’, as in (9.):

- (9) “The poor are pushed into deeper poverty by making them pay for what was theirs. Even the rich are poorer because their profits are based on the theft and on the use of coercion and violence. **This is not wealth creation but plunder.**”

A further technique used by her is explicit metaphor choice. In one section of her lecture she suggests that ‘metaphorical blindness’ is a way people ignore what is extant. It is like a manifestation of ‘cognitive dissonance’, of not accepting what exists and viewing it in another fashion. It is a ‘failure’ to see or to look. In discourse it takes the form of redefining phenomena or concepts. Shiva several times imputes this tendency to unspecified but implied actors, to generic ‘humans’. But the allusion to the corporations she is opposing is clear, when she speaks of ‘*This deliberate* blindness to diversity’.

In the concordance for ‘blind’ and ‘blindness’ (Table 3) the last two examples interestingly refer to literal blindness.

**Table 3: Concordance for ‘blindness’**

of other species and	blind	to their vital role in our
...ductivity. <b>I call this</b>	blindness	to the high productivity of
<b>This deliberate</b>	blindness	to diversity, the blindness
to diversity, the	blindness	to nature's production,
A rice as a cure for	blindness.	It is assumed that without
A rice and prevent	blindness	in children and anaemia in

But if we examine the broader co-texts of the first four examples we will see the behaviour I have been referring to in action. In (10.) not acknowledging the role of species other than humans is a problem for Shiva:

- (10) “As humans travel further down the road to non-sustainability, they become intolerant of other species and **blind to their vital role in our survival.**”

In (11.) Shiva contrasts ‘biodiversity’ and ‘monoculture’ and metaphorically transfers the latter to mental constructs:

(11) “From the biodiversity perspective, biodiversity based productivity is higher than monoculture productivity. I call this **blindness to the high productivity of diversity a "Monoculture of the Mind"**, which creates monocultures in our fields and in our world.”

In (12.) Shiva lists four crucial elements which in her opinion are deliberately ignored or ‘not seen’:

(12) “This deliberate blindness to diversity, the blindness to nature's production, production by women, production by Third World farmers allows destruction and appropriation to be projected as creation.”

## 5. What is value? Negotiation of senses and metaphor

Much political debate revolves around who causes what and with what result. The ensuing assessment of the relative shares in the process of value creation is the issue that Shiva addresses. The crux is one of agency. In this area, the debate about the factors of production and their relative shares in economic activity and hence in the creation of value comes to mind. Joan Robinson (1962: 1ff) has documented tellingly and ironically how widely variant notions as to what constitutes everyday ‘value’ among economists can be found. Metaphorical structuring is endemic to its definition. The debate about worth and value forms an important part of Shiva’s Reith lecture. She arrives at the VALUE IS SHARING or SHARING IS VALUE metaphor by means of a chain of arguments. These include a discussion of ‘wealth creation’, bringing in the law and legal processes (WTO ‘orders’), patents and property ‘rights’. A side-argument related to the legal domain addresses the sub-domain of ‘theft’.

The neo-liberal concept and metaphor, MARKET IS VALUE, is the very antithesis of SHARING. The concordance (Table 4) shows that bringing out this distinction is of central importance in Shiva’s chain of argument. The collocations associated with Shiva’s antipathy to markets in their globalized form can be seen in the highlighted items.

**Table 4: Concordance for ‘market’**

<b>to the dominant</b>	market	<b>driven 'development' and</b>
It destroyed the	market	for our diverse oilseeds -

in the name of	market	<b>competitiveness and market</b>
competitiveness and	market	<b>efficiency.</b> I want to argue
We have to move from	market	<b>totalitarianism</b> to an earth
...national commodity	markets."	While farmers earn less,
the poor to create	markets	<b>for the powerful.</b> People are

In the question session Shiva is asked about her ‘negative’ views of markets. This triggers (13.) an explicit positioning and differentiation between the ‘physical market’ and the ‘organizing principle for life’ from Shiva:

- (13) “Let me first respond by saying - I love markets. I love my local market where local "subgees" are sold, and one can chat with the women. The tragedy really is that the market is being turned into the only organising principle for life, and Wall St is being turned into the only source of value, and it's **the disappearance of other markets, other values that I am condemning.**”

By stressing ‘competitiveness’ and ‘totalitarianism’ in connection with the market idea she is condemning Shiva sets off her VALUE IS SHARING metaphor in sharp contrast.

## 6. A world turned ‘upside down’ in the name of modernization

Running through the lecture is the central metaphor SHARING IS VALUE. A superficial glance at the ‘sharing’ concordance (Table 5) and its collocations shows that in Shiva’s eyes VALUE IS SHARING for the Indian subcontinent.

**Table 5: Concordance for ‘sharing’**

have saved seed or	shared	<b>it with neighbours.</b> The
and saving and	sharing	seed is defined as theft of
<b>create growth through</b>	sharing.	The poor are pushed into
level. <b>Sustainability,</b>	sharing	and survival is being
<b>abundance is based on</b>	sharing	and on a deep awareness of
on <b>abundance and</b>	sharing,	diversity and
of <b>compassion and</b>	sharing.	We have to move from

other crop varieties.                      Sharing                      and exchange, the basis of

This is, as stated, the very antithesis of contemporary globalizing tendencies which are being forced upon Indian farmers and especially their womenfolk. The highlighted left and right collocates underline the complex ‘value’ metaphor Shiva is promoting. It is noteworthy how out of eight occurrences of ‘sharing’ six contribute to the positively loaded semantic prosody surrounding Shiva’s use of the word. A closer look at some extended co-texts will make this more explicit.

Shiva comments in (14.) on the questionability of the western metaphor of ‘exclusive property’ (via patents) for common knowledge and how this leads to the act of ‘sharing’ becoming ‘theft’ for westerners:

- (14) “Instead they are becoming the instruments of pirating the common traditional knowledge from the poor of the Third World and making it **the exclusive "property" of western scientists and corporations**. When patents are granted for seeds and plants, as in the case of basmati, theft is defined as creation, and **saving and sharing seed is defined as theft of intellectual property**.”

It is most significant that in several (three) instances (15.), (16.) and (17.) ‘sharing’ has near collocates of ‘abundance’, ‘worldview’, ‘view’ and ‘nature’, thus underlining a number of related concepts and radial categories which Shiva counterbalances against the capitalist expropriation view.

- (15) “**Nature** has given us **abundance**; women's indigenous knowledge of biodiversity, agriculture and nutrition has built on that abundance to create more from less, **to create growth through sharing**.”
- (16) “**This worldview of abundance is based on sharing** and on a deep awareness of humans as members of the earth family.”
- (17) “The sustainability challenge for the new millennium is whether global economic man can move out of the worldview based on fear and scarcity, monocultures and monopolies, appropriation and dispossession and shift **to a view based on abundance and sharing, diversity and decentralisation, and respect and dignity for all beings**.”

In (18.) Shiva appeals to ‘the rules of justice’, among other related facets, as endangered by globalisation:

- (18) “The rules of globalisation are undermining **the rules of justice and sustainability, of compassion and sharing**. We have to move from market totalitarianism to an earth democracy.”

In (19.) Shiva reiterates that ‘sharing’ is being redefined as a crime.

- (19) “Sharing and exchange, the basis of our humanity and of our ecological survival has been redefined as **a crime**.”

Straightforward, traditional agricultural practices such as saving seed have been criminalized under the WTO-regime. The genetic engineering corporations are using ‘intellectual property rights’ to destroy small farmers. Shiva states:

- (20) “Patents and intellectual property rights are supposed to prevent **piracy**. Instead they are becoming **the instruments of pirating the common traditional knowledge** from the poor of the Third World and making it the exclusive "property" of western scientists and corporations.”

The usurping of value by capital is the praxis of corporations. As Shiva notes:

- (21) “Since Seattle, a frequently used phrase has been the need for a rule based system. Globalisation is the rule of commerce **and it has elevated Wall Street to be the only source of value**. As a result things that should have high worth - nature, culture, the future are being devalued and destroyed.”

The western metaphor CAPITAL IS VALUE is predicated on the implication that ‘value’ is caused by capital’ or that ‘capital produces value’. We are dealing here with Humpty-Dumpty semantics once more (see Alexander 2002a).

As we saw, Shiva argues for the metaphor SAVING SEED IS WEALTH CREATION. A look at the concordance for ‘theft’ (four occurrences) demonstrates how Shiva views the activities of corporate agriculture. In a passage (22.) which has two occurrences she addresses the issue of patents. She shows how the failure to use patented seed is declared to be illegal! One is reminded of Proudhon’s famous slogan PROPERTY IS THEFT, in this connexion, as one continues to disentangle how Shiva contests the CAPITAL IS VALUE metaphor. As we have seen, at several points, she invokes metaphors of ‘piracy’ and ‘theft’ to characterize the activities of multitis. She emphasizes that:

- (22) “When **patents** are granted for seeds and plants, as in the case of basmati, **theft is defined as creation**, and **saving and sharing seed is defined as theft of intellectual property**. Corporations which have broad patents on crops such as cotton, soya bean, mustard are suing farmers for **seed saving** and hiring detective agencies to find out if farmers have saved...”

The metaphor of ‘crime’ and ‘stealing’ is used by Cargill to describe ‘sharing’, as Shiva shows (23.) by quoting the Cargill Chief Executive:

- (23) “In 1992, when Indian farmers destroyed Cargill's seed plant in Bellary, Karnataka, to protest against seed failure, the Cargill Chief Executive stated, "We bring Indian farmers **smart technologies which prevent bees from usurping the pollen**.”

We can see (Table 6) how this metaphor is modified to STEALING IS WEALTH CREATION. According to Shiva this is the case for the corporate interests like Monsanto and Cargill expanding in India.

**Table 6: Concordance for ‘stealing’**

feeding the world, but	<b>stealing</b>	<b>livelihoods from the poor to</b>
prevent "weeds from	stealing	the sunshine". But what
which itself aims at	<b>stealing</b>	<b>nature's harvest by</b>

She ironically quotes the absurd claim made in a Monsanto leaflet:

- (24) “When I was participating in the United Nations Biosafety Negotiations, Monsanto circulated literature to defend its herbicide resistant Roundup ready crops on grounds that **they prevent "weeds from stealing the sunshine"**.”

This provides the cue to consider the term ‘theft’ and the related semantic field, with items like ‘steal’, ‘usurp’, ‘piracy’ and ‘pirating’. We see also how the discourse of ‘law and order’ and ‘crime’ has colonized the dealings with industrial agriculture. In Shiva’s words: “Sharing and exchange, the basis of our humanity and of our ecological survival has been redefined as a crime. This makes us all poor.”

When giant corporations view small peasants and bees as thieves, the world is being ‘turned upside down’ in the name of modernization, business and science. The Uruguayan writer, Eduardo Galeano, has analyzed this ‘looking-glass world’ (1998: 5) writing about “Los modelos del éxito [Models of success]”: “El mundo al revés premia al revés: desprecia la honestidad, castiga el trabajo, recompensa la falta de escrúpulos y alimenta el canibalismo. Sus maestras calumnian a la naturaleza; la injusticia, dicen, es ley natural.” [“The upside-down world rewards in reverse: it scorns honesty, punishes work, prizes lack of scruples, and feeds cannibalism. Its professors slander nature: injustice, they say, is a law of nature.”]

## **7. Re-invigorating underrated characteristics of the world**

As a counter-weight to these developments Shiva stresses alternative metaphorical concepts and configurations. In her own discourse Shiva re-invigorates belittled (sic!), depreciated or devalued notions like smallness. ‘Small farmers’ is a positively loaded, affirmative term as

used by Shiva. Shiva re-writes and re-iterates a counter-current to structural metaphorical thought, namely: SMALL IS GOOD (and by implication LARGE IS BAD).

To illustrate this let us consider the concordance (Table 7) for ‘small’ and ‘smallest’ (from Shiva 2000a).

**Table 7: Concordance for ‘small’**

It is women and	small	<b>farmers</b> working with
biodiversity based	small	<b>farms</b> are more productive
the food production on	small	<b>farms</b> by small farmers
on small farms by	small	<b>farmers</b> disappear. This hides
into account. In Java,	small	<b>farmers</b> cultivate 607 species
FAO has shown that	small	<b>biodiverse farms</b> can produce
While women and	small	<b>peasants</b> feed the world
local economies and	small	<b>autonomous producers</b> is by
impossible for	small	<b>farmers</b> to survive. The
level, or by the	small	<b>cottage industry</b> because it is
...ntionally kept at the	small	level. Now, under the pressure
local economies and	small	<b>scale</b> processing. In August
In August 1998,	small	<b>scale</b> local processing of
corporations view	small	<b>peasants</b> and bees as thieves,
to stamp out the	smallest	insect, the smallest plant,
smallest insect, the	smallest	plant, the smallest peasant
smallest plant, the	smallest	<b>peasant</b> comes from a deep

If we list the immediate right collocates of ‘small’ (14 instances) and ‘smallest’ (3), we find what Shiva sees as valuable: ‘farmers’ (4), ‘farms’ (2), ‘biodiverse farms’ (1), ‘peasants’ (2), ‘peasant’ (1), ‘scale processing’ (1), ‘scale local processing’ (1), ‘insect’ (1), ‘plant’ (1), ‘autonomous producers’ (1), ‘cottage industry’ (1) and ‘level’ (1).

This reminds one somewhat of E. F. Schumacher (1973) the title of whose book was also the very predication of an alternative metaphor: *Small is beautiful*. In the question session after her Reith Lecture Shiva underlines (25.) the different state of affairs and how much this alternative needs to be upheld since modern global corporations have expanded:

- (25) “For the first time we have a system where no-one needs the peasants, unless we realise as societies we need them, that we've reached **a period where people are actually talking in India, in other countries that you can get rid of small producers.**”

Her emphasis on ‘local’ unearths the same value system at work. A consideration of the right collocates in the concordance (Table 8) shows positive semantic prosodies, while the left collocates even in the small span visible here indicate the threats to which they are being subjected:

**Table 8: Concordance for ‘local’**

<b>prudent food crops for</b>	local	<b>needs.</b> It is experiences such
<b>destruction of nature,</b>	local	<b>economies and small</b>
<b>...obalisation destroys</b>	local	<b>economies and destruction</b>
<b>uses to shut down</b>	local	<b>economies and small scale</b>
1998, small scale	local	processing of edible oil was
the <b>diversity</b> of	local	<b>food cultures</b> and local food
food cultures and	local	food economies. A global
that is <b>fresh,</b>	local	and <b>handmade</b> as a health

The right collocates are: ‘needs’, ‘economies and small’, ‘economies’, ‘economies and small scale’, ‘processing of edible oil’, ‘food cultures and local food’, ‘food economies’ and ‘handmade as a health’. There are three negative left collocates, representing a threat to ‘local’ in the form of: ‘destruction of nature’, ‘globalisation destroys’, ‘uses to shut down’. But these are countered by two positive collocates: ‘the diversity of’, ‘that is fresh’. In two sentences both ‘small’ and ‘local’ come together underlining the positive semantic prosody.

‘Large’, by contrast, seems to be negative, judging by its right collocates (Table 9).

**Table 9: Concordance for ‘large’**

times more food than	large,	<b>industrial monocultures.</b> And
is the presence of	large	<b>trading companies</b> in

## 8. What are the alternative metaphors for value?

Together with her contempt for and critique of largeness Shiva notes explicitly a further ‘phrase’. She shows in (26.) how this refers to value, its sole origin being Wall Street. Here too the meta-comment on the specific kind of rule system contests the very validity of ‘commerce’.

- (26) “Since Seattle, **a frequently used phrase** has been the need for **a rule based** system. Globalisation is **the rule of commerce** and it has elevated Wall Street to be the only source of value.”

How do we ascertain what the further alternative metaphors are? We can start with word frequency lists. In Alexander (2002b) it was found that the seven most frequent items were ‘food’ (40), ‘farmer/s’ (26), ‘being/s’ (23), ‘world’ (22), ‘production’ (20), ‘women’ (19) and ‘globalisation’ (16). These can give us a first approximation to the centres of interest of Shiva’s lecture. Certainly ‘food’ (40), ‘farmer/s’ and ‘women’ (19) are recurrent topics and actors Shiva focuses on, as we have already seen.

A second approach is to search for how the author presents items she criticizes directly or indirectly. A heuristic employed here entails searching with a listing and concordancer programme for further multiply employed lexical items from selected spheres. Given the interest in ‘value’ I selected ‘devaluation’ and ‘devalue’ as a starting point. As highlighted collocates in the concordance (Table 10) show, Shiva demonstrates what things are being systematically ignored or ‘devalued’.

**Table 10: Concordance for ‘devalu\*\*\*’**

inactive. The	devaluation	<b>of women’s work,</b> and of
support systems. The	devaluation	<b>and invisibility of</b>
a combination of	devaluation	of currencies, increase
themselves are	devalued.	Because <b>many women</b> in the

ensures <b>sustenance is</b>	devalued	in general, there is less
the future are being	devalued	and destroyed. The rules of

I then examined the broader co-texts of the first two occurrences of ‘devaluation’. Shiva makes it clear (27.) that ‘women’ and ‘women’s work’ are underrated. Also, ‘work’ in general in sustainable economies is downplayed.

(27) “Women who produce for their families and communities are treated as 'non-productive' and 'economically' inactive. **The devaluation of women's work**, and of **work done in sustainable economies**, is the natural outcome of a system constructed by capitalist patriarchy.”

In another section (28.) Shiva elaborates on this point, linking it more closely to patriarchal structures. These effectively devalue food production to make it invisible.

(28) “The devaluation and invisibility of sustainable, regenerative production is most glaring in the area of food. While patriarchal division of labour has assigned women the role of feeding their families and communities, patriarchal economics and patriarchal views of science and technology magically make women's work in providing food disappear. "Feeding the World" becomes disassociated from the women who actually do it.”

We can perhaps make the link here to feminist economics. Feminist economists such as Marilyn Warin and Julie A. Nelson (1996) have commented on primary production. The consumption of their own produce by non-primary producers, normally women, is considered to be of little or no importance by mainstream economists.

## 9. Re-definitions of value

These two extracts (27. and 28.) have enabled us to isolate at least two major strands of the life-work sphere which Shiva rates highly by contrast to what she downrates (like patriarchal division of labour). These are (1) sustainable, regenerative production and (2) women’s work. In this context she employs the ‘orthodox’ phrase ‘wealth creation’ but then proceeds to redefine the whole complex to the point where it can be seen as an aspect of ‘value’. Starting with the equation WEALTH CREATION IS X, we can list some of the ‘values’ X may receive in Shiva’s discourse.

X is 1) sharing, 2) diversity, 3) sustainability, 4) working co-operatively with nature’s processes, 5) food processing, 6) local economies and small scale processing, 7) women as the primary food producers and food processors in the world.

The next evident item to locate was ‘wealth’ itself. Table 11 allows us to identify Shiva’s counteracting definitions and her contestation of existing patriarchal and capitalist metaphors.

**Table 11: Concordance for ‘wealth’**

are <b>defined as</b> "	wealth	creators", something has gone
and <b>categories of</b>	wealth	and wealth creation. Pushing
of wealth and	wealth	creation. Pushing the real
route to instant	wealth	creation. Women - as I have
on the poor. The	wealth	of the poor is being violently
violence. <b>This is not</b>	wealth	creation but plunder.

Shiva demonstrates what the metaphor of wealth creation really means. The concordances with the left collocations ‘defined as’, ‘categories of’ and ‘This is not’ clearly testify to her disputing the one-sided semantic engineering she sees in the field of agriculture.

It is worth mentioning in connection with ‘wealth’ what Shiva writes in *Stolen Harvest* (2000b: 57): “In India, cows have been treated as sacred—as Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth” among other things. This aspect of Indian culture is developed in more detail in Shiva (2000b).

The collocation of ‘wealth’ with ‘creation’ leads us to consider the verb ‘create’. And ‘creation’ also brings to mind ‘causation’. Do we have a simple case of a synonym pair or a case of a radial category being expanded metaphorically? We have mentioned the widely used expression ‘wealth creation’ in the mouths of politicians and economists. This is also a notion Shiva (2000a) looks at critically. The relatively high frequency of these terms (c. 23) is also evidence of her preoccupation with the concept, we might note. Observing the concordance (Table 12) for the lemma ‘create’ and the related item ‘creation’, we find immediately an ambiguous and negative semantic prosody surrounding them, reflected in some of both the right and the left collocations (highlighted below).

**Table 12: Concordance for ‘creat\*\*’**

from the poor to	create	markets for the powerful.
waste parts that	create	<b>a threat</b> to our culture and

<b>myth of creation</b> to	create	new property rights to life
Humans do not	create	life <b>when they manipulate it.</b>
on that abundance to	create	more from less, to create
more from less, to	create	growth through sharing. The
that Ian Wilmut "	created	" Dolly denies the creativity
<b>the ecological poverty</b>	created	by the new biotechnologies.
of the Mind", which	creates	<b>monocultures</b> in our fields
are recipes for	creating	<b>hunger</b> , not for feeding the
services is declining,	creating	<b>deeper poverty</b> for the
global corporations,	creating	a situation <b>where the poor</b>
to be projected as	creation.	Take the case of the much
few. But <b>the myth of</b>	creation	presents biotechnologists
of wealth and wealth	creation.	Pushing the real production
to instant wealth	creation.	Women - as I have said -
<b>Such false claims to</b>	creation	are now the global norm,
<b>patriarchal myth of</b>	creation	to create new property
<b>theft is defined as</b>	creation,	and saving and sharing seed
This is not wealth	creation	but plunder. Sustainability
<b>Dolly denies the</b>	creativity	of nature, the
<b>...technologists as the</b>	creators	of Vitamin A, negating
<b>defined as "wealth</b>	creators",	something has gone wrong

Here is one (29.) of two broader co-text samples in which Shiva engages with and contests the very categorization systems and naming conventions involved:

- (29) “When growth increases poverty, when real production becomes a negative economy, and speculators are defined as "wealth creators", **something has gone wrong with the concepts and categories of wealth and wealth creation.**”

Example (30.) is triggered by following up synonyms for wealth like ‘white gold’. The latter is clearly in itself a superficial metaphor for a commodity being promoted by the seed companies, serving merely a persuasive function in the selling process.

- (30) “Farmers who traditionally grew pulses and millets and paddy have been lured by seed companies to buy hybrid cotton seeds **referred to by the seed merchants as "white gold"**, which were supposed to make them millionaires. Instead they became paupers.”

## 10. Disturbed harmony affects society as well as nature

A further element in Shiva’s SHARING IS VALUE metaphor is touched upon by her in a more recent article (2002) entitled “On Pests, Weeds And Terrorists: Weaving Harmony Through Diversity”.

In Shiva (2002) we find mention of reductionist trends in science, as the concordance (Table 13) illustrates.

**Table 13: Concordance for ‘reductionist’**

of <b>disharmony</b> but as	reductionist,	<b>essentialised,</b>
offered in the same	reductionist	<b>approach</b> , with the new
"weeds". Instead, the	reductionist,	<b>essentialised approach</b>
...tialising <b>violence</b> of	reductionist	<b>thought</b> . It is time to
enemies of pests.	Reductionist	<b>science</b> which fails to

Shiva continues (31.) to contest the ‘modernization’ of science:

- (31) “**This non-relational absolutised approach** aggravates the problem instead of solving it because it **deepens the disharmony** which creates pests **instead of recovering harmony**, the only lasting solution for preventing insects from becoming ‘pests’.”

‘Harmony’ is the name for this state to which we need to return. This echoes much ecological thinking, of course. It is a term used often in Shiva (2002) (Table 14).

**Table 14: Concordance for ‘harmony’**

Shiva <b>Lack of</b>	harmony	characterizes our times --
ecosystems. <b>Weaving</b>	harmony	<b>in agriculture</b> implies
instead of recovering	harmony,	the only lasting solution
instead of recovering	harmony	will deepen the pest
context of creating	harmony,	a war is declared against
<b>Diversity creates</b>	harmony,	and harmony creates
creates harmony, and	harmony	<b>creates beauty</b> , balance,
Terrorists: Weaving	Harmony	<b>Through Diversity</b> December

The collocation of ‘harmony’ with ‘diversity’ is intended to underline this point. To set up ‘diversity’ as a metaphor for ‘harmony’ as an alternative to the narrow, reductionist idea of harmony as ‘conformism’ demonstrates the political nature of Shiva’s writing. In times when ‘fundamentalist’ and militant religious precepts are being imported into daily politics, especially foreign policy discussions, this may sound idealistic. But Shiva knows (32.) what she is up against:

(32) “Non-sustainability, injustice, war are different expressions of disharmony which has its roots in a world view that blocks out relationships and essentialises characteristics and properties that are relational properties.”

Against this Shiva (2002) sets relations and relationships, criticizing this ‘non-relational absolutised’ approach. She attacks reductionism in science. ‘Relationships’ is a term she uses three times. The article deals in several ways with the pervasive nature of the phenomenon of how everything hangs together.

As Shiva says: “The most effective pest control mechanism is built into the ecology of crops, partly by ensuring balanced pest-predator relationships.” She refers to “invisible relationships of the plant to its environment”. It is interesting how this expression echoes the perception of insightful scientists and artists of the twentieth century, such as Piet Mondrian, who saw their task as uncovering and making observable these very relations and relationships. According to Herbert Read (1968: 200), for example,

“Mondrian defines Neo-plasticism [his aesthetic theory: R.A.] as a means by which the versatility of nature can be reduced to the plastic expression of definite

relations. Art becomes an intuitive means, as exact as mathematics, for representing the fundamental characteristics of the cosmos.”

What happens in the case of failing to acknowledge such relationships is what we see now happening in the world of agriculture, but also more generally in society, in Shiva’s estimation. Reductionism in science and its accompanying outlook is one of the problems that prevent us dealing satisfactorily with such obstacles. The ‘reductionist’ concordance (Table 13) shows that Shiva sees this as a central problem too. She has harsh words for western science: “Reductionist science which fails to perceive the natural balance, also fails to anticipate and predict what will happen when that balance is disturbed.” (Shiva 2002).

## **11. Conclusion: Shiva’s work is disturbing and irritating**

Shiva’s work is disturbing and irritating in several respects. First at the ‘level’ of meta-commentary, as we have seen. But her major influence will undoubtedly be at the face value level, where she addresses the objective situation. And here her work is equally, if not more, disturbing. It disturbs the Northern (First World) reader or listener precisely because it reminds him or her that the repression and exploitation at work in the Third World, such as India, is largely the result of individuals, international organizations and corporations that originate here in the North.

People still tend to under-estimate the extent and the powers of the forces of repression at work in the world. It is perhaps more comforting to accept the illusions propagated by the western media and lie-machines, that suggest the roots of poverty in the world lie solely in the countries where it exists. The global trading system will, by definition, solve all the world’s problems. Environmental and ecological degradation will cease once western technologies, scientific method and cultivation procedures developed by ‘philanthropic’ and socially responsible corporations can be put in place. So goes the Washington consensus argument.

The failure to appreciate the desperation that exists in some countries and parts of the world and which seems to express itself in a millenarian nihilism or in religious fundamentalist movements can be seen to mask insight into the true causes of that desperation. The lack of will to engage with human history in the recent past is symptomatic of this failure of understanding.

The rush to generalize, to abstract and to impose new metaphorical concepts developed elsewhere on societies which have long possessed their own appropriate ways of living is

what Shiva attacks in her work. The material conditions of being, of very existence are at stake in the Third World. In terms of the capitalist system promises or expressions of trust are meaningless. Capital knows no promises. Capital answers only to the logic of accumulation. This entails taking away surplus value wherever it can be generated and repatriating it as profit to the investor. Nowhere is this more brutally obvious than in the relationship with the factor of land or the physical environment. As Alexander (2002a) has argued, ‘sustainable development’ has become a kind of magic wand to spirit away opposition to normal capitalist practices of exploitation and accumulation.

What ‘counts’ as valuable is what can be counted on the profit and loss statement, as long as it is my profit and someone else’s loss. The loss of the third world farmers is converted into the profit of the multinational corporations! This is the state of affairs that Shiva is censuring or arraigning in her lecture.

Finally, what is the significance of the fact that Shiva is the only BBC Reith lecturer in 2000 who originates from a Third World country? Different metaphors and ‘worldviews’ take on a new meaning when this point has been digested.

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