



The Seeds of Vandana Shiva (2021): A Credible Actor of Change

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Vandana Shiva'nın Tohumları (2021): Değerli bir Değişim Aktörü

Abstract

Dr. Vandana Shiva has a history of environmental activism and gained popularity in mainstream media specifically for Western audiences. She has established herself as an opposition against seed monopoly and a promoter of unity. This paper chooses *The Seeds of Vandana Shiva* (2021), a documentary about Vandana Shiva's environmental activism from an ecofeminist perspective in order to introduce different concepts addressed by this film such as women empowerment, and reductionism. This article offers a discussion on the several persuasive strategies employed in this documentary film in order to promote change, appeal to emotions, and generate a sense of identification with the character and her cause.

Key words: *The Seeds of Vandana Shiva*, Eco-feminism, Documentary Film, Persuasive Strategies in Films, Women Empowerment, Environmental Activism.

Öz

Dr. Vandana Shiva'nın çevre aktivizmi geçmişi vardır ve ana akım medyada özellikle Batılı izleyiciler arasında popülerlik kazanmıştır. Kendisini tohum tekeline karşı bir muhalefet ve birliğin savunucusu olarak kurdu. Bu makale, kadının güçlendirilmesi ve indirgemecilik gibi bu filmin ele aldığı farklı kavramları tanıtmak için *Vandana Shiva'nın çevre aktivizmini ekofeminist bir bakış açısıyla anlatan bir belgesel olan The Seeds of Vandana Shiva'yı* (2021) seçmiştir. Bu makale, bu belgesel filmde değişimi teşvik etmek, duygulara hitap etmek ve karakter ve amacı ile özdeşleşme duygusu oluşturmak için kullanılan çeşitli ikna edici stratejiler hakkında bir tartışma sunuyor.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Vandana Shiva'nın Tohumları*, Eko-feminizm, Belgesel Film, Filmelerde İkna Stratejileri, Kadınların Güçlendirilmesi, Çevresel Aktivizm.

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Introduction¹

When it comes to the global south, environmental issues are very pressing, not only since climate change and biodiversity loss gain traction but because they affect the livelihood of people who often are farmers – individuals and families who feed a populace with their labour. Furthermore, when it comes to indigenous communities, women are considered as being more affected than men since they are the ones working with the land, going out to gather wild plants, fruits, and nuts for their communities. It can also be absorbed that there are several movements across the globe in the global south, often in South America, where indigenous women take the reins in environmental activism.

Dr. Vandana Shiva established herself not only as activist but also as mentor and role model for several generations. In media, she is specifically addressing Western audiences, holding lectures and speeches in universities, and reaching people world-wide through an online presence that isn't limited to environmentalists but caters to the broad public. A "controversial environmental activist" (Srivastava, 2020); a "scholar" (Makri, 2018); a "reactionary" (Brazeau, 2016); "anti-social", "unethical" and an "anti-science activist" (Ramesh, 2020), "social-justice warrior" and "poor advocate for the poor" (Miller, 2018); a "rock star" (Specter, 2014); a "homegrown warrior" (Kannan, 2022); and many more – Dr. Vandana Shiva has made a name and is widely discussed and criticized by her opponents while praised by the groups and individuals she speaks out for.

The opposing parties seem to be usually associated with specific organisations or directly have some stake in technologies of genetically modified organisms (GMO's) or the very organisations and individuals that promote GMO's and related technologies. Of the few critics mentioned who argue against Dr. Vandana Shiva, all are men except for Ramesh, who does not directly address Dr. Vandana Shiva but instead cites two letters in her article that were signed by many experts and presented to "the Stanford University and the University of California-Santa Cruz (UC-SC)". These letters were questioning the invitations Dr. Vandana Shiva received to participate in discussions in these universities (Ramesh, 2020). By researching the associations and money flows it can be observed that Stanford received a large fund from Bill Gates as the Stanford University News (1992) noted, as well as by the philanthropic organisation that belongs directly to Gates and his wife Melinda as Reuters reports (2015). The male critics mentioned above are either associated with Stanford (like Srivastava, Specter and Miller), write for newspapers and magazines which are owned by billionaires (2020), or defend reductionist perspectives in their writing (like Brazeau). It can be observed in the names opponents attribute

to Dr. Vandana Shiva that they don't directly attack her claims but rather use counter-rhetorics, especially when it comes to GMO technologies. The attacks are targeting Dr. Vandana Shiva's academic and scientific approaches and capabilities as scholar, as a mean to defend GMO technologies instead of directly stating a pro-GMO rhetoric. This comprises a rhetorical device which Anders Hansen understands as "unsympathetic counter-rhetorics", which includes "rhetorical strategies as anti-patterning, the telling anecdote, and the counter-theories of insincerity and hysteria" (2010, p. 30). By countering Dr. Vandana Shiva's abilities a picture is constructed in which she is drawn as insincere, by positioning her next to Frauds and guiding the audiences in perceiving her as rather 'hysteric' by referring to her as rock-star which places her as a mere phenomenon of pop culture instead of mentioning her scientific achievements as well as her long-term activism.

The Seeds of Vandana Shiva (2021) is an independent documentary directed by James and Camilla Denton Becket. It is a documentary film about Dr. Vandana Shiva's life and her accomplishments, her cause as well as her ongoing activism against seed monopoly and conglomerates like Monsanto².

In the current paper, *The Seeds of Vandana Shiva* (2021), a documentary about Vandana Shiva's environmental activism is chosen and represented concepts such as women empowerment, and reductionism are introduced and discussed from an ecofeminist perspective. A discussion on several persuasive strategies employed in this documentary film is offered to show cinematic strategies through which change is promoted and awareness is raised.

The Seeds of Vandana Shiva: Narratives and Structure

The film begins with a montage of images of Indian nature and shows Dr. Vandana Shiva's travels. She is introduced as "the most prominent activists in the world", "a pioneer", "Monsanto's worst nightmare". These descriptions are followed by a clip of her controversial statement on stage "I believe the war against the earth begins in the minds of men and I mean men, especially men who control power and capital". The documentary is structured in nine different chapters summarized below and chronologically follows biographical events of her life. Born in 1952 in a village in the Himalayas in care of her father and mother, she continued to study physics in her bachelor's and later went on to pursue nuclear physics which she quits after her sister made her aware of the Hiroshima bombing. Quantum physics was her alternative and she emphasizes that this knowledge of quantum physics together with her other abilities helped her understand the

importance of interconnectedness. The first chapter, "CHIPKO 1973," addresses the lumber mafia CHIPKO, which was clearing the land and triggered a traumatic loss for Dr. Vandana Shiva by logging her home forest. CHIPKO violently affected women who lived off these forests and later started to hug the trees—a movement Dr. Vandana Shiva joined—which succeeded in 1981. In the second chapter, "Water Wars 1982," Dr. Vandana Shiva conducted independent research about the effect of mining on limestone in the Doon Valley of India for the government. She directly questioned the women of the affected villages and drew a connection between water, mining and landslides which enabled her to convince the government to take preventive actions. This research became Dr. Vandana Shiva's motivation to start her own independent Research Foundation for Science Technology and Ecology. The third chapter, "Custody 1985," discusses how Indian society as patriarchal society didn't grant women the right for custody of their children. Dr. Vandana Shiva successfully challenged this rule with her battle for custody of her son, Kartikey (Tiku), and set an example for women in her country. In the fourth chapter, "Ecofeminism 1985," Dr. Vandana Shiva talked about the CHIPKO movement at the United Nations Conference for Women in Nairobi, where for the first time a link between environmental degradation and its impact on women could be made. In the fifth chapter, "Violence of the Green Revolution 1984," the way the violent protests between Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab were connected to the poison gas leak from the pesticidal plant in Bhopal India is depicted. The sixth chapter, "Patents on Life 1987," starts with a conference on biotechnology in Geneva Switzerland in which Dr. Vandana Shiva found out for the first time about GMO's, a subject that she would come to scrutinize throughout her life. She argues that there is no place for the small farmer in GMO technologies since the process of farming must become industrialized. "Navadanya 1994" is the seventh chapter in which seed became the focus of Dr. Vandana Shiva to start out a seed saving movement as well as research of sustainable and organic farming. She raised awareness among farmers in India and pointed out their sovereignty which the industry endangered. The eighth chapter, "Battle in Seattle 1999," shows how the conference of the World Trade Organisation in the United States of America that drove globalisation at that time could be interrupted by protests that spread awareness about the ecological and societal implications of industrialisation. The last chapter titled "Seed Monopoly 2002," describes how the monopoly of genetically modified cotton by the industry and its requirement for more chemicals drove farmers into ruin. It resulted into an epidemic of farmer's suicides who defaulted. To prevent similar outcomes in Africa, Dr. Vandana Shiva undertook a

travel in the affected areas to inform the population and farmers about GMO's. The film ends as it started. It shows India's nature, this time with a voice over of Dr. Vandana Shiva talking about the interconnectedness, quantum physics and the potential of the environment.

Ecofeminism

"I hope to inspire an expansion of perception while being cognizant of feminist precautions against the privileging of the Western gaze that reduces multiplicitous subjects to a single unified whole and projects an "ethnocentric universalism" as a standardized analytic device." (Woodill, 2010, p. 85)

Ecofeminism is a branch of feminism that was first mentioned by the French Feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne's in her 1974 book *Feminism or Death* (2022) that occurred right in the midst of the second wave of feminism that started out in the 1960s with the book by Betty Friedan in 1963 named *The Feminine Mystique* (Friedan, 1979). It was a time in which women fought for equal rights and "a re-evaluation of traditional gender roles in society and an end to sexist discrimination" (Pruitt, 2022). Ecofeminism was "misinterpreted and misrepresented" (J. Adams & Lori, 2022, p. 14) because it linked women with nature. Women however fought in the second wave of feminism to regain control of their bodies and to not to be part of "the development of a new sexual division of labor subjugating women's labor and women's reproductive function to the reproduction of the work-force" (Federici, 2004, p. 8). Women questioned their gender roles and wanted to break out of the "domestic sphere" and representations that place them in it (Belmont, 2007, p. 350). The quote above shows the underlying diversity and complexity of this field that looks at intersections of gender and environment. It emphasizes the Western gaze that instead reduces its subjects to stereotypes or simplifies them. This can also be seen in the representation of subject positions (Krijnen & van Bauwel, 2015, pp. 38-39) that are using stereotypes (p. 26) to place the viewer into specific, pre-defined seats, when Western media representations as in advertisement and TV are concerned. Ecofeminism however always has been concerned with intersections and criticizes binary or "dualistic thinking" when it comes to the constructions of dichotomies like 'humans and animals, man and woman, culture and nature, and mind and body' (J. Adams & Lori, 2022, p. 15).

The concept of reductionism is a reoccurring concept through which Shiva upholds the neglected connectedness of nature and society.

"Anteater: I know the rest of you won't believe this, but the answer to the question is staring us all in the face, hidden in the

*picture. It is simply one word-but what an important one:
"REDUCTIONISM!" (Hofstadter, 1999, p. 311)*

This quote is taken from a short story in the book *Gödel, Esher, Bach* by Douglas Hofstadter (1999), who has different characters arguing about an image that shows fractal-like words that can be read as Mu, Reductionism or Holism while the characters argue which perspective is better. This relates to debates in science that try to push rigorously for specific methods while discrediting other methods. Reductionism is a term that Dr. Vandana Shiva uses on several occasions in the documentary as well as throughout her books. She directly criticizes the traditional scientific method when she refers to reductionism since according to her it lacks the interconnectedness and intersection of different fields. Instead, reductionism takes a detail and focuses on it.

James C. Scott sees that "The analogy to the division of labor in modern capitalist production has implications roughly parallel to those of the military metaphor. Both, for example, require authoritarian methods and central control." (Scott, 1998, p. 152). Centralisation in industries that are hierarchical seem to employ methods of control, which apply the scientific method to employ authoritarian means of control and expansion of power. When it comes to Monsanto, the glyphosate discussion serves as example. Monsanto introduced this herbicide with its brand Round Up to kill weeds (SMTM, 2021). Unfortunately, it also killed the agricultural crops. Thus, Monsanto introduced GMO crops that were resistant to glyphosate. Farmers who want to use glyphosate also need to use these GMO Seeds. One part of what Dr. Vandana Shiva criticizes here is the monopoly that Monsanto is building, the other part is reductionism. She points out her concerns in several different books like *Seeds of Suicide* (2006, p. 106), *The Vandana Shiva Reader* (2014, p. 300), *Biopiracy* (2016, p. 45) in which she talks about the dependency that Monsanto is causing. Seed variety and biodiversity is reduced to serve the means of capital monopolies. This reductionism is also mentioned by Scott (1998) as simplification. The State (or corporations) simplify the crop in such a way that it becomes a "one-dimensional stereotype" with the purpose of "social, economic, and productive de-skilling" (p. 303). By de-skilling the environment and the people involved in farming, the state or corporation holds the power to decide and "guide behaviour" and to "expand their power" (p. 303). "[C]ultivators with a high degree of autonomy, skills, experience, self-confidence, and adaptability are replaced by cultivators following instructions" (p. 303).

A similar argumentation is also mentioned on several occasions in the documentary during talks about BT Cotton as well as the Bhopal disaster. Another point that Dr. Vandana Shiva and other groups are

concerned with is that the long-term results of glyphosate, especially in interaction with the environment and with human and non-human bodies is not understood yet. In her book *Who Really Feeds The World* (2016, p. 99) she describes evidence of kidney disease linked to glyphosate. Another unrelated independent research study looked at glyphosate and obesity. Although there is a correlation with glyphosate concentration in the environment and obesity data, a link to glyphosate as a direct causal factor to obesity could not be made. However, glyphosate studies show that rats exposed to higher amounts of it did not themselves get obese, but later generations did (SMTM, 2021). This discussion displays that it may not be possible to pinpoint specific effects to one cause and that Dr. Vandana Shiva's approach according to her studies in quantum physics may be revealing some complexities that reductionist and positivist approaches cannot.

Image of Destruction vs. Image of Empowerment

The Seeds of Vandana Shiva displays many contrasts by constructing binaries and juxtaposing these. Dr. Vandana Shiva has recognised specific occurrences and actions as problems that she defined (Hanson, 2010, p. 15) and brought to the public sphere to successfully push for change. Thus, the documentary makes use of her controversy and rock star status as well as her provoking statements by posting them against an opposition which in the documentary is constructed in a very simple binary of good and evil. It achieves this by juxtaposing contrasting themes.

First, it shows what is referred to in this paper as images of destruction. These images show the destruction of ecosystems and disasters that affect the health and livelihood of people as can be observed by the cleared forests, barren lands, landslides, floods, accidents, and atrocities as well as deaths of affected farmers and their mourning families. These images of destruction are connected to statements and representations of the agricultural industry and specific conglomerates like Monsanto. The images of destruction subtly "imply" (Greimas, 1987, p. 49) a value judgement (Wilkins & Coleman, 2005, p. 72) that is constructed around agricultural industries and Monsanto by connecting these images and representations with each other, thus creating a negative connotation. They appeal to the conscience of the viewer and "promote morality" (Wilkins & Coleman, 2005, p. 70) that may aim to cause change as well as a shift in perception.

"Food is a weapon. When you sell real weapons and arms, you control armies. When you control food, you control society."

And I would say for seeds, when you control seed, you control life on earth" – Vandana Shiva (Becket & Becket, 2021)

The above-mentioned quote from the documentary is a bold statement that immediately relates food to war and power. On one hand the representation of food in this documentary and specifically seeds focuses on control, power, and domination. On the other hand, food and seeds are represented as tools of liberation, diversity, and democracy. It becomes clear via the images, that diversity and a decentralisation of power is promoted throughout the documentary, while the monopolisation and its inherent reductionism is shown as something that causes disasters, wars, and pollution.

This can be specifically seen by the representation of historical footage, which also underlines the credibility of Dr. Vandana Shiva's statements and serves as a provision of proof that may aim to persuade the viewer (Hanson, 2010, p. 19). The footage of historical events can be summarized into the logging of the Himalayan forests, the Bhopal gas leak disaster, the violent protests in Punjab, grieving families of farmers who committed suicide, press conferences and the protests in Seattle. Some of these images, specifically in the chapter about The Violence of the Green Revolution may evoke horror. Like the horror genre as body genre (Williams, 1991, p. 4), the display of the body, especially in the Bhopal disaster, showed many close-ups and shots in which the vulnerability of the body was exposed. Next to the workers, children were shown with a range of medium shots to close-ups. The images display struggling children or dead bodies and faces while people aided them. Thus, "representation is an appeal to vision, but it also hints at the management of bodies and looking" (Tailor, 1998, p. 4).

The documentary continues to relate the events in this chapter to war-like images. It shows military and armed forces as well as protests that were linked to the Green Revolution and its pesticide use together with the hungry and the poor. It thus underlines Shiva's statements about the cause of this conflict that she assumes to be not religious as the Indian media suggested, but rather linked to water and the agricultural industries that drove small farmers to bankruptcy. The links made in the documentary between disaster and industrial agriculture render the latter as something abject by addressing the disasters as cause of the Green Revolution, which is violent, thus criminal, and immoral (Kristeva & Lechte, 1982, p. 128).

Second, the documentary shows scenes and shots of empowered women, the protesting public, and interviews of individuals who support Dr. Vandana Shiva's cause. They show a rich and diverse ecosystem. It leads the viewer close to activities related to sustainable farming through guiding the gaze of the viewer to close-ups of hands

working directly with soil as can be seen in the Navadanya chapter. The diversity of people is shown via close-ups of different faces of various sub-cultures of people Shiva is representing. The images also point out a diversity of seeds and the beauty of polycultures by displaying a lush variety of plants while placing the human body inside of this environment. The documentary connects these images with Shiva and her cause. It implies a value judgment by showing the joy of the people who live in these diverse environments. It is showing what this research refers to as images of empowerment. The images of empowerment are especially connected to small farmers and their communities and specifically to women.

When it comes to the representation of women and the environment it can be observed that the documentary places small farmers and specifically women in a *mise-en-scène* that emphasizes the importance of the environment and the actions of individuals and communities towards the land. It shows the potential of the land as nourishing environment by emphasizing the interaction of the human body through manual labour which it promotes. The bodies are enveloped in a lush ecosystem, thus enforcing a positive attitude or perception of this viewpoint in the documentary. This can be observed in shots of women in the chapter on CHIPKO, where the angle of the camera was placed near the ground looking upward to the women who sit on logs amidst nature, gathering roots, indicating a certain power and strength that is emanating from these women. The same is also seen towards the end of the chapter about Navadanya, where a long shot shows a young, strong, and confident woman walking through the field, while Dr. Vandana Shiva talks about the independence of farmers. The represented woman is not fragmented into detailed shots, instead, she slowly walks through the field and smiles creating an intimate atmosphere around her while contrasting her violet saree against the green of the field. It is positioning the viewer in a rather voyeuristic seat since the woman does not gaze into the camera (Krijnen & van Bauwel, 2015, p. 21). Contrary to the classic representation of women, as seen in advertising (p. 22), the woman in this shot is active. She is sweating, she knows the land, and she maintains her sovereignty with her upright and confident walk, which she presents in this private atmosphere in which she operates. Thus, the images of empowerment underline Dr. Vandana Shiva's statements about interconnectedness.

In summary it can be observed, that the main binary themes that are juxtaposed in the documentary are drawn as contrasts between a monopoly and diversity, control and liberation, mechanisation and nature, poison and health, poor and rich, as well as death and life.

Persuasive Strategies in *The Seeds of Vandana Shiva*

"[...] social movement persuaders must transform how people see the past, the present and/or the future to convince them that an intolerable situation exists that warrants urgent attention and action" (Stewart, Smith, & Denton, 2007, p. 50). This quote was cited by Rachel Gregg in her thesis about 'Environmental Documentary Film', where she looks at documentary films and its potential to evoke and facilitate change through persuasion (Gregg, 2011). *The Seeds of Vandana Shiva* is addressing the viewer by showing past events, relating these to present struggles and drawing a perception of possible futures. Where the past is considered, "awareness of unknown truths, remind people of ugly times, correct past illusions and offer historical revelations" (p. 7).

Here, the biography that draws from historical events and the aforementioned images of destruction has several functions in order to build persuasive arguments. By raising issues in the present situation, the viewer can learn about "its existence and severity and emphasize paradoxes or inconsistencies of institutions the movement opposes" (p. 7). In the documentary the past issues all converge into the current problem that Dr. Vandana Shiva sees within the seed monopoly of conglomerates she opposes, while suggesting alternatives that are already implemented as grass roots movements to protect the farmers and their livelihoods, thus painting an image of Monsanto as 'corrupt' (p. 7). Gregg suggests visions of the future have a binary outcome – either 'hopeful and utopian or dark, despairing and apocalyptic' (p. 7). It is indeed visible that the rhetoric of Vandana Shiva towards the end is hopeful when she emphasizes connectedness. It shows that a future is possible in which humans and the environment are in an interconnected relationship contrary to the alternative of a destructive mode in which nature is subdued and exploited by the dominion of "(wo)men" and their corporations.

Persuasive Strategies to Promote Change

To "recruit agents of change" Gregg suggests that there are three factors a documentary film should include in order to successfully promote change. First, these films are motivated by a "social vision for change, a sense of urgency, and clear targets on fundamental sources of environmental issues" (Gregg, 2011, p. 78), which can be identified by the goals of the documentary that can be outlined as: "education, criticism, raising awareness, artistic expression, empowerment" (p. 79). *The seeds of Vandana Shiva* educate its audience about historical events and environmental as well as social issues in India, it criticizes conglomerates and industrial agriculture and at the same time raises awareness about these and lastly it spreads

an image of empowerment specifically about women by highlighting various achievements of Dr. Vandana Shiva as role model as well as highlighting the importance and role of women in traditional and sustainable agriculture, thus suggesting “an agenda for getting its viewers involved and becoming agents of change either as a community or as individuals” (p. 97). The community aspect of this film is also fostered by the viewing condition, since up until the end of 2022 it was only possible to see the documentary as part of a community screening where discussion rounds and focus groups were explicitly recommended after screening.

Second, the audience must be able to feel that it has the power to act and change outcomes. This is enabled when films “present problems in an effective way balance past, present and future frames, maintain urgency without suggesting apocalypse, and focus on both material and emotional issues to foster a values-based discourse about social and environmental justice” (Gregg, 2011, p. 79). The documentary achieves this goal by first, building up a general awareness of related issues that all point to industrial agriculture while also showing that suggested solutions by Dr. Vandana Shiva and grass roots movements changed the outcome of these issues, and second, by calling out methods implemented by industrial agriculture and specifically the conglomerate Monsanto while suggesting alternative and sustainable methods and therefore promoting hopeful narratives (p. 80). By pointing the finger towards Monsanto, she also promotes a mobilisation since the issues raised about seed monopoly can clearly be overcome by educating people about Monsanto and suggesting actions like protests and the like against Monsanto. The issue thus becomes something that the viewer can grasp since the connection between Seed monopoly and its impact is clearly drawn.

Third, the film must provide ‘access to realistic change’ in which the ‘solutions match the problems’ (Gregg, 2011, p. 80), which is implemented by showing solutions that already worked and had a positive impact. Thus, it “legitimises” Dr. Vandana Shiva as credible actor of change. As role model she encourages environmental activism as well as environmental research that is inclusive of the complexity of the interconnectedness of humans and nature.

Persuasive Strategies that appeal to Emotions

According to Ben Lamar who looked at different research in his thesis about Evaluating the Effectiveness of Documentary Film, it is shown that in film, advertisement and politics, images can “influence people’s decision-making” and “subsequent behaviour” and “carry powerful meanings and promote more reasoned or civil discourse”

(Lamar, 2012, p. 10). Furthermore, Lamar cites several sources that indicate that images contribute to a positive cognition and memory of items and information (pp. 7-10). These factors in documentary engage the viewer to retain information and possibly reflect or change their behaviour. However, persuasion strategies will also need examples or evidence similar as an argument would need. Thus, Lamar refers to Bill Nicholas who mentions Aristoteles artistic evidence of proof. (Nicholas, 2001, p. 50). 'These are ethical, emotional, and demonstrative. Ethical evidence intends to establish a positive impression of a person's moral character or reliability. Emotional evidence attempts to affect the audience emotionally, influencing their attitude or mood to support a certain point of view. Demonstrative Evidence refers to the use of logical reasoning or demonstrations, whether actual or apparent, to show or create the idea of proving a case' (Nicholas, 2001, p. 50).

In *The Seeds of Vandana Shiva*, the first few chapters are concerned with establishing Dr. Vandana Shiva as credible person, by emphasizing on her education and experience she could gather in the fields with people affected by environmental degradation. Emotionally the documentary involves the viewer with strong images of conflict and disaster as well as images of empowerment – both of which are powerfully staged to underlie Dr. Vandana Shiva's message.

Furthermore, the documentary pushes a positive view and projects hope as possible outcome when action is taken. Dr. Vandana Shiva is represented as role model and inspiring character. Each chapter includes interviews of Dr. Vandana Shiva who reasons and serves as educator in a specific subject. Her reasoning shows that she has a way at looking at problems that can identify issues throughout a holistic approach that may not be available by focusing on the facts apparent in the foreground as can be observed in the chapter about the Green Revolution. This proves that she can draw connections by looking at different aspects of a problem. In her interviews she can rhetorically both convince with reason and appeal to emotions.

Lamar mentions that images and scenes which are enmeshed in a narrative are most powerful in persuading or appealing to the viewer and to further engagement (Lamar, 2012, p. 40). He also refers to the term transportation from Melanie C. Green which is similar to immersive experiences. According to Green, transportation can be described as "as a combination of attention, imagery, and feelings, in which an individual becomes immersed in a narrative world" (Green, 2021, p. 87). There are two main factors which Lamar identified according to Green that influence persuasion and engagement. 'First, people who are transported into a given narrative are less likely

to give attention to counter arguments. They view the narrative less critically, which indicates, that transportation can bypass rationality and directly engage with emotions. Second, transportation enables identification with the character(s) in the narrative through creating strong emotional bonds' (Lamar, 2012, p. 40).

It is worth mentioning that negative images have the potential to disrupt or suppress transportation. Lamar (2012) cites several sources that confirm how negative images, which evoke feelings of sadness, anger, or disgust, are less likely to induce changes in people's behavior or contribute to the cause portrayed in the documentary. Such negative images primarily resonate with individuals who lack prior knowledge of the subject and need an initial emotional connection to fully comprehend its urgency. People who are already familiar with the problem or subject may feel overwhelmed by negative images and thus feed into their own (mis-)beliefs of inadequacy or inability to become an agent of change (pp. 34-37). Instead, positive imagery is more likely to promote engagement such as donating (p. 33) to causes or considering a behavioural change like recycling (p. 37). It seems to indicate that when a behavior or solution is modeled, it becomes easier to understand how to adapt one's own behavior and engage with the topic, especially when there is a relatable narrative in which this behavior was modeled. In terms of the documentary in this paper, desired outcomes may be engagements in discussions, rising awareness about food and the promotion of organic or non-GMO alternatives as well as the support of small farmers, indigenous farmers and specifically women. The documentary shows some negative images that may evoke anger and disgust such as in the Bhopal disaster and the Green Revolution and discusses poverty as well as triggering subjects such as suicide. These images however are interwoven in a story of hope and emancipation that emerges from the experiences shared on screen, which allow the viewer to see how different actions and choices as well as unity in numbers can result in change.

Persuasion through Identification with a Character

The quotes about Vandana Shiva in introduction of this paper demonstrate negative and controversial statements about her as rock star among others. This also happens at the beginning of the documentary. It is clearly provoking just like her statement about men and aims to hook the viewer as for example in advertisements specifically in disruptive marketing (Wroblewski, 2022). It is here, where the transportation begins, right at the start. 'Who is this elderly woman on stage that draws all this attention both positive and negative to

her?', may be a question a viewer who doesn't know her could ask. While introducing Dr. Vandana Shiva in this way the viewer's interest is sparked, and they may get drawn to find out more about her.

Identification may describe a process in which a viewer puts herself in someone else's shoes, so that the viewpoint of the character is taken (Cohen, 2009, p. 250). Furthermore, the viewer feels with the character and takes on their identity repeatedly (p. 251). He suggests three attributes inherent in identification. 'First, identification involves a process where self-awareness diminishes and is replaced by strong emotional and cognitive connections with a character. It is not simply an attitude, emotion, or perception. Second, unlike psychological or sociological theories, identification is a response to specific textual features designed to provoke it. Directors and writers create characters for audience engagement in books, films, or TV shows. Unlike identification with parents, leaders, or nations, identification with media characters is a result of a deliberately crafted situation. Third, identification entails internalizing others' viewpoints rather than projecting one's own identity onto others' (Cohen, 2009, pp. 251-252). Cohen is mainly focusing on fictional characters. However, some of these attributes can be translated to *The Seeds of Vandana Shiva*. First, Dr. Vandana Shiva is established with a status, being called a rock star among other things. As activist she can be described as popular. And although the documentary is about a real person active in terms of the environment and human rights, the documentary makes use of cinematic tools to bring the viewer closer to Dr. Vandana Shiva as main character within a narrative. "Documentaries [may] have the capacity to tap into our emotions in a way that fictional films cannot" when it comes to the identification with the character (Lamar, 2012, p. 43). "Through mere optical means, a cameraman was able to make a person appear in a positive or negative way", thus "filmmakers are able to engage audiences and guide our emotions" (p. 12).

As described earlier, the documentary uses somewhat sensational imagery. It is not neutral, and it does not include a viewpoint counter to Dr. Vandana Shiva. It includes many crafted cinematic shots, specifically when communicating the benefits of organic farming and seed sovereignty. This may strengthen the identification because it is not disrupted by counter viewpoints that could undermine this perspective, thus intensifying the aspect of transportation. The documentary focuses on biographical storytelling with the focus on environmental and social issues as well as on women rights and empowerment. It is not solely focusing on India but inclusive of other areas, where these issues prevail like Afrika and the US as can be seen in the chapter about Seattle. Lamar (2012, p. 31) mentioned a study

about Emotional Affinity towards Nature, that indicates that emotional affinity to nature (that is acquired by exposure to environment through education and role models through childhood) can evoke positive behaviours and interest into nature topics (Kals, Schumacher, & Montada, 1999, p. 198). Taking on the viewpoint of Dr. Vandana Shiva thus might be more likely if emotional affinity to nature already exists within the viewer.

Conclusion

Any environmental issue usually comprises a complex and interwoven process of different variables, and the effects of any human action on the environment usually not point to a single cause and cannot be reduced to one culprit. Furthermore, the earth does not know borders and an action performed at one end of the world may affect other parts. Thus, drawing connections will require more than a laboratory approach to understand the impact of various industries on our planet. Theoretical fields like complexity and chaos theory as well as quantum physics (that are also applicable interdisciplinary) already acknowledged this approach and offer solutions and analytical tools that incorporate ways to make sense of the multiplicity of causes and effects. The traditional scientific method instead prefers to reduce the complexity of causes while employed in industries that aim to control and subdue the environment (instead of incorporating solutions that integrate it) while relying on research that was conducted in laboratories. The backlash of these approaches was shown in the documentary when it came to landslides and the effect of glyphosate and BT Cotton among others. When it comes to monetary gains, it could be observed in the documentary, that the government which ignores the impact of these industries on the environment will have to invest more than they gained to repair the damage and make the land or environment useful again. Not to speak of the individuals or small farmers who are not educated and buy these tools and use methods from industrial agriculture corporations that then destroy their livelihood.

Although there are only a few remarks of opposing voices in the documentary, this paper was looking at the comments and critique regarding Dr. Vandana Shiva to give an understanding of the interwoven money flows of these industries and people involved in it. It emphasizes the immense involvement of these corporation and the stake at hand for monopolies that aim to introduce methods that may end up damaging the environment and people in ways that are yet unknown and in ways that distribute freedom, wealth, and power away from the people into corporations and those owning these

corporations. The documentary forgoes to include the viewpoints of conglomerates and individuals that own them, and instead focuses on establishing proof through historical images and footages in order to underline Dr. Vandana Shiva's statements. While there was an encounter at the end of the documentary with someone specifically attacking Dr. Vandana Shiva's academic work, she countered by pointing out the money flows of sponsors for that person's research.

Dr. Vandana Shiva suggests that a more participatory understanding of the environment is needed to shift the perception of people which cannot be achieved by the "symbolic reality constructed for us" (Hanson, 2010, p. 18). This is in line with the research by Kals, Schumacher and Montada that Lamar mentioned when saying that affinity to nature is something that happens when people are exposed and involved in nature from childhood. Nevertheless, the media can influence "what to think about". It can signal what "society and the polity should be concerned about [...] in setting the framework for definition and discussion of such issues" (2010, p. 19). Thus, some persuasive strategies this documentary uses were analysed in order to see how change can be achieved and how Dr. Vandana Shiva was represented as role model and credible promoter of change.

The documentary specifically raises awareness about the biodiversity loss through pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers as well as GMO's which is a subject that seems to have only recently started to gain traction in the public sphere, latest through the often-discussed biodiversity report from 2019 (n. D., 2019).

In the documentary it could be observed that women and small farmers are especially affected. It could also be observed, how the documentary uses cinematic tools to represent these people to the viewer. On one hand it used historical footage to show the impact of industrial agriculture and struggles, on the other hand it used staged footage where the aim was always to show an empowered image especially of indigenous women, women as small farmers and people labour with their hands and bodies among nature. It showed how there was a contrast between images of destruction and images of empowerment, thus always pointing out a solution or showing alternatives, to invite the viewer through the proof these images provide, to take action or gain awareness themselves.

As mentioned in the paper and at the start of this conclusion, environmental issues cannot be reduced into single causes and effects. Furthermore, they also involve humans and non-humans, thus concern relationships with individuals, non-humans, within a society, as citizens, within political and societal frames. People participate as individuals and within families, groups, in corporations and

governments. Although it may not seem obvious, the issues people encounter today with climate change and the environment cannot only be reduced to how people interact with nature but also how interaction and involvement happens on a social and political level, which is shown by how people prioritize monetary gains and how they will defend the viewpoints of those who provide these gains since on a surface level, financial security deeply effect people's behaviours. On a deeper level there is the urge to change something about the status quo, but with what means can this change be achieved?

The Seeds of Vandana Shiva specifically criticized emerging and established structures that conglomerates and elite individuals further to secure power over means of production specifically in agriculture, a field that will play a huge role when it comes to answer questions such as: Who is feeding the world? Who is producing the food? Who will receive the food in the end? What are the costs when it comes to the environment as well as health of people around the globe? Is seed monopoly not just another form of colonialism, aimed to gain access and control the means of production in the global south? This paper comprised an introduction to these subjects through this documentary film and shows how a documentary can use cinematic tools and persuasive strategies (similar to advertisement) in order to get the message out to the public, since the public opinion also plays a role in how change can be achieved. However, there is room for more research to be made especially when it comes to strategies to educate the public across the world and to establish alternative solutions.

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² – As an American Company, Monsanto was founded in 1901 as an agricultural biotechnology corporation which was focusing on the production of genetically engineered crops for which it is well known today.

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