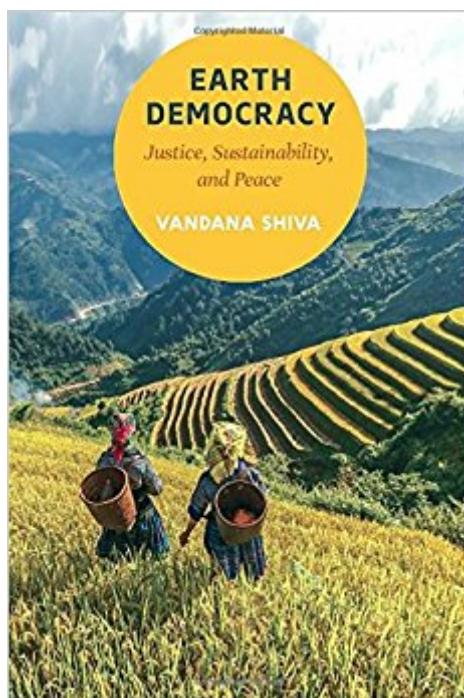


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Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, And Peace



Synopsis

World-renowned environmental activist and physicist Vandana Shiva calls for a radical shift in the values that govern democracies, condemning the role that unrestricted capitalism has played in the destruction of environments and livelihoods. She explores the issues she helped bring to international attention—genetic food engineering, culture theft, and natural resource privatization—uncovering their links to the rising tide of fundamentalism, violence against women, and planetary death. Struggles on the streets of Seattle and Cancun and in homes and farms across the world have yielded a set of principles based on inclusion, nonviolence, reclaiming the commons, and freely sharing the earth's resources. These ideals, which Dr. Shiva calls “Earth Democracy,” serve as an urgent call to peace and as the basis for a just and sustainable future.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“One of the world's most prominent radical scientists.” The Guardian “Shiva has devoted her life to fighting for the rights of the ordinary people of India. Her fierce intellect and her disarmingly friendly, accessible manner have made her a valuable advocate for people all over the developing world.” Ms. magazine “Shiva is a burst of creative energy, an intellectual power.” The Progressive “A leading thinker who has eloquently blended her views on the environment, agriculture, spirituality, and women's rights into a powerful philosophy.” Utne Reader

Vandana Shiva is a physicist, world-renowned environmental thinker and activist, and a tireless crusader for economic, food, and gender justice. She is the author and editor of many influential books, including *Making Peace with the Earth*, *Soil Not Oil*, *Staying Alive*, *Stolen Harvest*, *Water Wars*, and *Globalization's New Wars*. Dr. Shiva is the recipient of more than twenty international awards, among them the Right Livelihood Award (1993); the John Lennon-Yoko Ono Grant for Peace (2008); The Sydney Peace Prize (2010); and the Calgary Peace Prize (Canada, 2011). In addition, she is a board member of the World Future Council and one of the leaders and board members of the International Forum on Globalization (whose other members include Jerry Mander, Edward Goldsmith, Ralph Nader, and Jeremy Rifkin). She travels frequently to speak at conferences around the world.

The irrepressible Vandana Shiva is a very energetic person who sees beyond the hype around WTO and GMO and knows what dangers these type of initiatives are to the earth and all life on it. If you have not read or know of Vandana Shiva before then I recommend you actually start with videos on YouTube to hear her message. She is also in many movies such as the eclectic *Queen of the Sun: What Are the Bees Telling Us?* and *Flow: How did a handful of corporations steal our water*. I would NOT recommend starting to learn about her views with this book. Right from the start the author's tone is very sharp in pointing out what's wrong with globalization versus the commons. It's a continuous boxing match and the author keeps laying in punch after punch. What is missing from this book is a set of preliminary concepts and contrasts of what is globalization and what is the commons and Earth Democracy. Without any kind of building of these themes the reader is put into a somewhat stressful situation. Most of what is then followed in the book is bad this and that. The ways to respond to globalization are not clearly enumerated and how YOU should act after hearing this material is not immediately evident. The reader is not drawn into the situation in a deep way and full explanations of the concepts is not attempted before getting into the thick of things. So it really is like having the volume turned up listening to these things like a news broadcast rather than an engaging read. So while I highly value and appreciate what Vandana Shiva is doing on the world stage, her ability to communicate a message that can sink in through the written word is not a strong suit at least in this specific book.

"Earth Democracy" by Vandana Shiva offers both a masterful critique of globalization and a hopeful vision for a better world. Ms. Shiva compares and contrasts top-down systems of authoritarianism

and exclusion with bottom-up systems of egalitarianism and mutual cooperation to discuss how corporate power is proving to be a grave threat to democracy and the long-term viability of the planet. Ms. Shiva contends that a mutually-supportive network of empowered local communities might be able to create a global society that is based on humanitarian principles of peace, compassion and solidarity. Ms. Shiva has long been highly regarded as an activist and scholar. She has authored many books and is a frequent media commentator. "Earth Democracy" serves to further Ms. Shiva's stature as a leading intellectual who continues to eloquently voice the concerns of the poor. Her unique ability to blend science, history, politics, economics, gender issues and other fields of study into her text is impressive. The result is a book that rewards its readers with many pages of thought-provoking insight and analysis. Ms. Shiva points out that two thirds of humanity owes its livelihood to a sustenance economy that finds itself under increasing pressure from capital. She finds similarities in the earlier eras of enclosure and colonialism with today's struggle over intellectual property rights and patents, where the powerful use the law to privatize resources for profit. Arguing that overconsumption by the wealthy is the root cause of environmental destruction and human injustice, Ms. Shiva makes a compelling case for granting local communities more control over resources so that alternative, sustainable economies can be nurtured. Ms. Shiva brilliantly connects the insecurity wrought by globalization with the "ideologies of exclusion" and "cultural nationalism" that fuels war and terrorism. As state power largely serves to protect corporate interests, the economically uprooted and excluded masses seek identity through nationalist conflict and sometimes prove vulnerable to manipulation by religious extremists. On the other hand, Ms. Shiva cites the Indian farmer's struggles over seed and water rights as examples of how people might come together in a positive way to reclaim a more peaceful and secure future. Ms. Shiva reminds us that Mahatma Gandhi proved how small acts of resistance can hasten the end of empire. She believes that a multiplicity of movements such as Terra Madre that are struggling for food security, the environment, democracy and human rights will help us break free from the self-destructive path that has been prescribed for us by the corporate elite. I highly recommend this important and inspiring book to everyone.

A must read for advocates of environmental justice

This book was an eye opener and describes the unintended consequences of globalization and free trade by transnational corporations that are beholden to no country and follow and write their own rules. There are also glimmers of hope with some successes of the powerless against the

behemoths. A nice quick read, but with concepts that are repeated more than necessary to drive home the points.

In "Earth Democracy", Indian ecofeminist Vandana Shiva powerfully defends the rights of Third World farmers against agribusiness monopolies, biotechnology and international financial institutions like the WTO, World Bank and IMF. In a brilliant deconstruction of capitalist patriarchy, Shiva explains how market fundamentalism breeds religious fundamentalism and explores the many ways that corporate globalization negatively impacts the lives of low-income women around the world. Importantly, Shiva explains how the colonization of DNA by multinational corporations is an extension of the colonization of Asia, Africa and the Americas by an imperialist male white elite. Outlining how the preservation of seed, water and sustainable food systems are a prerequisite for peace and real security, "Earth Democracy" is a timely and informative read for global justice activists interested in alleviating world hunger, healing the environment and creating peace.

It's good

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