

S2E06 Foreword: Entangled Humans

Guest: Dr. Christine Daigle

[00:00:00] **Alison Innes:** [00:00:00] What does it mean to be human in a post COVID world? How are we connected to other humans? What is the role of privacy and social justice? When responding to a global pandemic? These are some of the big questions philosophy researchers are asking, and that we'll be exploring in today's episode of former.

[00:00:23] Welcome to the show. I'm your host, Alison Innes, and each episode. I bring you an interesting conversation with a researcher from Brock universities, faculty

[00:00:32] **Christine Daigle:** [00:00:32] of humanities.

[00:00:37] **Alison Innes:** [00:00:37] Now, if you find the idea of philosophy, a little intimidating stick with me, I get where you're coming from. In fact, I'll let you in on a little secret. If you promise not to tell, I used to find philosophy, really intimidate. I hadn't taken philosophy courses. And in fact, I kind of had the image of it as big words and complex ideas that I could never hope to understand.

[00:00:59] But my [00:01:00] conversations with today's guest as the pandemic unfolded over the past year really showed me how important and relevant philosophy and philosophical questions are to today's society. And I'm really excited to bring this conversation to you. So stick with me and we'll explain the big words. My guest today is Dr.

[00:01:17] Christine DayGlo, a philosophy professor with Brock's interdisciplinary humanities, PhD program, and director of the post humanism research Institute. And we'll find out what that means to them. She joins me today from Finland, where she is currently a research director Corps fellow at the Helsinki Collegium for advanced studies.

[00:01:37] She's currently researching vulnerability and ethics, and her research is funded by the social sciences and human research council of Canada, commonly known as shirk. She's also a member of the United nations educational scientific and cultural organization, UNESCO chair on community, sustainable research team at Brock where she investigates the [00:02:00] ways humans are entangled with the environment and how to frame notions of sustainability.

[00:02:05] So welcome

[00:02:06] **Christine Daigle:** [00:02:06] Christine. Thanks, Alison. Thanks for having.

[00:02:09] **Alison Innes:** [00:02:09] Thank you for making the time in your busy schedule of the, of the various projects that that you're involved with. So I figured we should start today's conversation with maybe a discussion of what post humanism is. So how, how do you explain it to non-experts?

[00:02:28] **Christine Daigle:** [00:02:28] Well, we need to start with a human. Actually to, to grasp what post-feminism is about human ism is a Western philosophical worldview, um,

that posits the human as special. It is an enterprise centric worldview that worldview that revolves around the human. Um, the human is exceptional. It is a rational animal.

[00:02:56] It is separate from non-human animals [00:03:00] and it is separate from nature. Um, it can put its reason to work, to create and use tools, culture, technology, et cetera. Um, the human of the humanist perspective, um, is, um, is, uh, typically conceived as a, as a white cisgendered heterosexual able body. Middle-class man.

[00:03:29] And a humanist perspective also adopts a hierarchical view of beings. Uh, and that hierarchical view allows for, uh, oppressive practices. For example, if I consider myself as a human being to be exceptional and separate from nature, that entitles me to exploit that nature and extract resources from it, for my own wellbeing, to the detriment of, um, of nature, for example.

[00:04:00] [00:03:59] So, um, this is what, um, humanism is in a nutshell. And so post humanism is a critical take on this worldview and one that rejects this understanding of the human. Post humanism wants to say, we need to rethink ourselves. Uh, we have been misconceiving ourselves as this kind of exceptional being, and we need to understand that.

[00:04:31] In fact, um, there are no such distinctions. There are no distinctions between the human and the non-human animal, the human and nature. Um, the other distinction that, um, that operates within the humanism, that between the mind and the body is also a, uh, a dualistic way of conceiving the human that post humanists want to reject because they think that we are always [00:05:00] embodied.

[00:05:00] You cannot separate the mind from the body and you cannot separate that embodied human. From its surrounding and other beings with whom it is entangled. Um, one thing I'd like to, uh, if I may, um, um, explain here is an important distinction between post-feminism and transhumanism. Uh, and sometimes people conflate the two, right.

[00:05:29] Um, and it has happened that transhumanist views have been referred to as post humanist. So there's a bit of confusion around that. Um, trans humanists, um, are really technical, optimistic, hyper humanists. Um, they believe in the exceptionality of the human being. They believe in the powers of reason. They, um, Have great faith in technology, um, in [00:06:00] enhancing the human in remedying, um, all the flaws that our bodies have and, um, they have faith in the development of technology, artificial intelligence, and whatnot, um, to assist us, um, in, uh, our very human pursuits.

[00:06:17] Right. Um, so in that sense, it is a hyper humanism. So, um, we as posts, humanists, um, we, there might be an interesting. Not mine. There is an interest in technology and artificial intelligence, for sure. Um, but, um, we are not, um, seeing this kind of technological capacity as a, as a panacea to a human and social problems.

[00:06:48] Um, rather we look at those, um, in terms of our entanglements with them, for example, right now we're using technology to [00:07:00] record, um, this podcast. Um, and, but it's humans having interactions via that technology and being surrounded by. Possibly all kinds of other beings that interact at this moment. Right.

[00:07:16] Um, so this would be the way a post humanist would, um, would approach technology, not as, um, our best hope for the future, but, um, rather as, as what, uh, one of the many things that forms, um, our environments, right.

[00:07:34] **Alison Innes:** [00:07:34] So how long has, has this idea or this approach been around? Uh, the

[00:07:39] idea

[00:07:39] **Christine Daigle:** [00:07:39] of post-feminism yeah, rather recent, um, philosophical movement, if you want to call it that, it's it originates in, in the late 1990s, um, there are of course, um, precursors, [00:08:00] um, to that movement.

[00:08:02] Um, if you think of, um, You know, post-feminism has its roots in the critical approach that you find. And feminism, for example, uh, post-colonial theory, visibility studies, um, critical animal studies. Um, those studies that really emerged and consolidated, um, in the seventies and eighties, um, and then continued developing beyond that.

[00:08:33] Um, So the, these movements and, and, and philosophical conceptions are really a part of that lineage that leads to the development of critical post-feminism. Um, but, but the movement itself is red or recent then, and it's really burgeoning right now. There's there was a lot of, uh, interest in it and, and more and more people were interested in, in developing [00:09:00] concepts and ideas.

[00:09:01] So.

[00:09:02] **Alison Innes:** [00:09:02] The idea then is that we, as humans are connected to other humans, to the environment, to technology, to animals, we're kind of all, we're, we're all connected somehow. Yeah.

[00:09:17] **Christine Daigle:** [00:09:17] Notion of interconnectivity or entanglement, um, is, is really one of the key features of post humanist thinking. Um, and it, it has many different aspects as you were saying.

[00:09:32] So first, um, there, there's the idea that, um, the, the human individual is itself an assembler. It is an assemblage of, um, many different, um, beings and particles and species. Um, we are, uh, individually multi-species we host species [00:10:00] and they form, um, our being, they, they help us. Really sometimes they harm us as we've learned.

[00:10:09] Um, but, um, so, so we are this assemblage, uh, we're also constituted by the substances we ingest, um, the substances that penetrate our bodies willingly on willingly pollution, um, heavy metals that are in the environment and that are found in bodies. Um, and, um, all of these things come together to coalesce, to form the individual human.

[00:10:38] Um, but we're also, so we're entangled in this way and, and we're further and tangled true. All of our relations with all the other beings, um, that, that exist, um, in, in the world really. I mean, something that happens at theater end of the planet, um, [00:11:00] Can impact you again, as we found out in the last year.

[00:11:03] Right? And, and, and so this is possible because of the, the, the very complex networks of relations that exists between beings and these entanglements, um, are both subjective and material. Um, and it's important to consider both aspects. For example, right now we're having a conversation. Uh, people are listening.

[00:11:32] And so this is an intersubjective, um, network of relations, um, an inter subjective and tanglement, and it's constitutive of each party to this affair. Um, but at the same time, Each each and every one of us are also materially and tangled. I had a snack before talking to you, so that, that food, the matter that is [00:12:00] now sitting in my stomach is, is doing something.

[00:12:03] And it's part of my material being as we speak, um, the air temperature, the sounds, um, all of these things. Right. Um, so, um, th th the idea of entanglement goes along with the notion of permeability, um, the porosity of beings, um, the permeability of beings, both bodies and minds. But again, remember we can't disentangle these two, right?

[00:12:36] So, um, whatever is constituting. My material being right now is also constituting, my subjective being and vice-a-versa and all of it. All at the same time.

[00:12:49] **Alison Innes:** [00:12:49] Okay. So it, um, it's a really big idea, um, in some ways, um, to, to kind of wrap, wrap our heads around. [00:13:00] Um, but on some level it also kind of makes intuitive sense that, um, that we, that we have this, this interconnectivity, but the, the idea,

[00:13:11] **Christine Daigle:** [00:13:11] um, yes, I, I agree with you.

[00:13:14] It makes intuitive sense where once you think about it, you can, you can say, oh yeah, that's actually how I experienced things. Right. Um, but one of the problem with the way in which we have conceived of ourselves is that we've wanted to ignore. These interconnections. Um, we have fancied that we were these beings that were separate from others that had like firm limits and boundaries and, and whatnot.

[00:13:43] Right. So we were living under defense, this, the, um, that we were, um, autonomous beings separate from other beings. Um, and so that's part of the post humanist agenda to, to reverse that and say, no, [00:14:00] we, we were wrong about this view of ourselves.

[00:14:03] **Alison Innes:** [00:14:03] So, so how does this view of entanglement then? How, how does it affect, um, our ethical or political views of the world and of ourselves?

[00:14:15] Well,

[00:14:16] **Christine Daigle:** [00:14:16] the, the first step I would say, um, is that if we, if we really grasp this idea of entanglement, Um, we will then understand that we are vulnerable beings and understanding one's own vulnerability and the necessity to embrace that vulnerability. Um, so rather than try to guard ourselves against it, which is what we've done for centuries.

[00:14:54] If we accept it, understand it, embrace it, [00:15:00] we will approach our action and behavior toward other beings. With whom we understand that we are in relation, um, differently that that's. In any case, that's the hope, right? Um, if, if I understand that my favorite example, um, um, maybe as a, as a means to justify my messy yard, but it's a good example.

[00:15:30] It works. Um, there there's different approaches to mending one's yard. Uh, you could choose to have a manicured yard where everything is perfect. Looks perfect from a certain point of view, right. And, um, just cut your grass, regular lead, you know, trim the bushes, keep as little clutter as possible and, and whatnot.

[00:15:56] You could use pesticides to assist you. You could use [00:16:00] herbicides, you could trap critters to relocate them or worst. Um, you could do all of this to have a manicured yard, or, uh, you could. Leave things a little messy and again, messy from a certain perspective, right? Um, you could let things grow. You could leave.

[00:16:21] Um, the, the fallen leaves in the fall rather than collect every single one of them to have a clean yard. Um, you could let the bushes grow a little wild to provide shelter for birds and critters and bugs. Um, all of these things, um, you could do. Out of laziness or he could do, because you understand that you are thereby providing some care for those beings with whom you are entangled with whom you share the world, because there are these beings out there [00:17:00] and their wellbeing.

[00:17:02] Is also important, just as much as your wellbeing and their wellbeing is more important than whatever aesthetic preferences you might have. Right. And, um, so that's an example of how you would in change the way you relate with other beings. So you would have a different kind of ed toss, um, animating your action and decision-making yeah,

[00:17:31] **Alison Innes:** [00:17:31] I liked the gardening metaphor.

[00:17:34] Um, so recently in your work you've been looking at relationships between humans and non-human animals. And, um, I noticed that that, um, that that's seems to be the preferred terminology. Um, Humans and non-human animals. Um, and is that, is that getting at the idea of that entanglement again, that, that we're, that it's not a hierarchy?

[00:18:00] [00:18:00] **Christine Daigle:** [00:18:00] Uh, yeah. I mean, because if you say the human in the hand and the animal, uh you're right there, you're positing a strong distinction. Um, and, and you're, you're, you're positing at distinction and you're saying the human is not animal light. Um, but in fact we are, and, and further, um, we are of the same matter as everything.

[00:18:28] So not just the non-human animal, but also plants and minerals and, and whatnot. Um, so if, again, if we're going to take seriously, the notion that we share in the same. Matter and the same math material processes, um, then to, to use language that reintroduces this things, actions is problematic. Um, yeah, so, so I would say that's why this would be the preferred [00:19:00] way to talk about that for,

[00:19:02] **Alison Innes:** [00:19:02] and we're seeing that complexity then between humans and non-human animals with and zoonotic diseases, um, with of course our very present circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic that, um, at time of recording, um, here in Niagara at Brock, anyway, we've kind of just hit the one year, the one year anniversary, if that's the right word it's um, or mark, mark, I guess.

[00:19:28] Um, With these zoonotic diseases and, and, um, the, the relationships between humans and non-human animals, um, like what, how, how do you characterize that relationship now and what, um, what needs to change so that, um, we maybe understand that vulnerability or, um, respond to that vulnerability in, um, a useful way,

[00:20:00] [00:19:59] **Christine Daigle:** [00:19:59] backtrack a bit to answer this.

[00:20:03] Um, I think it would be helpful to also, um, Bring it back to the notion of response ability, which is, um, an important concept, uh, in is thinking. So, yes, we need to recognize where materially entangled, that we are vulnerable, that we need to embrace this vulnerability we share in the same materiality we're of the same matter as all other beings, but there's, there's still something that makes us maybe a little bit exceptional.

[00:20:37] It's not an exceptionalism, but there's one thing that distinguishes us is that we have the ability to respond. We recognize all these things. And once we recognize the extent of the damage we have caused and the extent of the problems we have brought about, because we failed to recognize ourselves as [00:21:00] we are, we have the ability to change course.

[00:21:06] And to adopt a different ethics. And because we have, we have that, that ability to respond, we have the duty to respond and to adopt that ethos. This is how I would build, um, the ethical response ability, um, post humanist framework. Now that means in terms of our relations with non-human animals, that means revising really, um, many, if not all, all of the ways we relate to non-human animals, um, a colleague of mine, uh, Patricia McCormick, um, poses that we need to embrace an ethics of letting be an ethics of grace.

[00:22:00] [00:22:00] Let the non-human animal be, let, let them be by themselves, let them pursue their own projects, whatever those are, and, and just, just take a distance from the non-human animal and do our things and let them do their things. Now, if you think about this idea in so many ways, we are failing to let the non-human animal be.

[00:22:33] Um, we have pets, we factory farm, nonhuman animals. Uh, we hunt nonhuman animals. We, uh, we engage in urban development and we grab land and we encroach on wildlife habitats. Um, all these things that we do, uh, are, are. The opposite [00:23:00] of letting the non-human hand animal be. So we have a lot of work to do.

[00:23:08] **Alison Innes:** [00:23:08] And what does it, um, mean then in terms of our vulnerability to disease and, and, uh, zoonotic diseases or an animal origin, uh, diseases like, like COVID-19?

[00:23:27] Well,

[00:23:29] **Christine Daigle:** [00:23:29] it means, um, th th there there's a lot of things going on, um, in terms of, um, those types of diseases. Um, one of the problems of course, is that as we get closer and closer to, uh, to wildlife, as we, as we cause the loss of their natural habitats, uh, wildlife gets closer and closer to humans. Um, and, and sometimes wildlife carries disease and.

[00:23:59] And it's totally [00:24:00] fine and snap deadly to them. And, and it's like a minor cold would be for us, for example. Um, but if it jumps species, then, um, it can create a lot of havoc in that other species. So in the case of zoonotic diseases, like COVID-19, this is what we're experiencing. Um, so, um, but, but that is that this jumping species phenomenon is possible because we're always getting closer to, um, to non-human animals with whom.

[00:24:35] In normal circumstances if we were not as greedy and as exploitative and extractive of resources. And if we were not taking more and more space, um, we wouldn't be in contact, um, with those nonhuman animals. Um, likewise, when we engage in factory farming practices, uh, when you're thinking about broiler [00:25:00] chicken or BETTERY chicken, uh, or, or cattle, uh, for meat consumption, um, and whatnot, you're, you're, you're, you're packing non-human animals in, in human conditions and you're administering things like antibiotics, for example, and, and, and other things.

[00:25:23] And, and you're, you're creating conditions. Where diseases can emerge. And, um, there has been a case recently in Russia, um, of another, um, avian flu, uh, jumping to humans. And, uh, that was in, uh, I believe it was a battery chicken farm. Um, so there, there, there are problems with those practices. Well, first, um, consuming animals for, for our nourishment, uh, is problematic right there.

[00:25:58] Uh, we don't need to do so. [00:26:00] Um, but if we have to do so, I don't think we have to, but, but let's say someone thinks they have to, um, it's questionable whether we should engage. And those types of practices, um, not that any kind of free range, um, uh, practice is much better. It's still oppressive and destructive, um, and, um, and problematic.

[00:26:29] Um, but if people think that the steak, they eat this coming from this, um, pristine field where Daisy, the cow spent happy days munching on the ground. They're very wrong. Um, so I don't know where I'm going with this. Um, but anyways, your, your question was about zoonotic diseases. I mean, even in factory farming, um, you have emergence of [00:27:00] diseases that can then pass on to human.

[00:27:02] Um, not to mention how it affects the quality. Like if you're a meat eater, um, or dairy and egg consumer, um, you have to question yourself about the quality of the, of the food. Um, you are consuming if it is produced in these kinds of conditions with animals that are sick and, and spend miserable lives. So that is probably.

[00:27:27] **Alison Innes:** [00:27:27] Yeah. And something else that you had also mentioned to me before in terms of the factory farming and that, that risk of zoonotic diseases is that the people who are often working in those conditions, um, are often taken advantage of, um, and not treated well by other humans. Well,

[00:27:47] **Christine Daigle:** [00:27:47] yeah, I mean it, the, the whole factory farming system rights upon a system of oppression, that's often exploit's, uh, racialized workers, um, disadvantaged [00:28:00] workers, um, immigrant migrant workers, right.

[00:28:02] We have a lot of migrant workers in the Niagara region. Um, they're working orchards and, and, um, vineyards mostly, but, um, but they are still living in, um, much poor conditions than, than we. Do and, and so, um, and, and see the, the, the migrant workers working out in the orchards, um, they're, uh, exposed on a daily basis to high levels of pesticides and herbicides.

[00:28:35] Right. Um, and so their, their, their health is compromised in a way that's the consumer down the line, um, is not right. Like. The consumer is held is still compromised, but not as much as the migrant worker that is up in the tree, um, mending the tree and, or collecting the fruits. Right. Um, same thing for exposure to non-human animals, um, [00:29:00] in, in those, uh, factory farm settings, um, where, where you're in close contact with the non-human animal, who may be a carrier of disease as these Russian farm workers were.

[00:29:12] And, and then you become the vector for, for death jump, right? So the virus jumps it's literally jumps on you and then you then, um, are able to infect other people. And that's how you start, um, uh, an epidemic and potentially a pandemic. Um, in the case of COVID-19 what's interesting is that, um, Well at this moment of recording, because situation is always evolving and changing.

[00:29:43] Right. But, um, at this time, from what I know, um, they still have not identified with certainty where it originated. Um, they have sent a team of international researchers to Wu Han to try to determine whether [00:30:00] indeed the life market, um, was the, the 0.0, uh, of the pandemic. And I read an interview of one of these international researchers who was on the team and he said, well, there, there, there's no evidence.

[00:30:13] They've done all kinds of testing of non-human animals, um, from the markets, um, extremists and, and other, uh, traces of these non-human animals. Also the. We're working at the market or shopping at the market. And it's not clear that this is where indeed, um, the virus originated. So, um, but those kinds of settings, um, I've also been identified as problematic, um, because they are also settings where, um, you have the presence of, um, wild animals, like Pango and, uh, and, um, animals like [00:31:00] this with who normally humans wouldn't be in contact, but they're brought to the life market because they are consumed because they are considered to be a delicacy or whatever.

[00:31:09] Right. And, and so when you have circumstances like that, then you're increasing the chances, um, of zone that diseases to emerge. Um, so that is a problem. However, And I think I mentioned that to you before. Um, when we talk about live markets and things like that, we have to be extremely careful not to. Um, not to fall into the trap of, um, you know, having this kind of racist take on, um, food consumption practices that are foreign to us.

[00:31:46] Right. Um, I think we, we heard some of that at the beginning of the pandemic, when that story about the bat soup was circulating and, and people were blaming Beth

[00:32:00] consumption. Um, and, um, there was even this viral video that went around and it was later shown that that video originated from 2016 and was not even from China.

[00:32:13] So, um, and this was part of a racist trope, right? Um, that, that is still ongoing about, um, the pandemic. Um, some people still refer to the virus in, in very racist ways. Um, it's creating all kinds of, um, of issues and, and, um, treads of violence and perpetration of violence against Asian people. Um, that's extremely dangerous and, and, and unacceptable really.

[00:32:48] Um, so we have to be careful when we're talking about life markets and, and we think, oh, this is so uncivilized or such uncivilized, uh, ways of consuming food of nourishing [00:33:00] ourselves. Well, what, what counts as civilized and who who's entitled to determine what

[00:33:08] is

[00:33:09] **Christine Daigle:** [00:33:09] right. Food consumption is food consumption.

[00:33:11] Um,

[00:33:13] **Alison Innes:** [00:33:13] and then we're imposing our own hierarchy. Then I guess when, when we think about it, that way of, uh, on, on animals and saying there are certain animals that are somehow better like cows and, uh, Chickens and pigs compared to what, what other cultures might eat like bat soup.

[00:33:39] **Christine Daigle:** [00:33:39] Yeah. Or other cultures that might consume dog meat, for example.

[00:33:43] Um, and, um, what makes that, what makes cow consumption cow meat consumption any less errific than dog meat consumption? Right. Um, in my mind, it's all errific. [00:34:00] Um, but yes, we're introducing, um, all kinds of hierarchies that, that really are hard to justify. And they're certainly not just the fireball from a post humanist perspective, uh, when we're thinking that all beings are constituted in the same manner, um, and out of the same matter.

[00:34:25] **Alison Innes:** [00:34:25] So I want to talk a little bit more about the pandemic. Um, and you and I have spoken a few times for some Brock news articles, which I'll put a link to in, in, in our footnotes about, about some of the ways that, that we are, um, entangled with other human beings. Um, and we've talked about, um, things like mask wearing and vaccine distribution, the idea of vaccine, um, passports.

[00:35:00] [00:35:00] And I'm wondering what your thoughts are at this stage, in the pandemic of how, of how we. Are thinking about other people and how we maybe need to be doing a better job, maybe about thinking about other people.

[00:35:18] **Christine Daigle:** [00:35:18] Yes. I would say we need to do a much better job in how we relate to other humans, for sure. Um, well again, things move so fast, um, with this pandemic, um, research.

[00:35:37] Um, is unfolding as we speak, researchers are doing a fantastic job of, of looking at every aspect of this pandemic and how the virus operates, how it mutates, um, developing vaccines, testing their efficacy, checking if the, the efficacy is maintained, faced with [00:36:00] variants and whatnot, and the information keeps evolving as, as researchers are making their way through these complex questions.

[00:36:10] Um, well, that's a way of prefacing what I'm going to say and say, maybe what I'm going to say is going to be completely invalid by the time this airs or by the time, and the auditor will listen to it down the road. Um, but, um, Mask wearing, for example, that that is actually a really good example. There was a bit of confusion initially, as to whether, um, this was a measure that we should adopt and whether it was going to, um, be, um, effective in, in, in curbing that the, the, the, the rise of cases and things like that.

[00:36:55] So there was a bit of confusion. Then the recommendation came up that, yes, indeed, we should [00:37:00] be wearing masks. And then some people were opposed to wearing masks. And, but, um, I mean, mask wearing, when you think about it, this is a very minor. Inconvenience, um, in a person's life. Um, if you, uh, if you weighed it, that inconvenience, um, against, uh, the benefits to be gained, um, it's clear that we should, um, wear masks, um, masks are effective and, and also, um, w what I've written about this that's wearing a mask is also a way to express to others that you understand that you may unwillingly be a carrier of the virus and understanding that and expressing care toward, towards [00:38:00] others.

[00:38:00] You choose to limits within your means. Um, The possibility of transmitting it to someone else. So you're expressing care for others, um, and an understanding, um, of, of how you are vulnerable. The virus may be in you without you knowing it could feel totally fine. Um, and be a carrier. That's what, that's the trickiest part of this, uh, virus actually, uh, is the symptom of Methodism, right?

[00:38:37] Um,

[00:38:38] so,

[00:38:39] **Christine Daigle:** [00:38:39] so you could be a really well-intentioned person, a good person, um, and still infect someone and cause major health problems for severe cases and potentially death. Um, so knowing that if you're a caring person, Um, you would [00:39:00] take the measures you can and mask wearing is one of those measures. And when you do wear your mask, you're sending the signal that, okay, I get it, I get it.

[00:39:09] This could be a risk. And so I'm going to try to mitigate the risk. That's how I read other people's wearing their mask. So

[00:39:19] **Alison Innes:** [00:39:19] we've, we have been in this pandemic for what feels like eons, um, and with vaccines rolling out, um, people are really excited about, about vaccinations and getting vaccinated.

[00:39:36] Shouldn't be, and yeah, I'm I found out my parents are, are eligible now to, to get their vaccinations. And I'm really, really excited for that. Um, but what does this. Like, how, how is this going to, um, impact on that, that idea of care for each other?

[00:40:00] [00:40:00] **Christine Daigle:** [00:40:00] Yeah. Well, we're all suffering pandemic fatigue. It's been a long time, as you said.

[00:40:08] Uh, it does feel like eons it's been a year. Um, so we're all tired. Even if, you know, some of us may not have faced as strict, uh, restrictions as others, and all kinds of people have experienced that differently. A lot of people live by themselves have, I've had a really hard time being so isolated, um, et cetera, et cetera.

[00:40:33] Right. And then people living with others may not have had very favorable circumstances being lugged down together. So, um, we know about the rise in domestic violence cases and all of that. So it's been a really difficult time for everyone. Okay. So yes. Wow. There is a vaccine. We have every reason to be excited.

[00:40:58] Um, we should [00:41:00] genuinely be excited because it is exciting to see that human science, um, has been able to develop vaccines so quickly. Um, knowing that usually it takes years to develop an effective vaccine. So that's, that's wonderful that that's something to be excited about. Um, However, I think we're excited for the wrong reasons right now.

[00:41:26] Um, a lot of people are seeing vaccination as a get out of jail, free card, um, monopoly reference fully monopoly anymore. But anyway, um, but the idea that, um, now that you're vaccinated, you can go back to normal. You can go back to your pre pandemic life. You don't need to take precautions, you can gather together.

[00:41:53] Um, you can have a party of vaccinated people, right? Uh, if all your friends have been vaccinated, you [00:42:00] can now suddenly you can have a party, um, or grandma has been vaccinated. So Hey, we can go and visit grandma. Um, But that I think is, is problematic because, um, scientists have been saying at this moment, again, this could change, but right now they are

[00:42:22] not

[00:42:22] **Christine Daigle:** [00:42:22] certain, um, whether the vaccine reduces or even yeah.

[00:42:30] Um, eliminates the possibility of transmitting the virus for right now, what they know is that it protects you from developing the disease, or if you do develop it, it's going to be a mild form of the disease, which is highly deserved desirable. This is great. Um, but they don't know yet whether it will prevent transmission and, and, and what are, it will prevent you from even being a [00:43:00] carrier or, or to carry sufficient amount of the virus.

[00:43:04] To be a transmitter. So, so these are all questions they're looking at right now. So given this uncertainty to think that we can go visit grandma tomorrow with the toddlers,

because grandma got her vaccine is very problematic because maybe grandma will get the virus. Maybe she'll develop the disease.

[00:43:28] Okay. It might be a milder version, but guess what? Grandma, if she goes to a vaccinated people party, Um, she might then transmit it to other people who will then transmit it to their families because their families are also visiting. Right. Um, and so people are misunderstanding that's, uh, even with the vaccine because of the state of the science right now, uh, we need to continue to engage in the same, um, iconic, um, measures mask wearing [00:44:00] hand-washing social distancing or physical distancing, depending on the phrase you prefer.

[00:44:06] Um, we need to carry on with this until we know, um, what's the actual full impact of the vaccine is now of course, that means that we need to continue to be patient. Um, and patients is running low these days because it's been a long time. So what I'm finding hard these days, Is that, um, this is what, this is how you hear people talk about vaccination and the effect of the vaccination, um, comedians.

[00:44:44] Um, like Stephen Colbert, for example, um, you know, was, was making jokes about the Florida spring break gatherings and everything. And, and he's he's right. And criticizing those gatherings of young people. But then he says he jokes and says, well, [00:45:00] instead we should check the age and make sure they're over 80 and all vaccinated and send them to a spring break.

[00:45:05] Well, that too is problematic, Stephen. Right? And so this kind of public discourse that you see everywhere, um, it's also in the news and some of the news coverage and opinion pieces and everything there, there's a slight misunderstanding of what the vaccine can do for you. Um, and I think there should be, um, more effort put into really getting the message out that for right now, we don't know.

[00:45:33] And because we don't know, we need to be, to take precautions, uh, put in place the precautionary principle and can carry on with these measures as tired with them as we might be. So

[00:45:45] **Alison Innes:** [00:45:45] in some ways the vaccine really highlights how entangled we are, I suppose then, because, um, It's one of those things where it's not just about the individual person, but having [00:46:00] enough people vaccinated that the virus doesn't have anywhere to circulate.

[00:46:06] And I know that you have been thinking about that, not just in terms of local level, like we may think about our families are going back to work or school or that kind of thing, but it also requires some global thinking

[00:46:19] **Christine Daigle:** [00:46:19] you've been. Oh, absolutely. And this is something that the world health organization has been advocating for.

[00:46:27] And th there's actually, um, since the last time we talked about this, there's been actually more movement, um, in that direction where people are starting to understand that

indeed, we need to take a global approach to vaccination. We ought to have taken a global approach to the management of the pandemic, which we haven't done.

[00:46:49] There was great variation and how, um, restrictive measures were put in place across the globe, allowing for the virus to continue to circulate and to [00:47:00] mutate. Now that we have vaccination available. Um, available to whom, right. Um, it's not available globally. Uh, some countries have hoarded, those, um, countries with more financial means have, uh, been willing to pay more for, for doses and therefore

[00:47:22] have

[00:47:22] **Christine Daigle:** [00:47:22] received more.

[00:47:23] Um, and that is problematic. And so a market approach to acquiring, um, vaccine doses for,

[00:47:34] um,

[00:47:35] **Christine Daigle:** [00:47:35] national populations or local populations, um, may serve your local population, but in the long run, it won't. Um, because if the virus is allowed to continue to circulate in other populations across the globe, um, the more it circulates, the more likely it will mutate.

[00:47:54] And, uh, we're, we're not certain at this moment. Um, [00:48:00] As to whether there will be variance that will be resistant, um, that, that, that will, for which the vaccines will not be efficient. So, um, again, knowing that, um, we should make every effort to make vaccination available globally across the globe to all countries, no matter what their financial means.

[00:48:25] Um, that, that is, that is rather urgent and, and also making vaccination available to all age groups, which right now is a problem because there are not enough, um, those is available. Um, but that's another problem. It's, um, it's again, driven by the market approach. Uh, pharmaceuticals are in this business to make sure.

[00:48:49] First and foremost, um, it's used to be different. Um, research used to be conducted and public funded settings, [00:49:00] and then pharmaceuticals would be hired to produce whatever, um, medication researchers would come up with. But now that the research has been entrusted the pharmaceuticals and the claim that they need to make as much money as possible to fund this research.

[00:49:18] Um, we have allowed for, um, this market mentality to, um, in fact yes, um, research for medication and for vaccines, right? And so pharmaceuticals are, are saying, well, you know, we spent that much money developing this and that now we need to produce it. And so we need to yes. Cover our costs, but we also need to make profit.

[00:49:44] Well, when you have a global health emergency, This may not be time for profit. This, this should be time for, yes, you need to cover it, your costs. And we get that. Um, but let's, let's arrange for that to [00:50:00] happen. And let's also arrange for collaboration, um,

between companies, right. Um, and, and of course that goes against the whole idea of path and thing and, and whatnot and holding a recipe secrets.

[00:50:14] So that's, uh, one holds, um, the financial power over this. Right. Um, but, um, but there are labs and, and production facilities sitting idle as we speak that shouldn't happen. Um, they should be, um, put to work towards that, that effort, um, to provide vaccines to the world's population as a whole.

[00:50:41] **Alison Innes:** [00:50:41] Do you think that, um, that there's a risk that this will just, um, that this will further the divide between, uh, people in countries that have money that have, um, influence, um, that are able to access compared to people in [00:51:00] countries who, who don't have, have, uh, have those advantages?

[00:51:06] **Christine Daigle:** [00:51:06] Um, yes, I think so. Unfortunately, what the pandemic has done in many ways and with the current vaccination efforts, um, as well, is that it has just highlighted and exacerbated, uh, the existing inequities, um, that, that we had. And so, um, these inequities are not going away right now. They're they're reinforced and, um, it was hard to, um, To, um, get political support to address them before if the inequities are even worse, that I, I'm not, I'm not sure what's next.

[00:51:49] Um, I'm, I'm not very optimistic. Um, I have my good days and my bad days, some days I'm optimistic. And then, [00:52:00] then a few more days I'm like in there,

[00:52:03] **Alison Innes:** [00:52:03] it's not, but the headlines on Twitter are that morning,

[00:52:05] **Christine Daigle:** [00:52:05] right? Yeah. Yes, indeed. I mean, you know, like this, this mass shooting of Asian women yesterday, um, Put me in a very pessimistic mode this morning, for sure.

[00:52:19] So, um, so yes, it depends on the headlines, but, but I think that there, there needs to be a global reckoning that the way we've approached our lives and our relations with others, humans and non-humans, um, the world, the natural world, um, the, the, these were the wrong ways we, we need to change course. And I don't know if we, if we have the, um, the strength, the will to do that.

[00:52:54] Um, and, and when we think of how our societies and the [00:53:00] west anyways are structured, um, in neoliberal market terms, um, yeah, like how do you convince a Jeff basles. That he has enough money. Now, like if someone was doing the maths theater day, it's insane. The amount of money that this person owns. Why, why so much money?

[00:53:25] What do you do with it? Why couldn't you like with this kind of wealth you could do so much good. Right. And, and why aren't you doing that much? Good. And, and I just picked on basles, but there's many others like him, right? This is obscene. This kind of approach to existence is obscene. And okay. We can point that these, you know, multibillionaires, uh, You know, being sort of evil in this way.

[00:53:58] Um, not sort [00:54:00] of evil in this way. Um, but in many ways, our, our daily lives are also driven by a desire to accumulate things, to consume things, um, to, um, to

accumulate some wealth and, and what not. And if we, if we pause and think about what it is we actually need, do we need everything we think we need. Um, and perhaps the pandemic has been the occasion for some to reflect on that.

[00:54:39] You know, some have said it has made me rethink, um, the pace of my existence, um, being at home most of the time I've reconnected with my family, um, or I've slowed down on my work. Um, that's all good. Um, and I think that that's positive if people have [00:55:00] rethought things, I don't know. When was the last time you bought a piece of clothing, but for me that was a while ago, I'm always wearing mostly the same thing.

[00:55:09] Right. Um, and, and plus you can't really go shopping easily. So the temptations aren't there and all of that stuff. Right. So then, so there are circumstances created by defendant that maybe are conducive for rethinking some of our ways of life and those consuming ways and, and whatnot. But, but that may be true for those people who are privileged enough already, um, to not suffer from the circumstances in, in a way that that is, um, Life shattering.

[00:55:47] It has been life shattering for a lot of people. People have lost their jobs. They've lost their, uh, in the U S um, losing your job often meant losing your health insurance and, and, [00:56:00] um, you know, all kinds of other things like in countries where you don't have a good social, um, um, safety minutes, social safety nets.

[00:56:09] Yes. Thank you. Uh, to, to support you, um, you know, the, the, the pandemic might've been really crushing, uh, artists have had an incredibly hard time because, um, they, they haven't been able to perform or, um, uh, or put their work out there in a way that would allow them to sustain themselves and, and whatnot.

[00:56:32] And, and so, and it has looked like for a while, that culture was the last of the government's worries, right. To reopen concert, alls and, and, and things like that. Then. It's my understanding that now Quebec is about to reopen, um, uh, theaters and concert, alls, which with limited, um, access limited audiences, but still, this is a breath of fresh hair for, for artists, [00:57:00] um, will have had no livelihood, um, over the last year.

[00:57:04] So, you know, when, when you, when you don't know how you're going to pay your rent or mortgage or how you're going to put food on the table, um, and if you have health concerns and you've lost your health care, um, because you lost your job in the U S um, I don't know if that gives you enough mental, emotional space to reassess your motive existing.

[00:57:30] Um, so, you know, I've seen pieces by some. Uh, some thinkers about how, oh, this is a great moment for introspection and what not sure. I can do that as a privileged middle-class white woman who hasn't lost her job. Not sure that's accessible for everyone. Actually. I know it's not,

[00:57:55] I'm

[00:57:55] **Alison Innes:** [00:57:55] thinking of, of the, of the optimism in the early days of the [00:58:00] pandemic about how, um, you know, we, we, we would somehow have, have

all this time to do, to do all these things and it's really, it's really been, been the opposite just because the mental, the mental coping with the circumstances just can take, can take up so much of our, of our brains, uh, bandwidth.

[00:58:19] **Christine Daigle:** [00:58:19] Yes. And, um, it's funny, you were trying to say bandwidth and there was a bit of a lag, so you need to keep this, um, it's a perfect moment. Um, I would say yes, the mental load of coping with circumstances has been, um, very heavy and, and I think unexpectedly. So, um, but it takes me back to the notion of our interconnectivity and the way in which, um, our life circumstances have changed as a whole, as also [00:59:00] meant, uh, re um, a realignment of our relations with others.

[00:59:06] Um, and, and that's really important the way we relate with others has been changed, uh, profoundly. We're not in the presence of others in the way we have been when we are, we're concerned, we have to, uh, express care. Um, but we're also worried. Um, I find I have to go to. Um, to the dentist, then you feel like you're going into a, a war zone, um, that that just raises your concern level.

[00:59:41] Right. Um, and, and so, you know, all these things, if you have to travel somewhere like I did having to come here, uh, it was a 20 hour total travel time between my house and my apartment. So, you know, with being the presence of others in all kinds of different settings. [01:00:00] And so, you know, your anxiety, um, plays out in all kinds of different ways and, and, and then we've had to learn to, to stay in touch with others, but via these devices that we use, um, and sure we can stay in touch.

[01:00:19] We don't have to be completely isolated. Um, but, um, I think it's a good question to ask ourselves whether such technological, uh, replacements for in real life interactions, what are they do to same? And they might be a good approximation, I think, but they're definitely not the same. And so right now you're looking at me, but you're not looking at me just like I might be looking at you because I'm looking at the camera, but that means I'm not looking at you on my screen.

[01:00:59] Right. So [01:01:00] this kind of disconnect, um, right there. Um, I, I think we're going to have a hard time having conversations where we're intently looking at each other in the eyes, right. Because. We're no longer used to that, especially people live by themselves. Right. Um, so all these things, right. And, and, and I think you can see how we, how much we long for the presence of the other and for in real life conversation.

[01:01:28] I think everybody can relate to this experience of just going to the grocery store and having the time of your life. I mean, a chat with, with the grocery clerk or the cashier, right.

[01:01:43] **Alison Innes:** [01:01:43] It has become a very exciting event in my life. It's like people, I feel like I don't even have anything to say to you, but I just want to like, stand, you know, six feet apart.

[01:01:54] But like, you know, be near other people is like a huge,

[01:01:58] **Christine Daigle:** [01:01:58] huge, yeah, exactly. And, [01:02:00] and, and so that shows, I think how much our, our, uh, to the other, yeah. Has been profoundly impacted and, um, and so that too, uh, poses a lot of mental and emotional load on us as we are dealing with this, because we were used to have all of these interpersonal relations and in real life encounters, um, think of a crowded bus, um, or theater nights.

[01:02:32] I attended a concert in my head living room and I was thinking, oh, that's fun. It was a great concert, but it's not the same as being squished in the crowd in front of the stage. Right. And as much as when you are squished by that crowd, by the stage, you hate having someone else's elbow in your ribs. I was missing it the other night, right.

[01:02:57] Because we were, that's how [01:03:00] we have been constituted. That's our life experience. And now that has been taken away from us. And it's going to be interesting to see how we readjust to the presence of others. I don't know if I will not mind an elbow in my ribs in the future, if that is ever possible again,

[01:03:24] **Alison Innes:** [01:03:24] I was just thinking, well, you were talking of, of, of an example, but that I see whenever I go out to the drug store, the grocery store, um, and it's, it's perhaps a very Canadian example, but that, that struggle.

[01:03:39] Holding a door for somebody, how, how we have this, this kind of innate desire, this innate politeness that we want to hold the door for somebody, but like watching how people navigate that, trying to balance that human interaction with also like standing as far away from the door as they can. Well, they, you know, it's, it's [01:04:00] it kind of encapsulates this, this tension that we're having, I guess, between, between interacting with people and, and recognizing that, but then also recognizing that the risk, the risk that we, that, that we each pose to, to each other.

[01:04:18] **Christine Daigle:** [01:04:18] Yeah. And you know, what, thank you for this thought, because that, that's, that's an, a light of optimism in my day. Um, because. If we have these kinds of reflexes where we're like, oh yeah, let me hold the door for you. And then, oh, geez. I might be too close to you. If we're having this kind of reaction, then we're caring.

[01:04:42] And we do understand, um, the current circumstances and the various threats. Right. Um, and that's good. It's bad that we have to, to think about that. But I mean, that reaction in itself is good. It shows care [01:05:00] and it shows understanding. And if the majority of people are caring and understanding which some days I doubt, but if the majority are, then, then there's, there is hope that we can, um, move forward in, in a positive and constructive manner, but it's going to be hard and challenging and we're all tired.

[01:05:25] So, so I think we need to, um, Yeah, we just need to continue. Pushing on to use our namesakes Moto. Right. Um,

[01:05:38] **Alison Innes:** [01:05:38] yeah. Yeah. Well, I think that is a nice, um, optimistic, you know, then to end on, um, even though we don't know what's going to happen next, I

do look forward to chatting with you more in, uh, in, in the future, as, as things unfold and as we navigate whatever this new [01:06:00] normal is going to be going to look like for

[01:06:02] **Christine Daigle:** [01:06:02] us, there's hope we don't have to have a second anniversary special, but Hey, I mean, It's not an impossibility.

[01:06:14] Um, it's not very likely, but it's not impossible. And,

[01:06:20] and

[01:06:20] **Christine Daigle:** [01:06:20] I think maybe one way of dealing with pandemic fatigue is to stop thinking that it's going to be over next week. Um, but to think about it also long-term and say, well, okay, we might be in this for much longer than we thought now, what. Hmm. Yeah.

[01:06:37] **Alison Innes:** [01:06:37] Well, thank you very much for your words of wisdom and for sharing your, your thoughts with us and for joining us today with, uh, the various time difference and whatnot. I certainly appreciate you making the time and thank you as well to our listeners. For joining us. You can find us on social media, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram at Brock humanities.

[01:06:57] And we would love to hear from you and [01:07:00] what your thoughts are. And, um, we look forward to having you join us for the next episode.

[01:07:09] **Christine Daigle:** [01:07:09] Thank you so much for listening to forward. Find all of our footnotes links to more information transcripts and past episodes on our website, raw you.ca forward slash humanities.

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