

Deep Adaptation Q&A with Vanessa Andreotti hosted by Jem Bendell

Jem Bendell: Thank you everybody for joining us for our Deep Adaptation Q&A. This month I'm very pleased that Professor Vanessa Andreotti is joining us. She's been traveling, and so we had to make sure that the timing worked. Vanessa, where are you joining us from?

Vanessa Andreotti: I'm joining you from Písac in Peru.

Jem Bendell: In Peru? Fantastic. Thank you very much. For those of you who don't know, Vanessa holds a Canada Research Chair in race inequality and global change at the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. She's got extensive experience working across sectors internationally in areas of education related to global justice, community engagement, indigenous knowledge systems and internationalization. Her research is focusing on analyses of historical and systemic patterns of reproduction of knowledge and inequalities and how these mobilize global imaginaries that limit or enable different possibilities for our coexistence and for global change. I've been having a really interesting few days reading Vanessa's publication that she kindly gave me when we met a month ago or so, *Global Citizenship Education Otherwise Study Program*. The phrase here is 'gesturing towards decolonial futures'. So the concept of decolonization is something that we're going to cover today. It's something which I think many people don't really understand what it means. Or they'll think, 'oh, is that something that really needs to be done now?' And when I say that, I'm talking about people who are not engaged in the field of sort of international solidarity or activism, but even people involved in environmental activism, perhaps not necessarily aware of the critiques about the forms of activism and the ways that we approach topics of climate change, or global inequality, inclusivity, diversity, and so on. So Vanessa, I think it's really important, particularly for this new wave of climate activism that we're seeing, to hear from you and get a glimpse into the vast field of decolonization studies. And so thank you for joining us today on this call.

Vanessa Andreotti: I'm the one who's in gratitude here. I think that the connection between what you're doing in the Deep Adaptation movement and what has been happening in terms of decolonization, and decoloniality is extremely important, as you said. I'm here to try to give you a brief overview, but we'll see with the questions at the end what people want to know.

Jem Bendell: I'm wondering whether to start with theory, or actually, to start with something that's really real, because I know one of the criticisms I've heard of people who are involved in environmental activism from Western middle class lifestyles, or involved in Deep Adaptation in particular, is that it's quite conceptual, it's quite theoretical, it's anticipating terrible things. And it's about how we feel, and how we talk about this. And I just want to bring other realities into our conversation immediately. So I was wondering if, rather than going theoretical, you could talk about the communities who you're working with, who you might consider as somehow breaking down or being pulled apart, in part due to climate change. Or perhaps you see collapse as something that's something that's happened over time

and being done *to them* as such, and what we might learn from them. When I say 'we' I'm talking that many of the people on this call who are from the West. They may not be privileged, but most of us are from the West.

Vanessa Andreotti: One of the things that I think is important to say in the beginning is that there is a division between those who work with systemic historical violence and those who work with unsustainability. My research collectives are trying to put the two together and say we need to address them both together. Because if we can't learn from what has happened in terms of systemic violence, then we can't really understand where collapse comes from, and how the systems that provide us with confidence, securities and enjoyments have been built on the broken backs of other people and of the Earth itself. This is a connection that very few groups are doing. But that is very important. I've just come back from a gathering looking at ideas of what they would frame as the house of modernity falling. It's a network of about 10 indigenous communities that have a framework called Cinco Corras, which translates loosely as five cycles of healing. We actually started from the five concepts of justice: cognitive justice, affective justice, relational justice, as a precondition for ecological and economic justice to come. And the members of the community really said justice is not a concept that reflects what's needed. Partly it was because we were using a framework where you have individualism and collectivism, which are frameworks that are acceptable within modernity. But for them, it is metabolism, we are all part of this metabolic organism that we have forgotten about. Because we think of ourselves as separate. And the metabolism is sick. Because the metabolism is sick, we're sick as well. And we need to heal. And healing our thinking, our sentience, our feelings, our relationships, our exchanges, and our cycles is a precondition for us to exist differently. One of the things they say, for example, is that when non-indigenous people come and ask them what their proposal is, they're expecting a form of doing or a form of thinking. And when they come up with the response that it is actually healing. And it's a new form of existing, not just doing or thinking, people generally don't understand what that means.

We actually adapted one of the Deep Adaptation exercises that we did on the retreat for the community. We did the collapse exercise, but translated into a language that people would understand. In one station, you lose access to supermarkets, gas stations, and banks, in the other station you lose access to the energy grid, tap water and treated sewage. And as we were doing it, many said, 'well, this is not collapse for us, because this is our daily reality'. And some people actually felt quite offended that we were talking about it as collapse. Because they can survive in that environment. And they found ways of not just surviving but of establishing community and establishing practices that are extremely valuable for us as well in those environments. The last station that we had was the mental health collapse, where we start killing each other, and no matter what we did to prepare, there is going to be a lot of violence. And what they said was that if relationships are not healed, and not grounded, that's exactly what's going to happen. So there's no point preparing if we're not healing the ways that we are feeling, or our sentience, and accessing what we call in the project 'exiled capacities'. They access exiled capacities through ceremonies, through entheogenic practices, or through dances and festivals and other kinds of rituals. So if we don't have a different neurobiology to work with the metabolism from a position of visceral responsibility, then we will end up trying to protect what we've got and protect our families from violence erupting from diseased relationships. I think that's one example of a framework that gestures towards Deep Adaptation but from a very, very different onto-meta-physics, I would say.

Jem Bendell: Wow, you've gone right to the heart of the matter there. My Zoom collapsed on me and I had to restart it. I missed out a little bit about which community we're talking about, where you've been having these conversations and gaining this insight and advice?

Vanessa Andreotti: We have a network called Teya[?] de Cinco Corras. Most of the materials are only in Portuguese. Its ten indigenous communities that emerged out of a different network looking at the five justices framework. They all had an understanding that the house of modernity was going to fall and that the house of modernity was going to fall on them first, because this house was built on their back.

Jem Bendell: For those who don't know what modernity means in your framework. Could you just say what it means for you or what it means to them when they use it? Because it's kind of shorthand for a whole range of things, isn't it?

Vanessa Andreotti: Yes. The shorthand of the shorthand is, and the way that they refer to it in the in the project, is that 'white people's house' basically is going to collapse. The settlers' house is going to collapse because it's unsustainable. And its maintenance is predicated on continuous violence. The framework we use is that this house is based on a foundation of separability. There's nation states and artificial borders being imposed on one carrying wall. The other carrying a wall is universal reason. One form of rationality and single story of progress, development and human evolution also being imposed. The current roof is the roof of shareholder financial capitalism, which is structurally damaged because it depends on exponential growth and consumption to be maintained. This house depends on extraction and expropriation to be built. It's exceeding the limits of the planet. But at the same time, we have to pay attention to the dynamics within the house. There are the stairs of social mobility, for example, that are then perceived as the purpose of life. And there are promises of a global middle class for all, which do not consider the limits of the planet. So there are lots of crises right now in the house. The sewage pipes are blocked and the shit is coming out. So people in the house have already put all the waste back into the planet. People who are not in the house are either wanting to come in or mostly have lost the capacity to survive outside.

Jem Bendell: This is a massive, holistic, deep, challenging critique of where so many people are coming from, their worldview. So many real deep assumptions about themselves and about progress in society that perhaps people hadn't even realized. A lot of people are coming to a concern about climate change, particularly in the West now, where it's quite new for them. And so even to question capitalism is quite radical. But you're going way deeper than that, to actually challenge the very way we just carry about our lives and think about ourselves. You talk about neurobiology, the way that we're wired or the way that we respond to perception of threat. There's an invitation from the critiques that you've shared, but also from the wisdom from the people you're talking to, to totally transform how we are in the world. And you even mentioned entheogenic substances, but also spiritual dance and all sorts of things. So how does it how does it work for you, when you're at a Western University in Canada? When you're talking to people, maybe who are a bit worried about what climate change means with local forest fires or food prices going up, and then you're bringing this massive global critique and invitation to connect with and learn from indigenous peoples in Peru, how is that working out for you?

Vanessa Andreotti: I think the timing is right to do these things. For example, with the fires in the Amazon, the University was very quick to actually ask and support somebody coming from this network who is suffering the effects of the fires to come to the University and talk. On the other hand, there's also a lot of interest in psychedelic research at the moment. So when [?] came to my university, it was booked up. There were no seats left in five minutes when they started selling the tickets, and they sold the tickets. There is a momentum in a window where we're talking about these things and its not perceived to be esoteric. I think likely it is because of a global mental health crisis too. People are looking for ways of addressing the anxiety and the depression of having to deal with imminent end of the world as we know. Which is not the end of the world, period. It's the end of something.

Jem Bendell: I've seen very strange, unusual data like a YouGov poll that said that the majority of people in 24 out of 28 countries think that climate change will hurt themselves in their own lives, and will trigger wars. If this kind of research is backed up by other opinion polls, then we are seeing a real, as you say, global anxiety. And therefore, yes, a mental health issue. And so you find that people are ready for deep critical questions. That could go in a number of ways though couldn't it Vanessa? I mean, it could be that people turn away from global solidarity and curiosity about the so-called other, and turn inward and just want to protect them and theirs. How do you invite people that are feeling fear about the future, as many people in the Deep Adaptation conversation do, into having this appetite for actually letting go of everything that we thought we knew and welcoming a whole different way of being in the world?

Vanessa Andreotti: First of all, I think one thing that you mentioned before that has been our concern is the hijacking of this agenda by the right and the far right, specifically. That then manipulates fear and gets people to be polarized. This is already happening in Brazil and in many other places. This divides communities and divides families in very cruel ways. This is something we're keeping on the table to see. But what they say there is that the polarization exacerbates the same way of being. It takes it to its limits because it's the unconscious of people coming up. And I think we are realizing that the Cartesian person really only exists in a certain context. Once we are afraid of losing things, it's unconscious fears and insecurities that come up. And the response to that, from this community, it is not of segregation and isolation. They invite people in, and they invite people into processes of cleansing and healing out of necessity. Because they know that if we allow this exacerbation to reach a limit, it will become extremely dangerous for all of us. So there is an urgency there. There are two issues. There is an issue of translation of what they are offering and how people perceive them. That is an educational issue that we're working on. And there's also an issue of consumption. So a lot of people want these things but are coming with a consumptive attitude. I'm not just talking about consumption of stuff and objects, but I'm talking about the consumption of knowledge, of relationships, of experiences, as the mode of existing in the world that we learn inside that house. Once you approach this, even the entheogenics in that way, it doesn't have the same effect. The invitation of the community for the entheogenics, for example, is that you cleanse yourself so that you can be of use to the metabolism for others. You don't do that to increase your creativity or functionality within the capitalist system.

Jem Bendell: where metabolism is used as the word for the planet Earth, or the life force, or something more local?

Vanessa Andreotti: It is used as the planet and beyond. Depending on the context, we use land. Land is not just the soil. Land is the body. Land is the animals. Land is the trees. Land is the forest, and land is what has been and what will be. So we shifted it to metabolism. Because when people think about land, they still think about property or resource, and metabolism is alive. The idea is that this metabolism is bio intelligent, that we are part of it, that it can speak through us once we are decluttered from all these other things we are using to cope with traumas. Some of them are collective and historical, some of them are individual. They have techniques and practices, not knowledge systems, but practices, that can help us declutter. We talk about decenter, desire, declutter and discern.

Jem Bendell: I'm involved in this Deep Adaptation forum, which didn't exist seven months ago. Now it's grown, we have about 10,000 people engaged in our various different platforms. And the question has come up about why is it that that we are fairly middle class and Western? I don't want to erase the diversity that's already in this network. But still, we are still quite Western. I was wondering, what do we do about that? And then there's two questions already. One is, if we turn our attention to the wisdoms and the deep critiques that you're that you're connected to, and you're offering. I do remember how there's a niche in the West that's existed for ages, which is middle class people who are in touch with indigenous peoples wisdoms, and that actually is seen therefore as taking them away from connection and solidarity and being real with working class communities in their own countries. So there's almost like these two different things to respond to: One is getting real and getting engaged in the working classes in where your based, but also the other is this much more deeper critique about the whole of modernity that you're offering. Is there a cross cutting bit of guidance that you could give? Because I was wondering Is that just simply that people like me need to pay more attention to all the currently underprivileged, in terms of the ability to communicate to be heard to influence all the different groups and peoples and so on? Or is there any advice you could give, as we are going to go into a strategic review and decide what on earth should we be doing in 2020?

Vanessa Andreotti: It is very complex, as you said, and complicated. There are several layers of issues and problems that we haven't been able yet to sit with. For example, the issue of inclusion is one that is difficult. Generally, even with my body inside the university, the idea is that you include the diverse body, but business goes on as usual. So you're there at the service of other people. And generally, for white middle class learning you are instrumentalized for that learning. And if you refuse to do that, then you're punished, right? So people usually think about racism as like, I don't like white people. But actually in an institution, and I think it would be the same in a Deep Adaptation movement, it's the perception that you're coming in through the back door, you are here to serve, and if you make a mistake you don't have the benefit of the doubt. You're punished straightaway. Or if you refuse to do what you're supposed to do, then you're punished straightaway. So there's that problem there, that it can't be this relationship, it can't be this transaction. And people who are not used to seeing how the dominant system is violent need to learn how even the expectations that they put on inclusion are violent on the body of those who are included. On the other hand, there are also layers of the struggle of people of color and black people and indigenous people. There's a political layer where people have to operate within the discourses that are given to them in a specific struggle that we're not up there making. And then there is another layer, which is existential, which is the layer that these communities that I'm working with are working on.

The communities I'm working on are of people who have been through the political struggle and given up basically after saying this is not going to go anywhere. We need to go back to the trunk of this, and it is a question of existence. It's not a question of politics for them. But there are other people in their communities who continue the political struggle. And will continue to draw the lines that need to be drawn to protect the territories, to protect the people from racism or genocide now with Bolsonaro wanting to invade indigenous lands, to go and stay in solidarity with NGOs and lawyers to try to push back on what the government wants to do. So there are lots of things that need to be done. And lots of complexities we need to sit with. But I think for people who have not thought about these issues before, we have in that booklet materials that show the three denials. We have also included another one. So there's the denial of systemic violence. We're using denial in terms of a sanctioned ignorance, we need to do our homework in relation to that to understand how we got to the place that we are now. Not just wanting to jump into a solution or preparation for the collapse, but we need to understand why we are getting to collapse right now. The second one is sustainability. Why is it that we denied the limits of the planet? And how is it that the governments are still denying it? Then the third one is the denial of entanglement, the denial of the metabolism itself. How on earth did you come to see ourselves as separate from this, as separate from each other, as separate from the other animals, as separate from the Earth. And the fourth denial that we included is the denial of the magnitude of the problem. So the idea that we need quick fixes, and easy solutions, or that we need to look good, feel good, and do good and move forward? This this is all getting in the way of us really growing up.

Jem Bendell: I'm involved in a lot of conversations with people about how we affect change on climate at scale. There is this assumption that we're not somehow complicit. And we're not somehow involved in all the bad stuff. And also a yearning to find a simple story of feeling still okay about oneself. And that means feeling that one is right and that one is agentic. I mean, it's okay to have that going on, but maybe not to be unconscious that that's what's happening when we're looking at what to do. I just want to say that I've got a few questions that people have sent to Matthew, only three. But please, in the next few minutes, put your questions in the chat box. We'll send them to Matthew, and then I will call you in a moment. Vanessa, I just wanted to ask you, before we move over to everyone else, the field of climate justice has been around for a while. And I remember 10 years ago, the emphasis was about contraction and convergence and how the West has caused the problem more than everywhere else and therefore that we should cut carbon more and we should fund other countries to do so. Deep Adaptation is in a different realm, which is saying, this is already damaging societies, and it's going to get far worse. I was wondering, how does your analysis about decolonizing the conversation relate to the justice question. What does climate justice looked like on adaptation? And who should decide? Who should we be listening to to tell us what is fair and just on the adaptation agenda?

Vanessa Andreotti: I think the journey starts with the systemic historical and ongoing violence. addressing that denial, basically that foreclosure. Because if we don't understand how violence operates, even the concept of justice becomes extremely superficial. I still use justice in academic work because it makes more sense to talk about that in the West than talking about healing. Healing can very quickly become very new age and not in a very good way because then it's all about the self again, and the inner sense of the self, which is something we're trying to move away from. That's why we talk a lot about shit. So we say that there is individual shit we need to compost and there is collective shit that we need to compost. We need to figure out how to compost individual shits so that

we can show up differently to compost the affective cognitive and relational shit that we have to compost, which creates the economic and ecological problems that we're facing. So justice then starts, I think, from a position of wanting to show up differently for a very, very massive issue, and having the stamina to do that. Now, if justice is a teleological process from A to B, so okay, I'll do that, and it's going to be a checklist. Lots of people ask for checklists. A checklist so that I can feel good about myself again, so that I don't feel complicit. This is actually part of the problem. If we're all in the same metabolism, then we are all complicit with the metabolism being sick. We're all sick. Therefore, we need to start from a grown up position, not an infantilized position. Because the house actually itself infantilizes us to be able to want to stay in the playground. To feel good, to look good, to do good, and to move forward. What about instead of moving forward, we dig deeper and take responsibility. So that in viscerally, not just for our species, but for all species, there is a chance this can be interrupted. We will do what is needed rather than what we want to do. There's one last analogy that we use here in Peru. It might look bad, no, but it actually helps pedagogically. We were waiting to cross a very busy road here, very close to here, actually. And there was a group of 10 of us. And we were waiting for the traffic to stop a little bit. But this very little dog decided to cross the street. And it was really interesting to observe the response of people in the group who already have the critique that we were working on together. So some people just closed their eyes, others closed their ears, or closed their mouth. Some people froze. Other people just had this different reaction that they couldn't move, but they had a jolt. And one person went to the middle of the road and stopped traffic. And the person who did that didn't calculate whether or not she was going to get hurt, or what was going to happen. She just stopped traffic, the dog passed, and she went after the dog, and didn't even realize she had done it. We will need more people who can stop traffic, even if it goes against their self-interest. My interest is in what kind of education, and what kind of learning process we need to be able to declutter to that level.

Jem Bendell: We have a question coming in on that. It's from my colleague, who you've met, Katie Carr. So we'll take a question from Katie. Everybody else also please, if you've got a question inside you, go on be brave. Just put it in the chat, and you might get selected. We've got about 20 or 25 minutes to go.

Katie Carr: Hi, Vanessa. I've got two questions. I don't know which one you wanted. I'm going to go with my second one because its more relevant to what you were just talking about. My question is, how do you invite people into voluntary reconfiguration of the self, which is obliteration of the self? And how do you do in a non-violent way?

Vanessa Andreotti: \$10 million question. We start with a lighter invitation to shed your arrogance and poop your vanity. We use of humor a lot to do that. We're already working with people who are looking at for whom, what worked before, is not working today. This is not something you just go around and say, 'okay, everybody, let's just try to dissolve the self that we've learned and find a more layered way of sensing the self'. We do invitations that are 'hook invitations' to see who is actually looking for that. But this is not something you put down people's throats basically. That's what we've learned in the long haul. Making the invitation clear has helped a lot. Before we were finding it very difficult because we would put something in front of people and people would say, 'okay, that's for me to feel good, for me to look good, and for me to do good, and for us to move forward'. And now we've learned that that projection of what we're doing actually wastes a lot of resources and a lot of time and a lot of energy.

So now we are saying, 'look, not everybody needs to do this'. Right now we're working with people who want to dig deeper, and to relate wider. If that is what's calling you, then maybe what we're doing might be interesting for you. In terms of scalability, we have a question of momentum. I think there's going to be a momentum where things that used to work are not going to work anymore. Where more people will want this kind of thing. But we need to learn now so that by the time more people can have it, we can hold space for more people, we know better what we're doing. Because currently it's a little bit like we're touching things in the dark when dealing with the unconscious. So we're trying to weave different kinds of practices that have been around but also put a decolonial perspective on them and a metabolic perspective on them. Things that, for example, came up in the Deep Adaptation retreat: family constellation, or even Boal's Theater of the Oppressed, the rainbow of desire. There are many other techniques that have been around, but they're still focusing on an anthropocentric and not necessarily decolonial perspective. But once we can translate them into this idea of preparing for the end of the world as we know it and the dissolution of the self, they can be extremely useful in what we will be doing together. But you hit a spot there.

Jem Bendell: Fascinating. And thank you, Katie for the question. And Vanessa for that reflective answer. I'm going to go to Tom now because his question is connected, I think. There are institutions out there that relate to reconfiguring the self. And what are they Tom, and what's your question?

Tom: Thanks, Jem. Hi, Vanessa. Tom, from London, England. I had a question in two parts relating to religion, however you want to take that word in all its breadth and tension. The first part was about the indigenous communities that you're working with. I have a question about how much they are looking backwards, or seeking to go backwards, to an older way of being and their ancient traditions. Or to what extent they're reinventing those traditions for present and future challenges. So there's that question about those communities. The second part is a question about mainstream religious traditions. I'll leave it up to you to address that. But I was wondering whether you think they are equipped, or have resources to draw on, even if it needs reinventing, that might help as well. Or whether you see that the only hope is with the indigenous peoples who've held on to that older way of being and not been so infected.

Vanessa Andreotti: I think that the best way to respond to you is with a distinction that we make in the project about modernity, which focuses on form, and other traditions, which focus on the direction of things. So if you are trying to create a perfect form that is going to be permanent, then you're using language to index things and create things that will last. If you're using language in the movement kind of way, then the question really changes. The 'backward' and 'forward' also go because people are just responding to a context and the movements of a context. People would say, for example, the internet is extremely important for the movement. But the relationship we have with the forest, and with the other animals, and with the enchanted ones, which are the spirits around that, the Old One, the Ancient One, was much deeper than the one we have now. So it's a movement where we go backward and forward. It's complicated. We go deeper, probably. And we also go wider in terms of using technology differently. Once I had an elder showing me a mobile saying, 'what do you think this is?' I was like, what does she want me to say? Should I just say that we shouldn't use mobiles. In the end, what she wanted was to say that this is blood minerals. This is the blood of Mother Earth. And then she said, do you throw it away? And I sat and I said, maybe. She said, no you use it. You use it to stop the violence. So that's

the kind of thing that happens in relation to the first question. In terms of the second question, I think in every religion there is transcendence and imminence happening everywhere. In Christianity there are different strands. In Umbanda, which is the Afro religion here, there are different strands that go either towards more form or more the directionality of things. I'm seeing the directionality as getting together to say, look, we need something else. They work more with mystery and unknowability, not just the unknown but the unknowable. they can get together in, we were talking about that just in the gathering, it's like the sacredness of the mixture, of not really paying so much attention to form, but to where it's taking us. And if it's taking us to more responsibility, more visceral responsibility, if it's taking us towards being together to face the storm that is coming, then they would they would connect somehow away from separability. But the form religions that say there's always this one truth, and it's this truth, and my truth is not your truth, therefore you stay over there. They exacerbate the polarization. And that has happened in Brazil, when, for example, in the 60s and 70s liberation theology, which is a Christian strand, worked really well with Afro descendant religions, to take care of poor people and create community at the base. Once this shifted towards representational democracy, after the dictatorship was over, then evangelical movements came in with a Protestant work ethic, which is much more individualized and much more dogmatic. And that then broke the communities and many people say that that's the reason why we have Bolsonaro, the far-right president, being elected today. Does that help?

Jem Bendell: Thank you. You're being given huge questions to answer. Thank you, Tom, for the question. I am just looking at the time. I've been telling Matthew, my colleague, that maybe we couldn't fit two more questions in. Well, let's give it a go. So Christopher, you have you have two questions. I'm interested in the first one. So over to you, Christopher.

Christopher: Hi. Thanks to Joanna Macy and you Jem, I've been able to grieve about my upbringing. I just wonder, does my generation need to die off to be able to allow something new to come? I'm someone who's had near death experience, so I know you can shift a lot. But my layers of colonization from day one are of being a consumer of everything: people, workshops, stuff, life, everything in this room. I sometimes wonder, can I uncouple from all that? Really?

Vanessa Andreotti: That's a very good question. I don't know how deep this is in our unconscious. So we're trying experiments upon experiments to see what we can do to create that situation of the stopping of the traffic thing. But I've seen people of all generations do that. I like coming from this experience in the gathering and seeing how people treat the elders there. The idea of discardability is completely out of the question in that sense. They do have a sense of who are the wiser elders who go deep and who are the elders who have a different life and who just need care. And it was very humbling for me because it made me realize how much more care I should be giving my parents. It didn't really matter at a certain age what you're even doing or saying. You received the respect that you deserve because your life is honored. And that's what I think we should take away. Not in any different direction from that. I think that is a direction of the metabolism.

Jem Bendell: Could we find any sort of meaning from that process of separation? The kind that we've created with modernity and civilization as we know it, or call it now. Is there anything in it that was

somehow necessary, was somehow life, the metabolism, doing its thing in some way, so that we can honor it and say goodbye?

Vanessa Andreotti: We talk about hospicing a lot. Providing palliative care to the system dying. And that's where most of the lessons come because we cannot be afraid of death in that case. So if you're not afraid of death, then we can actually look at what has happened and open the space with this death to something new. But opening the space without this learning, this deep learning and unlearning that needs to take place, will just open the space for more of the same. The same thing will come back to teach us the lessons that we have failed to learn again. So providing palliative care, what we say generally in the project is that it's not glamorous. It is actually like sometimes cleaning vomit and diarrhea. And it's not something somebody will do to put in their Facebook page or to be agentic or innocent. And you sit with the person to hear the stories and sometimes the person's kicking and screaming not wanting to go. And sometimes there's peace, and there's calm, and there's a profound reflection on what has happened. So how do we create the conditions for more palliative carers who are ready to do what's needed? Not that they want to do.

Jem Bendell: That takes me back to the start when you told me about the wisdom and the suggestions coming from the indigenous communities you're working with. Rather than there being anger, blame, retribution, there's a desire to offer wisdom, healing. And so that sense that we are all part of the same thing, and that there is an opportunity for people who have been playing a role within modernity, at the top of the pile, some of us in modernity, to learn and to find new forms of meaning, as everything collapses.

Vanessa Andreotti: We talk about sensefulness. I know meaningfulness has become a very important thing. But it is related then to articulated languaging or wording. Often when we say 'meaning' people think that it's something that can be apprehended, basically. And we've been talking about sensefulness because there are lots of ways that the body makes sense that do not make sense in a meaningful way. So you can find sensefulness in that. However, it is important at this point to say that in another layer, there is a political movement for redress that is extremely important that pushes the politics and pushes policies and relationships to the brink of something. Because sometimes people say okay, so it's all about being one, and those who are pushing are wrong. No, those who are pushing are really important. And it's really important to remember that if we're going to be one, we are one with the flowers, the whales, the sun and the moon, but also with the violence and the shit. That is what is necessary to remember.

Jem Bendell: Absolutely. Not too many people say that and it's quite a powerful thing that comes through in your pamphlet, as well. And also when we've talked. We only have a few minutes to go. Three minutes. And so final question, please very quickly and a quick answer because we have to be off. Mothiur Rahman, who works with Extinction Rebellion. Thank you for joining us. Over to you.

Mothiur Rahman: Hi Vanessa. I wrote the question in the chat. It's a problem that I'm finding within some of the groups in Extinction Rebellion. Some are focusing so much on Demand One, which is tell the truth. The truth is getting out there about climate collapse, but the systems of power aren't changing sufficiently. Potentially big businesses are already moving to investing in renewables and moving their

pension funds to renewables, which then the metals and other things are needed in countries like Chile, where there's already force coming out. So what is the risk in the idea of decolonial futures, in plural, that we missed the opportunity? That we just continue this operation, that the West will look away again, and just say, well, we need to protect ourselves. And this is one way by investing in renewables. Just further separation, rather than a coming together.

Jem Bendell: Thank you. And, wow, what a question! You've got one minute.

Vanessa Andreotti: There are many understandings of decolonization. And there are some facts that can help disentangle that. But the understanding that I'm working from is precisely the undoing of separability. So the recolonization that we're talking about, that you are talking about in terms of capitalism shifting in order to recolonize, is part of a colonial process. That is not gesturing towards a decolonial future or decolonial futures. We use the term futures because we don't know what it's going to look like. That's why we keep it open. But I can suggest a couple of texts that talk about different understandings. It's not about replacement of one knowledge by another. It's about a different way of being. But different people would define it very differently. It's that multiple layered struggle. And some of these layers, as I said before, are really important. The ones that push because they open up spaces where we can actually do the work. If they were not there, people would be too complacent. So it's paradoxical and contradictory. But I think the point that we're trying to make is that shifting the direction and the vitality of it towards a metabolic intelligence that can help us exist very differently.

Jem Bendell: It's a key issue. And I'm sorry that we don't have more time to discuss it. On the Deep Adaptation forum there'll be a thread on this because tomorrow I'm publishing a blog related to the kind of issues we're talking about. And we'll be talking about Extinction Rebellion and climate justice and decolonization. So I'll make sure that I post that in all the different platforms we have. So yeah, wow, what a what a fascinating hour Vanessa. That went really fast. Thank you for joining us. And thank you everyone for joining us. This video is going to be online tonight. It's going to be on our YouTube channel. I'll also put it on my blog jembendell.com tonight, so people can find it. So please share it with everybody. And those of you who want to support us doing all this into next year. Remember our crowdfund is happening. Katie, you've been putting some really useful links in there. Can you put our crowdfunding campaign? That would be brilliant. Thank you, Vanessa. Cheers, everybody. And see you next month for Charles Eisenstein, which I'm sure will be very interesting too. Bye bye.