

The End Transcript

Lydia Moyer [00:01:29] When we talk about climate change, we're really talking about we're not really talking about saving the Earth. I think that that sort of language is a misnaming of the problem. We're really talking about saving the human species and making sure that we have a planet that we can still inhabit.

Willis Jenkins [00:01:50] What are the main contributors of contemporary environmental damage? I mean, I guess in aggregate, you could say generally human overshoot. So human over taking of capacities of land and water, ecosystems and really atmospheric systems to.

Lydia Moyer [00:02:17] The problem seems to be that the sort of capitalist business mindset of short-term gain and profit, so thinking like six months like a corporation does for the next shareholders meeting, really thinking about the government and its environmental responsibilities in that way when really, environmental concerns are very long-term concerns. There seems to be a lot of emphasis on individual gain. Whether that is for the politicians themselves or for corporations that they're working closely with or being lobbied by.

Willis Jenkins [00:03:00] I mean, a perverse thing about environmental damage is that it intensifies existing inequalities, so those who are the most vulnerable tend to suffer the first and worst consequences of environmental deterioration or disruption or disturbance.

Willis Jenkins [00:03:26] In United States, the statistically most significant predictor of exposure to toxic pollution is race, and that would be like a particular finding that is generalized around the world, that the socially marginal usually suffer the first and worst consequences of environmental problems. Key environmental justice claim is that the stakeholders of a project, that is to say, the people who are affected by a project must be represented in the processes of decision making around it. And one of the key claims is that they often are not, that they are excluded from it, if not formally, then materially and that means there's two perversities of that. One is that those who have the most ability to do something about these problems have the least incentive in front of them.

Willis Jenkins [00:04:23] Those who stand to suffer most or are most vulnerable to environmental issues need to have representation and political capacity to guide the response to those issues.

Lydia Moyer [00:04:40] There are many environmental laws on the books, and one of the problems is that they're not enforced. And it seems like political timelines are much more concerned with elections, tax seasons and that kind of thing, rather than with actual long-term well-being.

Willis Jenkins [00:04:59] As much of a struggle as it is to get to create political systems in which the most vulnerable have real political power, it's another step altogether for future generations to have political power in present-day decision-making processes.

[00:05:19] I mean, for more than a century, there's been environmental thought that has worried about the future of, let's say, Western civilizations. But especially the last couple of decades, as people see the stalled global response to climate change and the acceleration of the consequences of climate change, which again, first and worst come to marginalized people, often people of color. It's often framed as the collapse of human civilization. But it's

really it really is like the collapse of North Atlantic industrial civilizations and those that have followed that same pattern. You can make the case that there's a kind of unraveling already.

Willis Jenkins [00:06:14] Apocalypse in Greek means it just means revelation, the revelation of things. So in ordinary popular culture, use popular means like. Some terrible, cataclysmic end of things. Right, like a really bad catastrophe has happened. But that's that's a little bit at odds from how the readers of the Apocalypse of John, the Book of Revelation, would have received it. For them, it was probably something more like the unveiling of the true nature of reality. And so instead of meaning to inspire fear about a terrible and coming, it was rather meant to inspire courage.

Lydia Moyer [00:06:54] When I think about places like Chernobyl, where the big nuclear disaster was, people were cleared out of there and by and large haven't been allowed back in. And it's become what's sometimes referred to as an involuntary park. But a planet that isn't habitable by humans is not necessarily almost certainly not a planet that isn't habitable by other creatures. All kinds of flora and fauna. So this idea of the whole earth as an involuntary park. Sounds beautiful to me, but of course, you know, I say that with the with consciousness and their perception of a human, so it's sort of an ironic thing to think about how beautiful it would be in that beauty. I can only imagine that beauty through human eyes.

Willis Jenkins [00:07:40] Let us say modern or settler or industrial conceptions of humanity are not the only ones. And there's other ways of being human with the living world. And we need to find a ways to them. And there's ways of living beyond the vision of the human that we have inherited in the modern industrial west. And that's a post human future that's worth fighting for.