

## **'Place, Space and Community': a study of Extinction Rebellion and Climate Activism**

### **A verbatim theatre piece performed by Rachel Morgan and Em Fawsitt**

Extinction Rebellion Script – this is written as Verbatim theatre from anonymised data collected of at Extinction Rebellion's Autumn Uprising in London, 2019. The theatre performance occurred as part of a paper presentation at the Interdisciplinary Research Network Conference at CCCU on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

e. It will go down in history books. Provided of course we have history books to go down in. Provided, of course, we have a future.

r. Being here in Extinction Rebellion is important, whatever you actually do,... to protest or not – it's not a political statement: it's an existential one. So stand up and say something. Nevermind if it's been said before. Speak up on your own behalf. Take it very personally

e. I came here to meet people who think like me. Believe as I do, that there is a better way to do things. There might be a collection of disparate ideas about climate change and the environment, ideas, and facts but at the end of the day we are, once again, pitifully behind the times.

r. Let's not forget that the stakes we're playing for are huge. Our fatigue and our shame could mean the end of us. The end of our children and our children's children. Of everything we love. We have to reach within ourselves and find the strength to think, to fight. My job is to keep our kids safe. I feel this is the best I can do. I have a desire to advance towards change and I feel as though this is the only way I can keep them safe. The only way to be heard.

e. I feel terrified about the climate crisis. At home, I feel alone and the feelings I get can be overwhelming. It can be lonely keeping myself focused and active on environmental issues – people are very negative towards you. In one way being here concentrates the feeling of terror but gives me a way to express myself as part of a larger community. People come and go, but we all share a connection. We set up camp in the park last night, we held a peoples' assembly, hundreds of tents, a debate and a planning session for some actions. That whole thing represents for me how the world could be organised, you know, like real democracy operating in communities. This is it in action, and that's why it feels

important to me to be here. I work, I'm a student, but I still come here when I can to be a part of it. I feel that I need to be here, to be nourished, energised and to contribute something.

r. No fuck that, I'm damn angry about this. It makes my blood boil. Physically, being here doesn't change how I always feel about it. I have a sense of rage, resentment, anger, despair. A whole range of emotions, but at least this is a way to share them. To me, physically being here firms up my beliefs and the outrage I have about the lack of action by the government. Being here heightens the urgency of the cause that I stand for and justifies me taking direct action.

e. My feelings are the same whether I am here or not. I think what changes for me is, at home I feel resigned to the problems we face, but with others, I realise that I'm not and it lifts me up. But I need to stop. I need to be aware of my emotions, anger, rage, despair, sadness. I think they have a right to be heard. I need to be super-aware emotionally if I take part, because being non-violent is so important to how we rebel against the climate crisis. Otherwise, we'd lose the upper-hand and it lessens the power of the protest. People wouldn't listen if we got mad, what we are trying to say would just get dismissed and lost.

r. We were here. At this place. At this time. Coming to the protest makes me feel better about the situation facing us somehow. Personally, I feel proud to be here. I don't want to be asked later, what did you do about the climate crisis - nothing? I would feel guilty and ashamed about that. So, personal pride is a big thing for me, I feel really proud of what I'm doing and I'll continue to support the rebellion in whatever way I can after the camp.

r&e. At the end of the day, this world of ours is four billion, six hundred million years old. It could end in an afternoon.

r&e. But hey?

You know at least I feel like I tried.

Written and performed by Rachel Morgan and Em Fawsitt

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