Rebel or Sink?

Belonging, relational subjectivities and the politics of knowledge in Extinction Rebellion Netherlands

A Research Paper presented by:

Fleur Zantvoort
The Netherlands

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Major:

Social Justice Perspectives: Human Rights, Gender and Conflict Studies
SJP

Specialization:

Environment and Sustainable Development

Members of the Examining Committee:

Rosalba Icaza
Wendy Harcourt

The Hague, The Netherlands
December 2019

Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the International Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

Inquiries:

International Institute of Social Studies
P.O. Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
The Netherlands

t: +31 70 426 0460
e: info@iss.nl
w: www.iss.nl
fb: http://www.facebook.com/iss.nl
twitter: @issnl

Location:

Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
The Netherlands

Acknowledgments

First of all, my sincerest gratitude goes out to all of my fellow rebels who made this Research Paper possible; for lending their perspectives through interviews and conversations, allowing me to bounce my ideas off of them, and for providing me with a loving and caring community. I am also particularly grateful to everyone within XRNL and beyond who provided me with advice and encouragement in the early stages of this research. Thank you all for being the wonderful humans that you are, for trusting me and for showing me how we can be otherwise together while building a better world. Being in open rebellion against the government, even if it's just in the beginning stages, can be difficult, intense and deeply emotional. There were times when I questioned what I was doing, and felt like just giving up and walking away. But unfailingly, all of your love, the collective power, deep care and incredible devotion, the exhilaration of taking action together and surmounting our struggles together never failed to get me back on my feet and running every single time.

My heart also goes out to the wider movement for social and climate justice, I have learned and grown so much over the past year from being and resisting by your side. I am eternally indebted to the frontline communities defending their lands and their lives that are leading us the way, to the ones that came before and the ones yet to come – thank you so much for your love and your courage. Finally, I am grateful for the infinite life forms, entities, and processes that constitute this earth, that make it what it is and that make my own existence possible; without whom we would have nothing worth fighting for.

I also want to thank my friends at ISS for always being by my side, for our feminist adventures and the many to come, and the many meals, laughs, walks, coffees, tears and doubts shared, and particularly to my peer reviewers for always being on point in their comments. For keeping me safe and sane when trying to combine activism and academia was threatening to swallow me whole, for celebrating our successes together and coming together through our many frustrations and doubts, I could not have done it without your support.

To my parents and my family, for teaching me to respect and take care of the earth, each other and of myself, and for never failing to support me to pursue my dreams. And to my partner for always believing in me, for all the love and growth, and for providing me a safe haven to regenerate whenever I need it.

Finally, thank you to my supervisor, Rosalba Icaza, for helping me untangle my thoughts and pointing me in the right direction, for your words of encouragement and critical reflections, and to Wendy Harcourt for your many comments and for sharing my excitement about Extinction Rebellion.

Contents

List of Figures

List of Appendices

List of Acronyms

XR	Extinction Rebellion
XRNL	Extinction Rebellion Netherlands
XRUK	Extinction Rebellion United Kingdom
RC	Regenerative Culture

Abstract

A new wave of climate and environmental activism is sweeping the globe, and Extinction Rebellion is one of the prominent emerging movements demanding system change. I depart from the idea that systemic change requires that we re-evaluate and challenge hegemonic norms that structure whose bodies and politics belong to the struggle for climate and ecological justice. This Research Paper is based on activist research conducted alongside Extinction Rebellion Netherlands (XRNL) to examine how dominant knowledges and subjectivities are resisted and/or reinforced within a heterogeneous activist 'meshwork', and how this affects belonging. I draw from feminist and decolonial theories which have worked towards unsettling dominant epistemic and ontological assumptions rooted in androcentrism, anthropocentrism and modernity/coloniality. By revisiting Dutch socio-ecological histories through these lenses, I illustrate how dominant modern subjectivities and knowledges which claim ontological distance from nature and innocence in relation to intertwined gendered, racialised and ecological violence emerged, and how these shaped the environmental movement. I then draw from in-depth interviews and my own embodied knowledge as an XR rebel to explore the possibilities for transformative belonging across multifarious boundaries with and within XRNL, to co-think with the movement how affective ties between humans and with the more-than-human can rework power relations and inform a transformative politics. I focus on the discursive interventions made by XR's emphasis on telling the truth about the climate and ecological crisis, and on the ways in which its regenerative culture is reorienting subjectivities towards relationality and vulnerability and mobilising mourning as political praxis.

Relevance to Development Studies

Global climate change and ecological breakdown are of key importance to development studies, as they undermine the very ability of human beings to live a prosperous life, or in fact to live at all, subsuming all other development concerns. At the same time, they are some of the most destructive symptoms of structural global inequality produced by colonial patriarchal capitalism. This research paper builds on post-development critiques which have rejected development for representing the North as having the solutions to Southern problems (Santos et al. 2007: xxxviii), instead reaffirming that inequality and ecological destruction are hard-wired into the European development model and thus rendering its discourses obsolete. By departing from a rethinking of hegemonic narratives of progress in the Dutch context, I am bringing development studies home, suggesting that we take a long hard look at both what it means to be 'developed' and ways in which barriers to 'development' like climate change continue to emanate from European actors and institutions.

Although there is increasing research interest in critical development studies for alternatives emerging from the majority world, it is equally important to deepen our understanding of climate politics and resistance in the minority world, given that this is where the majority of global emissions, exploitation and ecological destruction originate. It is of key importance to better understand the ways in which European social movements can contribute to environmental discourses and policy interventions that place social and ecological justice at the centre. This research contributes to this understanding by thinking through the role of a particular movement in redefining the boundaries of who belongs to the struggle for climate and ecological justice, and in navigating the dominant subjectivities and knowledges that underpin the climate and ecological crisis. Finally, the activist methodology employed in this

research contributes to imagining how we can do activism and research 'otherwise' in a way that contributes to global justice while challenging exploitative academic research practices.

Keywords

Extinction Rebellion, climate justice activism, social movements, politics of knowledge, more-than-human, belonging, relationality.

Chapter 1
Introduction – This is an emergency/This is not a drill

"We didn't start the movement, we just attach onto it. People have been defending their lands for years and years and years, so make sure you keep a humble place. […] Remember you're just the last domino in this whole thing."
- John, personal interview, 14 August 2019.

1.1 Welcome to the rebellion

Over the past months, there were many moments when I would lie in bed at night, feeling utterly exhausted but content after another protest or action, with the seemingly endless repertoire of chants still ringing in my ears. It is perhaps through collective chanting that I have been able to feel most joyful, most determined, and most connected in the movement for climate justice. Globally, mobilisation around climate and ecological change has exploded since 2018. Some of the remarkable new movements that have spurred on mass mobilisation in Europe (and beyond) include the school strikers movement inspired by Greta Thunberg, and Extinction Rebellion (XR), which has left a lasting imprint on the United Kingdom, and has since spread to over 50 different countries. The Netherlands was one of the first countries to establish its own Extinction Rebellion group, in December 2018. In this Research Paper, I explore the ways in which dominant knowledges and subjectivities are resisted and/or reinforced in Extinction Rebellion Netherlands (XRNL), and how this affects (possibilities for) belonging to and with the movement.

The main aim[1] of XR is to organise people to participate in mass actions of civil disobedience to pressure their governments to take urgent action to confront the climate and ecological crisis.[2] The first major action of XRUK that put the movement on the map was the occupation of five major London bridges in November 2018. "The bridges" – as it is affectionately called by XRUK rebels[3] – is also the first moment many people in the Netherlands found out about the movement, and the catalyst for starting Extinction Rebellion Netherlands. Although I cannot remember exactly, this must also have been the first time I heard about XR. Intrigued by its ability to attract many first-time activists into actions of civil disobedience, as well as its emphasis on creating different ways of relating to each other and taking action together through its vision of a "regenerative culture", I decided to join XRNL in February 2019.[4]

Environmental and climate change organising in the Netherlands mainly occurred through institutionalised NGOs for several decades, and a grassroots climate movement had only started to consolidate a few years earlier.[5] This was accompanied by a proliferation of critical voices from within the movement, signalling that it is too white and too elitist (Cheuk

[1] See Appendix A for an overview of XR's background, demands and principles and values.
[2] There are many terms to describe climate change and the range of interconnected environmental problems we are facing; I use "climate and ecological crisis" throughout this paper, as this is the term preferred by XR.
[3] This is the term people in XR use to refer to themselves.
[4] See Appendix B for my journey of "becoming a rebel" and my involvement in XR.
[5] XR is more than a climate movement, as it focuses on extinction, social collapse and the "toxic system". Nevertheless, XRNL is often interpreted as a climate movement including by its own rebels, and there is significant overlap and cooperation between XRNL and other environmental groups, which is why I situate it this way.

2016; Derbali 2019), and pays insufficient attention to global struggles led by indigenous people and people of colour who are suffering the worst consequences of climate change (Cheuk 2019). The growing awareness of these limitations and exclusions echo a global shift in the climate movement towards "climate justice", which emphasises the systemic origins of climate change and the unjust distribution of responsibility and impacts (Della Porta and Parks 2014, no page; Tokar 2018: 20-21). As a result, "climate justice", "system change" and to a lesser extent "intersectionality" have ascended to near-buzzword status, featuring from Fridays for Future banners to the core of activist groups like Code Rood, as well as slowly seeping into established NGOs like Milieudefensie (Friends of the Earth).

Nevertheless, the Dutch environmental movement continues to grapple with histories of exclusion and oppression at the intersection of environmentalism and (neo)colonialism, and of race, class, gender, sexuality, ability and age. Despite the emerging will to diversity and growing awareness of the intersections between social justice and climate and environmental issues, whenever I would enter an environmental movement space in the past years, with few exceptions it would be predominantly white, highly-educated and urban, with varying distributions of age and gender. But what I am concerned about is not merely an absence or erasure of certain bodies, but also political, epistemological and ontological plurality within the movement that is essential when we are demanding a world in which we can thrive, with each other and with the earth. I follow feminist and decolonial voices in arguing that in order to "dance a new world into being" (see Klein 2013), one that is not premised on ecological destruction and systemic oppression, we will need an "ecology of knowledges" (Santos et al. 2007: xlix) and a different mode of humanity (Plumwood 2007: 1) which reaffirms our relationality to earth and each other (Vazquez 2017: 87).

In this research paper, I focus on Extinction Rebellion Netherlands to explore the possibilities for other ways of knowing and being in climate and environmental activism, in relation to the bodies and politics that enter into the movement and that the movement enters into alliance with. I aim to answer the following research question:

How are dominant subjectivities and knowledges resisted and/or reinforced in Extinction Rebellion Netherlands, and how does this affect (possibilities for) belonging?

With the following sub-questions:

1. What does it mean to "tell the truth" about the climate and ecological crisis, which knowledges are privileged and how does this shape belonging?
2. Which subjectivities emerge from XRNL's regenerative culture, and how does this affect the possibilities for belonging?

1.2 Why do I ask these questions, and where am I asking them from?

There is nothing new about climate change, ecological destruction and injustice, nor about the attempts to resist and revert these processes. The linkage between anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, temperature increase and potentially catastrophic effects has been known for over 50 years (CIEL, no date), and indigenous people have been resisting the colonisation of their lands and lives for centuries. Therefore, it is difficult to claim that we are in a particularly critical moment for limiting climate change and ecological destruction: in many ways, we are already far, far too late. Although many earthlings and "places of refuge" (Tsing 2015) have been lost, there is still much worth defending and nourishing. The new

wave of mobilisation that is taking place in some of the regions most responsible for ecological exploitation signals a time like no other to bundle all our efforts to stem, if not turn, the tide.

The odds are inconceivably stacked against us: climate-denialism fuelled by populist politicians and the hegemonic discourse of green capitalism are in direct tension with the movement for social and climate justice. "Green growth", "ecological modernisation" and "sustainable development" discourses present climate change and ecological degradation as techno-scientific issues (Wichterich 2015), and defend the idea that inequality will be addressed by indefinitely enlarging the economic pie for all. However, in XR we recognise that neither "business as usual" nor a magical CO_2-eating machine will save us: we will need to radically change our economic, political and social systems to thrive.

Globally, XR is gathering incredible momentum, attracting and politicising many first time activists. At the same time, criticisms abound of its predominantly white, middle-class movement base, its failure to engage with marginalised communities, and lack of attention for (neo)colonialism and capitalism as the root causes of the climate and ecological crisis.[6] While these criticisms are mainly directed at XRUK, they also bear relevance to XRNL. Although accurate in many cases, I find that people's daily experiences and perspectives on the movement paint a picture that is more complex and heterogeneous; it is within these tensions that I seek to identify possibilities for disrupting hegemonic norms and forging transformative alliances. At the same time, it is an attempt to reflect on the place that I, as a citizen and activist in the minority world with many privileges, and the many people like me in XR can, and should, take in the global struggle for climate, ecological and social justice. Following Gibson-Graham (2008: 2), I consciously move away from critique towards co-thinking and being with the nascent movement that is XRNL, in the hope to contribute to its reflexive practice and its struggle for social transformation, and to support the movement in amplifying its disruptions not only on the streets, but also epistemically, emotionally, and physically in relation to the bodies and voices that enter the movement and those that are left behind. I strongly believe that emphasising the interconnectedness of different struggles, as well as reconciling the academic and political projects tied up in them should be a central aim for social scientific research (Kaijser and Kronsell 2014: 424).

At the same time, I am conscious that by choosing to highlight the stories and experiences of people that are in many ways in a privileged position, and fit relatively comfortably within the climate and environmental movement and Dutch society, I risk silencing the voices that are not represented or that are marginalised in the movement. On the other hand, I consciously also choose to be careful not to pretend that as an educated, middle-class white woman/researcher, I can speak to the perspectives of marginalised people in the climate movement better than they can speak for themselves (hooks 1990: 241-243). It is important to attend to these power relations; like all knowledge, my research is inevitably partial and socially situated (Haraway 1988; Harding 2005), conditioned by a gaze from within the dominant culture in environmentalism, and at the same time it is a refusal to be interpellated by the hegemonic hailings of belonging to white, masculine, middle-class environmentalism (Carrillo Rowe 2005: 28). It is important to "stay with the trouble" (Haraway 2013), while at the same time agreeing with Sandra Harding (2016: 1074) that fighting for social justice is everyone's obligation, and that building meaningful connections across class, race, gender and other boundaries is of crucial importance.

[6] This article by XR Scotland provides an overview of some of these critiques: https://freedomnews.org.uk/statement-from-xr-scotland/?fbclid=IwAR1JSUDhn-B5saHzzlwLbd9mMuX51Of-pUcJMYSzTiuDu_Wz_orw6G09UAc

1.3 Methodology, positionality, methods, ethics

Methodology, positionality and methods

My methodological approach is mainly inspired by feminist, decolonial, and action research approaches. I decided to focus on XRNL, because I think it is important to conduct my research from where I am situated. In times of climate and ecological collapse, as researchers we can no longer stay on the side-lines, but have an obligation to participate as active subjects in the struggle for system change (Reitan and Gibson 2012: 407). I thus see this research paper as only one moment in an ongoing struggle and process. One of my main concerns centres around conducting research that is politically relevant to XR, hoping to "offer the[se] ideas back not as prescriptions, but as contributions, as gifts" (Graeber 2004: 12), in a way that subverts the (neo)colonial and extractive character of academic research (Leyva and Speed 2008: 23). I posit that an "activist research methodology" (Hale 2001; 2006) which combines political action and reflexive activist-scholarship is most useful and ethical to achieve those goals. By rendering myself both object and subject of study, I seek to collapse the subject-object divide that separates academia from social movements, taking a relational and reciprocal mode of engagement (Casas-Cortés et al. 2008: 27). In addition, by interweaving the "activist knowledges" that I gained from my everyday being with the movement throughout all chapters, I challenge the boundaries between activist and academic knowledges (Casas-Cortés et al. 2008: 23). Instead of a subject "learning about" a separate, inert object, I position myself alongside the movement as subject-object that is a "becoming world" (Gibson-Graham 2011: 4).

Thus, my own embodied knowledge from growing and resisting with the movement is an important source for this research, drawing from hundreds of documents, talks, trainings and other experiences. To describe my approach, the words of action researchers Brydon-Miller et al. (2003: 21) resonate with me, as they describe how research committed to social change inevitably embraces messiness: "we are forced to follow the problems wherever they take us, and the best among us learn the theories, methods and processes we need along the way." For two months, I maintained diaries in which I recorded observations, as well as my own emotions and reflections. I engaged in numerous activities in line with my research topic, as well as contributing to the everyday organisation of the movement. Being nominated local facilitator for XR Den Haag meant that I was involved both locally and nationally.[7] However, especially over summer most activities took place in Amsterdam and Utrecht, and being physically removed from these places made it difficult to stay in touch with the day-to-day activities of the movement.

Given the limited opportunities for participation in activities relevant to my research interests over summer, when activist activities were at a low, I conducted interviews with fifteen rebels about their everyday experiences in the movement, their politics, and their understanding of being situated in the Netherlands with its particular histories. I struggled with the idea of conducting interviews, since they provide little opportunity for dialogue and co-producing knowledge, and require that people surrender their time and knowledge with little space for reciprocity. However, within a limited timeframe, this represented the best way to gain access to rebels' experiential and activist knowledges. I mostly interviewed rebels who devote considerable amounts of their time to XRNL. I selected people to cover different social locations and movement circles; like most of XRNL, they were varied in age but on the younger side, most were white (one identifies as brown and one as black), and highly-educated (with some exceptions). I started with people that I knew well, and expanded to

[7] See Appendix B.

include people from different local groups and circles to gain a broader range of perspectives. Although the movement has a considerable number of international students and expats, eleven of the people I spoke to were Dutch or have lived here for a long time.

I focus on long-time Dutch residents, because I approach XRNL as situated within the broader Dutch environmental movement. As part of my methodological approach, I revisit the socio-ecological histories that inform this movement in Chapter 2. The purpose of this is to think through some of the power relations that underpin the knowledges and subjectivities that inform dominant environmentalisms in the Netherlands, in order to be able to move towards different modes of knowing and being. Since XRNL is explicitly concerned with influencing Dutch politics and mobilising Dutch residents,[8] I believe analysing XR within this context is both relevant and useful. The belongings that I am primarily interested in are thus belongings within the Netherlands, although I also touch upon cross-border belongings. At the same time, this perspective is necessarily limited, as XR and its people transcend national borders in many ways, and much of XR's narratives and strategies emerged in the United Kingdom. Still, to be able to move forward, I believe that an analysis rooted in particular cultural conceptions and socio-ecological relations provides useful insights.

This final paper reflects my own experiences, interwoven with the narratives and stories of others. It is relevant to point out that even my own interpretations only exist through the interrelations with countless of others: other activists within XR and beyond who gave me the insights and reflexivity required for this research, as well as the scholars, many of them feminists, who taught me how to approach research and activism otherwise.

Ethics and attending to the affects of being in movement(s)

Positioning myself as activist-scholar is not without its ethical, practical and emotional challenges. Protecting the identity of my fellow rebels is a key concern. A few interviewees came up with pseudonyms,[9] but most were willing to have their names attached to the research, since openly taking responsibility for our actions is a key value in XR. Still, I am careful to not provide information that could potentially be incriminating. Trying to negotiate between my activist and researcher roles made my position as a researcher ambiguous, especially since I was already involved in XRNL before starting my research. Although I explained my researcher role in most open meetings, people easily forget and I was seemingly always approached as fellow rebel. Therefore, I decided to ask people's specific permission for using what they told me or their names during the writing process, taking advantage of the close ties I have to most of the people that inform this research.

I think it is important to acknowledge the embodied, emotional experience of activist research, rejecting the notion that research is merely a cognitive, rational exercise. As many rebels have noted, XR tends to take over all aspects of one's life. Becoming absorbed in the movement's day-to-day reality, I started to lose track of where my activism-research ended and my personal life began. The sense of urgency that permeates XR, as well as the grief and fear of the everyday getting-to-grips-with loss and possible disaster meant I struggled to find the meaning of doing research when the hands-on activist work felt far more meaningful. This feeling was amplified by the fundamental conflict between the temporalities of academic knowledge production and activism (Leyva and Speed 2008: 41). As I explained, within these conflicting temporalities there was limited possibility for participatory research (Leyva and Speed 2008: 41), causing me difficulty situating my research in relation to what I believe to

[8] XRNL does not exclude non-Dutch citizens; on the contrary, mobilising Dutch people is an important concern of the movement, because it was initially comprised of a majority of non-Dutch people (mostly international students), although this is starting to change.

[9] Pseudonyms are indicated with *.

be ethical research practices (limiting exploitation and producing knowledge "for" and "with" rather than "about" the movement), and compromising the ability of my research to contribute to transformative change by working with people in the movement.

1.4 Chapter Outline

In the next chapter, I sketch the theoretical and historical framework for my research. I revisit the dominant constructions of the Dutch self-image and subjectivities through the lens of decolonial and feminist theories on the politics of knowledge, modernity/coloniality and human-nature relations. In the third chapter, I investigate what it means to 'tell the truth' about the climate and ecological crisis in XRNL. I discuss how XRNL's mobilisation of scientific knowledges and rebels' interpretations of who is responsible for the crisis shape belonging in multiple and at times contradictory ways. In the fourth chapter, I discuss XRNL's regenerative culture, and the ways in which relationality, vulnerability and mourning are reconstituting subjectivities and opening up possibilities for transformative belonging. Finally, in the conclusion I discuss some of the openings, challenges and future possibilities to which my research has taken me.

Chapter 2
Towards another environmentalism in the Netherlands

In this second chapter, I sketch the theoretical and historical framework for my research. In the first part, I revisit dominant constructions of the Dutch self-image and subjectivities through the lens of decolonial and feminist theories on the politics of knowledge, modernity/coloniality and human-nature relations. I depart from Gloria Wekker's concept of "white innocence" to illustrate the Netherlands' paradoxical relationship to its colonial past, and examine how a self-image of tolerance and moral exceptionalism when it comes to racism, gender, sexual and class relations obscures the white, heterosexual, masculine, middle-class normativity that sustains dominant human-nature relations and environmentalisms. In the second part, I propose "belonging" as providing a useful framework to understand how these norms can and are being resisted and/or reinforced in XRNL.

2.1 Another reading is possible: (white) innocence, human-nature relations and environmentalisms

Our common histories which shape the identities of "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983), whether they are nations or activist collectives, are based on stories, and they can be told in many different ways. Foucault (1977; 1994) has demonstrated how dominant representations of the present are historically produced through operations of power, legitimising certain knowledges by subjugating others. These dominant discourses determine which ways of being in the world are possible, given that "ways of knowing are also ways of inhabiting and creating the world and each other" (Motta and Esteves 2014: 4). As illustrated by decolonial scholars (e.g. Escobar 2016; Quijano 2010), the processes through which dominant subjectivities and knowledges come to be constituted under modernity are tied up in coloniality, relations of power that emerged as a result of colonialism and continue to persist (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 243).[10] Challenging these hegemonic norms and the power relations they naturalise and sustain requires recognising that the present is not the inevitable outcome of history (Vazquez 2012: 7), and uncovering the mechanisms of power through which it is actively produced.

In the Dutch context, Gloria Wekker (2016) has illustrated the process of denial and erasure inherent in the production of the Dutch self-image, which she characterises as "white innocence". Borrowing the concept of the "cultural archive" from Edward Said (1993), she argues that an "unacknowledged reservoir of knowledge and affects based on four hundred years of Dutch imperial rule plays a vital but unacknowledged part in dominant meaning-making processes, including the making of the self, taking place in Dutch society" (2016: 2). This self-image is paradoxical: at home and abroad, we imagine ourselves as tolerant and "on the right side of history", champions of women's and LGBTQIA+ liberation and free of racism. Yet this innocent perception is predicated on the structural erasure and denial of racism and colonial violence, which are conceived as having no bearing upon the present (Wekker 2018: 140). This intersects with similar erasures that occur in relation to historical oppression on the basis of gender and sexuality (see Bracke 2011), as well as class.

[10] The term modernity/coloniality indicates that coloniality is constitutive of European modernity: there is no modernity without coloniality (Escobar 2007: 185).

Human-nature relations in Dutch environmentalism

I argue that these denials are entangled in the erasure of violence inherent in human-nature relations. Dominant constructions of the self which celebrate the Dutch "trade mentality" erase not only capitalist racialised violence, but also the ecological destruction of the "shadow places" (Plumwood 2008) intimately implicated in the development of the Netherlands. The exploitation and appropriation of "nature" for development is legitimated by its ontological distinction from human "culture", which has been widely recognised as fundamental to the logic of modernity (De la Cadena 2010; Escobar 2016; Haraway 1991; Latour 1993; Plumwood 2007). This divide in turn underpins racialised and gendered systems of oppression and colonial exploitation (Vazquez 2017: 78), as race and gender can be understood as modern tools to rank "humanity" along a "civilisation-nature" continuum (De la Cadena 2010: 344; Lugones 2007: 202-203). This legitimises the colonial erasure of relational words and ways of being with the earth (Vazquez 2017: 78), advancing the totalising project of modernity characterised by a rational, autonomous subject and "human control over a passive and 'dead' nature" (Plumwood 2007: 1).

At home, the Netherlands is well-known for its human-made nature – planted forests, reclaimed *polders*, and neatly carved out agricultural fields. The relationship with the water and sea are emblematic for the Dutch relationship with nature: it is not only marked by struggle, but also by subjugation and repurposing, as we shaped the sea and rivers to form the infrastructure and fertile soil that fuel the country's economy. Nature is constructed as an "enemy", tamed and conquered by Dutch human ingenuity. Paradoxically, this exists side-by-side with an exceptionally high intrinsic valuing of nature compared to other Western European countries (Van den Born et al. 2001), and a popular "Arcadian" view of nature which emphasises the moral obligation to protect "wild and beautiful nature" (Van Koppen 2000: 304).

While these two dominant approaches to nature appear to conflict, these different "natures" both emerged through colonial encounters and are reproduced through modern/colonial discourses (Escobar 2005: 25 as cited in Alimonda 2011; Ford 2007: 117). They operate jointly to cover up the ecological destruction and social exclusion through which the Dutch landscapes are (re)produced (Trudeau 2006: 421). According to Van Koppen, both the conquest of nature and its preservation have been promoted by the white, male, urban upper and middle-classes (2000: 304-305). Moreover, white, male elites have historically determined which natures are rendered "appropriable" and which are considered "wildernesses" worthy of protection through restrictive formulations of "wild and beautiful nature" dating back to Dutch landscape painting (van der Windt 1995: 330). This has created a "yearning for nature" not directed to the nature in cities "of which we are a part", but rather towards that "which has been explicitly externalised by White Man, which has been defined as colony, backward, exotic" (Mies 1993: 133). While the "real nature" became bounded into "nature monuments" with the emergence of the conservation movement in the late 19th century (van der Windt 1995: 329-330), the man-made Dutch landscapes are no longer considered "real nature", and the ecological destruction inherent in their construction is erased.

It is within this context that we need to understand the emergence of particular modern subjectivities that claim ontological distance from nature and innocence in relation to intertwined gendered, racialised and ecological violence, thus enabling a Dutch self-image of progressive social and ecological practices. As I have illustrated, these subjectivities are rooted in particular, white, middle-class and male experiences, but have become universalised through modern/colonial discourses.

The Dutch environmental movement

When the environmental movement emerged in the 1960s and 1970s alongside a flurry of collective action which has been termed the "new social movements" (Melucci 1980), it continued to be informed by normative (middle-class, urban, white, masculine) approaches to nature/environmentalisms. It is unsurprising that the first environmental activists were mostly well-established people in society including journalists, scientists and politicians (Cramer 2014: 12). While the early days of Dutch environmentalism were still dominated by a critique of the environmental impacts of rapid economic growth and industrialisation, this changed in the late 1980s (Cramer 2014: 13-14). Environmental organisations became increasingly institutionalised and professionalised, and a neoliberal policy environment facilitated their incorporation into government negotiation and decision-making processes (Cramer 2014: 31-55; Van Markham and Van Koppen 2014: 243). Direct action, mass mobilisation and growth-critiques were abandoned. The environmental movement embraced ecological modernisation, characterised by a belief in market mechanisms, technological optimism and a resistance to systemic change, simultaneously greening the economy while putting ecology on the market (Van der Heijden 2017: 63). As a pioneer of ecological modernisation, the Netherlands would shape EU-level policies and beyond (Smith and Kern 2007: 2), and these ideas continue to be hugely influential.

However, with a new wave of social mobilisation starting around 2010, the environmental movement's endorsement of ecological modernisation is starting to waver. A bottom-up climate movement of citizens' initiatives started to emerge (Cramer 2014: 92-96), followed by a new generation of direct action organisations like Fossil Free Netherlands,[11] Code Rood,[12] Extinction Rebellion and Fridays For Future.[13] This has also started to affect established environmental organisations, as NGOs like Greenpeace and Milieudefensie increasingly reoriented towards citizen mobilisation (Cramer 2014: 98-100). This was catalysed by their withdrawal from the negotiations on the climate agreement in December 2018, which they perceived as inadequate and devoting insufficient attention to equity (Hofs 2018). The emergence of a grassroots movement also resulted in the insertion of critical voices regarding the normative environmentalisms that dominate the movement, and inclusion and diversity are increasingly debated throughout grassroots and institutionalised environmental organisations. In addition, "climate justice" has started to unsettle the ecological modernisation discourse, with its emphasis on systemic change, the uneven impacts and responsibilities of climate change and its intersection with social justice issues (Tokar 2018: 20-21).

2.2 Belonging as a theoretical and political tool

In order to expose and disrupt dominant knowledges and subjectivities that perpetuate coloniality, capitalism and patriarchy, it is important that this discursive shift translates into real transformations regarding whose politics and bodies get to belong to the environmental movement. I propose that "belonging" provides a useful framework to examine how dominant knowledges and subjectivities are being resisted and/or reinforced. Belonging is a heterogeneous, complex and flexible concept, entangled in places, relations, and emotions (Wright 2015), which allows us to understand how power is not only discursive, but anchored materially in the bodies, politics and relations that constitute the movement. In itself, "belonging" subverts the centrality of the rational, individualised subject divorced from nature, by taking a relational approach to the self. This echoes black feminists' and feminists' of

[11] Part of the global divestment movement spear-headed by US-based 350.org.
[12] A mass civil disobedience movement inspired by the German Ende Gelände actions.
[13] The school strike movement inspired by Greta Thunberg.

colour prior assertions that our subjectivities are always constituted through our relations (hooks 2001; Lorde 1978; Lugones 1987; Mohanty 2003). Thus, Carrillo Rowe proposes that since "the assumption of the individual is foundational to colonial modernity; as such, hopefully the assumption of belonging can be constitutive of the decolonial imaginary" (2005: 16).

Carrillo Rowe highlights the importance of recognising people's agency and accountability when it comes to belonging(s), when we understand that who we align ourselves with relationally and politically is not fixed to our identity (2005: 32). This departure from a "politics of location" (Rich 1984) towards a "politics of relation" (Carrillo Rowe 2005) recognises the political relevance of coalition-building based on affinity rather than identity (Haraway 2006: 122-123). Belonging as a point of departure also allows us to move beyond the binaries of oppressor/oppressed, and towards more complex intersecting and interconnecting relations of power (Mohanty 2003: 55). As signalled by Audre Lorde, difference itself is not divisive: instead, divisions emerge from the failure to recognise these difference, or to analyse the distortions that emanate from them, as a result of which we start to perceive them as either non-existent or insurmountable barriers (1984: 115).

Our affective ties, whom we love and whose lives matter to us, thus transmit power; belongings across differences like race, class and species boundaries are political, because they provide an opportunity for reworking operations of power (Carrillo Rowe 2005: 23; 2009: 3). Thus, belonging is both "being and longing, as subjects and their belongings desire to connect and reconnect differently" (Wright 2015: 399). At the same time, belonging may reinforce power relations if we fail to establish these connections; belonging also creates (potentially racist, sexist, anthropocentric etc.) borders by separating what belongs from what does not (Wright 2015: 399). We can thus distinguish between inclusive and exclusive (Wright 2015: 393) or hegemonic and transformative forms of belonging (Carrillo Rowe 2005: 30-32).

Extinction Rebellion: belonging in an activist "meshwork"

Taking a closer look at "belonging" as co-constitutive of XRNL, its politics and its praxis can help us understand whose bodies and knowledges get to participate in XRNL and whose do not, and under what conditions. I posit that "belonging" can not only challenge and/or reproduce hegemonic norms, but that the way hegemonic norms are navigated also affects the possibilities for belonging. Following Wright (2015: 404), I see "belonging" as performative, relational and more-than-human, a process of becoming rather than a state of being, always dynamic and shifting and at the same time conditioned by power relations (Antonsich 2010: 654; Carrillo Rowe 2005: 21). It comes into being through affective encounters with our ecologies – complex assemblages of plants, animals, people, physical landscapes and technologies (Rocheleau 2011: 213; Wright 2015: 392).

I bring together insights on belonging with decolonial feminist approaches to social movements, which argue they function as epistemic (Icaza and Vazquez 2013: 688-693) and ontological struggles (Motta and Esteves 2014: 3-4). Social movements are understood as key sites of learning and unlearning that produce "other" – embodied, lived and situated – knowledges (Casas-Cortés et al. 2008: 23-49) and are involved in the "co-construction of becoming otherwise" as communities and subjects (Motta and Esteves 2014: 5). I argue that exploring processes of hegemonic and transformative belonging provides a closer insight into how XRNL at times engages in epistemic and ontological struggle, yet in other ways reproduces hegemonic power relations. I think it is important to understand these tensions and contradictions as integral and potentially productive parts of the movement, which provide insight into how power relations are negotiated (Flórez Flórez 2010: 133-137). Rather than an homogenous and consistent entity, XRNL is better understood as a meshwork, an

"expansive, heterogeneous and polycentric discursive field of action" (Escobar 2008: 272) which is continuously subject to (re)construction through operations of power.

Chapter 3
Tell the truth and act like it's real

> We demand that our government TELL THE TRUTH about the climate and ecological crisis that threatens our existence and communicate the urgency for change.
> – *Extinction Rebellion Netherlands, first demand*

After discussing the theoretical framework for my research and the normative knowledges and subjectivities that underpin Dutch environmentalism in the previous chapter, I now turn to what it means to "tell the truth" about the climate and ecological crisis in XRNL. First, I discuss how XRNL mobilises scientific knowledge and emphasises urgency in a way that both challenges and reproduces hegemonic ways of knowing and relating to "nature" and each other. Next, I discuss rebels' interpretations of who is responsible for the climate and ecological crisis, and how this affects belonging to and with the movement.

Figure 3.1
"Tell the truth" at Rebel Without Borders

Source: Catharina Gerritsen

3.1 Telling the truth about the climate and ecological crisis

Act on the science: the "Heading for Extinction" talk

"Telling the truth" is central to the identity and demands of XR. But what does it mean to tell the truth? One of the ways in which XRNL has embedded telling the truth in its practices is through the "Heading for Extinction and What To Do About It" talk, adapted from the UK to fit the local context.

I attended my first XR talk on the night of the official "househeating" of the XR Artsfactory in Utrecht. The modest 44m^2 room serves as office space and artistic hub for producing lino prints, banners, and costumes, and for hosting talks, trainings and movie nights. With 25 people, many of them in their twenties but with some exceptions, the room was hot and crowded. To open the talk, Sander[14] explains the various sources of scientific information it is based on: from the most rigorous but also conservative source (the IPCC) all the way to

[14] Not his real name.

the individual scientist's opinion in a pub. For the next 45 minutes, he takes us through the science of climate change, biodiversity loss and some of its social consequences: an increase in extreme weather events exemplified by the cyclones Idai and Kenneth in Mozambique, effects on coastal communities like the Netherlands where the Delta works are inadequate for predicted sea level rise, as well as widespread food scarcity, social unrest and displacement.

To explain the climate and ecological crisis, XR makes a particular claim to truth which centres scientific knowledge on climate change and biodiversity loss, while simultaneously challenging the ways in which this has been communicated and largely ignored by the media, policy-makers, politicians, businesses and universities. This centres power/knowledge at the core of the debate; XR can be understood as intervening in the "regimes of truth" (Foucault 1977: 23) which downplay the impacts of climate and ecological change, or suggest that we are already on track for addressing it. By adopting language like climate "crisis" and "emergency" to replace technocratic, neutral-sounding terminology, XR directly challenges the ecological modernisation paradigm which defuses collective action by relegating responsibility to the techno-scientific, rather than social sphere. It is disrupting the deceptive win-win notion of sustainable development, positing that actually, "we're all fucked". By centring "extinction" rather than climate change as the fundamental issue, XR aligns humanity with the other-than-human in the same struggle. This not only opens up possibilities for interspecies alliances, but also legitimises "rebellion" as the appropriate response by removing the ontological, geographical and temporal distance associated with climate change (Doyle 2011, as cited in Arthur 2017: 34).

In line with this, the main purpose of communicating the science through the talk is not just to have people understand the seriousness of the situation: it is to spur them into action.

> "I only just saw a few months ago that graph [of temperatures and CO_2 emissions of the last 400,000 years]. It's now my *stokpaardje.*[15] It is so shocking and extreme, that should be plastered everywhere! […] That's why it's good to have these talks that we do, even if it's ten people. […] That's all we've got to do, get more people thinking about it, because as soon as they think about it, unless they revert to kidding themselves, they'll be forced to acknowledge the truth and realise they have to act too. Because you can't let it go when you know." (Chris, personal interview, 29 August 2019)

Chris, a 56-year-old Brit who lived here for almost thirty years, positions a scientific understanding of the climate and ecological crisis as essential to mobilising people to take action. I have heard many rebels echo this idea, insisting that they felt a strong urge to "do something" once being exposed to the science. This demonstrates the value of this approach: by intervening in the discourse, it is opening up new possibilities for resistance.

Who can relate to and through science?

However, it does not open up possibilities for everyone equally. From her perspective as someone without higher education, Kirsten, a 50-year old rebel who works in administration, says she feels the talk mostly appeals to people who are university educated, and Anne questions the extent to which academic language in the Declaration of Rebellion[16] can "appeal to the masses."[17] I was confronted with this realisation during an experience I had at a local community centre. Reaching out to community centres to host talks has been one of the

[15] A favoured issue or in this case, instrument.

[16] For the Declaration of Rebellion, see: https://extinctionrebellion.nl/en/persbericht-verklaring-van-de-rebellie/

[17] Translated from Dutch by the author.

solutions bouncing around the movement to the perceived lack of diversity of XR. In Den Haag, almost all talks had been restricted to student spaces and the activist-oriented café Utopie. The administrator of the community centre I contacted responded enthusiastically, and I headed over to discuss the details. During our conversation, it started to dawn on me how much the talk was actually tailored to a highly-educated audience, as I fumbled my way through an answer when the administrator asked me whether the talk was very scientific or we also use examples to illustrate our message. I felt ashamed that I had never quite realised the extent of prior knowledge of climate change and ability to interpret (and be interested in!) scientific graphs and data the talk required. At the same time, a warning from the speaker who would be giving the talk to not revise the talk based on my assumptions of the "less-educated other's" ability to interpret the science forced me to question the way in which I was reinforcing patterns of domination, and made me understand the importance of building affective ties across difference to challenge hegemonic and exclusionary ways of knowing.

Emphasising a scientific understanding of the climate and ecological crisis also limits the possibility for forging transborder solidarities. By reaffirming the "modern Western mono-cultural way of knowing", it reinforces the coloniality of knowledge and power[18] (Santos 2010: 226). This perpetuates Eurocentrism and denies the validity of other ways of knowing to address the crisis, such as indigenous knowledges (Santos et al. 2007: xxxiii). In addition, reaffirming that nature can only be "known" through its representation by science reinforces the ontological separation of "nature" from "culture" (Latour 1993: 28), which legitimises the destruction and appropriation of "nature" in the name of progress. This inhibits the reaffirmation of relational knowledges between earth beings that resist the nature-culture divide (Rojas 2016: 372), limiting our ability to form the affective ties with "earth others" (Plumwood 1993: 137) essential to a politics that promotes justice for all living beings.

At the same time, Malik, a university student from South Africa, reflects that despite its emphasis on science, he was actually attracted by the way XR humanises the crisis:

> "It finally took the environment out of this dichotomy of it's either very scientific or very spiritual, […] what XR is doing, it's saying listen, […] it's going to cause society to collapse, you're going to have mass starvation, these are human issues, that was a really important transition that needed to happen." (personal interview, 14 August 2019)

There are visible efforts in XRNL to supplement scientific knowledge with experiential knowledges. Personal accounts from the frontlines of ecological destruction find their way into the movement, such as that of Raki Ap, whose main political work focusses on the right to self-determination of the people of West Papua. For the past two years, Raki has actively sought out coalitions with the climate movement, emphasising the interconnectedness of their struggles.[19] At the Declaration of Rebellion, he spoke about the ecological destruction wreaked by palm oil plantations, oil and mining companies in West Papua, bringing an indigenous perspective on the connections between neocolonialism, capitalism and climate change into the movement. I was struck by the way in which Raki approaches coalition-building with optimism, determination and affection, all the while remaining critical. The connections between rebels and people like Raki have important political implications, demonstrating the potential of crossing through, with and over boundaries of difference (Mohanty 2003: 7).

---

[18] "Coloniality of power" (Quijano 2010) refers to the racialised relations of power that emerged in the context of colonialism, but continue to define power structures in the world today. "Coloniality of knowledge" (Lander 2000) refers to the ways in which as a result non-Eurocentric knowledges continue to be silenced and erased.

[19] Raki Ap, personal interview, 18 July 2019.

In addition, XR weaves a scientific understanding of the problem with an emotional, embodied way of relating to the climate and ecological crisis. After the scientific explanation of the "Heading for Extinction" talk, "one minute of silence" is introduced to make space for feelings of grief for what has been lost. This can be surprisingly powerful: during one talk when I was sitting quietly in a corner operating the PowerPoint, despite having seen the science and the talk many times before, I was surprised at how it still impacted me and made me feel overpoweringly sad and frustrated, feelings that were echoed by the audience members. In this way, XR is interrupting a dominant interpretation which places science in the realm of "reason" and "enlightenment", recognising that unless we connect to our emotions, we will not be taking the urgent action that is required. This resists the gendered denial of the epistemic importance of emotions, which delegitimises emotional responses to the climate and ecological crisis (Kretz 2017: 269; 283). This can be perceived as part of the "decentring effort" of Western science which Santos advocates is necessary to generate alternatives to "modern crises" like climate change and inequality (2014: 125). This opens up new possibilities for connecting to human "others" and the more-than-human, which I will further discuss in the next chapter.

Emergency, urgency and the possibilities for belonging

While important to spur people into action, XR's discourse around the urgency of the climate and ecological crisis necessarily also creates silences, which Foucault describes as "an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses" (1990: 27). By adopting a language of emergency, XR risks obscuring the roots of climate change and ecological destruction in a long history of colonialism and extractivism (Shukin 2015), and the "slow violence" (Nixon 2011) being inflicted on people in the majority world. This raises painful questions regarding who needs to be affected for climate change to be labelled an "emergency". Besides, approaching climate change as a scientific problem that needs to be solved urgently can also motivate climate action that sidelines concerns over its social impacts (Schlembach 2011: 209). Many rebels are acutely aware of this:

> "You mustn't think that XR is about reducing CO_2 emissions and that's it. The climate justice idea is essential. It would be easy to somehow work out a way to reduce carbon emissions, but nothing would be solved. […] We have to find a permanent solution to it *all*." (Chris, personal interview, 29 August 2019)

Figure 3.2
Logo XRNL
Urgency is key to XR's logo: an hourglass captured in a circle that represents the earth

Source: Extinction Rebellion Nederland 2019.

Throughout my conversations and engagements in XR, tensions between urgency and justice continued to surface. In the everyday scramble to organise actions, I at times encountered limited possibilities to address justice and inclusivity in XR, even if everyone believes that these are extremely important. Jana, a student from Germany and at the time national facilitator of XRNL, reflects on the tension between urgency and the possibilities of building community and relations across difference:

> "I think [building a broad movement] requires a lot of energy, and I'm not sure people are willing to sacrifice their energy for this deep encounter compared to sacrificing their energies to organise toilets for an action which is more necessary short term kind of. […] I always wonder how to communicate that it's more necessary to be sustainable not only in what we say, but also how we act, how we build the movement internally." (Jana, personal interview, 20 July 2019)

How do we make space for the energy-intensive labour of building affective ties with others in a movement focussed on direct action? How do we square the temporality of ever-intensifying climate breakdown with the time it takes to connect intimately, and build relations across difference? It is important to stay with these questions, as I in the following chapter will turn towards the role of regenerative culture in providing partial answers.

3.2 Who is responsible for the climate and ecological crisis?

While a shared understanding of what XR rebels *for* ("life") forms an important basis of affinity and political kinship (Haraway 2006: 123), XRUK has been repeatedly criticised for failing to identify the causes of the climate and ecological crisis, particularly capitalism and colonialism (see e.g. Wretched of the Earth 2019). However, many of the rebels I interviewed explicitly linked "telling the truth" to questions of responsibility and the origins of the climate and ecological crisis, in ways that move beyond XRNL's official demands and narratives. This provides important clues for understanding belonging.

A diversity of politics and XR as a pedagogical space

The XR principle and value that is perhaps most commonly cited by Dutch rebels is number 8: "We avoid blaming and shaming; we live in a toxic system, but no one individual is to blame." Anne, one of the founders of XRNL who has been active in the climate movement for years, explains that he thinks that an emphasis on individual lifestyle changes is deceptive: "to mobilise people, you need to tell them the truth."[20] Nevertheless, this interpretation of combatting climate change – as opposed to collective action – has been remarkably dominant in the Netherlands. Van der Heijden links this to a neoliberal subjectivity which makes people respond in the way industry wants them to respond: as consumers rather than citizens (2017: 157). XR subverts this discourse through a relational interpretation which posits that we are all implicated in and affected by the "toxic system", something which can only be resolved through systemic change. There is no clear definition of the "toxic system", explicitly leaving room for a wide variety of interpretations: it is exploitative, unjust, and destructive at a personal, interpersonal, social and planetary level.[21]

The interpretations of the "toxic system" among the people I interviewed varied significantly, but most favoured an economic explanation. For some, this amounts to the convolution of wealth and power in the political system; others pointed to the obsession with

[20] Translated from Dutch by the author.

[21] My own interpretation, based on the Principles and Values from XRUK: https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/about-us/.

economic growth and the profit imperative under capitalism as the root cause of the climate and ecological crisis. By rejecting the idea that growth equals prosperity, rebels subvert dominant green growth discourses predicated on the "smoke-and-mirrors magic of exclusion" (Ebron and Tsing 2017: 683). This opens up the way to recognise the impacts of growth on humans and other living being who are rendered as "not mattering", as well as possibilities for forming "rebellious and liberatory alternatives" to hegemonic forms of kinship and knowing (Ebron and Tsing 2017: 683). I was surprised to hear so many older rebels refer to the "Limits to Growth" report (Meadows et al. 1972), who in XR see the growth criticisms of the 1970s recognised and legitimated. By disrupting the hegemony of ecological modernisation, XR has the possibility to tie generations together through a common economic analysis.

When I talk to Ernst, who recently obtained his PhD in climatology but interrupted his career for some months to devote himself to full-time activism, he reflects that XR strategically avoids framing the problem in terms of capitalism. In this way, XR attempts to provide space for a diversity of politics: I have seen anarchists, socialists, green capitalists and everyone in between work side-by-side in XR. This is not to say that political differences do not create tensions, as they do throughout the climate movement as a whole (Falzon et al. 2018: 95-95). However, I believe that these tensions are generally productive (Flórez Flórez 2010: 133-137), allowing for dialogue between ideological standpoints without collapsing their differences, recognising their creative potential (Lorde 1984: 115) and opening up possibilities for belonging across the (although mostly leftist) political spectrum.

Despite XR's (at times) deliberate avoidance of capitalism,[22] Ernst reflects that the majority of people in XRNL are anti-capitalist. There are probably various reasons for this, but I argue that XR functions as a pedagogical (anti-capitalist) space with the potential to rapidly politicise people, sometimes within the space of a few weeks. Linda,[23] a PhD student who recently joined the movement, is perhaps one of the best examples:

> "It's a kind of self-reinforcing social process […]. Until a few weeks ago […] I took the capitalist system in which the economy needs to grow around 3% per year […] for granted, this is how it works, there is no alternative. […] But [when someone explained it to me], you think what kind of crazy system is this, […] there is literally a physical limit to what we can obtain. […] So since three weeks ago I am more anti-capitalist than ever."[24] (personal interview, 13 August 2019)

To understand this, it is useful to return to the principle "we avoid blaming and shaming". John, who worked in game design and digital advertising, but quit his job to devote himself to activism and is now working for Greenpeace, echoes Linda* when he tells me how a diversity of politics and lifestyle choices find a place in XR: "that's what I really respect about XR, […] we're [all] on a different point along that journey and you're allowed to not be perfect. […] We're taking the steps to support each other in that process." I believe this loving attitude holds enormous potential for creating a space in which a wide variety of people can claim belonging to the movement.

[22] This is a simplification, and is already starting to change: XR's handbook "This is Not a Drill" clearly identifies capitalism and colonialism as the problem, as do many other XR publications.
[23] Not her real name.
[24] Translated from Dutch by the author.

Colonialism and contesting (white) innocence

Besides emphasising the systemic nature of the climate and ecological crisis, many rebels reflect on the need to tell the truth about the geographical distribution of responsibility and impacts, in particular the responsibility of people in industrialised countries like the Netherlands:

> "There's the general narrative in the movement of the people who are going to be hit the hardest, are the people who've been contributing to the problem the least. And I think the way XR is trying to do it is basically saying we need to be telling the truth about what our industries, our governments, our society has caused, be open about that, […] and being real about the death and devastation that you're causing to real life people right now. Not ten years in the future, not just plant life or animal life, but also human life." (John, personal interview, 14 August 2019)

Malik tells me that he feels "white guilt" is primarily driving this narrative in XR, which he perceives as constructive. I was surprised by the amount of people that tied their own sense of responsibility into narratives of the Dutch colonial past:

> "[Regarding our history with the Dutch East India Company] I experience the same kind of, maybe not guilt but, what German people perhaps feel about the Second World War; my ancestors were not very cool people, no! The entire 'Golden Age', makes you think gold for whom… for my rich white ancestors it was really chill, but for the rest of the world? […] The Netherlands is still economically advanced based on what happened back then, maybe it's time to end that."[25] (Linda*, personal interview, 13 August 2019)

Kirsten echoes how colonialism made the Global North rich by "robbing the South empty",[26] while the Global South suffers the worst impacts from climate change. Similarly, Anne reflects how colonialism, the economic system and climate change are deeply intertwined: "There are still mechanisms at play like tribunals where companies can sue states for taking environmental measures, that is a product of colonialism, because it was invented by Dutch people to protect Shell in the Dutch East Indies."[27] Finally, Irene, a 60-year-old former peace activist and ceremonial leader, is visibly frustrated when she tells me:

> "The Netherlands has forever with this little frogland been in the top 10 or 5 of weapon-producing and trading countries. We live on top of the *beerput* (cesspool) here… ugh! […] This is no peace, that we are doing so well here is because of the war economy, so tell people the truth!"[28]

With these narratives, rebels are directly challenging the Dutch self-image of an innocent country regarding colonial and ecological violence, which appears to be an important part of "telling the truth". Irene juxtaposes the dominant idea of the "little frogland", where (white) innocence and ecologies come together in the image of a small place and its marshy lands and wet climate, with that of the *beerput*, the "pit of the bear". These narratives make visible the "shadow places" (Plumwood 2008) of Dutch colonialism and capitalism. These views were shared by people across a variety of social locations, and several people related how they were shaped relationally, through interaction with people in and outside XR. Rebels are thus refusing to be interpellated by the hegemonic hailing of belonging to dominant narratives of white innocence, opening up to contestation whose lives really matter, as well as possibilities for transformative belonging across geographical and racial difference. For

[25] Translated from Dutch by the author.
[26] Translated from Dutch by the author.
[27] Translated from Dutch by the author.
[28] Translated from Dutch by the author.

instance, Linda* directly connects (neo)colonial expropriation, the "idea that you have the right to grab whatever you want",[29] to the exploitation of natural gas in Groningen, inviting possibilities for solidarity.

Several rebels cited this sense of responsibility as an important motivation for taking action. At the same time, we should not become too attached to geographic interpretations, but pair them with a deeper understanding of how social relations like race, class, gender and their intersections cut across geographies to shape power and responsibility (Newell 2005: 70). Few rebels put forward such analyses, which I believe are important to move beyond binaries of oppressor/oppressed (Mohanty 2003: 55), and towards a more complex understanding of how power shapes the different realities of people in the Netherlands and their ability to respond to the climate and ecological crisis. Which notions of justice are prioritised, and who gets to long for justice? These remain important questions to keep asking ourselves.

Which truth do we tell? The tensions of a radical narrative

I have heard several people within XR signal a tension between intersectional analyses of the climate and ecological crisis like the ones provided above, and the need to urgently build a mass movement to address the crisis, which might be undermined by a message that is considered too "radical" or too "left-wing". This tension between balancing "radicality" and "mass appeal" is played out again and again, affecting decisions around which groups to align ourselves with, who to invite to speak at our actions, where to organise talks and so on. Our ability to enter into alliances depends on our ability to attach onto other struggles without losing our emphasis on the climate and ecological crisis. Nevertheless, I would like to trouble these tensions a little.

One particular moment when this tension became very clear to me was during the process of reviewing the demands.[30] During the long discussions in which we tried to shorten and clarify the demands, questions of how to appeal to "mainstream" Dutch citizens continued to surface. We can understand this imaginary "mainstream" citizen as normative: white, male, middle-class, and relatively conservative. This raises important questions regarding who we want to align ourselves with: do we imagine ourselves as belonging to this norm, and the environmentalisms it produces, or do we choose to turn away from it? I argue that choosing transformative belonging that challenges these norms does not necessarily undermine our ability to build a mass movement. Almost everyone I speak to comments on the fact that Dutch people are particularly difficult to mobilise, because we prefer negotiation and coalition-building over protest. We even have an entire vocabulary devoted to this: *schipperen* and the *polder model* regularly came up in conversations. However, as someone remarked when reviewing the demands, our remarkable acquiescence when it comes to political matters is fuelled by myths of the Netherlands being the "best and greenest country in the world". It seems to me that actively working to intervene in these discourses has great mobilising potential: shifting the discursive "Overton window", which used to feature in earlier versions of the talk, rather than responding to the norm. As I have demonstrated, many rebels are already engaging in this; it is important that these narratives find their way into official XRNL communications.

[29] Translated from Dutch by the author.
[30] See Appendix A.

3.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, "telling the truth" is essential to XR's identity and strategy, and scientific knowledges constitute a core part of this. Although this to an extent reproduces hegemonic norms of white, rational, middle-class masculinity that historically inform the environmental movement, it simultaneously disrupts dominant ecological modernisation discourses by appealing to "emergency" language and demanding systemic change. In addition, XR is increasingly foregrounding emotional and experiential epistemologies. This structures belonging in both exclusionary and inclusionary ways, yet the emphasis on urgency at times jeopardises the time-intensive labour of coalition-building. Finally, many rebels contest the Dutch self-image of innocence in relation to colonial and ecological violence. These contestations are important, because they open up possibilities for building affective ties with those who have suffered the most at the hands of colonialism and capitalism. Thus, while XR demands that we "tell the truth", there are in fact many truths circulating within XRNL, which figures as a pedagogical space in the relational (re)production of these knowledges. Being able to hold these different truths while examining which ones are most useful for transformative belongings is essential, as it is a way of resisting the totalising tendencies of modernity, recognising that all perspectives are necessarily partial (Haraway 2006: 139).

Chapter 4
We need a Regenerative Culture: relational subjectivities and mourning as political praxis

In this chapter, I further explore the epistemic and ontological importance of emotions in XR by focussing on XRNL's "Regenerative Culture" (RC). I will first discuss the ways in which RC is fostering relationality and caring connections within XRNL, and opening up possibilities for transformative belonging. Next, I examine how "vulnerability" is reconstituting subjectivities and forms an important site of action and connection for XR rebels. Finally, I will examine the role of grief and loss in making us aware of our shared vulnerabilities, and how this can contribute to a politics of mourning based on responsible connections between places and beings without collapsing the differences between them.

4.1 "Try to inhabit the mushroom": the relational self and care for the other(-than-human)

The first day of September is a drab, rainy Sunday, but the offices where XRNL is having its pre-Rebel Without Borders[31] national meet-up is abuzz with excited voices, joyful reunions, and contented sighs when people get their hands on a cup of coffee. It is these emotions that I find coursing through my own body at the sight of hundred or so rebels from across the country coming together to plan, prepare, and embrace each other. Before the Actions & Logistics circle launches into the practicalities of the day, Robin as a representative of the Regenerative Culture circle asks us to get up, give our body a little shake, and close our eyes.

> "I would like you to consider a mushroom, how, when you encounter it in the forest by itself, it seems so alone, so small. Try to inhabit the mushroom, seemingly alone in the huge forest. Try to feel how it feels, fragile, beautiful, exposed, difficult. And now feel the mycelium, […] feel your entanglement with […] the forest, the leaves on the ground and the other mushrooms […] how it is all you and how it is not you. Step into that feeling […] and try to hold it for a moment." (XR national meet-up, 1 September 2019)

When I open my eyes again, I have to wipe away some tears: tears of joy and gratitude of knowing myself to be connected to the people in this room, to the other-than-human, entangled together in political struggle for the right to exist. "Regenerative Culture" is an important part of XR. It is expressed not only through these kinds of exercises, but also embedded in its everyday practices. It is the movement's prefigurative politics: the way it imagines and enacts the new world "within the shell of the old" (Graeber 2004: 7). I argue here that "relationality" and fostering caring and responsible connections between humans and with the other-than-human are key features of RC. In its most basic definition, RC is a culture that is healthy, resilient and adaptable, caring for ourselves, each other, the planet and life as a whole. It is about substituting a "toxic" society which degenerates its social and ecological foundations for one that is regenerative, recognising that "we belong in deep relation to each other and our worlds" (Wright 2015: 403).

There are many tangible examples of RC in XRNL. RC is embedded in its principles and values, from "we avoid blaming and shaming" to "we actively mitigate for power".[32]

[31] The international week(s) of rebellion in October.
[32] See Appendix A.

During meetings, we have a check-in and check-out to share how we are doing, introduce ourselves with our pronouns, and use hand signals to communicate.[33] The significance of these micro-practices in challenging norms and acknowledging people that get erased by them became clear to me when Linda told me that as someone who is neuro-atypical it made her feel there was a place for her in XRNL from the very first meeting. There are also specific roles during actions considered part of RC: besides the "arrestables" who are purposefully looking to get arrested, there are many non-arrestable roles, including specific "wellbeing roles". Wellbeing people are in charge of the physical and emotional care and wellbeing of anyone involved in actions, including bystanders. This can mean peeling mandarins for people who are "glued on",[34] but wellbeing people are also trained in de-escalation, body-awareness and deep listening techniques. During the wellbeing training at the national meet-up, I was blown away by the trusting and intimate spaces of deep connection and vulnerability these practices create among strangers. As rebels experiment with how they want to belong to each other and the collective, these practices prefigure a new world in becoming. There is a possibility here for reworking power relations, "creating and recreating solidarities through the very act of living" (Wright 2008: 224).

Several of my interviewees commented specifically on the way in which reworking our ways of relating and being "otherwise" form a central component of RC, celebrating XR's community of support and care. Encouraging each other to take time for regeneration is embedded in movement practices through scheduled debriefs and reflection after actions, as well as in everyday interactions: "when you say: 'I'm really overwhelmed so I'm not coming this week', everyone says: 'Okay, we understand completely, come back whenever you're ready'."[35] This makes XR stand apart from other collectives where there is less space for caring relations. Kennelly (2014: 243-244) describes how a lack of a culture of support can foster burnout and depression among young female activists, and Pecorelli (2015) describes how sometimes personal emotions that do not align with the collective cause can be perceived as obstructive.[36]

One reason why care-full relations are valued as prefigurative praxis, is that many people in XRNL see care for human beings as deeply intertwined with care for the other-than human. I have heard many people repeat that taking care of ourselves is the first step in taking care of the earth, and Linda reflects that rebels who join the movement out of care for the earth tend to also be caring when it comes to people. This is significant for two reasons. First, because it legitimises self-care as a political strategy and "giving support as a political need", opening up towards the web of human and other-than-human relationships that are "at the core of effective, sustainable activist practice" (Kennelly 2014: 254). Second, it rejects the divide between "human" and "nature", instead approaching all life and matter as interconnected and deserving of care. In this way, it is shifting subjectivities to recognise the relational constitution of the self (Gilson 2015: 23), rejecting the denial of dependency and relationality that constitute the conditions for oppression and injustice along multiple axes of difference and the exploitation of the other-than-human (Gilson 2015: 12).

I argue that XR thus functions as a pedagogical space for unlearning dominant ways of being and relating to ourselves and each other (Motta and Esteves 2014: 8). Communication

---

[33] This is not specific to XR: this is used to varying degrees in other (environmental) groups too, and the signs are borrowed directly from Occupy.
[34] Chris, personal interview, 29 August 2019.
[35] Linda, personal interview, 13 August 2019. Translated from Dutch by the author.
[36] This does not mean that everything is perfect: burnout and exhaustion continue to form a challenge within XRNL.

forms an important element of this: Anna[37] told me she learnt a lot about communication in XR, and that "it's a space where I can engage in call out/call in culture,[38] that was accepted and appreciated in ways that were new to me." Non-Violent Communication workshops are supposed to formalise these pedagogies. Compassionate, collaborative communication resists exclusionary forms of belonging and aims to unlearn harmful and divisive practices. This is not an easy process as John reflects: "it's so hard for people to put into practice, because people are coming from these systems that are hierarchical, competitive, very growth-oriented, it's hard to break free from those things." Rather than *being* together differently, it is perhaps better understood a process of *becoming* "otherwise". This simultaneously constitutes a mode and way of resisting.

However, RC is not always recognised as an important element of the movement's political praxis. Although one of XR's founders, Gail Bradbrook, emphasises the importance of an "ecology of theories of change" (Extinction Rebellion UK 2019a), for most people non-violent civil disobedience is considered the core of XR's strategy. As a result, there is a generalised feeling that there is insufficient space for RC, which tends to get overshadowed by the urgency of direct action. This reading of XR delegitimises other strategies, in what I interpret to be a gendered understanding of which kinds of activism really matter. Direct action is infused with thrill and heroism traditionally associated with masculinity, and therefore valued over care, relationality and reflexivity that characterise RC but are typically associated with femininity. This hierarchisation of strategies is also excluding in other ways, as people's ability to get arrested highly depends on race, class and sexuality-based privileges. A failure to recognise the legitimacy of other forms of resistance, including those practiced by XR itself, forms a major barrier to challenging hegemonic norms of being and knowing that have traditionally structured environmental activism, and limit the possibilities for transformative belonging.

Nevertheless, for many people RC and feeling community are key reasons for getting and/or staying involved with XR. RC practices are actively creating belonging, as belongings are made through the coming together of beings and things in relational ways (Wright 2015: 393). Rather than perceiving belongings as either inclusive or exclusive (Wright 2015: 399), they are better understood as always necessarily both. Interestingly, the people I interviewed mention either XR's action strategy or RC as the main aspect of the movement that attracted them – hardly anyone mentions both. Although RC speaks to many people who would otherwise perhaps not have felt they belonged in activist spaces, I have also seen how these practices alienate others who do not feel they belong to the "floaty" or "spiritual" character of RC. In addition, I have experienced how at times the community and care labour that XR demands can be emotionally and physically exhausting, leaving me less able to be caring towards myself and others around me. This raises questions around who can be in community with each other in XR. I would like to share Kirsten's take on RC here, which I find promising as suggesting a way of thinking community beyond XR towards more inclusive belongings:

> "When you're talking about regenerative culture, […] for me that really means something like building up a network in the neighbourhoods, with associations, building networks in which you support each other, help, I think in the end that's the only way in which you can survive as a human, you need to cooperate, whether you're highly educated or not, you need to be able to rely on each other."[39] (personal interview, 26 August 2019)

---

[37] Not her real name.

[38] Anna defines 'call out' culture as the culture of publicly 'calling out' inappropriate (e.g. racist/sexist) behaviour, while 'calling in' culture holds people to account in private.

[39] Translated from Dutch by the author.

4.2 Relating from vulnerability

As I discussed in the previous chapter, although scientific knowledge is central to XR, an important component of RC is its emphasis on making space for our emotional response to the climate and ecological crisis. Through a combination of a language of "crisis", dystopian imaginaries and emotional connections, I argue that XR is making people aware of their vulnerability, which represents an important challenge to hegemonic ways of knowing and being. For many rebels, the prospect of ecological disaster in the Netherlands is almost accepted as certainty. During a mourning circle – which I introduce in the next section – the emphasis was not on *if* disaster at home was going to strike, but when, with flooding as the most salient possibility. This was accompanied by a loss of faith in people's privileges and government to provide protection. This is quite exceptional: in Europe, cultural discourses on climate change have tended to construe it as a problem of geographical, temporal and even ontological distance (Doyle 2011, as cited in Arthur 2017: 34). In their research with Dutch university students, El Zoghbi and El Ansari (2014) found they considered themselves to be safe from the impacts of climate change, seemingly sheltered by their location, socio-economic privileges, and faith in government and technology. XR interferes into this narrative of invulnerability: despite the high number of young, highly-educated and middle-class rebels, they are motivated to take action not just by global injustice, but based on an immediate fear for their own lives, environment and loved ones.

Feminist scholars have made us aware that vulnerability is not just a condition of being susceptible to harm or risks, but that it is a way of being related to what is not fully masterable (Butler 2014: 25). Judith Butler defines vulnerability as an "unwilled susceptibility" that binds us to others (2005: 91). We are always vulnerable, but it is recognising ourselves as such which signals a shift in the constitution of ourselves (Butler 2004: 43): "our vulnerability, our ability to be open to others, enables relationality and thus allows us to become what we are as well as to become otherwise in relation to others" (Gilson 2015: 23-24). This substitutes the individual, autonomous modern subject who is the master of its environment – inherent to modern environmentalisms which emphasise technological optimism – for a subjectivity founded on dependency, uncertainty and absence of control (Head 2016 as cited in Bulkeley et al. 2018: 325-326; Verlie 2019: 754).

For many people in XR, feeling vulnerable seems to be intimately connected to their motivation to take action. I was struck by this when Robin, who has been with XRNL since the beginning and works in IT, shared with me that as a white man, he has never really had to feel vulnerable. Although he was aware of climate change and biodiversity loss, he is visibly uncomfortable when he tells me he finds it hard to admit that it was fear for his own safety which precipitated his decision to join XR. Similarly, Daan, who recently graduated from a technical university, tells me how he was always aware that climate change was an issue, but that he did not really realise it would have actual implications for his own life. He describes in detail how during the exceptionally hot summer of 2018 he was doing his graduate project in a lab where it's 18°C all year round, and every day he would go outside and notice the extreme temperatures completely alien to him in the Netherlands. This led him to investigate further the science and implications of climate change, eventually leading to his rapid politicisation which culminated in taking action with XR.

What counts for Robin and Daan also counts for me: my privileges of being Dutch, white, highly-educated and middle-class have earned me a sense of invulnerability in relation to many things, including ecological disaster. By disrupting a sense of entitlement to a better future, vulnerability works to destabilise privilege and discourses of planetary domination (Verlie 2019: 754). When I first joined XR, I was sceptical of the language of "crisis", subscribing to the widespread belief that XR's emphasis on disaster would only paralyse people.

I was involved in environmental organisations before and believed climate change was really important, and at times I would feel terrified after reading another article about how desperate the situation is, but this feeling would subside as quickly as it came. However, by being exposed to XR's discourses and being in community with people for whom taking action against the climate and ecological crisis had taken over their entire life, I gradually started to internalise XR's narratives.[40] Instead of cognitively understanding the problem, being with XR made me *feel* the "great unravelling" in Joanna Macy's terms (Macy and Brown 2014). Although this has made me feel terrified and incredibly sad, as Butler proposes vulnerability is also "part of the very meaning of political resistance as an embodied enactment" (2014: 12). She argues this in the context of deliberate exposure to power, like in a non-violent blockade; recognising our vulnerability in light of the climate and ecological crisis makes the mobilisation of this vulnerability for resistance only seem logical.

At the same time, it is important to remain attentive to the fact that there are many people who do face greater exposure to the impacts of the climate and ecological crisis. Therefore, it is important that action is not only inspired by our own vulnerability, but also by "extensive responsibility for these especially vulnerable others", a responsiveness which Gilson argues is itself elicited through reckoning with our own vulnerability (2015: 24). It is by taking the lives of marginalised communities as the point of departure that our politics becomes most inclusive (Mohanty 2003: 510). Vulnerability can thus provide a fruitful entry point for relating to others, opening up possibilities for belonging across difference and species by knowing that we are all affected, however unequally, by the same crisis.

Vulnerability also has the potential to disrupt the culturally embedded idea of human domination over nature, captured brilliantly by Daan:

> "We cannot think otherwise than that we will always be fine, but at one point we will fall from our throne and we will realise that we are also vulnerable. […] The *watersnoodramp*[41] is as far as I know the last time that we as Dutch people got a significant beating from the sea, from our natural enemy which we have been trying to keep out for hundreds of years. […] Many people don't know that [danger] anymore, […] they don't feel that fear anymore. I think at some point when people start feeling that fear again, people would be prepared to do what is necessary. […] Who is scared of nature anymore in the Netherlands? We are really scared of other things, terrorists, Russia, maybe Trump… people are scared of their neighbours, but we're not scared of nature."[42] (personal interview, 27 August 2019)

Echoing Daan's suggestion, during the demands review process someone suggested centring the 1953 flood in XR's narrative, because reminding people of their vulnerability in relation to nature would not only create a sense of urgency, but also of solidarity. It is worth noting the tensions here, in the sense that vulnerability when understood as exposure to risk may also lead to a reactionary response, reinforcing the desire for control that characterises the modern self and its response to climate change (Head 2016 as cited in Bulkeley et al. 2018: 329). Therefore, it is important to provide spaces where we attend to our vulnerabilities rather than willing it away through domination and control (Butler 2004: 29); Irene suggested that respecting our boundaries and retreating from the sea may be a more adequate response.

---

[40] And yes, I do sometimes wonder if I have been brainwashed, and to what extent the lack of distance to my research is problematic. However, I am extremely appreciative of the space for reflexivity in XR, and the ways in which my relations to people outside the movement keep me sane.

[41] Major flood in 1953, which formed the incentive for the construction of the Delta Works coastal defences.

[42] Translated from Dutch by the author.

Dependency, vulnerability and responsibility come together in the phrase "we are nature defending itself", which has found common currency in parts of the environmental movement and was painted on a flag attached to the iconic yellow boat during Rebel Without Borders (see Figure 4.1). Although I think we need to trouble what it really means to be "nature defending itself" when we are deeply implicated in ecological destruction, this phrase stands in immediate opposition to the modern trope of (white) "saving nature" narratives, opening up the way to what Haraway calls "social nature" (1992: 309). Arguing that nature is "made" by human/other-than-human agglomerations, Haraway centres justice as essential to the meaning of nature and the way land and people are organised (1992: 297). When in the summer of 2019 the Amazon fires were dominating the news, I felt incredibly frustrated with "saving trees" tropes circulating around XR. A greater emphasis on the Amazon as "an irreducibly human/non-human collective entity" (Haraway 1992: 311) from a place of shared vulnerability would have resulted in a more useful understanding of how nature and justice are co-constitutive, and how we can imagine belonging that does not exclude "derealised" humans for the sake of reifying a certain imagination of nature.

Figure 4.1
"We are nature defending itself" at the yellow boat with "tell the truth"
Rebel Without Borders

Source: Catharina Gerritsen 2019

4.3 Mourning and grief as relationality and political praxis

"Now that we are crying, learning our emotions again, will come this connection to who we are, where we are coming from."[43]

- Irene, personal interview, 12 August 2019

What does it mean to mourn at the end of the world?

It was an incredibly hot summer day at the end of July when I, a little doubtful and a little nervous, rang the doorbell next to the green XR sticker that I identified as belonging to the Amsterdam Rebel Base. Inside the new office space, I gathered with six other rebels for the first "mourning circle" of XRNL, organised by the RC circle. Although mixed in age, we

[43] Translated from Dutch by the author.

were definitely on the older side for XR, and the circle had mainly drawn people involved in RC – many with an interest in spirituality or self-improvement. Mourning circles[44] are a way of collectively coming to grips with "the unbearable reality that we are living in a dying world, a world that a great many of us are helping to kill" (Klein 2014: 28). As we progressed through the evening, the atmosphere in the room turned heavy and full of sadness. While we discussed what the "great unravelling" does to our lives, everyone was blinking away their tears or crying quietly.

Figure 4.2
Blood of our children at the Declaration of Rebellion

Source: Catharina Gerritsen 2019.

Figure 4.3
Funeral procession in Amsterdam

Source: Catharina Gerritsen 2019.

Grief is an important emotion through which XR encourages people to connect to the reality of the climate and ecological crisis, during mourning circles as well as during actions and public performances. In April, during the Declaration of Rebellion, the "blood of our

[44] They are based on the work of Joanna Macy (Macy and Brown 2014), who is an important intellectual inspiration for XR.

children" was spilled onto the Plein in Den Haag to symbolise the (future) violence of climate change (see Figure 4.2), and in June, a funeral procession through the canals of Amsterdam (see Figure 4.3) bore a coffin which symbolised "our future and […] those already suffering at the hands of climate breakdown" (Extinction Rebellion Nederland 2019). Grief and mourning carry important potential to make people aware of their shared vulnerabilities: loss "illuminate[s] the very depths of socio-ecological relationality" by revealing the connections that tie us to others and co-constitute our own subjectivities (Butler 2004: 22).

Scholarly attention to grief in the context of the climate and ecological crisis has particularly emphasised "ecological grief" as an extension of mourning to other-than-human bodies (Cunsolo 2012: 141), mostly ignoring how this intersects with human power relations. In this section, I consider how mourning opens up possibilities for belonging not just across species boundaries, but also with multifarious human others. Without aiming to be exhaustive, I discuss three "subjects" of mourning: local ecologies and their "shadow places", the future, and the loss of "the world as we know it".

"Learning to be affected" through local ecologies

Gibson et al. (2015: vii-viii) argue that our connections to earth others develop by "learning to be affected" (Latour 2004a) by certain ecologies, species and materialities in specific localities, and the loss and potentiality that constitute them. During the mourning circle, I shared how seeing the devastating open-pit lignite mines just across the German border constituted an experience of ecological grief that left a lasting impression on me. However, I have rarely heard stories of grief for Dutch ecologies in XR. Although it is important to interrogate the non-straightforward ways in which we learn to be affected in a globalised world, this absence of intimate connections to local ecologies is striking. At the funeral procession, grief was directed at "our future and the future of the city of Amsterdam", as well as disappearing "coral reefs, tropical forests, savannah", and the "thousands or millions of people [who] will die due to floods, famine, droughts, or conflict" (Extinction Rebellion 2019). Loss appears to be either geographically or temporally removed from Dutch reality.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Dutch landscape is not considered "real nature"; as a result, Dutch ecologies have become derealised bodies which are "ungrievable", because they never really existed (Butler 2004: 33). The "othering" of these ecologies is co-constitutive of our subjectivities, as Butler signals that we are as much constituted by the lives we do grieve as by those whose deaths we disavow (2004: 46). By opening up to contestation what it is that we grieve for, mourning not merely the destruction of "coral reefs, tropical forests, savannah" but the Dutch heather, seas and agricultural wastelands, we redefine the boundaries of which lives matter and are able to unsettle the narratives of innocence which cover up the ecological destruction that underpins modernity. One promising example is the "missing" posters of local species threatened with extinction, like the national bird, the Grutto (see Figure 4.4). This not only allows us to form "risky attachments" (Latour 2004b) with (earth) others, relinquishing control and domination for the possibilities of uncertain connections (Instone 2015: 36); it also enables transformative belonging across time and space with other places of human/more-than-human agglomerations of loss.

Figure 4.4
"Missing: Grutto"

Source: Bente Brunia 2019 (public domain)

As I discussed in the previous chapter, many rebels are aware of the (neo)colonial violence in the "shadow places" of Dutch development, and feel responsibility towards these places and beings. Our limited ability to mourn the other-than-human is also entangled in the derealisation of people all over the world who have intimate connections to their ecologies and mourn them (Cunsolo 2012: 154). This illustrates the possibility of belonging to tie grief for the human and more-than human together. However, the "coloniality of power" (Quijano 2010) renders these connections inherently risky, since colonial denial and appropriation are easily replicated (Jacobs 1994). As Vazquez proposes, listening can be an essential tool for an ethical orientation towards knowledge as relationality (2012: 7): listening to others' grief and being responsive to it is essential for establishing responsible connections.

Mourning the future, erasing the past?

Rather than mourning local ecosystems, the speech delivered during the funeral procession primarily focuses on future loss when it comes to the Netherlands. Even though most rebels are aware of past and present impacts, an emphasises on "future loss" continues to surface as people grapple with the complex geographical and temporal realities of loss inflicted by the climate and ecological crisis. This risks erasing the past and present violence against other beings and humans in other places; it also negates the reality of people already suffering at the hands of the "toxic system" in the Netherlands. If we understand from queer death studies that mourning tends to overlook individuals who do not correspond to the norm (Radomska et al. 2019: 5), it is important to consider how reinforcing the idea that loss is located in the future negates the losses of marginalised people in the Netherlands, considerably limiting the possibilities for belonging.

At the same time, futurity is important given the accelerating and intensifying impacts of climate change for all beings and places. Can we mourn the future without erasing the past? In their interviews, many people interwove stories of people and ecologies that are already affected with fears for their own immediate kin. At the same time, the failure to translate this into official XR narratives undermines our ability to relate to loss and violence across geographical, temporal and other boundaries of difference. Langstaff (2016: 335)

argues that a radical politics of mourning which takes "some a priori unity of historical subjects" as a point of departure is impossible, given the radically uneven character of the dispossessive violence of modernity and ecological destruction. Moving beyond narratives of disaster for a universal "humanity", and towards a politics of mourning rooted in specific realities of loss provides a starting point for the responsible connections that transformative belonging requires.

Mourning "the world as we know it": belonging in the "One-World-World"

During the mourning circle, several people expressed their grief for the "loss of the world as we know it", and the inability of their children to live as they have lived. We can understand this as a sense of loss not only for a changing world but also for the modern self, sustained by a fossil fuel economy (Head 2016: 31). I felt frustrated, because as a young person, I could never quite claim belonging to their world; it was never meant to survive for me and I was never going to live in it. Without dismissing the deep loss felt by people as the world they have always known is slipping away, it is important to recognise that this "One-World-World" (Escobar 2016) was always based on the denial of other beings' belonging to it: gendered and racialised "others", non-human beings and future (now present) generations. Thus, Gabrys suggests that the "end of the world" is less about planetary destruction, and more an encounter with the relations we have ignored, overlooked or even ruined (2018: 61). While decolonial scholars draw attention to the ways in which modernity/coloniality actively rendered other worlds and ways of being outside Europe non-existent (Escobar 2016: 15; Vazquez 2017: 78), Irene reflects how this also occurred in the Netherlands itself:

> "Because of my contacts with indigenous peoples, I notice that I think the first country where colonisation was successful, is here. Our wise women have been burned at the stake, our wise men, our culture, we don't even speak the language anymore, it has been completely wiped off the map. We don't even remember who we are anymore, who our ancestors are, the feel of the land."[45] (personal interview, 12 August 2019)

Recognising how we are connected through the same processes of violence and loss that sustain the One-World-World as it comes to an end holds out a promise for transformative belonging. Langstaff argues that as anxiety is taking hold of those who could lay claim to belonging in the One-World World we "stumbled upon a narrow stretch of common ground with those who have been the objects of modernity's most violent inclusions and foundational exclusions […] herein lies the possibility of coalition" (2016: 339). Grieving across boundaries, human and more-than-human, makes us aware of the conceptual, spiritual and emotional limitations of some of the core divisions that constitute Western modernity (Fitz-Henry 2017: 156). If we are willing to depart from this world, we are able to come together through our dispossessions and orient ourselves towards the pluriverse (Langstaff 2016: 339), a world in which many worlds fit (Escobar 2016: 20).

Yet our own implication in this tremendous loss, however unequally, makes the possibility for coalition simultaneously elusive (Langstaff 2016: 339). This tension was also articulated at the funeral procession:

> "it can be awkward to confront the reality that we, with our consumption habits, cause the problem we are desperately trying to solve. […] Still, we need to ask ourselves to confront it, together. We need to grieve." (Extinction Rebellion Nederland 2019)

[45] Translated from Dutch by the author.

Verlie suggests that while guilt is "awkward", it can be an important step towards articulating a responsible subject (2019: 756), which my explorations in the previous chapter tentatively confirm. At the intersections of grief and guilt, we are invited to "stay with the trouble" (Haraway 2013), asking ourselves "how do we approach collective relations of loss, violence, and grief without collapsing its stark inequalities and irreducible multiplicities?" (Langstaff 2016: 354).

Mourning as a site of action: towards a politics of mourning

The mourning circle was not just a place of deep sadness, it also provided a space for forging deep connections; emotions like grief "align individuals with communities – or bodily space with social space – through the very intensity of their attachments" (Ahmed 2004: 119). The "emotional solidarity" this creates is important to validate experiences of grief, which as an emotion can simultaneously be alienating, as it falls outside what is a normatively accepted response to climate and ecological change (Kretz 2017: 271-275). I experienced that collective, conscious processes of mourning, rather than precipitating into despair, can also provide the foundation for collective action (Head 2016 in Bulkeley et al. 2018: 326), while turning away from loss and grief constitutes a form of denial which may inhibit people from taking political action (Randall 2009: 127). During the mourning circle, we recognised that our mourning originates from a place of great love, love for that which survives which exceeds what was lost (Langstaff 2016: 342). Mourning is intimately tied up with hope, which generates action towards possible worlds, striving to do things otherwise (Verlie 2019: 757). Head argues that hope, as the embodied orientation and praxis towards making a difference, is distinct from optimism, which dulls grief and is characterised by an investment in a better, stable future that underpins modernist approaches to climate change (2016 as cited in Bulkeley et al. 2018: 329-330).

The political action that mourning engenders is defined by the possibilities for belonging it creates: through fostering an ethical responsiveness to derealised others and mourning those otherwise rendered ungrievable, their lives come to inform our political action (Cunsolo 2012: 141-142). At the same time, it is important to remain aware of the erasures that occur within the new (still hierarchical) constellations of grief this creates. Taking mourning as the basis for our political praxis can supplement urgency as a site of action, making space for connections and affections that are otherwise lost. Mourning as a political praxis requires that we invent the appropriate practices and rituals that help us imagine and enact the beginning of another world, "a form of loving ceremony, transformative assembly, wellspring of resilience" (Langstaff 2016: 343). Beyond ritual, mourning can also form the motivation for disruptive actions, taking to the streets to demand an end to violence (Langstaff 2016: 348-349). This has great potential but is something which in XRNL still needs to be fostered, something for which the mourning circles provide a good starting point.

3.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, forging caring and responsible connections between humans and with the other-than-human are key features of RC and XR's prefigurative politics. Through recognising our shared vulnerabilities, RC welcomes an emerging relational subjectivity, as we willingly open ourselves up to others and our interdependency. This "affective adaptation" (Verlie 2019: 760-761) makes XR a pedagogical space for (un)learning dominant ways of being, thinking and becoming otherwise in relation to others (Motta and Esteves 2014: 8; Gilson

2015: 23-24) – XR is "like a life boat, preventative and adaptive at the same time."[46] As we become aware of our socio-ecological entanglements through vulnerability and loss, this gives rise to new ethical and political connections; as Tsing puts it, we are "forced to be ever more aware of the process of finding allies and building collaborations when we realise we are not the crest of a wave to an imagined better future" (2018: 75).

This is fostered by recognising grief and mourning as appropriate responses to the climate and ecological crisis, disrupting modern relations of domination towards the more-than-human and troubling the Dutch self-image of innocence in relation to ecological violence. Entangled with a tenuous hoping, mourning becomes "an embodied labour of bearing worlds" (Verlie 2019: 757) and can provide a basis for action that moves beyond urgency. Mourning as a political praxis is something which I propose merits nurturing in XRNL: where urgency inhibits the forging of alliances, mourning orients us towards connectivity and transformative belongings, redefining the boundaries of who belongs to the struggle for social and climate justice. At the same time, it is important to remain attentive to the way in which grief remains a terrain of political struggle, and new configurations of belonging give rise to new exclusionary practices.

[46] John, personal interview, 15 August 2019.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

In this Research Paper, I have attempted to provide insight into how dominant subjectivities and knowledges are being resisted and/or reinforced in Extinction Rebellion Netherlands, and how this affects (possibilities for) belonging. After rethinking Dutch environmentalisms in terms of power relations entangled in the denial of a history of capitalist colonial and ecological violence, I elaborated on two aspects of XRNL in relation to the navigation of these normative ways of knowing and being: narratives of "tell the truth" and its regenerative culture. Where Chapter 3 focussed more on the discursive and epistemic aspects, Chapter 4 emphasised subjectivities and the ontological dimension, although with considerable overlap and intersections between the two. I have discussed several ways in which dominant knowledges and subjectivities are being reinforced, leading to exclusionary belongings, such as a reliance on scientific knowledge, an emphasis on urgency, mourning practices that remove violence temporally and geographically from our immediate surroundings and a desire to appeal to normative, "mainstream" citizens. Additionally, I signalled many openings for transformative belonging, including the rethinking of our subjectivities through vulnerability and relationality, mourning as a political praxis, the legitimation of emotional and experiential knowledges and the contestation of (white) innocence.

Rather than providing definitive answers, I see this text as providing openings, questions, and glimpses of something that is inherently too dynamic and complex to capture completely, so that we might think, imagine, learn, connect and rebel more consciously and responsibly. There are many topics and facets of XR that provide important insights into belonging which I did not pick up on; particularly its strategy of non-violent disobedience, and the ways in which arrests and authorities are approached in XR, which have been the subject of elaborate critiques. Instead, I decided to emphasise aspects of XR that receive relatively little attention: its regenerative culture and its discursive interventions. In the Netherlands, we are living in the "belly of the beast" of capitalism, colonialism and ecological destruction: discursive interventions into dominant narratives of ecological modernisation and (white) innocence and the creation of different subjectivities and ways of relating are incredibly important avenues of change which are under-recognised both outside XR and within. We do not need to be millions: we have started the change by simply being, belonging, becoming together.

I thus aim to resist homogeneous readings of XR that understand the movement as having a singular strategy, a singular politics, and a singular identity. Throughout this Research Paper, I hope to have shown that XR is first and foremost a meshwork (Escobar 2008: 272), full of tensions and dissonance. As Chandra Mohanty writes, belonging to somewhere does not mean that it is a comfortable and familiar space, but:

> "an imaginative, politically charged space in which the familiarity and sense of affection and commitment lay in shared collective analysis of social injustice, as well as a vision of radical transformation. Political solidarity and a sense of family could be melded together imaginatively to create a strategic space I could call home" (2003: 128).

Our ability to "stay with the trouble" (Haraway 2013) even when at "home", is what creates the possibilities for transformative belonging, without aspiring to replace one totalising project for another.

It is true that XR was founded and is "moved" – rather than led – by many white, middle-class, highly-educated people, not so different from the norm which has structured Dutch and European environmentalism for decades. In fact, I posit that the core ideas and narratives of XR are geared towards making the climate and ecological crisis politically and personally relevant to relatively privileged people – those who have had little reason to fear

climate change and have thus far mostly benefited from the capitalist colonial system. This affects the possibilities for belonging to and with the movement – but it does not etch them into stone. I consciously build on a "politics of relation" as opposed to a "politics of location" throughout this research, to recognise that it is not who we are, but rather who we relate to, whose lives matter to us, and who we enter into coalition with as constitutive of our subjectivities and key sites of reworking power relations (Carrillo Rowe 2005: 23). If we resist the hegemonic hailings of power and embrace transformative belonging as integral to social and ecological justice, as one movement out of many we might just be able to forge the coalitions based on affinity and political kinship that we will desperately need as we aspire to the possibility of "another world".

I have found that we in XRNL at times find it difficult to imagine these connections. As we struggle to operate in a country where we perceive people as generally difficult to mobilise, we do not always see possibilities for coalitions. We are not sure how to reach across multifarious differences while being honest about the ways in which difference has formed the basis for violence, exploitation and erasure. There is something fundamentally wrong however about the idea that people at the receiving end of some form of oppression would be too busy with their own struggles; if we cannot make our struggle their struggle, we need to seriously question where we are headed. The political articulation of these connections is important – and I already see it happening – but neither should we underestimate the importance of embodied, affective ties, for instance when on the streets people of all walks of life stop and enter into conversation with us. I think that it is in our ability to be reflexive, our openness to change, our vulnerability that we are strongest: it is our responsibility to reflect on the ways in which we structure belonging that is not inclusive, and to open ourselves up towards uncertain, risky attachments.

While writing this Research Paper, I have at times struggled between the disparity I feel between the academic reality of writing, the reality of political struggle in XR, and the reality "out there" beyond the movement. There are severe limits and I think also dangers in the slow, static, snapshot nature of academic research trying to capture the fast-paced dynamics of social movements. XR today is not the same as XR in April, and it is not going to be the same as XR next year; the same counts for me as activist-researcher. At times, I feel myself getting lost in abstractions and theoretical concepts, in imagining what could be, losing sight of the nitty-gritty reality on the ground, with its limited energy, limited resources, real-life problems. After all, what and who do we do research for if there is little space for co-producing knowledge towards transformative social change? How do I justify the endless hours behind a computer screen while my friends were planning actions, making connections, getting arrested? I am eager to return to the other side of scholar-activism, and to translate what I have learned into practices to prefigure a new world in becoming.

There are other limits that I ran into while doing this research. I question whether situating XRNL in the socio-ecological histories of the Netherlands is appropriate, given the way in which the movement transcends place in many ways. Although I retain that it has practical, political and theoretical value given XR's own bias towards nationhood, it is also necessarily a limited and partial perspective. Belonging has many dimensions; providing a better understanding of the ways in which belonging at different scales interacts with and perhaps defies national borders remains something to be explored. Besides, writing in the Dutch context while having to rely on primarily US and Latin American-based scholarship further complicates matters. There is an elaborate literature on climate and environmental justice, coloniality and social movements in these places, but these are severely lacking in the European, let alone the Dutch context. I also find responsible translations of these literatures into our own context to be wanting in activist spaces, and I believe that this provides an important point where academia could be supporting activist knowledges.

To end this paper, I would like to return to an acknowledgement of the people, the movement, and the struggle for social, ecological and climate justice, that made this paper what it is; and with a commitment to keep going; to incline towards one another; to listen and to remain humble; to stand in solidarity; to be reflexive; to be vulnerable and responsive; to rebel for life.

References

Ahmed, S. (2004) 'Affective Economies', *Social Text* 22(2): 117-139. Accessed 29 October 2019 <https://muse-jhu-edu.eur.idm.oclc.org/article/55780>.

Alimonda, H. (2011) 'La Colonialidad de la Naturaleza: Una Aproximación a la Ecología Política Lantioamericana', in H. Alimonda (ed.) *La Naturaleza Colonizada: Ecología Política y Minería en América Latina*, pp. 21-60. Buenos Aires: CLACSO.

Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Antonisch, M. (2010) 'Searching for Belonging – An Analytical Framework', *Geography Compass* 4(6): 644-659. Accessed 28 October 2019 <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2009.00317.x>.

Arthur, K. (2017) 'Frontlines of Crisis, Forefront of Change: Climate justice as an intervention into (neo)colonial climate action narratives and practices', MSc Thesis. Cambridge, MA: MIT.

Born, R.J.G. van den, R.H.J. Lenders, W.T. de Groot and E. Huijsman (2001) 'The New Biophilia: an Exploration of Visions of Nature in Western Countries', *Environmental Conservation* 28(1): 65-75. Accessed 16 June 2019 <https://www-cambridge-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/core/journals/environmental-conservation/article/new-biophilia-an-exploration-of-visions-of-nature-in-western-countries/A5F67B76CDE7FD25153DD0862519D290>.

Bracke, S. (2011) 'Subjects of Debate: Secular and Sexual Exceptionalism, and Muslim Women in the Netherlands', *Feminist Review* 98(1): 28–46. Accessed 31 March 2019 <https://journals-sagepub-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/full/10.1057/fr.2011.5#articleCitationDownloadContainer>.

Brydon-Miller, M., D. Greenwood and P. Maguire (2003) 'Why Action Research?', *Action Research* 1(1): 9-28. Accessed 26 October 2019 <https://journals-sagepub-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/14767503030011002?casa_token=O62PKbE1RpMAAAAA:ZimMyo_QjBkcVPUcxUy6PtbA3yQuJJvA1mayJq0vMBsg7pPwa9CB772cbZaZ6TfFI1I8z_TnB26OSw>.

Bulkeley, H., G. Drew, R. Hobbs and L. Head (2018) 'Conversation with Lesley Head about *Hope and Grief in the Anthropocene: Reconceptualising Human-Nature Relations*', *Geographical Research* 56(3): 325-335. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/10.1111/1745-5871.12292>.

Butler, J. (2004) *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso.

Butler, J. (2005) *Giving an Account of Oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Butler, J. (2014) 'Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance', in J. Butler, Z. Gambetti and L. Sabsay (eds) *Vulnerability in Resistance*, pp. 12-27. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Carrillo Rowe, A. (2005) 'Be Longing: Toward a Feminist Politics of Relation', *NWSA Journal* 17(2): 15-46. Accessed 20 September 2019 <https://www-jstor-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/stable/pdf/4317124.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A7a9fca9bc84ef8db6bdabafd6a81d48a>.

Carrillo Rowe, A. (2009) 'Moving Relations: On the Limits of Belonging', *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* 5(5): 1-10. Accessed 28 October 2019 <http://liminalities.net/5-4/movingrelations.pdf>.

Casas-Cortés, M.I., M. Osterweil and D.E. Powell (2008) 'Blurring Boundaries: Recognising Knowledge-practices in the Study of Social Movements', *Anthropological Quarterly* 81(1): 17-58. Accessed 5 May 2019 <https://muse-jhu-edu.eur.idm.oclc.org/article/235057/pdf>.

Cheuk, L. (2016) 'De Nederlandse klimaatbeweging is te elitair', *OneWorld*, 27 May. Accessed 20 September 2019 <https://www.oneworld.nl/achtergrond/de-nederlandse-klimaatbeweging-te-elitair/>.

Cheuk, L (2019) 'Klimaatbeweging ziet activisten van kleur niet staan', *OneWorld* 27 March. Accessed 20 September 2019 <https://www.oneworld.nl/mensenrechten/klimaatbeweging-ziet-activisten-van-kleur-niet-staan/>.

CIEL, Centre for International Environmental Law (n.d.) 'Fumes'. Accessed 20 September 2019 <https://www.smokeandfumes.org/fumes>.

Cramer, J. (2014) *Milieu.* Amsterdam: Singel Uitgeverijen.

Cunsolo, A. (2012) 'Climate Change as the Work of Mourning', *Ethics and the Environment* 17(2): 137-164. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://www-jstor-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/stable/pdf/10.2979/ethicsenviro.17.2.137.pdf?refreqid=excelsior:1f09963e3cc754ba946cca9626dde4f8>.

De la Cadena, M. (2010) 'Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections beyond "Politics"', *Cultural Anthropology* 25(2): 334-370. Accessed 28 October 2019 <https://anthrosource-onlinelibrary-wiley-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2010.01061.x>.

Della Porta, D. and L. Parks (2014) 'Framing Processes in the Climate Movement: From Climate Change to Climate Justice', in M. Dietz and H. Garrelts (eds) *Routledge Handbook of the Climate Change Movement*, pp. 19-30. Accessed 5 May 2019 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270880400_Framing_Processes_in_the_Climate_Movement_From_Climate_Change_to_Climate_Justice>.

Derbali, N. (2019) 'Het witte gezicht van de groene beweging', *Trouw* 22 March. Accessed 20 September 2019 <https://www.trouw.nl/duurzaamheid-natuur/het-witte-gezicht-van-de-groene-beweging~b6dd54c7b/>.

Ebron, P. and A.L. Tsing (2017) 'Feminism and the Anthropocene: Assessing the Field Through Recent Books', *Feminist Studies* 43(3): 658-683. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://www-jstor-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/stable/pdf/10.15767/feministstudies.43.3.0658.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ab8aab87baf3f8f92d99d7a53860fbd69>.

El Zoghbi, M. and W. El Ansari (2014) 'Ethical Concerns and Contributions in Response to Climate Change and the Links to Well-being: A Study of University Students in the Netherlands', *Central European Journal of Public Health* 22(2): 118-124. Accessed 29 October 2019 <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9cf1/1ca56d71a4d4214ac39d9dc13307f04b4d1c.pdf>.

Escobar, A. (2007) 'Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise', *Cultural Studies* 21(2-3): 179-210. Accessed 5 May 2019 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09502380601162506>.

Escobar, A. (2008) *Territories of Difference: place, movements, life, redes.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Escobar, A. (2016) 'Thinking-feeling with the Earth: Territorial Struggles and the Ontological Dimension of the Epistemologies of the South', *Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana* 11(1): 11-32. Accessed 30 December 2018 <https://www.redalyc.org/html/623/62345164002/>.

Extinction Rebellion Nederland (2019) 'Toespraak Begrafenisstoet'. Accessed 29 October 2019 <https://extinctionrebellion.nl/en/toespraakbegrafenisstoet/>.

Extinction Rebellion United Kingdom (2019a) *Dr. Gail Bradbrook: Strategy Based in an Ecology of Theories of Change.* Filmed by J. Lowe. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://rebellion.earth/2019/09/12/dr-gail-bradbrook-strategy-based-in-an-ecology-of-theories-of-change/>.

Extinction Rebellion United Kingdom (2019b) 'About us'. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/about-us/>.

Falzon, D., S. Maron, R. Wengronowitz, A. Press, B. Levy and J. Juris (2018) 'To Change Everything, it Takes Everyone: Recursivity in the People's Climate March', *Interface* 10(1-2): 92-116. Accessed 28 October 2019 <https://www.samuelmaron.com/publication/interface/interface.pdf>.

Fitz-Henry, E. (2017) 'Grief and the Inter-cultural Public Sphere: "Rights of Nature" and the Contestations of "Global Coloniality"', *Interface* 9(2): 143-161. Accessed 26 October 2019 <http://www.interfacejournal.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Interface-9-2-Fitz-Henry.pdf>.

Flórez Flórez, J. (2010) *Lecturas Emergentes: Decolonialidad y Subjetividad en las Teorías de Movimientos Sociales*. Bogotá: Universidad Javeriana.

Ford, C. (2007) 'Nature's Fortunes: New Directions in the Writing of European Environmental History', *The Journal of Modern History* 79: 112-133. Accessed 28 October 2019: <https://www-journals-uchicago-edu.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/511196>.

Foucault, M**.** (1977) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1990) *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1994) 'Two Lectures', in S. Dirks, N. Eley and G. Ortner (eds) *Culture, Power, History*, pp. 200-221. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gabrys, J. (2018) 'Making Worlds at the End of the World', *Dialogues in Human Geography* 8(10): 61-63. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://journals-sagepub-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/10.1177/2043820617738830>.

Gibson, K., D. Bird Rose and R. Fincher (2015) *Manifesto for Living in the Anthropocene*. New York: Punctum Books.

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2008) 'Socially Creative Thinking or How Experimental Thinking Creates "Other Worlds"', paper presented at the Katarsis Conference.

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2011) 'A Feminist Project of Belonging for the Anthropocene', *Gender Place and Culture* 18(1): 1-21. Accessed 26 October 2019 <https://www-tandfonline-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/full/10.1080/0966369X.2011.535295>.

Gilson, E.C. (2015) 'Vulnerability, Relationality and Dependency: Feminist Conceptual Resources for Food Justice', *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* 8(2): 10-46. Accessed 29 October 2019 <https://www-jstor-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/stable/10.3138/ijfab.8.2.10>.

Graeber, D. (2004) *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology.* Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.

Hale, C.R. (2001) 'What is Activist Research?', *Items & Issues* 2(1-2): 13-15. Accessed 5 May 2019 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313514894_What_is_activist_research>.

Hale, C.R. (2006) 'Activist Research v. Cultural Critique: Indigenous Land Rights and the Contradictions of Politically Engaged Anthropology', *Cultural Anthropology* 21(1): 96-120. Accessed May 5 <https://anthrosource-onlinelibrary-wiley-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1525/can.2006.21.1.96>.

Haraway, D. (1988) 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspectives', *Feminist Studies* 14(3): 575-599. Accessed 24 January 2019 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3178066>.

Haraway, D (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature.* New York: Routledge.

Haraway, D. (1992) 'The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others', in L. Gross-Berg, C. Nelson and P. Treichler (eds) *Cultural Studies,* pp. 295-336. New York: Routledge.

Haraway, D. (2006) 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-feminism in the Late 20th Century in J. Weiss, J. Nolan, J. Hunsinger and P. Trifonas (eds) *The International Handbook of Virtual Learning Environments Volume 1*, pp. 117-158. Dordrecht: Springer. Rpt. of 'Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s', *Socialist Review* 80: 65-108 (1985).

Haraway, D. (2013) 'Multispecies Cosmopolitics: Staying With the Trouble', Institute for Humanities Research Distinguished Lecture, Institute for Humanities Research, Arizona State University, 22 March.

Harding, S. (2005) 'Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is "Strong Objectivity"?', in Harding, S. (ed.) *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, pp. 218-236. London and New York: Routledge.

Harding, S. (2016) 'Latin American Decolonial Social Studies of Scientific Knowledges: Alliances and Tensions', *Science, Technology & Human Values* 41(6): 1063-1087. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://journals-sagepub-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/0162243916656465?casa_token=03vClc5hkmcAAAAA:DwIMJLB_IYbZ3AKuxe7X4kzoQhVBlVn4bkU4IG4_Rt5rZsil5zoiUp5TAuC29ZT3bPK0RfGZfBnH-g>.

Head, L. (2016) *Hope and Grief in the Anthropocene: Re-conceptualising Human-Nature Relations.* London and New York: Routledge.

Heijden, H.A. van der (2017) *Na het Neoliberalisme: Klimaatverandering, Sociale Bewegingen en Politiek.* Delft: Uitgeverij Eburon.

Hofs, Y. (2018) 'Milieubeweging stapt uit klimaatonderhandelingen met kabinet uit woede over CO2-heffing', *De Volkskrant* 20 December. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/milieubeweging-stapt-uit-klimaatonderhandeling-met-kabinet-uit-woede-over-co2-heffing~bcc4fcdd/?referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>.

hooks, b. (1990) 'Marginality as Resistance', in R. Ferguson, M. Gever, T.T. Minh-ha and C. West (eds) *Out There: Marginalisation and Contemporary Cultures*, pp. 241-243. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

hooks, b. (2001) *All About Love*. Reprint, New York: William Morrow, 2018.

Icaza, R. and R. Vazquez (2013) 'Social Struggles as Epistemic Struggles', *Development and Change* 44(3): 683-704. Accessed 5 May 2019 <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/full/10.1111/dech.12039>.

Instone, L. (2015) 'Risking Attachment in the Anthropocene', in K. Gibson, D. Bird Rose and R. Fincher (eds) *Manifesto for Living in the Anthropocene*, pp. 29-36. New York: Punctum Books.

Jacobs, J.M. (1994) 'Earth Honoring: Western Desires and Indigenous Knowledges', in A. Blunt and G. Rose (eds) *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies*, pp. 169-196. London: Routledge. Rpt in. R. Lewis and S. Mills (eds) (2003) *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, pp. 667-691. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

Kaijser, A. and A. Kronsell (2015) 'Climate Change through the Lens of Intersectionality', *Environmental Politics* 23(3): 417-433. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://www-tandfonline-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/full/10.1080/09644016.2013.835203>.

Kennelly, J. (2014) '"It's This Pain in My Heart That Won't Let Me Stop": Gendered Affect, Webs of Relations, and Young Women's Activism', *Feminist Theory* 15(3): 241-260. Accessed 29 October 2019 <https://journals-sagepub-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/1464700114544611>.

Klein, N. (2013) 'Dancing the World into Being: A Conversation with Idle No More's Leanne Simpson', *Yes Magazine* 5 March. Accessed 30 October 2019 <https://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/dancing-the-world-into-being-a-conversation-with-idle-no-more-leanne-simpson>.

Klein, N. (2014) *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Koppen, C.S.A. van (2000) 'Resource, Arcadia, Lifeworld. Nature Concepts in Environmental Sociology', *Sociologia Ruralis* 40(3): 300-318. Accessed 28 October 2019 <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1111/1467-9523.00150>.

Kretz, L. (2017) 'Emotional Solidarity: Ecological Emotional Outlaws Mourning Environmental Loss and Empowering Positive Change', in A. Cunsolo and K. Landman (eds) *Mourning Nature: Hope at the Heart of Ecological Loss & Grief*, pp. 258-291. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Lander, E. (2000) *La Colonialidad del Saber: Eurocentrismo y Ciencias Sociales, Perspectivas Latinoamericanas*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO.

Langstaff, D.K. (2016) 'What Could it Mean to Mourn? Notes On and Towards a Radical Politics of Loss and Grieving', *Interface* 8(2): 311-362. Accessed 29 October 2019 <http://www.interfacejournal.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Interface-8-2-Langstaff.pdf>.

Latour, B. (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Latour, B. (2004a) 'How to Talk About the Body: The Normative Dimension of Science Studies', *Body & Society* 10: 205-229. Accessed 29 October 2019 <https://journals-sagepub-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/1357034X04042943>.

Latour, B. (2004b) *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Leyva, X. and S. Speed (2008) 'Hacia La Investigación Descolonizada: Nuestra Experiencia de *Co-labor*', in X. Leyva, A. Burguete and S. Speed (eds) *Gobernar (en) la Diversidad: Experiencias Indígenas Desde América Latina. Hacia la Investigación de Co-labor,* pp. 34-59. México D.F.: CIESAS, FLACSO Ecuador and FLACSO Guatemala.

Lorde, A. (1978) 'Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power', paper presented at the Fourth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Mount Holyoke College (August 25). Rpt. in *Sister Outsider* (2007).

Lorde, A. (1984) 'Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference', paper delivered at the Copeland Colloquium, Amherst College (April). Rpt. in *Sister Outside* (2007).

Lugones, M. (1987) 'Playfulness, "World"-travelling, and Loving Perception', *Hypatia* 2(2): 3-19. Accessed 27 October 2019 <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1987.tb01062.x>.

Lugones, M. (2007) 'Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System', *Hypatia* 22(1): 186-209. Accessed 11 February 2019 <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/full/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2007.tb01156.x>.

Macy, J. and M. Brown (2014) *Coming Back to Life: The Updated Guide to the Work That Reconnects.* Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers.

Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007) 'On the Coloniality of Being', *Cultural Studies* 21(2-3): 240-270. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://www-tandfonline-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1080/09502380601162548?needAccess=true>.

Markham, W.T. van, and C.S.A. van Koppen (2014) 'Nature Protection Organisations and Climate Change in the Netherlands, Germany and the United States', *Nature and Culture* 9(3): 238-265. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://search-proquest-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/docview/1619571552?accountid=13598>.

Meadows, D.H., D.L. Meadows, J. Randers and W.W. Behrens III (1972) *The Limits to Growth*. Universe Books: New York.

Melucci, A. (1980) 'The New Social Movements: A Theoretical Approach', *Social Science Information* 19(2): 199-226. Accessed 13 May 2019 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/053901848001900201>.

Mies, M. (1993) 'White Man's Dilemma: His Search for What He Has Destroyed', in M. Mies and V. Shiva (eds) *Ecofeminism*, pp.132-163. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publications, London and New Jersey: Zed Books.

Mohanty, C.T. (2003) *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonising Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Motta, S. and A.M. Esteves (2014) 'Reinventing Emancipation in the 21st Century: The Pedagogical Practices of Social Movements', *Interface* 6(1): 1-24.

Newell, P. (2005) 'Race, Class and the Global Politics of Environmental Inequality', *Global Environmental Politics* 5(3): 70-94. Accessed 28 October 2019 <https://www-mitpressjournals-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/abs/10.1162/1526380054794835>.

Nixon, R. (2011) *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pecorelli, V. (2015) 'Wondering While Wandering: Living Between Academia and Activism', *Interface* 7(2): 145-160. Accessed 29 October 2019 <http://www.interfacejournal.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Issue-7-2-Pecorelli.pdf>.

Plumwood, V. (1993) *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. London: Routledge.

Plumwood, V. (2007) 'Review of Deborah Bird Rose's Reports from a Wild Country: Ethics for Decolonisation', *Australian Humanities Review* 42: 1-4. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://tanixa.ga/tiz.pdf>.

Plumwood, V. (2008) 'Shadow Places and the Politics of Dwelling', *Australian Humanities Review* 44: 139-150. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p38451/pdf/book.pdf#page=143>.

Quijano, A. (2010) 'Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality', in W. Mignolo and A. Escobar (eds) *Globalisation and the Decolonial Option*, pp. 22-32. London and New York: Routledge.

Radomska, M., T. Mehrabi and N. Lykke (2019) 'Queer Death Studies: Coming to Terms with Death, Dying and Mourning Differently. An Introduction.', *Women, Gender & Research* 28(3-4): 3-11. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://tidsskrift.dk/KKF/article/view/116304>.

Randall, R. (2009) 'Loss and Climate Change: The Cost of Parallel Narratives', *Ecopsychology* 1(3): 118-129. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://www-liebertpub-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1089/eco.2009.0034>.

Reitan, R. and S. Gibson (2012) 'Climate Change or Social Change? Environmental and Leftist Praxis and Participatory Action Research', *Globalisations* 9(3): 295-410. Accessed 5 May 2019 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14747731.2012.680735>.

Rich, A. (1984) 'Notes Towards a Politics of Location', in *Blood, Bread and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979-1985,* pp. 210-231. London: Little Brown & Co. Rpt. in R. Lewis and S. Mills (eds) (2003) *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, pp. 29-42. Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press.

Rocheleau, D. (2011) 'Rooted Networks, Webs of Relation, and the Power of Situated Science: Bringing the Models Back Down to Earth in Zambrana', in M. Goldman, P. Nadasdy and M. Turner (eds) *Knowing Nature, Transforming Ecologies: A Conversation Between Science and Technology Studies and Political Ecology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 209-226. Rpt. in W. Harcourt (ed.) (2016) *The Palgrave Handbook of Gender and Development*, pp. 213-231. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rojas, C. (2016) 'Contesting the Colonial Logics of the International: Toward a Relational Politics for the Pluriverse', *International Political Sociology* 10(4): 369-382. Accessed 26 October 2019 <https://academic-oup-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/ips/article/10/4/369/2613785>.

Santos, B. de Sousa, J.A. Nunes and M.P. Meneses (2007) 'Introduction: Opening Up the Canon of Knowledge and Recognition of Difference,' in B. de Sousa Santos (ed.) *Another Knowledge is Possible*, pp. x-Ii. London and New York: Verso.

Santos, B. de Sousa (2010) 'From the Postmodern to the Postcolonial – and Beyond Both,' in E. Gutiérrez Rodrígues, M. Boatcam and S. Costa (eds) *Decolonising European Sociology: Transdisciplinary Approaches*, pp. 225-242. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Santos, B. de Sousa (2014) *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Schlembach. R. (2011) 'How Do Radical Climate Movements Negotiate Their Environmental and Their Social Agendas? A Study of Debates Within the Camp for Climate Action (UK)', *Critical Social Policy* 31(2): 194-215. Accessed 28 October 2019 <https://journals-sagepub-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/0261018310395922>.

Shukin, N. (2015) 'Materialising Climate Change: Images of Exposure, States of Exception', in T. Allen and J. Blair (eds) *Material Cultures*, pp. 189-208. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Smith, A. and F. Kern (2007) 'The Transitions Discourse in the Ecological Modernisation of the Netherlands', SPRU Electronic Working Paper Series No. 160. Brighton: University of Sussex.

Tokar, B. (2018) 'On the Evolution and Continuing Development of the Climate Justice Movement', in T. Jafry, M. Mikulewicz and K. Helwig (eds) *Routledge Handbook of Climate Justice,* pp. 13-25. New York and London: Routledge.

Trudeau, D. (2006) 'Politics of Belonging in the Construction of Landscapes: Place-making, Boundary-drawing and Exclusion', *Cultural Geographies* 13: 421-443. Accessed 28 October 2019 <https://journals-sagepub-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1191/1474474006eu366oa>.

Tsing, A.L. (2015) 'Feral Biologies', paper presented at Anthropological Visions of Sustainable Futures, University College London (13 February).

Tsing, A.L. (2018) 'Getting by in Terrifying Times', *Dialogues in Human Geography* 8(1): 73-76. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://journals-sagepub-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/10.1177/2043820617738836>.

Vazquez, R. (2012) 'Towards a Decolonial Critique of Modernity: *Buen Vivir*, Relationality and the Task of Listening', in R. Fornet-Betancourt (ed.) *Capital, Poverty, Development, Denktraditionen im Dialog: Studien zur Befreiung und interkulturalität (Vol 33),* pp. 241-252. Aachen: Wissenschaftsverlag Mainz. Accessed 26 October 2019 <https://www.prismaweb.org/nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Towards-a-decolonial-critique-of-modernity-Buen-vivir-relationality-and-the-task-of-listening%E2%94%82Rolando-V%C3%A1zquez%E2%94%822012.pdf>.

Vazquez, R. (2017) 'Precedence, Earth and the Anthropocene: Decolonising Design', *Design Philosophy Papers* 15(1): 77-91. Accessed 20 September 2019 <tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14487136.2017.1303130>.

Verlie, B. (2019) 'Bearing Worlds: Learning to Live-with Climate Change', *Environmental Education Research* 25(5): 751-766. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://www-tandfonline-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1080/13504622.2019.1637823?needAccess=true>.

Wekker, G. (2016) *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Wekker, G. (2018) 'White Innocence in the Netherlands', in M.F. Weiner and A. Carmona Báez (eds) *Smash the Pillars: Decoloniality and the Imaginary of Colour in the Dutch Kingdom*, pp. 137-148. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Wichterich, C. (2015) 'Contesting Green Growth, Connecting Care, Commons and Enough', in W. Harcourt and I.L. Nelson (eds) *Practising Feminist Political Ecology: Moving Beyond the 'Green Economy'*, pp. 67-100. London: Zed Books.

Wills, A. and O. Tobin (2019) 'Extinction Rebellion activists gather in Hyde Park to mark end of disruptive protests with "closing ceremony"', *Evening Standard* 25 April. Accessed 10 November 2019 <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/extinction-rebellion-protesters-gather-in-london-to-mark-end-of-demonstrations-with-closing-ceremony-a4126796.html>.

Windt, H.J. van der (1995) *En dan: wat is natuur nog in dit land? Natuurbescherming in Nederland 1880-1990.* Groningen: Boom.

Wretched of the Earth (2019) 'An open letter to Extinction Rebellion,' *Red Pepper* 3 May. Accessed 16 June 2019 <https://www.redpepper.org.uk/an-open-letter-to-extinction-rebellion/>.

Wright, S. (2008) 'Practising Hope: Learning from Social Movement Strategies in the Philippines', in R. Pain, S. Smith and S. Graham (eds) *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life*, pp. 223-234. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Wright, S. (2015) 'More-than-human, Emergent Belongings: A Weak Theory Approach', *Progress in Human Geography* 39(4): 391-411. Accessed 29 October 2019 <https://journals-sagepub-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/0309132514537132>.

Zadig, M. (2019) 'This is an Emergency: Power, Emotions & Transformation in Times of Urgency within Extinction Rebellion'. Unpublished MSc thesis, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam.

Appendix A: About Extinction Rebellion

Where did XR come from?

Extinction Rebellion (XR) was founded by 16 people in the United Kingdom who were involved in the network "Rising Up!", founded in 2016 (Zadig 2019). The campaign officially kicked off on the 31st of October 2018, with the Declaration of Rebellion. Prior to this, its members had been touring the UK to give presentations and recruit people into the movement. During its first mass civil disobedience action XR mobilised around 5,000-6,000 people to shut down five London bridges. In April, the movement held several sites in London for 11 days, severely disrupting traffic and with 1,130 people getting arrested (Wills and Tobin 2019). Extinction Rebellion Netherlands started in December 2018, and organised two weeks of actions in April simultaneous with the London uprising. In October, a second international uprising took place, "Rebel Without Borders", with countries all over the globe participating. In the Netherlands, over 1,000 people participated in a daylong blockade at the intersection in front of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, followed by a week of actions and activities.

XRNL's aims and demands

The main aim of XR is to mobilise people to participate in mass non-violent civil disobedience to pressure governments to take action to address the climate and ecological crisis. According to the XRUK website, "Extinction Rebellion is an international movement that uses non-violent civil disobedience in an attempt to halt mass extinction and minimise the risk of social collapse" (Extinction Rebellion UK 2019b). XRNL has three demands to the Dutch government:[47]

1. TELL THE TRUTH about the climate and ecological crisis that threatens our existence and communicate the urgency for change.
2. ACT NOW to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025 in a just and fair manner.
3. LET CITIZENS DECIDE by establishing a Citizen's Assembly which takes the lead on climate and ecological justice.

These demands were formulated during the demands review process in July and August 2019. During two meetings with an intermediary feedback process, the previously formulated demands were shortened and clarified to make them easier to remember and communicate.

XR Principles & Values

XR is a decentralised and autonomous movement, which means that anyone can take action in the name of Extinction Rebellion as long as they follow its principles and values:[48]

1. We have a shared vision of change.
   Creating a world that is fit for generations to come.
2. We set our mission on what is necessary.
   Mobilising 3.5% of the population to achieve system change – using ideas such as "Momentum-driven organising" to achieve this.
3. We need a regenerative culture.
   Creating a culture which is healthy, resilient and adaptable.

[47] For the Dutch version of the demands see: https://extinctionrebellion.nl/wie-wij-zijn/
[48] These are the short versions of the demands. For the full version, see: https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/about-us/

4. We openly challenge ourselves and this toxic system.
   Leaving our comfort zones to take action for change.
5. We value reflecting and learning
   Following a cycle of action, reflection, learning and planning for more action. Learning from other movements and contexts as well as our own experiences.
6. We welcome everyone and every part of everyone.
   Working actively to create safer and more accessible spaces.
7. We actively mitigate for power.
   Breaking down hierarchies of power for more equitable participation.
8. We avoid blaming and shaming.
   We live in a toxic system, but no one individual is to blame.
9. We are a non-violent network.
   Using non-violent strategy and tactics as the most effective way to bring about change.
10. We are based on autonomy and decentralisation.
    We collectively create the structures we need to challenge power. Anyone who follows these core principles and values can take action in the name of Extinction Rebellion.

XRNL Organisational Structure

XRNL is organised in a horizontal and decentralised way based on sociocracy. There are working "circles" at national and local level with mandates on specific topics, such as Outreach and Training, Media and Messaging, Arts, and Regenerative Culture. Each circle has a facilitator, who facilitates and plans the meetings, and a representative who represents the circle in the Coordination Circle – the coordinating body of the movement. Ideally, individuals are sociocratically nominated for these roles which they hold for 2-3 months.

Appendix B: Becoming a rebel for life

The first time I stepped into an Extinction Rebellion meeting was in February 2019, having been drawn by a Facebook event for a Regenerative Culture meeting taking place in The Hague. After hearing about Extinction Rebellion in November, and seeing the advertisement for the first XRNL meeting in December but having to miss it, I was interested in finding an opportunity to join the movement in the Netherlands. The current structures that are now in place (sort of) for new rebels to join the movement – like special integrator roles and a pathway starting with the Heading for Extinction talk and culminating into integration in a working circle – did not exist yet. The Regenerative Culture circle attracted me, because its emphasis on care, mitigating for power and interacting with each other differently coincided with what I was learning at ISS about being "otherwise" in relation to others.

Although the atmosphere was welcoming, after this meeting I was unsure how I felt about XR. The movement was only in its beginning stages, everything still had to be figured out, and I think I was not very patient or appreciative of that. The next meeting I went to was about a week later, this time at the Den Haag campus of Leiden University, for the first meeting for the Leiden University student group. This meeting was completely different; a group of young people who were trying to figure out how they could start up XR in the university, get more students involved and how to best influence the staff and management. However, not being part of Leiden University meant that I again did not really feel that I belonged in this space.

After this difficult start I turned my back on XR for a while. Other things were keeping me busy and I felt that the movement was too chaotic, too difficult to join. However, when actions were announced for the Rebellion Week in April, I decided to look into how I could get involved. I attended a non-violent direct action (NVDA) training in Utrecht with a friend. During the April Rebellion, I attended several actions, and inspired, helped organise a die-in at ISS. After the Rebellion Week, it was time for XR to start setting up local groups, and a few weeks later I was at the official kick-off of XR Den Haag. Once again, I joined the Regenerative Culture circle, volunteered to be its representative, and this time, it stuck. I attended the circle meetings, I started to meet more people, I felt like I could contribute something and in the Coordination Circle I was able to get an overview of the entire local group. It was also around this time that I decided to focus on Extinction Rebellion for this Research Paper. In June, I was nominated local facilitator of The Hague; with the end of the academic semester approaching and time for the research paper expanding, my involvement deepened. I had gotten the feel of the organisation, I had met almost everyone who was organising at the national level; I felt a rebel.

Besides being involved in the local The Hague group, I have participated intermittently at the national level in the Regenerative Culture circle, was briefly involved in doing background research for the Political Strategy and Change circle and the demands review process, helped to prepare the programme for Rebel Without Borders, unsuccessfully tried to keep a sub-circle on radical inclusivity going (which has since resurfaced) and was involved in endless other little tasks, including welcoming and training new rebels, making flags and banners and doing outreach to organisations and venues.