

#SoAatHome | Industry Insider – Creative responses to the climate emergency

Thursday 27 March 2025



1

00:00:00,976--> 00:00:02,976

So welcome, everyone,

2

00:00:03,000--> 00:00:05,000

to today's event which
is the Industry Insider:

3

00:00:05,024--> 00:00:08,424

Creative responses to
the climate emergency.

4

00:00:09,000--> 00:00:10,468

My name is Emma Boniwell

5

00:00:10,492--> 00:00:13,348

and I'm Head of Membership
and Author Communities

6

00:00:13,372--> 00:00:15,000

at the Society of Authors,

7

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00:00:15,000--> 00:00:21,000

as well as being the Society of Authors in Cymru coordinator.

8

00:00:21,000--> 00:00:26,000

This event is part of our Society at Home Spring/Summer 2025 programme

9

00:00:26,000--> 00:00:29,548

and it's in conjunction with the SoA in Wales group.

10

00:00:29,572--> 00:00:32,628

This #SoAatHome event is free for everyone,

11

00:00:32,652--> 00:00:34,028

but if you can afford to,

12

00:00:34,052--> 00:00:37,228

please consider donating to the SoA Access Fund

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13

00:00:37,252--> 00:00:39,748

which provides grants to authors

14

00:00:39,772--> 00:00:43,548

so that travel, subsistence,
childcare costs and access needs

15

00:00:43,572--> 00:00:47,000

aren't barriers to authors
taking part in events,

16

00:00:47,000--> 00:00:48,708

residencies and retreats.

17

00:00:48,732--> 00:00:52,028

We suggest a
minimum donation of £5

18

00:00:52,052--> 00:00:54,468

and I'll put the
link in the chat.

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19

00:00:57,000--> 00:00:59,468

You can help the Society
of Authors Access Fund

20

00:00:59,492--> 00:01:04,000

by making a purchase on our
virtual bookstore on bookshop.org,

21

00:01:04,000--> 00:01:06,348

where you can find
books written by authors

22

00:01:06,372--> 00:01:08,708

taking part in the
SoA programme,

23

00:01:08,732--> 00:01:11,948

including this evening's event.

24

00:01:14,372--> 00:01:17,748

And this session will last
one hour and 30 minutes,

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25

00:01:17,772--> 00:01:21,000

including a 20 minute

Q&A at the end.

26

00:01:21,000--> 00:01:25,676

There will be a five minute

comfort break just before the Q&A.

27

00:01:25,700--> 00:01:26,788

Captions.

28

00:01:26,812--> 00:01:28,948

Please do turn on the

closed captions option

29

00:01:28,972--> 00:01:31,548

if you would like live

subtitles during this event.

30

00:01:31,572--> 00:01:33,388

You can see that

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on the bottom bar.

31

00:01:33,412--> 00:01:36,000

It's two C's in a little box.

32

00:01:36,000--> 00:01:37,788

The recording of this event

33

00:01:37,812--> 00:01:40,388

will be available on the

SoA's website for members,

34

00:01:40,412--> 00:01:43,148

which can be accessed by

logging into the members area

35

00:01:43,172--> 00:01:45,388

and going to our resources page.

36

00:01:45,412--> 00:01:51,000

And for non-members, the recording will

be available via the SoA's Vimeo channel.

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37

00:01:51,000--> 00:01:55,868

And I'll pop some links

in for those things as well.

38

00:01:58,000--> 00:02:00,148

And if you have any questions,

39

00:02:00,172--> 00:02:01,988

please do post

them in the Q&A box.

40

00:02:02,012--> 00:02:04,908

You can post them

anonymously if you prefer,

41

00:02:04,932--> 00:02:08,000

but do post your general

comments in the chat box.

42

00:02:08,000--> 00:02:10,308

And I'm now going to

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hand you over to Cath

43

00:02:10,332--> 00:02:12,868

who will introduce our panel.

44

00:02:14,000--> 00:02:15,508

-Thank you so much, Emma.

45

00:02:15,532--> 00:02:16,948

Welcome, everybody.

46

00:02:16,972--> 00:02:20,068

I'm here chairing

tonight's meeting

47

00:02:20,092--> 00:02:25,028

in my capacity as vice chair

of the SoA Cymru committee

48

00:02:25,052--> 00:02:31,000

and we are really delighted to

welcome Nicola Davies and Tom Bullough,

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49

00:02:31,000--> 00:02:34,748

eminent Welsh authors with a particular interest in the environment

50

00:02:34,772--> 00:02:40,000

to discuss creative responses to the climate emergency.

51

00:02:40,000--> 00:02:42,188

I'm just briefly going to introduce them.

52

00:02:42,212--> 00:02:47,000

Nicola is the author of more than 90 books for children and young people

53

00:02:47,000--> 00:02:49,788

including poetry, picture books and novels,

54

00:02:49,812--> 00:02:53,148

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many reflecting her

love of the natural world

55

00:02:53,172--> 00:02:57,000

and the importance of human relationships with nature.

56

00:02:57,000--> 00:03:00,748

Her work has been published in more than 12 different languages

57

00:03:00,772--> 00:03:03,068

and she lives in West Wales.

58

00:03:03,092--> 00:03:05,000

So welcome, Nicola.

59

00:03:05,000--> 00:03:07,000

-Lovely to be here.

Thanks for having me.

60

00:03:07,000--> 00:03:08,268

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-Thank you for coming.

61

00:03:08,292--> 00:03:11,348

Tom, Tom Bullough, is
the author of four novels

62

00:03:11,372--> 00:03:17,000

and most recently, Sarn Helen, which
won the 2024 Wales Book of the Year.

63

00:03:17,000--> 00:03:19,988

His first feature
film, Mr Burton,

64

00:03:20,012--> 00:03:24,000

will be in cinemas from
the end of next week.

65

00:03:24,000--> 00:03:27,748

Tom has also recently
made Tarddle/ Source,

66

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00:03:27,772--> 00:03:31,508

a film which charts a
journey up the River Wye.

67

00:03:31,532--> 00:03:35,000

And he lives in
Bannau Brycheiniog.

68

00:03:35,000--> 00:03:37,000

Welcome, Tom.

69

00:03:37,000--> 00:03:39,000

-Thank you, Kath.

It's nice to be here.

70

00:03:39,000--> 00:03:40,588

-It's a pleasure to
have you both here.

71

00:03:40,612--> 00:03:44,908

So I'm going to ask, actually,
to start off with asking Nicola first

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72

00:03:44,932--> 00:03:48,148

and then Tom to say

something about themselves,

73

00:03:48,172--> 00:03:52,000

and about their work, whatever

they want to present to the meeting.

74

00:03:52,000--> 00:03:54,000

Over to you, Nicola.

75

00:03:54,000--> 00:03:55,908

-Well, I suppose...

76

00:03:55,932--> 00:03:57,668

All my (cuts out)

77

00:03:57,692--> 00:04:03,108

climate emergency are

rooted in my background,

78

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00:04:03,132--> 00:04:04,588

which is in biology.

79

00:04:04,612--> 00:04:06,148

I trained as a zoologist,

80

00:04:06,172--> 00:04:08,428

I worked as a field biologist.

81

00:04:08,452--> 00:04:11,908

So the first writing I did

about the environment

82

00:04:11,932--> 00:04:14,788

was about...

83

00:04:14,812--> 00:04:18,576

was actually about

conservation biology.

84

00:04:18,600--> 00:04:21,028

And so, actually, I think that

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when it comes to writing about

85

00:04:21,052--> 00:04:22,668

the climate emergency,

86

00:04:22,692--> 00:04:25,708

it gives me a different angle,

87

00:04:25,732--> 00:04:30,000

but it actually gives me

a kind of positive angle.

88

00:04:30,000--> 00:04:32,868

Because, although

on the large scale,

89

00:04:32,892--> 00:04:38,000

things can look just

hideously ghastly and terrible

90

00:04:38,000--> 00:04:39,828

and disastrous,

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91

00:04:39,852--> 00:04:41,948

on the smaller scale,

92

00:04:41,972--> 00:04:44,588

there are conservation projects

93

00:04:44,612--> 00:04:47,000

that are working.

94

00:04:47,000--> 00:04:49,468

There are people

all over the world

95

00:04:49,492--> 00:04:53,468

quietly getting on with

it and taking action.

96

00:04:53,492--> 00:04:57,948

And those are the

kind of stories that I try

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97

00:04:57,972--> 00:05:01,000

and reflect in my work.

98

00:05:01,000--> 00:05:02,068

Partly because...

99

00:05:02,092--> 00:05:04,588

Partly out of cowardice.

100

00:05:04,612--> 00:05:08,000

It's a bit of putting my
fingers in my ears and going...

101

00:05:08,000--> 00:05:09,268

'It's not that bad.'

102

00:05:09,292--> 00:05:14,508

But partly because
the reality, as I see it,

103

00:05:14,532--> 00:05:16,948

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is that it's never over
till the final whistle.

104

00:05:16,972--> 00:05:19,188

It's not over till
the fat lady sings.

105

00:05:19,212--> 00:05:21,228

And if we're going to go down,

106

00:05:21,252--> 00:05:24,000

I definitely want us
to go down fighting.

107

00:05:24,000--> 00:05:27,828

And I want to
inspire young people

108

00:05:27,852--> 00:05:33,148

to have adventurous,
purposeful lives.

109

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00:05:33,172--> 00:05:36,428

You know, capitalism
sells them this idea

110

00:05:36,452--> 00:05:40,908

of things and stuff is what's going
to bring you happiness, but it's not.

111

00:05:40,932--> 00:05:44,000

Actually, happiness is a
thing that comes and goes.

112

00:05:44,000--> 00:05:48,548

But what climate change
and the environment offer

113

00:05:48,572--> 00:05:51,108

is a really big purpose,

114

00:05:51,132--> 00:05:53,508

a really big and
important purpose.

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115

00:05:53,532--> 00:05:58,000

A task that you
can be involved in

116

00:05:58,000--> 00:06:00,548

in a myriad different ways

117

00:06:00,572--> 00:06:05,588

and be a small
part of the solution.

118

00:06:09,000--> 00:06:11,188

(inaudible) little trite
little poem on the loo wall

119

00:06:11,212--> 00:06:14,828

that my mum took to
every house that we lived in

120

00:06:14,852--> 00:06:16,488

and it was always
in the downstairs loo,

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121

00:06:16,512--> 00:06:18,000

so you saw it many times a day.

122

00:06:18,000--> 00:06:20,308

And it said 'little

drops of water,

123

00:06:20,332--> 00:06:21,708

little grains of sand

124

00:06:21,732--> 00:06:23,268

make the mighty ocean

125

00:06:23,292--> 00:06:25,000

and the promised land.'

126

00:06:25,000--> 00:06:28,000

And she used to say it to

me and, of course, I groaned.

127

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00:06:28,000--> 00:06:31,908

And then I came back to it when
I was writing a collection of poetry

128

00:06:31,932--> 00:06:33,548

about climate change

129

00:06:33,572--> 00:06:36,988

in conjunction with Ed Hawkins,

130

00:06:37,012--> 00:06:38,748

the guy who did
the climate stripes,

131

00:06:38,772--> 00:06:40,108

wonderful climate scientist.

132

00:06:40,132--> 00:06:42,548

And I sort of paraphrase it,

133

00:06:42,572--> 00:06:45,068

we are but drops of water,

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we are but grains of sand,

134

00:06:45,092--> 00:06:49,000

but together we're an ocean

and we can make a promised land.

135

00:06:49,000--> 00:06:52,908

So that's kind of

what I'm trying to do

136

00:06:52,932--> 00:06:54,908

in lots of different ways

137

00:06:54,932--> 00:06:57,708

across all age

groups with my work.

138

00:06:59,000--> 00:07:01,108

-Yeah, because you do write for

139

00:07:01,132--> 00:07:02,708

young people of

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all ages, don't you?

140

00:07:02,732--> 00:07:06,388

-Yeah, I do picture books
and I do big fat fantasy novels.

141

00:07:06,412--> 00:07:08,508

So I'm trying to get
it over in non-fiction.

142

00:07:08,532--> 00:07:10,508

-An extraordinary,
extraordinary volume of work.

143

00:07:10,532--> 00:07:11,776

Yeah, I'm very impressed.

144

00:07:11,800--> 00:07:14,428

-If you're a children's writer, you
make this much money per book,

145

00:07:14,452--> 00:07:16,068

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so you've got to
write a lot of books.

146

00:07:16,092--> 00:07:17,708

-Oh, yeah. Got to
write a lot of books.

147

00:07:17,732--> 00:07:18,748

Oh, thank you, Nicola.

148

00:07:18,772--> 00:07:20,388

Thanks for that introduction.

149

00:07:20,412--> 00:07:24,308

So can I hand over to Tom now
to say something about your work?

150

00:07:25,000--> 00:07:29,828

-Well, I mean, as your
introduction suggested, Cath,

151

00:07:29,852--> 00:07:34,468

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I suppose that I'm less
sure of what I am now

152

00:07:34,492--> 00:07:36,468

than I perhaps have ever been.

153

00:07:36,492--> 00:07:38,548

I thought of myself

for many years

154

00:07:38,572--> 00:07:39,748

as a novelist

155

00:07:39,772--> 00:07:44,000

and sort of felt

that it would be...

156

00:07:44,000--> 00:07:46,828

Disrespectful almost to

any other types of writing.

157

00:07:46,852--> 00:07:51,388

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I hadn't spent so much time
practising and sort of finessing

158

00:07:51,412--> 00:07:54,468

to sort of stray
outside those borders.

159

00:07:54,492--> 00:07:57,508

So it was something
of a surprise,

160

00:07:57,532--> 00:08:00,428

although I've written bits and
pieces of non-fiction in the past,

161

00:08:00,452--> 00:08:03,000

but it was a bit of a
surprise to find myself

162

00:08:03,000--> 00:08:06,708

writing Sarn Helen,
a non-fiction book.

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163

00:08:06,732--> 00:08:09,668

And, I mean, we'll
come on to talk a lot

164

00:08:09,692--> 00:08:12,148

about climate and ecology
and writing, I'm sure.

165

00:08:12,172--> 00:08:14,428

So I won't go into
detail about that now

166

00:08:14,452--> 00:08:17,108

but, I mean, that
really was an attempt

167

00:08:17,132--> 00:08:19,000

to try and square

168

00:08:19,000--> 00:08:22,428

what I was becoming, better
and better to understand

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169

00:08:22,452--> 00:08:30,000

with what I was doing
in my writing life.

170

00:08:30,000--> 00:08:31,628

But somehow having done that,

171

00:08:31,652--> 00:08:35,188

the doors seemed
to have opened a bit.

172

00:08:35,212--> 00:08:37,188

I mean, you know,
as you mentioned,

173

00:08:37,212--> 00:08:38,228

I've written a film.

174

00:08:38,252--> 00:08:41,828

In, fact that's taken 10 years, so that
has been ticking away in the background

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175

00:08:41,852--> 00:08:45,028

but really sort of
focused on that.

176

00:08:45,052--> 00:08:50,628

And we got it over the line and
then making a film about The Wye.

177

00:08:50,652--> 00:08:53,748

I'm actually a sort of novelist,
again, at the moment now

178

00:08:53,772--> 00:08:56,468

but somehow with this awareness

179

00:08:56,492--> 00:08:59,948

that there are far more
possibilities than I previously thought.

180

00:08:59,972--> 00:09:00,972

So I'm...

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181

00:09:00,996--> 00:09:03,628

I have no idea what comes next,

182

00:09:03,652--> 00:09:06,000

which is a great

feeling to have, I think.

183

00:09:06,000--> 00:09:07,000

-Yeah.

184

00:09:07,000--> 00:09:08,068

-Yeah, it's interesting.

185

00:09:08,092--> 00:09:10,652

And clearly, I don't know if this

applies to you as well, Nicola,

186

00:09:10,676--> 00:09:12,200

but Tom, you're

obviously an activist.

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187

00:09:12,224--> 00:09:16,548

That comes across in

Sarn Helen very movingly.

188

00:09:16,572--> 00:09:18,628

And sometimes it's--

189

00:09:18,652--> 00:09:20,188

In this sphere,

190

00:09:20,212--> 00:09:25,068

is it actually possible to separate
out activism from the writing?

191

00:09:25,092--> 00:09:26,908

I don't know what you
both think about that.

192

00:09:26,932--> 00:09:28,068

Which comes first?

193

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00:09:28,092--> 00:09:30,000

I mean, Nicola you've said

194

00:09:30,000--> 00:09:34,708

your training as a biologist,
a botanist came first,

195

00:09:34,732--> 00:09:36,988

but also that influence
from your mum.

196

00:09:37,012--> 00:09:40,388

So, I suppose--

197

00:09:40,412--> 00:09:41,412

-Well...

198

00:09:41,436--> 00:09:45,148

-It's always difficult to look back
and say, how did we start something?

199

00:09:45,172--> 00:09:48,000

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But can you
pinpoint, either of you?

200

00:09:48,000--> 00:09:49,228

Anything that's... Yeah.

201

00:09:49,252--> 00:09:52,868

-Well, activism is changing
very fast necessarily.

202

00:09:52,892--> 00:09:59,428

Some of the things
that we did in 2019, 2020

203

00:09:59,452--> 00:10:02,948

would now see you with a
prison term of some years.

204

00:10:02,972--> 00:10:04,748

There's a woman I know

205

00:10:04,772--> 00:10:06,708

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who, in the Golden Valley,

206

00:10:06,732--> 00:10:08,748

so just over the border

into Herefordshire,

207

00:10:08,772--> 00:10:11,000

is 22 years old who

208

00:10:11,000--> 00:10:15,028

spent 20 minutes on a Zoom

call planning a Just Stop Oil action

209

00:10:15,052--> 00:10:18,308

and is in prison for four years

with no previous convictions.

210

00:10:18,332--> 00:10:23,388

So, you know, I live

alone with my children

211

00:10:23,412--> 00:10:28,000

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most of the time
as a single parent.

212

00:10:28,000--> 00:10:32,268

It's really not possible to to
pursue that kind of activism now.

213

00:10:32,292--> 00:10:35,108

So a lot of my
emphasis, I suppose,

214

00:10:35,132--> 00:10:38,348

over the past couple of years

215

00:10:38,372--> 00:10:41,508

has been going and giving
talks about Sarn Helen

216

00:10:41,532--> 00:10:43,508

but also all the
matters arising from that

217

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00:10:43,532--> 00:10:46,148

and I've lost count

218

00:10:46,172--> 00:10:47,828

how many I've

done, but it must be

219

00:10:47,852--> 00:10:51,988

120 or 30 or something

like that, I suppose.

220

00:10:52,012--> 00:10:55,428

And so each one is an opportunity

to try and engage people,

221

00:10:55,452--> 00:10:57,108

and it's just about

engagement really.

222

00:10:57,132--> 00:11:01,000

And so where you draw a line,

223

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00:11:01,000--> 00:11:03,188

I would struggle to say.

224

00:11:03,212--> 00:11:05,628

-Yeah. Is that true for
you as well, Nicola?

225

00:11:05,652--> 00:11:07,988

That your work is
about engagement,

226

00:11:08,012--> 00:11:10,628

in your case with
younger people.

227

00:11:12,000--> 00:11:13,428

-Yeah, absolutely.

228

00:11:13,452--> 00:11:16,828

It's...

229

00:11:16,852--> 00:11:21,468

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It's all about

(inaudible) engaged

230

00:11:21,492--> 00:11:22,628

with natural history,

231

00:11:22,652--> 00:11:25,000

with a connection with nature

232

00:11:25,000--> 00:11:27,468

that I think all of us grew up with

233

00:11:27,492--> 00:11:31,000

and which kids don't get now.

234

00:11:31,000--> 00:11:32,588

And if they haven't got that,

235

00:11:32,612--> 00:11:35,508

if they haven't got that...

that basic connection

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236

00:11:35,532--> 00:11:37,348

and that basic understanding

237

00:11:37,372--> 00:11:44,108

of the fact that

(inaudible) human life

238

00:11:44,132--> 00:11:49,028

depends on that that web of
life that we call biodiversity.

239

00:11:49,052--> 00:11:50,428

If they don't understand that,

240

00:11:50,452--> 00:11:54,000

they're not going to get
any of the other messages.

241

00:11:54,000--> 00:11:58,828

When I was a young biologist,

242

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00:11:58,852--> 00:12:01,748

you know, it was all
about conservation then.

243

00:12:01,772--> 00:12:03,328

It was all about
species conservation.

244

00:12:03,352--> 00:12:05,588

So I was an activist then

245

00:12:05,612--> 00:12:11,000

when we were
campaigning to (cuts out)

246

00:12:11,000--> 00:12:16,000

the first cetacean sanctuary
in the Indian Ocean.

247

00:12:16,000--> 00:12:17,308

But since then,

248

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00:12:17,332--> 00:12:23,068

my activism has been in
the form of talking to people

249

00:12:23,092--> 00:12:24,908

every chance I get,

250

00:12:24,932--> 00:12:28,000

every school visit I do.

251

00:12:28,000--> 00:12:32,388

I give the children
as much information,

252

00:12:32,412--> 00:12:36,148

as many weapons

253

00:12:36,172--> 00:12:41,000

as I can reasonably do.

254

00:12:41,000--> 00:12:42,348

-And when you say weapons?

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255

00:12:42,372--> 00:12:44,348

-I'm slightly frustrated

256

00:12:44,372--> 00:12:49,548

by the... by the

borderline censorship

257

00:12:49,572--> 00:12:52,628

that has been going

on in children's books

258

00:12:52,652--> 00:12:55,748

and teachers reluctance

259

00:12:55,772--> 00:12:58,000

to talk about the

climate emergency.

260

00:12:58,000--> 00:13:00,108

-Is that right? Oh,

that's shocking.

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261

00:13:00,132--> 00:13:01,148

-Oh, yeah, absolutely.

262

00:13:01,172--> 00:13:03,628

One of the reasons why

I wrote my-- this trilogy,

263

00:13:03,652--> 00:13:07,828

this trilogy of fantasy novels,

264

00:13:07,852--> 00:13:10,268

was that it allowed

me to say things

265

00:13:10,292--> 00:13:15,000

that I wasn't allowed to

say in narrative non-fiction.

266

00:13:15,000--> 00:13:17,108

It allowed me to be

much more political

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267

00:13:17,132--> 00:13:19,000

and to make debates

268

00:13:19,000--> 00:13:21,748

and to shine lights on

269

00:13:21,772--> 00:13:23,828

issues that...

270

00:13:23,852--> 00:13:28,708

that I wouldn't get past

271

00:13:28,732--> 00:13:30,000

the marketing department.

272

00:13:30,000--> 00:13:31,068

-Really?

273

00:13:31,092--> 00:13:33,188

So the book that was shortlisted

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274

00:13:33,212--> 00:13:36,468

in the Wales Books of

the Year last year, Skrimslis,

275

00:13:36,492--> 00:13:37,748

that's one of the trilogy?

276

00:13:37,772--> 00:13:39,000

-Yes.

277

00:13:39,000--> 00:13:40,828

-So is the trilogy complete?

278

00:13:40,852--> 00:13:45,228

In a world where the history

has been different from our world.

279

00:13:45,252--> 00:13:48,028

Instead of abandoning

280

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00:13:48,052--> 00:13:49,908

the indigenous

connection with nature

281

00:13:49,932--> 00:13:52,428

that we did so many

generations (cuts out).

282

00:13:56,400--> 00:13:57,588

-We're getting a bit of--

283

00:13:57,612--> 00:13:59,338

We're

getting a bit of freezing from Nicola,

284

00:13:59,362--> 00:14:00,400

so bear with us.

285

00:14:00,424--> 00:14:03,908

-By a group of people who

want to use fossil fuels,

286

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00:14:03,932--> 00:14:08,468

who want to create
enormous inequalities

287

00:14:08,492--> 00:14:13,000

by gathering wealth to a
small number of people.

288

00:14:13,000--> 00:14:15,828

And so this trilogy of
novels is about that.

289

00:14:15,852--> 00:14:17,708

It's kind of about--
It's about capitalism,

290

00:14:17,732--> 00:14:19,148

it's about...

291

00:14:19,172--> 00:14:21,868

It's about imperialism

292

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00:14:21,892--> 00:14:24,228

and how that's brought us

293

00:14:24,252--> 00:14:28,000

to this very tricky place

with the environment.

294

00:14:28,000--> 00:14:32,028

-So is Skrimli the

first of the trilogy?

295

00:14:32,052--> 00:14:34,548

-In time, it's the first.

296

00:14:34,572--> 00:14:36,508

-But are the others published?

297

00:14:36,532--> 00:14:39,108

-Well, one of them is.

298

00:14:39,132--> 00:14:40,132

So this was...

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299

00:14:40,156--> 00:14:41,988

The first one I

wrote was this one,

300

00:14:42,012--> 00:14:43,588

which is The Song That Sings Us.

301

00:14:43,612--> 00:14:44,788

-Okay.

302

00:14:44,812--> 00:14:47,828

-And... there's a

character in that

303

00:14:47,852--> 00:14:49,508

who is a tiger.

304

00:14:49,532--> 00:14:53,000

And I then wrote his backstory.

305

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00:14:53,000--> 00:14:55,828

And then the last

one in the trilogy,

306

00:14:55,852--> 00:14:58,000

which is going to be called

All the Names of the Sea

307

00:14:58,000--> 00:15:02,308

follows on about 10 or 12 years

308

00:15:02,332--> 00:15:05,000

after the events in Song.

309

00:15:05,000--> 00:15:08,948

And it's about... It's about

how the fight is never over.

310

00:15:10,012--> 00:15:12,228

And it's about...

311

00:15:15,000--> 00:15:17,708

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How information
can be manipulated

312

00:15:17,732--> 00:15:22,000

and how you disentangle
the truth from the lies.

313

00:15:22,000--> 00:15:25,908

But actually very much about
the fact that fight's never done.

314

00:15:25,932--> 00:15:29,000

You know, I... I...

315

00:15:29,000--> 00:15:33,000

40 years ago we
thought, okay, great,

316

00:15:33,000--> 00:15:34,708

whales are now safe.

317

00:15:34,732--> 00:15:36,628

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It's a done deal, all good.

318

00:15:36,652--> 00:15:43,000

And now we're having to have those fights all over again in a different way.

319

00:15:43,000--> 00:15:45,508

You just have to go on being vigilant and struggling.

320

00:15:45,532--> 00:15:46,532

That's just the way.

321

00:15:46,556--> 00:15:49,228

-Yes. Yes. Fascinating.

322

00:15:49,252--> 00:15:52,588

So when do you expect the third one to be published?

323

00:15:54,612--> 00:15:56,000

-(whispers) I

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haven't finished it.

324

00:15:56,000--> 00:15:59,828

So I'm about 15,000 words in

325

00:15:59,852--> 00:16:00,852

and it'll be about 100.

326

00:16:00,876--> 00:16:02,468

-So anyway, we'll look forward--

327

00:16:02,492--> 00:16:03,508

-Yeah, so I'm going to...

328

00:16:03,532--> 00:16:05,382

I'll finish it by the end

of the year, I think.

329

00:16:05,406--> 00:16:07,028

-Are these... Is

this trilogy for...

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330

00:16:07,052--> 00:16:08,868

I mean, I think often

books for young people

331

00:16:08,892--> 00:16:10,976

are equally books for adults.

332

00:16:11,000--> 00:16:13,000

Would you say that these

books are for everybody?

333

00:16:13,000--> 00:16:15,268

-Well, I'd love them

to be for everybody.

334

00:16:15,292--> 00:16:16,988

I mean, certainly

quite a few people,

335

00:16:17,012--> 00:16:18,788

quite a few adults

have read them

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336

00:16:18,812--> 00:16:21,328

and really... And

really enjoyed them.

337

00:16:21,352--> 00:16:23,108

So I've tried to...

338

00:16:23,132--> 00:16:24,588

I mean, I...

339

00:16:24,612--> 00:16:29,000

I kind of try and walk that

line even with picture books.

340

00:16:29,000--> 00:16:32,748

I make the language accessible

341

00:16:32,772--> 00:16:35,868

for young readers

342

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00:16:35,892--> 00:16:38,468

but satisfying for older readers

343

00:16:38,492--> 00:16:42,668

and try and put

in a kind of layer

344

00:16:42,692--> 00:16:44,628

of deeper and important meaning

345

00:16:44,652--> 00:16:46,708

that will keep older

readers satisfied.

346

00:16:46,732--> 00:16:50,788

And that certainly seems

to work with picture books

347

00:16:50,812--> 00:16:54,000

because quite a few of my

picture books get... get used

348

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00:16:54,000--> 00:16:56,148

kind of across a wide

range of age groups

349

00:16:56,172--> 00:16:58,368

and I get letters from

grown-ups as well as from kids.

350

00:16:58,392--> 00:17:00,388

So, hopefully...

351

00:17:00,412--> 00:17:01,988

-I've read Skrimisli twice,

352

00:17:02,012--> 00:17:04,928

so I suppose I must

have been quite satisfied.

353

00:17:04,952--> 00:17:05,976

(cross chatter)

354

00:17:06,000--> 00:17:08,548

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Well, once to myself,
once to my daughter,

355

00:17:08,572--> 00:17:10,000

but I obviously read it myself.

356

00:17:10,000--> 00:17:13,868

-Yeah, I haven't yet read it,

357

00:17:13,892--> 00:17:15,468

but I look forward
to reading it.

358

00:17:15,492--> 00:17:16,828

And we'll hear some--

359

00:17:16,852--> 00:17:21,388

We'll ask you to read something
else from your work a little later, Nicola.

360

00:17:21,412--> 00:17:22,868

But I want to

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come, if I may now,

361

00:17:22,892--> 00:17:26,000

to the issue about
the situation in Wales.

362

00:17:26,000--> 00:17:27,628

Is the situation in Wales

363

00:17:27,652--> 00:17:30,308

in terms of the climate
emergency, is it particular?

364

00:17:30,332--> 00:17:33,428

Is it because we are
primarily a rural country?

365

00:17:33,452--> 00:17:37,876

Or as Tom suggests in the
introduction to Sarn Helen,

366

00:17:37,900--> 00:17:38,948

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to quote,

367

00:17:38,972--> 00:17:42,348

'because we face a threat

so inconceivably vast,

368

00:17:42,372--> 00:17:44,748

it's only on a very small scale

369

00:17:44,772--> 00:17:48,000

that it can seem to

mean anything at all.'

370

00:17:48,000--> 00:17:50,300

So I don't know if, Tom, you

want to say more about that?

371

00:17:50,324--> 00:17:53,108

-Yeah, I can

respond to that. Yeah.

372

00:17:53,132--> 00:17:55,000

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Well...

373

00:17:55,000--> 00:17:56,628

Yeah, that's true.

374

00:17:56,652--> 00:17:57,988

That was part of my thinking

375

00:17:58,012--> 00:18:02,988

in terms of why to write about
Wales specifically in Sarn Helen.

376

00:18:03,012--> 00:18:07,108

I suppose that that
notion of the size of Wales

377

00:18:07,132--> 00:18:09,000

being a unit of measurement

378

00:18:09,024--> 00:18:12,388

was one that
allowed me to believe

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379

00:18:12,412--> 00:18:15,548

that it's... It's a sort of
comprehensible unit.

380

00:18:15,572--> 00:18:19,788

One problem I think that
I've taught on various courses

381

00:18:19,812--> 00:18:23,000

to do with climate
and writing and

382

00:18:23,000--> 00:18:26,108

one problem that
people often encounter

383

00:18:26,132--> 00:18:32,188

is that when they start
to really apprehend

384

00:18:32,212--> 00:18:35,628

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the scale of the
crisis that we face,

385

00:18:35,652--> 00:18:39,068

they can find themselves in
a sort of condition of paralysis.

386

00:18:39,092--> 00:18:43,000

And some of that is to do with

387

00:18:43,000--> 00:18:44,508

the... the scale.

388

00:18:44,532--> 00:18:47,908

And you have to
narrow the focus,

389

00:18:47,932--> 00:18:49,788

both to be able to
get your head around it

390

00:18:49,812--> 00:18:54,388

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and to be able to kind of
communicate to other people, I think.

391

00:18:54,412--> 00:18:57,000

So that's a key part of it.

392

00:18:57,000--> 00:18:59,508

But I mean, it must be said
that, you know, although...

393

00:18:59,532--> 00:19:05,000

we probably
aren't the front line

394

00:19:05,000--> 00:19:09,000

of the climate emergency,

395

00:19:09,000--> 00:19:12,028

we do face some
very particular issues,

396

00:19:12,052--> 00:19:16,000

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particularly around
sea level rise, you know.

397

00:19:16,024--> 00:19:17,584

-Well, I was going
to say, in your book,

398

00:19:17,608--> 00:19:19,528

you talk about places
that are on the front line,

399

00:19:19,552--> 00:19:21,312

the particular places
that will be inundated.

400

00:19:21,336--> 00:19:23,988

-Well, yeah, I mean, it...

401

00:19:24,012--> 00:19:27,028

Cardiff is one of the most
at risk cities in the world

402

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00:19:27,052--> 00:19:28,268

in terms of sea level rise.

403

00:19:28,292--> 00:19:31,000

I think it's fourth,
considered to be fourth

404

00:19:31,000--> 00:19:32,000

most at risk.

405

00:19:32,024--> 00:19:34,108

I mean, essentially,
it's built on a salt marsh.

406

00:19:34,132--> 00:19:36,748

It was built on a salt
marsh as docks for..

407

00:19:36,772--> 00:19:40,788

you know, for industries in the
valleys and coal export and so forth,

408

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00:19:40,812--> 00:19:42,028

and, um...

409

00:19:42,052--> 00:19:45,508

But it's also the case,

410

00:19:45,532--> 00:19:47,528

and this is one of the

things that is brought home

411

00:19:47,552--> 00:19:50,388

if you happened to walk

the route of Sarn Helen,

412

00:19:50,412--> 00:19:53,548

which is a Roman

road which once ran

413

00:19:53,572--> 00:19:56,428

between the north and

south coasts of Wales.

414

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00:19:56,452--> 00:20:00,388

It's not easy to travel

415

00:20:00,412--> 00:20:02,388

through Wales, by and large.

416

00:20:02,412--> 00:20:04,828

You know, there's a reason

why you have to catch a train

417

00:20:04,852--> 00:20:06,252

round by Craven

Arms and everything

418

00:20:06,276--> 00:20:09,708

in order to go between

the north and the south.

419

00:20:09,732--> 00:20:12,708

And in consequence of that...

420

00:20:12,732--> 00:20:14,000

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I mean...

421

00:20:14,000--> 00:20:17,068

60 odd percent of the
population lives around the coasts

422

00:20:17,092--> 00:20:18,336

on those kind of flatter areas,

423

00:20:18,360--> 00:20:24,628

and so towns like Newport,
towns like Llandudno, Cardiff,

424

00:20:24,652--> 00:20:26,188

obviously,

425

00:20:26,212--> 00:20:28,948

all of these are
places which do face

426

00:20:28,972--> 00:20:31,948

very sort of, you

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know, very, very specific

427

00:20:31,972--> 00:20:36,388

and in some cases

imminent threat and danger.

428

00:20:36,412--> 00:20:39,628

And these are things that we

really do need to be aware of

429

00:20:39,652--> 00:20:42,628

because

430

00:20:42,652--> 00:20:45,908

there need to be plans involved.

431

00:20:45,932--> 00:20:49,028

I mean, I know that in some cases

there have been some coastal defences

432

00:20:49,052--> 00:20:51,308

around communities in Cardiff,

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433

00:20:51,332--> 00:20:55,428

which have cost more by house

434

00:20:55,452--> 00:20:58,828

than the value of those

individual homes themselves.

435

00:20:58,852--> 00:21:01,828

Which is to say that

436

00:21:01,852--> 00:21:04,308

such defences

are not sustainable

437

00:21:04,332--> 00:21:07,828

and we need to be making

plans as to what we're going to do,

438

00:21:07,852--> 00:21:11,548

because whatever we

do do in terms of emissions

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439

00:21:11,572--> 00:21:14,388

and we are accelerating
into this crisis globally,

440

00:21:14,412--> 00:21:19,000

we are producing more
emissions every single year.

441

00:21:19,000--> 00:21:21,988

Though it's not that we've
plateaued or started to decline,

442

00:21:22,012--> 00:21:25,000

we are accelerating into it.

443

00:21:25,000--> 00:21:27,188

But even if we weren't
accelerating into it,

444

00:21:27,212--> 00:21:29,188

things like the sea

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level rise, particularly,

445

00:21:29,212--> 00:21:31,468

is already, you know,

446

00:21:31,492--> 00:21:35,348

that's already in train, there

will be considerable sea level rise

447

00:21:35,372--> 00:21:37,000

regardless of what

we now do, so...

448

00:21:37,000--> 00:21:38,308

-That's right.

449

00:21:38,332--> 00:21:40,888

I mean, you talk in Sarn Helen

of this place called Fairbourne,

450

00:21:40,912--> 00:21:42,000

isn't there?

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451

00:21:42,000--> 00:21:43,468

-Well, Fairbourne

is a sort of..

452

00:21:43,492--> 00:21:47,788

I suppose that's the

community people turn to first

453

00:21:47,812--> 00:21:49,588

because, in the UK,

454

00:21:49,612--> 00:21:53,000

it's the first whose local

council, in this case Gwynedd...

455

00:21:53,000--> 00:21:56,548

Gwynedd sort of

was forced to accept

456

00:21:56,572--> 00:22:01,000

that they would be

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unable to defend it.

457

00:22:01,000--> 00:22:02,400

I mean, it is

virtually at sea level

458

00:22:02,424--> 00:22:03,548

as things stand.

459

00:22:03,572--> 00:22:05,412

-Yeah, I just, yeah, for

people who don't know,

460

00:22:05,436--> 00:22:08,000

it's just sort of north west

of (inaudible) on the coast.

461

00:22:08,024--> 00:22:09,068

-Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

462

00:22:09,092--> 00:22:12,348

But there are

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many others as well.

463

00:22:12,372--> 00:22:16,228

And the thing is, you see, in
some cases, some communities,

464

00:22:16,252--> 00:22:18,748

I can think of some
in Pembrokeshire where

465

00:22:18,772--> 00:22:22,000

I've been today,
Amroth, for example,

466

00:22:22,024--> 00:22:26,388

where there is scope for moving

467

00:22:26,412--> 00:22:30,108

the village or the
town back from the sea.

468

00:22:30,132--> 00:22:31,648

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But in the case of Fairbourne,

469

00:22:31,672--> 00:22:34,771

essentially it's on flat ground with
very steep ground immediately behind it.

470

00:22:34,795--> 00:22:36,708

There's no scope for
it to move backwards

471

00:22:36,732--> 00:22:39,308

and so, you know,
that's why that finds itself

472

00:22:39,332--> 00:22:42,148

in that particularly
critical situation.

473

00:22:42,172--> 00:22:44,548

-Yeah, yeah. Thank you.

474

00:22:44,572--> 00:22:46,428

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Nicola, do you have,

475

00:22:46,452--> 00:22:48,602

on this question of, you
know, the situation in Wales,

476

00:22:48,626--> 00:22:51,308

I know you write
about worldwide issues.

477

00:22:51,332--> 00:22:54,000

But do you have a perspective
on Wales as a...?

478

00:22:54,000--> 00:22:58,548

-Well, part of my life here
in Pembrokeshire now

479

00:22:58,572--> 00:23:01,988

is... is spending some
time in the summer crewing

480

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00:23:02,012--> 00:23:06,000

on a wildlife boat trips.

481

00:23:06,000--> 00:23:07,708

So I see the seabird colonies

482

00:23:07,732--> 00:23:12,028

here offshore on the offshore islands on Skomer and Skokholm.

483

00:23:12,052--> 00:23:16,508

And we have seabird colonies here of world importance.

484

00:23:16,532--> 00:23:18,348

We have a huge proportion

485

00:23:18,372--> 00:23:22,000

of the population of Manx Shearwaters.

486

00:23:22,000--> 00:23:24,068

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And there are lots
of birds here that,

487

00:23:24,092--> 00:23:28,000

like puffins,

488

00:23:28,000--> 00:23:30,348

that have a huge kind of
iconic status in people's hearts.

489

00:23:30,372--> 00:23:34,588

But they're also the
canaries in the mine,

490

00:23:34,612--> 00:23:40,508

the indicators of the big
changes in ocean currents

491

00:23:40,532--> 00:23:45,668

and big changes in
ocean nutrient cycles

492

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00:23:45,692--> 00:23:48,908

that are being affected by...

493

00:23:48,932--> 00:23:52,348

already being profoundly
affected by climate change.

494

00:23:52,372--> 00:23:55,068

In the UK, the
population of Kittiwakes,

495

00:23:55,092--> 00:23:58,000

which are beautiful
little delicate gulls

496

00:23:58,000--> 00:24:02,988

which used to be very, very, very,
very common birds along the coastlines

497

00:24:03,012--> 00:24:07,000

and actually in some places, even
in the centre of cities near coasts.

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498

00:24:07,000--> 00:24:09,168

They've declined. I can't
remember what the figure is.

499

00:24:09,192--> 00:24:11,000

It's about like 80%.

500

00:24:11,000--> 00:24:12,000

-Huge.

501

00:24:12,000--> 00:24:13,920

-And they are a direct
casualty of climate change

502

00:24:13,944--> 00:24:15,748

because they're surface feeders.

503

00:24:15,772--> 00:24:19,388

And as the food that
they like goes deeper

504

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00:24:19,412--> 00:24:21,348

because the surface

water is warmer,

505

00:24:21,372--> 00:24:24,388

they starve and

their chicks starve.

506

00:24:24,412--> 00:24:26,812

And... And... So,

it's happening.

507

00:24:26,836--> 00:24:29,836

It's happening

absolutely right there.

508

00:24:29,860--> 00:24:30,860

-You see it, yep.

509

00:24:30,884--> 00:24:33,828

-And you can see it

and you can feel it.

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510

00:24:33,852--> 00:24:39,148

And my job is to try and tell
people a little bit about that.

511

00:24:39,172--> 00:24:41,348

They come on the boat,
they want to see the wildlife.

512

00:24:41,372--> 00:24:43,188

I want them to feel the wonder.

513

00:24:43,212--> 00:24:46,000

I want them

514

00:24:46,000--> 00:24:49,028

to know about the extraordinary
lives that these birds live,

515

00:24:49,052--> 00:24:51,028

particularly Manx
Shearwaters are my favourite.

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516

00:24:51,052--> 00:24:54,108

What a marvellous
ocean wanderers they are.

517

00:24:54,132--> 00:24:57,908

But how they are indicators
of this ocean ecosystem,

518

00:24:57,932--> 00:25:04,428

to which we are
absolutely profoundly linked.

519

00:25:04,452--> 00:25:06,908

You know, every breath you take,

520

00:25:06,932--> 00:25:10,708

part of the oxygen, a third of the
oxygen in every breath you take

521

00:25:10,732--> 00:25:13,188

is created by the world's oceans

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522

00:25:13,212--> 00:25:16,228

and by those big
cycles of nutrients

523

00:25:16,252--> 00:25:21,000

that the birds and the
cetaceans are part of.

524

00:25:21,000--> 00:25:25,348

And all that is
happening right here.

525

00:25:25,372--> 00:25:28,028

-Yes, and as you rightly say,

526

00:25:28,052--> 00:25:30,708

it's really important to
recognize that the sea around us,

527

00:25:30,732--> 00:25:33,000

the coast and the sea, are a
part of our country as well.

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528

00:25:33,024--> 00:25:36,108

-But also in Wales, you know,

529

00:25:36,132--> 00:25:38,628

we have...

530

00:25:38,652--> 00:25:41,000

We have really bad agriculture.

531

00:25:41,000--> 00:25:42,000

-Yeah.

532

00:25:42,000--> 00:25:43,380

-Really bad
agricultural practices.

533

00:25:43,404--> 00:25:46,308

And I feel so sorry for farmers
because they're absolutely up against it.

534

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00:25:46,332--> 00:25:49,000

They've got a gun to their
heads from both sides.

535

00:25:49,000--> 00:25:52,668

But, you know, the
quality of water in our rivers

536

00:25:52,692--> 00:25:55,548

is a huge problem
here with the Wye,

537

00:25:55,572--> 00:25:56,708

with pollution on the Wye,

538

00:25:56,732--> 00:26:02,468

and that again affects
things like seagrass and kelp

539

00:26:02,492--> 00:26:05,988

which are huge, huge allies

540

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00:26:06,012--> 00:26:07,628

in fighting climate change.

541

00:26:07,652--> 00:26:11,588

You know, if we could restore those underwater forests,

542

00:26:11,612--> 00:26:14,068

that soaks up a hell of a lot of carbon

543

00:26:14,092--> 00:26:16,468

but very hard to do that

544

00:26:16,492--> 00:26:20,748

while our agriculture is still pouring enormous quantities

545

00:26:20,772--> 00:26:21,868

of--

546

00:26:25,852--> 00:26:26,852

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-Yep.

547

00:26:26,876--> 00:26:29,268

Just a little frozen
moment again.

548

00:26:29,292--> 00:26:30,668

Can I jump in at this point?

549

00:26:30,692--> 00:26:33,548

I wanted to ask Tom to

550

00:26:33,572--> 00:26:35,148

read a paragraph,

551

00:26:35,172--> 00:26:37,068

just a paragraph,
actually, from Sarn Helen

552

00:26:37,092--> 00:26:40,748

which is on-- that
one on page 64.

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553

00:26:40,772--> 00:26:44,948

It's just a little...

A little window

554

00:26:44,972--> 00:26:47,028

on a dichotomy in Wales,

555

00:26:47,052--> 00:26:48,052

if you wouldn't mind.

556

00:26:48,076--> 00:26:52,428

-Yeah, it is easy to

think of industrial Wales,

557

00:26:52,452--> 00:26:55,068

of little how the

slum in Merthyr Tydfil

558

00:26:55,092--> 00:26:57,508

or the smogs of

Swansea's Copper Works.

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559

00:26:57,532--> 00:27:00,148

The river running black
through the Afan Valley

560

00:27:00,172--> 00:27:03,000

or the lunar wastes of
Dinorwig's Slate Quarry,

561

00:27:03,000--> 00:27:05,388

and to see the hills
in plain opposition.

562

00:27:05,412--> 00:27:08,668

In fact, the hills are a
wasteland of peat bogs,

563

00:27:08,692--> 00:27:11,108

so degraded that every
year they issue more than

564

00:27:11,132--> 00:27:14,000

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a half a million tonnes
of carbon dioxide.

565

00:27:14,000--> 00:27:16,588

An act of despoliation
in scale and impact

566

00:27:16,612--> 00:27:22,000

immeasurably greater than all of
those other industries combined.

567

00:27:22,000--> 00:27:23,200

I think that's the right one.

568

00:27:23,224--> 00:27:24,748

-Thank you, Tom. Absolutely.

569

00:27:24,772--> 00:27:26,548

I think it's so clear, isn't it?

570

00:27:26,572--> 00:27:29,268

And as you say, Nicola,

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the farming practices,

571

00:27:29,292--> 00:27:31,588

the sheep farming and
all of that's a huge issue

572

00:27:31,612--> 00:27:33,000

that we can't cover

573

00:27:33,000--> 00:27:35,068

in all its detail this evening.

574

00:27:35,092--> 00:27:37,588

But we have that
dichotomy in Wales.

575

00:27:37,612--> 00:27:41,388

People think all the industry
and then there's the rural areas,

576

00:27:41,412--> 00:27:43,988

but it's... Yeah.

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577

00:27:44,012--> 00:27:45,988

And it's a snapshot of what

578

00:27:46,012--> 00:27:48,000

we're facing in terms of
the climate emergency.

579

00:27:48,000--> 00:27:50,268

-Also it also means that we have

580

00:27:50,292--> 00:27:52,788

enormous potential

581

00:27:52,812--> 00:27:54,668

to be part of the solution.

582

00:27:54,692--> 00:27:58,828

You know, we can
plant trees on those hills,

583

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00:27:58,852--> 00:28:02,000

we can change our
agricultural practices.

584

00:28:02,000--> 00:28:03,000

-Absolutely.

585

00:28:03,000--> 00:28:04,988

-We can somehow persuade
our farmers to going back

586

00:28:05,012--> 00:28:09,868

to being the true
guardians of biodiversity

587

00:28:09,892--> 00:28:14,148

that they were to some extent
several hundred years ago.

588

00:28:14,172--> 00:28:16,000

So you know there is...

589

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00:28:16,000--> 00:28:20,000

It's bad, but that means there's huge possibilities for improvement.

590

00:28:20,000--> 00:28:22,308

-So that brings me onto the question,

591

00:28:22,332--> 00:28:25,748

is writing something... Not just for you two and me,

592

00:28:25,772--> 00:28:29,788

but other, many people who are at this session this evening.

593

00:28:29,812--> 00:28:33,676

Is writing something we can do to help things?

594

00:28:33,700--> 00:28:34,700

-Yeah, absolutely.

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595

00:28:34,724--> 00:28:36,708

(cross-chatter)

-Oh, no, you go first.

596

00:28:36,732--> 00:28:38,000

You go first.

597

00:28:38,000--> 00:28:39,100

-Who... who's...? Who, me?

598

00:28:39,124--> 00:28:40,124

-Tom, Tom.

599

00:28:40,148--> 00:28:41,268

-Yeah, okay.

600

00:28:41,292--> 00:28:45,188

Yeah, well, look, I mean, this is something that I wrestled with for some time.

601

00:28:45,212--> 00:28:46,988

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And candidly, there
was a time when I thought

602

00:28:47,012--> 00:28:50,068

that it wasn't and that I
needed to be involved

603

00:28:50,092--> 00:28:53,000

much more in direct action.

604

00:28:53,000--> 00:28:56,708

And I changed my
mind about that, now.

605

00:28:56,732--> 00:29:00,028

And I'm glad to have done so

606

00:29:00,052--> 00:29:03,108

and I'm glad to have
a kind of opportunity

607

00:29:03,132--> 00:29:06,000

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to explain why, I suppose.

608

00:29:06,000--> 00:29:09,228

I suppose one
thing that I would say

609

00:29:09,252--> 00:29:12,308

is that one thing that is
important to understand about this

610

00:29:12,332--> 00:29:15,308

is that very often when people
talk about climate and ecology,

611

00:29:15,332--> 00:29:16,988

they talk about it
in a scientific terms.

612

00:29:17,012--> 00:29:19,748

Scientists are often asked to
speak on the radio and so forth,

613

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00:29:19,772--> 00:29:22,000

and they speak
in scientific terms.

614

00:29:22,000--> 00:29:24,148

So, what that
doesn't tend to do,

615

00:29:24,172--> 00:29:26,548

and one of the things that I
was seeking to do in Sarn Helen

616

00:29:26,572--> 00:29:28,228

and continue to
seek to do all the time

617

00:29:28,252--> 00:29:31,000

is to communicate
what this actually means

618

00:29:31,000--> 00:29:32,108

to people with that.

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619

00:29:32,132--> 00:29:34,308

But...

620

00:29:34,332--> 00:29:37,988

It's important to just

to understand that

621

00:29:38,012--> 00:29:41,000

the issues, as you might say,

622

00:29:41,000--> 00:29:42,468

these issues, as you might say,

623

00:29:42,492--> 00:29:43,708

are symptoms.

624

00:29:43,732--> 00:29:46,000

They are not

the crisis in itself.

625

00:29:46,000--> 00:29:50,588

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The crises are a
human behavioural crises.

626

00:29:50,612--> 00:29:52,988

It's essentially a
dysfunctional relationship

627

00:29:53,012--> 00:29:54,028

with the natural world.

628

00:29:54,052--> 00:29:56,000

It's a cultural problem.

629

00:29:56,000--> 00:29:58,828

So from that point of view,

630

00:29:58,852--> 00:30:03,788

you know, okay, so if you stop
and think about what writing is,

631

00:30:03,812--> 00:30:06,068

um...

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632

00:30:06,092--> 00:30:08,668

I suppose you could say that
what you do when you're writing

633

00:30:08,692--> 00:30:11,468

you perceive as
honestly as you can

634

00:30:11,492--> 00:30:16,000

and you find ways
to reflect or represent

635

00:30:16,000--> 00:30:18,308

that perception-- Well,

636

00:30:18,332--> 00:30:22,988

we live in skin of life

637

00:30:23,012--> 00:30:24,788

on the surface of this planet.

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638

00:30:24,812--> 00:30:26,668

The atmosphere,
most of the atmosphere

639

00:30:26,692--> 00:30:28,668

is within about seven
miles of the surface.

640

00:30:28,692--> 00:30:34,000

And that is our reality.

641

00:30:34,000--> 00:30:36,388

So its crisis is our crisis.

642

00:30:36,412--> 00:30:39,388

If there is a crisis there,
then that is our crisis.

643

00:30:39,412--> 00:30:42,468

Now, one of the reasons
why I emphasize honesty

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644

00:30:42,492--> 00:30:45,148

is I don't think writing works
if you're... if you're dishonest.

645

00:30:45,172--> 00:30:47,588

If you're not honest about
what your characters are feeling,

646

00:30:47,612--> 00:30:49,588

if you're not honest about
what you yourself feel,

647

00:30:49,612--> 00:30:51,988

the book is distorted.
It's not writing. It doesn't...

648

00:30:52,012--> 00:30:54,948

It doesn't work and so I think,

649

00:30:54,972--> 00:30:56,388

given that we know these things,

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650

00:30:56,412--> 00:31:01,868

this climate and
ecological crisis...

651

00:31:01,892--> 00:31:06,000

I mean, this must be central
to any writer's work now.

652

00:31:06,000--> 00:31:10,148

I mean, people talk about
climate fiction and so forth.

653

00:31:10,172--> 00:31:15,108

And of course, you can have work
which is looking specifically at issues,

654

00:31:15,132--> 00:31:16,868

you know, aspects of climate.

655

00:31:16,892--> 00:31:18,308

But I would say,
broadly speaking,

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656

00:31:18,332--> 00:31:21,000

contextually if you like,

657

00:31:21,000--> 00:31:23,748

the word climate is or

should be redundant.

658

00:31:23,772--> 00:31:25,868

It's almost tautological.

659

00:31:25,892--> 00:31:29,476

I mean it is our reality.

660

00:31:29,500--> 00:31:30,788

It's what we write about.

661

00:31:30,812--> 00:31:34,000

Of course, it

should be a part of it.

662

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00:31:34,000--> 00:31:35,568

But more than that,
there's a kind of--

663

00:31:35,592--> 00:31:38,108

There's a morality
involved in this as well.

664

00:31:38,132--> 00:31:41,588

I mean, sometimes, and I think
that this is a misunderstanding,

665

00:31:41,612--> 00:31:44,348

sometimes people
seem to think that writing,

666

00:31:44,372--> 00:31:47,348

either you can be true
to your artistic impulse

667

00:31:47,372--> 00:31:51,000

or you can find ways to,
as it were, sort of insinuate

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668

00:31:51,000--> 00:31:56,908

you know, information or views
or an agenda into your work.

669

00:31:56,932--> 00:31:59,828

Well, I don't think that
that's the right way to do it.

670

00:31:59,852--> 00:32:02,188

I think if you try to bend
your work out of shape

671

00:32:02,212--> 00:32:03,468

around an agenda

672

00:32:03,492--> 00:32:06,628

then that never really
tends to function.

673

00:32:06,652--> 00:32:09,000

You have to go where

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the book wants to go,

674

00:32:09,000--> 00:32:13,428

but you also have to appreciate

675

00:32:13,452--> 00:32:17,028

that all writing

has a world view,

676

00:32:17,052--> 00:32:19,028

all writing has a morality

677

00:32:19,052--> 00:32:20,608

whether you kind

of perceive it or not.

678

00:32:20,632--> 00:32:23,428

We are living at what

I hope is the tail end

679

00:32:23,452--> 00:32:28,000

of about 300 years of intensely

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human-centric storytelling,

680

00:32:28,000--> 00:32:29,588

which is effectively

reflected back

681

00:32:29,612--> 00:32:32,748

the experience of urbanization

682

00:32:32,772--> 00:32:38,000

and of industrial and

post-industrial societies.

683

00:32:38,000--> 00:32:41,468

A time in which

we've... we've...

684

00:32:41,492--> 00:32:46,548

we've thought that it was possible

for us to separate ourselves

685

00:32:46,572--> 00:32:47,708

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from the natural world,

686

00:32:47,732--> 00:32:48,732

some of us.

687

00:32:48,756--> 00:32:52,068

And or in any case, our
consequences could be put elsewhere

688

00:32:52,092--> 00:32:55,000

and what the
natural... what the...

689

00:32:55,000--> 00:32:57,628

current crisis is
showing us emphatically

690

00:32:57,652--> 00:33:01,000

is that this isn't the case.

691

00:33:01,000--> 00:33:03,028

That that is an illusion.

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692

00:33:03,052--> 00:33:05,108

So we find ourselves
at a point in history

693

00:33:05,132--> 00:33:07,028

in which our culture
and our reality are

694

00:33:07,052--> 00:33:11,000

drastically, critically out
step with one another.

695

00:33:11,000--> 00:33:12,188

Anybody who's writing...

696

00:33:12,212--> 00:33:15,268

I think anyone who writes

697

00:33:15,292--> 00:33:19,508

has some sort of cultural power,

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698

00:33:19,532--> 00:33:22,000

however small it might be.

699

00:33:22,000--> 00:33:26,548

And we are facing

ultimately a cultural crisis,

700

00:33:26,572--> 00:33:28,000

a cultural problem.

701

00:33:28,000--> 00:33:30,948

And so I think that there's

an absolute moral imperative

702

00:33:30,972--> 00:33:32,948

to be writing about it,

703

00:33:32,972--> 00:33:36,508

as well as the fact

that simply to observe

704

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00:33:36,532--> 00:33:41,748

honestly will

incorporate these issues.

705

00:33:41,772--> 00:33:43,068

So there's a... there's a...

706

00:33:43,092--> 00:33:46,868

yeah, there's an absolute

responsibility in there.

707

00:33:46,892--> 00:33:50,268

So I think there are kind

of two aligning points

708

00:33:50,292--> 00:33:51,292

within that, but

709

00:33:51,316--> 00:33:53,588

all of those things

put together,

710

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00:33:53,612--> 00:33:55,868

there's no question.

711

00:33:55,892--> 00:33:59,428

It's absolutely essential that
we're telling stories about this

712

00:33:59,452--> 00:34:02,108

because it is to do with

713

00:34:02,132--> 00:34:03,508

how our culture is aligned.

714

00:34:03,532--> 00:34:06,348

And this includes the stories that
we tell ourselves about who we are.

715

00:34:06,372--> 00:34:07,372

It's not just

716

00:34:07,396--> 00:34:10,000

down to writers, but it

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certainly applies to writers.

717

00:34:10,000--> 00:34:11,828

-Thank you. That's very clear.

718

00:34:11,852--> 00:34:13,000

Nicola, do you want to...?

719

00:34:13,000--> 00:34:15,508

-Oh, well, I mean, you
know, Tom, that's it.

720

00:34:15,532--> 00:34:17,000

You said it.

721

00:34:17,000--> 00:34:18,800

-Sorry, I do go off and
one about this a bit.

722

00:34:18,824--> 00:34:22,428

It's all right. It's really clear.

It's really good. It's really good.

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723

00:34:22,452--> 00:34:25,388

-It's... So the stories
that we tell ourselves

724

00:34:25,412--> 00:34:28,348

are incredibly,
incredibly important.

725

00:34:28,372--> 00:34:30,988

And not just the
stories that we tell us

726

00:34:31,012--> 00:34:34,828

about the terrible
state that we've got into

727

00:34:34,852--> 00:34:39,000

and exactly how we got here,

728

00:34:39,000--> 00:34:41,228

but also the stories

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we tell ourselves

729

00:34:41,252--> 00:34:42,748

about where--

730

00:34:44,212--> 00:34:46,828

One of the things

I talk about a lot

731

00:34:46,852--> 00:34:51,148

with children is planting...

732

00:34:51,172--> 00:34:53,348

is planting seeds.

733

00:34:53,372--> 00:34:54,948

I talk about--

734

00:34:56,132--> 00:34:59,000

The long life of an oak tree.

735

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00:34:59,000--> 00:35:00,628

But, actually,

736

00:35:00,652--> 00:35:05,000

all change begins with an idea.

737

00:35:05,000--> 00:35:06,908

Everything new in the world

738

00:35:06,932--> 00:35:08,828

begins inside somebody's--

739

00:35:14,000--> 00:35:18,000

-With an idea and

then with developing...

740

00:35:18,000--> 00:35:20,828

-...is with stories. You get in

their heads, you get in their heads

741

00:35:20,852--> 00:35:23,308

and you rearrange, hopefully,

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742

00:35:23,332--> 00:35:24,628

what's in there

743

00:35:24,652--> 00:35:28,068

and then what comes out and
expresses itself in the culture

744

00:35:28,092--> 00:35:29,748

will change.

745

00:35:29,772--> 00:35:33,388

And I...

746

00:35:33,412--> 00:35:34,988

Sometimes have thought,

747

00:35:35,012--> 00:35:38,868

oh, god, I just need... I just
need to go and throw things

748

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00:35:38,892--> 00:35:41,708

or stand up on a soapbox

749

00:35:41,732--> 00:35:43,228

in the corner of

Trafalgar Square

750

00:35:43,252--> 00:35:47,000

and scream my head off.

751

00:35:47,000--> 00:35:50,508

What we can do,

and I have been given

752

00:35:50,532--> 00:35:56,348

this gift and this

body of knowledge

753

00:35:56,372--> 00:36:01,428

that allows me to communicate

about nature to young people.

754

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00:36:01,452--> 00:36:04,388

And that's what I do.

755

00:36:04,412--> 00:36:06,668

That's my bit. That's
my bit of the patchwork.

756

00:36:06,692--> 00:36:10,708

-So you give an idea or ideas

757

00:36:10,732--> 00:36:12,148

to young people and then...

758

00:36:12,172--> 00:36:13,548

And then what happens?

759

00:36:13,572--> 00:36:18,000

Say a bit about how young
people respond to your work, Nicola.

760

00:36:18,000--> 00:36:19,000

In your-- You know...

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761

00:36:19,000--> 00:36:22,348

-Well, I work most... I

sometimes work with older kids,

762

00:36:22,372--> 00:36:26,000

but mostly I work with

primary school kids.

763

00:36:26,000--> 00:36:31,000

And if the country was run

by year fives, we'd be fine.

764

00:36:31,000--> 00:36:32,308

We'd be totally fine.

765

00:36:32,332--> 00:36:33,988

They get it

766

00:36:34,012--> 00:36:37,908

and very often they're

extremely knowledgeable

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767

00:36:37,932--> 00:36:39,108

about the natural world.

768

00:36:39,132--> 00:36:41,988

They're extremely knowledgeable

about the natural world

769

00:36:42,012--> 00:36:46,000

in the way it's represented

on BBC Nature programmes.

770

00:36:46,000--> 00:36:50,228

But they're not so knowledgeable

about the stuff that's on their doorstep.

771

00:36:50,252--> 00:36:53,000

And how important that is

and how wonderful that is.

772

00:36:53,000--> 00:36:54,000

-Yes. Yes.

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773

00:36:54,000--> 00:36:59,268

-So that's another thing that
I'm beginning to work towards,

774

00:36:59,292--> 00:37:03,000

to try and make more
of those connections.

775

00:37:03,000--> 00:37:06,268

But very often with children--

776

00:37:08,000--> 00:37:09,000

...response

777

00:37:09,024--> 00:37:13,148

and they'll come up with
something they're going to do

778

00:37:13,172--> 00:37:15,308

or a picture they're going to do

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779

00:37:15,332--> 00:37:16,948

or some fundraising

they're going to do

780

00:37:16,972--> 00:37:19,468

for a conservation organization

781

00:37:19,492--> 00:37:20,908

or something like that.

782

00:37:20,932--> 00:37:22,068

But, actually...

783

00:37:22,092--> 00:37:24,108

The--

784

00:37:25,532--> 00:37:28,628

...makes me feel, okay,

785

00:37:28,652--> 00:37:32,308

I've... I've done a bit

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of good in this world

786

00:37:32,332--> 00:37:35,548

is I've been doing this

for a very long time, now.

787

00:37:35,572--> 00:37:40,548

And I was a television presenter

working in natural history,

788

00:37:40,572--> 00:37:44,000

putting over these messages

through children's television programs

789

00:37:44,000--> 00:37:45,228

sort of 40 years ago.

790

00:37:45,252--> 00:37:49,000

So I sometimes meet biologists

791

00:37:49,000--> 00:37:50,988

who remember that

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792

00:37:51,012--> 00:37:52,908

and who say, oh,

I read your book

793

00:37:52,932--> 00:37:54,148

or I saw that program

794

00:37:54,172--> 00:37:58,468

and that helped me

want to study zoology

795

00:37:58,492--> 00:38:01,548

or become an ecologist or become

a campaigner or whatever it is.

796

00:38:01,572--> 00:38:04,000

And of course,

they're vanishingly few,

797

00:38:04,000--> 00:38:05,000

those people.

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798

00:38:05,024--> 00:38:08,000

But they are there.

799

00:38:08,000--> 00:38:09,748

So I know that

800

00:38:09,772--> 00:38:11,708

in some small way

801

00:38:11,732--> 00:38:13,988

I have had an effect

802

00:38:14,012--> 00:38:18,948

and intend while I am able,

803

00:38:18,972--> 00:38:21,868

as long as there's

breath in my body

804

00:38:21,892--> 00:38:24,000

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to go on doing it.

805

00:38:24,000--> 00:38:25,000

-That's great.

806

00:38:25,024--> 00:38:27,628

And I saw your
fairly recent book

807

00:38:27,652--> 00:38:31,000

called Green: The Story
of Plant Life on Our Planet

808

00:38:31,000--> 00:38:32,148

which is for young children.

809

00:38:32,172--> 00:38:38,000

And it's very, very
clear and you don't...

810

00:38:38,000--> 00:38:40,468

I don't work with young

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people, so I don't know,

811

00:38:40,492--> 00:38:42,388

but you don't hold back

from using long words.

812

00:38:42,412--> 00:38:43,588

So--

813

00:38:43,612--> 00:38:45,508

As long as you use

them in the right context,

814

00:38:45,532--> 00:38:47,348

kids are quite

interested in long words

815

00:38:47,372--> 00:38:49,228

and they... they

want to learn them.

816

00:38:49,252--> 00:38:51,028

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But the thing about,

817

00:38:51,052--> 00:38:52,468

I mean, particularly

that series,

818

00:38:52,492--> 00:38:55,348

there's one about biodiversity,

819

00:38:55,372--> 00:38:56,708

there's one about microbiology,

820

00:38:56,732--> 00:39:00,468

and there's one about genetics--

821

00:39:01,000--> 00:39:02,028

...and development.

822

00:39:02,052--> 00:39:05,000

So they're quite complex

823

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00:39:05,000--> 00:39:07,788

scientific biological issues.

824

00:39:07,812--> 00:39:10,308

But if you don't
get that science,

825

00:39:10,332--> 00:39:15,708

you're not going to
understand the bigger picture.

826

00:39:15,732--> 00:39:18,948

You're not going to understand
how that all fits together.

827

00:39:18,972--> 00:39:21,988

And I also know that
when I write a picture book,

828

00:39:22,012--> 00:39:26,908

very often that picture book is
not just being read by a child.

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829

00:39:26,932--> 00:39:29,828

The child is being
read to by an adult.

830

00:39:29,852--> 00:39:33,000

So I'm also explaining
that stuff to adults.

831

00:39:33,000--> 00:39:34,000

-To the adult.

832

00:39:34,000--> 00:39:38,228

-And one of the things that--

833

00:39:42,000--> 00:39:43,000

...on the media

834

00:39:43,024--> 00:39:46,000

is that even the scientists
don't really explain it very well.

835

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00:39:46,000--> 00:39:47,000

-Yeah, sure.

836

00:39:47,000--> 00:39:49,028

-They don't make
the basic connection

837

00:39:49,052--> 00:39:52,788

between all that photosynthesis
in the carboniferous.

838

00:39:52,812--> 00:39:54,628

You know, millions
of years of it

839

00:39:54,652--> 00:39:59,028

and we've spaffed it all in 200
years of the Industrial Revolution.

840

00:39:59,052--> 00:40:00,708

So no wonder--

841

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00:40:00,732--> 00:40:03,108

...no wonder.

842

00:40:03,132--> 00:40:06,748

And I think if you

explain it in those terms,

843

00:40:06,772--> 00:40:09,828

the penny... the penny drops.

844

00:40:09,852--> 00:40:12,868

I mean very, very

entertainingly,

845

00:40:12,892--> 00:40:15,228

my agent read it

846

00:40:15,252--> 00:40:18,000

and she said, you know, I've never

understood that before. Now I do.

847

00:40:18,000--> 00:40:20,000

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-Oh, really? That's
so good. So great.

848

00:40:20,000--> 00:40:21,000

Very interesting.

849

00:40:21,000--> 00:40:22,440

-No, I think that,
you know... Sorry.

850

00:40:22,464--> 00:40:23,464

-Go on, Tom.

851

00:40:23,488--> 00:40:26,728

-No, just to say, I mean, I think that
there are things that sometimes scientists

852

00:40:26,752--> 00:40:28,548

will take for granted,
which... which

853

00:40:28,572--> 00:40:31,000

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they would have no
reason to stop and explain.

854

00:40:31,000--> 00:40:33,068

An obvious and basic example

855

00:40:33,092--> 00:40:35,028

being that our
civilizations exist

856

00:40:35,052--> 00:40:40,000

because of the sort of 10, 12,000 years
of climatic stability of the Holocene.

857

00:40:40,000--> 00:40:42,628

That's the reason why we were
able to have settled communities

858

00:40:42,652--> 00:40:45,000

and that's why everything
that we live in amongst

859

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00:40:45,000--> 00:40:46,228

is here.

860

00:40:46,252--> 00:40:49,068

And that is one of the things that underlines

861

00:40:49,092--> 00:40:51,248

the fact that we've now moved into a different period,

862

00:40:51,272--> 00:40:53,508

commonly known as the Anthropocene.

863

00:40:53,532--> 00:40:57,628

And that is the scale of the change

864

00:40:57,652--> 00:41:00,000

that we're undergoing at the moment.

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865

00:41:00,000--> 00:41:04,108

I mean, that is perhaps one of those things which can help bring it into your head.

866

00:41:04,132--> 00:41:06,000

-Yeah.

867

00:41:06,000--> 00:41:09,408

-I think scale is one of the things that's really important for people to get hold of

868

00:41:09,432--> 00:41:10,668

because it--

869

00:41:10,692--> 00:41:14,508

...sceptics will say, well, your planet's been this hot before,

870

00:41:14,532--> 00:41:15,532

it's been much hotter.

871

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00:41:15,556--> 00:41:17,948

There used to be
jungles at the... at the...

872

00:41:17,972--> 00:41:18,972

Yeah, lovey,

873

00:41:18,996--> 00:41:20,268

but that was, you know,

874

00:41:20,292--> 00:41:23,548

that was however many
hundreds of millions of years ago

875

00:41:23,572--> 00:41:25,228

and there weren't
any humans then.

876

00:41:25,252--> 00:41:26,768

-No, no.

877

00:41:26,792--> 00:41:29,008

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-So I think it's really
important for people to get that

878

00:41:29,032--> 00:41:32,148

enormous scale into their head.

879

00:41:32,172--> 00:41:35,228

-I wonder if at this point

I can ask you, Nicola,

880

00:41:35,252--> 00:41:36,308

to read The Promise.

881

00:41:36,332--> 00:41:38,708

The Promise...

882

00:41:38,732--> 00:41:40,868

You've told me The

Promise is used in schools

883

00:41:40,892--> 00:41:42,988

to open discussions

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on environmental issues

884

00:41:43,012--> 00:41:45,668

and it was made into

an animation for the BBC.

885

00:41:45,692--> 00:41:48,388

And I think it's really lovely.

886

00:41:48,412--> 00:41:50,000

So would you like

to read it to us?

887

00:41:50,000--> 00:41:52,148

-Thank you. Okay.

Well, I won't explain it

888

00:41:52,172--> 00:41:53,622

because you're

grown-ups, aren't you?

889

00:41:53,646--> 00:41:55,400

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So you don't need
me to explain it to you.

890

00:41:55,424--> 00:41:57,388

You don't need me
to tell you about acorns

891

00:41:57,412--> 00:41:59,148

and how if you plant an acorn,

892

00:41:59,172--> 00:42:02,000

it's about the most powerful
thing that you can do.

893

00:42:02,000--> 00:42:03,108

So I'll...

894

00:42:05,592--> 00:42:06,748

...the street child.

895

00:42:06,772--> 00:42:10,788

So she's in a very bad

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situation, poor little sausage.

896

00:42:10,812--> 00:42:15,000

So she's the person who talks
out of the pages of this book.

897

00:42:15,000--> 00:42:16,468

When I was young,

898

00:42:16,492--> 00:42:20,776

I lived in a city that
was mean and hard

899

00:42:20,800--> 00:42:21,908

and ugly.

900

00:42:21,932--> 00:42:24,468

It's streets were dry as dust,

901

00:42:24,492--> 00:42:26,228

cracked by heat and cold,

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902

00:42:26,252--> 00:42:29,000

and never blessed with rain.

903

00:42:29,000--> 00:42:32,188

A gritty yellow wind

blew constantly,

904

00:42:32,212--> 00:42:36,000

scratching round the

buildings like a hungry dog.

905

00:42:36,000--> 00:42:37,708

Nothing grew.

906

00:42:37,732--> 00:42:40,000

Everything was broken.

907

00:42:40,000--> 00:42:41,068

And--

908

00:42:43,092--> 00:42:48,068

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...the people had grown as mean
and hard and ugly as their city,

909

00:42:48,092--> 00:42:51,000

and I was mean and
hard and ugly, too.

910

00:42:51,000--> 00:42:52,828

I lived by stealing

911

00:42:52,852--> 00:42:54,588

from those who had--

912

00:42:56,192--> 00:42:57,508

...as I did.

913

00:42:57,532--> 00:42:59,748

My heart was as shrivelled

914

00:42:59,772--> 00:43:04,000

as the dead trees in the park.

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915

00:43:04,000--> 00:43:05,588

And then one night

I met an old lady

916

00:43:05,612--> 00:43:08,000

down a dark street.

917

00:43:08,000--> 00:43:09,000

She was frail

918

00:43:09,024--> 00:43:10,588

and alone.

919

00:43:10,612--> 00:43:13,000

An easy victim.

920

00:43:13,000--> 00:43:15,508

Her bag was fat and full

921

00:43:15,532--> 00:43:18,000

but when I tried to

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snatch it from her,

922

00:43:18,000--> 00:43:20,948

she held on with the
strength of heroes.

923

00:43:20,972--> 00:43:24,108

To and fro, we pulled that bag

924

00:43:24,132--> 00:43:26,868

until at last she
said, if you promise--

925

00:43:29,800--> 00:43:30,828

...did she mean?

926

00:43:30,852--> 00:43:32,348

I didn't know or care.

927

00:43:32,372--> 00:43:33,748

I just wanted the bag.

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928

00:43:33,772--> 00:43:35,000

So I said, 'all right.

929

00:43:35,000--> 00:43:36,108

I promise.'

930

00:43:36,132--> 00:43:38,588

She loosened her--

931

00:43:39,712--> 00:43:40,908

...smiled at me.

932

00:43:40,932--> 00:43:42,988

I ran off without
a backward look,

933

00:43:43,012--> 00:43:44,988

thinking of the food and
the money in the bag.

934

00:43:45,012--> 00:43:47,000

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But when I opened it,

935

00:43:47,000--> 00:43:48,868

there were only acorns.

936

00:43:48,892--> 00:43:51,000

I stared at them.

937

00:43:51,000--> 00:43:55,428

So green, so

perfect and so many.

938

00:43:55,452--> 00:43:59,000

And I understood the

promise I had made.

939

00:43:59,000--> 00:44:00,948

I held a forest

940

00:44:00,972--> 00:44:06,000

and my heart was changed.

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941

00:44:06,000--> 00:44:07,868

I forgot about the
food and the money.

942

00:44:07,892--> 00:44:11,268

And for the first time
in my life, I felt lucky,

943

00:44:11,292--> 00:44:14,000

rich beyond my wildest dreams.

944

00:44:14,000--> 00:44:17,108

That night I slept with
the acorns for my pillow.

945

00:44:17,132--> 00:44:21,000

My head full of leafy dreams.

946

00:44:21,000--> 00:44:24,748

And in the morning I
began to keep my promise.

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947

00:44:24,772--> 00:44:28,908

I planted beside
roads and roundabouts,

948

00:44:28,932--> 00:44:34,028

among rubble and ruins and rusty
railings by train tracks and tram lines

949

00:44:34,052--> 00:44:35,268

and traffic lights,

950

00:44:35,292--> 00:44:38,828

in abandoned parks and
gardens laced with broken glass,

951

00:44:38,852--> 00:44:43,148

behind factories and shopping
malls at bus stops, cafes--

952

00:44:46,000--> 00:44:47,508

...hard and ugly.

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953

00:44:47,532--> 00:44:52,000

And I planted, and
planted, and planted.

954

00:44:52,000--> 00:44:54,068

Nothing changed at first.

955

00:44:54,092--> 00:44:57,828

The gritty wind still scratched
the parched, cracked streets

956

00:44:57,852--> 00:45:02,428

that people scowled and scuttled
to their homes like cockroaches.

957

00:45:03,000--> 00:45:07,108

But slowly, shoots of
green began to show.

958

00:45:09,000--> 00:45:10,308

Trees.

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959

00:45:10,332--> 00:45:12,576

First here, then there,

960

00:45:12,600--> 00:45:13,868

then everywhere.

961

00:45:13,892--> 00:45:15,368

People came onto

the streets to see.

962

00:45:15,392--> 00:45:18,000

They touched the

leaves in wonder

963

00:45:18,000--> 00:45:19,028

and they smiled.

964

00:45:19,052--> 00:45:21,668

They took tea together

by the tiny trees,

965

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00:45:21,692--> 00:45:23,000

they talked

966

00:45:23,000--> 00:45:24,208

and laughed,

967

00:45:24,232--> 00:45:28,000

and pretty soon they

were planting too.

968

00:45:28,000--> 00:45:29,508

Trees and flowers,

969

00:45:29,532--> 00:45:32,988

fruits and vegetables in parks and

gardens and balconies and rooftops.

970

00:45:33,012--> 00:45:36,000

Green spread through

the city like a song.

971

00:45:36,000--> 00:45:37,948

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Breathing to the sky,

972

00:45:37,972--> 00:45:42,000

drawing down the
rain like a blessing.

973

00:45:42,000--> 00:45:45,308

But by then, I was
already far away,

974

00:45:45,332--> 00:45:51,000

planting in another
sad and sorry city.

975

00:45:51,000--> 00:45:52,268

And another.

976

00:45:52,292--> 00:45:56,000

And another.

977

00:45:56,000--> 00:45:57,708

And another.

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978

00:45:57,732--> 00:46:02,376

And then, last night,

979

00:46:02,400--> 00:46:03,988

in a lonely alley,

980

00:46:04,012--> 00:46:06,348

a young thief fought me

981

00:46:06,372--> 00:46:11,000

for my sack of acorns.

982

00:46:11,000--> 00:46:13,348

And made the old bargain,

983

00:46:13,372--> 00:46:17,000

knowing how a heart can change.

984

00:46:17,000--> 00:46:20,388

Knowing--

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985

00:46:20,412--> 00:46:24,000

...will go on.

986

00:46:24,000--> 00:46:25,148

-Thank you so much, Nicola.

987

00:46:25,172--> 00:46:27,628

There were little bits with
the technology freezing,

988

00:46:27,652--> 00:46:29,128

but you'll be able
to get the whole--

989

00:46:29,152--> 00:46:31,468

to read the whole
piece again afterwards.

990

00:46:31,492--> 00:46:33,108

It was really lovely, thank you.

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991

00:46:33,132--> 00:46:35,748

I'm terribly conscious
of time rushing past

992

00:46:35,772--> 00:46:39,000

and there's so
much to talk about.

993

00:46:39,000--> 00:46:41,668

So I'm going to jump
about a bit, go back to Tom.

994

00:46:41,692--> 00:46:44,228

I wanted to ask Tom whether

995

00:46:44,252--> 00:46:48,148

winning the World's Book
of the Year for Sarn Helen

996

00:46:48,172--> 00:46:52,000

has led to any
political response?

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997

00:46:52,000--> 00:46:56,108

-I've got a quick answer
in a slightly longer answer.

998

00:46:56,132--> 00:46:58,000

Quick answer is no.

999

00:46:58,000--> 00:47:02,000

But I wouldn't expect one.

1000

00:47:02,000--> 00:47:04,000

-No.

1001

00:47:04,000--> 00:47:05,548

-Or at least not
that I'm aware of.

1002

00:47:05,572--> 00:47:07,988

Having said which,

1003

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00:47:08,012--> 00:47:11,828

I am aware of it's
having some effects

1004

00:47:11,852--> 00:47:17,000

on writers here in Wales.

1005

00:47:17,000--> 00:47:19,028

I just finished reading a proof

1006

00:47:19,052--> 00:47:21,476

of Jon Gower's
new book, Birdland.

1007

00:47:21,500--> 00:47:22,500

-Oh, oh.

1008

00:47:22,524--> 00:47:23,588

And which shows, you know,

1009

00:47:23,612--> 00:47:25,968

and he's mentioned this to

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me before, but he mentions in it

1010

00:47:25,992--> 00:47:28,548

that the idea was sort of sewn

1011

00:47:28,572--> 00:47:32,708

as a result of reading Sarn Helen,
which was particularly pleasing to me

1012

00:47:32,732--> 00:47:34,268

because the idea...

1013

00:47:34,292--> 00:47:36,360

Well, I first learned about
the lives of the saints

1014

00:47:36,384--> 00:47:37,828

which sort of underpins Sarn Helen

1015

00:47:37,852--> 00:47:39,400

from reading one of
Jon Gower's books.

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1016

00:47:39,400--> 00:47:40,400

-From whose work?

1017

00:47:40,424--> 00:47:42,948

-So it's a sort of wonderful kind
of to and fro of conversation.

1018

00:47:42,972--> 00:47:44,588

But I... I think

what I would say...

1019

00:47:44,612--> 00:47:46,388

Sorry, I do need to say this,

1020

00:47:46,412--> 00:47:51,000

is that it is not about
individual writers.

1021

00:47:51,000--> 00:47:53,548

You do not write a

book expecting that book

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1022

00:47:53,572--> 00:47:57,000

to have an effect

in and of itself.

1023

00:47:57,000--> 00:47:58,948

My perception

of what a writer is

1024

00:47:58,972--> 00:48:04,000

has changed completely

in the past few years.

1025

00:48:04,000--> 00:48:05,428

I used to... I think,

1026

00:48:05,452--> 00:48:07,428

I very much inherited that idea,

1027

00:48:07,452--> 00:48:11,468

kind of perhaps a sort of romantic

idea of the kind of isolated writer

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1028

00:48:11,492--> 00:48:13,668

and so forth, and that was
the way that I thought of it

1029

00:48:13,692--> 00:48:15,000

when I started.

1030

00:48:15,000--> 00:48:19,188

I see it now entirely as a
collective collaborative process.

1031

00:48:19,212--> 00:48:23,948

Everybody who is involved in
whatever way, whatever capacity

1032

00:48:23,972--> 00:48:26,308

with this broader mission,

1033

00:48:26,332--> 00:48:28,268

everybody's on the same side,

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1034

00:48:28,292--> 00:48:30,268

I feel no competition
with them whatsoever

1035

00:48:30,292--> 00:48:35,748

and... and so it's
wonderful, essentially,

1036

00:48:35,772--> 00:48:39,148

you know seeing the way that
Jon is embracing this at the moment

1037

00:48:39,172--> 00:48:41,908

or, you know, hearing Nick
reading or anybody else.

1038

00:48:41,932--> 00:48:43,628

And it's... it's
a massive relief

1039

00:48:43,652--> 00:48:47,000

and I recommend it to everybody.

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1040

00:48:47,000--> 00:48:48,708

-Well, it's interesting

that you say that

1041

00:48:48,732--> 00:48:53,708

because jumping on, one of my

colleagues on the Cymru committee

1042

00:48:53,732--> 00:48:57,028

asked me to raise with you both

1043

00:48:57,052--> 00:49:00,628

the question of whether you feel

that you belong to a loose collective

1044

00:49:00,652--> 00:49:03,000

of writers engaged

in these issues.

1045

00:49:03,000--> 00:49:05,000

And it sounds from what

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you say, Tom, you do.

1046

00:49:05,000--> 00:49:07,948

-Emphatically, yes.

Yeah, emphatically, yes.

1047

00:49:07,972--> 00:49:09,828

I think of it as a murmuration,

1048

00:49:09,852--> 00:49:12,000

as you see a

murmuration of starlings.

1049

00:49:12,000--> 00:49:15,708

Jon tells me, Jon Gower

tells me, or his book tells me

1050

00:49:15,732--> 00:49:20,228

that, you know, you can

have a murmuration.

1051

00:49:20,252--> 00:49:21,868

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It can be as many
as a million birds.

1052

00:49:21,892--> 00:49:25,028

And yet each
individual bird navigates

1053

00:49:25,052--> 00:49:28,000

off seven starlings nearest.

1054

00:49:28,000--> 00:49:29,000

-Extraordinary, isn't it?

1055

00:49:29,000--> 00:49:32,428

-And yet they move in concert.

1056

00:49:32,452--> 00:49:35,428

There is a sense of collective
purpose amongst them,

1057

00:49:35,452--> 00:49:36,948

a sense of coherence,

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1058

00:49:36,972--> 00:49:41,000

even in spite of the fact that they
can't be aware of the vast majority of it.

1059

00:49:41,000--> 00:49:42,100

-Absolutely amazing, yeah.

1060

00:49:42,124--> 00:49:44,348

-Occasionally I've
written the odd thing.

1061

00:49:44,372--> 00:49:46,788

I wrote some-- Put
something online last year

1062

00:49:46,812--> 00:49:50,508

and somebody from New Zealand
who runs an institute in New Zealand

1063

00:49:50,532--> 00:49:52,388

emailed me and said,

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oh, it's interesting.

1064

00:49:52,412--> 00:49:55,000

I've just been thinking
exactly the same thing.

1065

00:49:55,000--> 00:49:56,948

And this wasn't someone
I'd ever met before.

1066

00:49:56,972--> 00:49:59,908

But the more time
you spend in it,

1067

00:49:59,932--> 00:50:02,828

the more awareness you have
of the sheer number of people

1068

00:50:02,852--> 00:50:05,188

in all different capacities
who are working together

1069

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00:50:05,212--> 00:50:07,000

on this kind of broader project.

1070

00:50:07,000--> 00:50:11,000

And that is the thing, that's the thing that gives me hope, actually.

1071

00:50:11,000--> 00:50:12,708

-That's really interesting.

1072

00:50:12,732--> 00:50:17,776

Do you feel the same, Nicola, with other writers in your sphere?

1073

00:50:17,800--> 00:50:19,000

In young people's writing.

1074

00:50:19,000--> 00:50:21,068

-A bit, not quite so much

1075

00:50:21,092--> 00:50:25,068

because as writers for children,

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1076

00:50:25,092--> 00:50:28,508

we're pretty ghettoised.

1077

00:50:28,532--> 00:50:32,028

You know...

1078

00:50:32,052--> 00:50:38,028

There is an attitude among
some adult authors for adults

1079

00:50:38,052--> 00:50:42,708

that that we are somehow lesser.

1080

00:50:42,732--> 00:50:44,708

Less important,

1081

00:50:44,732--> 00:50:46,508

less intelligent,

1082

00:50:46,532--> 00:50:49,000

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less able, doing a
less important job.

1083

00:50:50,000--> 00:50:52,200

-Well, I don't think that
should be true in this arena.

1084

00:50:52,224--> 00:50:55,148

-So it's a bit harder but there is a
community within children's writers.

1085

00:50:55,172--> 00:50:58,068

There's absolutely, definitely
a community of people

1086

00:50:58,092--> 00:51:01,000

and--

1087

00:51:01,000--> 00:51:02,548

...writers--

1088

00:51:02,572--> 00:51:04,628

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...books about these things

1089

00:51:04,652--> 00:51:07,188

which is absolutely fantastic.

1090

00:51:07,212--> 00:51:10,108

-Well, I think it's really good that we have you two together talking.

1091

00:51:10,132--> 00:51:12,548

So there's not any kind of ghettoisation in it.

1092

00:51:12,572--> 00:51:13,628

-No, no, not at all.

1093

00:51:13,652--> 00:51:15,708

So I'm really glad that you're both here.

1094

00:51:15,732--> 00:51:21,668

I don't want to run out of time without

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asking Tom to read another piece,

1095

00:51:21,692--> 00:51:24,000

but can I just ask you

1096

00:51:24,000--> 00:51:25,348

about publishers?

1097

00:51:25,372--> 00:51:29,868

Are they embracing this work?

1098

00:51:30,975--> 00:51:32,975

-Yes and no.

1099

00:51:33,000--> 00:51:34,888

-Is there anything you
want to say about that?

1100

00:51:34,912--> 00:51:38,468

-Just because
of this issue of it...

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1101

00:51:38,492--> 00:51:43,508

Of people being--

People are always afraid

1102

00:51:43,532--> 00:51:45,548

to talk to children

about difficult things.

1103

00:51:45,572--> 00:51:47,868

You know, not very many

picture books about death.

1104

00:51:47,892--> 00:51:50,188

A universal experience,

1105

00:51:50,212--> 00:51:53,000

children will encounter it,

1106

00:51:53,000--> 00:51:55,128

very difficult to get anything

published about that.

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1107

00:51:55,152--> 00:51:57,000

And climate change is the same.

1108

00:51:57,000--> 00:52:01,188

So there is less now, actually--

1109

00:52:01,212--> 00:52:05,000

but there has been

1110

00:52:05,000--> 00:52:11,000

an expectation of sanitizing the message and sweetening it up for kids.

1111

00:52:11,000--> 00:52:13,520

-But you think it's changing? You think there's more acceptance?

1112

00:52:13,544--> 00:52:16,068

-It is changed. It's still there.
And in America now, you know,

1113

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00:52:16,092--> 00:52:19,108

picture books

particularly,

1114

00:52:19,132--> 00:52:21,188

picture books to be published--

1115

00:52:21,212--> 00:52:23,908

...foreign co-editions,

1116

00:52:23,932--> 00:52:25,988

and for most British

publishers, the obvious one

1117

00:52:26,012--> 00:52:31,000

doesn't need a translation or not

much of a translation is America.

1118

00:52:31,000--> 00:52:33,228

With the current

climate in America--

1119

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00:52:38,000--> 00:52:39,188

-Yeah.

1120

00:52:39,212--> 00:52:42,428

Tom, what do you

feel about publishing?

1121

00:52:42,452--> 00:52:47,148

-Yeah, I mean, I suppose most of what I know about it is anecdotal.

1122

00:52:47,172--> 00:52:50,000

I haven't kind of experienced any problems with it myself.

1123

00:52:50,000--> 00:52:52,068

I would say, though, that...

1124

00:52:52,092--> 00:52:53,868

I mean, I've got a friend, for example,

1125

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00:52:53,892--> 00:52:57,708

who was pitching a book about,
say, maybe seven or eight years ago

1126

00:52:57,732--> 00:53:00,748

to do with climate change
and was told by his publisher

1127

00:53:00,772--> 00:53:03,188

that...

1128

00:53:03,212--> 00:53:06,000

that nobody would
want to know about this.

1129

00:53:06,000--> 00:53:08,828

I would say that...

1130

00:53:08,852--> 00:53:12,188

So, like, I conducted
a bit of a poll

1131

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00:53:12,212--> 00:53:15,668

at Hay Festival

last year on my own,

1132

00:53:15,692--> 00:53:19,148

just looking through all the books

that were represented at Hay Festival.

1133

00:53:19,172--> 00:53:20,908

And there are

quite a lot of books,

1134

00:53:20,932--> 00:53:23,428

some books which were, you know,

1135

00:53:23,452--> 00:53:27,000

explicitly related

to climate or nature.

1136

00:53:27,000--> 00:53:28,388

But then plenty of others,

1137

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00:53:28,412--> 00:53:31,788

I suppose, like Sarn Helen, if
you were to look at the cover of it,

1138

00:53:31,812--> 00:53:35,000

then you would think
it's a book about Wales.

1139

00:53:35,000--> 00:53:36,000

-Yeah.

1140

00:53:36,024--> 00:53:38,828

-I would have said that
perhaps 25% of the books there

1141

00:53:38,852--> 00:53:41,024

were directly

1142

00:53:41,048--> 00:53:44,048

addressing
this...

1143

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00:53:44,072--> 00:53:45,976

the broader crisis.

1144

00:53:46,000--> 00:53:47,000

-That's really good.

1145

00:53:47,000--> 00:53:51,508

-And so I think there's no question that there's been an upsurge.

1146

00:53:51,532--> 00:53:55,028

But I want to see a point at which

1147

00:53:55,052--> 00:53:57,188

that isn't anything you would even remark upon

1148

00:53:57,212--> 00:53:59,000

because it's just a normal part of life.

1149

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00:53:59,000--> 00:54:00,600

-Yeah, definitely.

1150

00:54:00,624--> 00:54:01,976

-Yeah.

1151

00:54:02,000--> 00:54:03,000

-Yeah.

1152

00:54:03,000--> 00:54:05,908

Thank you. I'd like...

1153

00:54:05,932--> 00:54:10,000

Because we've only got
five minutes before our break,

1154

00:54:10,000--> 00:54:12,828

Tom, could I ask you to read
another piece from Sarn Helen,

1155

00:54:12,852--> 00:54:16,000

which is the piece

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about the angler?

1156

00:54:16,000--> 00:54:17,508

-Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

1157

00:54:17,532--> 00:54:19,000

Yeah, very short, isn't it?

1158

00:54:19,000--> 00:54:21,000

-It's from page 61. Yeah.

1159

00:54:21,000--> 00:54:23,828

-Yeah...

1160

00:54:25,000--> 00:54:26,528

-Because it talks about...

1161

00:54:26,552--> 00:54:29,868

I mean, I think, Nicola,
you referred to pollution...

1162

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00:54:29,892--> 00:54:31,788

Or you both did,
but river pollution.

1163

00:54:31,812--> 00:54:35,000

It's just... it's a
very beautiful piece.

1164

00:54:35,000--> 00:54:37,000

If you would like to read that?

1165

00:54:37,000--> 00:54:38,228

-It is a sorrow to him,

1166

00:54:38,252--> 00:54:39,628

the angler says,

1167

00:54:39,652--> 00:54:43,000

that so few of the
children come to the rivers.

1168

00:54:43,000--> 00:54:44,000

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When he was a boy,

1169

00:54:44,012--> 00:54:46,748

the Chapel Pool on

the Usk in Sennybridge

1170

00:54:46,772--> 00:54:49,428

was the swimming place

for the entire community,

1171

00:54:49,452--> 00:54:52,548

the place where he and his friends

would pass their summer holidays.

1172

00:54:52,572--> 00:54:56,000

'You'll still find

otter there', he says.

1173

00:54:56,000--> 00:54:58,428

'Wait among the trees

just behind the red lion

1174

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00:54:58,452--> 00:55:00,748

where the view takes
in both sides of the bend,

1175

00:55:00,772--> 00:55:03,188

and you're sure to see
the adults landing their fish.'

1176

00:55:03,212--> 00:55:07,000

And just at the moment, the
cubs at play rolling around together.

1177

00:55:07,000--> 00:55:09,588

There's space for them
all, so far as he's concerned.

1178

00:55:09,612--> 00:55:12,268

The anglers and
otters and kingfishers.

1179

00:55:12,292--> 00:55:13,668

He feels no sense
of competition.

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1180

00:55:13,692--> 00:55:16,468

If a head pops out of his pool,

1181

00:55:16,492--> 00:55:19,000

sleek and dark in

its necklace of rings,

1182

00:55:19,000--> 00:55:21,308

he will simply take

his rod elsewhere.

1183

00:55:21,332--> 00:55:22,948

The problem, he says,

1184

00:55:22,972--> 00:55:24,868

is the phosphate

concentrations.

1185

00:55:24,892--> 00:55:27,148

The run-off from the

free range poultry units

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1186

00:55:27,172--> 00:55:30,000

and the granular fertilizer
spread on the fields.

1187

00:55:30,000--> 00:55:32,628

Those in the recent
hot dry springs

1188

00:55:32,652--> 00:55:35,268

which have kept the
rivers warm, slow, shallow,

1189

00:55:35,292--> 00:55:38,776

ripe to be stifled by
sickly green algae.

1190

00:55:38,800--> 00:55:39,800

The problem, he says,

1191

00:55:39,824--> 00:55:44,000

is the lure of screens and the fact

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that with so many cars on the roads,

1192

00:55:44,000--> 00:55:46,868

unsupervised play is so
much more dangerous.

1193

00:55:49,000--> 00:55:50,628

-Thank you.

1194

00:55:50,652--> 00:55:53,348

It's really good to hear
you both read your work.

1195

00:55:53,372--> 00:55:54,372

I think it, just...

1196

00:55:54,396--> 00:55:57,108

Make's it all the
more meaningful.

1197

00:55:57,132--> 00:55:58,228

Thank you.

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1198

00:55:58,252--> 00:56:00,268

We're going to have
a break in a moment.

1199

00:56:00,292--> 00:56:02,948

I just want to say...

1200

00:56:05,000--> 00:56:07,428

I'll just tell it to
everybody else,

1201

00:56:07,452--> 00:56:09,668

let us both remember that...

1202

00:56:09,692--> 00:56:11,148

Let's all remember,

1203

00:56:11,172--> 00:56:14,068

however much we talk
about our own country,

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1204

00:56:14,092--> 00:56:18,000

that we're not living in isolation
from the rest of the world.

1205

00:56:18,000--> 00:56:20,588

And there's the issue
of the refugee crisis,

1206

00:56:20,612--> 00:56:23,000

which is a whole other topic.

1207

00:56:23,000--> 00:56:27,948

Nicola has written a little
book called The Day War Came

1208

00:56:27,972--> 00:56:30,428

which I recommend to everybody,

1209

00:56:30,452--> 00:56:33,988

which is a response to the UK
government's refusal to allow

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1210

00:56:34,012--> 00:56:37,628

3,000 child refugees

to enter the UK in 2016.

1211

00:56:37,652--> 00:56:39,508

We don't have

time to go into it all,

1212

00:56:39,532--> 00:56:41,108

but just let us remember,

1213

00:56:41,132--> 00:56:45,000

I don't know if you both want

to just say something about

1214

00:56:45,000--> 00:56:49,708

the fact that we

live in a wider world.

1215

00:56:49,732--> 00:56:51,988

Well, I'll say something

very briefly about refugees

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1216

00:56:52,012--> 00:56:55,468

which is that, yes, I mean, of course, you're absolutely right.

1217

00:56:55,492--> 00:56:57,508

And yes, of course, we are likely to see

1218

00:56:57,532--> 00:57:01,548

greater and greater numbers of refugees for climate reasons.

1219

00:57:01,572--> 00:57:07,000

But it should be borne in mind that some of those may be ourselves.

1220

00:57:07,000--> 00:57:09,548

If, as may very well happen,

1221

00:57:09,572--> 00:57:11,628

the North Atlantic Gyre

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and the Gulf Stream

1222

00:57:11,652--> 00:57:12,948

slows and stops

1223

00:57:12,972--> 00:57:16,348

then the British Isles

will not be vaguely able to

1224

00:57:16,372--> 00:57:21,000

accommodate the numbers of people

who are living here at the moment.

1225

00:57:21,000--> 00:57:22,388

So...

1226

00:57:22,412--> 00:57:24,000

Yes, these things are universal.

1227

00:57:24,000--> 00:57:25,588

These things are

absolutely universal

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1228

00:57:25,612--> 00:57:28,000

and we are included among them.

1229

00:57:28,000--> 00:57:30,628

-And that story of migration

1230

00:57:30,652--> 00:57:34,148

is the story of our species.

1231

00:57:36,000--> 00:57:39,348

-The scale that it is likely to
happen with climate change

1232

00:57:39,372--> 00:57:43,268

is absolutely enormous
but it's part of us.

1233

00:57:43,292--> 00:57:45,668

It's part of... It's part of--

1234

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00:57:45,692--> 00:57:50,308

We can respond to
the refugee situation

1235

00:57:50,332--> 00:57:55,028

by rigging our hands and going,
oh my God, this is all ghastly.

1236

00:57:55,052--> 00:57:57,228

Or we can just say, okay,

1237

00:57:57,252--> 00:57:58,888

this is a bit bigger
than it was before,

1238

00:57:58,912--> 00:58:00,000

but we've always done this.

1239

00:58:00,000--> 00:58:02,708

And we've always got
around it and it'll be fine.

1240

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00:58:06,000--> 00:58:07,868

It's a change in mindset.

1241

00:58:07,892--> 00:58:11,000

It just needs a
change in mindset.

1242

00:58:11,000--> 00:58:12,348

-And we carry on.

1243

00:58:12,372--> 00:58:14,148

It's one minute to eight.

1244

00:58:14,172--> 00:58:16,588

I'm going to say that the
three of us are going to mute

1245

00:58:16,612--> 00:58:19,908

and just go away
for five minutes.

1246

00:58:19,932--> 00:58:21,508

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So take your comfort break

1247

00:58:21,532--> 00:58:23,228

and we will be back

for your questions.

1248

00:58:23,252--> 00:58:24,252

Thank you very much.

1249

00:58:24,276--> 00:58:26,000

Thank you, Nicola.

Thank you, Tom.

1250

00:58:26,000--> 00:58:27,000

-Thank you.

1251

01:04:57,000--> 01:04:59,428

-I'm back. I think we're back?

1252

01:05:05,000--> 01:05:06,268

Yeah, shall we?

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1253

01:05:06,292--> 01:05:07,292

I've got a couple of--

1254

01:05:09,132--> 01:05:10,348

Oh, right.

1255

01:05:10,372--> 01:05:13,000

I've got several questions.

1256

01:05:13,000--> 01:05:14,000

-Brilliant.

1257

01:05:14,000--> 01:05:16,548

-Okay, first question

I've got here is...

1258

01:05:18,492--> 01:05:22,108

Would you generally tackle

climate writing head on

1259

01:05:22,132--> 01:05:26,000

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or more subtly through subtext?

1260

01:05:26,000--> 01:05:29,268

Is it more impactful for readers to discover your meaning for themselves

1261

01:05:29,292--> 01:05:32,148

or do we need to be more urgent in our messaging

1262

01:05:32,172--> 01:05:35,781

which may put off the audience who need swaying the most?

1263

01:05:36,600--> 01:05:37,788

-Diversity.

1264

01:05:37,812--> 01:05:40,148

Diversity. Diversity of approaches.

1265

01:05:40,172--> 01:05:41,828

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Everybody needs a different...

1266

01:05:41,852--> 01:05:44,988

You know, for some people,

1267

01:05:45,012--> 01:05:47,468

going straight at it

will work brilliantly.

1268

01:05:47,492--> 01:05:50,000

For some people, you have

to go around the houses.

1269

01:05:50,000--> 01:05:51,788

So, I think...

1270

01:05:51,812--> 01:05:54,468

Do it as many different

ways as you can.

1271

01:05:55,000--> 01:05:58,628

-There is a difference there as

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well with fiction and non-fiction.

1272

01:05:58,652--> 01:06:02,908

I mean, you can address
issues directly in non-fiction

1273

01:06:02,932--> 01:06:04,548

in a way it's difficult
to do in fiction,

1274

01:06:04,572--> 01:06:06,908

but I think what I
would really say is

1275

01:06:06,932--> 01:06:09,228

that, you know,

1276

01:06:09,252--> 01:06:11,000

be true to who you are

1277

01:06:11,000--> 01:06:12,428

as a writer

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1278

01:06:12,452--> 01:06:14,308

first and foremost.

1279

01:06:14,332--> 01:06:18,228

It may be that,

1280

01:06:18,252--> 01:06:22,068

you know, it may be that writing

1281

01:06:22,092--> 01:06:27,488

explicitly about these, you know,
different aspects of this crisis

1282

01:06:27,512--> 01:06:29,832

is exactly the sort of writing
that you'd be wanting to do,

1283

01:06:29,856--> 01:06:31,000

but I think that,

1284

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01:06:31,000--> 01:06:34,188

as I say, I think it's crucial to
think about it as a collective

1285

01:06:34,212--> 01:06:37,748

because it is also important

1286

01:06:37,772--> 01:06:42,348

that we have novels, say,
which is not about subtext,

1287

01:06:42,372--> 01:06:43,908

it's about context
in that sense.

1288

01:06:43,932--> 01:06:47,388

You know, if people
are reflecting...

1289

01:06:47,412--> 01:06:49,000

I mean, okay, let me just give

1290

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01:06:49,000--> 01:06:51,388

an example, a personal example.

1291

01:06:51,412--> 01:06:55,068

My son Edwin had... was

1292

01:06:55,092--> 01:06:58,000

anorexic for two years.

1293

01:06:58,000--> 01:07:01,548

Severely anorexic. That

was triggered by lockdown

1294

01:07:01,572--> 01:07:05,000

which was a result of COVID-19

1295

01:07:05,000--> 01:07:07,748

which was almost

certainly a zoonosis,

1296

01:07:07,772--> 01:07:11,348

a result of human

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incursions in natural habitats.

1297

01:07:12,000--> 01:07:15,268

That was an aspect of the
climate and ecological emergency.

1298

01:07:15,292--> 01:07:18,868

It's a question, I think, of
breadth, of the breadth of field,

1299

01:07:18,892--> 01:07:20,548

the breadth of understanding,

1300

01:07:20,572--> 01:07:22,628

seeing how all of
these things relate

1301

01:07:22,652--> 01:07:24,948

and how all of these
things intertwine.

1302

01:07:24,972--> 01:07:25,972

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-Yeah.

1303

01:07:27,000--> 01:07:28,000

-Yeah.

1304

01:07:28,000--> 01:07:29,188

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah,

1305

01:07:29,212--> 01:07:33,000

I've written a picture book
about about the UNCRC,

1306

01:07:33,000--> 01:07:35,188

about the Convention
on Rights of the Child.

1307

01:07:35,212--> 01:07:42,508

And that's perhaps the most
powerful piece of international law.

1308

01:07:42,532--> 01:07:46,348

And the climate

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crisis contravenes

1309

01:07:46,372--> 01:07:50,708

almost every single right

1310

01:07:50,732--> 01:07:53,000

the children laid out

1311

01:07:53,000--> 01:07:54,468

in UNCRC,

1312

01:07:54,492--> 01:08:00,000

and so it is potentially a very
powerful tool for children to use

1313

01:08:00,000--> 01:08:02,228

to fight for their right

1314

01:08:02,252--> 01:08:04,468

to a--

1315

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01:08:05,852--> 01:08:07,348

...blighted world.

1316

01:08:09,900--> 01:08:10,908

-Yeah.

1317

01:08:14,092--> 01:08:15,692

Okay, thank you.

1318

01:08:15,800--> 01:08:17,800

Tom, did you want to say
something more about that?

1319

01:08:17,824--> 01:08:22,988

No, no, only that I can keep talking about
any one of these things for a good hour.

1320

01:08:23,012--> 01:08:25,308

I'm just biting my tongue

1321

01:08:25,332--> 01:08:27,000

and I'm just sort of... Yeah.

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1322

01:08:27,000--> 01:08:28,468

-Yeah, there's so much to say.

1323

01:08:28,492--> 01:08:30,348

I know that it's

such a huge topic,

1324

01:08:30,372--> 01:08:31,788

but you're doing great.

1325

01:08:31,812--> 01:08:33,308

Okay, another question.

1326

01:08:33,332--> 01:08:35,308

Have you Nicola, Tom,

1327

01:08:35,332--> 01:08:40,388

engaged at all with the Society
of Authors Tree to Me Campaign?

1328

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01:08:40,412--> 01:08:42,188

Tree to Me

1329

01:08:42,212--> 01:08:44,028

to ensure that our

books have as little effect

1330

01:08:44,052--> 01:08:48,000

on the climate and

life crises as possible.

1331

01:08:48,000--> 01:08:49,668

Publishing has a big footprint.

1332

01:08:49,692--> 01:08:52,428

If so, what kind of response?

1333

01:08:52,452--> 01:08:55,428

-Yeah, yeah. I think...

This is really lame.

1334

01:08:55,452--> 01:08:56,708

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I haven't personally,

1335

01:08:56,732--> 01:08:59,948

but my main publisher has.

1336

01:09:02,000--> 01:09:03,000

-Okay.

1337

01:09:03,000--> 01:09:06,428

-No, I haven't. I mean, I've
come across other campaigns

1338

01:09:06,452--> 01:09:09,228

which have been
seeking to do similar things

1339

01:09:09,252--> 01:09:13,548

and raise those issues with...

1340

01:09:13,572--> 01:09:18,000

with my publishers
but no, not really,

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1341

01:09:18,000--> 01:09:19,388

I must confess.

1342

01:09:19,412--> 01:09:21,708

So there's always
more to do, isn't there?

1343

01:09:21,732--> 01:09:22,828

-There's always more to do.

1344

01:09:22,852--> 01:09:23,868

(laughs)

1345

01:09:23,892--> 01:09:25,208

-But yeah, now I'm aware of it,

1346

01:09:25,232--> 01:09:29,000

I will seek to engage
with that, yeah.

1347

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01:09:29,000--> 01:09:30,548

-Yeah. Great. Great.

1348

01:09:30,572--> 01:09:34,148

Okay, next question...

1349

01:09:35,000--> 01:09:38,308

-Perhaps writers have a
role in getting these issues

1350

01:09:38,332--> 01:09:41,000

to be more honestly approached.

1351

01:09:41,000--> 01:09:43,828

When refugees came from
East Africa and from Vietnam,

1352

01:09:43,852--> 01:09:46,000

there was no problem
accommodating them.

1353

01:09:46,000--> 01:09:48,148

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Like with climate change,

1354

01:09:48,172--> 01:09:49,788

it's the political context

1355

01:09:49,812--> 01:09:52,468

which seems to

obstruct sensible action.

1356

01:09:54,700--> 01:09:56,868

This is just a comment

really rather than a question.

1357

01:09:56,892--> 01:09:59,268

Thank you for this

excellent intermittent--

1358

01:09:59,292--> 01:10:00,948

Sorry, it's a

technology-- Session.

1359

01:10:00,972--> 01:10:03,388

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It's given me some very interesting ideas for a novel.

1360

01:10:03,412--> 01:10:04,976

(laughs)

1361

01:10:05,000--> 01:10:06,000

-Excellent.

1362

01:10:06,000--> 01:10:07,000

-That's good to know.

1363

01:10:07,012--> 01:10:09,388

-Yeah, I mean, just, just...

1364

01:10:09,412--> 01:10:11,268

I suppose to comment on that one,

1365

01:10:11,292--> 01:10:13,748

one interesting thing about this Tarddle/ Source,

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1366

01:10:13,772--> 01:10:16,428

this film that I made last year

1367

01:10:16,452--> 01:10:20,388

which involved... sort of succeeds
from Sarn Helen in a certain way,

1368

01:10:20,412--> 01:10:23,828

and a bit involved
travelling up the river Wye

1369

01:10:23,852--> 01:10:25,948

and recording conversations

1370

01:10:25,972--> 01:10:27,868

with scores and scores
and people on the way up,

1371

01:10:27,892--> 01:10:30,988

and then turning that into a
sort of audio collage sort of thing,

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1372

01:10:31,012--> 01:10:32,068

I suppose you might say,

1373

01:10:32,092--> 01:10:33,868

but one thing that I

was really struck by

1374

01:10:33,892--> 01:10:37,028

was that, you know, you

don't meet any villains.

1375

01:10:38,332--> 01:10:39,668

You meet people who are...

1376

01:10:39,692--> 01:10:43,988

by and large, I mean by and large

without any exceptions I can think of,

1377

01:10:44,012--> 01:10:45,972

people who do try to do

their best within a system

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1378

01:10:45,996--> 01:10:50,028

which isn't working properly and
isn't benefiting anybody, actually.

1379

01:10:50,052--> 01:10:51,588

Not really.

1380

01:10:51,612--> 01:10:55,000

Well it might be benefiting a very small
number of people but essentially it's not.

1381

01:10:55,000--> 01:10:56,000

-Yeah.

1382

01:10:56,000--> 01:10:57,588

-Yeah.

1383

01:10:57,612--> 01:11:02,308

Yeah, I think I've got a t-shirt that says,
'Capitalism. How's that going for you?'

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1384

01:11:02,332--> 01:11:04,000

(laughter)

1385

01:11:04,000--> 01:11:06,668

You know, because

it's not, just like you say,

1386

01:11:06,692--> 01:11:08,588

we tried it and it didn't work.

1387

01:11:08,612--> 01:11:10,000

So let's do something else.

1388

01:11:10,000--> 01:11:11,000

-Yeah.

1389

01:11:11,024--> 01:11:12,468

Just going back to that film,

1390

01:11:12,492--> 01:11:14,148

the River Wye film,

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1391

01:11:14,172--> 01:11:16,428

where is that going

to be available to see?

1392

01:11:16,452--> 01:11:18,452

-Well, it's been in art centres.

1393

01:11:18,476--> 01:11:20,476

So it's in Wyeside in

Builth Wells at the moment.

1394

01:11:21,000--> 01:11:23,188

-Okay, so it's going to come

around to film societies.

1395

01:11:23,212--> 01:11:25,748

-We'll be on in Newport at

some point before too long.

1396

01:11:25,772--> 01:11:29,000

It will be online at some

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point, but it hasn't got there.

1397

01:11:29,000--> 01:11:31,128

Yeah, I need to be a bit

more proactive about that.

1398

01:11:31,152--> 01:11:32,152

-Okay.

1399

01:11:32,176--> 01:11:34,108

-It was on in Hay Castle

initially, so it was...

1400

01:11:34,132--> 01:11:36,271

as an installation in Hay

Castle in Hay-on-Wye.

1401

01:11:36,295--> 01:11:38,948

-Is it coming west, Tom?

1402

01:11:38,972--> 01:11:40,000

Is it coming my way?

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1403

01:11:40,000--> 01:11:43,748

I did contact MOMA in

Machynlleth the other day,

1404

01:11:43,772--> 01:11:47,000

but I haven't heard back from

them yet, but I hope so. Yeah.

1405

01:11:47,000--> 01:11:50,068

-Oh, that'd be great.

That'd be great.

1406

01:11:51,000--> 01:11:52,268

-Okay, thank you. Right...

1407

01:11:52,292--> 01:11:56,068

'Interesting discussion so far.

1408

01:11:56,092--> 01:11:57,628

Thank you and enjoyed the readings.

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1409

01:11:57,652--> 01:11:59,148

I belong to a
collective of writers

1410

01:11:59,172--> 01:12:01,428

engaged with writing

1411

01:12:01,452--> 01:12:03,028

Thrutopia.

1412

01:12:03,052--> 01:12:05,908

That's T-H-R-U-Topia.

1413

01:12:05,932--> 01:12:08,708

Fictional narratives
which show realistically

1414

01:12:08,732--> 01:12:12,068

how we get from here to
a more sustainable future.

1415

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01:12:12,092--> 01:12:15,388

Do you think about writing--'

1416

01:12:15,412--> 01:12:16,548

Sorry.

1417

01:12:16,572--> 01:12:20,668

'Do you think about writing alternative
futures to the one we appear to--.'

1418

01:12:20,692--> 01:12:23,348

Sorry, can't read.

1419

01:12:23,372--> 01:12:26,068

'Do you think about
writing alternative futures

1420

01:12:26,092--> 01:12:27,828

to the one we appear
to be headed towards?'

1421

01:12:30,132--> 01:12:31,700

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-Yeah, I think it can be...

-Absolutely.

1422

01:12:31,724--> 01:12:33,000

Go on, Tom. You go. You go.

1423

01:12:33,000--> 01:12:35,148

-No, really, it can be,

yeah, really, really valuable.

1424

01:12:35,172--> 01:12:37,868

Kim Stanley Robinson's book...

1425

01:12:37,892--> 01:12:39,000

What's that called again?

1426

01:12:39,000--> 01:12:42,452

Somebody can remind me on the chat

instantly. The name's gone out of my head.

1427

01:12:42,452--> 01:12:44,388

I mean, I'm not

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sure that I thought--

1428

01:12:44,412--> 01:12:45,708

It's very successful as a novel,

1429

01:12:45,732--> 01:12:48,708

but I do think that

it does chart a...

1430

01:12:50,732--> 01:12:53,000

I thought someone

was going to tell me.

1431

01:12:53,000--> 01:12:56,868

I think it does,

1432

01:12:56,892--> 01:12:59,428

over about a thousand

pages or something like that,

1433

01:12:59,452--> 01:13:03,348

it does give a sort of pathway,

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1434

01:13:03,372--> 01:13:07,000

a sense of how we

might get to a better place.

1435

01:13:07,000--> 01:13:09,268

But I think that can

be incredibly valuable.

1436

01:13:09,292--> 01:13:12,000

I'll put it on the chat when

I remember what it's, um...

1437

01:13:12,000--> 01:13:13,000

What it's called.

1438

01:13:13,000--> 01:13:14,000

-Thank you. Thank you.

1439

01:13:14,000--> 01:13:16,308

-One of the people

I worked with,

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1440

01:13:16,332--> 01:13:17,708

and this is a long time ago,

1441

01:13:17,732--> 01:13:20,468

I did this book about

climate change in 2009.

1442

01:13:20,492--> 01:13:23,388

I worked with a

wonderful climate scientist

1443

01:13:23,412--> 01:13:26,948

called Mark Maslin from UCL,

1444

01:13:26,972--> 01:13:28,988

and he is the person

who kept me sane

1445

01:13:29,012--> 01:13:31,668

when I was writing that

book and doing the research,

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1446

01:13:31,692--> 01:13:33,788

and going out and
crying in the garden

1447

01:13:33,812--> 01:13:35,588

because it was all so
depressing and awful,

1448

01:13:35,612--> 01:13:39,348

because he said what
we need to imagine

1449

01:13:39,372--> 01:13:42,000

is what we want it to be like.

1450

01:13:42,000--> 01:13:43,548

We need to--

1451

01:13:43,572--> 01:13:46,368

And that comes back to what we
were saying earlier about storytelling.

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1452

01:13:46,392--> 01:13:49,348

You know, those are also stories that we need to tell.

1453

01:13:49,372--> 01:13:52,000

So...

1454

01:13:52,000--> 01:13:55,148

Imagining the positive side

1455

01:13:55,172--> 01:14:00,000

of all the changes that we need to make

1456

01:14:00,000--> 01:14:02,708

in every level of everything that we do.

1457

01:14:02,732--> 01:14:04,708

Actually the result of all that

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1458

01:14:04,732--> 01:14:07,628

isn't going to be a whole
load of ghastly misery.

1459

01:14:07,652--> 01:14:10,476

It's going to be nice.

1460

01:14:10,500--> 01:14:12,072

And it's important
to talk about that.

1461

01:14:12,096--> 01:14:15,668

-The Ministry for the
Future is what it's called.

1462

01:14:15,692--> 01:14:17,052

-Yeah, The Ministry
for the Future.

1463

01:14:17,076--> 01:14:20,388

-But actually, I'm writing a
novel again at the moment

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1464

01:14:20,412--> 01:14:22,468

and I'm not exactly

sure what it is,

1465

01:14:22,492--> 01:14:23,748

but one of the things that...

1466

01:14:23,772--> 01:14:26,708

It is set in...

1467

01:14:26,732--> 01:14:29,000

under kind of extreme

1468

01:14:29,000--> 01:14:30,188

climate change.

1469

01:14:30,212--> 01:14:34,428

But one of the things

that I love about writing is...

1470

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01:14:34,452--> 01:14:39,000

as a form of thought,

I really trust it.

1471

01:14:39,000--> 01:14:40,000

It... it has some...

1472

01:14:42,292--> 01:14:44,828

the connections that

arose in Sarn Helen for me

1473

01:14:44,852--> 01:14:49,428

between the age of saints

and the climate crisis,

1474

01:14:49,452--> 01:14:52,748

the age of saints being the sort of

fifth and sixth century as the earliest,

1475

01:14:52,772--> 01:14:57,000

you know, days of

Wales, as you might say.

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1476

01:14:57,000--> 01:14:58,468

I had no idea what those were

1477

01:14:58,492--> 01:15:00,388

at the beginning of the book

1478

01:15:00,412--> 01:15:03,108

and I don't have time

to develop them now,

1479

01:15:03,132--> 01:15:04,132

but it's...

1480

01:15:04,156--> 01:15:07,228

But it was a really

good representation

1481

01:15:07,252--> 01:15:09,868

of how going into a

book without an agenda,

1482

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01:15:09,892--> 01:15:11,988

just exploring particular areas

1483

01:15:12,012--> 01:15:14,000

and seeing what comes out of it,

1484

01:15:14,000--> 01:15:15,828

it can be...

1485

01:15:15,852--> 01:15:19,000

it can be revelatory, I think.

1486

01:15:19,000--> 01:15:21,000

-Yeah. Yeah.

1487

01:15:21,000--> 01:15:22,000

-Yeah.

1488

01:15:22,024--> 01:15:23,608

We'll come back

to the questions.

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1489

01:15:23,632--> 01:15:25,508

I don't want to stop them,

1490

01:15:25,532--> 01:15:27,268

but I just want to

come back to this issue.

1491

01:15:27,292--> 01:15:28,428

Nicola, you're very positive

1492

01:15:28,452--> 01:15:31,000

and so, you know, we

must look for the positives.

1493

01:15:31,000--> 01:15:33,748

How do you engage with people

who find all this very frightening?

1494

01:15:33,772--> 01:15:34,772

How do you deal with...

1495

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01:15:35,359--> 01:15:39,968

They are very frightening.

They are very frightening issues.

1496

01:15:39,992--> 01:15:42,268

-Well, it's not that I didn't...

I do find it frightening.

1497

01:15:42,292--> 01:15:43,648

I find it absolutely terrifying.

1498

01:15:43,672--> 01:15:46,912

I wake up, the same as everybody else,
in the middle of the night in a cold sweat.

1499

01:15:47,000--> 01:15:48,708

But that doesn't
get you anywhere.

1500

01:15:48,732--> 01:15:50,548

Salena Godden said
a wonderful thing,

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1501

01:15:50,572--> 01:15:54,000

it was just 'despair is for sissies.

1502

01:15:54,000--> 01:15:56,000

-Okay.

1503

01:15:56,000--> 01:15:57,988

-And I really believe

that. I think hand wringing,

1504

01:15:58,012--> 01:16:00,388

gets you... I mean, okay, yes,

1505

01:16:00,412--> 01:16:01,988

it's awful, it's ghastly,

1506

01:16:02,012--> 01:16:03,368

but where's that

going to get you?

1507

01:16:03,392--> 01:16:05,588

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It's not practical.

It's not pragmatic.

1508

01:16:05,612--> 01:16:07,628

So I am... a pragmatist

1509

01:16:07,652--> 01:16:11,000

and, actually, in

the current situation

1510

01:16:11,000--> 01:16:15,268

optimism and

positivity are pragmatic.

1511

01:16:16,000--> 01:16:17,000

-Okay.

1512

01:16:17,000--> 01:16:18,728

-They're the most useful things, because...

1513

01:16:18,752--> 01:16:22,348

because, actually, for the

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business as usual people,

1514

01:16:22,372--> 01:16:26,788

all of us going, oh, well,

it's all flipping hopeless,

1515

01:16:26,812--> 01:16:29,428

I'm just going to drink champagne

and stick my head in a gas oven,

1516

01:16:29,452--> 01:16:32,000

that is very

convenient for them.

1517

01:16:32,000--> 01:16:33,668

That's exactly what they want

1518

01:16:33,692--> 01:16:35,268

because you're not

going to oppose them.

1519

01:16:35,292--> 01:16:39,000

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So...

1520

01:16:39,000--> 01:16:40,000

-So for writers--

1521

01:16:40,000--> 01:16:44,508

-So... positivity and positive thinking
is an act of resistance, actually.

1522

01:16:44,532--> 01:16:48,000

-So we all, as writers, have to
take that as our starting point.

1523

01:16:48,000--> 01:16:49,428

-Yeah, yeah.

1524

01:16:49,452--> 01:16:52,000

Don't let the buggers
grind you down.

1525

01:16:52,000--> 01:16:53,000

-Absolutely.

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1526

01:16:53,024--> 01:16:56,308

-I think that fear is quite
a positive emotion, really.

1527

01:16:56,332--> 01:17:00,148

I would... I would
sort of distinguish it

1528

01:17:00,172--> 01:17:02,748

from anxiety.

1529

01:17:02,772--> 01:17:05,268

For example, people talk
a lot about climate anxiety.

1530

01:17:05,292--> 01:17:07,468

I think that that's often
to do with not knowing

1531

01:17:07,492--> 01:17:10,000

exactly what it is that

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1532

01:17:10,000--> 01:17:11,188

you are scared of.

1533

01:17:11,212--> 01:17:12,668

It's diffused in a certain way.

1534

01:17:12,692--> 01:17:16,948

Fear is directed at
something particular.

1535

01:17:16,972--> 01:17:18,828

And if it's directed at
something particular,

1536

01:17:18,852--> 01:17:21,668

then you can
respond to that fear.

1537

01:17:21,692--> 01:17:24,708

You know, if you... I
suppose you could say,

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1538

01:17:24,732--> 01:17:26,000

you know, (inaudible) you feel

1539

01:17:26,000--> 01:17:28,488

anxiety, but you don't know

what you're feeling anxiety about.

1540

01:17:28,512--> 01:17:31,588

That's just the way that I

think of it and I understand it.

1541

01:17:31,612--> 01:17:33,668

And I think that

we should be fearful

1542

01:17:33,692--> 01:17:36,628

because not to

be fearful is insane

1543

01:17:36,652--> 01:17:38,308

given the current situation,

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1544

01:17:38,332--> 01:17:41,028

but that doesn't mean

that it need be paralysing,

1545

01:17:41,052--> 01:17:42,052

not at all.

1546

01:17:42,076--> 01:17:43,748

-No, that's a useful distinction.

1547

01:17:43,772--> 01:17:45,272

It's like somebody's saying to me...

1548

01:17:45,296--> 01:17:46,438

-Quite the reverse in fact.

1549

01:17:46,462--> 01:17:48,446

It's like somebody's

saying to me, use our anger.

1550

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01:17:48,470--> 01:17:50,000

Use our fear and use our anger.

1551

01:17:50,024--> 01:17:51,468

-Yeah. yeah, and the most...

1552

01:17:51,492--> 01:17:54,388

You know, the
most traumatic thing

1553

01:17:54,412--> 01:17:58,148

that a psychiatrist
will tell you

1554

01:17:58,172--> 01:18:00,668

is being powerless,

1555

01:18:00,692--> 01:18:04,668

is being in a situation where you
experience something traumatic

1556

01:18:04,692--> 01:18:06,428

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but you are without power.

1557

01:18:06,452--> 01:18:11,588

And I think if you can translate

1558

01:18:11,612--> 01:18:16,268

fear into directed

action of some sort,

1559

01:18:16,292--> 01:18:20,000

then actually it becomes

easier to live with it.

1560

01:18:20,000--> 01:18:21,000

-Yeah, definitely.

1561

01:18:21,000--> 01:18:22,520

-I think you're absolutely right, Tom.

1562

01:18:22,544--> 01:18:24,308

-Yeah, good point.

Good point. Good point.

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1563

01:18:24,332--> 01:18:29,228

Okay, we've got a couple more
questions that we've got time for.

1564

01:18:30,000--> 01:18:31,988

Statement.

1565

01:18:32,012--> 01:18:34,948

'I'm a philosopher',
person here.

1566

01:18:34,972--> 01:18:36,508

'I'm a philosopher and a vet,

1567

01:18:36,532--> 01:18:40,348

and one of my friends
is a political scientist.'

1568

01:18:40,372--> 01:18:44,000

So this is a serious question.

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1569

01:18:44,000--> 01:18:47,268

'Should animals have a vote
in a truly democratic society?'

1570

01:18:51,000--> 01:18:53,000

-It's a really, really
good question.

1571

01:18:53,000--> 01:18:54,948

-It's an interesting
question, isn't it?

1572

01:18:54,972--> 01:18:58,000

Do you want to take that on?

1573

01:18:58,000--> 01:18:59,988

-I'm not sure--

1574

01:19:00,012--> 01:19:05,000

...but they should
certainly have rights.

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1575

01:19:05,000--> 01:19:07,468

There has been quite--

1576

01:19:07,492--> 01:19:09,908

There were quite a few
famous cases in America,

1577

01:19:09,932--> 01:19:15,308

which I'm sure the questioner
knows about a few years ago--

1578

01:19:16,000--> 01:19:21,508

...higher primates, chimps,
bonobos and orangutans

1579

01:19:21,532--> 01:19:25,108

who had been used
in language research

1580

01:19:25,132--> 01:19:27,388

and had been
taught sign language.

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1581

01:19:27,412--> 01:19:31,000

Somebody wrote an absolutely
wonderful novel about it, actually,

1582

01:19:31,000--> 01:19:32,948

called We Are All

Completely Beside Ourselves.

1583

01:19:32,972--> 01:19:35,000

-Isn't it?

-It's terrific. I totally recommend it.

1584

01:19:35,000--> 01:19:36,548

Yeah, it's great.

1585

01:19:36,572--> 01:19:38,228

And...

1586

01:19:38,252--> 01:19:44,000

There were court cases
that gave personhood

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1587

01:19:44,000--> 01:19:45,048

to these animals,

1588

01:19:45,072--> 01:19:46,628

which was absolutely...

1589

01:19:46,652--> 01:19:47,708

Absolutely right.

1590

01:19:47,732--> 01:19:49,988

And of course, famous

legislation in Ecuador,

1591

01:19:50,012--> 01:19:52,188

which...

1592

01:19:52,212--> 01:19:54,708

Rob talks about in

his New River book,

1593

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01:19:54,732--> 01:19:56,688

Rob Macfarlane talks

about in his new river book,

1594

01:19:56,712--> 01:19:58,708

which gave ecosystems

1595

01:19:58,732--> 01:20:02,000

personhood and and rights.

1596

01:20:02,000--> 01:20:05,788

And of course, that

stuff is completely

1597

01:20:05,812--> 01:20:08,868

embedded in indigenous...

1598

01:20:08,892--> 01:20:11,348

indigenous societies.

1599

01:20:11,372--> 01:20:18,000

So absolutely, it's

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something we need to recover

1600

01:20:18,000--> 01:20:23,000

and pay attention to and
enshrine anew in our culture.

1601

01:20:23,000--> 01:20:25,108

-Yeah, and just to
bring it back to stories,

1602

01:20:25,132--> 01:20:27,828

which I mean, you're
effectively doing already,

1603

01:20:27,852--> 01:20:32,000

but almost to just sort
of just finish that off...

1604

01:20:32,000--> 01:20:36,468

I mean, I referred before
about to how human centric

1605

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01:20:36,492--> 01:20:38,188

storytelling has become.

1606

01:20:38,212--> 01:20:40,628

I would really recommend
that people read

1607

01:20:40,652--> 01:20:43,268

The Great Derangement
by Amitav Ghosh

1608

01:20:43,292--> 01:20:46,068

which sort of explores
that pretty well.

1609

01:20:46,092--> 01:20:49,476

I mean, that's probably 14
years old now, but it's still...

1610

01:20:49,500--> 01:20:50,748

Still applies.

1611

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01:20:50,772--> 01:20:52,268

And just...

1612

01:20:52,292--> 01:20:57,028

You know, reflect
on storytelling

1613

01:20:57,052--> 01:20:59,908

from before the
industrial period

1614

01:20:59,932--> 01:21:02,748

and the role that
other species played

1615

01:21:02,772--> 01:21:04,308

within stories.

1616

01:21:04,332--> 01:21:07,000

The autonomy, the
respect very often

1617

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01:21:07,000--> 01:21:08,628

that was accorded to them.

1618

01:21:08,652--> 01:21:11,988

So I'm not in a position to
comment, really, on politics.

1619

01:21:12,012--> 01:21:14,628

But, in terms of storytelling,

1620

01:21:14,652--> 01:21:18,908

I feel emphatically that other
species should be represented

1621

01:21:18,932--> 01:21:22,788

and accorded effectively
the same rights as... as...

1622

01:21:22,812--> 01:21:25,000

as humans do.

1623

01:21:25,000--> 01:21:27,548

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-Please just repeat the name of that book, Tom?

1624

01:21:27,572--> 01:21:31,000

-Yep. The Great

Derangement by Amitav Ghosh.

1625

01:21:31,000--> 01:21:33,728

I don't know whether I can just grab a copy, there may be one around.

1626

01:21:33,752--> 01:21:36,428

Emma will find it for and put it in the chat for us.

1627

01:21:36,452--> 01:21:38,388

We're running out of time, but...

1628

01:21:38,412--> 01:21:40,508

A quick one.

1629

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01:21:40,532--> 01:21:43,628

'Living on the fringe
of the eastern valleys,

1630

01:21:43,652--> 01:21:46,948

I meet a lot of people who are
struggling with economic survival.

1631

01:21:46,972--> 01:21:51,000

The climate emergency is sometimes
seen as a middle class concern.

1632

01:21:51,000--> 01:21:54,228

Can you think of ways to reach
these people with the urgency

1633

01:21:54,252--> 01:21:57,748

and with the intertwined
nature of the problems?'

1634

01:22:00,000--> 01:22:03,668

-I think to talk about it in terms
of their own economic problems.

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1635

01:22:03,692--> 01:22:06,068

You know, that the... the...

1636

01:22:06,092--> 01:22:10,976

the unfair

distribution of wealth

1637

01:22:11,000--> 01:22:14,108

is all part of the same...

1638

01:22:14,132--> 01:22:18,000

is all part of the same story.

1639

01:22:18,000--> 01:22:19,268

So their situation

1640

01:22:19,292--> 01:22:20,988

is directly connected

1641

01:22:21,012--> 01:22:25,108

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to the industrial extractive
history of the South Wales valleys.

1642

01:22:25,132--> 01:22:27,748

And that is part--

I mean, you know,

1643

01:22:27,772--> 01:22:31,428

as your your

book tells the story,

1644

01:22:31,452--> 01:22:32,908

Sarn Helen tells the story

1645

01:22:32,932--> 01:22:35,308

of how all the history of Wales

1646

01:22:35,332--> 01:22:38,000

is connected with its current

1647

01:22:38,000--> 01:22:41,548

economic and climate situation.

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1648

01:22:43,000--> 01:22:47,108

-Okay, I know I'm dodging about,

1649

01:22:47,132--> 01:22:52,000

but I think we're going
to take one last question.

1650

01:22:52,000--> 01:22:54,028

How often have you been
tempted to self-publish,

1651

01:22:54,052--> 01:22:56,588

rather than use
commercial publishers

1652

01:22:56,612--> 01:22:58,228

in order to get a message out

1653

01:22:58,252--> 01:23:00,468

as a result of marketing
teams not being sold

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1654

01:23:00,492--> 01:23:03,000

on more gritty

narratives, for example?

1655

01:23:03,000--> 01:23:04,668

Or for other reasons

around the fear

1656

01:23:04,692--> 01:23:08,868

that reality is not popular

enough as a pitch to the bosses.

1657

01:23:10,000--> 01:23:11,868

Have you been tempted to self-publish?

1658

01:23:14,612--> 01:23:16,148

-I haven't found myself..

1659

01:23:16,172--> 01:23:18,748

Not... Not in terms of books,

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1660

01:23:18,772--> 01:23:21,028

because books take me
years and years and years,

1661

01:23:21,052--> 01:23:25,068

and I also do feel that

1662

01:23:25,092--> 01:23:28,508

regardless of what
subject you're writing about,

1663

01:23:28,532--> 01:23:30,388

there are ways to
make that compelling

1664

01:23:30,412--> 01:23:33,000

and that there are ways

1665

01:23:33,000--> 01:23:36,588

the publishers can
be, will be engaged.

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1666

01:23:36,612--> 01:23:41,988

Maybe I have a... had a positive experience with publishers in recent years,

1667

01:23:42,012--> 01:23:44,228

I think that essentially most publishers are people

1668

01:23:44,252--> 01:23:47,348

who just want to be passionate about the books that they're publishing

1669

01:23:47,372--> 01:23:49,428

and if, you know, if your...

1670

01:23:49,452--> 01:23:51,348

if your book is sufficiently passionate

1671

01:23:51,372--> 01:23:54,476

then that can be infectious and that's always my hope.

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1672

01:23:54,500--> 01:23:56,068

But I mean, you
know, having said that,

1673

01:23:56,092--> 01:23:57,588

there are plenty of things.

1674

01:23:57,612--> 01:24:01,948

Like, for example,
my defence statement

1675

01:24:01,972--> 01:24:06,268

that I wrote for
a trial court case

1676

01:24:06,292--> 01:24:09,988

with Extinction Rebellion,
I mean, you know,

1677

01:24:10,012--> 01:24:11,548

that was... that's on...

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1678

01:24:11,572--> 01:24:13,508

that's on blogs and
things in the first place,

1679

01:24:13,532--> 01:24:17,148

and I will publish that kind
of thing online for sure, yeah.

1680

01:24:17,172--> 01:24:19,068

And also there's an
immediacy about it.

1681

01:24:19,092--> 01:24:22,000

Sometimes the time lag

1682

01:24:22,024--> 01:24:23,388

is just too much,
but for a book,

1683

01:24:23,412--> 01:24:25,748

I couldn't imagine it, really.

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1684

01:24:25,772--> 01:24:29,108

It's too much time,
too much work.

1685

01:24:29,132--> 01:24:30,508

There's always a
massive time lag

1686

01:24:30,532--> 01:24:32,000

because they take me so long.

1687

01:24:32,000--> 01:24:35,348

-Yeah. And I have...

1688

01:24:35,372--> 01:24:37,000

I have thought about it,

1689

01:24:37,000--> 01:24:38,708

but I've always been fortunate

1690

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01:24:38,732--> 01:24:41,748

to eventually find somebody

1691

01:24:41,772--> 01:24:45,000

who will publish something that
all the big boys turned down.

1692

01:24:45,000--> 01:24:46,000

-Publish what you want.

1693

01:24:46,024--> 01:24:47,124

Yeah, yeah. Look, we are--

1694

01:24:47,148--> 01:24:49,988

-But there is a huge area

1695

01:24:50,012--> 01:24:53,508

and I mean, great potential
for self-publishing as well.

1696

01:24:53,532--> 01:24:56,988

But my ignorance is by no means

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to suggest you shouldn't do it.

1697

01:24:57,012--> 01:25:01,428

-Absolutely. Especially if
you're really good at social media,

1698

01:25:01,452--> 01:25:02,452

which I'm not.

1699

01:25:02,476--> 01:25:03,476

-Yeah, exactly.

1700

01:25:03,500--> 01:25:04,908

-Then you're...

1701

01:25:04,932--> 01:25:09,668

...to find an audience
for yourself is enormous.

1702

01:25:12,000--> 01:25:14,908

-Yeah. Right. We're going
to have to draw to a close.

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1703

01:25:14,932--> 01:25:16,228

It's been absolutely wonderful

1704

01:25:16,252--> 01:25:18,228

and thank you both.

1705

01:25:18,252--> 01:25:22,548

And I'm sorry to anybody whose
question we have not been able to cover.

1706

01:25:22,572--> 01:25:26,000

And I hope we'll be able
to do something again

1707

01:25:26,000--> 01:25:28,268

because it's such a big issue

1708

01:25:28,292--> 01:25:30,068

and it's really good
that we've had...

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1709

01:25:30,092--> 01:25:32,708

I hope a lot of people listening

1710

01:25:32,732--> 01:25:34,988

and I have learnt a lot and

I hope everybody else has.

1711

01:25:35,012--> 01:25:38,000

And thank you,

Nicola. Thank you, Tom.

1712

01:25:38,000--> 01:25:40,000

-You're so welcome.

Thank you for having us.

1713

01:25:40,000--> 01:25:41,908

-Thanks for that.

1714

01:25:41,932--> 01:25:43,300

Okay. Emma will wind up, I think.

1715

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01:25:43,324--> 01:25:45,068

-Yes, I'd like to say

thank you to Cath

1716

01:25:45,092--> 01:25:48,948

who's the vice chair of

our SoA Cymru Group,

1717

01:25:48,972--> 01:25:51,308

to Nicola and to

Tom for today's event,

1718

01:25:51,332--> 01:25:53,388

and thanks to you

for joining us today

1719

01:25:53,412--> 01:25:55,508

with some amazing,

thoughtful questions.

1720

01:25:55,532--> 01:26:00,268

I'm going to let you know

about an SoA at Home event

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1721

01:26:00,292--> 01:26:03,000

that takes place tomorrow
morning from 11 a.m.

1722

01:26:03,000--> 01:26:06,548

with our Feel Good Friday
workshop on story-coaching.

1723

01:26:06,572--> 01:26:09,748

And you can find
information about that...

1724

01:26:09,772--> 01:26:13,000

I'm going to paste
some links in to the chat.

1725

01:26:13,000--> 01:26:15,748

Also, if you're
not a member yet,

1726

01:26:15,772--> 01:26:17,228

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please consider joining

1727

01:26:17,252--> 01:26:18,988

and you can find
out more about it

1728

01:26:19,012--> 01:26:22,000

at the 'Join' link
that's in the chat.

1729

01:26:22,000--> 01:26:25,628

And if you are a member but
haven't completed our questionnaire,

1730

01:26:25,652--> 01:26:28,000

this is for SoA Cymru members,

1731

01:26:28,000--> 01:26:31,308

there's a link in the
chat to direct you to that.

1732

01:26:31,332--> 01:26:34,000

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We'd really appreciate
your responses.

1733

01:26:34,000--> 01:26:37,948

And the SoA at Home
events are free for all,

1734

01:26:37,972--> 01:26:43,000

but if you can afford to please consider
donating to the SoA Access Fund.

1735

01:26:43,000--> 01:26:44,108

And the link's in the chat.

1736

01:26:44,132--> 01:26:47,628

And also money for this goes--

1737

01:26:47,652--> 01:26:50,028

from this goes into
the Access Fund,

1738

01:26:50,052--> 01:26:53,348

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there's a virtual bookstore
on bookshop.org,

1739

01:26:53,372--> 01:26:55,000

which is also in the chat.

1740

01:26:55,000--> 01:26:57,748

And another big
thank you from me

1741

01:26:57,772--> 01:26:59,188

to Cath, Nicola and Tom,

1742

01:26:59,212--> 01:27:02,708

and to all of you that have
joined us today for the event.

1743

01:27:02,732--> 01:27:06,348

And let's continue this
conversation on social media

1744

01:27:06,372--> 01:27:09,000

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with the #SoAatHome hashtag.

1745

01:27:09,000--> 01:27:10,348

And thank you very much.

1746

01:27:10,372--> 01:27:12,588

And we'll see

you all again soon.

1747

01:27:12,612--> 01:27:16,960

Thank you.