

Editorial

Humanities for the Environment 2018 Report—Ways to Here, Ways Forward

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Abstract: We introduce the *Humanities for the Environment (HfE) 2018 Report*. The *HfE 2018 Report* consists of two publications; of which this Special Issue is one. The other is a special section of the journal *Global and Planetary Change* 156 (2017); 112–175. While the *Humanities* special issue may primarily reach our colleagues in the humanities disciplines; the *Global and Planetary Change* section reaches out to that journal's primary readership of earth scientists. The *HfE 2018 Report* provides examples of how humanities research reveals and influences human capacity to perceive and cope with environmental change. We hope that the *HfE 2018 Report* will help change perceptions of what it is we do as humanities scholars.

Keywords: environmental action; perceptions of change; humanities evidence base; integrative platforms

Human preferences, practices and actions are the main drivers of planetary change in the 21st century. The academic disciplines of the humanities are largely concerned with how humans perceive, articulate and behave as a species. Therefore, the Humanities for the Environment is a global initiative of eight regional Observatories that aim to bring out how the humanities may contribute to pro-environmental behaviour. This Special Issue reviews ways in which the humanistic disciplines may help us understand and engage with global environmental problems.

The “for” is a carefully chosen word. It originated at talks between founders of the HfE initiative in 2009 (primarily Sally Kitch, Sarah Buie, and Poul Holm). We were united in a concern that the humanities were not playing what we thought could be a vital part in global change scholarship and indeed politics. We believed that there was a need to bring out the best of humanities to identify tools and insights that might contribute to the greater good. We wanted to look not just to self-identified environmental humanists, but to the full range of humanities disciplines to find helpful ways forward.

1. A Case for the Humanities in Global Environmental Change

Global environmental change is a fact of life. In the last half-century or so a massive acceleration of human technologies has taken place. Humanity now has the power to both create and destroy the foundations of its own existence. Demographic growth, settlement pressures (especially in areas that are prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes and flooding), epidemic diseases, nuclear threats—the list goes on—are all depressing facts of the modern world. This is the New Human Condition, the condition in which humankind is the major driver of planetary change and where its powers of creation may lead to the destruction of life. The term ‘the human condition’ was initially coined by the political philosopher Hannah Arendt in a book published in 1958, which was deeply influenced by her experience of the Second World War and the Nuclear Age. Her concern was mainly with how humans deal with imminent danger. In the age of the Anthropocene the problems are very much of long-term degradation which raises new challenges to human awareness of and responsibility for the vulnerable earth—a ‘new human condition’ (Holm and Travis 2017).

As the human species is getting ever more technologically powerful one may wonder if the human species is fit to govern the civilization that we have created. Yet we do not think the question should be if, but when, and how, we may successfully respond to such global challenges, and indeed if we may learn from past challenges of resource scarcity and long-term degradation. All is not lost. In many global change issues, e.g., poverty, food, and health, there have been positive improvements as a result of top-down factors, such as better policies, and bottom-up factors, such as consumer preference for sustainably sourced food. Global change is at heart about human perception and agency. It seems therefore fruitful to ask if we can substantiate hope for the future with the positive aspects of the human experience.

Science measures and informs us of the scale of environmental change. Science will not, however, make us change direction. The global challenges of the 21st century are about human behaviours, preferences and motivations, individual and collective. Choice is hardly ever fully conscious, as we often tread well-known paths rather than explore new possibilities, and institutional parameters may prevent us from taking a preferred option. We choose actions, pathways and strategies based on more or less informed knowledge, and we may not even be cognitively prepared to identify optimal solutions to a challenge. Indeed, the heterogeneous nature of the challenges confronting us generates a multitude of 'wicked problems', i.e., problems that arise when solutions are implemented in haste, causing unforeseen consequences and creating further dilemmas to be resolved. Scientists have discovered to their despair that providing information about a problem may have no impact and that laying out a set of rational choices does not necessarily lead to action. Indeed, the scientific understanding of the physical world may not be of much use in understanding human values and motivations. While the sciences may observe and analyse change they are ill-equipped to motivate humans to change direction.

We make decisions all the time and by making decisions, we shape the world. No other more important decision is really made by us than what we choose to consume, be it in terms of housing, transportation, clothing, or food. The consequences of such choices may be dramatic and yet hidden to our immediate perception. The clothing industry has enabled us to wear polymer with ease and comfort—and at the same time unleash a massive pollution problem in the oceans as microplastics are released through our washing machines. Food choices have changed and with more obvious consequences. Thirty years ago, it would have been inconceivable to any ordinary Western person to eat raw fish. Now, of course, we happily engage in a Japanese food culture, which has changed our tastes also by becoming an indicator of social status (see [Probyn 2016](#)). We may know that eating tuna and other fish from the top of the ocean ecosystem is unsustainable but taste and fashion still outweigh environmental concerns. World consumption of meat continues to rise and our preferences are changing the world drastically.

We would be healthier if we all turn vegetarian and indeed, the planet would suffer much less than it does from methane and CO₂ emissions. Yet, preaching to and reproaching those of us who are meat-eaters is unlikely to change preferences—and indeed may have the reverse effect. So, what can be done? The Humanities for the Environment initiative argues that the human sciences—the mixed bag of academic disciplines in the humanities—are a largely untapped resource of insight into human motivation and agency that should inform how we interpret and stimulate change. The Observatories explore what we may learn from the disciplines which explicitly study the human, the disciplines of the humanities. The aim of the Humanities for the Environment is to observe, explore and put into action how the humanistic disciplines may contribute to understanding and engaging with global change problems by providing insight into human action and motivation.

We need therefore to define and understand how and why humans in the face of non-imminent danger choose to act as we do and how we may be able to change direction. Our research questions must be at the individual, institutional, and social levels: how do individuals respond to calls for change in individual behaviour; how can social innovation help redress institutionally ingrained patterns; and how do societies develop resilient responses to threats of crisis and collapse? Humans

use language, narrative, imagination and cognitive models to cope and take action. We nourish values and ethics to guide our choices. These are what the humanities help us to understand and use. Therefore, we need humanities tools to help us transform our perception and imagination for the new human condition. By studying the literature, art, history and philosophy of the environment, we gain deeper insights into human motivations, values, worldviews and choices.

2. The HfE 2018 Report

In the HfE Manifesto published in this journal (Holm et al. 2015), we stated that we would “work to ensure that the next IPCC report in 2021 is informed by humanities perspectives on the New Human Condition. To foster this aim the Observatories will produce a mid-term regional perspectives report in 2017. The focus of this report will be on regional perspectives of human perception and effective changes of pro-environmental behaviours [. . .]. Shortly after, the 21st annual Conference of Parties in Paris (COP21) in December 2015 decided to bring forward the next IPCC report to 2018. We decided, however, to stick to our initial plan as we understood that the road to increase the impact of the humanities is a long one.

The HfE 2018 Report consists of two publications, of which this Special Issue is one. The other is a special section of the journal *Global and Planetary Change* 156 (2017), 112–175. While the humanities special issue may primarily reach our colleagues in the humanities disciplines, the Global and Planetary Change section reaches out to that journal’s primary readership of earth scientists. In this way, we hope to broaden the dialogue and increase the impact of humanities insights. However, the two issues should be read together as a “mid-term report” that hopefully will help to hone our language and exemplify how the humanities may play a very real role for the environment. We shall therefore briefly present the GPC papers to provide the full context.

3. The Global and Planetary Change Special Section

Global and Planetary Change (GPC) presents six papers that specifically emanated from two workshops hosted by the European Observatory arm of the HfE. The thrust of the issue is articulated by Travis and Holm (2017). They argue that the concept of the polis as originally proposed by Hannah Arendt may help understand how societal change is brought about in issues that do not lend themselves to one immediate intervention (such as tobacco use, pesticides, HIV/AIDS, automobile safety, same-sex marriages, ethnic, racial and gender issues). In these issues, a polis—a loose coalition of like-minded people consisting of concerned citizens, cities and states, universities and businesses—formed to bring about momentous change. Change did not happen overnight but rather played out in a few decades. This insight is relevant to our understanding of current concerns regarding mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. In each case a strong counter-coalition worked to ridicule, obstruct, and even roll back progressive change. For one or two decades, change seemed almost impossible and defeatists might have been excused for thinking that human folly would prevail. However, change did happen within the relatively short time-span of a human generation.

Stephan Lewandowsky, Michael Mann and Mark Freeman’s (Lewandowsky et al. 2017) paper on scientific uncertainty, social and discount rates reviews associated ethical issues, and reports on a simulation experiment which considers sources of uncertainty and ambiguity: (1) Scientific uncertainty about the extent of future warming; (2) Social uncertainty about future population and future economic development; (3) Political uncertainty about future mitigation trajectories; and (4) Ethical ambiguity about how much the welfare of future generations should be valued today.

The other papers of the GPC issue bring out specific insights from regional or disciplinary perspective of direct relevance to our understanding of global change. Holm and Winiwarter (2017) identify the central role of humanistic disciplines such as history and geography in mid-twentieth century syntheses of global change. They point to some key insights such as the distinction between benign and wicked problems and “myths of nature.” In particular, Holm and Winiwarter point out that IPCC Assessment Reports are skewed towards a particular dimension of human sciences (economics)

and major insights from cultural theory and historical analysis are elided in climate science. To remedy this, the authors propose that funding should be provided for an Integrative Platform to channel humanities and social science expertise to inform and shape climate change research.

Ailise Bulfin's (Bulfin 2017) paper discusses the role that cultural studies can play in engaging climate change, by addressing the "structures of feeling" that characterize a society at a particular historical juncture. By analyzing depictions of climate catastrophes and apocalypse in Hollywood blockbuster films, the paper argues that popular culture has an effect upon the society in which it is consumed, as well as reflecting that society's desires and concerns. Steven Hartman, A.E.J. Ogilvie, Jón Haukur Ingimundarson, A.J. Dugmore, George Hambrecht, and Tim McGovern's collective paper (Hartman et al. 2017) describes the benefits of an integrated approach, using the lenses of historical ecology, environmental humanities, the social sciences, and geosciences. The paper considers Iceland and Greenland during the medieval period, and discusses how settlement patterns, agricultural thresholds and climatic changes were linked and can offer new information on how past societies understood and coped with such changes. Finally, Charles Travis' (Travis 2017) paper discusses how GeoHumanities and GIScience integrations with the New Human Condition/Anthropocene/Planetary Boundaries conceptual triad are salient to the development of Smart City Lifeworlds to engage the growing human geographical and urban dimensions of global climate change.

4. The Humanities Special Issue

This humanities special issue broadens the quest to define how, to what extent and by which means humanities scholarship and practice may help further pro-environmental behaviour. It contributes to the fast-growing literature on environmental humanities by specifically addressing issues of humanities interventions in global change research, policy, and action. It highlights "environmental humanities in action" by focussing on the contributions environmental humanities have made to address real-world problems. Thus, this humanities special issue goes beyond simply demonstrating that the humanities are 'useful'. Rather, it determines the scope of the humanities and how they can contribute to resolving current societal challenges.

Nine papers reflect on the current and potential role of humanities scholarship in international, national, and local contexts of practice. The special issue contributing authors—environmental humanists including social scientists—have all, in different ways, practised radical interdisciplinarity by engaging with environmental research issues traditionally dominated by scientists using quantitative approaches. This special issue shows the results of that engagement, many of which demonstrate impressive impact.

Sally Kitch's (Kitch 2017) paper elaborates on Progress, a research method which enables environmental humanists to shape and define environmental research issues (and therefore their outcomes) traditionally considered the domain of the natural sciences in ways that account for underlying power struggles and inequities and allow for multiple future scenarios based on alternative values, cultural practices and beliefs; Gavin Little (Little 2017) details a research model for developing interdisciplinary collaborations which allows environmental humanists to articulate their own contributions to, and develop collaborations on, pre-identified environmental research issues.

Ellie Graham, Joanna Hambly and Tom Dawson (Graham et al. 2017) show how citizen science can help to provide local coastal users with an awareness of climate change by affording public involvement a central role in strategies to safeguard coastal heritage against erosion, while Suzannah-Lynn Billing, Paul Tett, Ruth Brennan and Raeanne Miller (Billing et al. 2017) discuss how integrating different epistemologies of local marine resource users, policymakers and academics in marine management approaches can guide more effective marine governance.

Robert Boschman and William Bunn's (Boschman and Bunn 2018) beautifully illustrated paper on the abandoned Uranium City in Canada considers how we can learn how to revise our relationship with nature from the rise and abandonment of a city on the closure of its uranium mines. McCalman (2017) tells the compelling story of how a strategic and intellectual collaboration across the arts and sciences

once saved the Great Barrier Reef from destruction and the lessons this provides for the current battle to save this Reef.

Felix Riede's (Riede 2017) paper looks at how a deep historical perspective on past natural disasters can be used in present-day disaster risk reduction while Marisa Ronan (Ronan 2017) illustrates how religion can play both positive and negative roles in addressing anthropogenic climate change denial. Finally, Melanie Murcott (Murcott 2017) analyses how legal theory can contribute to the implementation of environmental laws in South Africa.

5. Whose Epistemologies and Ontologies? The Power to Shape Environmental Policy

The contributions to the humanities special issue throw into sharp relief the question of whose agendas are shaping environmental policy, and what kind of society this is shaping. They show how human value systems, practices, imaginations and identities can shape how 'natural' environments are framed (Holm et al. 2013). For example, while a large body of research since the 1990s has explored the positive role religious values can play in addressing climate change, Ronan (2017) illustrates how American evangelicals have curbed energetic evangelical faith-based environmentalism within their ranks with increased anti-science rhetoric and staunch denials of human-made climate change. She argues that, since we have entered the post-truth Trump era of fake news, it is particularly important to understand the ability of religions to impact negatively on climate policies.

In another value-laden arena, South Africa's first online rhino horn auction made news headlines (Somerville 2017; Agence France-Presse 2017; Du Toit 2017) after a series of court cases lifted the moratorium on rhino horn trade on the basis of a procedural issue (the government had not advertised the moratorium in a national newspaper). Murcott's (2017) analysis of the court judgments leading to the lifting of the moratorium (without affording a chance for the government to rectify their procedural error) paints a stark picture of a South African judiciary firmly ensconced in a collective worldview of human domination over, and entitlement to, non-human nature. Murcott illustrates how the relevant legislation could have been interpreted differently by the judiciary, by engaging with the concept of 'ecologically sustainable development' which is articulated in the same legislation interpreted by the judiciary to exclude consideration of the conservation and welfare of rhino, in the interests of wealthy, private rhino owners. She concludes that the failure of the South African courts to recognise the intrinsic value of nature, and accord nature rights serves to heighten, rather than respond to the global environmental crisis of the Anthropocene. As such, Murcott clearly argues for an ecocentric worldview that recognises the intrinsic value of nature. Juxtaposing this with Billing, Tett, Brennan and Miller's (Billing et al. 2017) contribution illustrates how the humanities and social sciences bring questions of social justice into policy debates by revealing pluralistic worldviews around, for example, the concept of conservation which is generally assumed to be 'good' and development which is often assumed to be detrimental to 'nature'. This paper critiques how the legislation protecting 'nature' (biological diversity under the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in this case) conceptualised the biophysical environment as separate from the human species. Member States were obliged to designate Special Areas of Conservation on the basis of scientific considerations alone, and without regard to social and economic considerations. Although the intrinsic value of nature was clearly recognised by the Habitats Directive, the legislative framing of humans as separate from nature is not conducive to cultivating the marine stewardship ethic needed to address the global challenges faced today. In this particular Scottish case study, the intertwined biocultural heritage of the marine protected area was ignored and contributed to a protracted conflict by local people to stop the designation of the marine Special Area of Conservation.

Reflecting on how a particular process is shaped (be that for advancing conservation or promoting private interests) raises questions about the voices excluded from that process, and asks us to consider how including such voices may lead to outcomes that are more responsive to the complexity of today's societal challenges. Graham, Hambly and Dawson's (Graham et al. 2017) paper provides a good example of how a more inclusive approach in practice can lead to outcomes that consider both

environment and people. Historic Environment Scotland has placed public involvement at the centre of its strategy in researching and promoting Scotland's cultural heritage. Coastal erosion threats to archaeological sites in Scotland are framed as opportunities to engage local people as citizen scientists in the discovery process, increase their awareness of climate change and share their learning throughout their communities. This inclusive process aligns with a recent EU report which recommends involving citizens through co-design and adopting an impact-focused approach to address global challenges (European Commission 2017). It also reflects the integration of different ways of knowing called for by Billing, Tett, Brennan and Miller (Billing et al. 2017) in order to grapple with the complexities of social-ecological systems.

The integration of multiple knowledge branches (through a strategic and intellectual alliance forged across the arts and sciences) was responsible for the successful protection of Australia's Great Barrier Reef (Reef) in the first 'war' to save the Reef during the 1960s and 1970s. McCalman's (2017) paper reflects on how an alliance between a poet, a Reef artist and a forest scientist galvanised first a local Queensland community and then the wider Queensland State public to stop federal government plans to mine the vast majority of the Reef for oil, gas fertiliser and cement. More recently, in 2016, the Reef made headlines when a tongue-in-cheek 'obituary' penned by a scientist proclaiming the Reef dead (see Jacobsen 2016) went viral. It was quickly challenged by other scientists pointing out that more than three-quarters of the reef was still alive (e.g., D'Angelo 2016). A year later, the Reef again made headlines with new surveys showing that severe coral bleaching events have affected two-thirds of the Reef (Knaus and Nick 2017). McCalman (2017) argues that the environmental humanities advocates for the Reef today should similarly unite across the diverse epistemologies and ontologies of the arts and the sciences as they engage in the second and possibly last 'war' to save the Reef—this time from the even graver and more immediate threat of coal-mining coupled with climate-change driven coral bleaching events in the fraught political context of climate-change denial. He considers that the interdisciplinary integration of natural scientists with those who practice in the field of the environmental humanities, arts and social sciences is crucial to bringing an explicit emotional intelligence to the conversation since supposedly 'emotional' viewpoints have no place in the 'objective' scientific methods of natural scientists. To address the complex societal challenges we face today, we need to move people's hearts as well as their minds. Sally Kitch's (Kitch 2017) paper speaks to this by reflecting on how interdisciplinary humanities collaboration can be developed on environmental research issues traditionally considered the domain of the natural sciences.

6. Shaping Outcomes, Reshaping Methods

The Progress method, developed by Kitch (2017) and her colleagues (humanists, social scientists and natural scientists) at Arizona State University takes a practical approach to improving the quality of quantitative environmental science research by, for example, better articulating research questions that reflect multiple viewpoints and reshape scientific methods. The Progress method addresses the fundamental question of how, and by whom, the environmental challenges we face should be defined, and thus encourages a questioning of values that science and technology imperceptibly reproduce (Castree et al. 2014). It offers strategies for expanding stakeholder engagement, and draws attention to power dynamics and inequalities that underpin problems and shape their solutions. It joins Billing, Tett, Brennan and Miller (Billing et al. 2017) in opening up spaces for co-designing multiple ways forward based on a recognition of alternative values, cultural practices and beliefs. While Kitch charts recent signs of progress towards integrating the environmental humanities and qualitative social sciences into quantitative environmental science research, she also draws attention to the institutional barriers and social and political climate for higher education that limit the radical interdisciplinarity necessary to transform environmental research. McCalman (2017) more generally highlights barriers posed by the current political climate to integrating natural scientists with those who practice in the field of the environmental humanities, arts and social sciences while Little (2017) points to the barrier caused by a lack of recognition of the internal complexity of the humanities disciplines. He reflects

on a four-stage model for interdisciplinary collaboration in the environmental humanities developed by the Royal Society of Edinburgh network in Scotland that explicitly takes into account the internal complexity of the humanities. The more technocratic disciplines (such as law, politics and media) may be closer to policy and commercial agendas, while disciplines such as the visual arts, theatre and literature may seem far removed from the policy-making process. Little concludes that grappling with this internal complexity serves to sharpen the focus on disciplinary strengths and weaknesses, and thus clarify the contribution that the humanities can make to societal challenges such as the transition to renewable energy sources to mitigate climate change.

7. How We Frame Environment-Society Relationships Can Shape New Understandings of How to Live in a Rapidly Changing World

Holm et al. (2013) join other scholars (e.g., Billing et al. 2017; Brennan, forthcoming; Castree et al. 2014; Kitch 2017; Nightingale 2014) in arguing for opening up the ways in which 'natural' environments are framed by acknowledging how human value systems, practices, imaginations and identities have shaped them. Yet, the dominant narrative in the environmental policy sphere tends to treat humans and nature as essentially separate by assuming that other-than-human nature can be defined separately from human culture (Billing et al. 2017; Brechin et al. 2002; Peterson et al. 2010). This dualistic worldview shapes environmental management legislation, policy processes and mainstream debates, reinforcing a Cartesian divide between nature and culture (Brennan, forthcoming). Robert Boschman and Williams Bunn's paper in the special issue shows how a simplistic policy framing of the abandoned Uranium City in Canada as an environmental hazard prevents humans seeing themselves as agents in a networked world. The authors argue that abandonment is relational and entails responsibility—in the case of Uranium City, the few remaining inhabitants have been waiting for 35 years for assessment, funding and remediation of its toxic suburbs and landfill. Ronan illustrates the complexity of values-based religious responses to climate change. She warns that it is dangerous to assume that religion plays a definitively positive role in addressing climate change through a greening of faith, observing that "American evangelicals have proven to be savvy in their countering of faith-based environmentalism, drawing on fiction, non-fiction and the curation of scientific research publications that carefully promotes a distrust of a belief in man-made climate change". Murcott's support for the notion of ecologically sustainable development in the South African Constitution takes a distinctly ecocentric stance on the need to consider the welfare of future generations alongside current generations (of humans and non-humans alike). The papers of Graham, Hambly and Bell and of Riede both reflect on how narrating past human-climate-environment interactions (drawn from archaeological records) can help contemporary societies cope with natural hazards. Focussing on the erosion of coastal heritage sites (Graham et al.) and the more extreme examples of past volcanic eruptions (Riede), both papers question how our framing of the past shapes how we understand and interact with the environment today and into the future and provide practical ways forward.

8. Changing How We Do Humanities

The HfE 2018 Report provides examples of how humanities research reveals and influences human capacity to perceive and cope with environmental change. The Humanities Manifesto (Holm et al. 2015) made the point that the humanities provide very good reasons for why humans resist change. We are often looking for others to act first in a lack of mutual trust, the prisoner's dilemma. We suffer the law of unintended consequences. We have weakness of will even with the best information. We have a compressed impression of time and may therefore value short-term benefits over long-term gain. We may be trapped behind linguistic and cultural barriers and we often suffer from tunnel vision. Change happens slowly and when faced with difficult issues, humans tend to be in a state of denial and/or despair as a reason not to act. Short-termism and alarmism/apathy often drives decision-making. All of this provides us with all sorts of excuses for not taking action.

Yet we do change. Many historical instances exist which serve as proof of our ability for positive and effective transformation via behavioural adjustments brought about through coalition of research with bottom-up as well as top-down initiatives (e.g., road safety, safe sexual practices, the social disapproval of smoking). Decisive change may not happen as quickly as we would like but history on the decadal to generational scales shows time and again that humans do alter even seemingly innate behavioural patterns.

We hope that the HfE 2018 Report will help change perceptions of what it is we do as humanities scholars. We believe it is important that we rid ourselves of some of the dismissive language that is sometimes used. It is sometimes argued that the humanities role is to ask critical questions and not to provide answers—which we leave to the sciences. We strongly dispute this statement. Of course, everybody asks questions. Citizens really want research to come up with answers or at least guidance (even where this calls for constraints on citizens' freedom of choice) and this is as incumbent on the humanities as on every other science.

The humanities provide knowledge of what has been created, what has been lost, what may be preserved, and what may be regained. We provide keys to understand and resolve conflicts about values or decisions. In the best manifestations, we empower people in their choices as consumers and as citizens and indeed as members of family and society. In short, we provide baselines, understandings of where we have come from. We contribute to articulating values and we have an impact on the actions that are happening. This is no small feat. The humanities matter. We change the world and we need to assert this when we talk about what we do.

It is to our own detriment if we say we don't matter or nobody listens to us. Of course, people listen to us. They may not always like what we say but they certainly listen to us and if not, we need to speak up. Take history as an example. Historians, obviously, deconstruct myths. That's what they are quite happy to do. They tell people, "No. What you thought happened didn't happen. This is what happened." But they also provide much more impactful things such as ways to think about change—in the past and in the future. They provide historical experiments to complement the natural scientific experiments that can be carried out in a controlled environment. Obviously, history is an unending series of one-off events but a lot of what we, as humans, act on draws on the historical experiment. History provides narratives and narratives can be both powerful and dangerous. Narratives provide all sorts of excuses to do really bad things. It's important that the deconstruction of the myths go hand in hand with the construction of the narratives.

So, at the end of the day, humanities like all sciences provide society with an evidence base.

We provide data, insights, knowledge, ways of thinking. This is why the humanities really matter, we provide social and cultural resilience—ability to understand change, challenges and opportunities—and imagination of the diversity of futures.

In conclusion, change does happen and the humanities provide crucial evidence to facilitate such change. We need to engage with citizens' perspectives at all times when developing our research agendas. In the current age of new-speak, climate-change denial and obfuscation of truth, there is a need for a broad coalition of academics, civilians, universities, cities and businesses to come together on an evidence-based platform. We must think, not in the political cycle of three or four years, which may cause despair, but in the long game building coalitions outside academia while remaining true to our commitment to contribute to society's knowledge base.

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