

## **Recalibrating the Humanities for the Times: New Humanities 3.0 and Climate Change Denialism**

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### **Abstract**

Anthropogenic climate change hypothesis challenges us to balance economic growth with the protection of the environment and the needs of the present generation with those of future generations. This paper argues that once science has established the facts regarding the link between anthropogenic global warming and climate change as well as how to avert disaster, the humanities have a duty to step in to provide the historical and cultural background necessary for the international community to distill wisdom from this knowledge and begin to act. In particular, because rising to these challenges requires that we draw on the species-specific traits of altruism and biological revulsion, the burden is also on the humanities to craft and tell the stories of our common humanity. The paper further argues that for a humanities sector assailed from all sides to be able to do this effectively, three things will need to come together. First, the humanities will need to recalibrate in ways that allow them to take on issues outside their traditional spheres, doing so strictly by retooling typical humanities inquiry methods, including narrative inquiry approaches, but also bringing to bear on such inquiry humanities sensibilities. Second, they will need to reconnect with a culture of stewardship vis-à-vis the public. Third, they will need to seek out new and creative outreach strategies for bridging the citizenship and environmental literacy gap in part at the root of climate change denialism.

**Keywords:** humanities, crisis in the humanities, narrative, anthropogenic global warming, climate change, climate change denialism

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“Scholars in the humanities are particularly well-equipped to identify, interpret, and assess the cultural determinants of our relations with the environment. These include the ideological constraints and resources that inevitably will come into play when we devise and execute programs to protect the environment.”<sup>1</sup>

### **1. Harmattan in rural Imo State, Nigeria**

December 2016. I am writing these lines from Lagos, Nigeria. We are five short days before Christmas. Not a whiff of Harmattan, the sub-season characterized by “[...] a dry and dusty northeasterly trade wind which blows from the Sahara Desert over the West African subcontinent into the Gulf of Guinea between the end of November and the middle of March”<sup>2</sup>. Not a sign either of two fruits I grew up associating with Harmattan, mangoes and the African cherry the Igbo call *udarà* and which the Yoruba call *àgbálùmò*. I think we are headed for an even shorter and milder Harmattan than we had last year, which was shorter

and milder than the one before and so on. Even without the benefit of the precise measuring instruments or multiyear charts of the climate scientist showing the evolution of the weather in the last thirty to thirty-five years, it is hard not to see that, at this rate, all that will be left of Harmattan in another few short years will be dictionary and encyclopaedia entries.

Now, I would be the first to concede that when Harmattan was Harmattan, it came with quite a few inconveniences—the dryness of the wind and the dust, the haze, the effect of these on the skin and, in particular, our seasonal *chocolat-au-lait* complexion that made us look like some miserable desert specimens. So, if any of my mates should look back and say to themselves instead, “What a relief!”, or even, “Good riddance!”, I would understand.

The point is, when we were growing up, the Christmas holiday was the most important school holiday. Of course, it meant we did not have to go to school for two, three weeks at a time. Of course, it meant we were going to get new clothes but, more importantly, it meant we could get away from the crowded cities to return to the village with its open spaces, with fewer restrictions on what we could do and what we couldn't do. But, when we were growing up, the Christmas holiday also coincided with Harmattan, the peak of the mango and *udarà* season.

We loved mangoes and *udarà* for slightly different reasons. Irrespective of the variety, mangoes were just delicious. Additionally, in the village, we could have practically all the mango we needed free, provided we could brave the early morning Harmattan cold to wake up at 6:00 a.m., 5:30 a.m. or even 5:00 a.m. to go to the sites of the trees to gather any fruits that had fallen from the trees during the night. Unfortunately for us holidaying city children, though, this was a game whose art the village children had perfected. Therefore, no matter how hard we tried they always beat us to the sites of the mango trees.

Since I just mentioned the early morning Harmattan cold, let me digress briefly to talk about that before returning to the situation with *udarà*. Some mornings, it got so cold mother—God rest her soul!—would move her cooking gear from the kitchen to the open in the backyard. She would then make a nice fire and, while she cooked or even just let the fire burn, the whole brood would sit around, warming ourselves.

There was this occasion when the cold was really bad. Two of my younger brothers were fighting over a choice position near the fire while I kept rubbing my palms together and whining, as we were wont to do when we wanted to speak like adults, “My God, anyone who survives the Harmattan this year will live long.” I believe mother was attracted to the scene by the fighting of my siblings. After separating them and threatening she was going to put out the fire if we did not behave ourselves, she turned to me:

“And you, always complaining,” she said to me calmly, catching me a little off guard. “Where do you think all the fruits you keep stuffing your stomach with come from?” I turned slightly to look at her. “It's either a Harmattan worthy of the name and lots of fruits during the year or a mild Harmattan and little or no fruits.” As nothing had prepared me for her intervention, all I could do was stare at her. It had never crossed my mind things were the way she presented them, indeed, that any good could come out of the harsh conditions of Harmattan.

Now, to return to why we liked *udarà*! The situation was similar to that of mangoes although with a major difference or two. *Udarà* was not quite as tasty as mangoes. Further, it was not a particularly easy fruit to eat as the unskilled often ended up with sticky fingers and lips that were glued together by the *udarà* juice—and that could look quite unsightly during Harmattan. This did not however stop us from loving it, even as some of this love, as I have already suggested, had nothing to do with the fruit's taste. In fact, sometimes one ran into *udarà* that were so sour not even the unsophisticated holidaying city children that we were visited the originating trees.

The reason *udarà* held such attraction for us was because where I come from, the *udarà* tree, unlike other fruit trees, was excluded from any form of ownership, private or even community. It at once belonged to no one and everyone, including a first-time visitor to the village, who could without fear of molestation help themselves to *udarà* that had fallen from the tree. Better still, provided it was not an *udarà* tree that was very close to a home, anyone could haul specially cut branch stubs into the *udarà* tree to try to bring down the fruits. This was the main attraction of *udarà*—and we would spend hours upon hours doing just that.

A first-time visitor from some far-off land might stop and watch us for a few moments as we hauled the branch stubs into the *udarà* tree, bringing down five to ten unripe *udarà* fruits for every ripe one and scream at us, “Com’ on! Stop this waste! One of you should simply climb the tree.” But such a reaction would come from lack of knowledge and would have elicited an exchange of knowing glances from us. Where I come from, precisely because the *udarà* tree belonged to no one, we all understood without ever being told one did not climb it to harvest its fruits. I suspect to do so would be to stake ownership over a fruit tree the gods had freely placed at a particular location for the benefit of no one in particular and, therefore, for the benefit of all.

In the last several weeks that I have been researching this paper, I have learned so much that recommends the *udarà*, in particular its medicinal values. But I have also had a rude shock learning the status of the *udarà* tree where I come from has completely changed and that now every single one of them belonged to someone or some family who could arrange to have it climbed in order to harvest the fruits. And because *udarà* trees are usually around for such long time, we are talking here of some of the same *udarà* trees I remember hauling those specially cut branch stubs into as a child. So, I am left scratching my head, wondering what children today are to do. Now, far be it from me to suggest here that climate change and, in particular, a disappearing Harmattan might have had anything to do with the erosion of a tradition that brought so much joy to our childhood. Still, the fact that these things are happening together does nothing to ease my sense of loss.

*To be continued...*

## **2. Framing my narrative**

Our global and national communities are presently confronted—indeed, have probably always been confronted—with tough choices which demand that we demonstrate wisdom. To judge by the alarms sounded by highly knowledgeable people and organizations<sup>3</sup>, the most urgent among these choices today, are perhaps those relating to the anthropogenic global warming and climate change question: How can we balance economic growth with the protection of the environment? How can we balance the aspirations of the present generation with the needs of future generations?

On the one hand, it is cheering to note that there is hardly a soul out there to doubt that *global* or *average* temperatures are indeed rising, leading, among other things, to climate change. On the other hand, one regrets that a small but influential minority, for all sorts of reasons, continue to dismiss any suggestions that human choices and actions are implicated or, where they concede this, try to make the argument these problems will take care of themselves without the international and national communities doing anything. It is of particular interest that this denialism has thrived in spite of overwhelming scientific evidence in support of anthropogenic climate change<sup>4</sup>. It is also of particular interest that this denialism feeds into two larger worrisome phenomena, America’s culture wars and the triumph of the post-truth world. The first of these, America’s culture wars, has a much longer history, resulting in much about it being better understood. The second, a phenomenon that literally came from nowhere to explode in 2016 with events in the UK and the United States, is at this point much harder to explain but nevertheless portends grave danger for the world

insofar as it could ultimately lead to the banishment of the enlightenment value of reason central to our civilization.

My aim in this paper is to show that this situation has opened up a niche at the limits of the power of scientific evidence to persuade and settle arguments, but also to go on to make a case that the humanities may be uniquely suited to fill this niche, provided the sector is willing to reconnect with its original mandate, i.e., to raise an informed citizenry<sup>5</sup> and contribute in transforming knowledge into wisdom<sup>6</sup>. I further argue—and thereby make the connection with the so-called crisis in the humanities—that for the humanities to successfully move into and occupy this niche, at least three things will need to happen. First, the sector will need to reinvent itself in ways that allow humanities disciplines to encroach and impact upon non-traditional territories, doing so strictly by retooling their traditional inquiry methods—and I have in mind here especially the narrative inquiry method. Second, the humanities will need to reconnect with a culture of stewardship as well as return to a rhetoric that signals a willingness to, at least sometimes, proceed on terms that make sense to the larger public and, thereby, give up some of their exceptionalism. Third, the humanities will also need to seek out new and creative outreach strategies for bridging the environmental and citizenship literacy gap in part responsible for the rise in climate change denialism.

### **3. Climate change and climate change denialism**

What is climate change? What is global warming? Are the two synonyms or do they designate two slightly different but related phenomena? And what is climate change denialism?

Although all three terms are at the core of the concerns of this paper, I would like at the present to dispose of the first two rapidly. This is in part because there is a wealth of very useable online primer some of them from reputable sources, which can be explored for additional information and in part also because the controversy about these arise not from their definitions as such but, instead, from their causes and how to deal with them.

*Wikipedia* defines climate change as referring to “a change in the statistical distribution of weather patterns when that change lasts for an extended period of time (i.e., decades to millions of years).” Scientists are in general agreement that climate change broadly conceived has been a constant in the history of the Earth and that in the past this change has been due to a host of factors, the vast majority of which were natural processes. However, they hold human activities, including agriculture and, in particular, the burning of fossil fuels, most responsible for the acceleration of the process today. This, according to NASA<sup>7</sup>, explains why the term “climate change”, which is a relative new coinage compared to “climatic change”, is sometimes used by scientists exclusively to refer to climate change linked to anthropogenic global warming.

What is global warming? *Wikipedia* considers global warming a synonym of climate change and notes under the entry dedicated to the former that “[g]lobal warming and climate change are terms for the observed century-scale rise in the average temperature of the Earth’s climate system and its related effects.” Interestingly, however, no claims of this synonymy are made in the entry for “climate change”. Instead, in the “Terminology” section we read the following attempt at terminological clarification:

The term sometimes is used to refer specifically to climate change caused by human activity, as opposed to changes in climate that may have resulted as part of Earth’s natural processes. In this sense, especially in the context of environmental policy, the term climate change has become synonymous with anthropogenic global warming. Within scientific journals, global warming refers to surface temperature increases while climate change includes global warming and everything else that increasing greenhouse gas levels affect.

Based on these clarifications, we should perhaps think of climate change as referring to “a long-term change in the Earth’s climate, or [the climate] of a region on Earth” and global warming as referring to “the increase in Earth’s average surface temperature due to rising levels of greenhouse gases.”<sup>8</sup>This subtle distinction between the two terms is one I think we have an interest in maintaining in order to eliminate a loophole deniers have often exploited when they point to localities where temperatures are falling as proof that climate change is not real.

Finally, we come to climate change denial or denialism. First, let me indicate here that I will use “denialism” in this paper more frequently than “denial”. This is to help us keep in view that the phenomenon under discussion sometimes goes beyond individuals denying that global warming and climate change are real to suggest the existence of an ideology-driven so-called “denial machine”. It “involves denial, dismissal, unwarranted doubt or contrarian views which depart from the scientific opinion on climate change, including the extent to which it is caused by humans, its impacts on nature and human society, or the potential of adaptation to global warming by human actions”<sup>9</sup>.The foregoing definition shows that climate change denialism can take many forms—or has many stages, as some would prefer to put it. But the *Wikipedia* also warns that “[c]limate change denial can also be implicit, when individuals or social groups accept the science but fail to come to terms with it or to translate their acceptance into action.”

#### **4. The Crisis in the Humanities and New Humanities 3.0**

With the so-called crisis in the humanities also at the heart of my claims regarding the role the humanities can play in tackling climate change denialism, it is only fitting at this point to ask: Is there really a crisis in the humanities? Or, are we just dealing with the unending teething problems of the humanities as some have argued? If indeed there is a crisis, what are the symptoms? How have stakeholders tried to deal with it? What can stakeholders do further to deal with it?

Even among those who are clearly in a position to know, there is no agreement on these basic questions. Maybe this is as it should be, considering that we are talking about the humanities here. Still this disagreement compels us to account for why these commentators seem to be looking at the same trends and data but arriving at different conclusions. Are the differences of opinion just between those who would concede we have on our hands a situation that rises to the level of a crisis and those who would not? Or, do commentators also diverge on what they perceive as the symptoms of the so-called crisis? Do disagreements on the first question sometimes result from the parties prioritising different sets of indices: enrolment numbers, job placement, research output, cuts in programmes and funding, the quality of the humanities education dispensed (to the extent that there exist objective measures for determining this), number of grants attracted, etc.? What is the role of geography in the perception of the crisis?

One of those who reject the use of the term “crisis” is Frank Donoghue, who would only go as far as concede the humanities are dealing with an “ongoing set of problems” that do not rise to a level warranting the use of the “dramaturgic term [crisis]”<sup>10</sup>. He argues that these problems have always been there and that there has always existed a certain antagonism between the core values and management style of business and the academy.

While acknowledging that the phrase “crisis in the humanities” has popped up regularly on the radar screens since at least the 1930s, Gideon Rosen, a former chair of Princeton University’s Council of the Humanities, dismisses the idea that the humanities are going through a crisis. He argues, instead that “[...] our ‘crisis’ is largely a PR problem [...] and that there] is a widespread perception that the humanities in particular are on the ropes, and even if it is false, this perception can have real consequences.”<sup>11</sup>

Richard A. Bell, for his part, agrees there is a *contemporary* crisis in the humanities, even as he suggests the crisis is primarily a “crisis of legitimation”<sup>12</sup>. Just like Donaghue, he argues that the problem of the modern humanities sector stems from the awkwardness it increasingly feels in the mostly entrepreneurial university environment of our campuses:

The modern university is in some ways a strange place for the humanities. On large campuses filled mostly with pre-professional students imbibing the technical skills demanded by industrial and postindustrial economies, philosophy can feel like an exotic luxury. [...] But these discordances between the humanities and the university system go back to the creation of modern universities in the nineteenth century [...].<sup>13</sup>

In particular, Bell regrets that faced both inside and outside the academy with charges of “overspecialization; triviality; insularity; fragmentation; and opaque, overly technical writing”<sup>14</sup>, humanities scholarship, for a very long time, influenced by French theorists, approached its legitimation problem by producing more self-referential discourse.

Prominent among those who admit we are dealing with a situation that rises to the level of a crisis are Michael Bérubé, the 2012/2013 President of the MLA, and Peter Levine. Bérubé argues that while there have been false alarms in the past, “[i]t is not even news anymore [...] that [g]raduate education in the humanities is in crisis”<sup>15</sup>, that the humanities are today dealing with a more contemporary crisis characterized by reduced and outright poor funding; diminishing enrolments in graduate programmes; fewer career opportunities and lower placement rates, etc. Levine, on the other hand, sees a crisis arising from the humanities disengaging from the ethical debates of our time. In a blog post offering the opening paragraphs of his contribution in a recent book, *Rethinking the Humanities: Paths and Challenges*, he writes:

The original and fundamental purpose of the humanities is moral argumentation. Humanists are scholarly contributors to public discourse about matters of value. If there is a “crisis in the humanities” today, it arises from a general reluctance or inability to contribute to public ethical debate. The reasons for this reticence include widespread moral relativism or skepticism, envy of abstract theory, alienation from the public sphere, and a refusal to engage morally with stories, even though ethical interpretation of narrative is the characteristic contribution of the humanities.<sup>16</sup>

In discussing the crisis in the humanities, it is easy to fall into the trap of focusing solely on what is happening in the United States because of American leadership in the area but also because of how openly and vigorously the debate has been carried on there. The truth, however, is that elsewhere around the globe—in the UK, in Australia, in South Africa, in Nigeria and Africa generally—the same general questions about the relevance and vitality of the humanities are being asked. Concerned stakeholders want to know how the humanities can be repositioned to better fulfil their historic mandates. And the concern is not just about the continued relevance of a humanities sector confronted with the *fait accompli* of the triumph of a “civilization of material progress”; it is also about a larger society that is looking for help on how to navigate truly existential choices it wakes up to each day.

In Australia, the humanities seem to be doing quite well. A major 2014 report notes that despite issues here and there, in particular with an ageing workforce and increasing workforce casualization, “Australia has a strong and resilient humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) sector that makes a major contribution to the national higher education system, to the national research and innovation system, and to preparing our citizens for participation in the workforce.”<sup>17</sup>

Regarding South Africa, one can infer the general situation from a comment paper by Laurence Wright, who takes to task two earlier reports on the value of the humanities in the

country. While agreeing the humanities sector is in crisis, Wright argues however that a good deal of the literature, including the South African reports, may be looking in the wrong place for the root cause of the crisis. To him, it “lie[s] most centrally in the question of whether students actually receive the calibre of education that humanities’ disciplines potentially afford and claim to deliver”<sup>18</sup>. In particular, he regrets that this literature fails to see that tertiary education has two products, knowledge and people and that if our

defence of the humanities concentrates on knowledge formation and its economic and cultural benefits—the research side—and fails signally to explain the role of the humanities in the social and intellectual formation of human beings, you will never persuade society at large that the human and social sciences are fully deserving of support.<sup>19</sup>

In Nigeria, there also has been some rumbling, even though it has been a little bit too muted to make much of a difference. Here and there, one hears the term ‘crisis’ in discussions on the problems that beset the humanities, or the humanities and the social sciences taken together, which suffer from being considered poor siblings of the STEM sector by the State and individual institutions for purposes of funding. For example, in a paper “explor[ing] the possibilities for charting a new path for the Humanities in Nigeria in an age where non-Science subjects, especially, the core Humanities, are treated with disdain<sup>20</sup>[...]”, Siyan Oyeweso accuses “the long-standing policy that privileges science-based courses in admissions, job placements, societal and governmental recognition as well as lop-sided funding [...]”<sup>21</sup> for woes of the humanities.

Voices have also been raised at the continental level to complain about the marginalization of the humanities, leading “The African Humanities Program [...] to convene] a Humanities Forum on June 7, 2014 at the University of South Africa.” In a report titled “Reinvigorating the Humanities in Africa”, submitted for consideration to The African Higher Education Summit, Dakar, Senegal, 10–12 March 2015, the Forum listed a number of areas requiring action. These include: assuring the proper conditions of work for the academic sector; strengthening Ph.D. programs; improving mentorship; nurturing a culture of research and teaching; developing effective mechanisms for dissemination of new knowledge; encouraging academics to participate actively in the public sphere.

There therefore appears to be an awareness in Nigeria as elsewhere on the continent that the humanities are clearly in need of help but one fails to see a similar awareness of the need for self-recalibration. For example, there is hardly any mention of how the humanities engage with the public, or how they make their case for support from the public or how they intend to bring the benefits of humanistic education to greatest number possible.

From the UK also there have been voices decrying the defunding of the arts and humanities and, more generally, their marginalisation (e.g., by the Defend the Arts and Humanities Campaign at <http://defendartsandhums.blogspot.com>). In particular, though, I would like to note the particularly interesting twist that Patricia Waugh brings to the discussion by insisting that we focus on how individual humanities disciplines are faring instead of looking at all of humanities together. So while “not denying that there is much to be anxious about [...], in particular, on behalf of the coming generation of scholars in a shrinking market for employment”<sup>22</sup>, she argues that her field, English studies,

is well-positioned to ride the tide of gloom for one major reason: it has one foot in the ‘Arts’ and in the creative, the speculative and the linguistically playful, and one in the ‘humanities’ and in rigorous thinking and evidence-based argument, in intellectual analysis and histories, rhetorical awareness and ‘lucidity’. It produces creative thinkers and crafty readers, affirmative and original visionaries, and hermeneuts of suspicion.

In fact, all the things Waugh lists as steps English Studies has taken to position itself to envisage the future with confidence are thankfully a reflection of the problems observers have argued ail the humanities sector. They include better engagement with and outreach to the public, increased willingness to open itself up to outside scrutiny, embracing of so-called low culture at the levels of curriculum and scholarship proper, abandonment of the false hope of legitimation offered by High Theory, more robust engagement with other disciplines, etc.

I think, however, we can look beyond the seeming terminology impasse and note that irrespective of the terminology adopted—crisis or “ongoing set of problems” or something in between—, irrespective of diagnosis, commentators, as we have seen have not hesitated to suggest a way forward.

Some of the issues ailing the humanities, e.g., reduced funding, may have political dimensions beyond the control of the humanities. Others, on the other hand, are issues the sector can work on and, indeed, has continued to work on over the decades. This is the point of the *New Humanities* (NH) in my title, which recognises these ongoing efforts to address the problems despite any disagreements about terminology. I have further resorted to versioning to suggest one could agglomerate elements of the ongoing crisis into three groups, leading to three broad solution paths. I hasten to add that with the exception of the issues submitted to NH 1.0, which are circumscribed in historical time, others are issues the humanities need to continue watching. The result of this is that new versions will necessarily build on and inherit the problems of preceding versions in what looks more like a relay system.

New Humanities 1.0, I argue, corresponds to digital humanities, in the sense of Stevan Harnad’s “scholarly skywriting”<sup>23</sup> but also in the sense of the various efforts within the academy to ensure the digital revolution did not transform the gap on our campuses between the sciences and the humanities into an unbridgeable chasm. It also covers the increasing use in the humanities of the computer for greater insights into their objects of study as well as the digitization of these objects of study themselves.

New Humanities 2.0, on the other hand, was mostly collaborative and transdisciplinary humanities. It aimed, among other things, to address the charges of hyper-specialization, insularity and triviality levelled against the humanities. Beyond trying to address any charges, however, the transdisciplinary and cross-sectoral research route made sense for at least two reasons. First, the sites of the vast majority of issues worthy of investigation today are at the interface of two or more disciplines, whether within the humanities or across different sectors. Two, transdisciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration necessarily allow for greater insights into even the most mundane among our objects of research but also are potent engines for disciplinary renewal:

[...] the most illuminating discoveries are often at the edge of a disciplinary boundary, sometimes forging new inter- or multi-disciplinary alignments or networks but also, in the process, often raising a more finely tuned awareness of the particular strengths and abiding insights of one’s own discipline.<sup>24</sup>

New Humanities 3.0, I propose, is humanities that are not shy to take on issues and themes traditionally considered outside their areas of interest provided such issues and themes have compelling proximate human interests. The exhortation implicit here is by no means entirely new. Edward Slingerland, for example, draws attention in his book to a piece by Louis Menand “which concludes that the way out of the malaise currently afflicting the humanities has to lie in an aggressive ‘colonization’ by the humanities of more and more areas of human inquiry.”<sup>25,26</sup>

I think there is a whole series of areas of inquiry with “compelling proximate human interests” currently the exclusive preserve of the social and human sciences in which the



humanities can make significant contributions using—and this bears emphasizing—approaches and methods that are recognizably humanistic and bringing to bear on such inquiry sensibilities that are also recognizably humanistic. I also think there are a whole series of issues on which science is producing vast amounts of knowledge that will need to be distilled into wisdom for it to have a truly transformative effect on our world. I propose then that NH 3.0 might be founded on four commitments, some of which have already been mentioned in passing above.

The first is a commitment to appropriate new areas of inquiry provided, as has already been pointed out, such areas have a compelling proximate human interest. With all the dire warnings being issued by scientists (refer to endnote 3), who can deny that global warming and climate change constitute an issue with a compelling proximate human interest.

The second is a commitment to conduct such inquiry using approaches and methods that are recognizably of the humanities. This commitment speaks directly to the legitimation issue. It would do the credibility of the humanities no good if such inquiries just tried to fake scientific or social science methods and approaches or tried to mask limited knowledge with arcane terminology under the mistaken belief that this would put to rest any *bona fides* question.

The third is a commitment to always bring humanities sensibilities—“see, think, and engage differently with the world, whether the world immediately around us, the worlds of our past, or the worlds of our imaginations”<sup>27</sup>—to bear on such inquiry. Wolin reminds us that

Humanistic study can restore integrity to the public sphere by resisting at every turn the reifying and banalizing temptations of the information age. Confronted with the simplifying tendencies of the high speed society, the humanist’s task is to ensure that arguments and issues are reframed with the measure of complexity and subtlety necessary to arrive at nuanced and considered judgments.<sup>28</sup>

The fourth and last is a commitment to continually seek ways to bridge the chasm that has developed between the academy (the humanities, actually) and the city. Whereas the sciences are ever so willing to share with the public what they do and are doing, the humanities, on the other hand, have generally not cared much about this kind of stewardship or, perhaps, are just not skilled at doing it<sup>29</sup>. Indeed, this was a major issue at a 2012 Modern Languages Roundtable focusing on advocacy for the humanities, which noted:

In the sciences, this gap is being addressed by new demands for “societal impact” as a requirement for NEH and NIH grants. In the case of the humanities, organizations like *Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life* offer models for publicly engaged approaches to research and teaching that bring students and faculty into direct contact with those communities.<sup>30</sup>

## **5. Narrative, narrative inquiry and climate change**

Given the critical role assigned narrative and narrative inquiry within my problematic, let us at this point address ourselves to question the nature of narrative. What is narrative? What is narrative inquiry? What is it about narrative that authorizes one to think it can be mobilized in the effort to undermine climate change denialism?

Before attempting to define narrative, let me point out two important changes the concept has undergone as it has round-tripped between the humanities and the world. The first is the collapsing of the distinction originally made between “narrative” and “story”, and the second is the jettisoning of the restriction of narrative to the verbal medium. This has led to “narrative” and “story” now being used interchangeably but also, as Rimmon-Kenan puts it, to a situation where “[t]oday, narratives are detected in film, drama, opera, music, and the visual arts.”<sup>31</sup>

Stephen Denning proposes that narrative (or, story) might be defined (“in the broadest sense [...as] anything told or recounted”) or “more narrowly, and more usually, [as] something told or recounted in the form of a causally-linked set of events; account; tale; the telling of a happening or connected series of happenings, whether true or fictitious.”<sup>32</sup>

A more scholarly “narrow definition” might come in the form of Monika Fludernik’s:

A narrative (Fr. *récit*; Ger. *Erzählung*) is a representation of a possible world in a linguistic and/or visual medium, at whose centre there are one or several protagonists of an anthropomorphic nature who are existentially anchored in a temporal and spatial sense and who (mostly) perform goal-directed actions (action and plot structure).<sup>33</sup>

And what is narrative inquiry? To start with, “[...] at present, there is no single narrative inquiry method, but rather a number of methods dispersed among individual disciplines.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, what we have is an agglomeration of qualitative inquiry approaches united by the use of narrative in some way. *Atlas.ti*, makers of the qualitative data analysis software with the same name, note that:

Narrative research is a term that subsumes a group of approaches that in turn rely on the written or spoken words or visual representation of individuals. These approaches typically focus on the lives of individuals as told through their own stories. The emphasis in such approaches is on the story, typically both what and how is narrated.<sup>35</sup>

These approaches range from the kind of first-person, journal-style reporting of research that is now popular among education researchers, especially in the Anglophone world—the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia—to “approaches and traditions that focus on personal experience as expressed or communicated in language”<sup>36</sup>. The personal experiences recounted could be those of the researcher or those of the research subjects.

There are any number of reasons for thinking narrative could be a potent tool for undermining climate change denialism. Let us examine four here. The first is the chief argument used to account for why narrative has caught on to the point of warranting the declaration of a “narrative turn”. That argument can be stated as follows: We are *Homo narrans*! When John D. Niles first threw up the idea, he meant to suggest that narrative was in a non-trivial sense at the core of our humanity<sup>37</sup>. Humans, the literature on narrative insists, are conditioned not only to tell stories<sup>38</sup> but also to open their hearts to a good story<sup>39</sup>, which perhaps explains why storytelling has always been used to instruct and to transmit moral values. Niles reminds us:

Even more than the use of language in and of itself or other systems of symbol management, storytelling is an ability that defines the human species as such, at least as far as our knowledge of human experience extends into the historical past and into the sometimes startling realms that ethnography has brought to light.<sup>40</sup>

To summarize then, but also to transition to the second argument, narrative can be a potent weapon to fight climate change denialism because throughout the history of our species, we have relied on stories and storytelling to pull through crises, including, according to Bernard Victorri<sup>41</sup>, species-threatening crises. This is a virtue of narrative charismatic business and political leaders understand and appreciate a lot, to the point that a whole cottage industry has developed around storytelling training. The point is, in times of crisis or rapid change, people are generally anxious. They literally do not know where to turn to but because “[...] rather than focusing on general, abstract situations or trends, stories are accounts of what happened to particular people—and of what it was like for them to experience what happened—in particular circumstances and with specific consequences”<sup>42</sup>, they inspire and reassure us.

The third is an argument often given for the widespread adoption of narrative inquiry in educational research, i.e., the use of narrative can and does give voice to the voiceless. There are two ways “giving voice to the voiceless” has been interpreted. First, in the sense in which this is used among advocates of narrative inquiry in educational research when they encourage the kind of personal first-person, almost journal-style writing Robert J. Nash calls “scholarly personal narrative”, which “puts the self of the scholar front and center”<sup>43</sup>, in which the researcher is deeply immersed in the writing. Second, and more central to our purposes here, in the sense in which Jane Elliot speaks of “giv[ing] a voice to the most marginalized groups within society.”<sup>44</sup>In this regard, Rimmon-Kenan notes that “[i]n some social-political contexts, ‘narrative’ is seen as a way of giving voice to minorities or disadvantaged groups, generally repressed and silenced by the hegemony”<sup>45</sup>, while Margret Steixner and Manuel Heidegger consider storytelling as a leveller, “a very egalitarian method”:

Everybody can do it and sometimes even people who have low self-esteem for various reasons [...] feel attracted by storytelling as a simple and natural means of communicating their views and experiences.<sup>46</sup>

As Leo Marx reminds us, providing the scientific evidence establishing climate change as well as coming up with the technical countermeasures to mitigate its effects are the province of scientists and engineers. Still there is a whole lot the humanities can do to help provide a context for understanding or to help distil wisdom from the knowledge produced by scientists since environmental problems typically “have their origin in the practices, individual and institutional, of human beings”.<sup>47</sup>

Once it is granted the humanities can make significant contributions of the sort we have been talking about to environmental protection efforts, the next question is what is the ideal vehicle for making this contribution? Enter narrative, in particular for humanities scholars with a literary bent.

The fourth and final argument is the emergence of narrative as a potent tool for exploring personal identity. In a video primer on narrative theories of personal identity, Elisabeth Camp reminds us how this view, which “starts from the idea that we are fundamentally sense-making creatures, *Homo narrans*[...]: ‘tellers’, [...] or ‘knowers’”<sup>48</sup>, has transformed how philosophers approach the compelling question “Who am I?”:

From a narrative view, ‘Who I am’ is given by the story I tell about myself. Or, maybe, to guard against preemption or self-deception, the stories that an especially honest, reflective version of myself would tell.<sup>49</sup>

Upon closer examination, it is easy to see how at the heart of the climate change challenge lies the question of personal identity. The anthropogenic global warming and climate change question challenges all of us to deal with fundamental questions such as: Who am I? Are there things I care about sufficiently as to be willing to turn to the precautionary principle even when I strongly believe the jury is still out on them? What is my place in the universe? What is my relationship with other humans, even in far-flung lands? What are my civic and moral responsibilities as a citizen of my local community, my country and planet Earth? What is my relationship with generations yet unborn? Are the lives of little children growing up in the remotest black African villages less important than those of children growing up in Casablanca, Rome, New York or Melbourne just because of the geography of their birth?<sup>50</sup>These are by no means easy questions to deal with, in particular given that we now know global warming and climate change create losers and winners. Notwithstanding, my contention is that the humanities can—and should again begin to—help us try to answer these questions for as Wolin reminds us

The humanities’ mission is to provide an answer to Tolstoy’s existential interrogative: what should I do and how should I live? [...] The prerogative of

science, in the sense of *Wissenschaft* or technical scholarship, is the domain of instrumental or formal reason. Science determines the most efficient, rational means to achieve a given end. As to whether such ends themselves are intrinsically worth pursuing, science is agnostic. It consigns such queries to the reverie of poets on starry nights.<sup>51</sup>

## 6. Discussion

I have probably carried on as if narrative was an unproblematic concept and tool; it is not—and on many levels. It is not if one has in mind that the term is sometimes taken in the sense of *a particular* point of view of events, which would then be one point of view among many others. It is not either if we consider that narrative can be used to give voice to the voiceless, with its attendant risks, including the risk of stigma. Nor is it if we keep in mind the ever-lurking question whether the events related by our narratives “are really real”<sup>52</sup>, arising from but also leading to narrative being held only to standards of verisimilitude. Yet, there is a serious case to be made, sometimes drawing on narrative’s supposed weaknesses, for it as a tool that can be used to great effect to contribute to efforts to deal with some of the knotty issues of our time, including climate change denialism.

Let us briefly consider two of these weaknesses, narrative’s malleability (and ubiquity) which, by “collapsing [...] the difference between literature (or fiction) on the one hand and non-literature (‘life’) on the other”<sup>53</sup>, has led to a situation—and this is the second weakness—where narratives can only aspire to verisimilitude. While it has been argued, e.g., by Pekka Tanmi that “[t]he celebrated ubiquity of narrative in culture is both a fecund premise and [...] the bane of narrative theory today”<sup>54</sup> and by Rimmon-Kenan that by insisting on finding narrative everywhere, we risk emptying the concept of all content, it is equally true the extension of the concept to other media (film, theatre, music, art, etc.) has greatly expanded the options for the kinds of uses to which narrative has been put since the narrative turn. For example, it is thanks to this extension that a work such as “The Inconvenient Truth”, Al Gore’s award-winning documentary (directed by Davis Guggenheim) has been received as a reference for the use of narrative to bring climate change awareness to the largest number possible. Similarly, it is easy to see how the fact that narratives are held only to standards of verisimilitude can be both a weakness and a strength. Bruner captures this ambivalence perfectly in the following passage:

Unlike the constructions generated by logical and scientific procedures which can be weeded out by falsification, narrative constructions can only achieve “verisimilitude.” Narratives, then, are a version of reality whose acceptability is governed by convention and “narrative necessity” rather than by empirical verification and logical requiredness [...]<sup>55</sup>

Thus, while there may be other avenues for the humanities to contribute to the debates of our time, I contend that they can also help us navigate these difficult terrains by crafting and telling the stories of our common humanity. Indeed, if, as Esther Mackintosh argues, “[t]he key is to persuade members of the public that the humanities are not just a set of disciplines but a tool that can open lines of communication and dialogue, generate ideas, and *show us how the issues we confront have been handled by people in other times and places*,”<sup>56</sup> (emphasis added), I do not see how the recalibration of the humanities advocated by NH 3.0 can avoid having narrative at its core. Of course, it would be great if such narratives were grand or master narratives, but personal and particular narratives would also do. As neuroscientist Paul A. Zak<sup>57</sup> and his team have established, good stories, especially character-driven ones, cause oxytocin, the empathy neurochemical, to synthesize in the brain, leading to a greater amenability to empathize with the narrator.

Regarding the crisis in the humanities, it seems to me stakeholders could either switch to defence mode and parse words or roll up their sleeves and see it as a challenge and an opportunity for renewal. As I have suggested elsewhere, we could begin by looking beyond terminology differences and ask how we can continue to work on the ongoing issues of the sector, in the interest of both the humanities and society at large.

For example, much has been made, including in this paper, of the broad general education afforded by the humanities, which should, among other things, help develop the critical thinking faculties of beneficiaries, allowing them to come to their own judgment in important matters. If the humanities are to succeed in this, they will need to have their sight set beyond the number of humanities graduates and PhDs they produce and work towards ensuring every citizen, irrespective of discipline or profession, has the opportunity to benefit from this kind of education. Obviously, this goal is easier to pursue on campuses than in the outside world. Here in Nigeria, for example, the choice has been the integration of a number of Nigeria University Commission-required general studies courses, drawn mostly from the humanities, in the curriculum of the various degree programmes<sup>58</sup>. There is also the bold but no doubt onerous model suggested by Susan Jeffords at the 2012 Modern Language Association Roundtable titled “Making a Case for the Humanities: Advocacy and Audience” which is worth looking at for a way forward. She calls for the embedding of humanities faculty in other units to make for a tighter and more seamless integration that would see “the humanities infusing across the university the perspectives and capabilities that students learn in humanities classes”<sup>59</sup>. The more difficult task, however, is how to make up for lost opportunities once people have graduated without being exposed to this kind of humanities education or when members of the public are just genuinely interested in pursuing a life-long humanities education. This is where proper engagement by the humanities with the public beyond advocacy for themselves comes in, in terms of outreach to make up for missed literacy opportunities.

Elsewhere, I suggested that there might be at the root of climate change denialism both an environmental and citizenship literacy gap. The humanities need to begin viewing the bridging of this gap as part of their mission to raise an informed citizenry. If citizens have the opportunity to educate themselves properly about the issues, they are more likely to want to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem, even if in good faith. There are no overly ready-made solutions here, not to talk of a one-size-fits-all solution. Humanists will need to examine the particular circumstances of their communities to determine what works for them in terms of how to create learning opportunities for citizens to reflect on what it means to be a citizen and the value of the environment. However, the model offered by *Imagining America*<sup>60</sup>, which proposes programmes and research projects designed to provide opportunities for growth for students and faculty but also for useful engagement with the public, looks exciting to me and is worth understudying by other national humanities sectors.

With global warming and climate change, the international community faces not only one of the most compelling problems of our time but also one of the most irritating. Global warming and climate change constitute a compelling problem because they remind us in the most dramatic fashion that, irrespective of where we live, we are all citizens of a country called planet Earth and that for some things national borders, even when they are protected by high electrified walls, can only go so far in keeping the problems away. The individual and corporate choices made at locations thousands of miles away can still affect our lives in the most unexpected ways and, therefore, irrespective of whether we contributed to the problem or not, we still have an interest in being part of the solution. Further—and this is a cruel irony as many have pointed out—the poor countries who contribute the least to the build-up of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases directly responsible for global warming are also

those most likely to pay the greatest toll for its effects. This is so precisely because they are poor and may not be able to afford any future mitigation measures and technologies.

The global warming and climate change debate is irritating because of the lack of good faith that has sometimes characterized the debate. There is, for example, the desperation of deniers who would cling to the most insignificant error or faux pas of the other side to weave the most mind-numbing theories regarding non-existent conspiracies to conceal the evidence. An example that comes to mind is the scandal created by the leaked e-mails of the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit<sup>61</sup>. In particular, there is also the bad faith of deniers who have sought to use the hedging characteristic of how scientific claims are made to argue that anthropogenic climate change is just a hypothesis thrown out there and that the jury was still out.

It is in this context that efforts by the international community to put in place and implement policies capable of averting any future catastrophe—from the Kyoto Protocol to the Paris Agreement—have continued to come up against the brick wall formed by a small but powerful coalition of deniers. Let me note here that insofar as climate change denial spans the whole spectrum of outright rejection of the notion of anthropogenic global warming to the position of those who concede it but do not care about being a part of the solution, even if only out of laziness, there are deniers in every country. Yet, in many ways, climate change denialism is essentially an American problem. All the principal more or less organized groups arrayed against efforts to take measures to combat it—a conservative coalition comprising the political right and the religious right on one hand and the fossil fuel lobby on the other hand—are American. Further, the culture war that forms the subtext of the skirmishes is also American; it is the now familiar battle of the conservative coalition against liberals, who they accuse, in particular, of seeking to curtail their rights and impugn on their American way of life<sup>62</sup>. In this sense then, the climate change controversy is another front in a larger war, which includes the abortion, same-sex marriage, gun control and political correctness debates as well as the ideological battle to keep the federal government small as a way to pre-empt its meddlesomeness, etc. Based on this, this conservative coalition has approached the climate change debate with the same religious fervour and single-minded determination that has characterized the other battles.

Another source of irritation is that tackling climate change denial has been akin to aiming at a moving target. This is because, as already mentioned elsewhere, there are, by some accounts, as many as six types of deniers. They range from those who outrightly deny climate change is taking place to those who concede climate change but reject the responsibility of humans to those who seek to give a scientific cachet to their denialism by insisting that they be called climate science sceptics even as they would rather do science in the public place, in Internet blogs<sup>63</sup>. Considering that some of these positions are held by the same individuals concurrently, it has been especially difficult making progress in the debate because when one argument is shot down, they simply pull out another one from their collection.

While I do not want to hold climate change advocates responsible to any degree for deniers' actions, there are nevertheless enabling factors that advocates need to be aware of in order to better control and, thereby, increase the chances of building a broader consensus necessary to implement mitigation policies. It has already been mentioned elsewhere that while climate change is creating major problems for many regions, advocates need to realize it is also making some regions more habitable and, therefore, more economically viable. Similarly, changes in temperature are not occurring uniformly and numbers advanced by scientists are average temperature increases, which tell us nothing about local conditions, which may be significantly different. Yet, most people are more interested in their local conditions as Quirin Schiermeier warns:

To plan for the future, people need to know how their local conditions will change, not how the average global temperature will climb. Yet researchers are still struggling to develop tools to accurately forecast climate changes for the twenty-first century at the local and regional level.<sup>64</sup>

In particular, while it is not certain that it is for lack of knowledge that deniers hold the positions they hold, it is still based on the evidence developed by scientists that advocates can hope to get them to change their positions, not be vilification. This calls for the adoption of communication strategies that are sophisticated enough to factor in the fact that “society’s capacity to cope with [... possible remedies of an environmental problem] will in considerable measure depend on less tangible, largely unquantifiable political, institutional, and cultural factors.”<sup>65</sup> It turns out the humanities are particularly endowed to do this because, as Marx, puts it

The essential method of the humanities is historically informed interpretation. Among its merits, this method lends a temporal dimension to our understanding of environmental problems which we otherwise are likely to define in misleadingly presentist terms. (The presentist view of a situation ignores its past and assumes that its only significant manifestations exist in the present.)<sup>66</sup>

But modern humanities are also particularly suited to do this because they are, by their preferred dialogic teaching methods, as has suggested Wolin, direct heirs of Plato and his colloquies and debates and, beyond Plato, of “Florentine humanists [who] realized that scholarly learning must take place as the critical appropriation rather than as the passive fetishization or glorification of Great Texts.”<sup>67</sup>

## 7. Conclusion

*Continued from page 3...*

Lagos, Nigeria. Weekend of 17–19 February 2017. Two important things to report. For the first time during the ongoing Harmattan, we experienced something close to the normal early morning Harmattan cold of yore three mornings in a row and then we were returned to the new normal. Second, and more importantly, I had seen my first *udarà* of the season a few days after Christmas but what happened this weekend took me completely by surprise. I saw my first mangoes of the season in a neighbourhood Lagos market. It was such a surprise because during my weekly commute to Osun State, every mango tree I had seen was barely flowering and none of the agricultural produce vendors that line the expressway offered mangoes as they normally would during the mango season. There had to be some conspiracy to mess with my mind, I thought to myself.

As soon as I got home, I put through a call to a colleague in Ogbomosho to find out what was the situation with mangoes there. A little explainer is perhaps necessary here. Ogbomosho is to mangoes a little bit of what Paris is to *haute couture*. I therefore think it fitting to describe the town as “the mango capital of the world.” Or, maybe just of Nigeria. It is the only town I know which has been honoured by a variety of mango being named after it. My colleague assured me mangoes wouldn’t be out in Ogbomosho for another two months.

One of the things I have tried to do in this paper is show that whether the crisis in the humanities is as bad as some make it out to be or not, it need not be a death knell. Instead, I have argued that stakeholders have a duty to view the ongoing adversity of the humanities as both challenge and opportunity. The times call for a positioning of humanities disciplines to more effectively equip citizens to deal with questions of how we can and should live to the fullest in the present, but with a clear understanding of our history and an acute sense of our duties and responsibilities to our collective future.

But the paper is also intended as a demonstration paper of the opportunities before a recalibrated humanities, or New Humanities 3.0, that are able to take on issues and themes outside their typical areas of predilection, relying on a retooling of their traditional inquiry methods and bringing to bear on the inquiry sensibilities that are recognizably of the humanities. Climate change and climate change denialism, which have been the focus of the demonstration, are compelling enough because of the real existential threat they pose. Yet, as I pointed out in the body of the paper, the far greater risk to humanity is the disenlightenment culture (or culture of unreason) that in part sustains climate change denialism. Because we are the humanities, we must challenge it at every turn.

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<sup>1</sup>Marx, Leo. "The Humanities and the Defense of the Environment," (Working Paper No. 15, Program in Science, Technology, and Society, Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1991.<http://megaslides.com/doc/9267383/the-humanities-and-the-defense-of-the-environment.>), 5.

<sup>2</sup>Wikipedia.

<sup>3</sup> In *Climate Wars: Why People will be Killed in the Twenty-First Century*, Harald Welzer warns: "Space and resource conflicts due to global warming will fundamentally alter the shape of Western societies in the next few decades [...]. Climate change is therefore not only an extremely urgent issue for environmental policy; it will also be the greatest social challenge of the modern age, threatening the very existence of millions of people and forcing them into mass migration. The question of how to cope with such flows will become inescapable as refugees of whatever provenance seek to enhance their survival chances by moving to better-off countries." (Welzer, Harald. *Climate Wars. What People Will Be Killed for in the 21st Century*. (ePub edition. Translated from the German by Patrick Camiller. Cambridge: Polity, 2012.))

Also, according to *The Guardian* of 17 October 2016, the FAO 2016 *State of Food and Agriculture* report identified "Climate change [...as] 'a major and growing threat to global food security', [...] warning that it could increase the global population living in extreme poverty by between 35 and 122 million by 2030, with farming communities in sub-Saharan Africa among the hardest hit."

<sup>4</sup>Dismissing earlier claims of 97% agreement on anthropogenic global warming among publishing scientists, James Lawrence Powell has put the agreement rate at the near unanimity number of 99.99%:

"My search found 24,210 articles by 69,406 authors. In my judgment, only five articles rejected AGW [...]. These represent a proportion of 1 article in 4,842 or 0.021%. With regard to the authors, 4 reject AGW: 1 in 17,352 or 0.0058%. As explained, I interpret this to mean that 99.99% of publishing scientists accept AGW: virtual unanimity .

"Of course, what matters is not only how many articles reject AGW but also the quality of the evidence presented and the influence of those articles on science. The latter we can judge from the number of citations. As of January 2016, excluding self-citations, the five rejecting articles have been cited a total of once. The only possible conclusion is that there is no convincing evidence against AGW." (Powell, James Lawrence. "Climate Scientists Virtually Unanimous: Anthropogenic Global Warming Is True."(*Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 35.5-6 (2015): 121–124. DOI: 10.1177/0270467616634958.), 124.)

<sup>5</sup>I take it for granted here that an informed citizenry is also one where individuals have benefitted from a broad enough education allowing them to examine issues with an open mind in order to come to their own conclusions. In this regard, Richard Wolin is right to insist that "[t]raditionally, the virtue of the humanities has been their capacity to counter the stultifying specialization that pervades modern life, and instead to provide an overview of the scope and expanse of life as a whole. (Wolin, Richard. "Reflections on the Crisis in the Humanities." (*Hedgehog Review* 13.2 (2011): 8-20.), 10.)

<sup>6</sup> Nicholas Maxwell has argued that one important reason our noblest efforts to make real progress have often appeared doomed and science and technology have become, so to speak, the cause of our global problems, is to be found in our institutions of learning. They "are neither designed nor devoted to helping humanity learn how to tackle global problems—problems of living—in more intelligent, humane, and effective ways" and focus on knowledge and knowledge inquiry. He therefore suggests that if we want to obtain different results we should prioritize wisdom and wisdom inquiry over knowledge and knowledge inquiry. (Maxwell, Nicholas. *How Universities Can Help Create a Wiser World. The Urgent Need for an Academic Revolution*. Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2014.)



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<sup>7</sup>Conway, Erik. "What's in a Name? Global Warming vs. Climate Change."([https://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/features/climate\\_by\\_any\\_other\\_name.html](https://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/features/climate_by_any_other_name.html).)

<sup>8</sup> Conway, Erik. "What's in a Name? Global Warming vs. Climate Change."

<sup>9</sup>Wikipedia.

<sup>10</sup> Donoghue, Frank. *The Last Professors: The Twilight of the Humanities in the Corporate University*. (New York: The Fordham University Press, 2008), 1.

<sup>11</sup> Rosen, Gideon. "Notes on a Crisis". (*Princeton Alumni Weekly*, 9 July 2014. <https://paw.princeton.edu/article/notes-crisis>. 2014.)

<sup>12</sup>Bell, David A. "Reimagining the Humanities: Proposal for a New Century". (*Dissent Magazine*, Fall 2010. <http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/reimagining-the-humanities-proposals-for-a-new-century>).

<sup>13</sup> Bell, A. David. "Reimagining the Humanities: Proposal for a New Century".

<sup>14</sup> Bell, A. David. "Reimagining the Humanities: Proposal for a New Century".

<sup>15</sup> Bérubé, Michael (2013). "The Humanities, Unraveled." (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 18 February 2013. <http://chronicle.com/article/Humanities-Unraveled/137291/>.)

<sup>16</sup>Levine, Peter. "Rethinking the Humanities."(Blog: *A Blog for Civic Renewal*. Posted 16 May 2012. <http://peterlevine.ws/?p=8876>.)

<sup>17</sup> Turner, G., and Brass, K.. *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia*. (Canberra: Australian Academy of the Humanities, 2014), 90.

<sup>18</sup> Wright, Laurence. "Valuing the humanities: What the reports don't say".(*S Afr J Sci*. 2013; 109(1/2), Art. #a002, 3 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/sajs.2013/a002>), 1.

<sup>19</sup> Wright, Laurence. "Valuing the humanities: What the reports don't say", 1.

<sup>20</sup> In a piece on the situation of the humanities in Africa, Linda Nordling, the "African science policy, education and development" writer for SciDev.net, tells the story of how Uganda's president Yoweri Museveni, during the launch of science laboratory at Uganda's Ndejje University in 2015, dismissed humanities and arts courses as "useless" and academics in these disciplines as "people putting on big academic gowns but [...] with no solutions to many of the country's challenges". (Nordling, Linda. "Africa Analysis: A need to overhaul the humanities." (12 March 2015. *Analysis Blog*. <http://www.scidev.net/sub-saharan-africa/education/analysis-blog/overhaul-the-humanities.html>.)

While such words may sound harsh and unfair, in particular coming from someone who is said to have majored in a humanities and arts discipline, it is nevertheless easy to see where such commentators are coming from. The vast majority of African countries are still grappling with the problems of under-development and while they may see the value of the humanities for the overall development of their people, they would rather for now prioritize good roads, regular electricity, good healthcare delivery systems, good housing, potable water supply, etc.

<sup>21</sup> Oyeweso, Siyan. "Towards New Directions in Humanities Scholarship in Nigeria." (Blog: *Siyan Oyeweso*, <http://talktosiyen.blogspot.com.ng/2012/12/towards-new-directions-in-humanities.html>.)

<sup>22</sup>Waugh, Patricia. "English and the Future of the Humanities." (Position paper, 2010. [http://www.universityenglish.ac.uk/wp-content/docs/English\\_and\\_the\\_Future\\_of\\_the\\_Humanities.pdf](http://www.universityenglish.ac.uk/wp-content/docs/English_and_the_Future_of_the_Humanities.pdf).)

<sup>23</sup> In the early 1990s, as the personal computing revolution was taking hold, Harnad wrote two particularly prescient papers envisioning how the revolution would transform scholarship: Harnad, Stevan. "Scholarly Skywriting and the Prepublication Continuum of Scientific Inquiry." (*Psychological Science* 1: 342-343, 1990.); and Harnad, Stevan. "Post-Gutenberg Galaxy: The Fourth Revolution in the Means of Production of Knowledge". (*Public-Access Computer Systems Review* 2 (1): 39 - 53, 1991.). The articles explored two main ideas. The first was how emailing, online discussion groups, and all the emerging avenues for electronic prepublication open peer review, with the endless possibilities of interaction, were going to radically transform the scholarship scene and what scholars, in particular in the humanities and social and human sciences, needed to do to take advantage to speed up the validation of knowledge process in their fields. The second idea was how online publishing and digital archiving were already transforming the dissemination of research in the sciences and why other sectors needed to take a cue to bring their research to the largest number possible.

<sup>24</sup>Vaugh, Patricia. "English and Future of the Humanities."

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<sup>25</sup> Slingerland, Edward. *What Science Offers the Humanities: Integrating Body and Culture*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 300.

<sup>26</sup> Insofar as the humanities scholar wishing “to aggressively colonize” such non-traditional territories may need to team up with researchers for whom such territories are home, it is easy to see how NH 3.0 loops back to the concerns of NH 2.0, which was mostly about transdisciplinary and collaborative research.

<sup>27</sup> Jeffords, Susan. Contribution to the 2012 Modern Languages Roundtable, *Making a Case for the Humanities: Advocacy and Audience*. 2012, 6.

<sup>28</sup> Wolin, Richard. “Reflections on the Crisis in the Humanities”, 18-19.

<sup>29</sup> One cannot help wondering why, for example, the humanities do not offer high quality magazines and journals with missions similar to those of science’s *Nature*, *Scientific American*, *Pour la science*, etc.—prestigious off-the-shelf publications that communicate to the public the work scientists are doing and how this is going to affect their lives.

<sup>30</sup> *Making a Case for the Humanities: Advocacy and Audience*. 2012 Modern Language Association Roundtable. Teresa Mangum, Session Organizer. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith (2006). “Concepts of Narrative” (in *The Travelling Concept of Narrative*, edited by Matti Hyvärinen, Anu Korhonen and Juri Mykkänen. Collegium: Studies across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences 1. Helsinki: Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, 2006, 10–19), 16.

<sup>32</sup> Denning, Stephen. “What is a story? What is narrative meaning?” (<http://www.stevedenning.com/Business-Narrative/definitions-of-story-and-narrative.aspx>.)

<sup>33</sup> Fludernik, Monika. *An Introduction to Narratology*. (Translated from the German by Patricia Häusler-Greenfield and Monika Fludernik. London: Routledge, 2006), 6.

<sup>34</sup> Webster, Leonard and Patricia Mertova. *Using Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method. An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. London: Routledge, 2007, 7.

<sup>35</sup> Atlas.ti. “Narrative Research”. Retrieved 13 February 2017: <http://atlasti.com/narrative-research/>.

<sup>36</sup> McAdams, Dan P., Ruthellen Josselson, and Amia Lieblich. “Introduction.” (in *Identity and Story: Creating Self in Narrative*, edited by McAdams, Dan P., Ruthellen Josselson, and Amia Lieblich, 3–11. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2006), 4.

<sup>37</sup> “Oral narrative or what we call storytelling in everyday speech,” Niles argues, “is as much around us as the air we breathe, although we often take its casual forms so much for granted that we are scarcely aware of them.” (Niles, John D. *Homo Narrans. The Poetics and Anthropology of Oral Literature*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 1.)

<sup>38</sup> “Humans”, Connelly and Clandin argue, “are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives.” (Connelly, Michael F. and D. B. Clandinin. “Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry.” (*Educational Researcher*, Vol. 19, No. 5 (Jun. - Jul., 1990), 2-14. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1176100>.), 2).

<sup>39</sup> “Storytelling may seem like an old-fashioned tool, today—and it is. That’s exactly what makes it so powerful. Life happens in the narratives we tell one another. A story can go where quantitative analysis is denied admission: our hearts. Data can persuade people, but it doesn’t inspire them to act; to do that, you need to wrap your vision in a story that fires the imagination and stirs the soul.” (Monarth, Harrison. “The Irresistible Power of Storytelling as a Strategic Business Tool.” *Harvard Business Review*. 11 march 2014. <https://hbr.org/2014/03/the-irresistible-power-of-storytelling-as-a-strategic-business-tool>.)

<sup>40</sup> Niles, John D. *Homo Narrans. The Poetics and Anthropology of Oral Literature*., 3.

<sup>41</sup> Rejecting the three possible explanations hitherto advanced for the extinction of all archaic *Homo sapiens* with the exception of our species, Victorri has instead advanced a hypothesis with the narrative function of language at its core. He suggests that during this period of recurring species-threatening crises, *Homo sapiens sapiens* would have invented a novel function of language, the narrative function, which allowed them to recount the events of past crises and, thus, make up for a lack of biological revulsion at that point in the hominization process. He concludes that this ability to recount past events could have enabled our ancestors to avoid the social destabilization acts that made the rest of archaic *Homo sapiens* vulnerable and ultimately led to their extinction. (Victorri, Bernard. « *Homo narrans* : le rôle de la narration dans l’émergence du langage. », 117–122.).

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And, if I may add, it is a version of this hypothesis that we find at work in “The Story People” thought experiment proposed by Jonathan Gottschall in *The Storytelling Animal. How Stories Make Us Human*.

<sup>42</sup> Herman, David. *Basic Elements of Narrative*. (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.), 1–2.

<sup>43</sup> Nash, Robert J. *Liberating Scholarly Writing: The Power of Personal Narrative*. (New York: Columbia Teachers Press, 2004), 18.

<sup>44</sup> Elliott, Jane. *Using Narrative in Social Research Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. (London: SAGE Publications, 2005), 144.

<sup>45</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith (2006). “Concepts of Narrative”, 15.

<sup>46</sup> Steixner, Margret and Manuel Heidegger. “Reviving the Tradition of Storytelling for Global Practice”. (20 September 2013. <http://www.sietareu.org/images/stories/congress2013/presentations/Margret%20Steixener%20The%20power%20of%20storytelling.pdf>.)

<sup>47</sup> Marx, Leo. “The Humanities and the Defense of the Environment,” 2.

<sup>48</sup> Camp, Elisabeth. “Personal Identity (The Narrative Self)”. (February 5, 2016. Online Video from “WiPhi: Open Access Philosophy”. <http://www.wi-phi.com/video/personal-identity-narrative-self>.)

<sup>49</sup> Camp, Elisabeth. “Personal Identity (The Narrative Self)”.

<sup>50</sup> A Monash University study reports as follows: “[...] the contrasting opinions of believers and sceptics about the causes of climate change provided the basis of social identities that define who they are, what they stand for, and who they stand with (and against).” (Monash University. “Actions, beliefs behind climate change stance.” *ScienceDaily*. [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/02/150202114549.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/02/150202114549.htm).)

<sup>51</sup> Wolin, Richard. “Reflections on the Crisis in the Humanities”, 10.

<sup>52</sup> Camp, Elisabeth. “Personal Identity (The Narrative Self)”.

<sup>53</sup> Tammi, Pekka. “Against Narrative (“A Boring Story”).” (*Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 4.2 (2006): 19-40), 27.

<sup>54</sup> Tammi, Pekka. “Against Narrative (“A Boring Story”)”, 19.

<sup>55</sup> Bruner, Jerome. “The Narrative Construction of Reality”. (*Narrative Intelligence*. Mateas, Michael & Sengers, Phoebe, eds. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003, 42–62), 44.

<sup>56</sup> Mackintosh, Esther. Contribution to *Making a Case for the Humanities: Advocacy and Audience*. (2012 Modern Language Association Roundtable. Teresa Mangum, Session Organizer. [<sup>57</sup> Zak, J. Paul. “Why Inspiring Stories Make Us React: The Neuroscience of Narrative.” \(\*Cerebrum: The Dana Forum on Brain Science\* 2015 \(2015\),\) 2.](https://www.btaa.org/docs/default-source/reports/making_a_case_for_the_humanities_advocacy_and_audience.pdf?sfvrsn=0., 9–12), 11.</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

Zak, J. Paul. “Why Your Brain Loves Good Storytelling.” (*Harvard Business Review*. 28 October 2014. <https://hbr.org/2014/10/why-your-brain-loves-good-storytelling>.)

<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately, I doubt that any fair-minded person can look at the outcome of this effort over the years and unequivocally state that it has been a success. The choice of courses clearly needs to be reviewed and a clear sense of the objectives pursued developed. In addition, the implementation and commitment of the institutions and staff who teach these courses are also areas to be worked on. At the present, they seem to be just going through the motions to comply with the University Commission’s mandate. Yet, if we truly have in mind to augment the disciplinary learning of beneficiaries with aspects of a broad based humanistic education of a nature to foster critical thinking this element of our curricula needs to be approached with the same seriousness we approach the teaching of the core courses of the different programmes.

<sup>59</sup> Jeffords, Susan. Contribution to 2012 Modern Languages Roundtable, *Making a Case for the Humanities: Advocacy and Audience*. 2012, 6.

<sup>60</sup> [www.imaginingamerica.org](http://www.imaginingamerica.org).

<sup>61</sup> See, e.g., Ward, Bob. “A Reputation in Tatters.” *New Scientist* (29 May 2010), 26–27.

<sup>62</sup> See, e.g. Collomb, Jean-Daniel. “The Ideology of Climate Change Denial in the United States.” *European Journal of American Studies*, 9.1 (Spring 2014), Document 5. <http://ejas.revues.org/10305>; DOI: 10.4000/ejas.10305.

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<sup>63</sup> See, e.g., “Another dumb climate psychology paper.” (3 February 2015). The IPCC Report. (Blog) <https://ipccreport.wordpress.com/2015/02/03/another-dumb-climate-psychology-paper/>.

<sup>64</sup>Schiermeier, Quirin. “The Real Hole in Climate Science.” (in *Nature*, 463 (21 January 2010), 284–287.), 284.

<sup>65</sup>Marx, Leo. “The Humanities and the Defense of the Environment.”, 5.

<sup>66</sup>Marx, Leo. “The Humanities and the Defense of the Environment.”, 4.

<sup>67</sup>Wolin, Richard. “Reflections on the Crisis in the Humanities.”, 17.

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