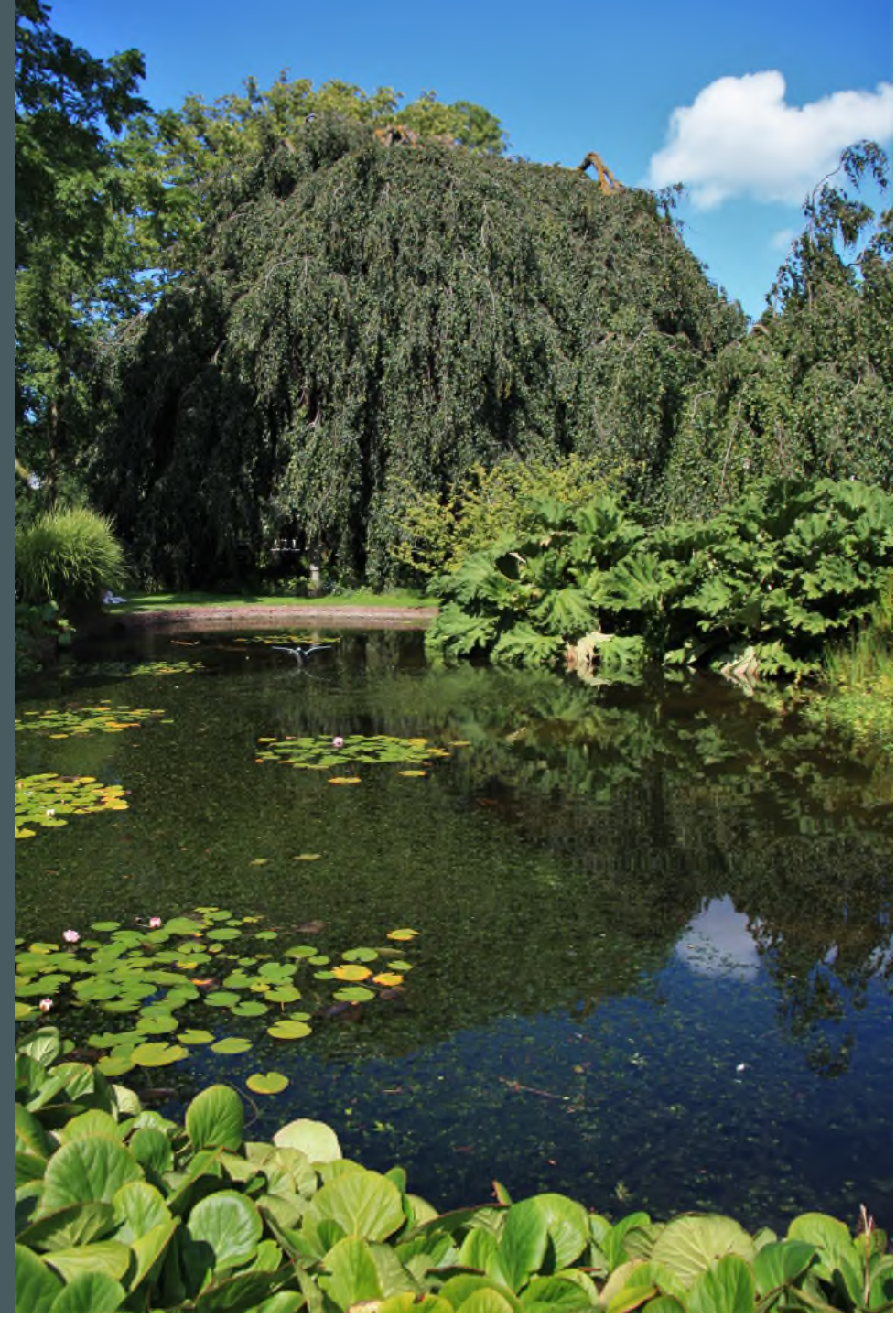


*CGHE conference, UCL IOE, 27 March 2024:
The public good role of higher education*

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC AND COMMON GOOD

Simon Marginson / University of Oxford
CGHE PI and Director 2014-2024

Hortus Botanicus, Leiden University, Netherlands



NO ONE IS AN ISLAND

JOHN DONNE 1624

No Man Is An Island

No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were:
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind,
And therefore never send to know for
whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.

John Donne

IN A MULTI-POLAR CAPITALIST
WORLD IN EXISTENTIAL CRISIS,
THIS IS A CHALLENGING TOPIC:

WHERE IS THE
COMMON GOOD?

WHERE IS THE *GLOBAL*
COMMON GOOD?



HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC AND COMMON GOOD

1. Foundations of the research project

- Neglect of collective and non-pecuniary individual outcomes
- Nation-state variation and the approach to comparison

2. Organisation of the research

3. Aspects of public and common good:

- the state as public sector
- universal beneficence: *the public good*
- the inclusive communicative domain
- the public/private dual in economics
- distinction between public and common good
- the problem of global common good
- concluding remarks



THE DOCTRINE WE CRITIQUE

1. METHODOLOGICAL INDIVIDUALISM
(*NO COLLECTIVE ASPECT IN SOCIETY*)

2. INDIVIDUAL PERSONS ARE UNITS OF
ECONOMIC CAPITAL

‘Methodological individualism is a doctrine about explanation which asserts that all attempts to explain social (or individual) phenomena are to be rejected ... unless they are couched wholly in terms of facts about individuals.’

Steven Lukes (1973), *Individualism*, Basil Blackwell, p. 110



A photograph of a dense forest. In the foreground, two large, ancient-looking trees with thick, gnarled trunks and extensive, exposed root systems dominate the view. The roots spread out across the forest floor, which is covered in dark soil and green undergrowth. The background is filled with many more trees, their trunks receding into the distance. Sunlight filters through the dense canopy of green leaves, creating a dappled light effect on the forest floor. The overall atmosphere is serene and majestic.

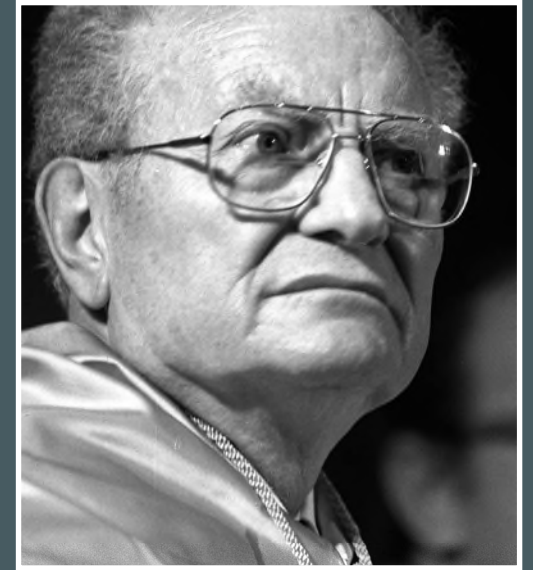
INDIVIDUAL TREES AND THE COLLECTIVE WOOD

INDIVIDUAL TREES AND THE COLLECTIVE WOOD



THE ECONOMIC POLICY DUALISM: SAMUELSON'S PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GOODS

- Goods are *non-rivalrous* when consumed by anyone without being depleted, for example knowledge of a mathematical theorem, which sustains its use value everywhere, indefinitely
- Goods are *non-excludable* when benefits cannot be confined to individuals, e.g. national defence, clean air, basic research
- Private goods are neither non-rivalrous nor non-excludable, and can be produced and sold as commodities in markets
- Public goods are non-rivalrous and/or non excludable. They are subject to market failure and financed by state or philanthropy



Paul Samuelson (1954.) The pure theory of public expenditure. *Review of Economics and Statistics* 36 (4), pp. 387–9

(Common-pool goods, are rivalrous but non-excludable, such as a fishing zone. goods are excludable but non-rivalrous until occurs.)

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GOODS DO NOT HAVE TO BE ZERO-SUM

‘A tenable conception of the public sphere would countenance not the exclusion, but the inclusion, of interests and issues labelled as “private”’.



Nancy Fraser (1990),
Rethinking the public sphere: A
contribution to the critique of
actually existing democracy.
Social Text, 25/26, pp. 56-80.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/466240>

THE COMPARATIVE PROJECT INVESTIGATES

- How the outcomes of higher education are conceived in national cultures and policy jurisdictions other than the Anglophone, with due regard for lexical issues
- How 'public' (or nearest equivalent) non-pecuniary individual and collective outcomes in higher education are understood by practitioners and policy makers in the different jurisdictions
- What different countries might learn from others



STUDIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PUBLIC GOOD

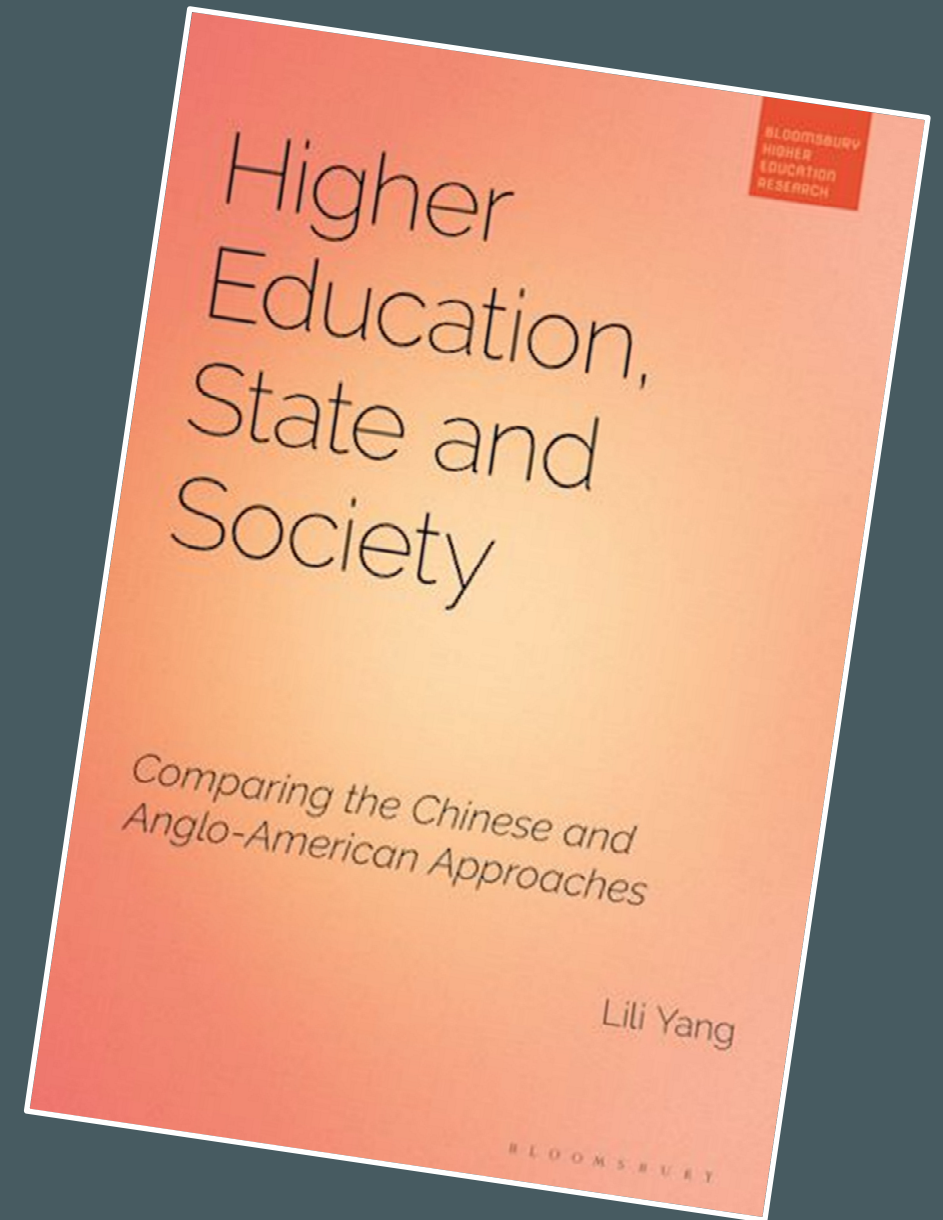
Country	Researchers	Data collection	Interviews in universities	Other interviews
Canada	Tom Brotherhood	2019	17	3
Chile	Carolina Guzmán-Valenzuela, et al.	2018	55	0
China	Niancai Liu and Lin Tian	2017-2018	22	4
England UK	Aline Courtois, Simon Marginson, Lili Yang	2017 & 2021	13	11
Finland	Olga Mun, Elisa Brewis	2019	18	2
France	Vincent Carpentier and Aline Courtois	2018	41	0
Japan	Lilan Chen Futao Huang, Kiyomi Horiuchi	2017-2020	7	4
Poland	Krystian Szadkowski	2018-2020	18	15
South Korea	Yunkyung Min and Olga Mun	2019	6	2
United States	Gerardo Blanco and Rebecca Schendel	2024	n.a.	n.a.

HIGHER EDUCATION, STATE AND SOCIETY

COMPARING THE CHINESE AND
ANGLO-AMERICAN APPROACHES

Lili Yang, 2022

Bloomsbury, PB £26.09, E-BK £20.87



TRANSPPOSITIONAL ANALYSIS

Q. Is it possible to develop a combined or generic framework for defining, observing, and monitoring the public outcomes of higher education, one that can break free of the neo-liberal restrictions on imagining those outcomes, while accounting for the global range of principles and practices?

A. Transpositional analysis

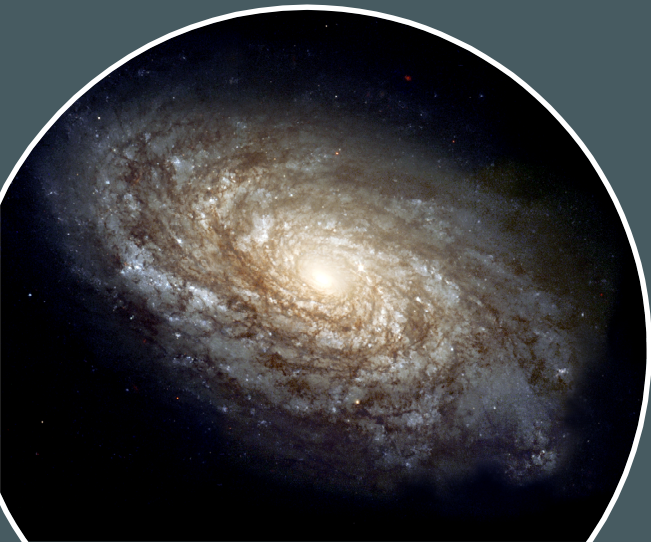


‘Observations are unavoidably position-based, but scientific reasoning need not, of course, be based on observational information from one specific position only. There is a need for what may be called “trans-positional” assessment—drawing on but going beyond different positional observations. The constructed “view from nowhere” would then be based on synthesizing different views from distinct positions... A trans-positional scrutiny would also demand some kind of coherence between different positional views’

Amartya Sen (2002,), *Rationality and Freedom*, Harvard University Press, p. 467.



**Analytic economic
'public/private' dualism:**
public and private exclude
each other



**Normative-universal
'public good':**
public contains and fulfils private

Political 'public sector':
State or government, public regulates private

ANGLOPHONE IDEAS OF 'PUBLIC' AND 'PRIVATE'



POLITICAL 'PUBLIC' AS STATE



NORMATIVE-
UNIVERSAL
'PUBLIC GOOD'

Dusty Spiral Galaxy NGC 4414 - Hubble



THE SOCIALLY-INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIVE 'PUBLIC'





ANALYTIC ECONOMIC 'PUBLIC/PRIVATE' DUALISM

Public goods - non-excludable or non-rivalrous goods, that cannot be produced profitably in market and must be financed by the state or philanthropy

Private goods - everything else, maximizing the space for private profit-making and minimizing spending by the state

HIGHER EDUCATION AND COMMON GOOD(S)

- 2015 UNESCO paper on education as a global common good draws on communitarian West European traditions of solidaristic and participative local democracy – a collective approach, shaped from the bottom up by self-determining communities, in which people share individual rights and common welfare. Private as well as public agents contribute to common goods
- The common good is the combination of common goods
- Higher education helps to form and enable democratic communities in which each person has a voice

UNESCO. (2015). *Rethinking education: Towards a global common good?* UNESCO.
<https://unevoc.unesco.org/e-forum/RethinkingEducation.pdf>



PUBLIC GOOD AND COMMON GOOD

PUBLIC GOOD	COMMON GOOD
‘Public’ as state/government sector	NO, across both public and private sectors
‘Public’ as inclusive of all citizens	YES, and tends to flatten inequalities
‘Public good’ as universal beneficence	YES, shared condition of all
‘Public goods’ as non-market goods	NO, common goods are not market defined
Compatible with any political forms	Presupposes collective local democracy

MAZZUCATO'S COMMENT ON THE LIMITATIONS OF EACH CONCEPT

- **Public good** is top-down and is oriented to private market interest not collective interest. It limits the role of the state to market failure and externalities
- As it has been understood so far, **common good** tends to be confined to the local level and presupposes not just market failure but state failure. It 'places the burden for compensating for weak states on communities'
- What is needed is active and positive government that *combines* the top-down and the bottom up, one that 'promotes and nurtures co-creation and participation'

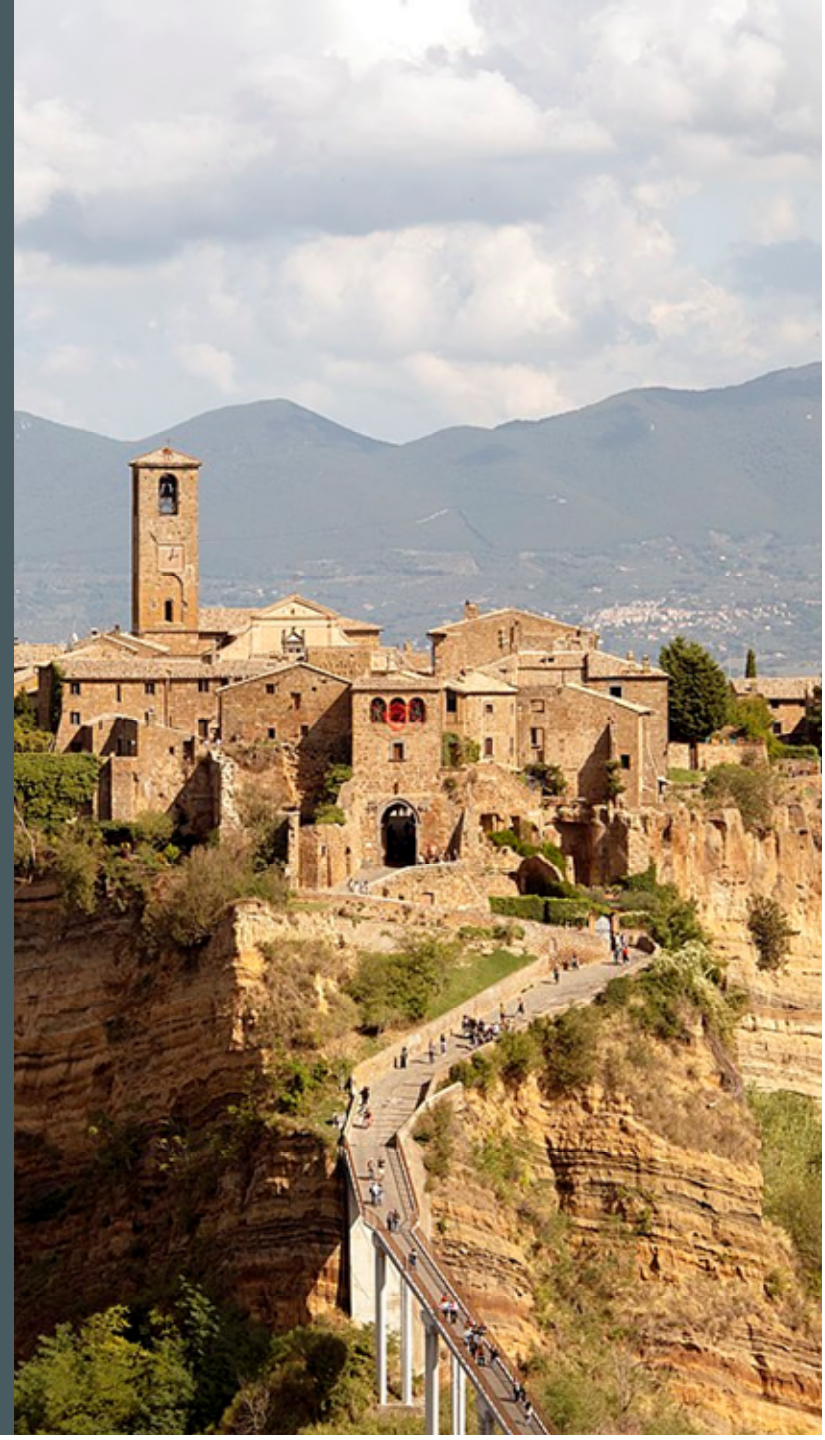


Mariana Mazzucato (2023). Governing the economics of the common good: from correcting market failures to shaping collective goals. *Journal of Economic Policy Reform*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17487870.2023.2280969>

TWO EXTENSIONS OF THE COMMON GOOD IDEA

- **Public common goods:** While non-state actors make common good contributions, the state is the crucial guarantor of equity and transparency and the preventer of private capture. This role of the state can be described as provision of *public common goods*
- **Public value:** ‘The common good needs to be based on a conception of *public value* as collectively negotiated and promoted by a range of stakeholders’ (Mazzucato 2023)
- Both concepts are relevant to higher education

Civita di Bagno Regio, central Italy



GLOBAL PUBLIC AND COMMON GOOD

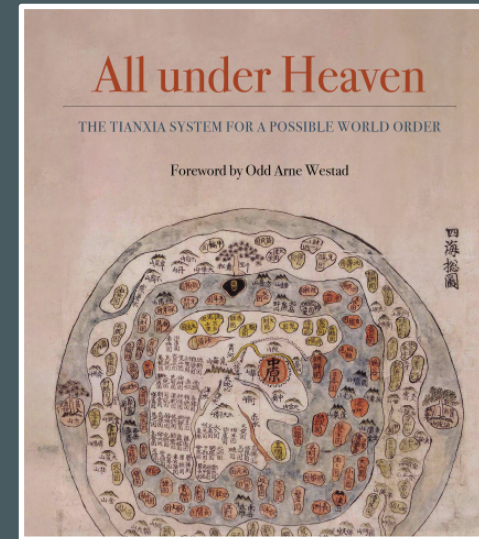
- No global state limits the potential of global public goods
- Global common good rests on shared agendas and collaborative relations and is not confined to state action
- Higher education has advanced potential for global common goods



TIANXIA: A WORLDWIDE PERSPECTIVE

Sinic tradition includes the concept of tianxia, which respects a world without borders based on unity-in-diversity, held together by shared rituals and ethical values rather than coercion:

- ‘... with respect to the political, only nation-states are deemed significant. It is for this reason that the world has only been exploited as a “common” resource and treated as a domain to be fought over and abused ... This is especially the case within ideologies of hegemonic nation-states, where other nation-states and even the high seas are conceived of as just so much territory to be dominated’ (Zhao Tingyang 2021, pp. 185, 187).



Zhao Tingyang, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, modern expert on tianxia

THE GLOBAL AND THE PLANETARY

- ‘Global’ refers to the convergence and integration of human society at world level.
- ‘Planetary’ refers to the world as an inter-dependent system that includes humans, technology and nature. This perspective decentres the human, while bringing new responsibilities to the human society.
- In addressing the Climate-Nature Emergency, step 1 is effective global society based on unity in diversity – ‘higher education for the common good’ can work towards this. Step 2 is for that human society to work together in the planetary domain



Dipesh Chakrabarty
(2021), *The climate of
history in a planetary
age*, University of
Chicago Press

CONCLUDING REMARKS



Thank you for your
attention... have a
great conference!



Dickonsia Antarctica, Otway National Park, Australia. Photo:
SM