

Implications of Election Results for Climate Change Policy and Action:
International and Domestic Perspectives
November 15, 2016

Opening Remarks
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This Forum is taking place one week after elections that have left millions of citizens in the U.S. and abroad deeply anxious about the future.

Seventy years ago, in the wake of widespread devastation in Germany after the end of World War II, Martin Heidegger claimed that *poets* are the ones who can help us face the “dark night,” peer into the abyss, and fashion a way forward. [See Martin Heidegger, “Why Poets?,” in *Off the Beaten Track*, Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes, ed. and trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 200-241).]

In that spirit, let us listen to some lines from three American poets and a man from Argentina to help set a context for our topic today:

Adrienne Rich, --poet, essayist, and radical feminist.

Wendell Berry—poet, novelist, essayist, professor, farmer and critic of industrial agriculture

Pope Francis—the man from Argentina

Maya Angelou—poet and writer, professor and civil rights activist, and much more
[cut to Youtube of Maya Angelou, reciting her poem, “Still I Rise,” at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOqp50LSZ0>.

The complete poem is available at
<https://allpoetry.com/poem/8511437-Still-I-Rise-by-Maya-Angelou>]

This introduction was motivated by my conviction that we will not find a constructive path forward without engaging the *affective* realm as deeply as the *cognitive* realm in order to make sense and meaning out of the events and trends that shape our lives.

I include not only poetry in the affective domain, but also expressions of music, art, literature, film, and revitalized civic and religious symbols and rituals. In the cognitive domain, I include the natural and social sciences, economics, political theory, history, philosophy and theology.