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A Critique on the study of Global Warming

This critique is written on my personal study of two films with starkly contrasting views about Global Warming: An Inconvenient Truth and The Great Global Warming Swindle.

An Inconvenient Truth

Background

An Inconvenient Truth is a 2006 film documenting former United States Vice President Al Gore's nationwide campaign to educate people about worldwide Global Warming, directed by David Guggenheim. The documentary chiefly follows a slideshow presentation, which according to Al Gore, has been shown to people across the world more than a thousand times. It aims at alerting the public to an increasing "planet-wide emergency" due to global warming, and shows re-enacted incidents from Al's life story which influenced his concerns about environmental issues.

Detailed Overview

The film speaks of the need to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions as a "moral imperative", even providing various sources and tips in the end, through which you could reduce your own carbon footprint. It explores the evolving relation throughout history between Carbon Dioxide as an ever-present gas in the atmosphere of the Earth, and the temperature of the same. The graphs showing the simple increase-decrease relation between the two manage to take the audience back and reconsider whatever they thought they knew about historical global warming and cooling. Photographs and videos of massive receding ice glaciers, melting mountain-top ice caps, collapsing Antarctic ice shelves and pieces of land unusually cracking up under the scorching heat of the sun were shown. Al also explores the effect global warming might be having on ocean current networks and increased hurricane activity, bringing into attention the endangered mass of Greenland's ice and what devastating effect its thawing could have on the North Atlantic jet stream and Europe's never-ending problem with heat waves. Al concludes by saying how society, as a whole, could move towards being a carbon-emission-aware and environmentally conscious collective.

The Great Global Warming Swindle

Background

The Great Global Warming Swindle (GGWS) is a controversial documentary on climate change by British television producer Martin Durkin. The main aim of the documentary is to compile a

series of interviews with various scientists, meteorologists and climate scholars from Britain as well as from across the globe. All these scientists have a background in research which in some way concludes that global warming is a misunderstanding and nature is just taking its natural course.

Detailed Overview

The documentary argues against the conventional scientific understanding of the degree and cause of recent, observed climate change. It presents an alternate view that recent Global Warming is neither significant nor due to human activity, while not attempting to argue the latter view through any critical deconstruction of climate science orthodoxies. Rather, it contends that modern climate scientists are at best seriously misguided in their collective opinion on the nature and causes of Global Warming. It even brazenly states that Global Warming is “the biggest scam of all time”.

Personal Thoughts

I, personally, was extremely moved and affected by the first film. It shook me to the very core how irresponsible mankind has been towards this issue. It has been fifteen years, since the release of *The Inconvenient Truth* and even today some sections of the media go about questioning and denying Global Warming as an issue. It was only two years ago, when the President of the United States decried Global Warming on the basis of the coldest Thanksgiving in history occurring that year, and also disowned his own administration’s climate reports which emphasized how devastating the effects of climate change could be on the economy. While the withdrawal of the United States from the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Climate Agreement can be successfully (to a certain extent) reasoned from a staunchly economic standpoint, it also shows the complete ignorance and denial that one of the most powerful countries of the world, and by extension a lot of the world’s populace, lives in.

The second film, in my opinion, only thrives to decry and debunk the “hoax” of global warming. While, yes, it does raise valid and very true, scientifically-based points, I feel it misses out on the very crux of the matter; humanity must strive, to enormous effort, to co-exist with nature in a peaceful way and let our planet take its natural course of evolution. The film does not explain the unnatural and off-trajectory rate at which climate change is occurring in present times. Natural events like Solar wind fluctuations and cosmic wave anomalies will keep taking place regardless of whether we populate the Earth or not- but as a society, it is our inherent responsibility to be accountable to our home and the detrimental effects, however minute, we could be causing.

A move towards more efficient and carbon-aware technology should be a self-aware decision we take as a society. Even if global warming is not largely due to greenhouse gases, as the second documentary claims, greenhouse gas accumulation leads to a variety of other problems and will only worsen Global Warming as an issue, one example of it being the high-scale depletion of the Ozone Layer in the stratosphere. We, as citizens of the world, came together to pass various acts and take preventive measures for that particular issue, leading to the Montreal Protocol and NASA announcing in 2019 that the Ozone Hole had been the weakest since its discovery in

1982. I see this as a small victory, in a war against the anthropological aggravation of climate change which the world must acknowledge, before it gets too late.

P.S. Upon further research, it turns out that one of the key scientists interviewed for the second film, Professor Carl Wunsch, Chair of Physical Oceanography at MIT, has publicly stated that he was completely misrepresented in the documentary. None of the other interviewees has published a credible alternative to the scientific consensus on global warming provided in the mentioned IPCC reports. The filmmakers present, intentionally or otherwise through selective editing, grossly simplified and often disingenuous and counter-factual arguments and quotes.