

THE “Great Global Warming Swindle”



Why should you never wrestle with a pig? (Answer on page 11)

SWINDLE

A personal response to Channel 4's recent “polemic”

March 2007

“Steal from one source, and that's plagiarism. Steal from five and you can call it research.”

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What Happened

On Thursday March 8th, 2007, Channel 4 showed a 75 minute programme entitled *The Great Global Warming Swindle*. Made by British television producer Martin Durkin, it argued against prominent scientific views on global warming. The publicity for the program stated that the mainstream theory of global warming is "a lie" and "the biggest scam of modern times."

Groups like Spinwatch released articles before the show was broadcast predicting that it would be inaccurate.

Predictably enough, given the film maker's favoured methods (we'll come back to that) its accuracy has been disputed on several points, and the film has been criticised for being one-sided. Channel 4 described the film as "essentially a polemic and we are expecting it to cause trouble, but this is the controversial programming that Channel 4 is renowned for."

Aftermath

The show attracted 2.5 million viewers and an audience share of 11.5%. Though there have been 144 complaints to Ofcom, as of March 19, 2007, Channel 4 revealed that it had received 758 calls and emails about the programme, with those in favour outnumbering complaints by six to one.

The channel subsequently announced that it would be hosting a debate about the global warming issue to be broadcast in April.

One of the contributors, Carl Wunsch, has threatened to sue. He may have sent a complaint to OfCom

Many climate campaigners report that their friends/families/work colleagues were impressed by the documentary, and now feel that the entire issue is 'up for debate'. The controversy has spilled over onto the Internet. The wikipedia entry has been frozen (this isn't unusual in such heated cases.)

Email correspondence

On March 15, 2007, *The Times* reported that Durkin had seriously fallen out with a scientist who had been considering working with him. Armand Leroi was concerned that Durkin had used data about a correlation between solar activity and global temperatures which had subsequently been found to be flawed. Leroi sent Durkin an e-mail expressing concern about the programme and saying, "To put this bluntly: the data that you showed in your programme were . . . wrong in several different ways". He copied the e-mail to scientific author Simon Singh. Durkin responded to Leroi saying "You're a big daft cock". Singh sent an email to Durkin urging him to engage in serious debate. Durkin responded stating, "Since 1940 we have had four decades of cooling, three of warming, and the last decade when temperature has been doing nothing", and concluded with, "Go and fuck yourself". Leroi subsequently said that he was withdrawing his co-operation with Durkin. Durkin later apologised for his language, saying that he had sent the e-mails when tired and had just finished making the programme, and that (despite his comments) he was "eager to have all the science properly debated with scientists qualified in the right areas".

for the original emails, see <http://ocean.mit.edu/~cwunsch/papersonline/durkinemails.htm>

"A lie is halfway round the world before the truth has its boots on."

Critique of the claims in “Great Global Warming Swindle”

Programme directed by Martin Durkin on Channel 4 on Thursday 8 March 2007.

Critique by John Houghton, President, John Ray Initiative.

Some **background on Martin Durkin** can be found on

www.gmwatch.org/profile1.asp?PrId=39 and

<http://www.monbiot.com/archives/2000/03/16/modified-truth/>

The programme purported to debunk the science of Global Warming describing it as ‘lies’ and an invention of hundreds of scientists around the world who have conspired to mislead governments, and the general public. The most prominent person in the programme was Lord Lawson, former Chancellor of the Exchequer who is not a scientist and who shows little knowledge of the science but who is party to the creation of a conspiracy theory that questions the motives and integrity of the world scientific community, especially as represented by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).



The material presented was a mixture of truth, half truth and falsehood put together with the sole purpose of discrediting the science of global warming as presented by the main world community of climate scientists and by the IPCC.

For the best and latest statement of the science, you are referred to the Summary for Policymakers of the IPCC 4th Assessment Report published in February 2007 (see: www.ipcc.ch).

You are also referred to a 2-page statement by the Academies of Science of the 11 largest countries in the world (the G8 plus China, India and Brazil) addressed to the leaders at the G8 Summit at Gleneagles in 2005 giving a clear and urgent message about the reality of Global Warming and its likely consequences and also endorsing the consensus of the IPCC. This statement by the Academies is unprecedented. There could not be a stronger statement supporting the work of the world scientific community by the most eminent scientists in the world.

You are also referred to **JRI Briefing Paper 14**, Global Warming, Climate Change and Sustainability: Challenge to Scientists, Policy-makers and Christians" by Sir John Houghton, 2007 that can be downloaded from:

http://www.jri.org.uk/brief/Briefing14_Houghton.pdf

Here I briefly point out the main **lines of evidence for human-induced climate change** and then address some of the main arguments presented in the programme.

1. First, it is important to note that the **main lines of evidence for human-induced climate change not addressed in the programme** were:

- * growth of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere mainly due to fossil fuel burning to a level greater than for at least 600,000 years;
- * observations of global warming at the earth's surface (in magnitude and pattern) consistent with the increase in greenhouse gases, the basic science of which has been known and understood for over 200 years.

2. Climate is always changing – TRUE. However, the programme also argued that changes in global average temperature over the last 50 years and as projected for the 21st century are within the range of natural climate variability as observed over the last few millennia – NOT TRUE.

Many of the prominent climate changes over past centuries have been regional in scale. Global Warming is concerned with global scale changes. The IPCC 4th Assessment Report Summary for Policymakers has a particular section summarising the conclusions of detailed studies using a wide range of paleoclimate data. It concludes that ‘Paleoclimate information supports the interpretation that the warmth of the last half century is unusual in at least the previous 1300 years.’

3. That carbon dioxide content and temperature correlate so closely during the last ice age is not evidence of carbon dioxide driving the temperature but rather the other way round - TRUE. The programme went on to state that this correlation has been presented as the main evidence for global warming by the IPCC – NOT TRUE.

For instance, I often show that diagram in my lectures on climate change but always make the point that it gives no proof of global warming due to increased carbon dioxide.

4. The troposphere is warming less than the surface – NOT TRUE.

This raises a debate that took place in the 1990s but which has now been resolved. There is now agreement among the scientists involved in measurements that trends in satellite observed tropospheric temperatures when properly analysed agree well with trends in surface temperature observations. The programme also stated that warming should continue to higher levels. That is not the case. In fact, higher levels are observed to be cooling, consistent with the science of global warming that indicates that there is warming below and cooling above the ‘blanket’ of additional carbon dioxide.

5. Volcanic eruptions emit more carbon dioxide than fossil fuel burning – NOT TRUE. In fact, none of the large volcanic eruptions over the last 50 years feature in the detailed record of increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide.

6. Changes in the sun influence climate – TRUE. They cited the Maunder Minimum in the 17th century when no sunspots were observed, as a probable example. **Solar influences are the main driver of global average temperature in the 20th century – NOT TRUE.**

Changes in solar output together with the absence of large volcanoes (that tend to cool the climate) are likely to have been causes for the rise in temperature between 1900 and 1940. However, the much more complete observations of the sun from space instruments over the past 40 years demonstrate that such influences cannot have contributed significantly to the temperature increase over this period. Other possibilities such as cosmic rays affecting cloud formation have been very carefully considered by the IPCC (see the 3rd Assessment Report on www.ipcc.ch) and there is no evidence that they are significant compared with the much larger and well understood effects of increased greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide.

7. Climate models are too complex and uncertain to provide useful projections of climate change - NOT TRUE.

In the programme, this was illustrated by a statement made by a youthful Professor Smagorinsky, a pioneer in climate modelling, speaking in the 1980s explaining some of the inadequacies of early models. Climate modelling has developed enormously since then. Modern models include detailed coupling of the circulations of atmosphere and ocean and detailed descriptions of the interactions between all components of the climate system including ice and the biosphere. They have been tested thoroughly in their ability to reconstruct current and past climates. The 30 or more major modelling groups in the world regularly compare their methods and their findings. Contributors to the programme with their parodies of climate models just demonstrated their complete ignorance of the significance and capabilities of modern models.

8. The IPCC process stifles debate and is used by scientists to further their own self interest – NOT TRUE.

I chaired the main meetings of Working Group I during the production of the first three IPCC scientific assessments. I can say categorically that the process was very open and honest. The aim was to distinguish between what was reasonably well known and the areas where there is large uncertainty. The chapter groups had complete freedom to investigate and assess the scientific literature and draw their conclusions.

Contrary to the impression given in the programme, no one ever resigned from being a lead author in Working Group I because of their disagreement with the process or the final content of their chapter. In fact, no one ever communicated to me a complaint about the integrity of the process.

I should mention, however, a case of disagreement that occurred in Working Group 2 of the IPCC that dealt with the impacts of climate change – a more complex area to address than the basic science of Working Group I. Professor Reiter who appeared in the programme described how, unfortunately, his expert work on malaria failed to get recognition in the relevant IPCC chapter.

Even Professor Lindzen, who appeared at length on the programme, stayed the course as lead author within Working Group I, expressing his satisfaction with the report's chapters as good scientific documents. He has often, however, gone on to express his view that the conclusions of the Policymakers Summary did not faithfully represent the chapters. But he has never provided any supporting evidence for that statement – nor, to my knowledge, has anyone else who has quoted that statement originating from Lindzen.

It is important to note that IPCC Policymakers' Summaries are agreed unanimously at intergovernmental meetings involving over 200 government delegates from around 100 countries. This agreement is only achieved after several days of scientific debate (only scientific arguments not political ones are allowed) the main purpose of which is to challenge the scientific chapter authors regarding the accuracy, clarity and relevance of the summary and most especially its consistency with the underlying chapters. Agreement at such a meeting has ensured that the resulting document, so far as is possible, is scientifically accurate, balanced and free from personal or political bias.

Reference was made in the programme to an article in the Wall Street Journal in 1995 about the 1995 IPCC report accusing the IPCC of improperly altering one of the agreed chapters before publication. This was a completely false accusation as was pointed out in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, September 1996, 77, pp1961-1966.

9. Action on climate change by developed countries may have a negative influence on development of the world's poorer countries – POSSIBLY TRUE.

A strong non scientific point made towards the end of the programme concerned the possible effect of pressure from the developed world on developing countries to develop without use of fossil fuel sources of energy. There is something inherently unfair in such pressure that could hamper growth of developing country economies especially when rather little is being done by developed countries to reduce their own fossil fuel emissions. Further, the greater proportion of the damage from climate change will tend to fall on developing countries. The responsibilities of developed countries therefore are clear, first to reduce their own emissions as rapidly as possible and secondly to assist developing countries with resources and skills to develop their energy and other requirements in sustainable ways.

[Webmaster's note: Sir John Houghton was co-chair of IPCC Scientific Assessment working group 1988-2002, and Director General of the UK Meteorological Office 1983-1991.]

British campaigner Jo Abbess took the time to watch the documentary and go through checking out every claim. It's well worth reading what she found...

<http://portal.campaigncc.org/node/1843>

Swindled by Channel 4: spurious science for the climate of confusion

by Andy Bowman

Global warming caused by human activity is a giant hoax! Bush and the oil companies were right all along, I knew I should have had more faith! So says a channel 4 documentary broadcast last Thursday, 'The Great Global Warming Swindle', produced by Martin Durkin. It effectively attributes the green movement to a neo-imperialist agenda to prevent the world's poorest regions from developing.

Just like Al Gore's recent venture into factual film making, Durkin's account is staggeringly one-sided, and has as much to do with a personal political agenda as it does with a discussion of climate science. Unlike Gore however, Durkin utilizes extremely dubious information, discredited long before the documentary went to air.

Central to the case put forward in the 90 minute documentary, is the claim that the sun is responsible for all fluctuations in global temperature, with anthropogenic factors playing an insignificant role in recent warming trends. Such a delightfully simple explanation, why didn't the world's finest minds realize this before? Graphs do show a correlation between solar irradiance and global temperature, but what the film crucially omits is the fact that once non-anthropogenic factors - such as solar sunspot changes, cosmic ray cloud nucleation changes and volcanic activity - have been taken into account, it is apparent that the earth should at present be cooling, not warming (1).

The sun's energy alone does not create our climate, the atmosphere traps heat in what is known as the greenhouse effect. It is the quantifiable anthropogenic changes made to the atmosphere which explain the present rise in temperature. Theories of Cosmo-climatology such as those advanced in the film have not remained credible under peer scrutiny, and as such are not taken that seriously in the scientific community (2). Furthermore, the graph used to prove the relationship between solar rays and temperature turns out to be a little less accurate than was claimed (3). To retain balance in this article, it is necessary to say that Durkin might respond by suggesting that climate scientists who disagree with the cosmic rays theory (the majority) are not doing so due to lack of credible evidence, but as part of a conspiratorial proto-fascist resurgence led by environmentalists, as Durkin effectively claimed in a 1997 documentary "Against Nature", aired on Channel 4.

Prior to bringing the spurious cosmic rays theory into play, Durkin displays ice core data proving that increases in temperature precede increases in atmospheric CO2 levels. From this it is inferred that humanity can't be involved in global warming...thus, it must be the sun! Again only part of the story is told. CO2 and temperature are presented as entirely un-correlated, rather than as strongly coupled variables in a feedback relationship. CO2 is not responsible for initiating warming, but amplifies it once it is under way, as we are now witnessing (4). The film should also have mentioned that there is a considerable lag between emitting CO2 and the increase in temperature - we will not witness the effects of current emissions for some time yet.

A further attempt to sever the link between human activity and global temperature came with a focus upon the plateau in global temperature between 1940 and 1980, a period when CO2 emissions were rising. Again lying by omission, there was no attempt to explain that this plateau has been attributed to the greater prevalence of sulphate aerosols (which cause cooling) during this period.

Many of the most potent weapons in the public climate skeptics arsenal were also brought out over the course of the film. Firstly, the medieval warm period, where one could grow grapes in the UK - The film neglected to mention that this was a regional fluctuation rather than a global change (5). Secondly, the so called mini ice-age, again a regional fluctuation, specific to Western Europe, and insignificant compared to the global trends we are now experiencing (6). Thirdly, the claim that volcanoes are responsible for greater CO2 emissions than humans - something that flatly contradicts all available evidence, which shows the sum total of all CO2 emitted by active volcanoes amounts to about 1/150th of anthropogenic emissions (7).

Anybody even scratching the surface of contemporary debates on climate change would be aware of the weak foundations of the case put forward. However, the content is understandable given that the only scientific advisor employed for the documentary was a certain Martin Livermore, whose sole scientific qualification is as the Director of The Scientific Alliance, an organization that has no affiliation with any recognized scientific body. The Alliance was set up by in 2001 by Robert Durward, the fiercely anti-green director of the British Aggregates Association, and Foresight Communications, a Westminster public relations and lobbying company, to "counter scare-mongering by the so-called green lobby". The Scientific Alliance, like most of the contributors to the program, has strong links with the US public relations organizations that have been so effective in setting the Bush agenda on climate change. Indeed, many of the scientists used as authoritative voices on the documentary will be familiar to those with an eye on corporate greenwash, as figures who have received direct funding from fossil fuel industries (Fred Singer, Patrick Michaels, Patrick Moore) or lack credentials as climate scientists (Philip Stott, Piers Corbyn) (8).

The scientific community is never unified on any issue, and if you have the money it is possible to assemble a team of scientists to defend your vested interests should they be threatened by other scientific discoveries. This happened in the past when the link between lung cancer and smoking emerged, and in recent times a denial industry has arisen to confuse the issue of climate change. Although by no means perfect, the IPCC was established to remedy the confusion that results from a multitude of

different voices pitching into the debates on global warming, with agendas concealed beneath a façade of scientific neutrality. It presents us with a moderate line on climate change, taken from the thorough examination of contemporary peer-reviewed scientific literature. It happens to be the case that even the moderate line on climate change is extremely troubling (9), and the IPCC is most frequently criticized for under-stating the problems faced (10).

Understandably, many people would rather listen to comforting assurances that the carbon economy can continue in full swing. Many will also pay handsomely for them, as channel 4 has demonstrated.

Given the serious implications of any discussion surrounding global warming, how was it that such an obviously misleading documentary came to be broadcast? Of course anti-dogmatism is the lifeblood of science, all theories must be continually challenged, and this is to be encouraged in the public arena - but only when these challenges are based upon theories proven by credible evidence - something this film conclusively failed to provide.

Unfortunately this was not simply a case of well meaning ignorance on the part of those involved. Durkin is well known to channel 4, in the past they have aired a number of his clumsy forays into the world of scientific controversy, none of which have passed without incident. They include 1997's "Against Nature" which attempted to paint environmentalists as proto-fascists (later reprimanded by the Independent Television Commission for misleading interviewee's over the purpose of the documentary and misrepresenting their opinions through selective editing) (11), an edition of Equinox which linked silicone implants to the prevention of breast cancer (rejected by the BBC whose in house researcher stated that Durkin was ignoring evidence contradicting his claims), and a hopelessly ill informed portrayal of the GM crop debate in 2000 (multiple signatories from the Third World complained in a joint letter following the programme that it was a propaganda vehicle that made use of the Third World's rural poverty to support the monopoly control and global use of genetically modified food production by transnational corporations and emotionally blackmail the UK public into using GM) (12). Serious complaints about the misinformation distributed in these films has obviously not deterred channel four from once again giving Durkin funding and a prime-time slot. The complaints have begun to accumulate, including one from Carl Wunsch, professor of physical oceanography at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and one of the most credible sources used in the film, who is considering legal action against channel 4, claiming that his views have been "completely misrepresented" to imply that pollution has nothing to do with global warming, calling the film "as close to pure propaganda as anything since World War Two" (13).

The final section of the documentary was the most enlightening. Neglecting to mention the environmentalist mantra of contraction and convergence (allowing people living in poorer nations to increase their emission levels up to a sustainable level, should they want to, whilst the biggest polluters contract dramatically to sustainable levels), nor the fact that the Kyoto protocol does not apply to the worlds poorest nations, nor that the less economically developed regions of the world will be worst affected by climate change, Durkin claims that anthropocentric global warming is a conspiracy drawn up by the global elite to lock poorer nations into 'under-development', to the benefit of the wealthy. Therefore ceaseless growth of the carbon economy must continue! Durkin's political background involves strong ties to the (now disbanded) Revolutionary Communist Party, a group that went so far left it came out again on the right (14). The RCP believed, similar to fundamentalist Christians seeking to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem to usher in the apocalypse, that the demise of capitalism will be speeded by exemplifying its worst effects on the human population of the world and its ecosystems. All attempts to bring about social and environmental justice are opposed as delays to the revolution, but hidden beneath right wing libertarian rhetoric of extreme opposition to state interventionism. It is no wonder then that many associated with this group have been welcomed with open arms by the corporate press, and others whose interests are threatened by the curtailment of consumption necessary as a response to global warming. 'The Great Climate Swindle' provides a perfect accompaniment to the advertisements upon which corporate media entities such as Channel 4 rely upon for their survival.

As it stands, the coming century is likely to bring droughts, floods, famines, resource wars and mass migrations on a scale never seen before. Responses to the impending crisis are at present hopelessly inadequate, and if one doesn't feel motivated to join the growing protest movement in some capacity, perhaps it would be best to pray that Durkin and co. are correct.

(1) <http://www.newscientist.com/data/images/archive/2486/24861403.jpg>

(2) <http://www.realclimate.org/index.php/archives/2007/03/cosmoclimatology-tired-old-arguments-in-new-clothes/>

<http://www.realclimate.org/index.php/archives/2006/10/taking-cosmic-rays-for-a-spin/>

(3) http://stephenschneider.stanford.edu/Publications/PDF_Papers/DamonLaut2004.pdf

(4) <http://www.realclimate.org/index.php/archives/2004/12/co2-in-ice-cores/>

(5) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Ippc7.1-mann-moberg.png>

(6) <http://www.pages2005.org/mediaroom/paperpics/mann1.gif>

<http://www.usefulinfo.co.uk/images/cetann.gif>

(7) <http://gristmill.grist.org/story/2006/12/17/223957/72>

(8) <http://www.climatedenial.org/>

(9) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/6179409.stm>

(10) IPCC for policy makers, 4ar http://ipcc-wg1.ucar.edu/wg1/docs/WG1AR4_SPM_PlenaryApproved.pdf

(11) http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/19980402000124.html

(12) http://www.biotech-info.net/joint_letter.html

(13) http://news.independent.co.uk/environment/climate_change/article2347526.ece

<http://environment.guardian.co.uk/climatechange/story/0,,2031457,00.html>

(14) <http://www.monbiot.com/archives/1997/12/18/the-revolution-has-been-televised/http://www.monbiot.com/archives/1997/12/18/the-revolution-has-been-televised/http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1102753,00.html>

Who ARE these guys?

In 1997 television producer Martin **Durkin** from the TV company Kugelblitz made a series for Channel 4 called Against Nature, which targeted environmentalists, presenting them as 'the new enemy of science' and as comparable to the Nazis. They were responsible, the series argued, for the deprivation and death of millions in the Third World. ([Crimes against Nature](#), [The Revolution Has Been Televised](#))

Channel Four had to broadcast a prime-time apology after Against Nature drew the wrath of the Independent Television Commission which ruled, 'Comparison of the unedited and edited transcripts confirmed that the editing of the interviews with [the environmentalists who contributed] had indeed distorted or misrepresented their known views. It was also found that the production company had misled them... as to the format, subject matter and purpose of these programs.' (See [CHANNEL 4 SAVAGED BY TELEVISION WATCHDOG](#))

Having seen the programmes in advance, the Guardian's Environment correspondent, John Vidal, sought to identify the perspective from which the programmes had been made, 'I only know of one broad group which consistently uses this sort of argument about "environmentalism". The Far Right. In the US, the Wise Use Movement is linked to the militias and its members beat up environmentalists who they call "commies". In South America and Asia, corporations and landowners spend millions killing them and bribing or influencing politicians against their arguments. Against Nature appears to peddle their line, yet C4 either can't see it or approves.

Vidal's conclusion was understandable as the series provided a platform for a whole string of contributors from [the Far Right](#) but those behind Against Nature were not the usual right wing suspects. Rather, as Guardian columnist George Monbiot noted, the critical links were to a network then centered on the magazine LM, formerly known as [Living Marxism](#), the monthly review of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP).

Monbiot writes, 'The assistant producer of Against Nature, Eve Kaye, was one of the principal coordinators of the [RCP/LM](#). The director, Martin **Durkin**, describes himself as a Marxist, denies any link with LM, but precisely follows its line in argument. The series starred Frank Furedi, previously known as Frank Richards, LM's regular columnist and most influential thinker, and [John Gillott](#), LM's science correspondent, both billed as independent experts. Line by line, point by point, Against Nature followed the agenda laid down by LM: that greens are not radicals, but doom-mongering imperialists; that global warming is nothing to worry about; that "sustainable development" is a conspiracy against people; while germline gene therapy and human cloning will liberate humanity from nature.'

Durkin's hidden agenda and controversial methods did not stop Channel 4 from making further use of his services, as [Private Eye](#) noted in February 2000, 'What does Channel 4 do with programme makers condemned by the TV watchdog, the Independent Television Commission (ITC), for using underhand editing techniques? The answer is, er, hire them to make another programme... Despite the damning ITC judgement the programme was seen at Channel 4 as something of a triumph, and science programmes commissioning editor Sarah Ramsden received high praise. Now **Durkin** is back with TV company Kugelblitz to make another programme in defence of genetic modification for Channel 4's 'Equinox' series.'

'Modified Truth: The Rise and Fall of GM' was broadcast on March 20 2000. It presented GM food as perfectly safe and as much needed to feed the starving in the Third World. Dr. Tewolde Gebre Egziabher of Ethiopia was among multiple signatories from the Third World who complained in a joint letter following the programme that it was a propaganda vehicle that made use of the Third World's rural poverty to support the monopoly control and global use of genetically modified food production by transnational corporations and emotionally blackmail the UK public into using GM ([Joint Letter](#)).

Two scientists critical of genetic engineering who were invited to contribute to the programme, Dr Arpad Pusztai and Dr Mae-Wan Ho, both subsequently complained that they were misled about the content and were not given a chance to reply to attacks on their positions ([Pusztai's comments](#)). [Dr Ho said](#), 'I feel completely betrayed and misled. They did not tell me it was going to be an attack on my position.'

They are far from the only ones to complain about **Durkin's** methods. Contributors to a **Durkin**-directed Equinox programme about breast implants, which argued implants reduce the incidence of breast cancer, [complained](#) of the programme makers' deceptive tactics: 'In discussions with Martin **Durkin's** "Kugelblitz" crew as to the content of their proposed "science documentary" on silicone breast implants last year, we were totally and unequivocally misled as to the intent and content of that piece.' **Durkin's** proposal for the programme had earlier been rejected by the BBC because it 'ignored a powerful body of evidence contradicting his [**Durkin's**] claims'. A [researcher](#) hired to help **Durkin** make the Equinox programme resigned because, 'my research was being ignored. The published research had been construed to give an impression that's not the case. I don't know how that programme got passed.'

LM= ?

The Guardian reported that 'the pivot of Living Marxism's activities in the mainstream is... the *Economist* Intelligence Unit.' Would a reader care to offer an interpretation of this which does *not* conclude that LM is some kind of front for the British state?

(Guardian G2 15 March 2000)

From Lobster 39 www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/

(The Guardian article is "Poison in the well of history: Living Marxism accused ITN of distorting the truth about Bosnia. Now, it faces ruin after losing the ensuing libel battle. Ed Vulliamy, who filed the first reports on the horrors of the Trnopolje camp, explains why an unholy alliance of Serb apologists and misguided intellectuals had to be defeated in court")

Galileo?



My arse*!



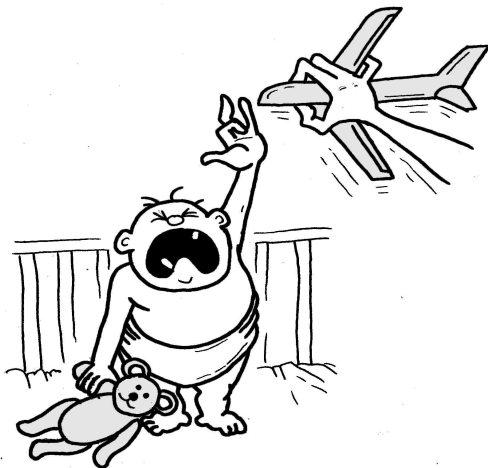
Were it not for dissent, science, like politics, would have stayed in the dark ages. All the great heroes of the discipline - Galileo, Newton, Darwin, Einstein - took tremendous risks in confronting mainstream opinion. Today's crank has often proved to be tomorrow's visionary.

But the syllogism does not apply. Being a crank does not automatically make you a visionary. There is little prospect, for example, that Dr Mantombazana Tshabalala-Msimang, the South African health minister who has claimed Aids can be treated with garlic, lemon and beetroot, will be hailed as a genius. But the point is often confused. Professor David Bellamy, for example, while making the incorrect claim that wind farms do not have "any measurable effect" on total emissions of carbon dioxide, has compared himself to Galileo.

George Monbiot, 13 March 2007

it's patently **not, much to my girlfriend's chagrin...*

Why do we like to hear this?



Because if it's true, then we get to keep our toys...

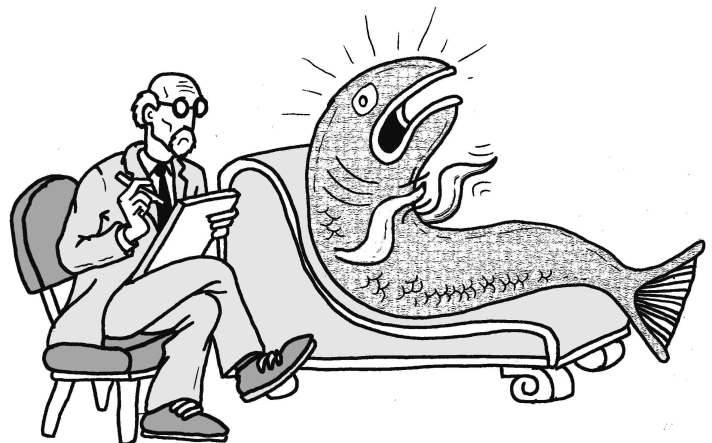
and, if you'll humour me in a little **Cod Psychology**

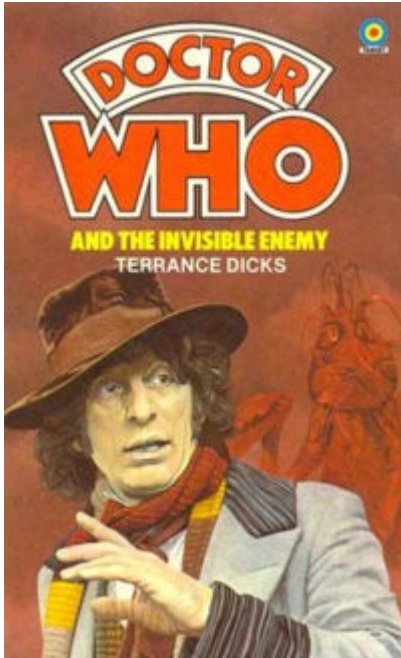
The show was very popular (Channel 4 reports messages running at six to one in favour.) Why?

Science, with its numbers, graphs and lack of certainty about risk, scares and confuses people. They resent the constant stream of scientific reports all saying the same thing. They remember the lies over BSE and so forth.

So when a show like this comes along, it looks like a "fair fight" - it looks like the plucky underdog is finally biting back.

And we get to keep our toys...





The “ANY OLD ARGUMENT” Strategy

Most people don't want to believe the worst of their masters or the planet's future. They are therefore very grateful for any argument that lets them avoid the obvious. You could see this working back when the Daily Mirror published photos of UK soldiers abusing Iraqis in a truck. For the first 48 hours it was obvious the Army thought the photos were/could be real. It was the BBC that ran- very vigorously- the '*the photos could be fake*' angle.

More recently, remember the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes on July 8, 2005? People's revulsion was tempered by the '*well, he did jump over the turnstiles away from the cops*' argument, which the Met allowed to circulate for a good 24 hours. The important thing is that there is *any* argument, (no matter the facts or logic), onto which people can hang their desire for the psychological status quo.

Many of the more prominent sceptics are old enough to have grown up during the cold war with the Soviet Union. Back then the vast global conspiracy wasn't grant-hungry scientists, but rather Faceless Communism

There were certain luxuries to this. You had a 'visible' enemy. You could, if you wanted to, pretend that its agents were all around, invisible. You could posture in a mahco way about the “throw-weight” of missiles and speculate on whether yours was bigger than his. It all got very Freudian and Oedipal. (see Helen Caldicott's book “Missile Envy.”)

The Global Warming menace is more frustrating for these Cold Warriors. Many of them believe that environmentalism is simply communism by the back door (see Vaclav Klaus quote above).

But this time the enemy really is a) “invisible” and b) us.

Vaclav Klaus, the Czech president, told US congressmen in a separate hearing this week. “*Communism was replaced by the threat of ambitious environmentalism.*”

22 March 2007 page 36, Financial Times

So when your world-view is under attack to you a) step back and reconsider or b) re-assert it more and more loudly and shrilly? Answers on a postcard to the usual address.

"Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts."

Daniel Patrick Moynihan



A. You both get muddy, but the pig enjoys it...

Do you wrestle with a pig? Under what circumstances? You have to ask yourself why you are spending time on it, and what else you could be spending time on.

There's a tactic that losers on the Internet use, called “trolling”. [“In Internet terminology, a **troll** is a person who enters an established community such as an online discussion forum and intentionally tries to cause disruption, often in the form of posting messages that are inflammatory, insulting, incorrect, inaccurate,

absurd, or off-topic, with the intent of provoking a reaction from others.” en.wikipedia.org]

Before you engage in a debate with someone, try to figure out if they are going to listen to you. Also consider what effect your refusing to engage might have on other people who are watching things unfold (this is rarely possible, or worth it, except in the real world, also known as “Meat Space” to differentiate it from “Cyberspace”).

It may be that you don't win over the person who wants to rile you, but if you keep calm and polite and factual (getting down into name-calling is rarely worth it) can win you respect and make the other lot look stupid...

What is to be done?

Essential Reading

Elizabeth Kolbert Field Notes on a Catastrophe
George Monbiot Heat (and his website www.monbiot.com)

On climate science

Royal Society www.royalsoc.ac.uk/
Hadley Centre www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/hadleycentre/
Real Climate www.realclimate.org
Tyndall Centre www.tyndall.ac.uk

on 'sceptics' and the denial industry

www.exxposexxon.com/
www.desmogblog.com/a-global-warming-swindle-play-by-play
www.medialens.org

on the psychology of denial..

www.climatedenial.org/ (really good blog- astute stuff)

And if you want to *do* something about it

www.climatejustice.org.uk
www.climatecamp.org.uk
www.planestupid.com
www.manchesterpermaculture.net
www.biofuelwatch.org.uk
www.foe.org.uk
www.greenpeace.org.uk
www.campaigncc.org.uk
www.c-red.org.uk

Paul Kingsnorth "In your face, eco-hairies"

http://www.theecologist.org/blog_full.asp?blog_detail_id=115

Channel 4 Apology about "Against Nature"

www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/19980402000124.html

Channel 4's Against Nature series turns out to have been made by an obscure and cranky sect
By George Monbiot. Published in the Guardian 18th December 1997.

<http://www.monbiot.com/archives/1997/12/18/the-revolution-has-been-televised/>

Channel 4 has hired a charlatan to make its science programmes

By George Monbiot. Published in the Guardian 16th March 2000

<http://www.monbiot.com/archives/2000/03/16/modified-truth/>

Don't let truth stand in the way of a red-hot debunking of climate change

George Monbiot Tuesday March 13, 2007

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/story/0,,2032575,00.html>

On Living Marxism

www.gmwatch.org/profile1.asp?PrId=78

On the Revolutionary Communist Party

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutionary_Communist_Party_%28UK%2C_1978%29



You already know enough. So do I. It is not knowledge we lack. What is missing is the courage to understand what we know and to draw conclusions.

Sven Lindqvist, "Exterminate all the Brutes"