

A REVIEW OF JAMES DELINGPOLE'S BOOK: (Version 2)

BOOK: Killing the earth to save it: How Environmentalists are ruining the planet, destroying the economy and stealing your jobs. The publisher is: Connor Court Publishing, Ballan, Victoria, 2012, Australia.

AUTHOR: James Delingpole is a writer, journalist and blogger. He is author of numerous books and lives in London with his wife and children. His website is www.jamesdelingpole.com

REVIEWER: Brian Harrisson lives in Melbourne, is a member of CPA Australia and is now retired. He originally graduated in Industrial Accounting later in Economics and Politics and later still in, Advanced Taxation Law. He was formerly a Corporate Financial Executive, Public Accounting Practitioner, Mining Company Director and Business Strategist. He became interested in the science of climate change through his work on Carbon tax policy. He considers that the evidence supporting the case that, human activities are causing the planet to warm, is convincing. He recently started the website www.brians-satchel.com .The site was developed to provide considered opinions on issues of community importance.

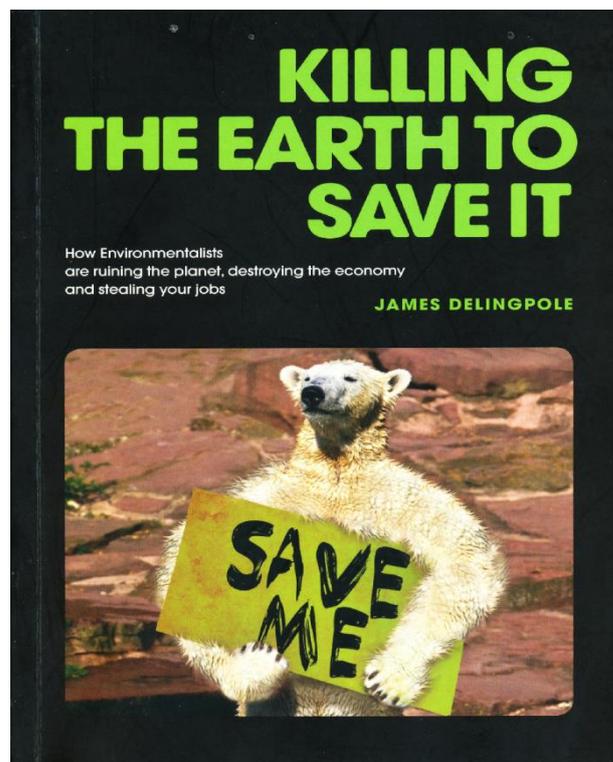
COMMENT: This document has been arranged in two parts:

1. Review of the book.
2. Author's comments about the review.

This version clarifies a technical point on pages 4 and 5 of version 1 dated 27 August 2012.

APPROXIMATE WORD COUNT: 3,700

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1. REVIEW OF BOOK

*“There are none so blind, as those who will not see.”
English proverb.14th century.*

ESSENCE

The author claims that, Western Governments and climate scientists are parties in a conspiracy to deceive their publics into believing that human activities are causing the planet to warm, when the truth is that the planet is not warming. His attempts to support this claim are rich in hyperbole and short on facts. The book fails to, demonstrate that there is such a conspiracy or rebut the evidence that the planet is warming.

I first came across the name James Delingpole, UK journalist, writer, blogger and admitted climate denier, when he was interviewed by Sir Paul Nurse, President of the Royal Society on a BBC Horizon programme broadcast on a TV channel in Melbourne. The book tells us that the interview made the author angry. Even if his depiction of the events is accurate, one might reasonably ask the question, why is the kettle calling the pot black? The experience would seem to have left its mark. Some months later when he came to Australia as a guest of the Institute of Public affairs, to promote his new book, he was interviewed by the ABC’s Jon Faine on his morning radio programme in Melbourne on 774. It turned out to be a non-event because of the author’s unwillingness to engage. The interview did not provide any commercial motivation to buy his new book, but I did so anyway and I’m glad I did. It helped me understand why the author did not engage.

The book titled **“Killing the Earth to save it”**, with the subtitle “How Environmentalists are ruining the planet, destroying the economy and stealing your jobs”, leaves no doubt in the readers’ mind what the author thinks about AGW (Anthropogenic Global Warming or warming caused by humans). Early in the book the author explains, “What I am about to do is prove to you that...the people who tell you that AGW is a near certainty are a bunch of liars, cheats and frauds. Your taxes will be raised, your liberties will be curtailed, and your money squandered to deal with a crisis so unlikely and so poorly supported by real world data or objective science that it might as well not exist.¹”

Given the strong and growing volume of evidence² indicating that human activities are likely to be driving planetary warming, this is a big mouthful, for a person with an admitted, “woefully inadequate Science background”. The first hint of what was to come was given by the list of some 30 pages of references. Its structure was not rational and caused this reader a lot of grief. If he intended to obfuscate, his strategy was eminently successful as this reader gave up trying to use it, after wasting a great deal of time. As the logic underlying the author’s arguments is wobbly, the narrative needed the support of a sound reference system but it did not get it. The regrettable outcome is that much of the narrative and his arguments become, little more than statements of unsupported hyperbole.

A valuable inclusion in the book was an outline of the journey that led him to hold his unusual views about climate change and AGW. It apparently began when Tony Blair led the British labour party to power in 1997, using the idea of a “New way”. This idea combined with the notions of economic freedom and social justice attracted wide ranging support. The new policies in action however reduced liberties, accelerated socialization and increased control over people’s lives. The European Economic Community and the United Nations provided examples of this model in action albeit in a different political context and at a different stage of development while the USA, Canada and Australia had also moved in that direction. These events laid the foundation for the author’s belief that there is a world conspiracy driven by a flawed system of values. In his view the carriers of this virus are the “Watermelons”. They are apparently a wide range of Gramsci³ inspired decision makers and people of influence in a society who are green on the outside and red inside. The author reached a watershed when “he came to distrust AGW theory because he recognized it as part of the familiar socio-political pattern of Government that had begun to replicate itself across the world”. A book by Booker and North titled “Scared to Death”⁴ showed him how Governments exploit popular hysteria to achieve their aims. Examples in their book included the AIDS scare; the Killer egg salmonella scare the mad cow/BSE scare, the Millennium bug scare and most recently the AGW scare. In all cases scientists were complicit in an ongoing deception of the population over the scares. The author claims that scientists originally believed that AGW really was true but when later evidence proved that it was not, they began fiddling data to support their original belief. This conspiracy has now become a win/win charade in which Scientists retain the massive Government funding that would otherwise be lost, while in return they provide Governments with evidence that supports the particular line required. The meaning of the term “sustainable development” has been corrupted in the process as Governments exploit it to achieve their ends. His conspiratorial beliefs were confirmed by the event referred to as “Climategate”⁵. The author asserts that it provides the irrefutable evidence of the conspiracy and confirms that scientists are complicit in the cover-up, proving they are corrupt.

He developed four beliefs during this journey. These can be summarized as: The science supporting AGW is bunkum, Climate scientists are corrupt, there is an AGW conspiracy⁶, and our lives are being destroyed by those activities. The validity all these beliefs depend on the validity of the science so this was the obvious place to start examining their substance.

Belief 1 – The science is bunkum⁷: My initial reaction to his comments on the science was that the author is out of his depth. However, it is not uncommon for, journalists, bloggers, shock jocks, lobbyists, without scientific training or knowledge, to give their opinions on a whole range of climate change issues, including the science. Why then should the author be criticised for doing the “when in Rome, thing”, when he can be judged on the quality of his work. Although a professional wordsmith cannot be expected to have the detailed knowledge of a scientist, he can be expected to know enough about the key climate science issues, to put forward an evidenced based case and rationally defend its validity.

The author begins by asserting that it is not up to him to prove the case either for or against AGW⁸. The problem is that unless he shows that the science is bunkum, he does not show that scientists are corrupt and if cannot show this then he will not be able to show that there is an AGW conspiracy. To maintain the integrity of the book, he is effectively duty bound to substantiate his claim about the science, and to his credit he does try, so why the posturing in the first place?

The scientific case supporting AGW can be summarized in four propositions⁹. They are: The planet is warming, Excessive warming is dangerous, Increases in atmospheric CO2 are likely to be causing the warming and CO2 generated by human activities is likely to be driving those increases. They are referred to as P 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively.

Re P 1: The author's main attack on AGW is well directed. It is on the validity of the so called "Hockey stick"¹⁰ graph. The graph summarizes the work of Michael Mann and his co-authors Raymond Bradley and Malcolm Hughes. It shows that 20th century temperatures were the hottest of any in the second millennium and that the last 50-year period was particularly hot. This work was used by the IPCC in its 4th assessment Report¹¹ and is a key plank underlying the science showing that the planet is warming. The author claims that the work on the "hockey stick" is flawed to the point of being useless¹². He bases his claim on two sources. One is the work of Andrew Montford¹³ an English writer and editor. The other is the work of Stephen McIntyre & Ross McKittrick, respectively a former mining executive and an Economist¹⁴. The author claims that Montford proved¹⁴ that the "Hockey stick" is an illusion while the latter proved that Mann's work is chicanery. Mann and his co-authors acknowledged that the work of McIntyre and McKittrick identified a minor technical error in their statistical methodology and revised their figures after remedying the technical error in method. The revisions did not materially change the original figures or their import. Subsequently twelve different scientific research projects¹⁵ were carried out by different research teams using a range of statistical methods and combinations of proxy records. All produced outcomes that were similar to the hockey stick work. The author fails to point out this critical point. He also failed to point out that the work of McIntyre and McKittrick has demonstrable flaws in its methodology. As to the work of Andrew Montford, it is unlikely that even he (Montford) a writer would claim to have produced "the" definitive scientific work about the global temperature trends over the last 1000 years.

Re P 2: The author asserts that warming is good¹⁶ using two historical examples. One is the Medieval Warming period (broadly lying somewhere between 800 and 1400) during which the now frozen Greenland, prospered. The other is the "little ice age"¹⁷ (broadly spanning the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries) during which the economies of Europe, suffered from the cold conditions. His observations overlook the obvious point that global warming can have both good and bad effects. The IPCC¹⁸ has projected the outcomes for a range of future warming scenarios. They show that each scenario will have both good and bad effects but on balance have a net adverse effect with the net adverse effects becoming progressively more "costly" with increasing temperatures.

Re P 3: The author observes that the correlation between rising emissions, atmospheric CO2 and atmospheric temperature levels over a 20 year period, does not indicate a causal relationship between all or any of them¹⁹. While this observation is true on its own, it combines issues that relate to both P3 and P4 and as each involves different scientific issues they need to be separated to avoid confusion.

Evidence supporting P3 indicates that atmospheric CO2 levels have been closely related to climate swings for at least the last 400,000 years indicating a likely causal relationship between the two. The relevant basic physics and chemistry have been known for years. It has been demonstrated experimentally that when small amounts of CO2 (readings in ppm) are combined with water vapour, (the main atmospheric greenhouse gas) the flow of radiation throughout the water vapour is impeded, whereas without CO2, this interference is reduced. This experimental phenomenon

translates into the atmosphere. Satellite measurements show that radiation emitted by the planet into space takes place at the infrared or relatively long electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) wavelengths. Those measurements further show that the level of radiation emitted into space at these EMS wavelengths is reducing over time as the level of atmospheric CO₂ and its equivalents increase. The radiation from earth that would otherwise be emitted into space is retained in the climate system thus intensifying the greenhouse effect that has historically kept the earth's climate reasonably balanced. The question then is, if CO₂ is facilitating planetary warming, is the predominant source of the increasing CO₂, natural or human?

Re P 4: The author asserts²⁰ that, there is no proven connection between manmade emissions and dangerous climate change. Putting aside the authors superlatives²¹, there are multiple indicators that manmade emissions are driving the increasing CO₂ levels in the atmosphere. Stated briefly, four of these indicators are: One, the decreasing atmospheric ratio of C₁₃ to C₁₂ since the start of industrialization. The significance is that the carbon content of CO₂ produced from burning fossil fuels and forests is heavier in the carbon isotope C₁₂ whereas the isotopic composition of preindustrial (normal) atmospheric CO₂ is heavier in C₁₃. Two, the increasing quantities of other man made (non-natural) gasses are showing up in the atmosphere. As they have grown from a base of zero in pre- industrial times, they confirm the increasing influence of humanity in the atmosphere. Three, the sheer volume of the CO₂ equivalents humans emit or cause to be emitted into the atmosphere each year. This is currently approximately 18.63 quadrillion litres and growing. That is 18,630,000,000,000,000 litres²² each year. This annual volume combined with its atmospheric residence time, has caused the ratio of anthropogenic carbon as a proportion of all carbon in the atmosphere, to grow from approximately zero in pre-industrial times to an estimated 14%²³ today. Four, models of the atmosphere's fingerprint. The model's mathematical depiction of the atmospheres three dimensional fingerprint matches the actual atmospheric fingerprint only when the effects of human activities are included in models. If human effects are excluded, the results do not match.

It is likely that human activities have driven atmospheric CO₂ levels from around 280ppm in pre-industrial times, to the current level of around 390ppm. The fact that the CO₂ levels have grown so quickly from the equilibrium level of 280ppm that prevailed for a long time prior to industrialization, indicates that the natural system is not coping. It is likely that human activity has disturbed the natural system that maintained the climate equilibrium²⁴. History has shown that small initial disturbances to climate equilibrium can start a process that results in large swings in temperature.

The comments under P3 make it likely that increased CO₂ is driving atmospheric warming while those under P4 make it likely that human activities are driving those CO₂ increases thus making the connection between humanity and warming, that the author was unable to make. This scientific information is all in the public domain for those who are prepared to look, so why did the author choose to ignore it?

Some of the author's other comments on the science, or science related matters are the publishing equivalent of, 10 second advertising "grabs". Take these representative examples: The author claims to know more about the science of climate than the President of the Royal Society Sir Paul Nurse a Geneticist and Nobel laureate; indicates that he has read a lot of the relevant scientific papers. He also tells us that any scientific paradigm is likely to be temporary after reading Thomas Kuhn's classic

book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*; understands the argument of Karl Popper, Philosopher, that a science theory is valid only if it can be falsified. He tries to apply Poppers argument to “prove” that the notion of AGW is false but overlooks the fact that his attempt was based on a circular argument. He makes assertions that simply mislead, such as “There is no evidence to support the alarmist claims that the Arctic will be free of ice by 2030²⁵”. Putting aside hyperbole, the fact is that the area of the arctic ice cap has been contracting over the last 30 to 40 years. Since 2007, 70,000 km² of ice cap has been lost as part of that trend.

The bottom line is that the author did not produce any arguments to rebut any of the evidence supporting any of the four propositions, nor build a plausible case to support his assertion. He did not show anything more than a superficial understanding of the key climate science issues involved. These comments are not intended to suggest that the author does not have this knowledge. They are however intended to suggest that if he does, he has not used it to show readers that the science is bunkum.

Belief 2 – scientists are corrupt: If the emails that were released into the public domain by the event called “Climategate”²⁶ are analysed properly, they should show whether specific climate scientists acted corruptly. Presumably this work would have been done by the eight²⁷ different independent committees that investigated “Climategate” or specific aspects thereof, before each concluded that there has been no evidence of fraud or scientific misconduct. Although the author, who sees himself as the “UK bete-noire of the climate change movement”, may find this somewhat off-putting, most unbiased observers would not. He quoted many anecdotes to support his more general claim that scientists in general are corrupt. Many of the anecdotes while interesting, are marginally better than gossip. Even if they are all true, they do not show that climate scientists are corrupt in their science work or produce corrupted data, whatever else they show.

Belief 3- There is a conspiracy²⁸: A conspiracy usually involves a principal conspirator, deception about a truth, intention to deceive, illegality or harm against society and agents who help spread the required message. A good example is given by the tobacco industry conspiracy. The industry knew that smoking was killing people, yet denied that it was. It used medical scientists to support that view. The conspiracy was destroyed only after the evidence showing that smoking does kill, became overwhelming. If you replace the name “tobacco industry” with “Government” as the principle conspirator, change the subject of the conspiracy from “smoking” to “AGW” and change the agents of the conspirator from “some medical scientists” to “climate scientists” you have a good idea of what the author is asking his readers to believe. That notion simply doesn’t pass the common sense test, notwithstanding the author’s declarations and assertions.

Conspiracy is a topic that is dear to the hearts of the denial movement. This is the third book I have reviewed by an author²⁹ who can reasonably be described as a climate denier. Each writer is distinguished in his own field, but each trots out the claim of a widespread conspiracy involving Governments and cover ups about AGW³⁰. All do so without providing any substantiated evidence supporting their claim. The question needs to be asked “why would educated and talented people like the author, promote a line that is so patently untrue?” There are a number of plausible explanations. No doubt readers of the book will develop their own answers to this question.

Belief 4 – The conspiracy is destroying our lives: The meaning of “destroying our lives” seems to be defined by the author as increased taxes, reduced liberties and wasted money. Putting aside the

reality or otherwise of AGW, the emphasis on those three issues presents a fairly narrow view of the world and society. It would have been helpful to hear the views of this public figure on the broader important politico/social issues as they relate to AGW. Examples of such issues include:

- Boundaries of Government?
- Role Governments in education, health and welfare?
- Reasonable level of taxes?
- Boundaries of an individual's freedom?
- What should happen when economic values conflict with social values?
- The mutual responsibilities, if any, between state and citizen?

The message that "our lives are being destroyed", does not tell us much about how the author thinks a society should work. Then again perhaps it does.

CONCLUSIONS

The author did not achieve his stated aim to show readers that "the people who tell you that AGW is a near certainty are a bunch of liars, cheats and frauds. Your taxes will be raised, your liberties will be curtailed, and your money squandered to deal with a crisis so unlikely and so poorly supported by real world data or objective science that it might as well not exist". The failure was caused by: the wobbly nature of the books logic, the lack of evidence supporting either his four beliefs or any of the claims in that quote, and the un-nuanced lens through which the author views the topic of AGW. This latter point is especially important. The binary (right or wrong) nature of much of his discourse and the extreme comments he descends to in the narrative, destroys any opportunity to engage with his readers in any constructive way, that would permit the debate to make progress.

Although the book is written by an avowed climate denial ideologue, it is not down-hill all the way. It contains some interesting and informative stuff and represents a good example of how the denial movement ruthlessly applies the art of street fighting to the literary domain and constructs its own reality bubble in which to conduct the fight.

Although the book is not for everyone, I would commend it to people who are interested in the politics of AGW.

Brian Harrisson.

2. AUTHOR'S COMMENTS ABOUT THE REVIEW.

I posted the following note in the "Contact James" tab of the author's web site www.jamesdelingpole.com, on 14th August 2012.

"Hi James,
I have written a review of your book "Killing the earth to save it" and plan to post it on my web site www.brians-satchel.com, around the end of the month.
Please let me know if you are interested in writing a response. If so I will send you a copy of the review. I undertake to post both simultaneously.
Brian Harrisson."

I have not had any response.

Brian Harrisson
27th August, 2012

On 11th September 2012 I received the following Email from the author:

"Dear Mr Harrisson, apologies for not writing earlier. Sorry that you couldn't understand the book. I did try to keep it simple. All best James

James Delingpole"

On 12th September 2012 I replied to the above:

"Dear James Thanks for your note. The original invitation remains open if you change your mind.
Regards,

Brian Harrisson"

ENDNOTES

¹ P 16

² See the 4th Assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2007. As this involves extensive documentation and references, the review of Professor Robert Carter's book, "The Climate Counter Consensus", posted on, www.brians-satchel.com might be an alternative. It sets out the scientific arguments supporting the case for AGW and the denial case against it.

³ Antonio Gramsci was an Italian writer, politician, political theorist, and linguist. He was a founding member and onetime leader of the Communist Party of Italy and was imprisoned by Benito Mussolini's Fascist regime. (Wikipedia). He believed that control of society requires the control of the social superstructure to protect the so called revolution.

⁴ According to Wikipedia, Christopher Booker is an English journalist and author while Richard North is a British blogger and author. The contentious themes in their book have received both critical and favourable reviews that are divided along the usual AGW denier/believer lines.

⁵ For an adequate explanation of the term "Climategate" see the following link. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climatic_Research_Unit_email_controversy. Briefly the author claims that emails illegally hacked from the University of East Anglia, a primary centre of climate research, provided unequivocal evidence of climate data manipulation.

⁶ See the comments under the heading Belief 3 to gain a feel for what the author means by the term conspiracy.

⁷ Bunkum is the term I thought was used by the author but I can't relocate it. As it is a good description of the way the book portrays the science, I would be happy to accept responsibility for the term.

⁸ P 16

⁹ These are four key issues in the climate science debate.

¹⁰ The "hockey stick" is a short hand term used to describe a graph of average global temperatures over the last millennium. It showed a cooling trend for roughly the first 900 years and a sharply upward trend during the last century, hence the term "hockey stick". It represents an important piece of scientific evidence supporting the belief that the planet is warming. The work was done by a team scientists led by M E Mann. The other members were R S Bradley and M K Hughes. Their 1998 paper covered the period from the year 1400 and their second paper extended their work back to the year 1000.

¹¹ See note 2

¹² p5

¹³ p5

¹⁴ p5

¹⁵ On P 26 – 27 the author ridicules the first three committees that reviewed "Climategate". He described the work of the first committee as cursory, the appointment of the Chairman of the second committee, as like putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank and described the third as being filled with "warmists" or friends of the institute being investigated.

¹⁶ This comment is at P253. As well, at P137-138 he dismisses concerns about the low lying terrain and islands, threats to the polar bears, arctic melting and the occurrence of extreme weather patterns as evidence of AGW.

¹⁷ The author uses the terms "Dalton" and "Maunder" minimums. Both are part of the "Little Ice age".

¹⁸ IPCC = The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is the top world climate science body.

¹⁹ p52

²⁰ p39

²¹ The author acknowledged that the term "proven" should not be used in science. Scientists use words indicating "degrees of probability" such as, likely, very likely, and levels of confidence. The word "dangerous" is superfluous. Climate is likely to become "dangerous" if humanity do not take action to prevent it becoming so. I don't think that scientists are making that unconditional assertion at this stage.

²² For calculations see 6.4a of book review referred to in endnote 2.

²³ See the CO2 information centre at: <http://cdiac.ornl.gov/pns/faq.html>

²⁴ For this purpose, equilibrium is defined as a state where the Earth's volume of inward solar radiation is balanced by radiation emitted into space. This balance is mediated by the planet's natural processes including composition of the atmosphere.

²⁵ p 139 – It is unlikely that a comment like that has ever been made by a climate scientist.

²⁶ The **Climatic Research Unit email controversy** (also known as "**Climategate**") began in November 2009 with the hacking of a server at the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) at the University of East Anglia (UEA) by an external attacker. Several weeks before the Copenhagen Summit on climate change, an unknown individual or group breached CRU's server and copied thousands of emails and computer files to various locations on the Internet. (From Wikipedia)

²⁷ The book only refers to three reviews. His opinion on their value are summarized in endnote 14

²⁸ The book talks about two conspiracies. One is the Socialist world conspiracy for want of a better name. The other is the AGW conspiracy. Although the latter is part of the former the book is predominantly about the AGW conspiracy.

²⁹ The two other books are, Professor Robert Carter's book "The Climate counter consensus referred to in endnote 2 and Professor Ian Plimer's book "Heaven and Earth" which was also reviewed at www.brians-satchel.com

³⁰ The three authors are: James Delingpole, Robert Carter and Ian Plimer.