

Rhetorical analysis, "global warming – the great delusion" assignment



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Patterson contends that “ In fact, global warming is the most widespread mass hysteria in our species’ history”, and that the beliefs Of global warming proponents are the result of their own delusional imaginations and a subconscious apocalyptic yearning toward which masses of people tend to subject themselves. While Patterson worries that what he perceives to be the delusions of global warming proponents run amok could prove to be a legitimate threat to the progress of Man, he argues that there is a growing trend of dissenters to the theory among the scientific community that will break the supposed fever of global warming hysteria.

The author begins the piece by drawing a parallel between the actions of global warming supporters and the erratic behaviors of witch hunters and alchemists prior to the 20th century. He claims that Charles McKay, 19th century journalist and author of “ Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds”, would draw the same conclusions today concerning global warming proponents that he did when observing popular susceptibility towards belief in witch hunts and alchemy.

In doing so, he attempts to illustrate his point that the proponents of global warming are simply falling prey to the madness fueled by those around them, rather than basing their actions and beliefs on facts or evidence. To support this assertion, Patterson employs a bevy of Devil terms to describe the commonality between the ignorance observed by McKay toward witch hunters and the ignorance observed by Patterson toward global warming activists. Terms like superstition, guilt, hatred, and apocalyptic yearning all seek to paint global warming believers as a reactionary group acting on impulse over evidence.

A rebuttal might point out that Patterson has yet to provide evidence against global warming or discredit the available evidence that supports the theory, and Mackey point about humans self-inflicting worries upon themselves might not hold any water if the worry in question was indeed valid and supported by evidence. Patterson continues this assertion into the next paragraph, adding more emotional emphasis by claiming that “ In fact, global warming is the most widespread mass hysteria in our species’ history”.

By framing the argument so dramatically, Patterson draws a visible distinction to whom his intended audience may be: those who already agree with his position and are looking for solidarity in their own opinions, as well as those on the fence or who have a neutral opinion on the validity of global warming. By emphasizing the extent of the error of global warming believers to such a degree, Patterson may be attempting to pique the interest of those who have paid little attention to the global warming debate before.

Additionally, global warming proponents are grouped into the term ‘ Waveforms” in this paragraph, and later referred to as “ climate cultists”. These terms carry a belittling connotation that implies that global warming proponents are members of an extremist fringe group, rather than the majority. A rebuttal of this point might simply note that the majority of climatologists still subscribe to global warming as a viable theory, and Patterson is still yet to present any evidence to support his assertions.

The author’s argument continues on to present this perceived hysteria of global warming as not only a potentially viable threat to humankind and the institutions that have enabled it to thrive, but one that is evidently on the

decline. Patterson expresses a fear that “ Man will be convinced by these climate cultists to turn his back on the very political, economic, and scientific institutions that made him so powerful, so wealthy, so healthy’.

By framing his argument in a way that transitions from highlighting the scientific ignorance of global warming to the policies that such a worldview could impact, Patterson attempts to establish a chain of logic that justifies his concern for global warming as an influence on government. The language used in the sentence (“ climate cultists” trying to convince “ Man”, turning their back on beneficial institutions) also implies to the reader that the proponents of global warming are actively attempting to undermine the institutions that have allowed humankind to thrive in the modern world.

This opinion is underlined later in the article, when Patterson contemplates why many “ hope” for climate change catastrophe. At this point, Patterson approaches the core of his argument, wherein he provides what he believes to be sufficient evidence that the idea global warming will soon cease to be a threat to the progress. He argues that the “ fever is breaking, as more and more scientists come forward to admit their doubts about the global warming paradigm”.

The use of a fever as a metaphor suggests that the hysteria that surrounds global warming acts as an ailment on society, and as more and more scientists challenge the theory, TTS credibility – and ultimately its power – is diminished. To support this statement, he cites quotes from scientists expressing reluctance and doubt toward the theory of global warming.

Patterson makes sure to mention the alleged prominence of the dissenting

scientists and to identify IVR Giver as a Nobel prize winner, in an attempt to bolster the credibility Of his sources through the use of God terms.

A rebuttal of this point might argue that this is not evidence against global warming, but rather an argument from authority. By citing two examples of scientists dissenting from popular scientific nonsense on global warming and asserting them as proof of the untruth of the theory, Patterson ultimately says nothing persuasive in opposition to global warming. Were he able to provide evidence of an increasing trend of scientists rejecting the theory, his argument might gain credibility, but by citing only two singular examples, he gives the reader no reason to believe that this information is indicative of the norm rather than the exception.

Perhaps anticipating the counterargument that the majority of scientists still accept global warming as a viable theory, Patterson posits another quote from the group of dissenting scientists, who claim that “ Alarmist over climate is of great benefit to many, providing government funding for academic research and a reason for government bureaucracies to grow. ” While Patterson doesn’t expound on this claim, its presence in his article strongly implies that he identifies with the point made by these scientists.

He then goes on to dismiss federal mandates related to carbon emissions as “ schemes” meant to undermine the individual liberty of the voters. A rebuttal might argue that these points contradict the primary argument Patterson add at the opening of the article; by heavily implying that global warming proponents cling to the hope of “ climate change catastrophe” mainly as an effort to profit from government funding and to further

bureaucratic control, he nullifies his argument based on the quote from Charles McKay that global warming fear is borne from superstition, Western guilt, and apocalyptic yearning.

Overall, Matt Patterson article proved to be an unconvincing piece of rhetoric against global warming. He provided astonishingly little evidence to support his argument that global warming was a ridiculous superstition, and elided on two singular examples to demonstrate that scientists were flocking away from the theory.