

# Environmental disasters essay

[Environment](#), [Climate Change](#)



The two essays by Michael Pollan and Curtis White talk about climate change in regards to the relationship between the environment and human beings. Although the two essays share the same topic, they take the subject and engage the readers in totally different points of views. Pollan's essay talks about global and ecological responsibility being a personal virtue while Curtis discusses the socio-economic or political issues underlying sustainability (Pollan; White). These two essays are very different in terms of voice; however these pieces of writing are both important for people all over the world to read. Climate change and environmental disasters are a real issue. Just this year, there have been more storms, cyclones, earthquakes and typhoons all over the world. One cannot look at the state of many developing countries where the majority of the population is exposed and vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This issue on developing a viable solution for the problem of anthropogenic gases and global warming is long from being found. Not only this, many people do not want to hear about this issue since they do not think it is real. Unless people have tangible proof that their cars, thermostats and aerosol cans are contributing to climate change, they are not going to give up their lifestyles. By synthesizing the two essays, one can see that there is a need for change and that it is not an issue which should be dealt with in terms of ecological factors or even personal virtue. The social, economic and political factors affecting this problem and the move towards real sustainability should also be a topic that will raise awareness. Pollan's essay addresses a question most people would ask themselves. Why should anyone bother with responsible eco-living when no else seems to care about sustainability? How could one person make a change when billions of

other people around the world don't seem to be doing their part? The problem is that too many people care too much about their comfort to even try. A little change can go a long way, even if it is just a little drop in the bucket (Pollan). Too many people think that if they can only make a small difference, they shouldn't even bother and that's the reason why there is not a lot of effort seen in terms of reducing carbon footprints.

It's sad to think that it takes a large scale disaster for people to actually do something about their contribution to climate change. It's not only a matter of personal virtue, it's an issue of responsibility. When will people learn that their lifestyle choices affects everything in the world, not just issues that revolve around the human population, but also things that can gravely affect animals and the earth. Climate change and global warming are not the only results of carbon gas emissions. Studies show that the ocean absorbs up to 30% of all the carbon dioxide humans produce. This means that all the harmful CO<sub>2</sub> gases are seeping in the ocean. This results in a drop in the pH level of the earth's water, which could upset the balance of the ocean's ecological system, and ultimately affect humans (Pollan).

Thinking about the effects of all these emissions as an individual is the problem. People should learn how to view the issue on a larger scale, and see what kind of real effects CO<sub>2</sub> and greenhouse gases take. It's not only about scaring them into being more responsible, as Pollan suggested and what the documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" did with its audience. People shouldn't even ask themselves why they should bother, the question they should ask is "what can I do to help?" because humans are the only living species who are able to make a change (Pollan).

The essay by White addresses a different issue, but it is also linked with what Pollan is saying. The reason why people ask “ why bother?” when it comes to environmental issues is because they are not affected, and they want to keep living their comfortable lives. During the ages of industrial revolution, humans have contributed so much anthropogenic gases that have crept into the ocean and affected the atmosphere that natural disasters are occurring more frequently and are becomingly more devastating.

Just last month, the islands of the Philippines were hit by the super typhoon Haiyan which left the country in shambles (MacKenzie 6). The Philippines is a developing country, and only days after the storm, a Filipino delegate addressed the United Nations with an emotional appeal regarding climate change and how it is a real issue that cannot be taken lightly. The official negotiator from the Philippines, Naderv Sano urged the United Nations to push with their negotiations. However, there are a number of scientists who say that one event cannot be entirely linked to global warming (MacKenzie 7). However, the link between man-made CO<sub>2</sub> and climate change is already realized. The world cannot wait for more natural disasters like this before it decides to do something about it.

There are too many people living in first-world countries that are comfortable with their lifestyle (White). They cannot see and cannot begin to imagine the devastation that climate change brings upon developing countries. The truth is that climate change is a reality, and even if many individuals do not think that a small change can make a difference, even just adjusting one’s mindset or habits can spark a light. The ecological and environmental impact of climate change also has socio-economic factors which are closely tied with

political concerns. If extreme weather conditions continue, the ecological system of the environment, in terms of wildlife will become unbalanced. Not just that, the agricultural industry as well as fisheries all over the world will be hit by the devastating effects of climate change.

If the issue is really about lifestyle and comfort, then people should know about the effects of climate change and how it can take a toll on their personal lives. Again, instead of thinking about it as an individual, people should learn how to see the issue of global warming as a bigger picture in order to really grasp the reality of the situation (White).

The Kyoto Protocol is a project by the United Nations which bring together developed countries. The countries involved in this treaty sign a pledge to reduce their carbon emissions. Although developing countries are not part of this treaty, they also promise to reduce their emissions of anthropogenic gases. This kind of effort, although very minimal is a start in taking global responsibility. Although the countries that are involved with this protocol only make up a small percentage of global carbon dioxide emissions, it can still make a big change.

If we continue to live carelessly, not caring about the detrimental effects of climate change and global warming, the environment around us will take a toll (Pollan). Human beings cannot sit around and simply wait for things to get worse before they start acting. There is a direct relationship between our actions and the state of the environment. Human activity is definitely responsible for the increase in global temperature, and it is speculated that if we continue to emit the same amount of carbon dioxide into the sea and in the atmosphere, we will not see past the year 2050.

People are too busy waiting for extreme reactions from the environment before they stop and think of what their acts are actually doing (White). This is something that should be addressed. As human beings, people should become more aware of what is happening to the environment and make it a point to do something about it, no matter how “small” their efforts are.

As human beings, we share planet that we live on with other people, animals and living beings. All our actions reflect on what is happening to the earth.

This means that we cannot just keep doing what we want to do simply because we wish to preserve our lifestyle. Our relationship with the planet is one way (White). We are users and abusers who take everything that the ground offers and we do not give back. Sure, some people consider planting a tree once in a while, but they take their large fuel powered SUV home even though their house is right around the block.

If our actions are seen in how the earth is responding in terms of climate change, then that means that our efforts to reverse or limit the effects of global warming will also make a difference (Pollan). We are the ones who create this issue through industrialization. Therefore, we should also be the beings who will find viable solutions. The essay of White addresses the issue on lifestyle change and socio-economic factors. This means that people should know how climate change can affect their personal lives so that they don't need to ask themselves “why bother?”

The earth is billions of years old, and humans only realized the power of fossil fuels in the last century. Knowing what we are doing to the environment should be enough for people to take a stand and reduce their carbon emissions. It's not just a matter of awareness, it's about letting

people know why they should care on a personal level and on a larger scale. Climate change is real, and most of it is because of human activity.

## **Works Cited**

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