

Is global warming a threat or an illusion? essay

[Environment](#), [Global Warming](#)



Kristen Leacock 12/14/07 Expository Writing CMP-120-C1 Is Global Warming A Threat Or An Illusion? Part II In addition to the discussion on Antarctica and the Arctic, three statements are being challenged. The first statement that is being challenged concerns the worldwide temperature that “ has apparently increased by less than a degree (0.9) Fahrenheit” which took place before World War II” (Stott). We are further updated that there was a “ rise in temperature of around 0. degrees centigrade over the last 150 years” (Stott, “ Cold Comfort”).

So what does a graph portraying temperatures over the United States tell us when we look at it? Does it tell us that the time between 1880-1940, which includes of 1900-1940, display additional warming than 1940-2000, also including the years from 1960-2000? The next point being challenged relates to particular years in addition to short-term stages, such as a decade or fifteen years. Since the graph stops at the year 2005, it limits us to look at the years from 1960-2005. Looking at the graph, are we able to tell whether more or less global warming has taken place or is taking place? Last but not least, there is proof that “ over the past 100 years, winters in the Northern Hemisphere have become warmer” as a result of an increase in global cloud formation (Bailey 328). With some amount of assurance, what can we tell about the responsibility of clouds in managing global warming? Despite the fact that we are limited to the United States, the graph is significant because the United States has been an industrial giant since at least the 1880s. In addition, given that we drive nearly fifty percent of the world’s cars, the graph is particularly noteworthy after World War II for those, such as McKibben, who state that the majority of global warming has been

happening in the second half of the twentieth century and beyond. Try as we may, we discover that from the year 1880 to 1940, including 1900-1940, if we begin from the lowest temperature documented to the highest temperature, we wind up with an increase of about one percent Celsius and perhaps even a little less (see graph in “ Controversy”). By using the same method for the years 1940-2000, incorporating the years 1960-2000 and even 2000-2005, we finish up with practically the same outcome, which is about one percent (see graph).

Even though the graph is very useful, however, it does not help us to answer whether more or less warming happened after rather than before World War II. Of greater importance is the ending that the massive quantity of car-related carbon dioxide may possibly be not all that important in the development of global warming, since a great deal of cars were driven prior to World War II; nevertheless the increase on both sides basically stayed the same. Yet, we should not assume that greenhouse gases are non-hazardous, for they possibly affect humans, plants, animals, soil, oceans, water, and our pets terribly.

So it behooves us to be in charge of those greenhouse gases irrelevant of their correlation with global warming. And while McKibben’s proposition to slim down the economy and our way of life on all levels is prone to do more damage than good, but his proposal to depend on “ electric cars” (320) is, at least, a step in the right direction. Moreover, there is not a good economic explanation for why Detroit cannot start to manufacture several more hybrid cars that produce at least forty miles per gallon. It’s a question with a time

limit, too: either we make these changes soon, or it won't be worth the bother. (320) By separating single years on both sides, before and after World War II, we once again discover a draw, or very similar. Neither is the post-World War II period any assistance on short-term information to conclude whether global warming or cooling is occurring, or has occurred. However, through 1880-1940 and 1940-2000, as all the way through the year 2005, including the single years and the temporary temperature outcome are questionable, we should not disregard what the graph shows: cooling periods and a warming trend subsequently.

Certainly, the years from 1940 to 1970 illustrates a remarkable cooling followed by a thirty-year period or so of warming. Dr. Hansen presents an explanation for that zigzag. Documents show that the warmest year was 1934 and the second highest was 1998. Five of the warmest years happened before World War II. This act signifies that the next five out of ten occurred after World War II.

Furthermore, the dissimilarity between the two groups is somewhat unimportant. As for temporary measurements it is yet again a draw or just about a draw with a minor prejudice regarding cooling, even though that assumption (minor cooling), is impulsive, providing the complexity of weather information, as Olmsted reminds us Stott validates it in his eight-minute video. As a result, "some years are warmer while others are cooler, according to NASA space scientist Roy Spencer, but the global temperature trend has been slightly downward" (Bailey 328).

As indicated by Dr. Hansen, the cooling throughout the first half of the twentieth century was a natural occurrence, while the variation from cooling to warming is the outcome of the existence or lack of aerosol in the environment. With a massive quantity of aerosol in the environment, the temperature changed drastically cooler after World War II, between the years 1940 and 1970. No wonder then that climatologist incorrectly came to the conclusion that the world was about to enter into a new ice age.

Although aerosols produced acid rain, had an effect on humans physical conditions, in addition to flora and fauna, the industrialized countries, such as the United States, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada, took strict procedures to decrease aerosol; the remaining result being that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases were now capable of pushing the temperature upward.

Needless to say, Dr. Hansen's hypothesis has yet to be investigated, but at least it presents a believable explanation. What are the roles of clouds? Do they operate like a blanket, thus controlling global warming? Or has cloud configuration been on the rise over the preceding years? Well, according to Dr. Ackerman, the lead scientist of a long-term examination thinks it is too early to tell.

In other words, the science of comprehending cloud structure and its involvement with temperature control is in spite of everything still in its early stages. Just one out of the three sources notifies us that yes, because of the responsibility of phytoplankton in the biosphere, " increased cloudiness has up until now partially mitigated the effects of global warming" (Toon 3).

Already, we have seen the position played by aerosols, consistent with Dr. Hansen's hypothesis. A third source on clouds conveys to us the discoveries of Israeli and American climatologists working collectively. Obviously, there is a distinction among the result of light-colored and dark-tinted aerosol components. The first kind, because it mirrors light, contributes in cloud formation; the second, because it soaks up the light, "is more effective at preventing clouds from forming" (Environment News Service 1). Now you can see why cloud science is in its initial stages, providing the task of separating and examining the two types over wide-ranging atmospheric areas.

Do scientists presently acquire the instruments to determine all the difficulties involved, particularly when Dr. Hansen informs us: ...but the aerosol effect is complicated because aerosols are distributed inhomogeneously [unevenly] while greenhouse gases are almost uniformly spaced. So you can measure greenhouse gas abundance at one place, but aerosols require measurements at many places to understand their abundance. ("Dimmer") With a tie on the North Pole, a win in support of those who declare that the ice is solidifying in general more willingly than liquefying in Antarctica; with the disputed draw on both sides of the divide, before or after World War II, whether longer-term, shorter-term, or particular years; and with just one source out of the three declaring that clouds are decreasing global warming, we can only reiterate Olmsted—if the professionals in these lines of work are like children in elementary school in the face of inconceivable complications, we should not become too wound up on whichever side but instead take on a healthy uncertainty (which is unlike from being a pessimist), the same as keeping an open mind ("Complex"). In

the intervening time, should we not ask of the existing crop of elected officials running in the primaries and the forthcoming widespread election for the presidency to deliberate global warming? Works Cited 1.

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