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Exploring Global Warming and the Lesser Known Theories

Global warming, the name of the phenomenon believed to be causing the Earth's temperatures to increase over the past fifty years, has led many scientists to attempt to persuade much of Earth's inhabitants to lay off fuels that are believed to be the cause of such warming. As of now, there are no scientists who *deny* the fact that global warming is occurring; however, there are some scientists who do not accept the varying theories of what is actually causing global warming ("Global warming"). Other than just effecting temperature averages on the Earth, scientists believe that global warming could also negatively bring about climatic changes, such as floods and hurricanes ("Global warming"). Humans may have an affect on the total outcome of global warming; however, the scientists who reject these views have "seen their grant funds disappear, their work derided, and themselves libeled as industry stooges, scientific hacks or worse" (Lindzen).

The actual cause of global warming is not entirely known (again, there is large amount of scientists who say human activities are the main or only cause). Some believe humans are the cause of it, while others believe it is just the natural climatic cycle of the earth. Still others believe the exact cause is completely unknown. Richard Lindzen makes the point that from the 19th century until the 1970s, some glaciers had been decreasing in size, but are now actually increasing in size, and scientists aren't sure as to *why* this is happening (2 Lindzen). Some have tried to associate hurricanes with global warming, but there's growing belief that hurricanes are

not affected by global warming (Linden 2). Dr. Robert Balling, states that “Earth was probably warmer in the past than our records indicate and, therefore, the change in temperature that we now observe is not as great as it appears” (Balling 1). Another possible reason why the Earth appears to be warmer could be caused by thermometers placed incorrectly, close to structures that may give off heat (Christy 6). These all appear to be valid ideas as to what may be causing global warming, yet much of these theories are overlooked by the scientific community.¹

Not all scientists believe the earth increased in temperature only slightly or for unknown reasons. Some scientists believe that there is indeed a large “global warming” phenomena occurring; only they believe the effects of it are not caused by humans, but rather natural causes. Most of these scientists point to events that have occurred over the past thousand years or so, such as the Medieval Warm Period and the Little Ice Age (Singer 1), as proof to their theory that global warming isn’t anything problematic. These two periods in history help to explain why the Earth would be warming, as it has already done so in the past. Some also point to more recent events, such as the global cooling hype in the 1970’s, which showed that the Earth was cooling, but ended up not being much of a concern (“Global warming controversy”). There is another belief that volcanic dust (which can remain in the stratosphere for years, limiting the radiation of the sun) could have caused the cooling seen prior to the 1970’s (Balling 7).

There are also varying ideas on what, exactly, the byproduct of global warming is. Some believe global warming is causing major weather problems, such as Hurricane Katrina; however,

¹ Dr. John Christy makes the note that this could be because those scientists who embrace the common idea, that global warming is caused by humans, normally get more money and media attention (Christy 1).

most scientists believe that global warming is not causing these events (Jaffe). In a few places of the world, global warming is even beneficial. Alpine glaciers have been *advancing* since the 1970's, when in decades past they had been melting away – and scientists do not know how or why they are doing this (2 Lindez). There is also evidence that the “Greenland ice sheet is actually growing on average” (2 Lindez). Over the past fifteen years there has been a warming trend in the UK, which is helping certain crops grow better, and longer into the year – such as wine, olives, and tea (“Wine in UK”). There are also other crops that before the recent warming period, the UK could not grow.

There are still two basic sides of the global warming theory, and as to what is causing it. There is ample research that has been done on the subject of global warming; however, the actual time length that global warming has been studied is still in its relative infancy when compared to the span of human life. There are many more years of research needed on the subject. For instance, instruments used a hundred years ago were not as accurate as they are today, which *could* explain why the Earth appeared cooler then. On the same note, the Earth may have actually been cooler then, but the studies done from the past twenty to thirty years may not be proven factual in another twenty or thirty years (as in the case of the 1970's global cooling scare).

While this essay may suggest that global warming is *not* caused by human activity, it does *not* account for the negative effects human activity may have on the environment (for example, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere which has risen over 100 million units since 1750), which can be proven more readily than can global warming (Jaffe). The effects of cleaner burning energy sources on the environment may be a better media topic, as

the public would probably more readily embrace such initiatives, instead of alarmist scenarios that can't be *fully* proven – unless one day they happen.

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