

Letter to the Editor
Hobart *Mercury* (p. 13)
24 Nov 2015

Dear Sir

The responses in Friday's Letters page to my letter about climate change all seem to have missed the point. I said that Hunter and Godfrey were speaking as Environmentalists not as scientists. This was not a put-down of Environmentalism nor of them as competent scientists, it was a statement of fact. They make moral judgements about how we should deal with the world, the climate in particular. They have every right to do this, but science is not about moral judgements, it is about facts. It is not about what ought to be the case, it is about what is the case.

This distinction between science and ideology is important; it first happened in the 17th century with the foundation of the Royal Society and resulted in great advances in science. Now the distinction has again become blurred so that scientists like myself, who dare to suggest that the global warming hypothesis may be wrong, are treated, not as mistaken, but as traitorous. Why would people become so passionate about this issue if it were not ideological? This confusion of science and Environmentalism distorts them both. Unfortunately it is a confusion which affects journal editors and funding agencies as much as scientists themselves.

Ideologies (including religions) are the means by which human moral progress is facilitated, the means by which great numbers of people organise themselves to make the world a better place: to convert the heathen, to free the slave, to save the Planet. The problem is, ideologies are static. It is almost impossible to change an ideology once it is established. People who try to do so are often denigrated as 'heretics', 'recidivists' and so on.

Environmentalism is no exception. It has been with us since Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring' alerted us to the dangers of unrestrained industrial pollution. The environment became something worth preserving, not just because of its relevance to human welfare but for its own sake. But Environmentalism is holding science back. Unlike ideology, science changes all the time as new discoveries and new ideas come to light. In the field of climate science, because of its ideological character, new discoveries likely to challenge the accepted narrative are lucky to see the light of day.

One such new idea is that of false correlation and spurious regression. This has been widely used in the field of econometrics since 1974, but is not seen as relevant in climate science. My present paper on this topic, which explains global temperature changes as random fluctuations, has already been rejected twice by peer-reviewed journals.

I intend to persevere. Wish me luck.

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