

BOOK REVIEW

The Deliberate Corruption of Climate Science by Tim Ball. Mount Vernon, WA: Stairway Press, 2014. 298 pp. \$22.95 (paperback). ISBN 978-0988877740.

My first encounter with Dr. Tim Ball was while watching him in the BBC documentary *The Great Global Warming Swindle*, released in 2007. In a cast that listed, among others, well-known climate skeptics such as the Canadian environmentalist Patrick Moore, former member of Greenpeace; Richard Lindzen, professor of meteorology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Patrick Michaels, Research Professor of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia; Nigel Calder, Editor of *New Scientist* from 1962 to 1966; John Christy, Professor and Director of the Earth System Science Center at University of Alabama; Paul Reiter of the Pasteur Institute; former British Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson; and Piers Corbyn, a British weather forecaster, Dr. Tim Ball was a pleasant surprise for me. Well-articulated, with a sense of humor that was difficult to ignore, Dr. Ball brought a voice of reason to the heated debate on anthropogenic global warming (AGW).

His recent book, *The Deliberate Corruption of Climate Science*, describes a collection of specific cases where, according to Dr. Ball, blatant corruption of science enabled the activities of “a cabal, a secret political clique or faction.” His main goal in this book was to “explain their motive and objectives, which were political, not scientific . . . How . . . they bypassed and perverted the scientific method . . . [and how] They effectively silenced scientists who tried to perform the normal roles of critics and skeptics” (pp. 3–4).

Over thirteen chapters, the author describes the “Historical Development” (Chapter 1) of what he calls the “deliberate corruption of climate science” followed by, among other closely related topics, the “Transition from the Club of Rome to the United Nations” (Chapter 4), and “The Search for a Human Signal and Political Machinations Designed to Prove Human CO₂ was Causing Global Warming” (Chapter 5). A hefty Chapter 7 discusses in two parts what “Scientists Knew from the Start” and “What the IPCC Reports Say about the Computer Models.”

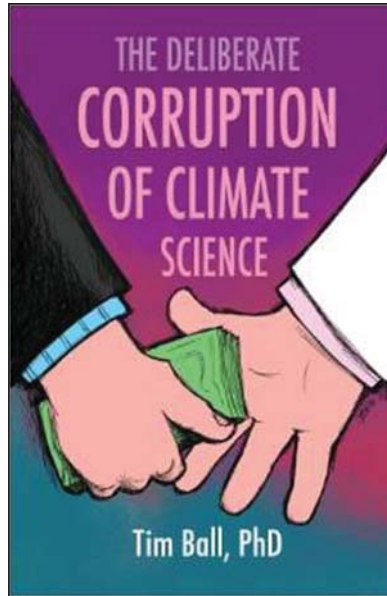
After claiming that “Nature Fails to Cooperate with the IPCC Deception” (Chapter 6), the author points out a sensible and pivotal issue in current

climate change debate: “Temperature Data and Data Manipulation” (Chapter 8). The remaining chapters of the book outline topics such as “Exploiting the Rich and the Poor under the Guise of Saving the Planet” (Chapter 9), “How the World Found Out What Was Going On in the IPCC Climate Science” (Chapter 10), a detailed presentation of the scandal known as Climate Gate, followed by “What Else Did We Learn From the Leaked Emails?” (Chapter 11). The last two chapters discuss “How Did So Few Achieve Such a Large Deception?” (Chapter 12) and “What’s Next?” (Chapter 13).

The overarching theme of the book—the corruption of climate science—is not something new or seldom heard about. A simple Internet search with the keywords “climate change skeptics” or “climate change deniers” reveals thousands of opinions and articles of various flavors and intensities. Dr. Ball focuses his arguments on “the deliberate corruption of climate science” exhibited in the leaked e-mails following the scandals dubbed “Climategate I” and “Climategate II.” And, despite a vigorous PR campaign by the Climate Research Unit (CRU) of the University of East Anglia UEA attempting to mend the broken confidence fences, the unbiased public had serious reason to believe that sometimes a supposedly neutral science may become tainted by political or other non-scientific agendas.

If scientists such as Dr. Ball, who are doubtful about anthropogenic global warming (AGW), are accused of lobbying for the fossil fuel industry, the proponents of AGW, according to this book, are dishonest brokers who maliciously use climate science “to advance the agenda of the progressive left.” The author continues his diatribes against proponents of AGW by quoting the former President of the Czech Republic, Václav Klaus:

I am afraid there are people who want to stop the economic growth, the rise in standard of living . . . and the ability of man to use the expanding wealth, science and technology for solving the actual pressing problems of mankind, especially of the developing countries. (p. 154–155)



Next, he accuses Maurice Strong, Al Gore, and the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) of machinations: “Instead of helping poor countries and poor people, [they] are reaping rewards of their activities while the people pay the price.” And further: “A vast industry has erupted in UK: Investing in climate change is proving to be profitable for governments, corporations, and investors from many sectors” (p. 155). On the next page, we learn that “Scientists of the IPCC may be involved in carbon trading, but they also benefit through being high-profile, easier access to funding, and easier promotion.”

Dr. Ball identifies several ways climate science has become corrupted. He starts with the fundamental definition of Climate Change as it was incorporated in Article 1 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) treaty formalized at the “Earth Summit” in Rio in 1992. “Climate Change” was defined as: “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over considerable time periods.”

It is obvious that this definition of climate change implies human intervention and makes human impact the primary focus of future climate research. Any proper scientific definition would list natural climate variability first, then the anthropogenic contribution. Following this tricky definition from 1992, Maurice Strong established for the newly formed (1998) IPCC two objectives: Create the science needed to prove anthropogenic CO₂ was the cause of climate change and then convince the public that if they didn’t act, the outcome would be catastrophic (p. 46).

Next, Dr. Ball reveals another corruption of climate science: When the IPCC finishes a report, it first produces a Summary for Policymakers (SPM) well ahead of publishing the Science Report. According to Dr. Ball, the SPM, which is the most important part of IPCC work, is always dramatically different from the Science Report. And the media and the public most likely read and refer only to the SPM, with only a few people reading the Science Report. According to one IPCC expert reviewer (David Wojick), “what is systematically omitted from the SPM are precisely the uncertainties and positive counterevidence that might negate the human interference theory. Instead of assessing these objections, the Summary confidently asserts just those findings that support its case. In short, this is advocacy, not assessment.”¹

More disturbing, by releasing the Summary for Policymakers before the Science Report, IPCC leaders guarantee the pre-eminence of political message over science. They also require that the Science Report agree with

the Summary, when it should be the other way around. Using a phrase from the book, they “reach a conclusion and then make the research fit.”

Several scientists expressed serious concerns about the objectivity of publications released by the IPCC. They argue that many contributors to those publications cite themselves, a situation described by Dr. Ball as “typical of the incestuous political nature of the entire IPCC process.” When the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) appointed an Ad Hoc Committee in 2006 to report on the “Hockey Stick” Global Climate Reconstruction, its chairman, Professor Edward Wegman, made his first recommendation as follows:

Especially when massive amounts of public monies and human lives are at stake, academic work should have a more intense level of scrutiny and review. It is especially the case that the authors of policy-related documents like the IPCC report, *Climate Change 2001: The Scientific Basis*, should not be the same people as those that constructed the academic papers.²

The Wegman report ends with a strong conclusion:

Our findings from this analysis suggest that authors in the area of paleoclimate studies are closely connected and thus ‘independent studies’ may not be as independent as they may appear on the surface.³

Dr. Ball takes aim at the alleged lack of peer-reviewed papers published by opponents of AGW such as himself. He notes that apparently members of a group of 43 AGW proponents are peer-reviewing each other’s articles, and thus, “when there is a small group in a specialized research area, it is too easy to control what gets published. It is what I call peer-review censorship” (p. 81).

In a sub-chapter titled “Wikipedia—a Falsified Resource for Students and Media,” the author unveils a disturbing way of manipulating climate science by controlling climate information through Wikipedia. He accuses William M. Connolley (who established himself as an editor at Wikipedia) of, with the aid of cohorts and supporters, controlling all entries related to climate, climate change, and the people involved in climate studies. Allegedly, Connolley created or rewrote 5,420 separate Wikipedia articles.⁴ When he disliked the content of an article, he removed it. For example, he removed all mention of the Climategate scandal from the article by Michael Mann, a friend and fellow proponent of the AGW. Lawrence Solomon, a Canadian writer on the environment, wrote about Connolley’s action as a Wikipedia editor:

When he disapproved of the argument that others were making, he often had them barred—over 2,000 Wikipedia contributors who ran afoul of him found themselves blocked from making further contributions. Acolytes whose writing conformed to Connolley's global warming views, in contrast, were rewarded with Wikipedia's blessings. In these ways, Connolley turned Wikipedia into the missionary wing of the global warming movement.⁵

A subtle and perverse way of corrupting climate science is discussed by Dr. Ball under the heading **Groupthink** (p. 227). Coined by social psychologist Irving Janis in 1972, groupthink enforces unanimity at the expense of quality decisions. The phenomenon occurs when a group makes faulty decisions because group pressures lead to a deterioration of mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment. Groups affected by groupthink ignore alternatives and tend to take irrational actions that dehumanize other groups. A group is especially vulnerable to groupthink when its members are similar in background, when the group is insulated from outside opinions, and when there are no clear rules for decisionmaking.⁶

Dr. Ball believes the CRU/IPCC pattern (which emerged from Climategate scandals and other actions) may effectively illustrate this psychological phenomenon. In Chapter 11 he identified and described a number of symptoms of groupthink:

- **Having an illusion of invulnerability.** Contents of the emails display an arrogant invulnerability.
- **Rationalizing poor decisions.** Phil Jones, the former head of CRU at the University of East Anglia, tried to justify his decision to withhold Freedom of Information (FOI) material. His action was followed by other group members (Rob Wilson, Michael Mann, and Keith Briffa).
- **Sharing stereotypes that guide the decision.** This refers to unethical comments about practices happening inside the group without anyone challenging them. The reason? They all were making them.
- **Exercising direct pressure on others.** Putting pressure on some editors (e.g., at *Geophysical Research Letters*) to not publish certain papers the groupthink group did not like.
- **Maintaining an illusion of unanimity.** Self-explanatory.
- **Using mindguards to protect the group from negative information.** One of the group members, Gavin Schmidt, set up a blog, "RealClimate," to act as a "mindguard." He wrote in an email: "The idea is that we working climate scientists should have a place where we can mount a rapid response to supposedly

‘bombshell’ papers that are doing the rounds and give more context to climate-related stories or events.”

- **Examining few alternatives.** The original definition of climate change narrowed the options to only those pertaining to human activities. Similarly, out of all greenhouse gases, only CO₂ was singled out.
- **Not being critical of each other’s ideas.** As shown above, by peer-reviewing each other’s papers, the groupthink members were rewarding themselves with publication recommendations. At the same time, the “intruders” (aka skeptics) were kept outside the publication mainstream.
- **Not examining early alternatives.** The episode of the Medieval Warm Period was used in the first IPCC Report, but later one groupthink member (Michael Mann) decided to remove it because it contradicted his own model of global warming.
- **Not seeking expert opinion.** It is notorious now that the infamous “hockey stick” proposed by Mann, Bradley, and Hughes (1998) was flawed on statistical grounds. Had they asked for a statistician’s expert opinion, they would have avoided personal embarrassment and misleading the public until their “hockey stick” model was thrown in the trash bin.
- **Being highly selective in gathering information.** This point relates to cherry-picking the data to prove the group ideas.
- **Not having contingency plans.** The CRU/IPCC groupthink did not think that their emails would ever be exposed. It was a severe blow for them. It is not surprising that even the friendly journal *Nature* published the critiques of five climate experts under the suggestive title “IPCC: Cherish it, tweak it or scrap it?”⁷

Overall, *The Deliberate Corruption of Climate Change* represents an informative lecture for those who want to become more knowledgeable about the battle between the proponents and opponents of anthropogenic global warming. The book would have benefited from a Table of Contents and an Index—both would allow for quicker searches through the book.

Notes

¹ The UN IPCC’s Artful Bias—Glaring Omissions, False Confidence, and Misleading Statistics in the Summary for Policymakers.

http://www.john-daly.com/guests/un_ipcc.htm

² <http://www.uoguelph.ca/~rmckitri/research/WegmanReport.pdf>

³ Ibid.

⁴ http://www.conservapedia.com/William_M._Connolley

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ http://www.psyr.org/about/pubs_resources/groupthink%20overview.htm

⁷ *Nature*, 463, 730–732 (11 February 2010). doi:10.1038/463730a

CONSTANTIN CRANGANU

Brooklyn College of the City University of New York

Reference

Mann, M. E., Bradley, R. S., & Hughes, M. K. (1998). Global-scale temperature patterns and climate forcing over the past six centuries. *Nature*, 392, 779–787.