

John Robson: When It Comes to Science, Nothing Can Be Taken for Granted

 9  5  Save



Attendees walk past a sign for the COP29 U.N. Climate Summit outside the venue, in Baku, Azerbaijan, on Nov. 23, 2024. AP Photo/Sergei Grits



By John Robson

11/26/2024


Updated: 11/26/2024

   Print

Commentary

As with Poe's purloined letter, the most obvious things can sometimes be hardest to see. Thus I spent a week in Baku, Azerbaijan, for COP29 but only on my return home did an emailed question open my eyes to something conspicuously missing there: science. Which evidently the delegates and activists also totally failed to see.

Share When I speak of "missing" science I don't mean the participants disagreed with me about it. Of course, the vast majority did, with only a small group of skeptics lurking about corners of the hall. But my point isn't that correct science was missing. It's that there were no sessions on science at all. Not even ones intended to hammer home the supposed worldwide consensus that certainly was 97 percent wall-side at that conference.

 Now there was a lot going on there so I cannot state with certainty that I didn't miss one or two sessions where people went at this topic. But my and large COP29 was an echo chamber of the most curious sort, in which the silence was repeated ad nauseam.

By contrast, I have attended a reasonable number of conferences that question climate alarmism. And I can assure you we didn't just talk about the science, we debated it. Obviously, we did so from a point of view that rejected orthodoxy. But we knew we had to talk about what alarmists claimed, why they claimed it, and how and why we disagreed. Including sometimes with one another.

Likewise, at the [Climate Discussion Nexus](#), including in our webinars, we engage with people who think humans have some impact on the climate, even potentially worrying over time, some who think we are causing a mild warming that's beneficial, and others who think we have little or no influence on the temperature outside or the weather. We talk civilly with people who think the sun drives climate, and people who doubt its significance.

When those of us who question the existence of a man-made climate crisis gather, we also realize that there are some people in the room deeply immersed in scientific technicalities, including some who fly

through complex mathematics at baffling speed (hello, Christopher Monckton), and others fairly new to the subject who appreciate a summary of the fundamentals. At COP29 they didn't even do briefing sessions for newbies.

In my own 2017 documentary "The Environment: A True Story," by contrast, I presented what I took to be the three key premises of climate alarmism, explained the arguments in favour, and then attempted to refute them systematically. But enough about me. Let's talk about COP29.

What was so striking about the Baku gathering that failed to strike me until I got that email is that nothing of the sort was going on. There weren't even rah-rah "What do we know and how do we know it" sessions that recapitulated key alarmist beliefs about the role of CO₂, of methane, and so forth to stormy applause, with charts and diagrams.

It was all just taken for granted. So much so, in fact, that I don't think the people there even noticed. As fish famously do not realize they swim in water, the delegates were many fathoms deep in unexamined assumptions.

As I've written elsewhere, so OK more about me, one advantage of being at odds with conventional wisdom from geopolitics to economics to climate is that you'd have to be singularly dense to miss not only that people disagree with you, but why and how they disagree. From my Cold Warrior youth on, I've been bombarded with challenges to my way of thinking that make it hard not to notice my premises, and understand potential alternatives.

It can be done, of course. One can be wilfully ignorant and obtuse. Or take the view, not coincidentally popular among climate alarmists, that anyone who challenges your worldview is a fraudster, perpetrating a sinister hoax for sinister reasons. Though as I've also said elsewhere, anyone who attended COP29 would have trouble sustaining that view because people there were painfully sincere, and often very sweet about it. What they weren't was alert.

They had no idea that anyone not conspicuously a rogue or a fool disagreed with them. They had no idea what potential weaknesses existed in their views of science (or policy, where there was much description but minimal debate except on how much cash to hand over, a topic for another day). And they weren't interested.

Nobody was preaching to them about why claims of solar influence on climate are wrong. Nobody was trying to demonstrate why there was no Medieval Warm Period. Nobody was rebutting claims that 1979 is a lousy year to start measuring Arctic ice. Nobody was talking, as far as I can tell, about any of it, in formal sessions or over coffee.

The silence was so deafening I didn't hear it until I got home.

Views expressed in this article are opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

Sign up for the Epoch Opinion newsletter. Our team of Canadian and international thought leaders take you beyond the headlines and trends that shape our world.

[Sign up with 1-click >>](#)



John Robson

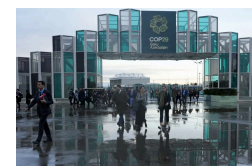
Author

John Robson is a documentary filmmaker, National Post columnist, contributing editor to the Dorchester Review, and executive director of the Climate Discussion Nexus. His most recent documentary is "The Environment: A True Story."

Author's Selected Articles

John Robson: As Azerbaijan Hosts COP29, Academic Theories Could Stifle the Nation's Fledgling Westernization

Nov 19, 2024



John Robson: As They Were Ready to Serve, So We Must Be

Nov 10, 2024



John Robson: The Clash of Worldviews in the West

Nov 04, 2024



John Robson: Canada's National Debt Is Off the Charts, yet There's No Talk of Welfare Reform

Oct 28, 2024



Copyright © 2000 - 2024 The Epoch Times Association Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Cookies Settings](#)