

Cargo Cult Science

A summary

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The author begins by providing a short history how science evolved: by debunking myths. Science as a method to test if certain isolated ideas work or not. He decided to investigate why people believed in witch doctors and alike and found out, that non of those phenomena actually work.

The question “what else is there what we believe?” arises: how to treat criminals, how we educate and various other pseudo-sciences. The author introduces the term “Cargo Cult Science” describing sciences that are actually not scientific and practices that don’t work.

Futhermore, the question how to be scientific is answered. Provide all the information to judge or value a contribution, not just the information that you would like to provide and concludes that we don’t actually teach this scientific integrity in class.

He advices that we should not fool the layman or one seeking advice from us. Always be honest and conduct experiments unbiased. This involves making all results public, not just those we want to in order to achieve something such as reputation or alike. Sometimes, this scientific integrity or utter honesty is disallowed by political issues or other challenges in life and sometimes even lazyness.