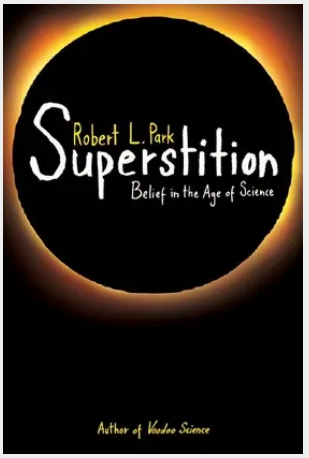
Park

Superstition

Belief in the Age of Science



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From uttering a prayer before boarding a plane, to exploring past lives through hypnosis, has superstition become pervasive in contemporary culture? Robert Park, the best-selling author of Voodoo Science, argues that it has. In Superstition, Park asks why people persist in superstitious convictions long after science has shown them to be ill-founded. He takes on supernatural beliefs from religion and the afterlife to New Age spiritualism and faith-based medical claims. He examines recent controversies and concludes that science is the only way we have of understanding the world. Park sides with the forces of reason in a world of continuing and, he fears, increasing superstition. Chapter by chapter, he explains how people too easily mistake pseudoscience for science. He discusses parapsychology, homeopathy, and acupuncture; he questions the existence of souls, the foundations of intelligent design, and the power of prayer; he asks for evidence of reincarnation and astral projections; and he challenges the idea of heaven. Throughout, he demonstrates how people's blind faith, and their confidence in suspect phenomena and remedies, are manipulated for political ends. Park shows that science prevails when people stop fooling themselves. Compelling and precise, Superstition takes no hostages in its quest to provoke. In shedding light on some very sensitive--and Park would say scientifically dubious--issues, the book is sure to spark discussion and controversy.

Why the battle between superstition and science is far from overFrom uttering a prayer before boarding a plane, to exploring past lives through hypnosis, has superstition become pervasive in contemporary culture? Robert Park, the best-selling author of Voodoo Science, argues that it has. In Superstition, Park asks why people persist in superstitious convictions long after science has shown them to be ill-founded. He takes on supernatural beliefs from religion and the afterlife to New Age spiritualism and faith-based medical claims. He examines recent controversies and concludes that science is the only way we have of understanding the world.Park sides with the forces of reason in a world of continuing and, he fears, increasing superstition. Chapter by chapter, he explains how people too easily mistake pseudoscience for science. He discusses parapsychology, homeopathy, and acupuncture; he questions the existence of souls, the foundations of intelligent design, and the power of prayer; he asks for evidence of reincarnation and astral projections; and he challenges the idea of heaven. Throughout, he demonstrates how people's blind faith, and their confidence in suspect phenomena and remedies, are manipulated for political ends. Park shows that science prevails when people stop fooling themselves.Compelling and precise, Superstition takes no hostages in its quest to provoke. In shedding light on some very sensitive--and Park would say scientifically dubious--issues, the book is sure to spark discussion and controversy.

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