

53rd IAA SYMPOSIUM ON THE SEARCH FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE (SETI) –
The Next Steps (A4)
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GALACTIC CARGO CULT

Abstract

Cargo cult represents a belief system from Melanesian islanders. During the World War II, Japanese army gave goods, originally intended for their soldiers, (food, equipment, clothing, etc.) to these indigenous people to gain their compliance. In other cases, islanders found shipments with goods and incorporated them to their daily lives even if they did not know their use or meaning. Some of these tribes ended worshipping the unknown suppliers, usually coming from the skies. The John Frum cult from Tanna in Vanuatu is a good example of cargo cult. In 2022, 500 people in this region still believe and expect the comeback of John Frum to bring prosperity and wealth. What if some extraterrestrial civilizations are purposely sending cargo to other worlds where some other civilization may find them and start a cult of superior beings more advanced and wishing for their arrival? We have sent messages into space in hopes of communication with other advanced civilizations (Pioneer missions and others). SETI accepts the possibility of finding a probe sent or left by other intelligences in their exploration effort. However, we should also contemplate the possibility of intentionality and not accidental situation where a special cargo, maybe non understandable by us is left in purpose to promote a change, a dilemma connecting us to them in a disadvantageous position. We propose to study and compare the cargo cult hypotheses as an intentional communication strategy for long distance interactions and colonisation between civilizations in the SETI framework.