

The Science of Cannabis

by Theodore Dalrymple



It's curious how people's beliefs about matters of fact often follow their political opinions, rather than the other way around. Those who believe in an active regulatory state are much more likely to believe in man-made global warming than those who want to reduce the role of the state to a minimum—though whether such warming exists or not is, or ought to be, a matter of empirical fact. Strictly speaking, it would be possible to believe in man-made global warming without subscribing to the need for close regulation; but, in practice, political and empirical beliefs usually go together.

It is the same with cannabis. Those in favor of legalization—or liberalization—tend to emphasize its benefits and deny its harms; those against emphasize the harms and deny the benefits.

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