

# No Grand Gnab

The Urth list — 7 messages, 3 voices, 14 Feb 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3850>

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 14 Feb 2003, 17:26

Unfortunately for those of us who like cyclic universe theories, it appears that "The universe will expand=20 forever. It will not turn back on itself and collapse=20 in a great crunch," according to evidence just being released from the anisotropic microwave mapping project.

Full story at:

<http://www.cnn.com/2003/TECH/space/02/11/cosmic.portrait/index.html>

I presume the relevance to things Wolfean is obvious...

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Chris — 14 Feb 2003, 18:24 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

This has actually been theorized for quite some time. IIRC some scientists were holding on to the idea that there may be enough dark matter in the universe to account for the difference in mass needed to bring everything back together.

What confuses me about this article is that they seem (or claim) to know just how much dark matter there is in the universe - I'm not sure how they're coming up with those numbers.

Chris

Unfortunately for those of us who like cyclic universe theories, it appears that "The universe will expand forever. It will not turn back on itself and collapse in a great crunch," according to evidence just being released from the anisotropic microwave mapping project.

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 14 Feb 2003, 18:31 · follows Chris

What confuses me about this article is that they seem (or claim) to know just how much dark matter there is in the universe - I'm not sure how they're coming up with those numbers.

Probably reverse-engineering ... with data like this, I suppose they have enough information to work out the higher- order differentials (i.e., the rate change of the rate of change of ... ) of the

expansion of the universe. Given that, they could extrapolate forward and determine whether the slowing expansion will reverse into a collapse or just continue to expand at a rate that asymptotically approaches zero.

Or something.

Hey, I just live in the universe, I don't run it...

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James Jordan — 14 Feb 2003, 19:17 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Well, so Wolfe is now apparently out of date!

I think 100 years from now, all our SF will be seriously out of date. Conventional SF works in terms of theories about the universe that are just that: theories. Better: myths. Can anyone seriously believe that humanity has done more than just scratch the surface of the reality of the universe? We cast out grids, paradigms, myths, that seem to make the most sense of the data we know. How much don't we know? We've not been at this very long.

That's why I like SF much more than I like PBS. SF is literary, fun, mythical. PBS always seems to think the latest word is also the last word!

Nutria

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 14 Feb 2003, 19:30 · follows James Jordan

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...which was hardly my point. I was just directing attention to a bit of current science that I figured would be of interest to Wolfe readers, because of his cosmological concerns.

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I think it better to say that the science in the SF will be out of date, which doesn't particularly make the SF out of date. The current state of knowledge about, say, Mars, does not detract from my pleasure in reading (to pick a relatively few examples) "A Rose for Ecclesiastes," "A Martian Odyssey," MAN PLUS, LOST RACE OF MARS, THE WAR OF THE WORLDS, etc.; does it do so for you?

Conventional SF works in terms of theories about the universe that are just that: theories. Better: myths.

H'mmm. I don't know if I'd go so far as to call the theories of modern science "myths." I think though that some SF (and particularly the resurgent, literary space opera of people like Zindell and Hamilton) uses them in part the way classical myths used their respective cosmologies.

Can anyone seriously believe that humanity has done more than just scratch the surface of the reality of the universe?

Hey, I'm not sure we've even done that ... !

Which is just as well. After all, the most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind ... oh, did someone already say that ... ?

That's why I like SF much more than I like PBS.

This line had me lol in my office.

PBS always seems to think the latest word is also the last word!

True for you, Patera!

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James Jordan — 14 Feb 2003, 20:10 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

At 01:30 PM 2/14/2003, Blatted blasted:

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No, of course not. That was my point. But I like the way you rephrased it.

PATERA Nutria

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James Jordan — 14 Feb 2003, 20:16 · follows James Jordan

At 01:30 PM 2/14/2003, you wrote:

Well, so Wolfe is now apparently out of date!

...which was hardly my point. I was just directing attention to a bit of current science that I figured would be of interest to Wolfe readers, because of his cosmological concerns.

Apologies for making two posts when one would have been better.

Also, I ask forgiveness if my statement appeared offensive. I should have added ;)

As for Wolfe's cosmological concerns, just in case someone wants this tidbit: His expression to me about the Urth universe was that he had decided to write "in terms of one current view," or words to that effect. While I'm sure he's interested (as I suppose we all are), he obviously was not invested in any particular scheme. (By that I don't mean, btw, that I think he would regard young-earth creationism as a viable alternative.)

FWIW

Nutria