

Myth and Science

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 14 Feb 2003

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James Wynn — 14 Feb 2003, 21:07

Nutria proffered:

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

Blattid deferred:

H'mmm. I don't know if I'd go so far as to call the theories of modern science "myths."

Crush butts in:

One definition of "myth" certainly could equate the "old stories" with scientific theory; that is, "what might have happened based on what we know."

You probably remember that this is the definition C.S. Lewis utilized (and he was no Fundamentalist). Consider that the interests of the old stories, modern religion, and the sort of science that usually provokes general interest are the same: Where did we come from? (Prometheus, Genesis, and paleontology) What is going on? (The Fates, the Gospels, Relativity) Where are we going? (Ragnarok, Revelation, cosmology)

The reason is that they are born from the same visceral urges. The old stories and religion (especially true for Judaism and Christianity) even have an advantage in these inquiries that science does not. That is, all three presume that the human point-of-view is valid and objectively true, but only the first two can begin to justify why.

Finally, this definition explains the ubiquitous interest of SF writers (like Wolfe) in ancient mythology.

--- Crush