

# What holds me back from embracing EP

Post by "Joshua" of July 20, 2022 at 6:27 PM

Quote

So we're talking about the Criterion of Truth, and what amount and class of evidence beyond our own experience should be required to form such an opinion?

This must necessarily vary with the nature of the claim being made, or the hypothesis being proposed.

There's an interesting thought experiment in one of Patrick Rothfuss's books, which I will attempt to badly paraphrase from distance and memory:

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"Imagine a wild forest with three villages clinging to its edges. You travel to the first village, and the residents warn you not to go into those woods, for the place is haunted by demons and no one comes back alive.

In the second village, you are again advised to keep a wide berth from the trees, for the forest is home to a powerful witch. All who go there fall under her spell, and are never seen again.

At the third village they tell stories of men who were killed by werewolves in the night, and talk of the howling shrieks by moonlight that pierce the verdant gloom as darkness settles over the hamlet.

Which of these is true? Neither of them? Neither, of course. But here's the real question:

Would *you* go into those woods? Perhaps the witch and the demons are simply bandits or thieves, whose first and best weapon is fear? The howling beasts merely wolves, yet no less deadly for that? Maybe the forest is every bit as dangerous as they all say, though they all say it wrongly."

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The point, I think, is that mundane claims require no great amount of evidence, but fantastical claims demand a great deal more--a demand they seldom satisfy.

I'd like to see someone draw a map of terra incognita and write, "I don't know what's here, but I'll warrant it isn't dragons."