

Strung Together: The Cultural Currency of String Theory as a Scientific Imaginary

Sean Miller

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Strung Together: The Cultural Currency of String Theory as a Scientific Imaginary Sean Miller In Strung Together: The Cultural Currency of String Theory as a Scientific Imaginary, Sean Miller examines the cultural currency of string theory, both as part of scientific discourse and beyond it. He demonstrates that the imaginative component of string theory is both integral and indispensable to it as a scientific discourse. While mathematical arguments provide precise prompts for physical intervention in the world, the imaginary that supplements mathematical argument within string theory technical discourse allows theorists to imagine themselves interacting with the cosmos as an abstract space in such a way that strings and branes as phenomena become substantiated and legitimized. And it is precisely this sort of imaginary—which Miller calls a scientific imaginary—duly substantiated and acculturated, that survives the move from string theory technical discourse to popularizations and ultimately to popular and literary discourses. In effect, a string theory imaginary legitimizes the science itself and helps to facilitate a virtual domestication of a cosmos that was heretofore remote, alien, and incomprehensible.



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