

The origin of Neoshamanism

These are the circumstances that lead to the Shakeoff. Much like the War of Dissolution it doesn't have a single definitive cause, but most historians say there are a few major contributing factors. First, a pandemic that highlights the inadequacy of Claravian medicine. People get sick and look to the research monks for answers. The Bright Way has thus far been so preoccupied with the stars that other scientific fields that aren't obviously related to aeronautics and astronomy receive little attention. People die, and the survivors say "You did your best and it wasn't good enough."

Around the same time, a movement romanticizing pre-theophany life becomes popular. Yinrih are increasingly urbanized, and society is becoming more complex. People imagine a simpler time before the Theophany, before the yinrih migrated out of the jungle they were built to live in. When the pandemic hits, this catalyzes the movement, as the denser population and more frequent movement brought on by newly invented train travel is blamed for the plague.

The third contributing factor is a failed orbital flight. Much like Firefly's ill-fated mission 33 millennia later, this was a highly publicized experiment that was all but promised to succeed. While this was a case of overconfidence rather than deception on the clergy's part, the outcome was the same, a loss of trust in the clergy.

So there's this movement glorifying the old shamanists, a public health crisis that highlights gaps in the Bright Way's knowledge, and a catastrophe that makes the clergy look bad.

All this culminates in the schisms that formed both neoshamanism and Atavism. The various groups of schismatics differed on where "it all went wrong." The Nonagentivist Neoshamanists rejected the Great Commandment and monotheism, but kept the Claravian idea that science is a form of worship. They're the ones who accuse the Bright Way of academic tunnel vision, and it is out of this Nonagentivist movement that we get the Mindseekers and Lifebringers that filled in much of the yinrih's academic gaps.

The Agentivists thought the Nonagentivists didn't go far enough, and they sought to recreate Shamanism wholesale, including reintroducing animism. While both branches of Neoshamanism believed in panpsychism, agentivists went further and claimed that not only was everything potentially conscious, but that these things could act on their own. If the wind blew a certain way because it willed itself to do so, then the idea that you could predict its movements by simply observing it sound silly. You can't just observe it, you have to ASK it.

Atavism, meanwhile, thought that the other two groups still weren't going far enough. Atavists said that sapience is where it all went wrong, and yinrih should return to being tree dwellers.

This results in a period of civil unrest, if not outright warfare. While these schismatics were outnumbered, they were still a statistically significant minority, they were also highly geographically concentrated, and whole nations took sides. If you professed one faith in the

territory of another, it would not go well for you, and suspicions about conspiracies, and the expected societal fallout from those suspicions, ran rampant on all sides.

If this sad period of history could be said to have a silver lining, it's that this is when yinrih learned that ideologically motivated violence is counterproductive. Things gradually settled down, but the Bright Way was still the clear majority. This state of affairs continues until the first group of Neoshamanists moves to settle Newhome after discovering viable terraforming techniques. The Bright Way was more than happy to provide transportation. "By all means, do your thing over there."

Of course, all this time secular governments are still in charge and doing their thing. They may not have officially been associated with one faith or another, but of course they would lean in a particular direction. Once Newhome became livable, these secular governments wanted to manifest their destiny on this new world, and that's how the "normies" showed up after Newhome's wild west period.

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