

Alternative Perspectives on the Noosphere

The Bright Way believes that only beings that possess souls can be conscious. While all living things have souls, only sophonts are given rational souls by the Uncreated Light and possess the fullness of consciousness. The activities of all sapient beings gives rise to a noosphere, and there are as many noospheres as there planets baring sapient life. The Great Commandment tells the yinrih to unite these hitherto isolated noospheres in order to hasten the convergence of the universe to a perfect whole.

Neoshamanists believe in panpsychism, which is the idea that consciousness is a property of matter itself, or woven into the fabric of the universe. Neoshamanists believe that there is one universal noosphere which is the source of consciousness. According to this theory, while consciousness is latent in all things, it becomes apparent in any system of sufficient complexity. Living things are just the most obvious complex systems, but other things such as rivers, storms, volcanos, and even [machines](#) possess some degree of consciousness.

Furthermore, the noosphere contains every thought or idea that a sophont could possibly think. When a sophont thinks of something new, he isn't inventing it, he's uncovering that part of the noosphere where it had always existed. However, the noosphere is not a discreet set of ideas that one can pluck out of the air. It is a churning maelstrom of nonsensical white noise that only occasionally resolves into an idea. Some neoshamanist mystics seek to "map out" this web of ideas. In many ways they resemble Claravian research monks.

The Misotheists share Neoshamanism's belief in a single universal noosphere. However, rather than all ideas existing within the noosphere already, Misotheists believe the noosphere is affected by the emotions and beliefs of all sapient beings. If enough people believe something, it can arise as an active entity that has agency over the material world. The more people feel a particular emotion or believe an idea, the more power the resulting entity has.

The Farspeakers are orthodox Wayfarers, but they put special emphasis on the communicative aspect of the noosphere. They see the noosphere as ideas at rest in people's minds, and in transit--being communicated from one person to another through speaking writing, or other means. Farspeakers speak of the noosphere having a "body", which is any physical means of communicating ideas. Just as an individual sophont possesses a brain and nervous system that upholds his or her consciousness and gives shape to ideas, physical means of communication, most prominently the Internetwork, represent the brain and nervous system of the noosphere as a whole.

Since Wayfarers cherish sapience as a blessing from the Uncreated Light to its little ones, and

because the noosphere springs forth from sapience, Farspeakers hold the noosphere in special reverence, and see taking car of its body as their sacred duty.

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