

Thoughts on Terraforming

I think, at least at first, the Bright Way might lose interest in the other planets of Focus after determining they're lifeless. This opens the door for Neoshamanists and other miscellaneous actors to swoop in and start getting the terraforming ball rolling.

So by the dawn of the space age, Claravian research monasteries have grown to become the vulpithecine equivalent to higher education, with young adult yinrih studying under the research monks, who by now have branched out beyond spaceflight and related disciplines to cover other hard sciences. Other groups like Neoshamanists found their own institutions of higher learning patterned after the model pioneered by the Claravian monks. Though as I wrote above, they view the endeavor of scientific research differently than the Bright Way. Wayfarers see the study of Creation as an act of worship of the Creator, expanding the Realm of the Known further into the Realm of the Knowable, getting closer and closer to the impassable boundary that separates the natural and supernatural. Neoshamanists believe that every idea already exists within the single universal noosphere, and that nobody truly invents new things, but rather comes upon that part of the noosphere where it had always existed. Their own analogs to research monks map the noosphere.

One of these Neoshamanist institutions starts exploring the idea of terraforming Newhome. They engineer a kind of anaerobic microbe that very, very rapidly metabolizes several different compounds into oxygen, but because it's anaerobic, oxygen kills it, so it sets up a negative feedback loop that ends up killing it off just as the atmosphere becomes breathable for higher lifeforms.

After the space age dawns, various political movements advocate the settling of Newhome, with Neoshamanists being at the forefront. The first colonists have to spend centuries stranded alone in an airless wasteland with little to do besides seeding the environment with these oxygenating microbes, so they start a machine-worshipping cult, as one does.

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