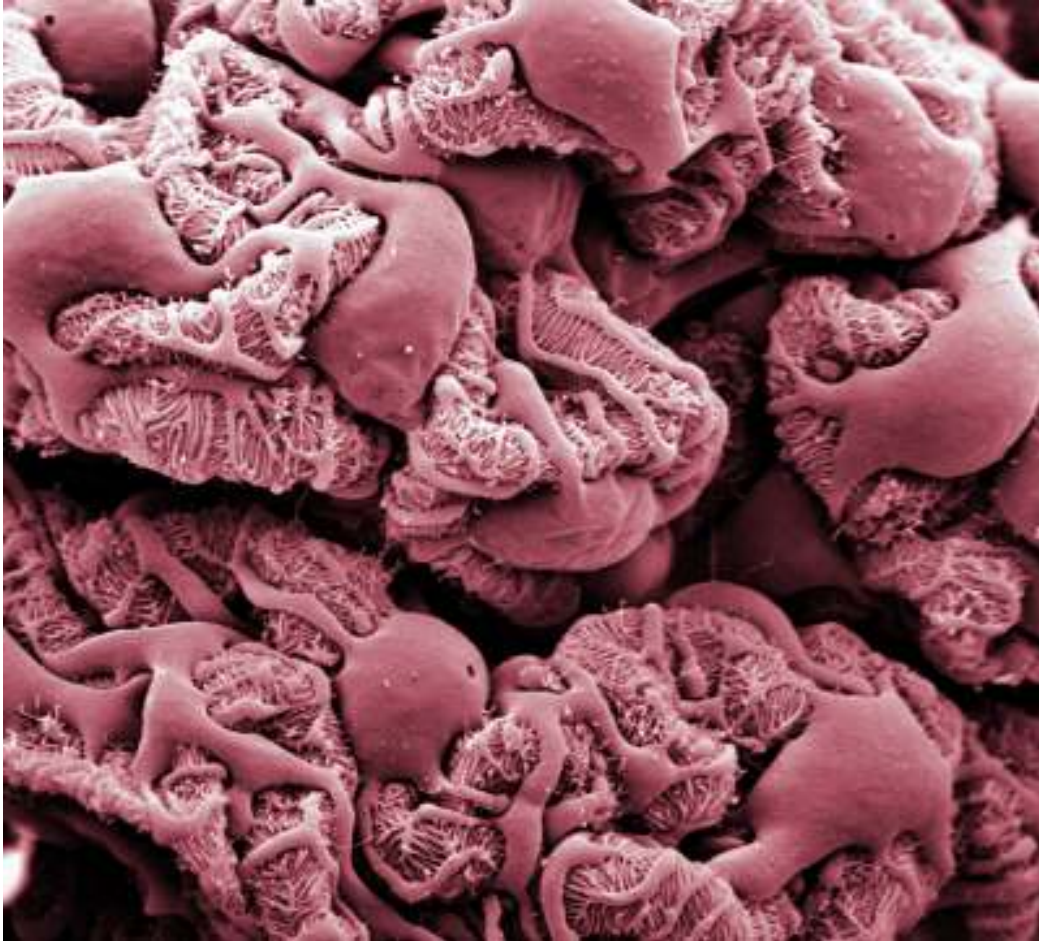


## Systems of Existence: life in the neogene

New genes demand expression -- third eye.  
- *Greg Bear*

By 2100, there is no longer a single mankind. The civilization that fills the solar system is composed of beings derived from humans, dragons and artificial intelligence in varying degrees of mixture, and the important demarcation lines are no longer between nations, cultures or species, but between different systems of existence.

### ***The Dracosphere***



**Figure 1: Dragon tissue (K. E. White)**

The most alien system compared to traditional humanity. The Dracosphere consists of the enormous biomass involved in the Dragon consciousness, covering about a third of the Earth (mostly in the tropical oceans). Information diffuses between organisms as plasmids, neural links, chemical signals, flickering bioluminescence or radio.

Individuality as we know it does not exist. Rather, the dracosphere is what the old transhumanists called a functional soup, an enormous store of skills, abilities, computational resources, memory and biomass that can be combined into endless new combination. Within this soup exists teleological threads, the closest equivalent to individuals: issues, questions, problems or wills that bind the functions into temporary assemblages that seek to answer the questions or implement the visions the thread represents. The threads are constantly woven together, mutating and recombining. The

Dracosphere is often described in mystical terms; here past and present are the same, memory is the same as existence, consciousness permeates everything but without any sense of self.

The Dracosphere seems to be attempting to upload as much as possible of the old crustal Dragon civilization. To this end it sends down deep tendrils to pump up plasmids encoding its knowledge, and is sometimes willing to buy deep core samples from regions it does not have access to. It protects its existence in general terms, but none of its parts seems overly concerned about survival. The Dragons do not seem to have any clear agenda beyond this, but this is likely because they cannot be pinned down in human categories. Conversely, it does not seem to have any single opinion about humanity.



**Figure 2: Dragon bloom (Chris J. Anderson)**

## The voice of the dragons



**Figure 3: Voice of the dragos (D-baker)**

The old Voice of the Dragons human community has now been entirely integrated. There remains a population of humanoid bodies used for personal interaction with other humans (especially at gateways like the New Orleans Castle).



**Figure 4: Voice of the dragons (D-baker)**

Economically the Dracosphere is the source of biodesign par excellence, both inventing new designs whole cloth or doing contract work with other societies. It is also the major producer of Earth climate, selling climate control and weather maintenance to other societies – or at least many attempts are made to get it to play a proper part in the climate system. In exchange it buys information, various hard tech services like satellite communications and transport systems and syntronic processing.

Technologically it is potentially the most advanced system; while it does not commonly use machine phase nanotechnology, it can deploy it in large quantities (as evidenced in the construction of the Trans-Oceanic Channel System). It is believed to be recreating the physical knowledge of the original Dragons, although it is more interested in cultural and aesthetic data.

## ***The Society of Mind***



**Figure 5 (Mondolithic studios)**

The people with syntononic enhancements gradually found themselves forced together by circumstance and shared thinking. While they physically remained mixed with other groups of humans, their new modes of thinking set them apart and led to intriguing new possibilities. The possibility to link thinking and share memories and functions enabled the syntonics to work together. They could interface with AIs at enormous intimacy. The resulting system is often called the society of mind, after the ideas of 20th century AI researcher Marvin Minsky.

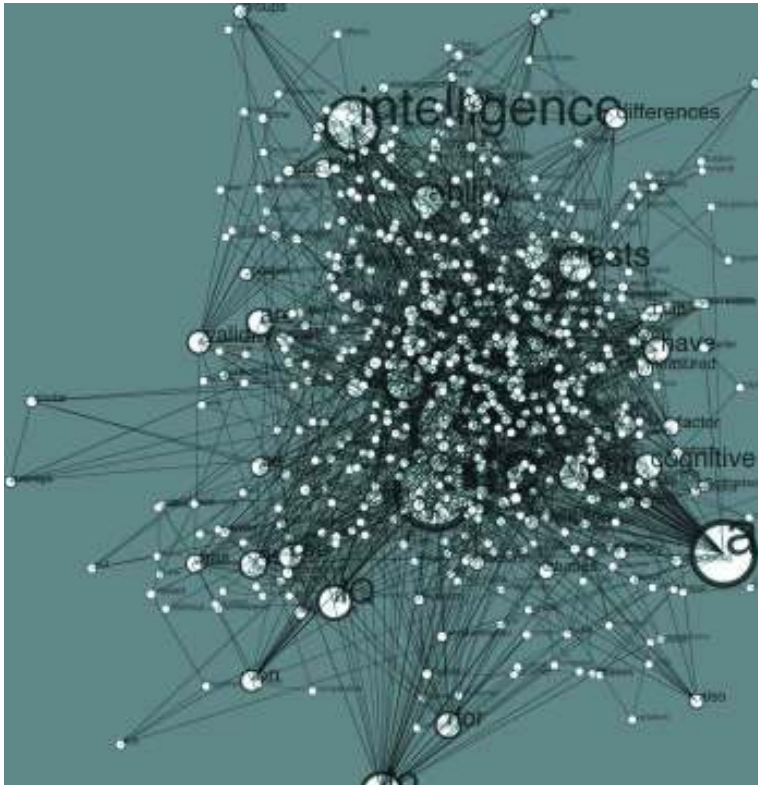
The Society is not a group mind, but rather a mind economy. Syntonics trade mental resources with each other, partly in an economic manner, partly in a social manner.

The Society requires high bandwidth communication and was hit bad by the Spamocalypse. In many ways the current Society is a recreation of the old society that was broken up by the chaos. Many of the older syntonics have responded by ensuring the robustness of their software links and safety of their wetware by relocating into small, well-protected clusters of habitats near the Moon.

The Society has strong economic ties with the Netocracy, especially since members tend to live within it (but it also has sizeable populations within the Immunities, forming an unusual bridge of systems). While originally extremely cautious about links to the Dracosphere, these days the Society has neural interfaces with it and exchange information according to complex mental protocols. The Society is in many ways the key player in solar system economy, with its intimate ties to the orbital stocks and

banking institutions, its intermediary position in many trades and its flexibility. It sometimes act as a single enormously diversified employee-owned corporation.

## ***The Netocracy***



While the Netocracy has roots going back to the turn-of-the-century internationalist culture, it was largely formed by the demands of the Spamocalypse and the move to a nanotech economy. It is essentially the arch-internationalists, hoping to do another jump in freedom and fluidity just as their grandparents did in the 2020's.

The Netocracy is on one hand extremely fluid and informal, with few constraints on intellectual property, custom or organization; adhocracy is the norm to a far greater extent than even in the old internationalist culture. On the other hand it is very focused on certain individuals – coordinators, organizers, leaders, gurus and wizards, usually just called netocrats. These netocrats are the key people that act as cores for the adhocatic networks, and set their protocols. Especially the netocrats that create widely used computing or social protocols wield enormous influence.

While the Netocracy is used to denote all the information-technology societies mainly in orbit, many of the societies within this framework are culturally and economically very different. Some notable societies are the Indigos, cultures that have refrained from neogenetics and many other forms of modern technology, essentially cutting themselves off from mainstream civilization.

Economically the Netocracy benefits from its space location and access to cheap energy and raw materials, but are hampered by the constant need of making what is needed rather than relying on an outside environment. It is the leading developer of nanotechnology and hard technology, trading it for biotechnology from Earth and other system habitats.

The Netocracy and the Society of Mind are not compatible; the Netocracy requires individuals and focuses on hardtech, while the Society is approaching everything as cognotech. They are however often allied.

## ***The Heterogenous Zones***



**Figure 6: Biotech building (R&Sic(n))**

Many small systems, as diverse as the major systems but involving far fewer people or areas exist.

The Beijing nanosymbionts  
The Las Vegas Enclave  
The Unicorns