

The Nexus: Theories of Origin

Lore Article · History

Summary

A survey of unofficial scholarly theories about the origin and nature of the Nexus, assembled from sources the Orders of Wizardry have not suppressed only because they have not noticed them.

What Is Known

The Nexus is a region west of the Barrier Isles where reality becomes unreliable. No one who has entered has returned. At its center, according to Barrier Isle oral tradition that predates any written record, stands a tower surrounded by roses. The Orders of Wizardry have classified all formal research into the Nexus as a closed inquiry. The connection between the Nexus and the instability that makes long-distance teleportation dangerous across Dracomere is a theory held privately by several Conclave members and published by none of them.

This is everything the Settled Lands knows officially. It has been everything the Settled Lands knows officially for approximately two thousand years. The closed-inquiry classification has been maintained through successive Heads of the Conclave without review. No one in the current Conclave hierarchy has formally asked why.

Unofficial theories exist. They circulate in the margins of academic correspondence, in the private libraries of retired Order members, and in the oral traditions of the Barrier Isle communities. The Orders have not suppressed them. This is either because the theories are wrong enough to be harmless, or because the Orders have not been paying attention to where they are spreading. Both explanations have been offered. Neither is fully satisfying.

The Wound Theory

The oldest surviving written theory, attributed to a Grey-Robe archivist named Thessavar who was expelled from the Order approximately eight hundred years ago for unrelated reasons. Thessavar argued that the Nexus is a tear in the fabric of Kyrell's reality -- a place where the world was damaged so severely that it has never healed, and that the unreliability of space and distance within the Nexus is the physical expression of a wound that has been open for longer than recorded history.

Thessavar identified three possible causes for such a wound: a divine conflict of sufficient scale, a catastrophic arcane working gone wrong, or contact with something from outside the world

entirely. He favored the first explanation, citing the violence of Solgarde's battle with Halina at the world's creation -- the god-knight's defeat of the first daughter of the universe was, in Thessavar's framing, not a clean victory but a catastrophic one, and the Nexus is the place where the worst of the damage landed.

This theory has two things going for it: it is old enough to predate the Orders' interest in suppression, and it explains the Nexus's apparent permanence without requiring an ongoing cause. Its weakness is that it does not explain the tower, the roses, or the Nexus Wanderers, who do not behave like the residual effects of ancient damage. They behave like something that is still happening.

The Anchor Theory

A more recent and more specific theory, circulating in private correspondence among a small network of scholars for the past century. Its origin is disputed; no single author claims it, which suggests either that it developed collaboratively or that whoever developed it had reasons not to attach their name to it.

The Anchor Theory holds that the Nexus is not a wound but a construction -- something made deliberately and maintained actively, though not necessarily by anyone currently alive. The argument runs as follows: the Nexus has consistent properties. The Thinning occurs at the same boundary. The tower and roses are always at the center. Wounds do not have consistent centers; constructions do.

What the Nexus was constructed to do is the part of the theory where the correspondence diverges. The most developed version argues that it is an anchor -- a fixed point in reality whose function is to hold something in place. What it holds, the theory does not specify, because the scholars who developed it recognized that specifying it would require knowing what it holds, which would require entering the Nexus, which no one has done and returned from. The connection to teleportation instability fits this version: if the Nexus is an active working of enormous scale, its presence would distort the fabric of Kyrell's reality in the way that a heavy object distorts the surface it rests on.

A minority version of the Anchor Theory argues the reverse: the Nexus does not hold something in. It holds something out. The region exists to keep something from reaching Kyrell from wherever it originates.

The Vennite Origin Theory

The most unsettling of the circulating theories, and the one the Orders would most likely suppress if they knew it existed. It surfaces in exactly one document: a fragment of what appears to be a pre-Time-of-Nightmares text, provenance unknown, which was purchased by a collector in Saltmere approximately forty years ago and has since changed hands several times. The current location of the document is not publicly known.

The fragment's argument, reconstructed from the portion that survived: the Nexus predates the Empire of Venn but was known to Vennite scholars, who called it something that translates roughly as "the Held Place" or "the Place of Keeping." The fragment refers to an event -- the specific event is not described, only referenced as though the reader already knows what it was -- after which the Held Place was sealed and its location made deliberately difficult to reach. The fragment notes, without elaboration, that the seal was considered imperfect by those who made it.

The scholars who have seen this fragment disagree about what it implies. The most alarming reading: the Nexus was deliberately moved to its current location, made difficult to access, and then sealed -- imperfectly -- around something the Vennite Empire considered too dangerous to destroy and too dangerous to leave accessible. The tower at the center is not incidental. It is the reason.

The Nexus Wanderers, in this reading, are not entities that emerged from the Nexus randomly. They are what happens when the imperfect seal lets something out.

What the Orders Know

The closed-inquiry classification was established by the first Conclave, contemporaneously with its own founding. The Spirit Dragon Whistles were produced. The Orders unified. The Conclave's first acts included classifying records on both. This timing is documented. Its significance has not been publicly analyzed.

Two things follow from this if the timing is meaningful rather than coincidental: the first Conclave knew something about the Nexus that it chose immediately to restrict, and whatever they knew, they considered it comparable in sensitivity to the Whistles -- the artifacts that gave mortals power over near-divine beings. The successive Heads of the Conclave who have maintained both restrictions without review have either accepted the original assessment without question, or have read the restricted records and reached the same conclusion independently.

Archmage Theodric Vane has read the restricted records. He has maintained the classification. He is a man who tells people the full weight of what he knows even when they cannot absorb it. He has not told anyone what the Nexus records say. This is, among those who know him well enough to notice the inconsistency, the single most unsettling fact about the Nexus available to anyone outside the Conclave's highest tier.