

## BOOK PHILOSOPHY

This factoid is not a complete philosophical theory: just a collection of ideas, principles, musings and snippets; used as a guide by the author.

Some other factoids cover exhodic philosophy.

The main function of any book, whether it be an illustrated children's book of fables or a treatise on molecular structure, is to entertain the reader. Nobody wants to sit for hours reading dull prose.

Ray Strahler has followed some Wagnerian principles in the design of "Exhodon":

Surface Beauty.

Depth of Description.

Woven Plot.

Free Actors.

Destiny.

Consequences.

Veiled Plots.

Surface Beauty.

First, the negative part:

Before 1933, the function of the artist was to create beautiful objects; from pottery to stained glass to painting to music, etc..

The emergence of the concept "Socialist Man" (this was before Feminism, OK?), combined in an unholy alliance with Capitalism, had a profoundly destructive effect on the artistic world of the 1920's and 1930's. The results of that cataclysm permeate today's art world.

Colorful images of delicate dragonflies were replaced by concrete sculptures of muscular men wielding hammers.

Life on Planet Earth is based on the getting of money. This rule applies to every human, including artists; most of whom do not have private means. In general, the money-givers dictate the artistic direction of any epoch. So much for free will. Such is the depth of perversion

created by the system, that the adjective “disturbing”, when applied to an artistic work, is nowadays considered to be a compliment.

Some artists reject the seduction of modern commercialism, accepting their relative monetary poverty, so that they can produce works of genuine artistry and merit, thereby satisfying that inner drive for perfection.

In the so-called Developed World, 80% of the population lives in large cities, surrounded by ugliness, stink and noise. Only in the quiet privacy of their homes can most humans create a refuge from the external assault on their senses, arranging the interior decoration as balm to the soul. Another way of temporarily escaping from the grinding greyness of daily life is to collect and read interesting books.

Now, the positive part:

Even during the blackest days of despotic regimes, there are humans who persist in producing beautiful works. We all have a need, deep within our souls, to raise our eyes and feel the power of a golden sunset. For millions of years, our ancestors led a nomadic existence. Life was hard and unpredictable, but the surrounding beauty of Mother Nature became imprinted on the collective mind of humanity.

A soulless logger with a chainsaw sees the tree, but a human sees a unique creation which has lived for hundreds of years, withstanding drought and tempest. Our ancestors lived with the trees and worshipped them for their strength and beauty. As a boy, I used to climb to the dangerous tops of beech trees and feel the wind moving that great strong mass slowly back and forth. Perhaps that is why Gruesome Forest Game Habitat is filled with gigantic trees festooned in colorful flowers.

It’s not easy to create beautiful images for the reader’s enjoyment, using only words instead of pictures, without becoming boringly long-winded. Making a beautiful environment for the story, however, was one of the main objectives from the beginning.

The result: Chivandoe is reborn and spends her childhood in that magical forest created by her green mother, Setsishkay. This forms the central section of “Exhodon”.

Setsishkay’s main concept for the remodelling of GFG Habitat was the creation of a gorgeously beautiful landscape roamed by bizarre and dangerous Game creatures.

## Depth of Description.

This is a tricky one. Some of Oscar Wilde's works contain long descriptive passages, where he attempts to incorporate beauty into prose, but ends by becoming boring. Modern humans are used to seeing movies, where each exciting scene is cut to an easily-digestible length.

"Exhodon" is written on this principle. Ray Strahler has seen the movie, and described it in a concise fashion for the modern reader. Apart from some long early chapters describing the Exhodon and their Glowrealm, scenic description is woven into the story in short passages.

Science Fiction, by its nature, requires more description than conventional human (e.g. Crime) stories. The SF reader is aware of this inescapable fact, and should therefore plough through those passages bravely. In the case of "Exhodon" the situation is more difficult than usual, because no humans are involved. Hence the long descriptive parts are needed, to set the scene, otherwise the reader will not fully grasp events later in the story.

## Woven Plot.

In fact, the "Exhodon" story (Book1) runs in a linear sequence from the parental meetings to the final scene. Woven, in this case, means the incorporation of strands from other stories about characters who only appear incidentally or play minor roles in this particular book. Although each book is a self-contained story, the series of books forms a complex interlocking web. The final result will be grasped by the reader as a true saga.

## Destiny, Free Actors, Consequences.

Destiny assumes the background presence of some entity over whom we have no influence, but who has the power to determine the course of our lives. In Wagner's "Ring der Nibelungen" the Norns sit in their dark cave and weave the web of destiny.

This deterministic concept, although apparently present, is firmly

contradicted by the philosophy in the books.

The characters in the books are Free Actors, meaning that they have free will, but, as here on Earth, there are limits imposed on their actions by their environment and society.

There are no goodies or baddies. The childishly oversimplified concept of inherent Good and Evil is absent. Everybody acts in his own best interests. This results in the most important of the three concepts above (and this is truly Wagnerian): Consequences.

The characters interact with each other, doing what they consider to be the best in all situations. Generally, this results in a harmonious resolution of problems. A chain of seemingly random decisions taken by the main protagonists, however, leads to an unexpected change in the direction of Chivandoe's life, thence to unforeseen adventures.

### Veiled Plots.

More Wagner (what, are you bored already?): the listener can sit for the required number of hours and just let the magnificent music flow into his mind. This is the concept of Surface Beauty. Sometimes, it's enough.

Diversion: Mark Twain once said "Wagner has some wonderful moments, but some awful quarter-hours."

Or, by reading the libretto or straining to catch the sung words, more meaning can be distilled out of the complexity of the music drama. You have to listen to "The Ring" many times to reach deep down into all of those hidden psychological meanings. Some people even read more into the plot than actually exists.

"Exhodon" has some of these Veiled Plots: the reader has the impression that more is happening behind the scenes than is immediately obvious. This is, after all, basically a story about parenthood and childhood, but in a strangely alien setting.

A child can only see what it is capable of understanding.

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