

EXHODON SOCIETY

General

Exhodon are non-biologicals, and therefore only die if they are killed; deliberately or in an accident.

An unimaginable variety of living and working environments exists in the more than 700 million Habitats orbiting Glower.

Exhodon change into a range of different bodies as required by circumstances, as casually as humans change their clothes. This is possible because the mentality of an exhodon is contained within its helm.

Every exhodon is born when its helm is created in a birth cell in one of the 24 Helm Creators orbiting the Glower moon, Home. The coparents donate parts of their own characters, but Exhodic Law and the Helm Creator control brains forbid the transfer of memories from parent to child.

A newly-born exhodon has all of the knowledge it requires, such as Exhodic Law, language, science, mathematics, etc., to be able to function immediately.

However; a newly-born, having no memories or experience of life, requires a time of childhood to integrate its inherent knowledge into the basic character given by its parents, to form a socially competent member of exhodon society.

What is a helm?

The helm contains a six-lobed brain encased in two opposing hemispherical shells with slightly flared rims. The helm is closed when embodied: bodily control is performed via the 12 laser ports (6 per halfhelm) situated next to the rims.

When a helm is naked, outside of a body, the two halves of the shell may be held apart. Thus the helm can move about using its 6 tiny tentacles ending in tiny six-fingered hands.

The halfhelms are coloured in a pattern, which is fixed at birth.

Between alternate tentacle roots a flexible eyestalk ends in an eyeball covered in skin, which can wrinkle back to reveal an irised eye.

The iris has the same colour as the helm, but is of a brighter hue.

The three eyestalks may be moved independently or in concert, giving the helm panoramic vision.

The naked helm has no olfactory sensors, and therefore no sense of smell.

Between those tentacle roots without eyes, three small greyish bumps serve as ears. A helm has no means of generating sounds by the puffing of air, but the outer shell surface may be caused to vibrate, allowing spoken communication over a limited frequency range.

A closed helm obviously cannot see out of its three covered eyes, but surrounding objects may be scanned at low laser power to enable lower-resolution imaging.

Sexes

There are 5 exhodic sexes, based on the originals inherited from the Hexapod ancestors on Home. Sex has nothing to do with bodily shape or function, but is a determinant of basic character.

An exhodon's HelmID ends with its sex, e.g:

405-220-617-524-3-Q

(Zanvooghea's HelmID)

The HelmID is programmed into the helm at birth, and serves as the exhodon's name. Each HelmID is unique in the entire Glowrealm.

These are the sexes:

Q: queen. Creative, emotional, leader.

M: male. Analytical, steady, independent.

F: female artisan. Artistic creator, diverse characters, follower.

A: male artisan. Technical creator, diverse characters, follower.

W: warrior. Analytical, brave, technically competent.

Helm Creators

Population Analysts, working for Population Control, feed their data into the Helm Creators, whose control brains evaluate all factors and then modify their helm production schedules accordingly.

On a Glowrealm-wide scale, this maintains the optimal balance of

characters and sexes for a stable society.

As few children are born, relative to the billions of existing exhodon, being selected as a parent is equivalent to winning a lottery.

Every exhodon has an equal chance of winning, irrespective of sex or status.

Parental combinations are selected impartially by the Helm Creators, based on carefully-designed criteria. Even though any exhodon could find itself wrenched out of its normal life to become a potential coparent, grouped with total strangers, the parental selector ensures compatibility of their basic characters. Priority is given to the child's educational requirements, rather than parental desires.

Parents

Exhodic Law is programmed into every helm at birth to create a law-abiding culture. However, the ultimate success, or failure, of society depends on the education given to each child; thence its adult character and capabilities.

The Helm Creators and their Servitors, as well as carefully choosing parents according to strictly defined criteria, also dictate the rules which they must follow in the education of their child. One of these rules states that a child must spend the first halfyear of its life in a Hexapod second or third instar body, and the parents, when in the presence of their child, must wear adult Hexapod-type bodies.

The family group must also strive to replicate, as far as practical, the original nomadic Hexapod lifestyle, by wandering about in a more or less natural landscape.

Thus every exhodon begins life as part of a family group in a natural environment, ensuring that its mind will begin to develop along the perfect pathway, leading to the essence of exhodity.

A queen- or male child requires a longer and more intensive education than a female- or male artisan child.

Adult queens and males are in general deeply involved in complex projects. Artisans may generally be spared from normal duties to look after their child.

Thus the parental system was developed: three parents for a queen- or male child, two parents for an artisan child. The former may comprise a QQM group, or a QMM group; the latter is always an FA group.

In the remaining case, War Control looks after its own: the rare warrior child is given a happy childhood in one of the Helm Creator Habitats, but will eventually undergo intensive training to become a War Control Operative, possibly even a Warfare Specialist.

Money

The Exhodon have no concept of monetary exchange. Each Habitat is a self-contained ecosystem ruled by a queen, who makes decisions concerning material, energy and, above all, maintenance.

Wealth

RS note: this probably belongs in the Philosophy department, but it is also relevant to Exhodon society.

What is true wealth?

Wealth is defined by quality of life.

The Exhodon need no food or clothing; they don't even need to breathe if they stand still and remain silent. Shelter is provided automatically by the Habitat interior. More or less any object may be created in a Maker, as long as enough material is available.

For immortal beings, time is not in short supply, and therefore is not considered to be important, in general.

In such an environment, what things have value?

Read on ...

Space

Not outer space, but the living space available for any body.

Most Habitat interiors are laid out as pleasant landscapes containing small islands of buildings or structures. The population density is generally quite low, so that anybody can take a long walk and meet few others. Anybody seeking company can enter the Midhills, where life runs at a faster, noisier pace.

Beauty

Beauty cannot be possessed; it can only be created and enjoyed.

The main priority of every Habitat queen is Habitat maintenance; the lives of the inhabitants depend on it.

She continually strives, however, to increase the amount of beauty inside her home: after all, she will live there for centuries. Avoidance of boredom stands high on her priority list; so the greater the variety of views and exquisitely designed bowers the better.

Self-determination

An exhodon, although duty bound to cooperate with fellow inhabitants, is free to live and work wherever it feels most comfortable.

Within the bounds set by the Habitat queen, an individual has complete control over materials and energy.

Work

The Exhodon are always busy. It's something of a paradox that beings who have so much time available rarely squat around doing nothing. Doing work that you enjoy is the key to contentment. Nothing satisfies more than looking back over a job well done, knowing that you have given your best and produced a good result.

Working on a complex project with your friends produces a prolonged sense of contentment with life.

Play

Exhodon often work hard, but they really know how to play.

The twin seasons called Dimness, around the dark time of Edge-on, are devoted mainly to fun and games.

Most queens and females, and some males, take part in the Fighting Games. The combatants in the single events obviously try to be the best, but

the team events are more popular, as they present a colourfully noisy show to the spectating males and male artisans.

Not all games involve violence; some are designed to test the mental and physical coordination of the players, either singly or in teams.

Many simple and complex forms of dancing have been developed over the millennia, together with their relevant musical structures.

Every exhodon can sing, when using a suitable body. The exhodic spoken language itself is polyphonic, since each bodily spiracle can produce a separate tone. An overheard sonic conversation between two exhodon sounds like a duet between two small pipe-organs, played at a fast pace by virtuoso organists.

Choral singing is especially popular during the dark periods around Edge-on. Groups form spontaneously, then wander out into the woods to gather in a dim clearing beneath their floating glowglobes, where they sing ancient songs of love, loss, death, birth, battles won or lost.

Friendship

The inhabitants of any particular Habitat form a society of friends.

New exhodon arrive, old ones leave. Some friendships last for only a short interval, others for centuries. Lovers fall into and out of love, perhaps once, often regularly. Over such long lifetimes, few relationships are permanent.

The Exhodon have no concept of jealousy.

Physical sex is just for fun between friends; mental sex is something deeper and longer-lasting between lovers. True lovers don't object to their counterparts having a bit of fun in the shrubbery.

As nobody actually owns anything, envy over material goods cannot exist; although the shining capability of a talented individual can produce feelings in that direction. As far as feelings are concerned; the Exhodon are no angels, and are not living in some sort of Utopia without strife. Emphasis is placed on living a full emotional life, which covers the whole range from pain to ecstasy.

Social Rank

There is a hierarchy of merit, derived from experience and achievements. Position in the hierarchy is determined by current credit status, which is stored in the Distributed Data System (DDS).

Credit is not to be confused with wealth, but is a measure of an exhodon's achievements.

Age is not a direct determinant of status. In fact, it is considered socially inept to refer to one's own age. Any recently-met stranger could be old or young, as HelmID's are continually recycled, therefore giving no indication of real age.

A low-number HelmID from the early Glowrealm era, however, engenders respect. A really ancient exhodon could even have taken part in the original exodus from Home as a Hexapod, before being converted to a true exhodon. Her mode of speech often resolves the question: the ancients had to learn a new language during the Great Rationalisation, and the old Hexapodian accent is sometimes apparent.

Although a Habitat queen has the final say in all matters related to operation and safety, and is deservedly respected by the inhabitants, she cannot be regarded as an absolute ruler.

The exhodon are all intelligent competent beings: this results in the inevitable differences of opinion, which are often resolved by fighting.

Bodies are essentially throw-away items, so violent fights are acceptable behaviour, under certain strictly defined conditions. There are no fights between naked helms, of course, as this could be dangerous.

Social life in a Habitat, therefore, tends to oscillate between periods of calm friendliness, with outbreaks of conflict between individuals or groups. Anybody who cannot be reconciled with the current situation always has the option of wandering away to seek a better life elsewhere.

Wandering

Most exhodon stay put for long periods in the Habitat of their choice. Even though inter-Habitat travel is actively discouraged by Traffic Control, many exhodon wander around the rings, sampling the delights of diverse

Glowrealm environments like tourists; joining work projects more or less randomly, while searching for the ideal living environment.

Some exhodon, emulating the ancient Hexapod poetic system from Home, make a profession of wandering permanently to bring gossip, tales and news to their eager listeners. Squatting in a group of friends listening to a much-travelled poet is somehow more appealing than simply connecting to the DDS via the Habitat Network and watching the news in internal mode.

Political groups

Due to the continual relative movement of all Habitats, physical groupings are impossible. This contributes to social stability, as all exhodon must work together in small groups, limited to each Habitat.

Social ideas and concepts are distributed via the DDS and wandering individuals.

Live virtual meetings are also impossible due to communication time delays across the rings. Hence political groups only exist via DDS virtual data areas. These are checked carefully by War Control for potential antisocial content.

Laws

The Exhodic Law is programmed into every exhodon's helm at creation.

Habitat rules are automatically and temporarily loaded into an exhodon's helm on first Habitat entry.

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