

## Q & A

### Whitney H. Murphy (Author of *Ages of Claya* Fiction Series)

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Question: What do the titles of your books mean? Where did you come up with them?

A: 'Anamnesis' is a term from ancient Greek philosophy and modern psychology. The ancient philosophy encompasses the idea that eternal truths learned in this life are not actually learned here, but remembered, from our previous life/lives. In more modern psychology, the term refers to the ability to remember a past life.

'Emendatus' is a latin term, which means 'corrected' or 'amended'.

My bachelor's degree was in linguistics. I love tinkering with languages--finding the ways they connect, pulling them apart to see how they work, etc. It was my love of human languages that inspired me to use terms from old languages and philosophies for my first three books.

Question: What languages are the languages in your writing based on?

A: The languages of Claya are entirely their own. I never based them off any existing languages (although as kid I used to create many codes and alphabets). This may make me sound a little crazy, but the languages of Claya were created much the same way as the world they exist in. Spontaneously. That said, they do have fully working grammar, and I have taken time over the years to make notes of their syntactic structures. But like all language, they are constantly evolving.

Question: How many books do you plan to write?

A: So far, I only plan to publish three books. Once I've written those, I might write more of the history of West Ataran, and the years between the first three books.

Question: Are events, people or places in your writing related to things in your real life?

A: Absolutely yes. Although I've never done it on purpose. The events in Claya come to me like dreams. They often come to me like a sudden, vividly recalled memory. I can't tell you how many times I've written down scenes from Claya, only to read them later and discover that they are parallel to some event in my actual life. I've learned over the years that every event in my life is mirrored by an event in Claya--although something that happened yesterday in this reality may show up in the ancient times of Claya, or anytime in the history of that world. The people and places in Claya connect to this reality as well, and I'm always searching to find their meaning.

Anamnesis in many ways is a reference to the concept of an eternal soul--the idea that we existed before this life and will continue to exist after death. I like the old analogy credited to Saint Bede, a monk historian who (I believe) lived until sometime around 735 AD. To put in my own words, Bede

recorded that the life we're currently experiencing is not unlike a sparrow flying through a mead hall. It soars in through a window, momentarily experiencing the sounds and sensations of the hall before zipping out through another window and into the outside world again.

Question: Do the other books in the Ages of Claya series have a dystopian setting, as Anamnesis does?

A: No. Anamnesis is the only book I've planned to write with a dystopian/post-apocalyptic setting. In a way, my first book is a prequel. A narrow introduction into a much larger world where the stories of the other books take place.

Question: Anamnesis seems to focus a lot on the importance of self identity. It talks quite a bit about memories. Does the second book in the series follow this theme as well? Or what unique theme does it have?

A: Anamnesis is a tale of remembering who we truly are. Emendatus, on the other hand, is a tale of correcting. It focuses on the fact that once we know who we are, we often want to change something about ourselves and/or the world around us. It tells the stories of a few individuals who are striving to 'fix' the world they're living in, either on a small or large scale.