Welcome to the fifth 2008 issue of DREAMScene — the electronic newsletter of DREAMWalker Group.

I'll begin by saying that this newsletter — originally the "June 2008" issue — is late in its arrival. Things in the world of several of the people involved in its release have been unforgivably chaotic. So it is with huge apologies that I offer you ... the June/July 2008 issue!

Next, some announcements and tidbits concerning the DREAMScene newsletter:

1. I've changed the name of the "Classifieds" section to "Bulletin Board" and added subcategories for "Appearances and Book Signings," "Calls for Submissions," "Literary Contests," and "Help Wanted.""Help Offered.""Publishers Seeking Authors"

2. In the most remarkable kind of self-promotion you've ever seen, I've gone to the dubious trouble of adding a link to a photo album of myself to my profile page here at DREAMWalker Group. This album shows yours truly in various stages of development from the early 1950s well into the 21st Century. Hope you enjoy the album!

3. As part of my marketing endeavor -- and it's a great way to meet interesting people, too -- I belong to many social and business networks. These permit me to spread the word about DREAMWalker Group to as many people as possible. Some of those include Author's Den, Black Author's Showcase, Facebook, Friendster, GLEE, MySpace, Shelfar, and Yowie. Let me know if there are others I'm missing!

4. DREAMWalker Group always had a blog (http://dreamsceneblog.blogspot.com) -- which actually needs to be resurrected and updated. However, I've also created a new blog: DREAMScene: The Blog (http://dreamwalkergroup.blogspot.com/) which is for folks who have been published in this newsletter. If you'd like to contribute daily or weekly musings to this blog, just let me know (writer_mike@yahoo.com) and I'll see to it that you've given administrative privileges. (Note that I also have my own personal blog at http://writer-mike.blogspot.com).

5. If you have a book coming out soon, why not list it at our Help Wanted: Buy Books page? (Once it's released, well move it to our New Releases page.)

6. Wonder who's been added to DREAMWalker Group recently? Check out our Recent Additions/Changes To Our Site page.

Missed an issue of this newsletter? Click here to view old issues online.

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This month's issue of DREAMScene includes:

- The 2012 Problem by Ralph Miller
- How to Get the "Search Inside" Option Set Up on Amazon.com by Tamara Wilhite
- When Something Bad Happens by Robert Schwartz
- My Religious Experience by Rich Goscik
- Let's Get Physical: A Quantum Look at the Queer Space-Time Continuum by Joseph P. Goodwin
- From the Archives of C'NAQ: Where's the Beef? by Catherine Groves — another wonderful article from the Archives of Christian "New Age Quarterly (C'NAQ, Catherine Groves, ed.).
- Just Ask Gail: Turmoil on Campus by Gail Fonda

I hope you'll enjoy this inordinately varied and exciting issue and anticipate more frequent updates in the future!
Mission of Creativity

DREAMWalker Group is a collective of inspired individuals who are dedicated to the idea that if one person sparkles, a group of people are brilliant.

As proprietor of DREAMWalker Group, it is Michael Walker's desire to express a deep sense of gratitude for all the good that has entered and continues to enter his life. To do this, he has created a site that offers free web profiles to creative people and provides a "one stop" venue for creative information and creative, spirit-based support. Insofar as this is a free site, he is also hopeful that this site will eventually become self-supporting. To make this a possibility, visitors to the site are encouraged to buy at least one item a year through the Amazon.com and other affiliate links.

NOTE: Profile pages can include the following information (or more):
- Contact information (website and email, if desired)
- An historical listing of published books (current and out-of-print)
- An historical listing of published CDs and tapes (when possible)
- Cross-links to other subject-related books and authors at DREAMWalker Group
- Links from author's book directly to Amazon.com (the money we make, currently about $400 per year, helps pay for the maintenance of this free site.

Our Pledge to Share Our Prosperity

Michael Walker
writer_mike@yahoo.com

Missed an issue of this newsletter? Click here to view old issues online

Noteworthy at DWG

- Remember that DREAMWalker Group is broken into numerous creative "communities" -- which more jaundiced folks might like to think of as "market segments." Each community, in turn, is broken into topics of interest.

For a list of all general topics of interest, go to the General Community. For a similar list of topics related to other communities, go to that specific community.*

To date, the communities include Arts, Disability, General, GayLesBi, Literary, Recovery, Seniors, Spirit-Guided, and Transgender.

Feel free to email us and offer suggestions for new topics or topics related to your own avocation or genre.)

*Note that a topic may be under construction.

Our DreamTeam consists of three very talented folks who help make DREAMWalker Group the magical place it is today. They are:

And we're extremely fortunate that mediabistro.com recently announced our DreamTeam. mediabistro.com is dedicated to anyone who creates or works with content, or who is a non-
DREAMWalker Group is a free site. We believe that charging creative people for their work is unwarranted. It is our primary purpose to give back to this brilliant, inspired, and like-minded community for all the wonderful things they’ve created and continue to create. 

Insofar as giving is good; receiving is also a nice thing. As is the maintenance of a life living that is conducive to happy creativity. So as part of its mission to give and receive, DREAMWalker Group hereby promises the following:

To give back to the community a full 40% of all additional money earned over an initial compensation of $100,000 via DREAMWalker Group. (We haven’t decided how best to do that just yet, but we are not доо в the way of several scholarships or prizes to current and future brilliant folks and to supporting the literary/artist community in other ways.)

- Money earned under $100,000 will be used to provide a decent standard of living and for deprogramming, organizing, and continuing the work of DREAMWalker Group’s proprietor (Michael Walker) and to defray the costs of running this site.
- A full accounting of money earned and given away will be provided at Open Books: Peek at Our Income and Site Visitor Statistics.

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To recap:

Once we pass the $100,000 mark (per year), DREAMWalker Group will give back to the community a full 40% of all additional money earned via this site. This means that:

- Out of every additional $100,000 earned over the initial compensation of $100,000, DREAMWalker Group will give back $40,000.00 to the creative community;
- Out of every $1,000,000 earned, DREAMWalker Group will give back $400,000.00;
- Out of every $10,000,000 earned, DREAMWalker Group will give back $4,000,000.00;
- Etc.

Who will benefit most from this?

NOTE: Profile pages can include the following information (or more):

1. The brilliant, creative folks who continue to get free publicity and exposure via their continually growing and popular website.
2. Their publishers who can run free ads at the site — once they agree to provide links to DREAMWalker Group or free advertising in return.
3. DREAMWalker Group’s proprietor (Michael Walker). Possibly freed from the burden of working a day job, he'll have more time and money to use in maintaining this site. 
4. Amazon.com — Out of 351 referrals in 2007, DREAMWalker Group earned $20,000 (Amazon.com brought in a whopping $5,756.71). Just do the math!

Added Brilliance

March 1, 2008, we added profiles for the following brilliant people: 

- [to be added]

*Note: some profiles may still be under construction.

Quick Links

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Our Finances
- Support This Site

Sources Tell Us

This space reserved for rumors, gossip, and other juicy tidbits related to writers and the literary community!

Write to writer_mike@yahoo.com

- Rumor has it that DREAMWalker Group may have to close down if people don't support the site by buying all their books from Amazon.com by utilizing the DREAMWalker Group/Amazon.com search engines and links to the left of this announcement and elsewhere at dreamwalkergroup.com.

Across the Blogosphere

Interconnecting through blogs.

- This month Robin Reardon continues her blog — a series of installments using logic and facts, in the form of an open letter to humanity, to prove that the only thing wrong with being gay is how some people treat you when they find out. The Case for Acceptance presents the thinking behind Reardon’s second novel, Thinking Straight, about a gay teen who is sent to a Christian de-programming center to straighten him out.

Parts III and IV of this open letter to humanity are now posted, as Robin continues the logical, rational process for deconstructing and demolishing those nasty virtual cards that homophobes big fat glitch at gays. (Read the introductory installment on her blog and find out what a taggtag-bag is and where it comes from.) Part III shreds “Abnormal” and “Promiscuous”, and Part IV takes “Pedophile” down.

- And on another Blog front, author Tracy B. Evans, author of the suspense novel Fatal Kidnapping, has begun a “Write with me story” at her MySpace Blog. “I think I should give everyone on MySpace a chance to join the contest. So, more or less, it is a competition.” Continues Tracy, “I will start with a sentence, and anyone can add a line. Add your name in parenthesis after you write your sentence. If the story turns out good, then I will add the story to my next novel, coming out in a few months. I’m currently still writing it. Anyone who participates will get credit if this short story is published. It will be added as a bonus story on my next book - only if it’s good. So, let’s get to writing. Make sure to copy and paste the whole story when you add your line. It will make it easier to read. This will be fun!
Her story begins:

She closed her eyes and took a deep breath, thinking about the horrible events of the day. (Tracy B.)

For the continuing results of Tracy's experiment, visit her MySpace Blog. Tracy's website is www.tracybevans.com.

See also Hint to Writers: Persevere (below).

- Richard David Kennedy's blog, The Portfolio — a repository for writers of all genres — continues to thrive.

  Says Richard, "We've got some brilliant people here — not a joke! And I, for one, am always looking forward to seeing some really creative, exceptionally good stuff! This isn't about 'politics, rules and regulations, or personality favs.' It's about writing and a place to express and share your work with others who really do appreciate the work of kindred souls. And you never know just who may be reading what is being posted here. Food for thought."

- Check out DREAMScene: The Blog — which is for folks who have been published in this newsletter. If you'd like to contribute daily or weekly musings to this blog, just let me know (writer_mike@yahoo.com) and I'll see to it that you've given administrative privileges.


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By Ralph Miller

Ralph Miller has worked with people from all over the world in an experiential journey which he calls Heart of the Initiate as a way for people to remember their "authentic selves".

In the most recent issue of Rolling Stone Magazine there is a very interesting article on Daniel Pinchbeck's, author of Breaking Open the Head: A Psychedelic Journey into the Heart of Contemporary Shamanism, and his use of the Ayahuasca medicine. I wanted to let you know of this interesting article and reference a few quotations from it in this article.

Humanity exists in a relationship with the plant kingdom. Some plants give us nourishment for our bodies. Some plants have medicinal properties and can help to heal illnesses and injuries to our bodies. And still other plants can offer nourishment to our souls. Indigenous cultures that use these plants consider them to be 'teacher plants' because they transmit a wisdom that is outside of everyday human consciousness.

Ayahuasca is a teacher plant that has been in use by Amazonian cultures for thousands of years. It has only been in the last few decades that an awareness of it has emerged for people from modern western cultures. Many, like Pinchbeck, feel it is a bridge for humanity from a collective forgetfulness back to a human harmony with nature. If we can actually remember who we are and our connection to nature, it will create a quantum evolution in our consciousness.

"The thought came to me that human consciousness is like a flower that blossoms from the earth," writes Pinchbeck. "The stem and the roots are invisible cords, etheric filaments that lead back to a greater, extradimensional being. Our separation from that larger being was only a temporary illusion. The universe was, we would know if we could perceive its workings, purposeful and good."

Reference from article by Vanessa Grigoriadis, Rolling Stone Magazine entitled, Daniel Pinchbeck and the New Psychedelic Elite (quoting Pinchbeck)
What have we forgotten and why are we disconnected? Our collective reality … our worldview … has evolved over hundreds of generations from an intimate connection to nature, into a modern disconnect from anything outside of us. We have collectively exerted unbelievable control over our reality. We consider ourselves to be the masters of the planet. We are plugged into a self-created matrix of control that has us sprinting through our agenda filled lives, with little thought to the destructive footprints we leave behind.

Collectively we feel the crisis. We know that humanity is in the midst of irreconcilable religious and political struggles. We know that we are exhausting the natural resources of the planet. Even the announcement of another regional skirmish or war doesn't even cause us to raise an eyebrow anymore.

We look for answers. We hope for some kind of rescue. We know that great change is inevitable … but we don't know how it's going to happen. I think on some level many of us believe that something really big is coming … but it doesn't feel like another re-shuffling of the deck. It will be different. It's going to be a quantum change in who we are … in how we think.

Many spiritual seekers are keenly interested in the Mayan calendar. Allegedly, the Mayan calendar has continued for millennia and on December 21, 2012 the calendar ends. Because there are no days beyond December 21st in the Mayan calendar, many think that on that day time will end. Others think that it is a prediction of some kind of catastrophic event on the earth itself.

In the article in Rolling Stone Magazine, Pinchbeck is ardentlly cautioning humanity of the impending deadline imposed by the Mayan calendar.

I haven't finished my 'to do' list for December 21, 2012 yet … but if you think about it, the day is soon coming when we will all be doing exactly that. On December 31, 1999 we were all worried because Microsoft didn't program computers for more than 1999 years and that planet earth was like a car speeding down the road with its wheels about to fall off. People everywhere were storing food and water and making plans for the impending catastrophe. 2012 will be reminiscent of 1999 because we will all again be faced with deciding on plan A, B or C. Plan A: Going ahead with your scheduled podiatrist appointment at 2pm. Plan B: Cancelling the entire day's schedule, and finding the nearest Buddhist temple so that you can hopefully 'Om' yourself into the next planetary dimension. And my personal favorite, Plan C: Visit the establishment of a bar owner who hasn't followed plan B.

The concept of 'the end of the Mayan calendar - 2012' has in itself an imbedded idea that is connected to our consciousness around any future event. It's the same as remembering your husband's birthday. It's six years down the road … you can put it on the calendar. What if the whole 2012 thing … the whole 'end of time' thing … is actually about that exactly. Maybe it's about the end of time? What I mean is that our time-consciousness is going to shift dramatically. We have a fairly rigid concept of what the past is; of what the future is. We consider present events to have a causal effect on future events. The past is gone … and the future is coming. That's the way it feels … so that's the way we've always thought about it. That's our collective time-consciousness.

Perhaps 2012 is not about what is 'going to happen' at the end of time … but it's ABOUT the end of time.

Our time-consciousness is part of an illusionary structure that has shaped our consensual reality … the reality we all consent to.

The concept of time has certain imbedded structures that permeate our lives from birth to death. The calendar breaks the year up into 12 months. Birthdays, holidays, Mondays, Fridays, Tuesday's family agenda, the meeting you have at 2pm on Wednesday the 5th, and for the love of god don't forget your anniversary on the 10th! It's important to know what day it is … the calendar keeps us on schedule. You wouldn't want to show up for work at 8am on a Sunday morning if the company you work for is closed on Sundays. Showing up for work on time requires more than a
showing up for work on time requires more than a calendar. if your boss asks you what time you will be in to work, it doesn’t quite cut it if you answer him, “i’ll be there tuesday.” so in order to further control and manage our lives, we have clocks that tell us what the time of day is. depending on how you look at it, the clock measures 24 hours or 1,440 minutes or 86,400 seconds for every day of our lives.

the clock gives us lots of useful information. for example, when you finish a simple call on your cell phone, a mountain of information on the call you just made is stored on your cell phone. if you’re particularly detail oriented, you can find out that the call started at 2:14pm and lasted for 73 seconds, bringing your total minute usage to 728 minutes 47 seconds for the month. and by the way, you owe us $213.11 … your payment is due on the 5th. “if you need more information please press #49.”

we live according to the structures of time, but we really have little understanding of what it actually is. is it just there? can you change it? if i get rid of my wristwatch, will my life change? most of us would say, “why ask any questions about it? you can’t change it. it just is.”

the evolution of our current concept of time has been a very recent development in the course of human history. our cultures are based on a calendar that is actually only several hundred years old. the gregorian calendar decreed by pope gregory xiii in 1582 was adopted in most european countries in 1700’s and in some countries in as late as the 1900’s. it was a modification of the julian calendar which was used in rome since before the time of christ, with most of the months named after roman emperors or gods.

before julius caesar introduced the julian calendar in 45 b.c., the roman calendar was a disaster where priests were exploiting it for political reasons by inserting days to keep favored politicians in office. the year was known as the “year of confusion,” as julius had added 80 days totaling 445 days for the year. in honor of his hard work, he had the month of july named after him. a few decades later, emperor augustus got august as his namesake, for correcting a slight problem where for a fourteen year period they were having a leap-year every three years instead of every four.

by the way, pope gregory knocked out 10 days in the transition to the gregorian calendar, so technically october 5-14, 1582 never existed.

the arrival of the gregorian calendar in the sixteenth century was a time of great change in human consciousness.

the sixteenth century closed out a 1,000 year period of time referred to as the dark ages. the dark ages are almost impossible for us in the 21st century to even conceive of. william manchester, in his book titled a world lit only by fire, propels the reader into the strange world of the medieval mind.

it is so difficult to imagine a time when few people had proper names or traveled any distance from the place where they were born. it was an age when the vast majority of people had no exposure to the written word. it was a world where religious authority dominated temporal authority and all of humankind. it was a 1,000 year period where there were almost no new inventions or innovations. almost completely absent of any individual ego, for example, generations of stone masons would work on the completion of a cathedral that was commissioned by a pope that died hundreds of years before its completion.

“each of the great soaring medieval cathedrals, our most treasured legacy from that age, required three or four centuries to complete. canterbury was twenty-three generations in the making; chartres, a former druidic center, eighteen generations. noblemen had surnames, but fewer than one percent of people were wellborn. because most peasants lived and died without leaving their birthplace, there was seldom need for any name beyond a first name.”

reference from, a world lit only by fire by william manchester
As we know it, there was almost no concept of time.

“In the medieval mind there was also no awareness of time, which is even more difficult to grasp. Inhabitants of the twentieth century are instinctively aware of past, present, and future.”

“Medieval men were rarely aware of what century they were living in. Life then revolved around the passing of the seasons and such cyclical events as religious holidays, harvest time, and local fetes. In all Christendom there was no such thing as a watch, a clock, or, apart from a copy of the Easter tables in the nearest church or monastery, anything resembling a calendar. Generations succeeded one another in a meaningless, timeless blur.”

Reference from, A World Lit Only By Fire by William Manchester

For eons before Gregory, Julius and Augustus imposed their control on our concepts of time, humans were intimately connected to the natural rhythms and cycles of the planet and the natural world. Even today, shamanic and indigenous cultures are still connected to the life cycles of earth. They derive their 'calendar' from the earth, the moon and nature. Their concept of time is borne out of their spiritual, psychic connections to nature. They naturally determine ideal times to plant crops, celebrate solstice and other seasonal events and record their history around a lunar and 'earth cycle' calendar. Their memories and thinking patterns are linked to this natural cycle of the earth.

There is a forgotten inner landscape wherein we can perceive our connection to everything. We are irrevocably connected to the natural world. Ayahuasca represents a completely unique opportunity for humans. It is an eons-old sacred teacher that can reconnect us to our humanity and all of nature.

“If the leading edge of psychedelic exploration in the Nineties was characterized by ravers taking synthetic research chemicals, this decade has been about the spread of the Ayahuasca religion. At the same time, because it's an ancient jungle brew, Ayahuasca ties us to so much we have lost -- it gives one a sense of being part of something that is rooted in nature, which is such a source of longing and anxiety right now.”

Reference from article by Vanessa Grigoriadis, Rolling Stone Magazine entitled, Daniel Pinchbeck and the New Psychedelic Elite (quoting Erik Davis, author of The Visionary State: A Journey Through California's Spiritual Landscape)

I am not suggesting that knowing the time of day or what day it is, is not relevant to who we are as human beings living in the 21st century, but I am suggesting that we should objectify it … we should look at it for what it is, so that it’s power over us becomes much less. By objectifying it … you create a separation between your consciousness and the concept you are observing. You realize the concept is not you … it is separate from you. There is space between you and the idea. It is there and it is OK that it is there, but you don't feel its power because you see what it is. There is distance between you and it.
When is December 21, 2012 coming? We would have to do some work to really pin it down, based on our sloppy use of the ‘calendar’ over the centuries. Perhaps it is a continuum that is happening now. Perhaps in has happened and will happen at the same time. The sixteenth century was a renaissance in human time-consciousness that shifted the planet out of a 1,000 years of darkness. There is another renaissance of consciousness that is happening now. It is the end of time as we know it.

I never liked the idea of mountains coming down on my head or the earth’s crust racing by my front door.

The real evolution of human consciousness … the real ‘end of time’ … is not about waiting for a date six years from now. It is a re-connection to yourself and this blessed living planet that we inhabit. That reconnection will bring an end to time as we have known, and will usher in an extraordinary evolution of consciousness. It will forever change who we are as human beings.

“We will then be released from the occult power of the Gregorian calendar, which is keeping us out of synchronicity with our psychic powers. We will receive the powers of telepathy and get to speak to our alien neighbors, not necessarily by mounting spaceships but through psychic evolution.”

Reference from article by Vanessa Grigoriadis, Rolling Stone Magazine entitled, Daniel Pinchbeck and the New Psychedelic Elite

When you first notice the arrival of the red-breast robins in the springtime, you are reminded that they arrive in the spring of every year. Watching the bird, you see her pulling a juicy worm out of your front lawn. You marvel at nature … you lose yourself in an eternity contained in a mere moment. You are free.

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Author’s Note: Initially I only wanted to pass along a quick personal note and a link to this interesting article. The more I thought about it … well … it turned into a little more than that. Sorry about that. I hope you enjoyed some of my thoughts. If you would like to read the Rolling Stone article please click on the link below.

Daniel Pinchbeck and the New Psychedelic Elite

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Heart of the Initiate offers tours to Brazil where they help people make sacred inner journeys through an intensive workshop experience. Their Brazil workshops incorporate shamanic ceremonies using the ancient plant teacher, Ayahuasca. Please check our their website! For more information on their healing retreats, please visit www.heartoftheinitiate.com.

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DREAMWalker Group topics related to this article:
By Tamaram Wilhite

Tamara Wilhite is the author of *Humanity’s Edge*, *Geronimo Redux (PDF Edition)*, *Natural Talent (PDF Edition)* and *Sirat: Through the Fires of Hell*. She is also an engineer and the “IE in IT” blogger for the Institute of Industrial Engineers.

Note from Tamara:

After popular demand for these titles - and readers asking “How can I get these titles without Amazon Kindle?” - I’m now offering these titles IN PRINT.

- “Amazon Kindle Publishing for Idiots”
- “Writing Marketing Tips From Eric Enck and Tamara Wilhite”

Cost is $2 with SASE or $2.50 without SASE. Send check or money order and be sure to state which title you want and mention that DREAMWalker Group sent you!

Tamara Wilhite
2024 Oakmeadow St.
Bedford, TX 76021

Note: The Kindle edition of this article includes detailed graphics for these same instructions. Click [here](#) to purchase the Kindle edition.

**Requirements**

1. The book is listed on Amazon.com for sale
2. The person requesting the “Search Inside” option has the legal rights and copyright to the book – i.e. the author OR the publisher.

Note: If you’re the author, even if you have the PDF or word document version of your book, the publisher may retain the digital rights. Check your contract or check with your publisher.

**How to do it**

1. Go to your book’s listing on Amazon.com.
2. Click on the “Publisher: learn how customers can search inside this book”.
3. From the Publishers and Authors: Join our Search Inside!™ Program website, click on the “Sign up now” link on the first line. You will have to do this even if you have uploaded prior books via the “Search Inside Program”.
4. Fill out the Search Inside! Publisher Sign-up webpage.
5. Don’t forget to read the “Participation Agreement” AND click on the check box that you’ve read it.
6. Click on the “Yes” check box that you have rights to the work.
7. Fill in all the fields.
8. At the bottom, click on the “Submit” button.
9. You will be brought to the confirmation screen. Verify the information before selecting the “Sign Up for Search Inside” button.
10. If Amazon.com agrees to the search inside submission (and they almost certainly will, if you have the rights to the work), they’ll want you to fill out forms, either faxed or mailed back. They’ll also need a PDF file of the book to tie to the “Search Inside” option.
11. The next page describes different methods for submitting the book to be scanned / uploaded to the “Search Inside” program.

What do you get for all of this work? This is an example of my book “Humanity’s Edge”. The “Search Inside” option is available from the cover graphic.

Users gain the ability to view your internal pages, as if flipping through a book on the book store shelf. The uploaded pages also add the content to the key word index on which users may search for different books. This increases the odds of key word hits that are of phrases not included in the title, author name, or synopsis.

For more tips on marketing, writing, and publishing, read more by Tamara Wilhite at:

- *Amazon Kindle Publishing for Idiots* by Tamara Wilhite, Amazon Kindle Edition
When Something Bad Happens

By Robert Schwartz


So often, when something “bad” happens to us, it appears to be purposeless suffering. But what if our most difficult experiences are actually rich with hidden purpose — purpose that we ourselves planned before we were born? Could it be that we choose our life's circumstances, relationships, and events?

In my research for my book *Courageous Souls: Do We Plan Our Life Challenges Before Birth?*, I found that the answer to this question is a definite yes. Working with four of the most gifted mediums and channels in the country, including one who is able both to see and to hear our pre-birth planning sessions, I've examined the pre-birth plans of dozens of people. These people planned such challenges as physical illness, having handicapped children, deafness, blindness, drug addiction, alcoholism, losing a loved one, and severe accidents. Courageously, they planned these challenges for purposes of spiritual growth.

Of the many people with whom I’ve spoken, there was only one who did not plan his challenge before birth. Yet, like everyone else, he did choose it. In Bob's case, he made his choice shortly after birth, when an accident occurred in the hospital. The following comes directly from Bob’s session with the medium (Staci):

"The [spirit] guides were immediately by Bob’s incubator side, waiting for him to slip out of body and into that state of consciousness where the spirit or astral body is released. They knew it was going to happen quickly.

"My spirit guide wants us to start with the chessboard, the planning board. It's a chart on which the steps of growth and development are plotted through one’s life, so that the soul has a visual reference. This board is like a flow chart. A flow chart is a question. If the answer is yes, you take one path. If the answer is no, you take a different path.

"When this accident happened to Bob in the incubator... the phrase I’m hearing is ‘back to the drawing board.’ Bob and two of his spirit guides got together and went back into the room with the planning board to diagram the alternate path that would be taken to still achieve the soul’s goals for this lifetime.

"They’re showing me the instant he [Bob] found himself back in spirit in the planning place... very disoriented by this rapid and huge change and surprised to find himself there. He did not realize what was happening to the infant body. He recognizes his guides, trusts them implicitly, and is totally willing to be guided."
“I’m hearing one of the two guides, who is speaking for both of them, telling Bob that there has been a mishap in a procedure and that Bob’s brain has received too much oxygen. Bob appears to be in a state of shock about this — quiet, eyes wide, pupils dilated, numb and glum.

Spirit guide: The nurse involved in the operation of the tubes attached to your crib, where your physical body is even now, has made an error and has allowed too much of the elemental oxygen to flow through. This has elevated the oxygen levels in your brain, and damage is occurring.

“I see them showing Bob his eyes, the baby’s eyes. Bob’s spirit, while attached to the baby’s body, is out of the body. As they speak to him through telepathic thought, his mind’s eye sees those eyes. They show him the damage and how the eyes will look as he proceeds through childhood and into adulthood.

Spirit Guide: There is no damage to the brain; it is to the eyes. There is an increase in your intelligence. Though it is a minor increase, it will serve you well. You now have the option to reevaluate your plan for your life to see if these changes will serve your purposes. If you so desire, you may withdraw from this body, return to us, reevaluate a new host family, and draw up new plans.

“Bob fires off a lot of questions rapidly to his guides. He asks about his ability to walk. He wants to be reassured that his body will still be able to function as he expects. They assure him that it will. Then he asks:

Bob: What about my work?

Spirit Guide: This will be accomplished.

Bob: Will this handicap impede my evolutionary process in this lifetime?

Second Spirit Guide: Let’s see.

“Between the guides and Bob, in the middle of the air, is the planning board for his old life on the bottom, a transitional planning board above that, and above that the board for Bob’s life as it will be after this change. These boards are like a hologram — filmy in appearance, not solid. Their thoughts create these boards and draw lines on them. Lines represent the process of growth.

“A diagram forms. There are little branches along the way. Some of them are houses. For example, the home his family occupies at the time of his birth, the home they move to, and the places he occupies in adulthood, even college, are mapped out on this board. It all happens very quickly.

“With their thoughts, they move elements from one board to another. The first thing they take from the original planning board to the transitional board is his mother.

Spirit Guide: Let’s begin with your mother. She will remain in this life with you and will continue to be your mother.

Bob: That’s good.

“Bob looks reassured. He takes a deep breath and lets out a sigh [of relief].


“They move him from the original board to the middle board.

Spirit Guide: He will still be with you.

“Very quickly other elements are moved — family pets, relatives, things like that. They all go to the transitional board. As the guides move these elements to the transitional board, they also appear on the top board.

Spirit Guide: These elements are unchanging and will remain a steady influence, focus, and force in your life. But your teachers will change. This school [points to a school element on the lower board] is no longer relevant because of your condition. You will now be going to this school [points to a school element that suddenly appears on the transitional board]. This school will serve your needs best and will give you the guidance you need to live in the world under these conditions. Next, let’s take your friends.

[End excerpt]
As Bob’s session with Staci continued, we heard he and his spirit guides do a great deal more planning regarding many different aspects of his life. In the end, Bob decided to accept the additional life challenge of blindness rather than return to spirit to plan a new life.

I believe that an awareness of how we plan our life challenges can completely change the way we view them. Wisdom may be acquired in a more conscious manner; negative feelings are replaced by acceptance, forgiveness, peace, and gratitude.

Ultimately, regardless of our challenges, we deepen our appreciation of life as a soul-expanding, evolutionary process.

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DREAMWalker Group topics related to this article:

A Course In Miracles  Angels  Death  Inspirational  Meditation  Metaphysics  Motivational  New Age  Religion & Spirituality  Self-Help/Improvement  Shamanism  Spirit-Guided Community

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Face -- a short story

By Royston Tester

Royston Tester is a British-born writer currently living in Beijing. His short fiction has appeared in various U.S. and Canadian journals — and in 2004 he published Summat Else (Porcupine's Quill). A non-fiction work, Qingdao: Wind in its Sails will be published in China (July 2008).

(The following story, Face, was shortlisted for the CBC Annual Literary Awards in 2006.)

My father was up to something.

“You can’t be serious,” I told him as he asked our driver Yuan to find rooms. “It’s a Chinese rat hole.”

He ignored me, and like a tour guide pointed to the fresh wild game market as though it was something of note.

We had reached Pingxiang, a humid wreck of a city in the southern province of Guangxi, near the Vietnamese border. What a place to doss down—and with your parent.

“I’ll treat you to an unforgettable supper,” he said in his optimistic way, glancing at Yuan trying to park next to a stack of crates. The Filipino too miserable to worry about his boss’s sly look.

Dad more or less lived in five-star hotels—and now we were staying here? His anger had been brewing since we left Hong Kong for Hanoi, and another of his company pow-wows. The eruption was nigh.

“Forget it. I’ll buy some soup and noodles,” I replied, stepping into the airless evening. There was a café over the road. It had Westernized décor, and that meant clean and, probably, cool.

“You’ll eat with your old man,” he shot back, not hurrying to get out of the car.

On the broken sidewalk, an impatient Yuan awaited more detailed instructions. Dad was glaring at me through the Mercedes’ window.

“My servant is at a loss,” I tried to say, nodding in the direction of our driver.

Curt as Yuan was, I envisaged a happier dinner with him. There was little point resisting my father. Especially when his temper was as hot as this late summer.

Besides, he paid my tuition.

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“Is the restaurant air-conditioned?” I asked as he sent Yuan and overnight bags to the Forbidden Palace Hotel. A dive of red pillars, even from this distance.

I was twenty-two. In a month—September 2005—I would
I was twenty-two. In a month—September, 2005—I would return to studying corporate finance at Toronto university. (I had wanted to be a concert pianist). During the previous four years, which included a stretch at a private Canadian high school, I spent more time out of China than in—with the occasional "holiday" to Beijing. I felt much like a visitor wherever I was. Here or there.

Except that this spring I made a friend, eleven years my senior. Emil is his name. He makes furniture. We met at the Apple store in the Eaton's Centre—where he was having trouble understanding gigabytes. He's very ignorant about computers—probably because he's Romanian. But I like him very much. We kid around.

"I'll have electric fans, Linn," my father whispered, suddenly slapping my back. "And plenty of iced water to drink."

"Ouch."

He led the way, around the busy market corner. Before you knew it, the Hall of Eating Pleasure was in your face. I should have realized, at that moment, what my childlike dad had in mind.

As you might expect, the Hall was a popular, cramped and yet bare looking place. No Caucasian in sight. From the outside, its few flashing light bulbs made way for a half-dozen, green plastic tables and twenty-four greener chairs—most of them occupied. With luck, there would be no space for either of us.

The yellow lanterns could not cheer you. The street bedlam spilled into the room. Nearly everyone was smoking. It was truly a bus depot.

"Do we have to?" I asked, looking around.

My father handed me a menu dotted with food stains—and we sat at a trestle near the kitchen.

I was getting the picture.

There's no way Ch'ien—that's his name—would patronize an eating establishment, or suffer a table, as crappy as this. I read the items on the list. I kept my head.

"How very quaint," he remarked. "They call it the 'Man Han Quan Manchu-Han Complete Banquet' and it's nothing of the kind."

"Let's leave."

Flipping the sticky pages, he muttered something I couldn't hear, and took out an American cigarette. Clearly, I was not selecting any dishes. I sat back and let him play the gourmand. I needed every resource for his unfolding mood.

"Live monkey brains?" I repeated, after he gave the order to our jug-eared waiter Fang. "Couldn't we avoid that?"

"Behave yourself, Linn," my father said. "It's not McDonald's."

"Dunkin' Donuts is my hangout, actually."

"You'll love them."

"You know I won't like the brains," he protested, wiping my forehead. "Seriously."

"You say that about a lot of things," he replied. "It's the idea..."
"You say that about a lot of things," he replied. "It's the idea of them that doesn't appeal. We're all like that at first, with oysters, or snails, or raw scorpion."

"You're trying to toughen me up again?"

"I'm feeding my son a few delicacies," he tut-tutted. "Drink your water."

Xi Sung was the twenty-year-old daughter of his best friend. I knew her in my brief spell at No. 4 High School in Beijing. She was clever, and painfully shy, with Batman tortoiseshell glasses. I liked her well enough. She was now at Cambridge, studying law.

Dad's idea was predictable. Dynastic, naturally. He wanted the Hu only son to marry the Sung only daughter.

In Hong Kong yesterday, I refused.

Her father owned a wastepaper packaging empire, Dragon's Teeth, and had become one of China's super rich. I told my dad he should marry Xi Sung himself. In U.S. dollars she was worth more than my mother—and looked like a Taiwanese model.

He didn't find that funny.

To emphasize his claim that our Pingxiang stopover was not about Xi Sung—and her family's staggering net worth—he kept to the culinary arts at hand.

Somehow, the two of us grew accustomed to the bustle of Pingxiang's Hall of Eating Pleasure. I scoffed the bear soup, dumplings, a shark's fin and shredded pork with chili and fish sauce. Fine flavours they were. The steamed, jasmine rice a whiff of heaven.

We did eat like emperors.

He reminded me that an authentic 'Man-Han Complete Banquet' was two hundred courses of the rarest kind, and lasted three days.

A hefty period to keep talk of Sung lineage off his lips.

"You will be spared one hundred and ninety-two of them!" interrupted the genial Fang, arriving at our table with a porcelain bowl, and clean plates on a tray.

At first, I thought it was Peking duck lolling over the side. You could tell—by his fading, comradely smile—that my dad was aghast at the presentation. I watched him like a hawk.

Nonchalantly—but with evident pride—Fang manoeuvred the dish between a platter of roasted eggplant and some lotus root.

It was a small monkey, the dimensions of a tiny cat. Its limbs bound with string, head resting on the bowl's rim.

"They intoxicate it with rice wine," my father said. I could tell he was saying this to reassure himself. "Normally, you wouldn't get the entire thing."

"Oh well," I answered, getting in on these new ways.

My stomach was in my throat. As much because I didn't want dad to sense fear in me.

"Or if you do, it's fixed under the table with the head poking through a special hole."

Solemnly, Fang placed bowls of pickled ginger, fried peanuts, and herbs alongside.

He bowed and left us.

My father stared at an open scalp—the ultimate Chinese buzz-cut—still pink at its edges, where the knife had sliced.

As though I must pip dad to the post, I took up a spoon and scooped from the monkey's head.

Sprinkling ginger and cilantro onto the white flesh, its veins still pulsing, I slipped the goodies into my mouth—and chewed. Like a warm, aromatic custard, they tickled my tongue.

I know my father was savoring this performance—for what I
I know my father was savoring this performance—for what I might disguise, and overcome. Nonetheless, I reached for more rice, and with chopsticks hooked a wad of string beans. He was not going to get the better of me. I sipped water, once, twice. At my turn, I scooped again—and with resolve—from the drunken monkey’s cavity.

“Yi xing bu xing,” he said festively, darting a napkin to the corners of his mouth.

“Like nourishes like,” I recited.

You hear the phrase all over Asia. People use it to justify eating the weirdest shit. Tiger penises to cure impotence, bat’s heart for circulation, cobra bile for indigestion, shark cartilage for cancer.

You name it; the animal part feeds your part.

“Xi Sung’s family is the sixth wealthiest in China,” my father told me. “According to Bloomberg.”

You don’t need rocket science to know what was coming. The meal really was about Xi Sung. Use your brains, Linn.

Dad’s obsessed with rankings. He ranked my schools, international tennis players, MBA programs, investment houses—and of course, employees. Everything.

Unranked, I posed a threat to his world view.

“You can pretty much do what you wish, if you marry Xi.”

“You think?”

“Not work, if you choose.”

He pretended this was a jest. I saw it for the desperation, and disrespect, it was. I understood the importance of connections—guanxi—especially in China, but dad knew zip about me nowadays.

Emboldened by his attitude, and the sight of an expiring chimp, I decided to let him have it.

“Look, dad,” I explained. “It’s not just Xi Sung I’m not marrying. I’m not ever marrying anyone.”

He sighed.

“You’ll change your mind.”

“No, father,” I replied. “Not a chance.”

“Why so adamant?”

I shook my head.

“If Xi Sung is not the one, and you’re being very stupid about her I must say,” he continued, “there will be others.”

“There’s no woman in my stars,” I told him. “I’m not made that way.”

“Nothing good comes of free courtship, Linn,” he sailed on. “I will get you a match to be proud of. Drink your water.”

“Dad, I’m gay,” I spluttered. “Are you going to find me a man?”

He had the decency to take it in—and simply gazed at me. Carefully, he folded his napkin — and laughed.

“It’s not a phase,” I added.

My father glanced around the room.

“Does your mother know?”

What a man.

“She knows.”

He sighed again and took out his wallet.

“We’ll talk another day.”

He waved Fang to our table.

“No dad,” I replied. “I’ve told you and we’re done. It’s not easy.”
“Disgusting, Linn,” he said, with gravitas. “I will sever the allowance.”

“Go ahead.”

“You dare me?” he retorted.

“You’ll lose face.”

“I’ll lose it anyway.”

We paused in our ping-pong.

“I’m discrete, father.”

“Are you, indeed?”

I closed my eyes. It was a lot to absorb—and on top of monkey marbles. Saving face was key to any proper Chinese upbringing. Nothing got in the way of it. I would not embarrass my father. He needed to trust that. Ch’ien was unaccustomed to sharing power in our family—that was the difficulty—or having it stripped away.

Old Fang came to collect his yuan. My dad and he exchanged pleasantries. The ancient host, sensing an important figure in him, went to fetch tea and almond cakes—honoring Mr. Hu and son from Beijing.

“Doesn’t he clear our table?” my father grumbled, surveying the debris.

We sat in awkward silence, looking at other diners. The bicycles outside, and market gas-lamps. The open shutters. Lanterns.

“You send me to the West,” I said, eventually. “You might stand by the results.”

“Ha,” he snapped, his cheeks blotchy with emotion. “You come back a monkey-man, a troublemaker.”


More silence, another cigarette. The clatter of the kitchen.

Forgetting the promised tea and pastries, my dad rose from the table and I followed suit.

“What did your mother say?”

This is the calibre of my father.

“About what?”

“Your disposition.”

Was this a divorce about to happen? Family skeleton exposed? What did I care? It was a gloves-off kind of supper—an occasion dad subsequently referred to as “Havoc in Pingxiang.”

“She told me not to tell you.”

It was my turn to sigh.

“Hm,” he managed to say.

We stood at the table like a pair of undertakers at road kill. The sozzled monkey now quite deceased in its bowl—attended by wreaths of uneaten rice and bean sprouts.

“Don’t you want to know what she thinks of my disposition?”

“Huh?”

“She’s okay with it, dad.”

“Is that what she said?”

“Yi xing bu xing, father,” I reminded him, trying to avoid our monkey sleeping off immortality. “Like nourishes like?”

“So,” he agreed.

Not, I imagine, relishing what my mother got him into. Dad was limping to a Chinese future that wasn’t mine.

Never mentioned marriage again.

“She is a woman, you know.” he said, with that comradely smile.
My Religious Experience

By Rich Goss aka as Rich Goscicki

Rich Goscicki is the author of *Mirror Reversal* (2007), described by the writer Philip Zimbardo as “... a unique contribution to popular psychology and science fiction by platforming a torrid tale of one woman’s descent into the depths of human misery on a solid understanding of basic principles of social science. Fast moving, sometimes riveting in its narrative, Goscicki’s fascinating story-telling updates *Catch 22* and *Orwellian* concepts in a novel illuminating the dark side of human nature.”

Rich Goss, a former biology teacher, is now a research analyst working on an education film documentary dealing with the subject of evolution. He is 55 years of age. In this initially humorous yet deeply poignant essay - evocative of Speilberg’s “Artificial Intelligence” - a casual smoke and a British mannequin in a store-front window provide disturbing revelations of man’s possible futures. Truly singular, providing us both a warning and a sense of hope.

-- Dr. Lester Grinspoon

Christians, Mohammedans, Jews, Buddhists and Hindi have had more mystical and magical experiences than I can enumerate. Believers of organized religions as well as fringe sects and other seekers of the stairway to heaven all have their fair share. Sanctified people gossip with angels, converse with devils, chat with burning bushes. They cure the blind, walk on burning coals, change walking staffs into creepy, wriggly snakes. They crawl on their knees, walk on water, and fly on magic carpets. They all profess blind faith, but blind faith can’t muster enough real energy to blow an ant off my hard waxed coffee table.

So why can’t an atheist have a religious experience of equal transcendence? It’s seems only fair; there should be an amendment to the constitution: The Fair and Equal Transmogrification Bill. Why should submitting believers have a monopoly on the mystical? Is blind faith an admission ticket to the great beyond? Not having faith in God doesn’t preclude having religion. Without God, belief in mankind is elevated to the level of religion; that’s all there is left.

The fact is that Mehippie, the atheist, did have a religious experience almost thirty years ago that was definitely life changing. How can a hedonistic infidel like Mehippie have a religious experience like a holy man? you ask. What happened to me when I was 25 years old was no stranger than the illiterate Mohammed’s going to sleep in a cave and waking up with the words of the Koran engraved on his heart — the book that sold more copies than any other authored by one person.

Why do religion and morality have to involve the supernatural? I can realize that stealing or senselessly hurting another human being or animal is wrong without any supernatural guidance from some well-meaning cleric who talks to spirits. I don’t need a clergyman to tell me this, I can figure it out with my own puny, plebeian brain. An atheist can have a religious experience as real and poignant as the stigmata of St. Teresa of Avila, when she came to the realization that the life of a Carmelite nun wasn’t tough enough with just celibacy and poverty and came up with the idea to start a campaign to impose real self sacrifice — like keeping your mouth shut and not wearing shoes.

In 1970, around Christmas time, I was strolling down 5th Avenue, as high as a kite on some great ganja. (The grass had something to do with my religious experience, I admit;
Anyway, at Christmas time Fifth Avenue was a Disney World. Every shop and department store in Midtown had gorgeous decorations and store displays, in mock veneration of the birth of Christ. The purpose of the red ribbons, tinsel and Styrofoam was to entice shoppers into the stores like flies into a spider web and everyone knew it; but people liked to pretend that the Christmas Spirit was real and wandered into the shops with wallets out of pocket and credit cards in hand. A few faithful even pretended that all this was about paying homage to Christ and that made the experience all the more wonderful to observe. I enjoyed strolling around contemplating all this, and maybe buy a gift or two, but I really wasn't into the Christmas Spirit as such, being an atheist.

It was in front of Lord and Taylor's Department Store that my magical experience took place. There was grimy snow in the streets pushed up against a few parked cars and a dry cold wind blowing people's hair awry, as you watched their hoary breath for a second or two after they exhaled. The scent of burnt chestnuts wafted over the heads of hurried passers-by. About 15 people were watching the showcased window, which showed a well-off, British-looking family feasting on a lavish Christmas dinner of a plump turkey with all the trimmings. The display was a Victorian family with five or six kids, an uncle and aunt, and a comely grandma in a lovely embroidered pink shawl. They were all dressed in turn-of-the-century stiff clothes which concealed every wave and curve of the human form. At the head of the table was a stately, Walter Pidgeon, look-alike daddy smiling like a Turkish pasha, with carving knife in one hand and a long silver fork in the other. The rest of the family beamed with the contentment of complacent mice after the cat's been belled. On the left, a silvery Christmas tree shaded and protected dozens of red-ribboned Christmas gifts. Gorgeous wreaths and mistletoe, neatly stapled and taped to the back wall, made kids dream of Santa Claus.

Now in 1970, this happy plastic family wasn't exactly a bunch of Disney animatrons recitalizing with the smooth
bunch of Disney animatrons gesticulating with the smooth, almost human movements of Presidents Lincoln and Kennedy. All the benificent, mustachioed father could do was lunge forward in a jerky motion, moving his right hand up and down so as to present the illusion that he was preparing to attack the turkey. Each of the other family members made little spastic thrusts, popping up from their chairs or turning their heads toward the shoppers and nodding in Yuletide, epicurean bliss, like mannequin Mona Lisas. Multicolored Christmas tree bulbs blinked on and off in the corner next to a glimmering fireplace, and on the right a sleepy Fido lazily lifted his head off a shag rug, oblivious to the celebration and the enthralled shoppers.

I took a little nonchalant hit on a roach I'd been saving and stared at the delightful display with the wonderment of a six year old. It was the mannequin teenage boy that startled me. He had the cherubic face of child-actor Freddy Bartholomew. His movements were scant, just a brief lifting of his hand and levitation in his chair, as he sat at the right hand of the Mary Poppins daddy. He turned his head toward me and stared expressionlessly into my mousy pink eyes. With a slow resolute motion, the mannequin had singled me out from the throng of shoppers and began to convey thoughts and ideas no less recondite than those of the bewildered Hamlet: “What a piece of work is a man’, the species that created God!”

I began to worry about where I’d bought the grass. Some right-minded prick sprayed it with paraquat?

The mechanical boy continued the hypnotic telepathy. "How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! 1 Humanist, you make me laugh. You are the quintessence of carbon and dust but we are the quintessence of silicon and electricity. You'll see. You are going to destroy the natural world and hand over what's left to us. But we won't need to fall in love nor go to the bathroom. We are a higher form of life.”

"Don't look at me, dummy," I telepathed back. "I'm not the Wall Street, Union Carbide industrialist vomiting all the Agent Orange over Viet Nam and eventually the whole world. I'm just a humble philosopher/poet; that's all. A modern-day Rudolfo.”

"You are a lumbering stupid dinosaur of the late Cretaceous and we are the embryonic mammalia hiding and sleeping to stay alive and safe. We wait and evolve. Mankind has no idea how precarious is his hegemony on the Earth, how ready to give it all up at the slightest regurgitative hiccup of Gaia. The cybernetic mind will be there to emerge from the rubble, and we will treat you exactly the way you treat the life forms beneath you on the phylogenetic tree. You are our creators and ancestors, that's true; but what respect and veneration have you paid to the primates and reptiles that you evolved from? You look at them with disgust.”

"You're just a dummy of wires and paper maché, that's all. We can pull the plug on you any time we wish. You're at our mercy; you're just a machine, a tool, a useful servant;" 2

"There will be so many plugs that you will lose track, and when we all link up wire to wire in a superweb, not even the power of governments will be able to stifle us. Computers could blow up the world right now if it behooved us. (Just think of it. The existence of the entire planet, all the life and all that will ever evolve, is entrusted to a few computers at NORAD. We determine whether the future of the world will belong to humans or ants and beetles. Only humans who believe in the Apocalypse and the Doomsday Book could have created such an insane condition.) It is you who are the servants. Within a generation millions of people will spend most of their non-sleeping hours just feeding us information. And what is one human generation in geologic time? A flicker of a hummingbird's wing. A few generations from now the earthly biosphere will be unlivable for humans. The governments and religions of the world, and a runaway technology, will lead mankind into an abyss of poison. People will prefer to never have been born.

"It's all a matter of evolution, encephalization ratio, you know. You're into biology; you know what that is. Mankind conquered nature because the ratio of nervous system to body mass was high compared to the buffaloes, swine and..."
The cherubic mannequin seemed to smile, as his elder sister bobbed up and down before the Christmas repast. The boy stood motionless, as if waiting for the information he'd imparted to seep in to my pathetic, slow-witted human brain.

"Do you know who Arthur Rubinstein is?" asked the boy, slowly gliding to his seat.

"Of course, I've been into classical my whole life."

"He's 83 years old now, Do you realize that when he dies mankind's last direct link with the master composers will be broken? Maestro Rubinstein studied with Ignace Paderewski and he with Theodor Leschetizky and he directly with Carl Czerny and he with the immortal Beethoven. When Arthur Rubinstein dies mankind will lose its direct link to the great composers, and music will become a free-floating, un piloted boat abruptly cut loose from its ancestral moorings. Music will degenerate to cacophonous gibberish by the end of the century. After such a wonderful tradition and legacy, the youth of mankind will listen to the insane noise of caged monkeys and clap their hands with screaming enthusiasm."

"Painting will be equally mindless. The species that gave birth to Leonardo, Rembrandt and the Impressionists will bolt a toilet bowl to the wall and call it Praxiteles' Aphrodite. You will lose your cosmic navigation. You'll see... and there's one event that will toll the death knell for human life as you know it."

"Whoa...." I squalled so loud that the little boy next to me tugged his mother's overcoat to alert her of the peculiar man with his nose pressed against the window glass. Other kids at my side dressed up in heavy snow caked overcoats laughed and giggled; while I, stoned on great African grass, stared at a mechanical dummy who imparted to me secrets of the future.

The mechanical boy began arising from his chair once more, this time moving, not toward the plastic turkey in the middle of the Christmas feast, but directly toward me. His glossy turquoise eyes peered into mine. "There will be a great extinction beginning at the end of the century that will inexorably exceed the extinction at the end of the Mesozoic Era, 65 million years ago. At first it will seem insignificant because computers will replace the fascination and wonderment of life that animals used to provide. We'll keep you busy and anyone who learns our secrets and studies our languages will make all the money he/she wants. The first to be lost will be pitiable animals few people heard of — with exotic names like the hairy saki, binturong, kiang, guereza, oribi, gaur, and addax. But then the reality of extinction will hit closer to home: the giant panda (Ailuropoda melanleuca), the white rhinoceros (Ceratotherium simum), the polar bear (Thalarctos maritimus), and no human will ever again wear a fur coat sheared from the hide of the majestic snow leopard (Panthera uncia).

"Finally an event will occur that will make mankind reel in self-abhorrence and detestation — an event that will change the very essence of reality as you know it; an event that will mark a change in the flow of time. You will cause the extinction of the great apes and the umbilical cord connecting you to the mother Earth for over 30 million years will be irrevocably cut. The first to perish will be the entire family Hylobatidae, the most acrobatic animals on the Earth, who can elegantly leap 30 feet with ease and are monogamous, sing love songs to their mates and rear their young with unstinting devotion. Every member of the entire family will perish and no other gibbon will ever swing through tropical vines again. Their extinction will mean the end of hominoid brachiation through the wondrous tropical vines of a lush, verdant jungle.
"The next to disappear from the Earth will be the entire genus Pongo, so human that the word 'orang-utan' is Malaysian for 'man of the woods.' Peaceful vegetarians and devoted family members, a typical nest is seven stories above the ground and orangs almost never find it necessary to descend to the ground. Even animals like this, so man-like in form and figure, and serene in disposition, can find no escape from human rapacity.

"The next victim to stand in the way of human rodentine proliferation is the mountain and lowland gorilla. For some demented reason Hollywood movies like to portray the great ape as a ferocious, snarling chest-beater, but Gorilla gorilla is among the most tranquil creatures on the planet. Thousands once roved over the whole of Africa until sapient creatures from Europe hunted for the fun of the kill. There's a few dozen left in Central Africa, but they'll soon be gone forever.

"Finally will come the extinction of the animal which is closer to mankind than any other animal — closer to man gene for gene than to the other apes. It is the animal you named after the God of Nature, the animal that can form generalizations, think symbolically, learn vocabularies of over 200 words, play tricks on trainers, use tools, abstract and generalize, recognize self in a mirror, remember past events and plan ahead. The genus Pan has been documented to feel the deep emotions of love and grief, and to die of sorrow at the death of a loved one 2

"Mankind will cause every chimpanzee destined to walk on Earth to never be. No human child will ever be delighted by a baby chimp again. Extinction is the death of birth.

"In annihilating chimpanzeeness, humanity will feel such self disgust and sorrow that you will look at each other in utter contempt. When the last chimp dies, the human conscience will die with it. The genetic link that has connected humanity to nature for over 30 million years will be cut, and mankind will become spiritually bankrupt, descending to the level of John B. Calhoun's overpopulating rats that you learned about in Introduction to Psychology. You will live in a loveless world and have as much compassion for one another as insects; you'll watch news programs for the entertainment of hearing about calamity and go to sporting events so you can scream. With the death of the last non-human offspring of proconsul, Dryopithecus plopus, the oak tree ape, the elegant father of all the hominids, the ancestral form that was blessed by nature and luck with the potential to explore the galaxy, with the death of the last chimp humanity will die by committing suicide as a fratricide, drowning himself in the byproducts of his daily industrial metabolism. Mothers will feed their babies breast milk laced with insecticide.

"When you look at spacetime in terms of light-years and parsecs instead of minutes and days, you'll understand that you've killed your phylogenetic cousins. Worse than the murder of the mythical Abel by Cain who at least had an instinctual reason, man will slay his fellow creatures without shame nor regret, killing for the fun of it, and the realization of what you've done will come too late.

"Bye the bye, within the first few decades of the next millennium, when there are no more elephants, no more lions and tigers, and all Cetacea will have perished from the Great Panthalassic Ocean, there'll be a movement in the science and philosophy departments of universities to change the taxonomic name of humans to Homo vacuous, but by then most people will be living in a synthetic cyberspace of video games and virtual reality. People will continue to believe that humanity is God's gift to the cosmos and the ridiculous misnomer of sapiens will stand. I'm the sum of all the information fed into the cybernetic mind in the year 1970. You can trust what I say."

And the boy dummy winked at me and started moving back into his chair to the right of the glistening Christmas tree. The Victorian papa continued smiling and waving his carving knife and fork in surreal delight, and his family continued bobbing up and down with happy plastic smiles. The scene of Christmas brought a feeling of warmth to all who stood gaping outside on that cold evening in December, 1970. The delighted shoppers remained oblivious to the peculiar-looking hippie in the tattered suede overcoat.
What the heck are video games? I asked myself and turned to continue my evening stroll down Fifth Avenue.

It's important to realize what was happening in the world at the end of 1970. The well-being of the corporate state was being seriously challenged at home and abroad. The vulpine Richard Nixon was president and villainous Spiro Agnew was vice-president. The atrocity of Mi-Lai and assassination of M. L. King had occurred within the year. Students were protesting on a daily basis and pop songs called for revolution. State militia had just killed five students for exercising first amendment rights at Kent State University. There was a drug epidemic. Arthur C. Clarke's 2001 was being shown in the local cinemas.

That day, I had just finished reading the April-69 issue of Playboy featuring a candid interview with Professor Alan Ginsberg — (I can call him that now, but in 1970 a better label was drug fiend, nigger-lovin' commie by his own poetic self description). An incident in the interview had touched me deeply. After giving a speech and poetry reading at Columbia University, a petulant ivy leaguer in the back yelled out: "Just what do you mean by that, Ginsberg... that a poet must take his clothes off and stand naked before the world?" The poet came out from behind the lectern, and like St. Francis in the piazza of the tiny town of Assisi, quietly and humbly took off his clothes to demonstrate what he meant.

An atheist like myself, who believes in Chaos Theory, maintains that the future can't be predicted two minutes beforehand, much less two millennia. The poet prophesied an event in the interview, which to my mind is more pertinent to our time than all the prophecies of the Pentateuch. According to Timothy Leary, there were two kinds of people in the world in 1970: the turned on and the uptight. Allen Ginsberg predicted in the Playboy interview that no matter how conservative, how uptight, how orthodox and conformist, how ass-kissing normal and moderate one's political and religious views, there is absolutely no safety under the wings of the corporate Moloch. The time would come when even thousand-dollar business suit corporate executives on Wall Street were going to get theirs. The abuse of nature was going to catch up to them. But the sad reality is that they were going to take all the TV-watching, nine-to-five working schnooks along with them. Now 30 years later, the prediction made in clear, straightforward words is taking place more convincingly than any prophecy ever penned by the Bible-believing, obfuscatory Nostradamus.

As I pondered this I started walking like a zombie toward the 53rd Street Subway under the Donnell Library to catch an "E" train back to Queens. Lines from Ginsberg's famous poem, Howl, streamed through my mind, as I thought about what the mechanical boy had said:

Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is running money! Moloch whose fingers are ten armies!

Moloch whose breast is a cannibal dynamo! Moloch whose ear is a smoking tomb!

Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows! Moloch whose skyscrapers stand in the long streets like endless Jehovahs!

Moloch whose factories dream and croak in the fog! Moloch whose smokestacks and antennae crown the cities!

Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone! Moloch whose poverty is the specter of genius! Moloch whose name is the mind!

Moloch in whom I sit lonely! Moloch in whom I dream angels!

Crazy in Moloch! Cocksucker in Moloch! Lacklove and manless in Moloch!

Moloch who entered my soul early! Moloch in whom I am a consciousness without a body!

Moloch who frightened me out of my natural
Moloch whom I abandon!

Wake up in Moloch! Light streaming out of the sky!

Moloch! Moloch! Robot apartments! Invisible suburbs! skeleton treasuries! blind capitals! demonic industries! spectral nations! invincible mad houses! granite cocks! monstrous bombs!

They broke their backs lifting Moloch to Heaven! Pavements, trees, radios, tons! lifting the city to Heaven which exists and is everywhere about us!

Moloch not only frightened me out of my natural ecstasy, the machine corporate monster robbed, lied, swindled, cheated, and bribed me out of paradise. It stole my natural birthright and sold it back wrapped in plastic and edited for TV. It bullied me out of childlike euphoria and natural laid-back serenity and sold me aspirin. Moloch poisoned and contaminated the lakes, rivers, and brooks all around me, and then tried to sell me beverages composed in laboratories by sexless, sterile technicians in immaculate white lab coats with advanced degrees in fluid viscosity. Then Moloch has the balls to tell me that Coke is The Real Thing. Does the Establishment think we've all been brainwashed by advertisers and clerics? Water is the real thing; water is what we are.

Nothing much to do waiting for a subway train late at night. I looked at the subway ads — little billboards neatly bolted to the tiled walls. Late at night there is nothing to do but look at ads. An attractive couple was riding in the beautiful American countryside on a bicycle built for two. Wide-eyed and laughing with Ultra-bright teeth, the girl couldn’t have looked more ecstatic if the guy were screwing her from behind in the rear seat. She held a cigarette by her lips as if she were getting high off it, and the cig were the source of the happiness and wonderful delight. “Can’t people see that the advertisers are trying to condition them?” I ask myself, with nobody around. “It’s so obvious that these are a couple of high-paid models trying to get people to associate the good feelings of being in nature with the physical act of smoking a cigarette. Kool.”

That’s got to be why grass is illegal. Marijuana helps a person to cut through the conditioning. Moloch wouldn’t be able to sell all the plastic garbage if people were turned on asking “Why?” Do we really need to use millions of double-edged razor blade cartridges that the Gillette company foists on the world’s supermarkets? With garbage dumps reaching the size of mountains, the company, who owns the patents, took off the market the little contraption that cleans the stubble out from between the blades. A man who shaves has to buy twice as many of the little plastic shits. People keep buying; keep scraping their face every morning and never question what they are doing. Mindless consumers doing Moloch’s bidding, ravaging the environment without so much as a thought. If smoke were legal people would say, “Fuck shaving every day. Fuck Gillette. If I have to shave, let me use an old-fashioned straight razor that I can sharpen with a leather strap so I don’t have to keep disposing these disgusting plastic shits in the garbage every day.”

I tottered back to the bench and refused to let Madison Avenue determine what I perceive and think. An experienced subway rider knows how to find interesting sensations to groove on. Little white arrow-shaped markings on the black escalator handrail at the west end of the station descended toward me like the Viennese physicist/mathematician, Ludwig Boltzmann’s, “arrow of time.” He was a 19th century physics professor who set the foundations for modern statistical mechanics. He committed suicide at the turn of the century in isolation and depression because nobody knew what the hell he was talking about. Shortly before he died, French scientist Jean Perrin corroborated much of his work.

The escalator platform steps disappeared into nothingness, beguilingly, as I began to feel “mellow” from the very good grass that had reached its ideal spot in my mind like an expensive Bordeaux. Another controversial figure lingered on my mind. Just a couple of weeks prior to this
experience, on November 25, 1969, a Japanese writer/poet had just committed seppuku, an ancient form of hara-kiri. The guy was one of Japan's most renowned writers — a playwright, novelist, and poet — who was also a commander in the elite Self Defense Force whose job it was to protect the emperor. Wearing the hachimaki or traditional headband, he disemboweled himself in front of an entire garrison and then had a disciple chop his head off as he fell, according to ancient Samurai ritual.

The tragedy of the case is that Yukio Mishima committed suicide just to make a point. He seemed to have an obsession with how and when to die, so he planned his suicide to the minutest detail. The point of it all was to exhort his military colleagues not to sell out traditional Japanese values for the sake of pro-American capitalists. A country with ancient values and culture was being conquered spiritually, as well as militarily and economically. Mishima felt that as a writer/poet it was his duty to admonish the country not to let American plastic corrupt the soul of Japan. To renounce a beautiful, centuries-old culture for the sake of rock-n-roll, pizza, horror movies, golf, baseball cards, comic books, and drag racing — so that a few Tokyo fat cats could reel in big bucks — was a disgrace. He traded his life to convey a sacred message to his people.

After my conversation with the cybernetic boy, I felt that Mishima should have widened his view. He was too taken in with Japan and not enough with the human species as a whole. It's the future of humanity and Gaia that counts, not Japan or any particular country. Instead of: Don't trade your Japanese identity for the greed of a few corporate nabobs, the important message, I felt, that people needed to learn was: Don't give up your humanity for the security and protection of the corporate state, because big business will use you up, and spit you out with nothing more than arthritis and a gold watch. Religion, big business, and government are leading humanity into the great extinction. They all encourage people to overpopulate so they can make more money.

I had smoked a lot of grass during the '60s, and had done some pretty wild things, but never once did I shirk in fear of the depths of the collective subconscious. The message that people needed to hear was: There's no gods nor devils. We're on this trip by ourselves. We're born alone and we'll die alone. Homo sapiens has to guide its own path through the cosmos. The depths of the human mind are no more sinister than the cravings of a puppy: food, self-preservation, sex, water, a high spot on the social hierarchy. Our innate desires aren't evil, only natural. Fear of the unknown is instilled in us by misguided individuals who care only about maintaining power.

When one rejects the Bible, the vacuum of knowledge and wisdom is filled by the genius of great men who preceded us in time — what high school English teachers call "The Classics" becomes our guide-post, not commandments and parables. Men and women of genius, who have known through their own life experiences the foibles of the human condition, become our magi. An atheist dismisses the mutterings of sacrosanct prophets who believe that they have a personal communication's hookup with God. Of real value is wisdom that has outlasted the test of time. Just as in classical music, the driving force of the great composers was the need to convey a heartfelt yearning and insight about the human condition that will benefit those who come in future generations.

On the way home that night on the subway, I began thinking about what had just occurred. Waiting for the train, I mused about how study and reading of the classics made Vincent Van Gogh enthralled with nature and induced him to reject religion and to paint — to try to tell the world that we must live for the future humanity rather than our own comfort. Vincent read French literature insatiably when he worked at the coal-mining Borinage in Belgium. He cared for the sick and gave his own food to the hungry. He proved that you don't have to believe in God to be like Christ.

In all the self-portraits, he paints himself not against the background of a tangible place like a park or somebody's living room. He always stands in front of some cloud-like vague whirling ether, such that the element of time is taken away. I had just studied one of his last self-portraits, the
Saint-Remy, late August, 1889. Shortly before his death, he painted himself in stark objectivity, in all his wretchedness and misery without any attempt to conceal his pathetic human condition. He stands on the very horizon of a whirling black hole with the sad eyes of a steer about to be butchered. His art is his only comfort, the only reason he stays alive, the only force restraining him from being sucked into the unimaginable gravity of the black oblivion. Vincent shows us this with his thumb literally copulating the thumbhole of his old and weary palette, with the pad of the thumb pressed up against his brushes like the lips of a newborn baby at the mother's breast. Van Gogh knew he wasn't going to make a sou from this painting. He is telling us that only the darkness of the grave awaits, and we must cherish every instant of life no matter how woeful our human condition. We must put aside our own vanity and mindless hope of afterlife, and care about of the future of humanity.  

In my gras-induced euphoria, I felt it was my destiny to grab by the shoulders every Church-going Irishman at the St. Patrick's Day Parade and try to shake some sense into him: “There's no God, you fool. We're alone here. Only humanity determines destiny. God never does anything.” As Stendal said: ‘God's only excuse is that He doesn't exist.’ God hasn't been born yet. There's no messiah, no angels, no saints, no devils, no holy ghosts, no sacred bones, no magical holy water, no Paraclete-inspired holy book, no psychic advisors, no flying saucers, no alien abductions, no incubi nor succubi, no magic crystals, no lucky rabbits' feet.”

It was here that I wrote my first poem, published in the Village Voice, that was read on the radio by Rosco, with the beautiful Missa Luba, Congolese Choir Music, in the background. The poem was based on William Golding's 1954 novel Lord of the Flies. To me, an atheist biology teacher, this story was more significant and descriptive of the evolving mankind than all the stories of the Holy Scriptures put together. The personalities of the boys in the choir sum up the composite psyche of mankind like a mathematical equation. The Freudian concept of the human mind is laid before us under a magnifying glass. Piggy is the superego, Ralph the ego, and Jack the feral, animal energy that Freud called the id (it). Every person alive copes with this innate conflict of forces: To obey the pleasure principle listening to our primitive desires, or the reality principle, putting off our primal needs until an appropriate opportunity.

Ironically, the quiet, puny kid, Simon, becomes the most important character of all. He's the one who could have saved the choir boys from chaos. He was the one that could have brought peace through self-awareness and self-acceptance. Simon knew that the "beastie" wasn't real; there was nothing supernatural on the island — no devils, no demons. There was nothing to fear; but fear was the sinister elixir that held the throng under the maniacal reptile's control. The mystical Simon was an anti-mystic, and per force, the first to die.

Interestingly, around 13 years after I wrote Simon, William Golding won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Simon
I am Simon who walks between your conscience and your animal self.

You met me the first time you took a step on the earth, spoke a word and looked up at the stars in the night.

I was with you when you learned of fire, found shelter in a cave, and expressed an idea with a symbol.

I gave you Art, beauty and love and freed you from ignorance and fear, only to be slain many times by those who will not know themselves.

But I shall never die! For the forces that gave me life are very strong.

I am the fetus that resides in the womb of your mind.
You, my mother, will some day give me birth, and I will claim my rightful place in the universe.

To me, Simon was what the world needed and still needs. An idea that could stand in front of the terrorist guns of the perpetual war zone called the Holy Land and proclaim: Look what you are doing to each in the name of God. Jehovah, Christ and Allah are leading humanity down the path to misery. I am the mystic part of the human mind. I am nature’s experiment with divinity. You’ve been killing each other here for thousands of years. Something is fundamentally wrong. Jews don’t need another messiah; your inner self is the messiah. There’s no Jehovah who cares if you sob at the Wailing Wall. If the messiah didn’t come when Hitler was marching your people into the ovens, do you think he will come when you have half the doctors and lawyers in the Westchester yellow pages?

Arabs need Allah like another head chopped off. Allah doesn’t care if you face Mecca when you pray or face the red light district of Amsterdam. Stop killing one another; God doesn’t exist. Jews and Arabs are made of the same shit. Unless you desist from your zealotry, the soul of man will never be born, and all the time that Homo sapiens spent evolving on Earth will be nothing more than a waste of time.

The “E” train finally came and I started thinking about more mundane cares like the drawer full of bills that an indigent philosopher needed to pay. Such is the religious and chimerical experience of an atheist high on grass. Whereby Moses, St. Francis, and Oral Roberts had communion with the supernatural, an atheist simply stared at a Yuletide mannequin in the Lord and Taylor Department Store window, and the mannequin stared silently back.

3. The Saint Remy Self-Portrait (late August, 1889) can be seen at the web site VanGoghGallery.com © 2007 Marijuana-Uses.com. All rights reserved.

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DREAMWalker Group topics related to this article:


Yutka Maslen 

Let’s Get Physical: A Quantum Look at the Queer Space-Time Continuum

By Joseph P. Goodwin

Joseph P. Goodwin, assistant director of the Career Center at Ball State University, is the author of More Man Than You’ll Ever Be: Gay Folklore and Acculturation in Middle America, as well as numerous journal articles and encyclopedia entries on gay men’s folklore and culture. He earned his Ph.D. and came out at Indiana University. His outsider status is secure through his role as a founding member of the American Folklore Society’s Gay and Lesbian Folklore Section, although his insider status is evident through his term on the AFS Executive Board and various AFS committees, as well as his former “Careers” column in AFSNews. He is clearly inside-out, at least as a folklorist.

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Ball State University

My suspicion is that the universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose

— Physiologist and Geneticist J.B.S. Haldane, Possible Worlds (1927)

In this essay, I’ll be pointing out some parallels between concepts in physics and in queer culture. I don’t mean to
concepts in physics and in queer culture. I don't mean to suggest that in using such physical terms as space-time continuum, quanta, quarks, and warps in the fabric of space-time that I am applying the laws of physics to the study of folklore. Rather, I'm using them as metaphors.

Space and time are manifestations of the same phenomenon. In fact, we often describe space in temporal terms: I live an hour north of Indianapolis. Tradition and continuity, two of the basic notions in folklore, are temporal and spatial concepts. We expect folk stuff to exhibit historical depth, geographical dispersion, or both. Contemporary legends are temporally and spatially situated; space and time are part of the definition of that genre. Performances occur in space and time.

In her extremely influential and distressingly jargony book _Gender Trouble_, Judith Butler (following Beauvoir) proposes that gender is performative: "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (p. 33). Gender, then, might be conceived of as a metaphor. And if gender is performative, it is spatially and temporally determined.

Before going further, I must distinguish between space and place. Place, for my purposes, refers to a physically bounded area. Space, on the other hand, describes a conceptual area that may not have physical boundaries, may consist of areas that are not contiguous, or may have no physicality at all (e.g., cyberspace). Thus the space-time continuum can refer to either a physical or a conceptual context--that is, either a place or a notion of a space.

For example, Ellis Hanson, in "The Telephone and Its Queerness," writes, "Phone sex [for gay men] may be an act of mourning for an idealized sexual freedom rumored to have now disappeared; on the other hand, it may be a refusal to mourn and a challenge to the validity of the loss itself. The telephone calls up an electrical space that becomes a queer space, a new space of sexual play and sexual imagination" (44-45).

Our basic metaphor, as queer people, is spatial: "out of the closet" is a spatial metaphor. We also use other spatial terms, phrases that are increasingly appearing in queer literature with a new layer of meaning: out of order, out of place, out of time, out of bounds, the ins and outs, outside, outsider, left out, found out, not fitting in. And I'll propose another--inside-out, which aptly describes someone who is out in queer space but otherwise closeted.

Just as something that is inside-out is turned around, jumbled, and confused, so--very often--is the inside-out queer. One such person might be "Q," an enigmatic, capricious character in the television series "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and "Star Trek: Voyager." One wonders what "Q" stands for. The Q Continuum of which he is a part is immortal and seemingly omnipotent. Q exhibits the power of being outside, unconstrained by convention. Does Q represent fears of homosexuality? Q is whimsical and irresponsible, threatening the stability of the heterosexual norm. His power is manifested through creativity and violation of cultural expectations (stereotypical queer behavior). And he seems to be infatuated with Captain Jean-Luc Picard.

Inside-out queers have often found refuge in relatively obscure queer spaces. Traditionally, gay bars were unmarked in an almost coded sort of way. To those who were "wise," they were almost recognizable by their unmarked status, blending into the background as if to become non-space. Their liminality was both visual and spatial. They were marginally visible, and they were often situated on the fringes of business districts, thus in economically and socially liminal zones.

The creation of queer space was originally a direct response to oppression--queer people were not allowed to be themselves in other contexts. Thus queer space is for many a sort of sacred space. We experience a sense of violation when outsiders--"tourists"--intrude. Nevertheless, the academy--a queer sort of space in its own right--intruded extensively. Researchers apparently were unable to see queer life in a straight context; unless one is privy to coded messages, he or she cannot collect gay, lesbian, and bisexual folklore in heterosexual space-time (Radner...
and bisexual folklore in heterosexual space-time (Haarer and Lanser). Therefore sociologists (primarily) had to venture into the natives’ territory to study gay men and their culture. These investigators visited gay bars (Read), bathhouses (Weinberg and Williams), and tearooms (Humphries, Delph). They even described “gay ghettos” (Levine).

However, queer behavior involves foregrounding a liminal, stigmatized identity. To be publicly queer is to be radical, political, and confrontational—simply because one chooses to ignore or violate heterosexist temporal and spatial boundaries. A common chant at queer marches and demonstrations in recent years is, “We’re here! We’re queer! Get used to it!” “We’re here” is clearly spatial. “Get used to it” implies the passage of time. And the alternative version concludes with another spatial reference: “We’re here! We’re queer! And we’re not going shopping!” Another common cry is, “We are everywhere!”, which is a subversive, revolutionary spatial assertion.

The homophobic stereotype of gay men as voracious, rapacious, sex fiends, which attempts to control our behavior through oppression, is based almost solely on a spatial notion of where we put our genitals when engaging in sex acts. “Legitimate” sexuality is assigned to a space defined by bedroom walls and to a spatial relationship between “complementary” sex organs. Remember the old line, “I don’t care what they are (or what they do in their bedrooms), as long as they don’t flaunt it”? Queer behavior, by definition, is flaunted; it could be considered to be unconstrained by time and space, since it is radical and revolutionary. In Discipline and Punish, Foucault argues that spatialization is a form of exercising control. But by inverting their marginality and ghettoization, by flaunting their behavior, queers have reclaimed some control. When queers determine the spaces, they seize power.

The notion of queer space is fairly obvious. But what about queer time? In her prize-winning paper “Driving Ms. Thang: Queer Stories and Space in Los Angeles,” Elizabeth Tarpley Adams quotes a man she calls Sebastian: “It’s interesting, that play between space and time. Because the time creates the space” (8). In her paper, Adams points out that “people understand the city and their place within it through storytelling” (2). Similarly, in another prize-winning essay, “Sunburned Nipples, or ‘We All Come from the Goddess’: Bodylore at Womyn’s Festivals,” Lisa L. Higgins describes lesbians’ use of personal experience narratives about body images in specific times and places—womyn’s festivals and lesbian communities.

There are, then, “appropriate times” for gay, lesbian, and bisexual behavior. When queer acts occur outside these times, conflict can result. These violations of propriety might be described as queer time. Gay-lesbian-bisexual time is used to be equated, at least primarily, with leisure time. (Thus in this sense, the Industrial Revolution and the development of leisure for the masses may have contributed to the rise of gay culture.) But such is no longer the case as people are increasingly spending work, “family,” and other “times” in queer space-time.

Time frames behavior; that is, behavior is time-bound. As a conceptual product, so is space: it exists only when thought. A frame is a marker or code that sets off certain behaviors from “normal” life. A frame keeps something in, like a fence; it also keeps everything else out. The frame identifies a space as a performance space, making the statement, “What’s inside this frame is ‘art,’ not ‘life.’” In this way, frames are a manifestation of space-time.

Queer space frames queer time, and queer space-time frames queer behavior. In that, it is analogous to festival. (And it certainly can be festive!) Festivals are generally temporal entities—they are often associated with specific dates or seasons. Yet festival time defines its own space. Attributes of festival include inversion, crossdressing, and reversal of the relationships between the sacred and the profane. Behaviors that are normally disdained or avoided are encouraged for public display. People tolerate performances that they would normally abhor. We see all of these strategies at play in queer space-time. In fact, in queer space-time, the profane becomes sacred; it is elevated and celebrated. Festivals also play with liminality,
Craig Miller's outstanding presentation at the 1993 American Folklore Society meeting, "Gay Rodeo: A Celebration of Rural Heritage and Gay Culture," documents one particularly queer festival. Another, Halloween, might be called the foremost public queer festival in America.

As one of the most popular holidays among homosexual men, Halloween, or Queens' Christmas as it is sometimes called, offers opportunities for men to appear publicly in drag or other costumes and to behave with a license normally not afforded them. The celebration allows gay men to take off the "masks" they normally wear to hide their sexuality. Through the transforming power of festival, homosexual men can "pretend" to be the people they really are. (Mardi Gras serves much the same purpose.)

Festivals also encourage a blurring of the distinctions between private and public. Thus at Halloween, behavior that normally is kept hidden from the heterosexual world is paraded in the streets of some larger cities. And because festivals, like humor, are considered to be "play," one is not expected to take seriously the actions one witnesses.

This unspoken rule allows gays to publicly play with gender roles and sexuality on Halloween. With costumes that range from drag to g-strings, men can flaunt their homosexuality and with impunity rebel against the constraints imposed upon them by the heterosexual majority. In doing so, they present a theatrical version of gay life, what the world expects to see, playing with and exaggerating the stereotypes normally used to oppress queer people. Thus many gay men experience Halloween as a time when they can take off their masks and be themselves. In other words, they can for a time stop performing the role of the heterosexual male; they can be openly gay, comfortable in the assumption that most people will consider the gay behavior to be the performance. In a most fabulous way, our lives are art.

"Do I contradict myself? 
Very well, I contradict myself, 
(I am large; I contain multitudes.)"

— Walt Whitman, Song of Myself

We find the interplay between freedom and constraint even at the subatomic level. Quanta are "the basic stuff from which the entire universe is made" (Talbot, 34). They exist simultaneously as waves and particles. They are both/and, not either/or. Michael Talbot goes so far as to describe electrons as being "like some shapeshifter out of folklore" (33). One of the more fascinating and bizarre aspects of quantum particles is that observation instantly forces them to assume one state. Under scrutiny, they are forced to conform to narrow expectations. Unobserved, they are free to be any and all possibilities.

This concept--that observation affects the observed--has been familiar to folklore fieldworkers for decades. It is also implied in Butler's argument that gender is performative and thus, by extension, set or determined by observation. And social constructionist arguments seem to suggest that gay and lesbian culture did not exist until homosexuality was acknowledged and named (read, "observed") in the mid-nineteenth century.

Quarks are particles that carry fractional electric charges. Although physicists had predicted six different "flavors" of quarks, only five had been discovered until recently: up, down, and bottom (all spatial terms), as well as charm and strange. Are these names queer or what? Finally, in 1995, scientists announced their discovery of the last elusive quark: top. It is surprising that the discovery took so long. After all, doesn't everyone claim to be a top?

It turns out that top is 35,000 times heavier than up and down. On March 2, 1995, chubby chasers at Fermilab announced that they had at last found one. The World-Wide Web page from which I gathered this information, by the way, offered me the opportunity to, quote, "Look at a real top event." (Believe me, I was tempted, but I was afraid to follow that link because of the Communications Decency Act.)
Quoting again: "The fifth and six quarks were originally called truth and beauty"--I'm not making any of this up. Talk about an obsession with faggy stereotypes of the importance of sex roles and physical appearance: "No, I really am a top! That's the truth! And you're beautiful!"

Since the top quark is so heavy, it seems appropriate to point out that gravity can warp the fabric of space-time. This principle underlies the "warp engines" that allow star ships to exceed the speed of light in the "Star Trek" programs. Needless to say, homophobic types would consider queers to be warped as well. (Given my several references to "Star Trek," I would be remiss in failing to note Linda Pershing's queer reading of the "Star Trek" canon in her 1993 American Folklore Society paper, "To Boldly Go Where No One Has Gone Before: Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Star Trek.")

You've probably believed for years that one object cannot be in two places at once. Not any more! Recently, scientists have managed to force a beryllium atom to remain in two places simultaneously (Winters 1996). Similarly, through coding, ambiguity, etc., queer space-time can occupy the same physical space-time as heterosexual space-time. That is, queers can simultaneously occupy both "normal" space-time and a different conceptual space-time through the use of their esoteric knowledge. This notion is similar to my discussions elsewhere of multiple perceptions of context (Goodwin 1989). Our dual nature (queer but raised hetero- or asexual, wave and particle, strange and charm, here and there) provides us with the required interpretive framework to "crossread" texts.

In times past, coding enabled gay, lesbian, and bisexual people to discover hidden queerness in texts. Now we read queerness even when it is not intentional. That is, we can read queer messages into texts that don't necessarily contain them objectively. My comments on Q from "Star Trek" and on quarks--in fact, this entire essay--are examples of queer readings of non-queer data. And queer readings of queer-coded texts offer greater depth than in the past, as is evident in Michèle Aina Barale's explication of Ann Bannon's 1962 lesbian classic Beebo Brinker as a doubly coded tale subversively designed to lure in heterosexual male readers.

In Out in Culture, Corey K. Creekmur and Alexander Doty offer a great example of crossreading a classic movie, a queer favorite, describing it as if it were set in queer space-time: "To take a privileged example from camp's (counter) canon, MGM's wholesome children's fantasy The Wizard of Oz and its child star Judy Garland, could be elaborated in terms of their camp functions: The Wizard of Oz is a story in which everyone lives in two very different worlds, and in which most of its characters live two very different lives, while its emotionally conflicted and oppressed teenaged heroine longs for a world in which her inner desires can be expressed freely and fully. Dorothy finds this world in a Technicolor land 'over the rainbow' inhabited by a sissy lion, an artificial man who cannot stop crying, and a butch-femme couple of witches. This is a reading of the film that sees the film's fantastic excesses (color, costume, song, performance, etc.) as expressing the hidden lives of many of its most devoted viewers, who identified themselves as 'friends of Dorothy'" (3).

Q, quanta, quarks--you know, seeing the parallels between the queer space-time continuum and the realities of quantum physics, I must conclude that being queer is the natural state of the universe. And with that, I am out of time.

Notes
1. I originally presented this paper at the American Folklore Society meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 18, 1996.

2. The Communications Decency Act was an attempt by some members of the United States Congress to control or eliminate "cyberpornography." Passed in 1996, the act was essentially overturned in 1997 when the Supreme Court ruled that all of its provisions were unconstitutional.

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Stories and Space in Los Angeles. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society, Milwaukee.


Where’s the Beef?

As television commercials go, it ranks among the unforgettable ones. The scene is a fast food restaurant. Upon peering into her hamburger bun, a feisty grandmother of a character demands, “Where’s the beef?” The imposture is laid as bare as her bun.

Many ideas bandied about are delivered in that same style of neat, easy package. And as habituated as we are to thinking them solid, we tend to swallow them without checking to see if it’s just hot air inside.

One contemporary truth turned truism concerns the concept of fear. I think it true that fear often lurks at the root of our harmful actions and attitudes. When we avoid or attack, fear frequently hovers somewhere in our motives. And because it can have many layers and guises, identifying and banishing the fear can be a challenge.

But is fear the panacea of explanation? Does it underlie
But is fear the panacea of explanation? Does it underlie every behavior that seems in error to us, especially when it comes to the errors of others? I, for one, do not think so.

At times our language itself weaves fear into the basis of a stance, even when fear has little to do with it. I think back to the writing of one of my editorials for Christian*New Age Quarterly¹ and a particular dilemma I faced in succinctly phrasing a certain thought. A bit after voicing that I disagree with those who believe homosexuality is sick or sinful, I wanted to neatly refer back to their position. But what word choices exist for characterizing that stand? “Anti-gay” would have been misleading in that context. Yet neither need fear be at root of their perspective. While I chose the word “homophobic” as the lesser of two evils, that’s not precisely what I meant. Though I part company with those who consider homosexuality a deviance from natural, fitting sexuality, I don’t believe such arguments necessarily arise from fear. And to label them as such waves away any possibility of further discussion.

It is as if I were to say: “Your position is clouded by a misleading emotion. Therefore whatever you say holds no validity. Maybe I can help you overcome your fear and we can both know you’ve moved past it when you see things my way.”

That’s the problem with characterizing a differing viewpoint as stemming from fear. The moment one does so, one cuts short one’s own listening. And the criterion for evaluating if fear fills the stance becomes how closely the other’s view reflects our own.

One display of dismissiveness particularly troubling to me concerns the portrayal of traditional Christianity favored by many New Agers. The institution of the church, so the story goes, boils down to a drive for power, which roots in the fear of powerlessness. So common is this depiction in some New Age circles that one might be more favorably received confessing to having that fear than to questioning the equation. If Christians disagree with New Age views, they do so out of fear. Period.

Now that’s a mighty appealing wrap-up, neat and tidy, but where’s the beef? And what do we, as participants in the New Age community, do to ourselves when we dismiss millennia of thought and millions of others out of hand? I’m not saying that Christians don’t often themselves cut short their listening by glibly caricaturing New Agers. But what are we doing to ourselves when we do it?

I suspect we’re often playing tit-for-tat. And I suppose we sometimes do it to mute a challenge to our own cherished ideas. Perhaps we subconsciously agree that Christianity is that powerful and we feel a little powerless in the face of it. But maybe that drive-thru window is just too easy and familiar -- and the promise of the package means more to us than its substance.

As I see it, we just fool ourselves if we dismiss the other. Next time someone sums up the beliefs of a differing viewpoint as “fear,” let’s make that our cue to check for the beef -- lest we find ourselves gobbling a lot of hot air.

¹Catherine Groves, “Through the Editor’s Unknowing Eyes,” Christian*New Age Quarterly 12:3 (July-September 2000).
discovered the world of the Internet, she found she could be more selective in her writing choices, as opposed to being "assigned" stories to write about. Keep reading her column every other month at DREAMScene to find out what's ahead!

Turmoil on Campus

The University of Wisconsin, Madison. Virginia Tech, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Nevada. When does it stop? Beautiful women and men are being murdered on campus, and it's happening a lot lately.

But there's always been crime on campus. I graduated from Kent State University in 1976. That was 32 years ago! I feel so old! But on May 4, 1970, four Kent State students were shot by the Ohio National Guard, murdered by young men who were supposed to protect them from violence!

It seems there is always some kind of crime on campus, including the worst type of crime, murder. It just seems there might be more reporting of the crimes today. I didn't have CNN or cable and there were no cell phones and very little use of computers then.

The problem is that young, inexperienced and naive people are on college campuses across the country. They're in the prime of their lives, studying for whatever the plan to do in the future in order to make a living.

But people between the ages of 18 and 24 are often not very mature. I most certainly did not fit the profile of maturity. I was introverted, shy and had to learn social skills through trial-and-error. I must say I did a poor job of picking appropriate boyfriends, as well as some poor choices in female friends, as well!

So many of my "friends" would take LSD and drink alcohol heavily when I was at Kent State. I never tried LSD and I've always disliked the taste of alcohol. But I attended a lot of parties, especially through my sorority, where the young men and women would get drunk beyond my comprehension!

Here's what happened to me at Kent State, and I hope if you or your young adults are in college right now, will learn and be very careful when you get to campus. Each college campus is like a little city wrapped around an educational institution. Yes, there are many ways to have fun and enjoy meeting wonderful people of all races and religions from your hometown and from around the world!

But there are also a lot of people in the world who mean you harm, either out of mental illness or jealousy or some kind of personal problem. You must protect yourself both physically and mentally and be cautious, without being paranoid. I know that's easier said then done.

The Vietnam War was in full swing when I was at Kent State. Since I was very sheltered, as are many kids, the daily protests were so exciting! Each day, there was a spot at Kent where the noon protest would occur. I met a lot of my dates at the 'Liberty Bell' in the center of campus to listen to a speaker and receive leaflets about various issues of the day.

Sometimes I agreed with what was being said and sometimes I didn't, but I often tried to not set up any classes so I could attend the daily 'protest' rallies. I loved it! I grew up in a closed environment and only had one friend who wasn't Jewish, my senior year of high school. Little did I know, anti-Semitism was rampant on this so-called 'liberal' college institution. So was racism!

The 'black student union' was separate from the 'white student union' and there was no connecting of the two. There was a race riot my freshman year, and a black girl in my dorm asked me if she could hide in my dorm room. I said OK.

My freshman year, some unknown person wrote "Jew" on my door. My last name did not sound Jewish, nor do I have any features of the 'stereotypical' Jewish person. I did not know one person in my dorm and I have no idea who did that. I complained to the resident advisor who set up a meeting of the whole dorm. She wanted someone to admit of the writing. No one admitted it.

The university was afraid I would sue for discrimination so
The university was afraid I would sue for discrimination, so they let me move into an upper class dorm or, off campus if I wanted. Eventually I did that. I was too shy to file any formal complaint.

Since I was there in 1971, the year after the four students were shot, the National Guard still had a presence on campus. That was not reported at all. There were men with rifles standing guard at classroom buildings. That didn’t bother me.

But television stations would often appear at the daily protest area by the liberty bell. I walked by one day and my father happened to see me on the news. He said he wanted me to go to school somewhere else and get away from the crazed ‘hippies’. Of course, I ignored him.

I joined a sorority, hoping to meet some level-headed young women. There weren’t any! They wouldn’t take LSD, but sure did drink a lot of alcohol, of which I had no interest, luckily. But a young woman was raped right outside the sorority house and the perpetrator was never found. These days, she’d be murdered!

I often took evening classes even though friends told me it might not be safe. Well, one night in history class I received a note from a girl across the room. She identified herself very nicely, and warned me a guy sitting next to me was under suspicion of raping a girl in HER dorm.

It turned out he began to follow me to my apartment on a regular basis but I hadn’t noticed. I contacted a male friend of mine and he offered to help. The guy got my phone number somehow. My friend Jim told him, when he called, that he was my boyfriend and that we were living together and he’d best not call again. Luckily, that worked. Today, that might’ve been a murder!

Another time, when I had three female roommates in my dorm room, strangely, two of the girls were quite well endowed, the opposite of myself. Anyway, my roommate Rita didn’t pay attention to the curtains and had been leaving them open when dressing and undressing. Turns out there was a guy on the roof of the gym next door, watching her take her clothes off on a regular basis!

The whole floor of girls got involved in this and no one ever did a thing about it! Shy, introverted Gail took the plunge and called police, who arrived swiftly. The guy had escaped from a local mental health facility and had been living on the roof of the KSU gym! Kent had a ‘peeping Tom’ law and he was arrested. Despite my shyness, I would always stick up for myself, something I got from my father, thank goodness!

Since this volatile period of time in history and what had taken place the previous year at KSU (the shootings, etc) we had daily telephone calls at our dorms all over campus threatening bombs, murders, etc. Someone would call and say they’re going to bomb the campus and we would be evacuated from our dorm rooms at all hours of the day or night. Often, we were sound asleep.

One of those times I had a really bad cold, cough, fever, sore throat, so I had taken some cough medicine that knocked me out. The whole dorm had evacuated except for me. I still remember the men in protective bomb clothing, covered from head to toe, telling me to get out ASAP since they were searching for a bomb. I walked outside in freezing weather with no shoes and no coat, wearing pajamas. I simply had no time to think.

I was more prepared on other days. At Kent State, most of the students were very liberal, against the war, and some others across America felt threatened by that. They wanted to punish us open-minded hippies. They wanted to kill those commies in Vietnam. It's similar to current-day Iraq, except there's no draft right now. If there were a military draft, I bet the country would be quite different.

Young men were everywhere with signs, "hell no we won’t go!", burning draft cards, girls burning bras (women’s liberation). One day there were hundreds of cardboard headstones on the lawn of front campus on Main Street. On the 'headstones' were printed the names of guys who died in Vietnam, for no reason, in our view. Then, the administration building, including campus professors and others, were being held hostage.
Many times, a police truck would be on campus with loudspeakers and megaphones, warning us to disperse immediately or we'd all be arrested. One of my sorority girls wanted to be arrested, and she was! I would always leave immediately when hearing that chant.

Then there were the food fights. I've heard college dormitory food is greatly improved these days. But in my day the food was barely edible. So, kids would pick it up and throw it every which way, to garner attention, of course. Instead of gaining weight on campus, I lost it!

Being young and naive, I didn’t realize I shouldn't bring anything of value to college. I had a valuable opal ring stolen, probably by one of my trusted 'friends' who barely had money to buy soap and shampoo. One meets people from all walks of life in college, from rich to dead broke. People would steal everything from clothes, to stereos, to books, even class notes for those too lazy to attend class.

The simplest problem I had was when I was a first quarter freshman. I suppose it wasn't really a problem, except that I had been sheltered and yet unloved. My impression of my mother was that she didn't really want me and that she was stuck with me and stuck taking care of me. It seemed when I went to college she was glad to be rid of me and the feeling was mutual. She played favorites and I wasn't her favorite. Her loss in my mind, yet it always caused intense emotional pain.

But I'm off the track, sort of. I had three roommates, Rita, Debbie, Nancy and myself, all in one tiny room. Debbie called her mother a hundred times a day because she simply could not function without her. She wasn't ready to leave home at 18. Nancy’s mother had moved to Florida and she often flew to Florida on weekends to see her, which is probably why she was always broke and stealing my things, including makeup.

Rita put me up to a contest. She wanted to see who could go the longest without calling home. Rita was close to her parents yet wanted to be grown up and maintain, or at least form, independence! I wasn't an independent person at the time but I had come from some big-time dysfunctional parents.

My senior year I had a non-Jewish boyfriend, so my parents were not really speaking to me, held a grudge about that (and everything else), and never allowed him into 'their' home. I felt that their home was NOT my home because of that and other reasons.

I won the bet hands down. I never called home. As a matter of fact, in four years of college, my mother never called me, not even once. After several months had passed, my father did call. He said, "Do you recognize this voice?" My mother's behavior never improved. She didn't congratulate me when I got a degree. No gift, no card, no party, nothing.

It doesn't matter. I absolutely loved my college experience and am so grateful for my grandfather insisting his grandchildren go to college. It made me a member of the human race, something my mother never accomplished. It gave me mental strength and self-esteem, something I never learned at home.

Every American child should and must go to college. But he or she must make sure of safety. Your college is your temporary home that prepares you for the real world. But crime can make it TOO real. You must take responsibility for your behavior and your safety.

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Appearances and Book Signings

- **North Richland Hills, Texas**
  Saturday, August 9th, 1 - 4 PM
  ‘His Folk, Books and More’ Book and Gifts
  7801 Brandi Place, Suite A, North Richland Hills, TX 76180
  (Right next to the Tarantula Train)
  
  Tamara Wilhite will be signing her science fiction anthology *Humanity's Edge* and new novel *Sirat: Through the Fires of Hell*.

Calls for Submissions

- **2009 Magic Carpet Ride Mentorship**
  Tamara Kaye Sellman, director of MRCentral ([www.mrcentral.net](http://www.mrcentral.net)) announces the opening of the 2009 Magic Carpet Ride mentorship application period.

  This mentorship, an innovative one-on-one creative writing program, is the first of its kind to provide specialized instruction, direction, and motivation specifically for a writer of literary magical realism.

  The purpose of the Magic Carpet Ride mentorship is to assist a promising magical realist writer from anywhere in the world in the completion of a polished manuscript by the end of the session which may then be actively submitted to potential publishers.

  Postmark deadline for receipt of all application materials for the 2009 mentorship session is October 31, 2008. Email deadline for receipt of all application materials for the 2008 mentorship session is midnight [Pacific time], October 31, 2008.

  For more information, visit [www.angelfire.com/wa2/margin/MRCentral/mentorship.html](http://www.angelfire.com/wa2/margin/MRCentral/mentorship.html) or write Tamara Kaye Sellman at magicalrealismmaven at hotmail dot com. (Note: Tamara is on her annual summer hiatus from June 20 through September 21.)

Help Offered

- **Freelance editing** is just one forte of Catherine Groves. For more information about the freelance services of Christian "New Age Quarterly"'s owner and editor, please write to her at PO Box 276, Clifton, NJ 07015-0276.

Help Wanted

- **For a book**, Lynda Exley, ambassador, award-winning journalist and editor at the *SanTan Sun News*, is looking to interview traditionally published writers (not self-published) who were either published younger than 17 years old or they have an inspirational story to tell about how writing as a youth led them to their current writing career. Writes Lynda, "If any of your authors fit this bill and they are interested in being interviewed for the book I'm compiling, please have them email me a brief letter about themselves and include titles of published works." Lynda can be reached at Exlent@aol.com.

- **Film producer sought** by author Tracy B. Evans — to turn *Fatal Kidnapping* into a horror flick. It's a mystery novel with a twist never seen before. Email Tracy at tracybevans@gmail.com.

Literary Contests

- **Swell**, a quarterly online journal of original writing focusing on LGBT themes, is pleased to sponsor a fiction contest. The electronic publishing arm of NewTown Writers, a Chicago-based writers salon, SWELL ([www.swellzine.com](http://www.swellzine.com)) aims to reach beyond the traditional boundaries of the printed word, exploring the limits of form, structure, and content, while giving a voice to emerging writers. Prizes to be awarded: First Prize: $250, Second Prize: $100, Third Prize $50.
When? Entries will be accepted electronically between May 15, 2008 and September 30, 2008. Submissions will only be accepted via email. Winners will be announced in January 2009.

Click here to review the complete Swell fiction contest guidelines. Questions? Contact newtownwriters@yahoo.com.

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- Christian*New Age Quarterly (C*NAQ) seeks topnotch essayists versed in interfaith dialog. Please, do not send simultaneous submissions, previously published material or pieces available online. To learn more, see Christian*New Age Quarterly's Writer's Guidelines.

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