

What is Visionary Fiction?

Visionary Fiction is an exciting new genre typified by *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, *The Celestine Prophecy*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *The Alchemist*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and many other well-read stories. These books weren't known as Visionary Fiction when they were written, but they certainly embody its many qualities. Today, there are many more books being written in this genre, and this has led to the formation of the Visionary Fiction Alliance (www.visionaryfictionalliance.com) in 2011 based on a 2009 article by co-founder and author Jodine Turner. She says, "*Visionary Fiction speaks the language of the soul. It offers a vision of humanity as we dream it could be.*"

VF Qualities

Visionary Fiction has elements of science fiction, fantasy, and inspiration genres, but it goes beyond these. It has all the elements of a good novel, such as unforgettable characters, dramatic conflicts, suspense, and often romance. But it includes something more. What is that more?

Visionary Fiction aims to give the reader a vision of a better life or a better world, to lead the reader to a bigger, more inclusive, universal frame of reference. It is designed to expand consciousness and connect the reader to the larger humanity of which we are all apart. It does this through these author strategies:

- 1) An inner journey.** The focus is often on the transformation of the characters from the inside out. Certainly, they interact with others and the world, but the juice of the encounter is its effect on who they are. They become bigger, stronger, and more integrated as a person. Perhaps enlightened!
- 2) Embedded wisdom.** VF stories weave spiritual, esoteric, ancient wisdom into the fabric of the narrative. It is part of the story; it is part of the character's evolution of understanding. It may reference legends, scriptures, old rituals, religious traditions, and more, but it won't blatantly preach. As Turner says, "When written well, Visionary Fiction does not proselytize, evangelize, coerce, or feel dogmatic."
- 3) Inner tools.** VF stories are all about the systematic exploration of the inner realm of life – with its resulting impact on everyday life. A wide array of "explorer's tools" have developed for inner space, and these tools help unfold the story. These include: visions, dreams, past lives, heightened intuition, new dimensions, refined sense perception, omens, signs, and more. Turner says these are "catalysts for radical shifts in perception."
- 4) Flow of consciousness.** Famous meditation teacher Maharishi Mahesh Yogi once said that good literature can actually develop consciousness. He then identified the author's technique as "very great contrasts put close together" to create a swing back and forth that stretches consciousness. I would say that well-written VF stories swing the reader's intellect and emotions

from the surface of life to the depths, from the concrete to the abstract, from the personal to the universal, from the active sounds of words imbued with meaning to the silent gaps between words. It is this flow of contrasting values that produces the transforming experience in the reader. It is the flow of the writer's consciousness embedded in the words that leads to an evolutionary flow in the reader's awareness.

The power of VF stories

The beauty and wonder of Visionary Fiction is the huge effect it has on the reader through the simple process of telling a story. I would suggest that VF stories represent the art of fiction writing reaching for its full potential. It's not enough to just tell a story to entertain; VF stories aim to transform. They make complex ideas easy to understand through the characters' experiences. They stretch the reader's mind with the use of inner tools. They help the reader envision new possibilities – for themselves and for the world. This is the vision of Visionary Fiction.

Check the list of VF titles on the website of the Visionary Fiction Alliance (www.visionaryfictionalliance.com), and immerse yourself in some of the most enlightening fiction stories available today. Prepare yourself to become something more – a better, richer, fuller you!

*Submitted by M.R. Neer, author of **The Elixir of Freedom**
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