



# Grey Matters: Fictional Dialogues for the Real World

*Bradford Tatum*

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## **Grey Matters: Fictional Dialogues for the Real World** Bradford Tatum

Human beings are the only animals on the planet who completely control their environment. As a result, we have freed ourselves from the traditional evolutionary forces that shaped us and are subject only to what is known as cultural evolution. We not only strive to understand the world around us. We are actively engaged in creating it. That's not to say we are not still animals. Quite obviously, if we seek a pulse, we are still beholden to the fundamental requirements of all carbon based life on earth. What has changed is what we value. How we value. We have replaced the irreducible worth of resources for abstracts. God, money and Twitter only mean something to us. Which is really not such a bad thing. For seemingly the first time in history, adaptive forces have conspired toward a creature capable of a creative response to her/ his destiny. We get to write the story of our own becoming. The problem is we are still on the first sentence of the first page and have no idea if we are writing a love story, an adventure story or one of those Philip K. Dick inspired cautionary tales. The three short pieces in this book were designed to illustrate certain core exigencies in human communication, to animate the dialectic mechanics of such questions as: If technology learns to think, should such cognitive engines be held to the same human standards as the creator? If science becomes commoditized as entertainment what is the responsibility of the scientist? Are all applications of inventions ethical? Even when such inventions are used for war? With evidence of the Higgs boson bringing us closer to an understanding of our cosmic beginnings and M Theory on the threshold of becoming a unified field postulate, it is somewhat sobering to realize that no such unification is occurring among us culturally. We are more fractured and factional than ever. Due our relatively short lifespans and dogged adherence to indoctrinated biases, culture is becoming increasingly a cottage industry where nothing is universally accepted except within its own sphere. Our only hope against such reductive forces is communication. I'm not talking about being "connected" or the constant barrage of updated minutiae that passes for communication. I'm talking about actual dialogue, engaged discourse based on not only mutual respect but on a mutual desire to understand one another. We're not going to like everything we hear. But I think it is of tremendous importance that we hear it. Only in hearing what someone else has to say will we have the opportunity to create something like a mutual non-destruction agreement. Only through a respectful and tolerant exchange of points of view can we begin to formulate core values so fundamental they can seep beneath the foundations of our differences.

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