



Creative Wordshops

Dorian Haarhoff

082 873 6802

dorianhaa@gmail.com

www.dorianhaarhoff.com

storyteller facilitator speaker writing-coach poet

Writing Newsletter

Feb 2020

re-story, re-
create and re-
imagine your life
and work

As from Feb this letter is also on a blog dorianhaarhoffblog.co.za
courtesy of Dominic Haarhoff

See 'what's on' for wordshops, retreats and ongoing opportunities

Dear seeker of word and images

The Seventh Story

Imaginal knowing, the only way that the unconscious can move into consciousness, happens through fantasy through dreams, through symbols... and through well-told stories. It happens through poetry... the words that create the image that in turn creates a new awareness - that is in us already.

(Richard Rohr, Hope Against Darkness)

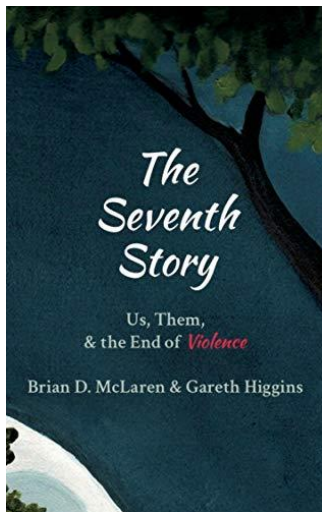


This letter welcomes you to the twenties. Bertolt Brecht some ninety years ago wrote 'Truly we live in dark times.' Still surrounded by such darkness how can stories light the way? (as on the gate of a Bethlehem farm -friend Igno's farm.) I'm

tempted to offer a dozen quotations on story - one of each month.

Quotations that offer that beam that penetrates fog - mental, industrial et al.

Please reread Rohr's words over and over as a mantra. What does 'imaginal knowing' mean to you? In this letter I'm tempted to offer quote after quote of such storyguru wisdom. Here's a Jungian (James Hillman) echo. 'The first task is re-storying the adult... in order to restore the imagination to its primary place in consciousness in each of us regardless of age.... My interest in story is as something lived in and lived through, a way in which the soul finds its life.' While in this letter there is a sprinkling of these insights, I wish to focus on a book that Terri gave me while co-facilitating a retreat in North Carolina in late Oct last year.



In *The Seventh Story: Us, Them, and the End of Violence* (2019) (e-book download includes a PDF with lyrics). Gareth Higgins and Brian McLaren consider how to tell better stories to make a better world. 'If you want to change your life, and if you want to change the world, you have to begin with stories.'

They identify six stories that shape our lives as individuals and as societies. They give our lives meaning, direction, and drive, even though many of us have never given them a name. You have seen the first six at work throughout history and in our world today. They are made-up stories that divide the world into 'us and them'. Found in families, schools, social groups, business, local politics and international relations. Everywhere.

Domination

Somebody wants power over others and rules over them. Husbands abuse wives, uncles abuse children. Gangs or the Mafia run the community. Men exclude women from positions. Authoritarian politicians make laws to privilege their group at the expense of other groups. Brute force rules.

Revolution

The dominated group succeed in overthrowing the rulers and take over power. They in turn oppress other groups to secure their power base. (as in *Orwell's Animal Farm*)

Isolation

A group separates itself and carries on trying to establish other ways of securing power e.g. business. They believe they are special - the chosen people.

Purification

This group runs on prejudice - religion, race, gender, nation. We are better than that other group. More intelligent. Our blood purer. They are out to get us and take away what we have. So we get rid of people who do not agree with us or who not belong to our club. Persecute, kill or drive them into exile.

Victimisation

The group begins to see itself as victims. We have suffered more than any other group so our stories tell of suffering and our survival. We will never forget our sorrow and we will not forgive the perpetrators.

Accumulation

'If we can't find peace, security and happiness by ruling the world or overthrowing the rulers or withdrawing into isolation or getting rid of a minority by accumulating shiny objects then let us never forget our sorrow.' (Higgins and McLaren on story 1-5). So now in story 6 we accumulate - houses, cars, businesses. Factories that belch pollution into the air and poison rivers. We believe money is power so we exploit the others, the creatures, the earth and cut down rain forests

As soon as we name these stories - domination, revolution, isolation, purification, victimization, accumulation - we become aware of the shadow division.

Us over them

 Us overturning them

 Us staying apart from them

 Us cleansing ourselves of them

 Us suffering more than they have

Us having things they don't

We consolidate our tribe through excluding others. These competition stories do not bring peace. Win lose. They drive us apart, create more suffering, and fail to answer the question of how to make a better world.

The Seventh Story

Are we hungry for a story that changes what we think we know about religion, politics, economics, art, and even storytelling? And how we behave? The seventh story works through inclusion not exclusion. We are all in it together. Win-Win.



A person knocks on the door of somebody's home and the one inside asks 'Who's there?' The visitor responds 'It's me.' 'Go away' says the one inside. The outsider thinks for a while then knocks again. 'Who's there?' 'It is us.' The insider responds 'Enter.'

Here is St Francis with the leper (St Francis Retreat Centre N Carolina) In the Us story we belong to something bigger than ourselves. We enter a conversation that could change the way we see ourselves, the creatures, the trees and seas. St Francis spoke of 'Brother Sun, Sister Moon.' An inner journey that could transform how we experience meaning and love instead of fear and aggression.

So how do we arrive at this blessed abode? An Ubuntu story? Here are three more story signpost writers:

To remain vibrant throughout a lifetime we must always be inventing ourselves, weaving new themes into our life narratives, remembering our past, re-visioning our future, re-authorising the myth by which we live. (*Sam Keen and Ann Valley Fox*)

Why stories? Because stories are origins and origins are places that we walk out from. Because stories have many feet and travel several roads at once... because the story conjures the invisible. (*Deena Metzger*)

Ever since I heard my first love story I started looking for you (*Rumi*)

So the seventh story talks of shared origins, reinvention and searching.

May we activate such 'Us' stories in a new decade

Dorian