



Creative Wordshops

Dorian Haarhoff

082 873 6802

dorianhaa@gmail.com

www.dorianhaarhoff.com

storyteller facilitator speaker writing-coach poet

Writing Letter

Nov 2024

re-story, re-create, re-imagine you

for this letter, a weekly story and ongoing opportunities - dorianhaarhoffblog.co.za

Dear writer, storyteller, reader, lover of words, images, silences...

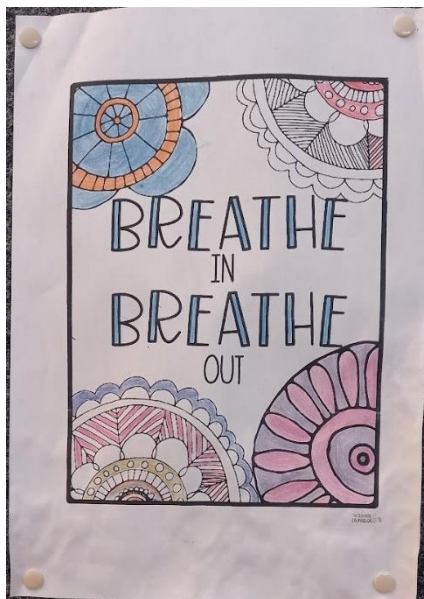
Thank you for those who subscribe to the monthly letter and/or who receive the weekly Sat story. While the letter and story remain as a gift to all, for those who wish, I'd appreciate any voluntary donation for the year (Aug 2024- July 2025.)

Dr R D Haarhoff Standard Bank Current account 0828 59 248

The Trilemma of I, Us and No-self

God, whose love and joy are present everywhere, can't come to visit you unless you aren't there. (Angelus Silesius)

Someone knocks on God's door. Who's there? God calls. *It is I.* Go away says God. Puzzled, the person knocks a second time. *Who's there? Let us in.* God flings wide the door. Is this what the mystic Angelus Silesius hints at? Or St Paul's *I live yet not I but Christ liveth within me?*



This month I touch on what has intrigued mystics, philosophers and poets across millennia - and now neuroscientists. The paradox, ambiguity and illusion of the first-person singular. Their insights allude to how we spend a lifetime thinking with and about the I when there isn't one. Knotting the rope that binds. Creating a theatre of the absurd.

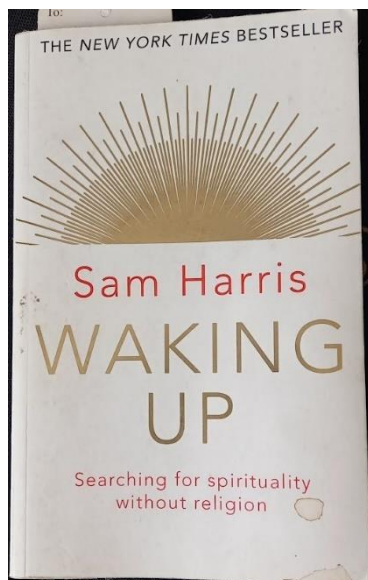
What of Decartes' *I think therefore I am?* A friend suggested this is putting the cart before the horse. Is it not *Thinking sets up an illusionary I am?* What of Plato's cave where chained beings see flickering firelight shadows as reality? What

does writer Ray Bradbury mean with his *I do not write the other me,*

demands emergence constantly? I offer but a few sparse questions about this conundrum.

Perhaps the Spanish poet, Juan Ramon Jimenez, can be our guide:

I am not I. I am this one
walking beside me whom I do not see,
whom at times I manage to visit,
and whom at other times I forget;
who remains calm and silent while I talk,
and forgives, gently, when I hate,
who walks where I am not,
who will remain standing when I die.



Sam Harris, in *Waking Up* (also a fine app) spells out one of the paths: "There is something degraded and degrading about many of our habits of attention as we shop, gossip, argue and ruminate our way to the grave. I spend much of my waking life in a neurotic trance. My experiences in meditation suggest...that an alternative exists. It is possible to stand free of the juggernaut of self, if only for a moment in time."

Harris quotes Rumi: "One day, you will find yourself outside this world, which is like a mother's womb. You will leave this earth to enter while you are yet in the body, a vast expanse, and know that the words 'God's earth is vast' name this religion from which the saints have come."

(Harris) "Most cultures have produced men and women who have found that certain deliberate acts, uses of attention, meditation, yoga, prayer, can transform their perception of the world.... Ceaseless change is an unreliable basis for lasting fulfillment. Realizing this, many people begin to wonder whether a deeper source of wellbeing exists. Is there a form of happiness beyond the mere repetition of pleasure and avoidance of pain?... Is it possible to be happy before anything happens, before one's desires are gratified in spite of life's difficulties. ... If there exists a source of psychological well-being that does not depend merely upon gratifying one's desires, then it should be present even when all the usual sources of pleasure have been removed."

"Leaving aside the metaphysics, mythology and sectarian dogma, what

contemplatives throughout history have discovered is that there is an alternative to being continuously spellbound by the conversation ... with ourselves. There is an alternative to simply identifying with the next thought that pops into consciousness and glimpsing this alternative dispels the conventional illusion of self." Harris also mentions the paradox in the prison where solitary confinement is the ultimate punishment when you're deprived of other people.

How do we separate ourselves from the mind movie- too often a B Hollywood one? This I wrote some 12 years ago:



The Face of Meditation

there is something
of the death mask
in this sitting still
before the wick of
candle flicker.

fingers of air
scent and shape it,
imprint the cheeks
eyebrows, forehead and chin
with furrows of the fall.

lips rest with each other
like lovers silent, abed.
lines round the eyes show.
the journey of bow and arrow
and the journey's end.

the blood and breath retreat,
asleep beneath the skin.
the archer peels back
the mask and places it
in the museum of memory.

the face shows now
the one before we
were born. becomes
in a personal farewell
at last translucent.

A joy to meet Tim Freke (*The Jesus Mysteries* et al) in Boulder and Cape Town years back. His take is a constant two-step shift between the One and the Two. Unity and Separation. And what of Rumi's drop in the ocean that contains the ocean - the hologram?

One of the fine word-play rhymes in English is 'I' and 'Eye - which leads me to William Blake: *He ever will perceive a lie who looks at truth with, not through the eye. Perhaps an adaptation? He/she ever will perceive a lie who looks at truth, privileging the I.*

So who is thinking this bombardment of 'I' thoughts? Dorian

000

Writing Retreat Radar -Summer 2024

detailed flyers on request

1. Magic Carpet Writers (Somerset West)

last Wed of the month writeaway

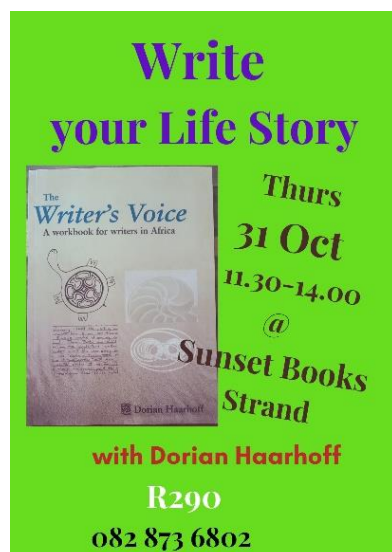
a fun-loving supportive thinking/being group of aspirant writers (full)

2. ZenPen Retreat (Groot Marico)

25 -29 Oct 2024 **Writing, Being & Meditation**

<https://tararokpacentre.co.za/event/zenpen-writing-being-and-meditation/>

014 503 8901



**Write
your Life Story**

*The
Writer's Voice*
A workbook for writers in Africa

Thurs
31 Oct
11.30-14.00
@
**Sunset Books
Strand**

with **Dorian Haarhoff**

R290

082 873 6802

3. Sunset Books Strand: Write your life story as a gift as a legacy 31 Oct

4. The 7th Writeaway

Writer's Retreat
writeaway in
Pringle Bay





15-17 Nov
swim in
a sea
of words
10
places
with writer & mentor R990
Dorian @ Selfology
082 873 6802 for flyer

in Pringle Bay

5.

Story
time
R30



create a tale
with Dorian
Sat 2 Nov 11.30-12.15
@ Menucha Pring Bay
5-95 welcome

6. Mentoring: ongoing one-on-one attention

You help me to sound like myself (numerous clients)

Like a pair of sandals we walk this road together. Taking in the view. Mentoring involves finding out where you want to go with your writing/story telling/work/life and encouraging you get to there.