

Searching for a New Story:

1. Choosing Our Adventure

Making theHouse Ready for the Lord
Mary Oliver

Dear Lord, I have swept and I have washed but
Still nothing is as shining as it should be
for you. Under the sink, for example, is an
uproar of mice—it is the season of their
many children. What shall I do? And under the eaves
and through the walls the squirrels
have gnawed their ragged entrances—but it is the season
when they need shelter, so what shall I do? And
the raccoon limps into the kitchen and opens the cupboard
while the dog snores, the cat hugs the pillow;
what shall I do? Beautiful is the new snow falling
in the yard and the fox who is staring boldly
up the path, to the door. And still I believe you will
come, Lord: you will, when I speak to the fox
the sparrow, the lost dog, the shivering sea-geese, know
that really I am speaking to you whenever I say,
as I do all morning and afternoon: Come in, Come in.

come in. come in.

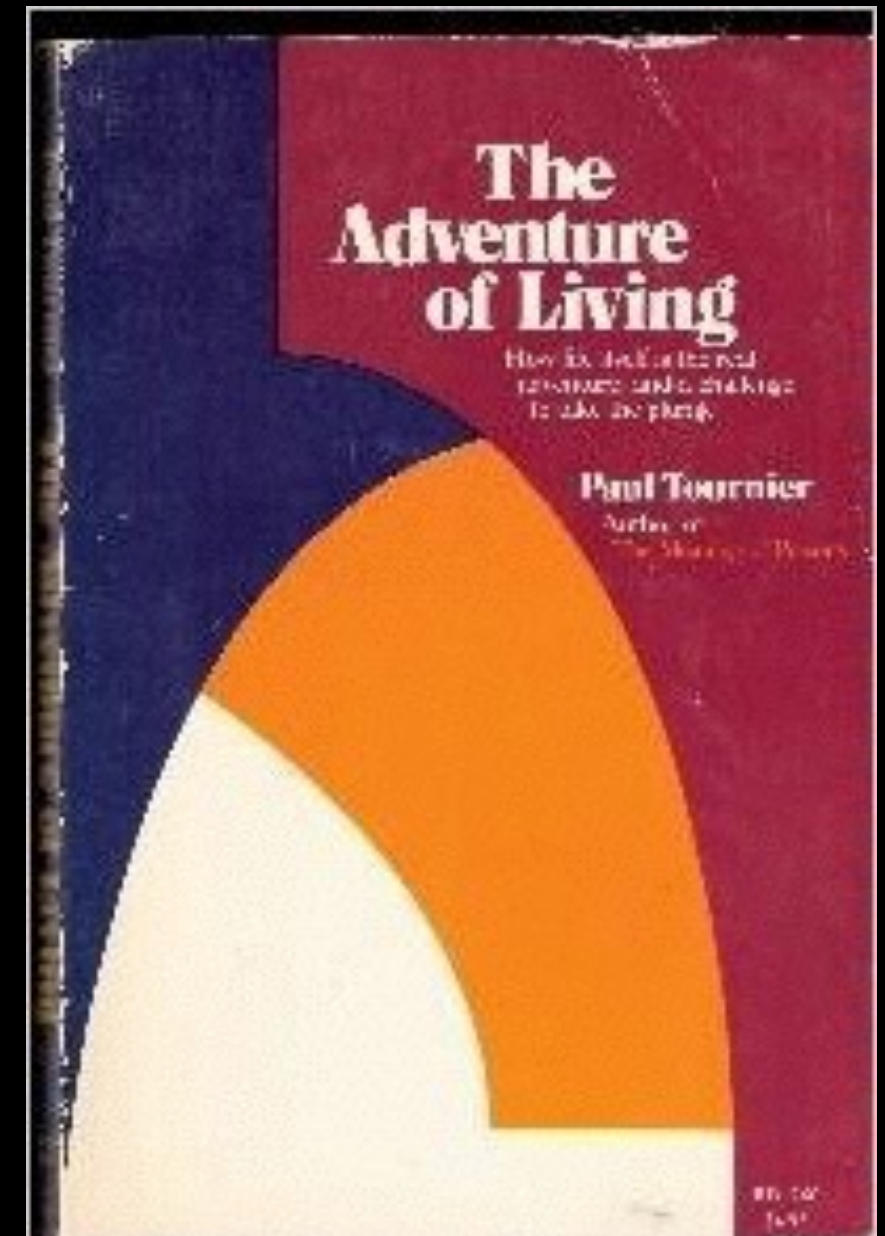
a heart of spiritual receptivity ... the
portal to spiritual formation.





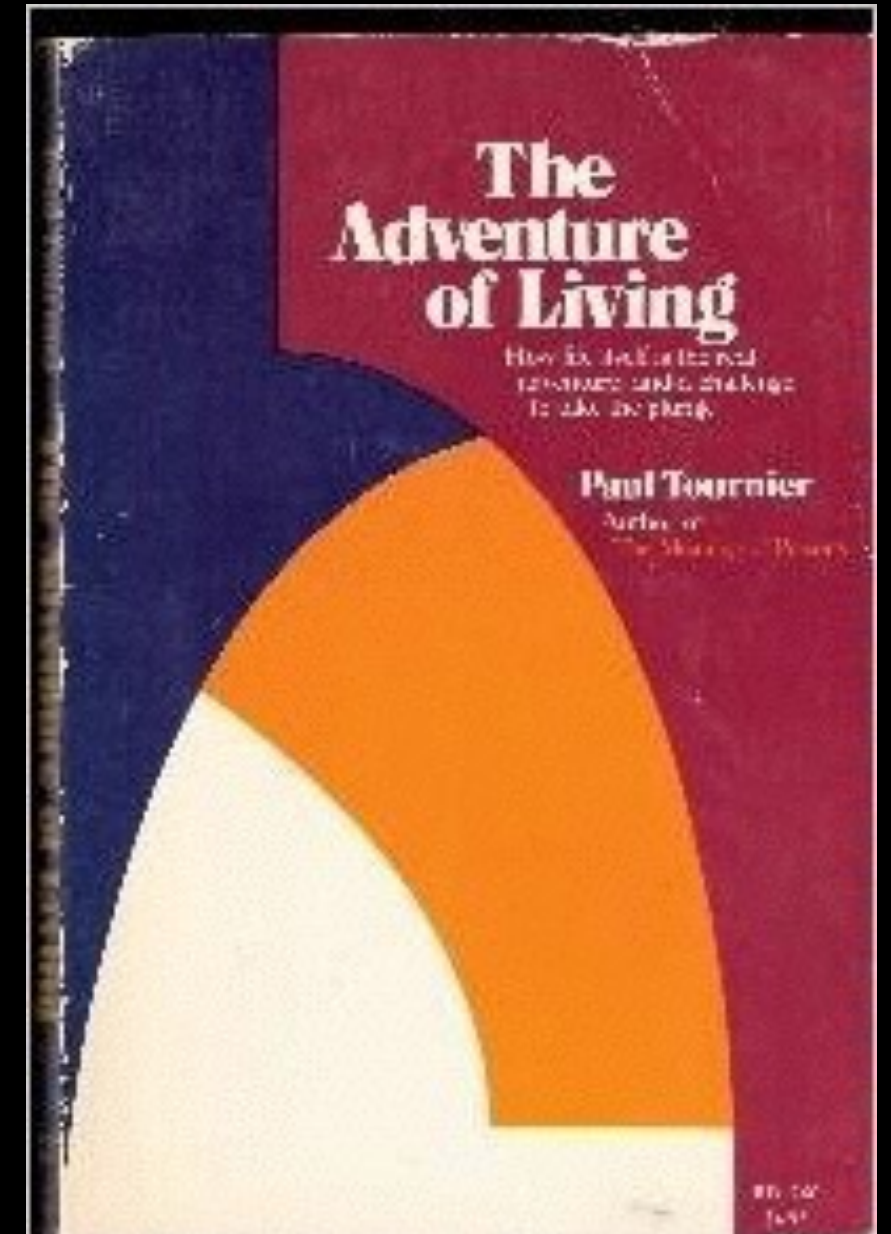
Paul Tournier, "The Adventure of Living"

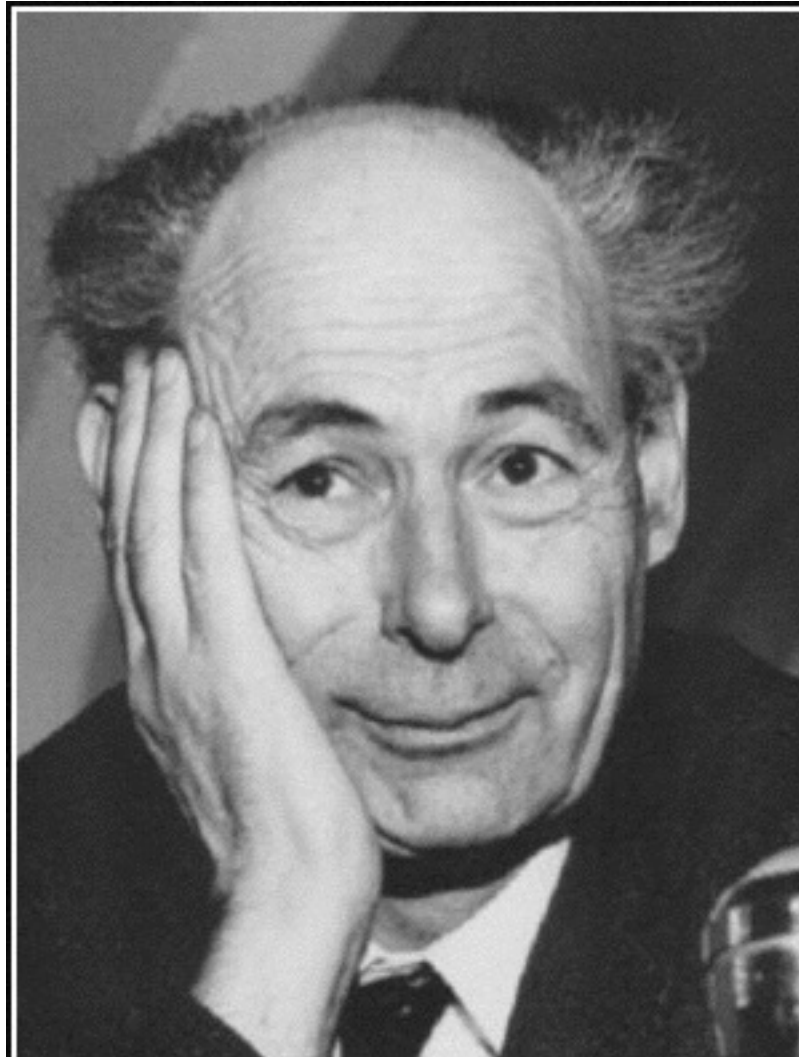
One of the most important books in my life.



Paul Tournier, "The Adventure of Living"

We live for adventure.





Everything that is worthwhile in life is scary. Choosing a school, choosing a career, getting married, having kids - all those things are scary. If it is not fearful, it is not worthwhile.

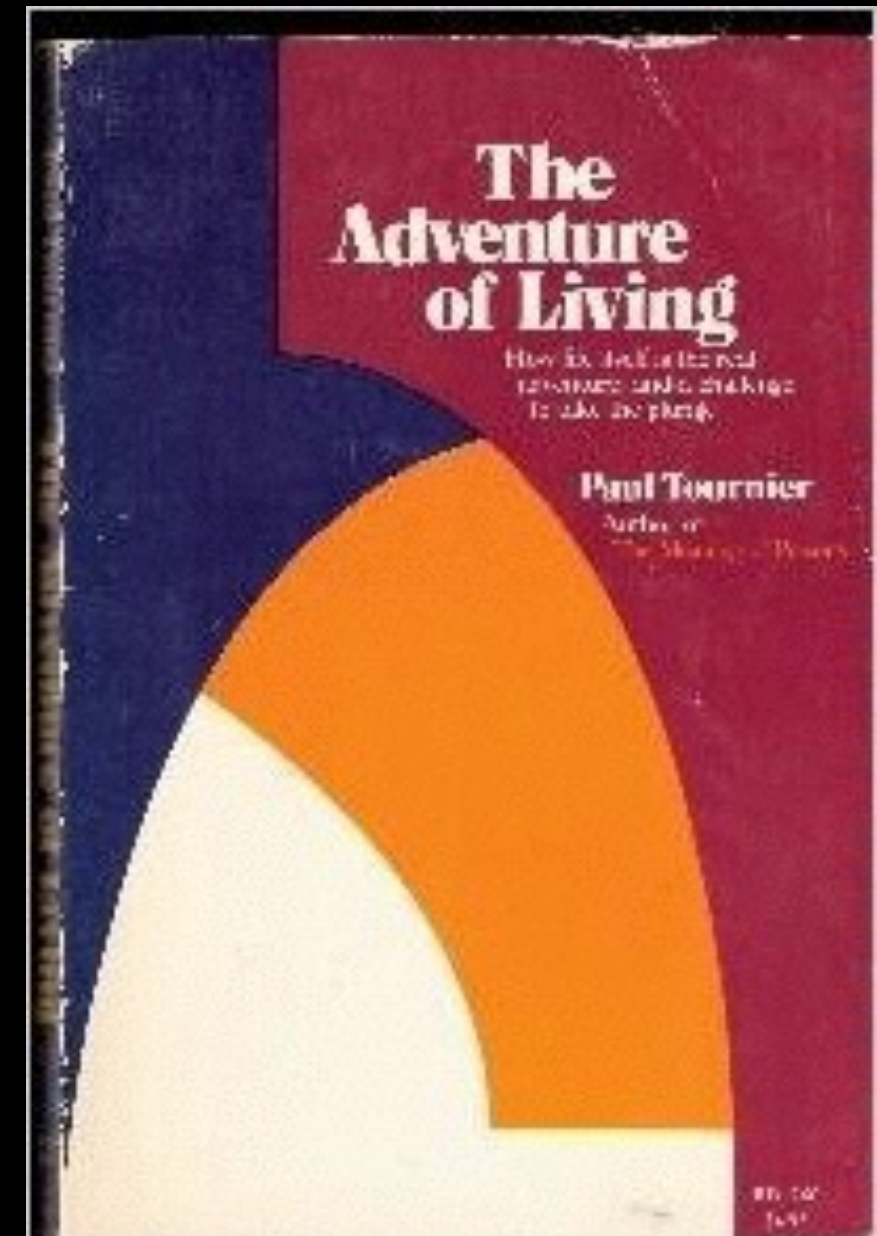
— *Paul Tournier* —

Paul Tournier, "The Adventure of Living"

We live for adventure.

A love of facing fear ...

A love of risking failure ...



If there had been no fear of failure, neither would there be any joy in success.

Where there is no longer any opportunity for doubt, there is no longer any opportunity for faith either.



Adventure happens in the experience of being in between-between the time we leave home and arrive at our destination; between the time we leave adolescence and arrive at adulthood; between the time we leave doubt and arrive at faith. It is like the time when a trapeze artist lets go the bars and hangs in midair, ready to catch another support: it is a time of danger, of expectation, of uncertainty, of excitement, or extraordinary aliveness.





Why do I love this?
alligators, lightning, sunburn, sweat, mosquitoes,
getting lost, expense, exertion, failure, mistakes
... no pay!



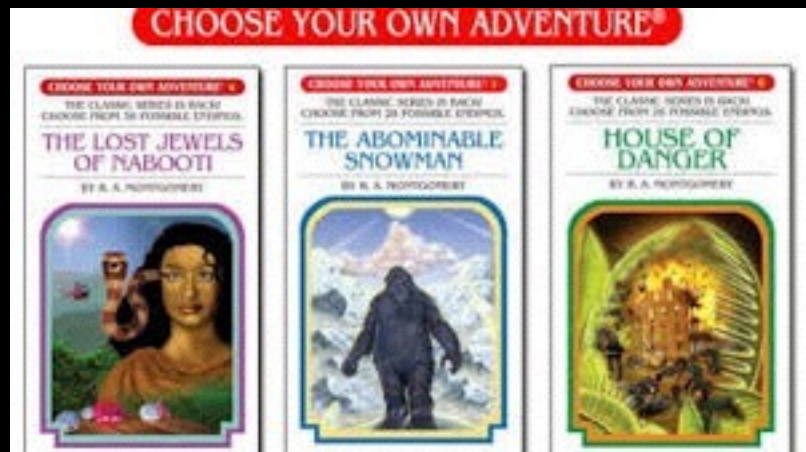
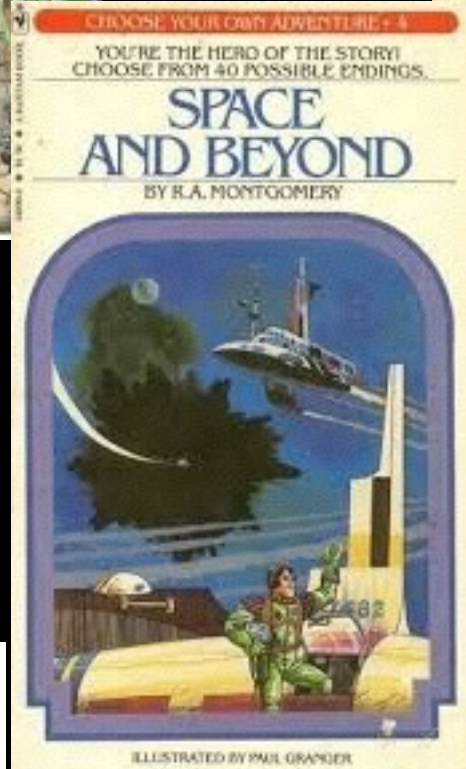
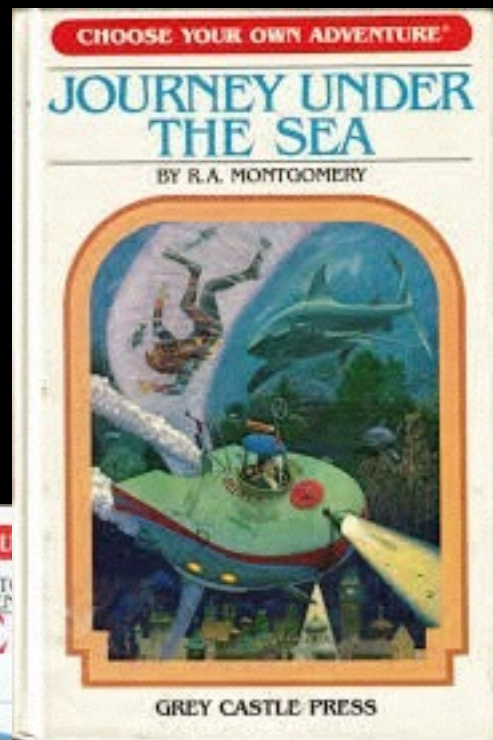
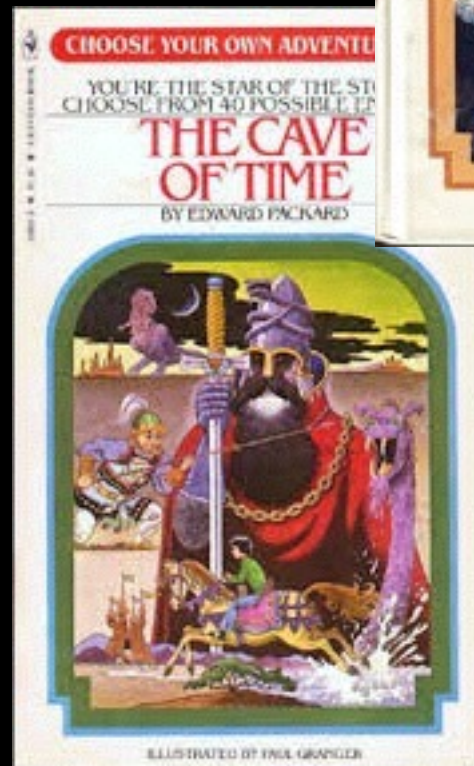
G.K. Chesterton, “An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered.”

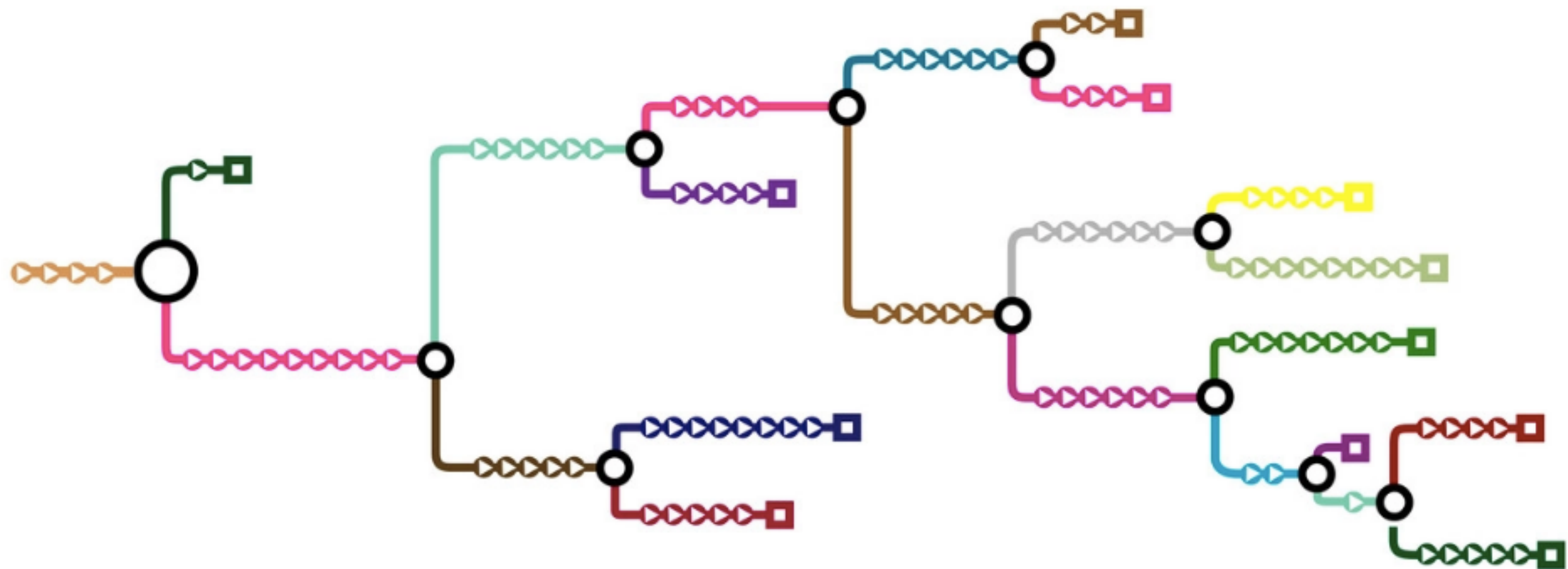
We live by adventures ...

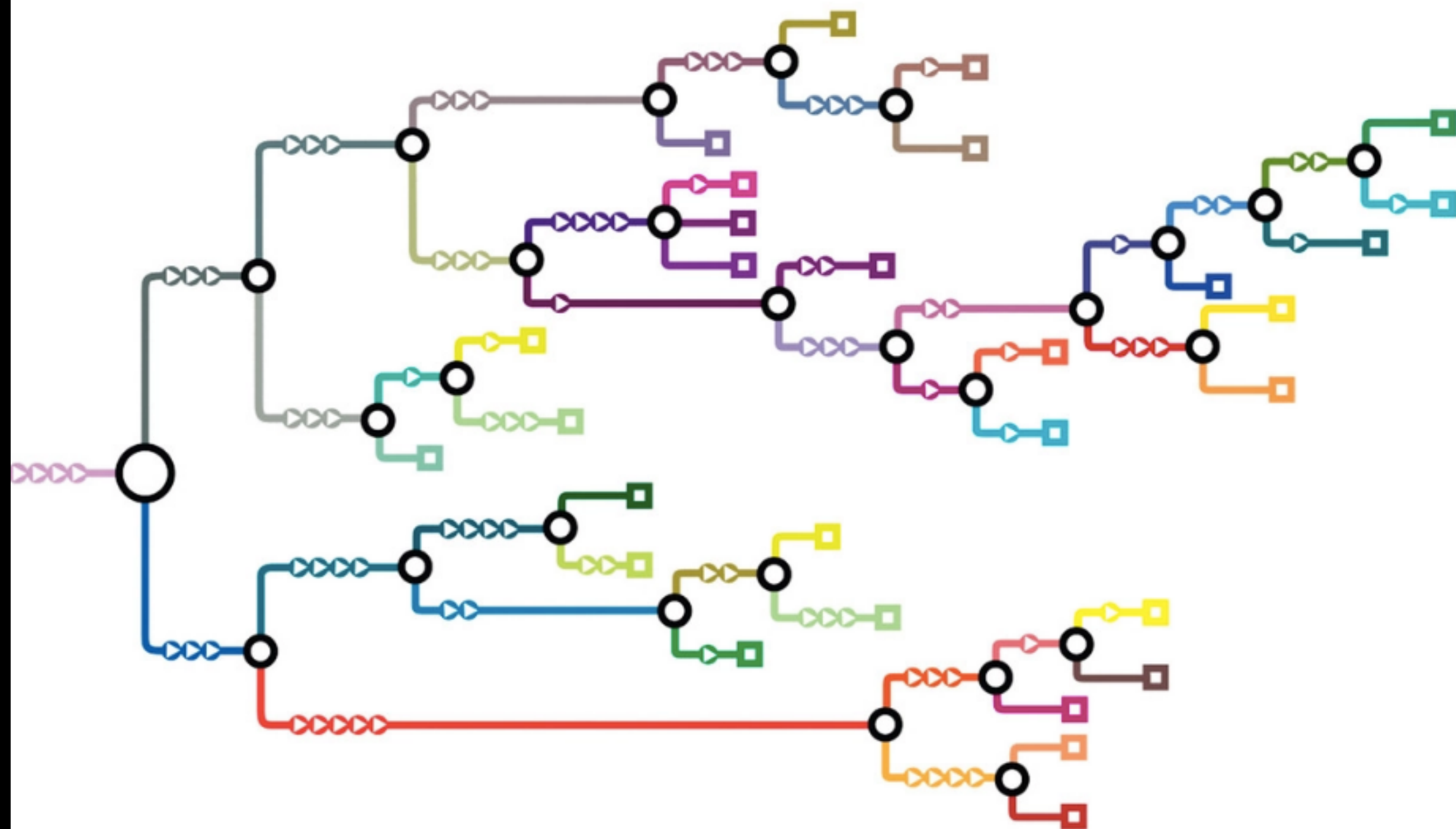
as individuals
as communities and nations
as religions
as civilizations

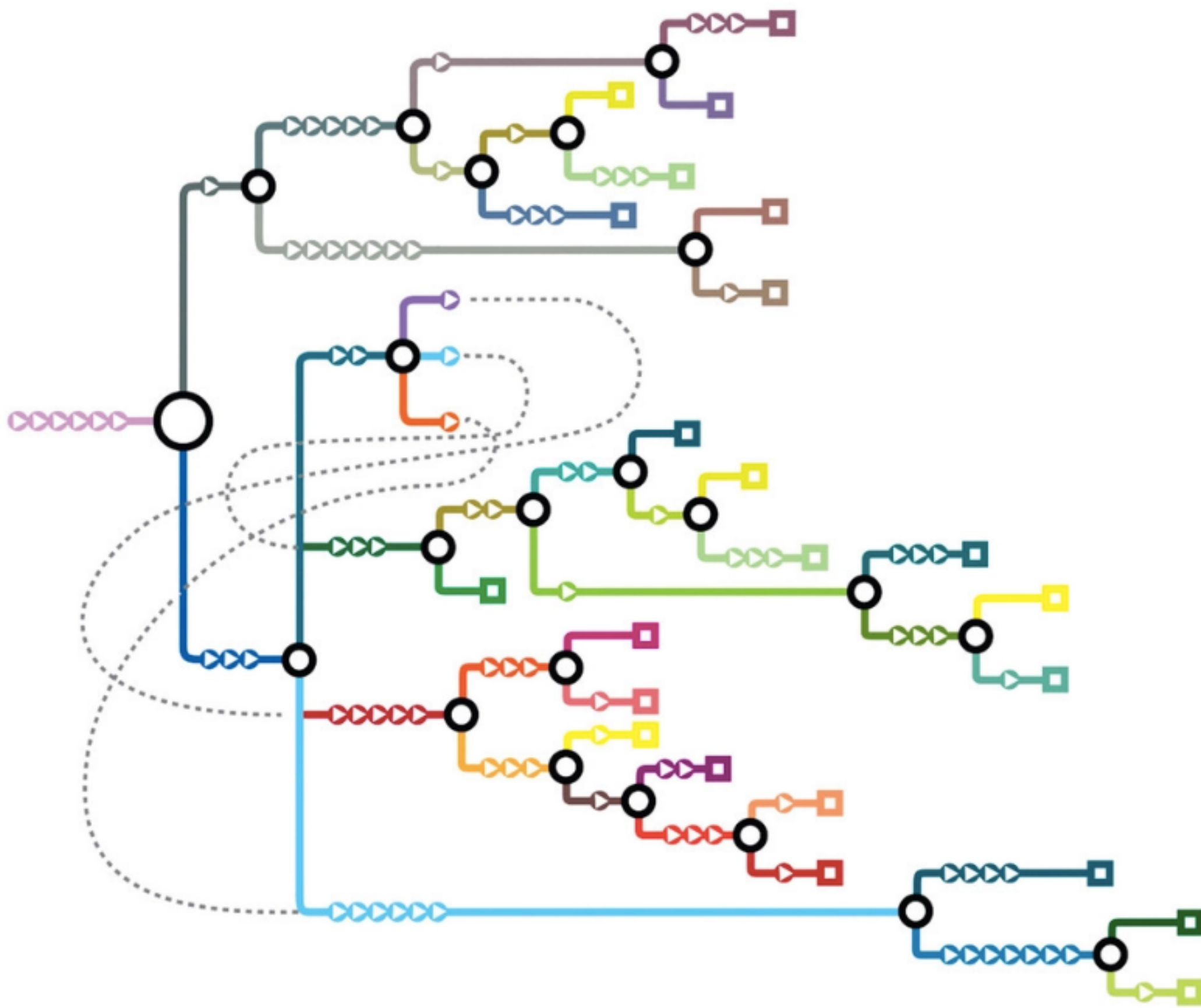
When we lack adventure,
we fail to flourish.

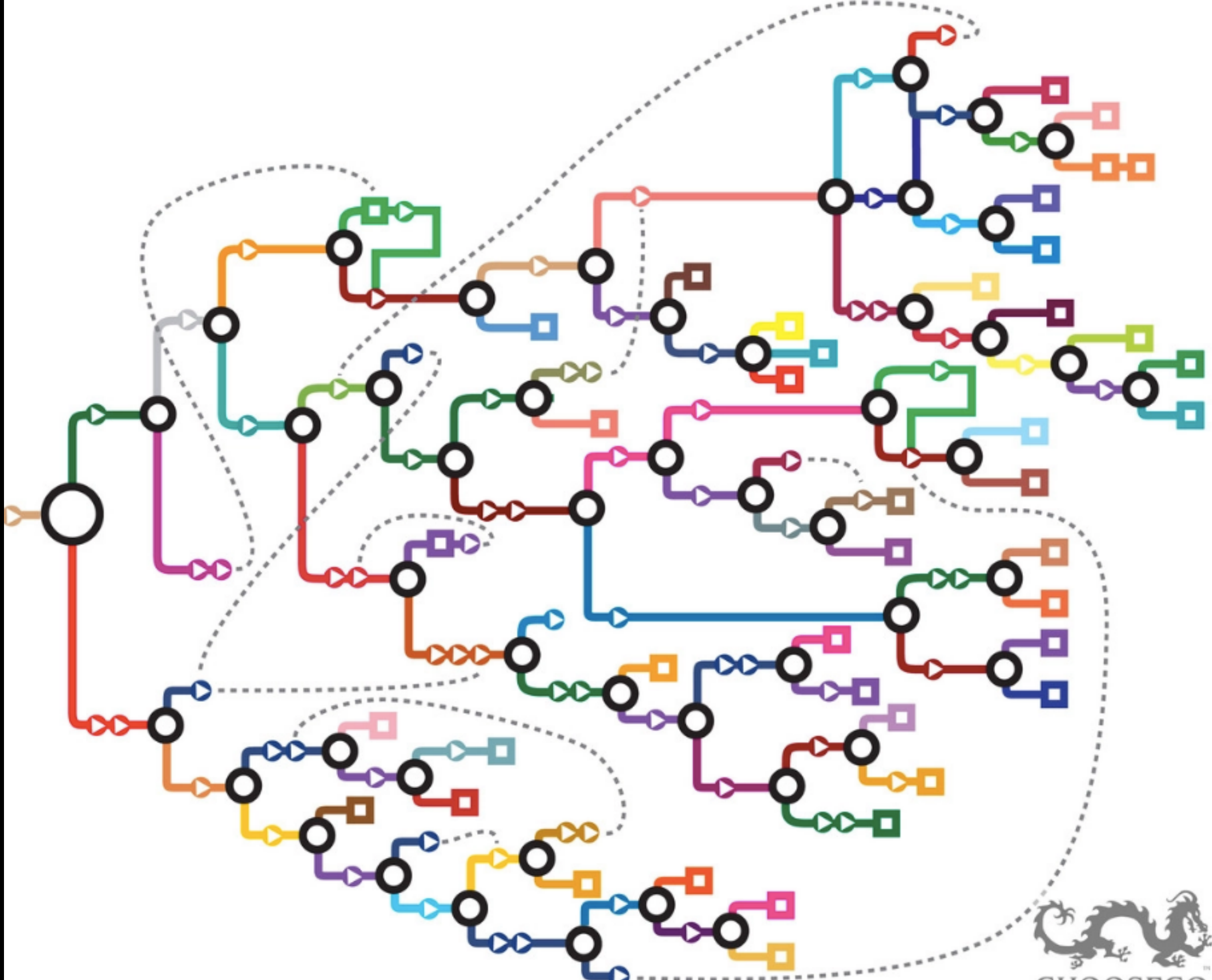
The wrong adventure for the wrong time or setting can
be self-destructive.











Our adventures are our stories. They connect the events of our lives in a meaningful flow. They tend to follow certain patterns. They are an act of interpretation.

- like a physical disease
- like a mental/emotional illness

What makes a good interpretation/diagnosis?

A man had a son who found a horse.

I saw a woman jump off a cliff.

A certain man had two sons.

to repent:

to rethink our story,
or to have second thoughts about it,
and
to choose a new story to live by
as individuals
as collectives

Stories matter.

Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity. . .

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



“The single story creates stereotype
and the problem with stereotype is
not that they are untrue but that they
are incomplete, they make one story
become the only story”

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



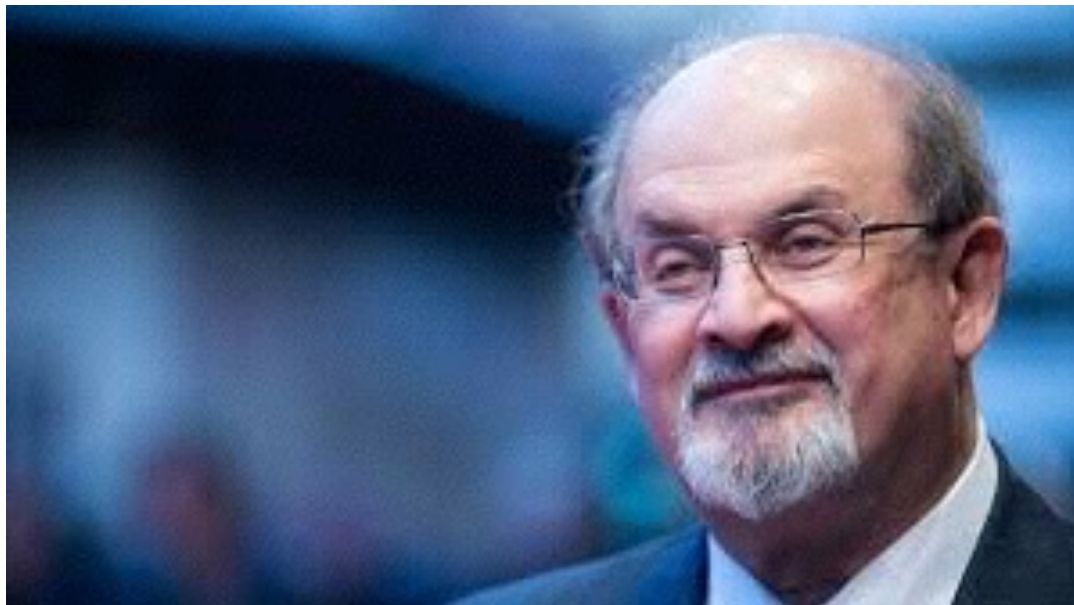
Wirelesshogan



The Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti writes that if you want to dispossess a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story and to start with, “secondly.” Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British and you have an entirely different story.

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

“Those who do not have power over the story that dominates their lives - the power to retell it, rethink it, deconstruct it, joke about it, and change it as times change - truly are powerless, because they cannot think new thoughts.”



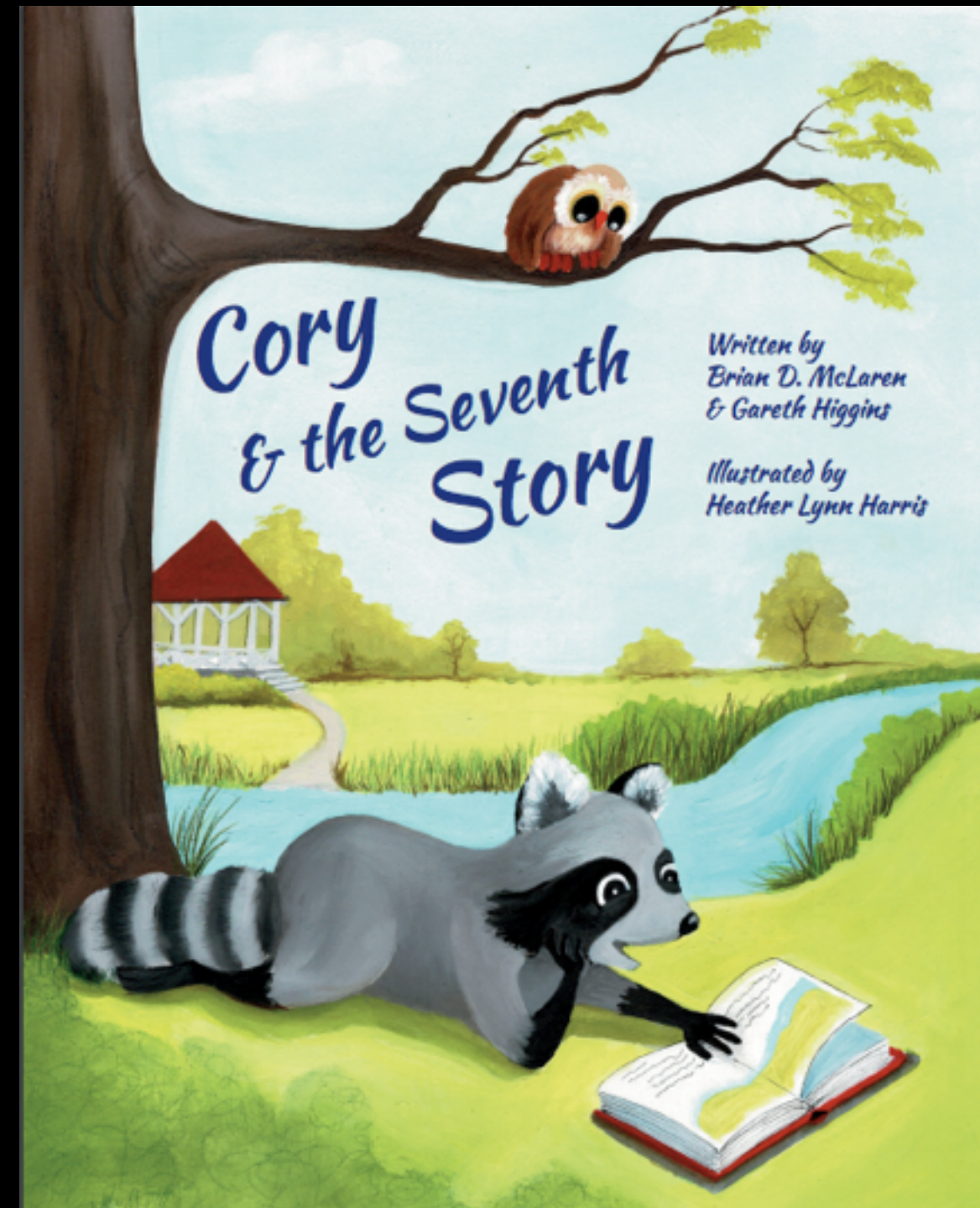
- Salman Rushdie

In groups of 3 or 4:

What observation or reflection can you offer
about a story you are part of - your own,
your family, your church or denomination,
your profession, your nation?

Tomorrow - another take on seven basic stories

1. Domination
2. Revolution
3. Purification
4. Isolation
5. Accumulation
6. Victimization
7. ???



Searching for a New Story:

1. Choosing Our Adventure

Searching for a New Story:

2. In search of a seventh story



Cory & the Seventh Story

*Written by
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& Gareth Higgins*

*Illustrated by
Heather Lynn Harris*

*There once was
a young raccoon
named Cory.*

Cory lived in the Old Village, along the clear stream, near the deep forest, within the broad meadow.

Cory loved stories. Stories about long ago . . . stories about today . . . stories about someday in the future. Most of all, Cory loved stories that end "happily ever after."

Every morning, Cory woke up full of excitement for the day's adventures: climbing trees, crossing creeks, and exploring new places with Owl, Cory's best friend.





One day, Cory went on a walk through the Old Village.

Owl, as usual, flew along.

The young raccoon saw Fox and Badger fighting. They snarled and screeched. They scratched and bit. Finally, Fox ran away in defeat, and Badger turned to Cory.

"You like stories, so here is mine," he growled. "Fox had a shiny object. I wanted it, so I took it. Now everyone will be afraid of me, so I can take whatever I want. I'll take over Old Village just like our ancestors did when they pushed the first residents away. I will rule by tooth and claw over the Old Village and I will live happily ever after!"

From that day forward, Badger started pushing everyone around to get his own way. He took whatever he wanted.

Everyone in the Old Village was afraid of him and very, very sad. "Poor us!" they said. "Life is so unfair!"

"Who, who, who will help us?" cried Owl.





The next day, Cory saw Fox whispering to her friend, Weasel.

"What are you talking about?" Cory asked.

"We have a plan," Weasel whispered. "We are going to get revenge on that bad Badger!"

Fox and Weasel quickly formed a mob of angry neighbors. Then they marched through town looking for Badger.

When they found Badger, they surrounded him. Soon the sounds of fighting, yelling, scratching, punching, growling, whacking, and snapping echoed through the Old Village. When the fight was over, Fox and Weasel were in power.

From that day forward, Badger had to do whatever Fox and Weasel said.

"Our enemy is defeated!" Fox and Weasel shouted with joy. "Now we will live happily ever after!"





Fox and Weasel were no better than Badger. They ruled the Old Village by tooth and claw. They made everyone afraid and took whatever they wanted. Nobody felt safe.

"Different rulers, but the same danger!" Owl said to Cory. "Who, who, who will help us?"

Just then, Rabbit hopped, skipped, and jumped up to Cory and Owl. She ran fast circles around them as she spoke in her high-pitched voice. "The Old Village is a mess!" she said. "There's fighting and trouble everywhere!"

Then she stopped suddenly, perking up her ears. "I know what to do," she said, speaking very quickly. "Whenever there's danger, run away fast!"

So Rabbit sped away to share her idea with others. "Hurry! Let's go!" she said.

She convinced many neighbors to run away with her. They hopped, flew, jumped, and scampered through the broad meadow and crossed over the clear stream. They built a new neighborhood on the other side. They even put up a great big wall to keep everyone else out.

"Now we will live happily ever after!" Rabbit squealed.





A few weeks later, Cory and Owl went to visit them.

"What's new? What's your story?" Cory asked. "Are you living happily ever after?"

"No, no, no, we're not happy at all!" Rabbit said. "We moved to a new place, but we brought our old stories with us!"

"Some of us are acting like Badger, ruling over others. Some are acting like Fox and Weasel, making plans to overthrow the rulers. Now we are even worse off than before, trapped behind this great big wall! Life is so unfair!" Rabbit said, hardly taking a breath.

Then she blinked three times, and a big tear formed in her right eye and moved slowly down her face. "We jumped from one mess into another! What can we do now?" Rabbit asked, her lips quivering.

"Maybe you should come back to the Old Village with us," Cory said. "Then we can work on our problems together."

Rabbit's eyes brightened. She jumped up, hopped away, and quickly convinced the others to return to the Old Village.





When they arrived, Old Skunk was standing on a stump, giving a speech to a crowd in Old Village Square.

"You know what's wrong with this village?" Old Skunk asked. "We have been invaded by animals who don't fit in! Normal folks in this village have fur or feathers, but the invaders are different. They have . . . yucky scales or slimy skin!"

Nobody had noticed this before. They shoved Turtle, Lizard, Snake, and Frog into the center of the circle in front of Old Skunk.

He pointed a sharp claw at them and growled.

Soon everyone was pointing at them, laughing at them, and making jokes about the way they looked.

"Don't you think Old Village would be a better place if we cleaned it up and got those dirty, disgusting invaders out of here?" Old Skunk snarled.

Suddenly, the crowd started shoving Turtle, Lizard, Snake, and Frog to the edge of town. "This is OUR Village," the crowd shouted. "You're not welcome here anymore!"





Turtle, Lizard, Snake, and Frog were surprised and hurt to see their neighbors reject them. They escaped into the deep forest to hide. "Life is so unfair!" they whispered, partly to themselves and partly to each other.

Cory was upset. He walked up to Old Skunk and said, "Why were you so mean to our neighbors?"

"When people are worried or afraid," Old Skunk hissed, "you just have to give them somebody different to blame for their problems. If they call somebody else dirty or bad, they will feel clean and good. If they hurt somebody who won't hurt them back, they will feel very powerful, important, and safe. It works every time."

"But that's wrong!" Cory said.

Old Skunk stepped back and looked at Cory from head to toe. He said, "Have you ever noticed that most folks in this village don't have a mask or a ringed tail?"

Old Skunk showed his sharp teeth, and Cory wasn't sure if he was smiling or snarling.





The next day, Cory went for a walk and noticed something really strange. Almost everyone was wearing baggy gray coats. And nobody smiled and said hello. They just walked quickly down the street, looking as if they were in a hurry . . . and a little bit worried.

When Porcupine walked by, Cory stopped him.

"What's going on here?" Cory asked. "Why are you covering up what makes you special?"

Porcupine looked around nervously and then whispered, "I don't want Old Skunk to see my quills. I'm afraid he will laugh at me and then I will have to go hide in the forest. Skunk has ruined everything for everyone. Now we will have to wear these ugly coats for the rest of our lives. There's nothing we can do about it." He shook his head and rushed quickly away.

Cory's neighbors lived in a gray world of sameness and fear. "Life is so unfair!" they cried, feeling very sorry for themselves.

"Who, who, who will help us?" Owl asked.

That's when Badger remembered something.

He remembered how happy he was when he first stole the shiny object from Fox. He went to talk to her.

"We could make everyone happy," he said, "if we sold everyone shiny objects! And we could get very rich too!"

So Badger and Fox built a shiny object factory. Soon everybody in the Old Village was buying shiny objects. They wore shiny objects as jewelry. They played with shiny objects as toys. They put shiny objects on their houses and used them to decorate their baggy gray coats.

"Who has the most shiny objects?" Mouse asked.

"Who has the biggest shiny object?" Deer wondered.

"Who has the most money from making and selling shiny objects to everyone?" Fox and Badger asked, laughing, because they knew the answer.

After that, Cory heard neighbors telling shiny object stories everywhere. "Just a few more shiny objects," they said, "and we will live happily ever after!"

Cory wanted to believe them. But, looking around, Cory didn't feel happy.





Badger and Fox cut down many beautiful trees to burn as fuel for their shiny object factory.

The smokestacks filled the air with smelly gray smoke.

The shiny object factory dumped dirty water onto the ground, and it flowed into the clear stream where the fish and tadpoles lived.

Whenever there was a sports event or a concert, someone would interrupt with annoying shiny object commercials.

And ugly SHINY OBJECTS! BIG SALE! signs were popping up everywhere.





*Cory walked alone
to the clear stream to sit
by the water and think.*

"We are in trouble," Cory thought. "Our stories are failing us. No one will live happily ever after in a world like this."

Owl flew over to perch in a nearby tree.

They didn't say a word as they watched the water flow by and listened to its gentle music.





Cory leaned over, looked down into the clear water, and saw a sad raccoon face looking back.

Suddenly, another face appeared.

It was a large face with big brown eyes, a majestic creature that Cory had never seen before.

"Wh-wh-what are you?" Cory asked, still staring at the reflection in the water. "Are you a monster?"

"I am a horse. My name is Swift."



With that, Swifthorse bent down to take a drink from the clear stream, just inches away from Cory.

Cory's head slowly turned to take in the amazing creature: her pointed ears, her long sleek neck, her tall shoulders, her strong legs, her wide back, her coffee-brown coat, her long, flowing black tail.

"I've never seen a horse before," Cory said. "What is your story, Swifthorse?"

"I am a poet from far away," Swifthorse said. "I travel the world seeking wisdom and beauty, and I share what I find in well-chosen words."

"I am happy to meet you," Cory said. "I need wisdom and beauty because I have a very big problem and the world feels very ugly to me right now."

Swifthorse lowered her head and pointed her ears toward the young raccoon. Their noses were almost touching.

"Tell me," she said.





"My neighbors are living by stories that will only bring fighting, tears, and trouble," Cory said.

Then Cory told Swifthorse about Badger taking power . . . Fox and Weasel taking revenge . . . Rabbit running away with some villagers . . . Old Skunk scaring away other villagers . . . Porcupine and the baggy gray coats . . . the rise of the shiny object factory . . . and all of Cory's sad neighbors who felt that life was so unfair.

For a long time, Swifthorse listened to Cory, breathing in long, slow breaths. When Cory finished speaking, Owl called out from the tree above them. You know what she said.

"Who, who, who will help us?"

Swifthorse said, "Maybe it's time for you to look within for the help you need. I have a plan. Climb on my back, and I will explain."

Cory scampered up the tree and dropped onto Swifthorse's back, and Owl joined Cory there. As they trotted along, Swifthorse shared her plan.





When they reached Old Village Square, a crowd quickly gathered because no one had ever seen a creature so large and so beautiful as Swifthorse.

"Let's have a special meal in honor of our special guest," Cory said. "Let's set up a big round table, and let's all bring our favorite food to share. But please, everyone, please leave your shiny objects at home."

While their neighbors prepared the special meal, Cory and Owl rode Swifthorse out into the deep forest. They found Turtle, Lizard, Snake, and Frog and invited them home. As the sun was setting, they returned to the Old Village, riding on Swifthorse's back.

They saw the big round table full of delicious food. Cory gave the furless, featherless neighbors the places of greatest honor, right next to Swifthorse.

Then Cory asked everyone to take off their baggy grey coats so Swifthorse could see their beautiful, wonderful differences.

As they ate their meal, Cory's neighbors told their stories, stories from their own lives and stories from the long-ago days of their ancestors, stories of hope and joy, stories of pain and sorrow. Swifthorse listened carefully to every word.

After the meal, Cory turned to Swifthorse. "Would you recite one of your poems for us?"

She nodded her head, shook her mane, looked at each guest with her big brown eyes, and began to speak. Her gentle, strong voice sounded like a song.



*Six old stories,
wherever I go,*

The same six stories are running the show:

The story of power to dominate,

The story of striking back with fury and hate,

The story of running to find a safe place,

Or pointing at others to shame and disgrace,

Or being stuck in self-pity for the pain we've been through,

Or of me having more shiny objects than you.

These same six old stories steal freedom and laughter,

So nobody lives happily ever after. But . . .

Swifthorse began walking around the table as she continued her poem, her hooves clip-clopping to the rhythm of her words.

*There's a new Seventh Story
to live by, my friends,*

A new Seventh Story without "us against them"—

Of working for fairness in all that we do,

Of refusing to strike back when others strike you,

Of facing our problems and not running to hide,

Of not letting differences make us divide,

Of turning our pain into compassion for others,

Of not wanting more than our sisters and brothers.

The new Seventh Story that I'm speaking of

Is the story of peace, and the hero is love.



For a long, long time, there was only the sound of the wind in the trees and Swifthorse's hooves as she circled the big round table.

Swifthorse stopped walking, and spoke again: "My friends, the biggest story in the universe is the story of love growing and spreading from one heart to another. We all get to play a part in this story."

"There is no big or small, no short or tall,
No best or worst, no blessed or cursed,
No dirty or clean, no cause to be mean,
No rich or poor, no reason for war,
We have more than enough in the story of love.
Each is for all of us, and all are for each of us.
This is the wisdom this new story teaches us."

Eyes blinked and opened wide. Ears perked up, tails twitched, brows furrowed, and feathers ruffled. All around the table, faces looked surprised and curious. Smiles began to form on many faces. Swifthorse raised her head and let out a loud whinny that echoed through the streets.

Nobody had ever heard about a Seventh Story before. It sounded beautiful and wise to nearly everyone.



Except for Badger, Fox, Weasel, and Skunk. All at once, they started growling and snarling, growling and snarling.

"No! Stop! Be quiet! You're hurting our ears with your words!" they shouted. "Go back to where you came from! We like ruling over others by tooth and by claw. We like wearing our baggy grey coats! And most of all, we like making more and more money by selling more and more shiny objects. We will never, ever, EVER have enough! And we will never, ever, EVER live by your silly Seventh Story. Go away, and never come back, you big ugly donkey!"

Badger, Fox, Weasel, and Skunk started throwing leftover food at Swifthorse, and then they threw their plates and silverware too. They snarled terrible words at her. She began walking away, and then turned back, her eyes so sad, yet so full of love. In her gentle but strong voice, she said:

Drive the poet away, but this story will stay.
Long after I'm gone, the story lives on.

Her words only made them more angry. They jumped up from the table, ran toward her, and snapped at her legs. They drove her out of the village, over the broad meadow, and to the edge of the clear stream near the deep forest, snarling and growling and snapping all the way.







Nobody knows for sure what happened to Swifthorse after that. Some say they hurt her. Some say they did something even worse. Whatever happened, Swifthorse has never again been seen in the Old Village.

Since that day, Badger and Fox have been getting richer and richer, selling shiny objects. The sky is getting smoky and the stream is getting murky because of the shiny object factory. Old Skunk still says terrible things about neighbors without fur or feathers. Many feel life is very, very unfair.

But for some, Swifthorse's Seventh Story has never gone away. And change is in the air. Late in the day as the sun is setting, you can find more and more animals walking out of the Old Village to the stream to talk with Cory and Owl about the Seventh Story.

Fox even joins them sometimes.

They leave their shiny objects home. They take off their baggy gray coats and let their beautiful differences show. They recite Swifthorse's poem, and they all bring food and share a meal.

They build a glowing fire and sit in a circle around it.

After a while, Cory knows it's time to speak.





"Swifthorse was right," Cory says. "The old stories separate the Old Village into us and them."

"Us ruling over them,
us overthrowing them,
us getting away from them,
us bullying and rejecting them,
us feeling sorry for ourselves because of them, or
us having more shiny objects than them."

"But this is the truth," Cory says. "There is no *them*. We are all part of one great, big, beautiful, wonderful *us*."

"We can all choose to be a part of a healing story: the story of love. This story can set us free. This story can lead to a happy ending for everyone."

"Who, who, who will choose the Seventh Story of love?" Owl asks.

Then Cory looks each person in the eye, just as Swifthorse did, so full of love, and asks three simple questions.

"Which stories are you living by lately?
How are they working out for you?
How can we live the Seventh Story together?"

They sit around the fire and talk late into the night. ♦







Six stories are running
the show.

DOMINATION: Romans, Herodians, Sadducees

REVOLUTION: Zealots, “christs”

PURIFICATION: Pharisees, Scribes, Teachers of Law

ISOLATION: Essenes

ACCUMULATION: Wealthy Judeans, “rich”

VICTIMIZATION: Poor, sick, “sinners,” Samaritans, Galileans

the SEVENTH STORY ...

“KINGDOM OF GOD ... FAMILY OF GOD ... ABUNDANT LIFE ... LIFE OF
THE AGES ... “ - LIBERATION, RECONCILIATION

Domination: Us over them.

Storyteller/POV: Winners, powerful, elite, protectors of threatened status quo

Setting: a great empire/power structure threatened by rebels or rivals

Characters: good us vs. evil them

Conflict: rulers versus rebels

Plot: path to victory

Resolution/Theme: Us in power, them defeated, destroyed, humiliated

Revolution: Us overthrowing them.

Storyteller/POV: Outnumbered rebels with a cause

Setting: Oppressive empire/power structure

Characters: Freedom fighters versus corrupt oppressors

Conflict: Oppressive evil them vs. Freedom-loving us

Plot: violent fight for liberation, “good guys with guns,” or stones, or lasers, etc.

Resolution/Theme: Us free, them defeated, destroyed, humiliated

Purification: Us expelling them.

Storyteller/POV: Clean us threatened by dirty them

Setting: Troubled empire/nation plagued by repulsive troublemakers

Characters: Purifiers versus contagion, vermin

Conflict: Containing or eliminating the contagious infection, stopping the dangerous invasion

Plot: removal or containment of resistant or “savage” minority

Resolution/Theme: purity and health restored

Victimization: Us in spite of them.

Storyteller/POV: A beleaguered minority fighting for survival or respect

Setting: An inhospitable and oppressive nation/empire/environment

Characters: Defenders/champions of a misunderstood/mistreated minority or marginalized majority

Conflict: Quest for restored/unchallenged honor/dignity/safety

Plot: Victimizers exposed/Heroic truth revealed

Resolution/Theme: Dignity, safety, honor restored, victimizers exposed/shamed

Isolation: Us apart from them

Storyteller/POV: Refugees/exiles from an oppressive regime

Setting: wilderness/frontier quest for promised land/home

Characters: Pilgrims/pioneers/refugees seeking a safe place

Conflict: Pursuers from former home, obstacles to finding new home, cowards who want to go back

Plot: Escape, wall-building, conquest, pioneering

Resolution/Theme: new home established and celebrated

Accumulation: Us competing with them.

Storyteller/POV: People with good ideas and good work ethic seeking prosperity and independence

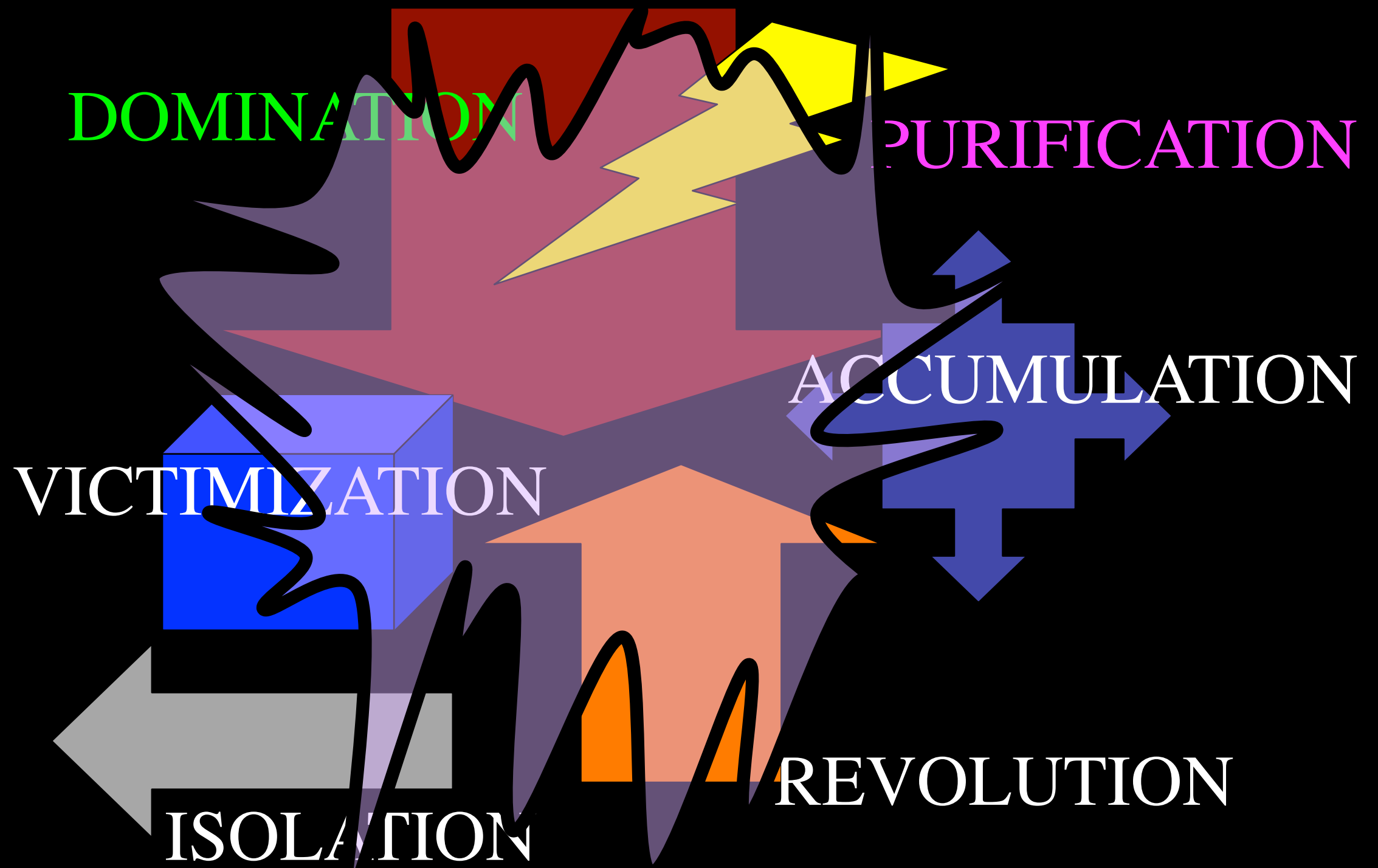
Setting: Competitive or cutthroat environment with inhospitable or corrupt elites dominating markets

Characters: Industrious entrepreneurs vs. regulators, unscrupulous competitors, lazy cheaters

Conflict: Hard work & good ideas versus market domination or corruption

Plot: Ideas, setbacks, moving toward profitability

Resolution/Theme: The universe rewards hard work, playing by rules, & good ideas. The ones with the most money, toys, land, assets win.



Six stories rule the world...

Domination: Us over them.

Revolution: Us overthrowing them.

Purification: Us expelling them.

Victimization: Us in spite of them.

Isolation: Us apart from them

Accumulation: Us competing with them.

but there's a seventh story
at work as well.

Liberation: Some of us for all of us.

Storyteller/POV: Disillusioned with dominant stories

Setting: conflicted environment suffering from six violent stories

Characters: seekers of truth, justice, freedom, peace

Conflict: not becoming the monster when resisting the monster, not losing hope/dream, overcoming destructive evil/violence with creative good/nonviolence

Plot: Inner and outer temptations, often climaxing in self-sacrifice/suffering/apparent defeat

Resolution/Theme: Wiser/better/resilient after each struggle in a never-ending quest for common good

Six stories rule the world...

Domination: Us over them.

Revolution: Us overthrowing them.

Purification: Us expelling them.

Victimization: Us in spite of them.

Isolation: Us away from them

Accumulation: Us competing with them.

In search of a seventh story ...

Liberation/Reconciliation/Restoration: Some of us for all of
us.

LIBERATION/ RECONCILIATION/
REVOLUTIONARY LOVE/COMMON GOOD

An abstract graphic design featuring the word "DOMINATION" in bright green, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The text is positioned horizontally across the upper-middle section. The background is a complex composition of geometric and organic shapes. On the left, there are large, dark, irregular shapes in black and dark purple. A thick, jagged black line curves across the upper right quadrant. Below this, a large, bright yellow lightning bolt shape points towards the bottom left. The background is filled with various shades of red, purple, and pink, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-20th-century abstract art or graphic design.



PURIFICATION



ACCUMULATION



ISOLATION

An abstract graphic featuring a purple background. In the top left corner, the letters 'ON' are written in a white, serif font. A large, light orange triangle points downwards from the top right. A thick white diagonal line cuts across the upper right portion of the image. In the bottom foreground, there are two stylized, pointed shapes with black outlines and orange interiors, resembling cat ears or abstract peaks. A dark purple rectangular shape is positioned on the left side, partially overlapping the orange triangle.

Jesus and the Seventh Story

Storyteller/POV: God is telling a story called creation (or the Big Bang/Bloom/Expansion) or “the kingdom of God”

Setting: An evolving universe moving toward beauty, diversity, community

Characters: Beloved creations, some hijacked by harmful stories

Conflict: Love of money/power/pleasure vs. love of neighbor, self, earth, God (whole)

Plot: Truth-telling, movement building ... victory through defeat

Resolution/Theme: Resurrection happens.

Searching for a New Story:

1. Choosing Our Adventure

Searching for a New Story:

2. In search of a seventh story

Searching for a New Story:

3. A Story of Adaptation and Adaptability

Searching for a New Story:

4. What future story for Christian Faith?

slides will be available

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what future story for
Christian faith?

who will be included in that story?



“Where common memory is lacking,
where people do not share in the same past,
there can be no real community.
Where community is to be formed,
common memory must be created.”
— GEORGES ERASMUS, Dene elder

In Fourteen Hundred and Ninety-Two, Columbus sailed
the ocean blue.



In Fourteen Hundred and Fifty-Two, Pope Nicholas told
European Christians what to do.

“...invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit.” - Pope Nicolas V, Romanus Pontifex, 1452-4, Doctrine of Discovery

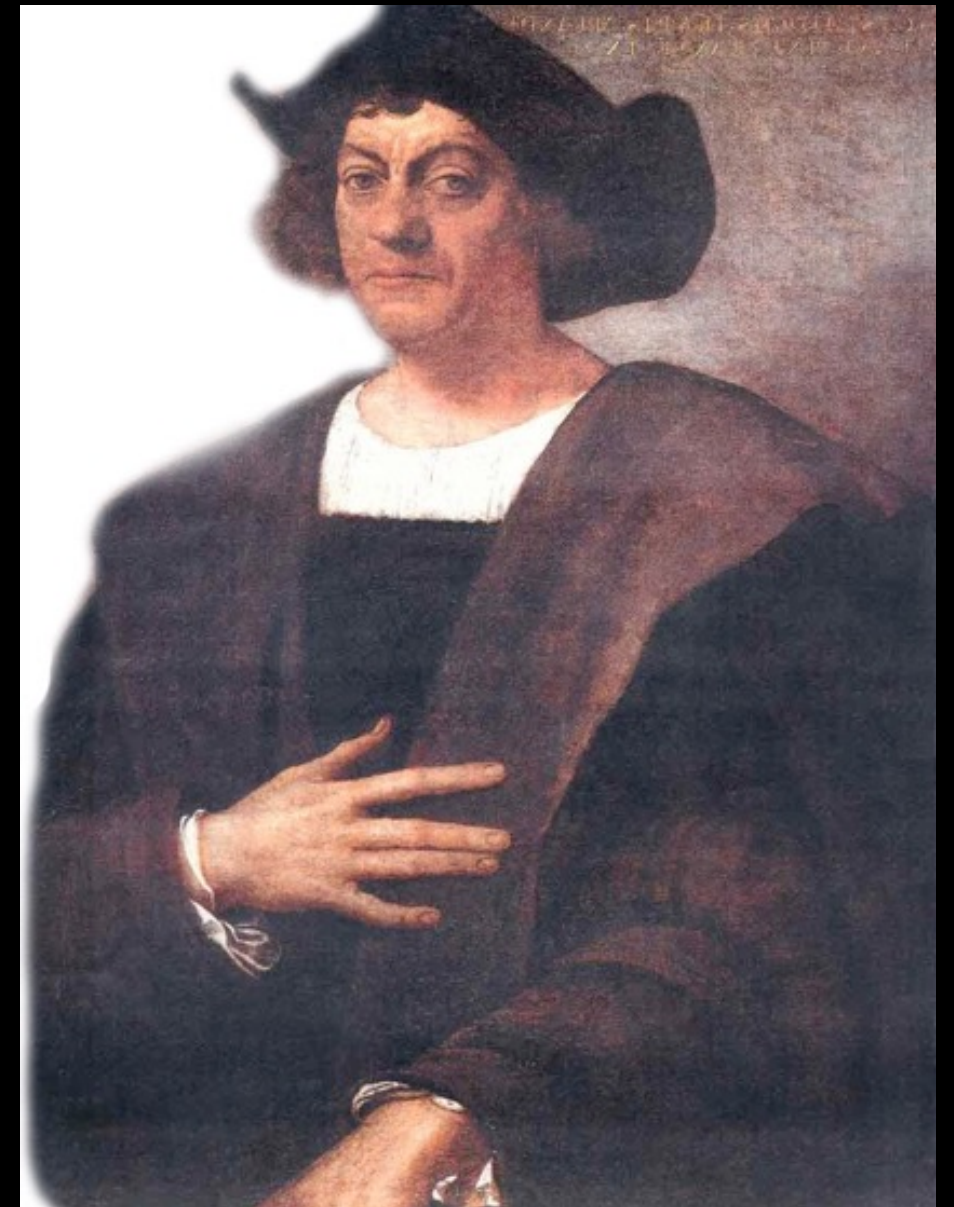




1495

2nd Voyage Return Cargo: 1600
male and female Taino slaves for
Spain

“It is possible, with the name
of the Holy Trinity, to sell all
the slaves which it is possible
to sell ... Here there are so many
of these slaves ... although they
are living things they are as
good as gold.”





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who will be included in that story?

- how can we tell the story of our past in a way that includes rather than excludes?
- who is at the table when we envision a new future story for christianity?

Will Christianity survive and thrive?
What kind of Christianity will predominate?

Why these questions are dangerous.

Optimism: Complacency

Pessimism: Resignation & adjustment

Why these questions are dangerous.

How futurists approach these questions.

Continuing trends:

Continuing decline in West,
with large reserves of money.

Possible eventual decline in Global
South.

Continuing trends: decline,
shrinking & wrinkling

Worst-case scenario(s):

Rise in White Nationalist Christianity
& Its Allies



Continuing trends:

Continuing decline in West

Worst-case scenario(s):

Rise in White Nationalist Christianity
& Its Allies

Desirable future(s):

**A new kind of Christianity ...
a global spiritual movement
rooted in Christ
for the good of the world.**

Continuing trends:

Worst-case scenario(s):

Faith that Addresses our Four Global Crises:

Planet
Poverty
Peace

Politics & Religion

How do we get there?

the seventh story ...

the kingdom of God

abundant life, life to the full, life of
the ages

family of God

the seventh story ...

in Christ

Christ in you

the way ... the way of love

the seventh story ...
afterlife AND this life
personal AND social
science AND faith
Sunday AND Monday
humans AND creation ...

The historical challenge

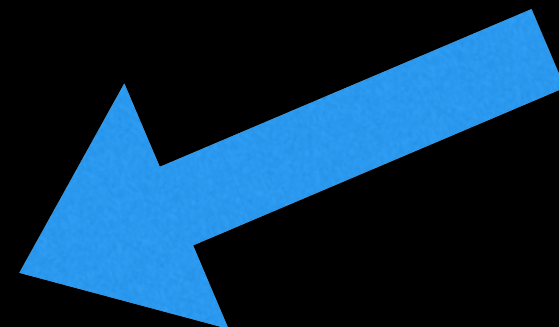
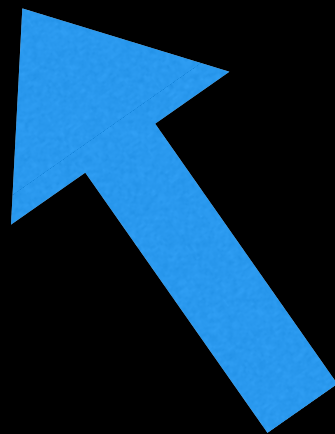
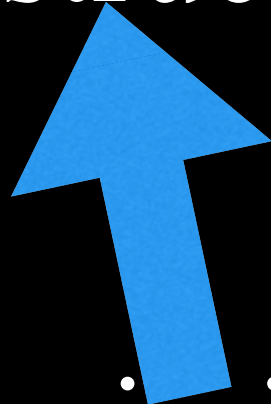
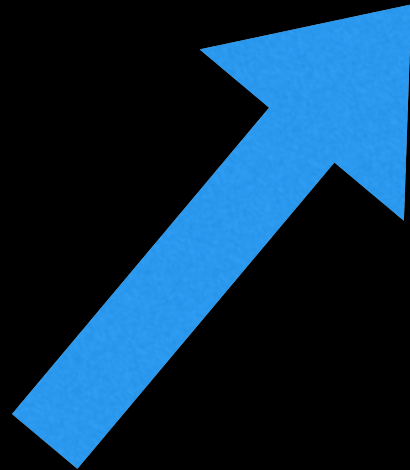
The doctrinal challenge

The structural challenge

The missional challenge

The liturgical challenge

The spiritual challenge



innovation AND imitation

central AND marginal spaces

younger AND older

which adventure?

the adventure of denial, repetition, & routine

the adventure of nostalgia, blame, & resentment

the adventure of surrender, aging, & extinction

which adventure?

the adventure of denial, repetition, & routine

the adventure of nostalgia, blame, & resentment

the adventure of surrender, aging, & extinction

the adventure of honesty, opportunity, & creativity

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35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.
(Matthew 9)

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Broken lines, broken strings,
Broken threads, broken springs,
Broken idols, broken heads,
People sleeping in broken beds
Ain't no use jiving
Ain't no use joking
Everything is broken
Broken bottles, broken plates,
Broken switches, broken gates,
Broken dishes, broken parts,
Streets are filled with broken hearts
Broken words never meant to be spoken,
Everything is broken
Seem like every time you stop and turn
around
Something else just hit the ground
Broken cutters, broken saws,
Broken buckles, broken laws,
Broken bodies, broken bones,
Broken voices on broken phones
Take a deep breath, feel like you're
chokin',
Everything is broken

Every time you leave and go off someplace
Things fall to pieces in my face
Broken hands on broken ploughs,
Broken treaties, broken vows,
Broken pipes, broken tools, People bending
broken rules
Hound dog howling, bull frog croaking,
Everything is broken



David Booker: Seven Basic Plots

1. Overcoming the Monster,
2. Rags to Riches,
3. The Quest,
4. Voyage and Return,
5. Rebirth,
6. Comedy
7. Tragedy.

