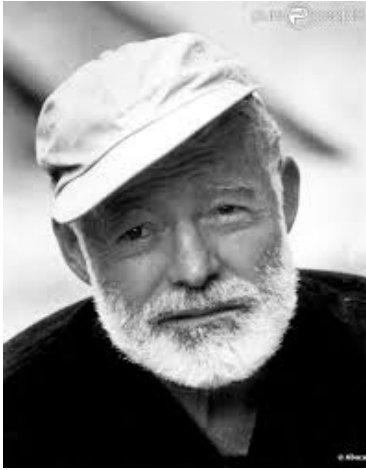


Why Trump Is a Better Storyteller Than Hemingway

By: Rick Gilbert



I just read an amazing article by Steve Bryant (Dicksandbetties.com) comparing Trump vs. Hemingway as storytellers. Ernest Hemingway's famous six-word story:

For sale.

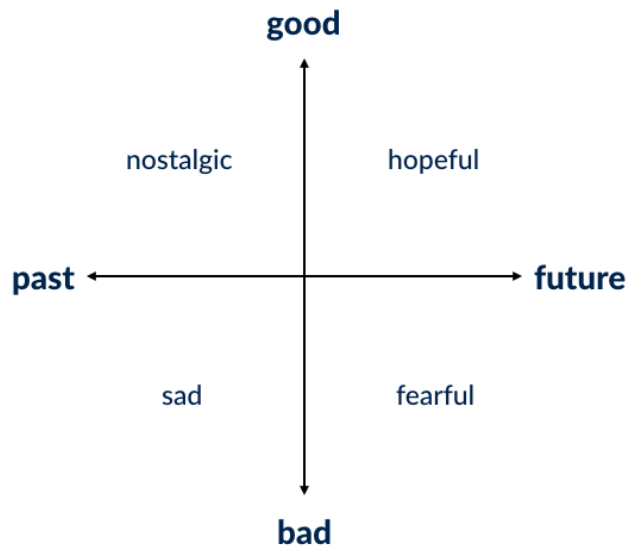
Baby shoes.

Never worn.

is the starting point.

We project a timeline onto this story: the past, a live baby; the present, a dead baby; the future, parental grief. We conjure up in our minds a horrible family situation. Hard to imagine the family getting beyond this disaster. But Bryant points out that there is ambiguity. While we immediately think of a family tragedy, it could be about a baby shoe manufacturer that is advertising a sale.

Bryant describes an excellent model to analyze stories:



Emotion plus time gives us the story's essence. Using the same model, Bryant looks at Trump's story: "Make America Great Again." We are *nostalgic* for a past when America was great; we are *sad* in the present because we have lost our greatness; he is promising us a *hopeful* future when we will be great again. The flow of the story is up and to the right.

The baby shoe story ends in despair. The Trump story ends in triumph. Bryant points out that the anti-Trump people who argue, "America is Already Great," don't have a story. The statement is emotionally neutral, hence it lacks power.

For years I have been enthusiastic about a story archetype called "The Hero's Journey," first described by Joseph Campbell. It has since been updated by Hollywood scriptwriting coach Michael Huage (storymastery.com). What I like about Bryant's model is the simplicity. Still the hero's journey, but simpler.

To get on Steve Bryant's mailings about stories: Dicksandbetties.com.