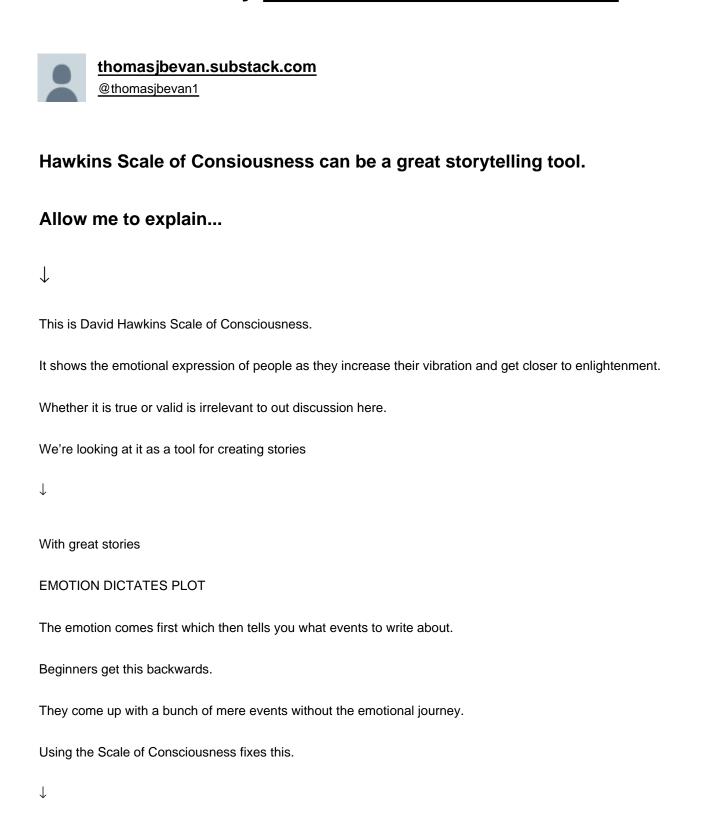
Twitter Thread by thomasjbevan.substack.com



A HEROIC TALE

A happy story involves the story of a character moving Up the scale.

So the protagonist might start off as a timid person (Fear) Suffer a tragedy (grief)
Tackle their demons (anger)
And stumble bc of ego (pride)
Before overcoming & being ready for life (hope)
\downarrow
See how it works?
And this was linear for the sake of simplicity.
You can move a character up &down the scale, snakes and ladders-like to build tension.
If you reflect this is how real life journeys transpire. Two steps forward one step back.
Boring stories are too smooth
\downarrow
The emphasis on emotional movement naturally gives your story propulsion.
In fact, if you just think up a sequence of different movements up and down the scale, your mind will easily form a plausible plot within these to manifest.
This system is great for idea generation.
\downarrow
TRAGEDY
A tragic tale involves a character ultimately ending up at a lower place on the scale
For contrast they will usually start at a place of neutrality or higher and then descend
Romeo starts at neutrality &moves as high as Love & joy before descending all the way down
\downarrow
Hamlet sinks from neutrality all the way down to the very depth of despair and apathy
Othello too
Any character who murders or kills themselves is at the very bottom of the scale
And this is the value of tragedy, to make us reflect on the bottom without having to go there

STORIES ARE SURVIVAL INFORMATION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS ENCODED EMOTIONALLY

They don't resonate and stick without this element

So we need to learn to shape stories in terms of waves of emotion

Hawkins Scale is an invaluable reference for this

Emotion dictates plot. Always.