

Thoughts on Coming Apart and the Coming Great Reset



**Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer**

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Contemplating Immigration

Themes and Theses - Why I'm Contemplating Out Loud

(Initially formulated in the early 90s, following decades of reading history, philosophy, psychology and a lot of contemplation. In the end, this is a relatively straightforward story about human nature and history rhyming.)

The US will enter a period of crisis in the early 2000s. In the late 90s, I took up Strauss' and Howe's terminology of the Fourth Turning (without incorporating their generations paradigm) and agreed with Howe that the end stage of the crisis began with the Great Financial Crisis and would last into the early 2030s. We are not yet to the middle of the end stage of the crisis.

The crisis will be serious and could be existential.

Internal strife will increase, up to and including secession and civil war.

International conflicts will increase as the vacuum created by the weakening of the US is filled by other players.

There will be many threads to the crisis, but the primary thread will be debt, deficits and entitlements. Other factors include, eg, demographics, a loss of meaning and myth and a loss of self-discipline.

Politics will move leftward as citizens look for some refuge from the chaos. The US will become increasingly susceptible to a (man) on a white horse, who can come from either the left or the right.

Inflation, as the most likely way to address debt since austerity is not politically acceptable, will significantly lower standards of living, exacerbating the civil crises. Once the old rot is cleared out, and assuming continuity, there will be the basis for the establishment of a new order. (Added around 2020) The loss of faith by our youth in our founding principles means that the new order will at least partially be based on new principles. As yet, I have no visibility as to what those principles might be.

(Added in the early 00s) While humans are contributing to global warming, policies implemented to address manmade global warming will create a significant energy crisis, probably toward the end of the Fourth Turning.

(Added in 2023) The lowering / elimination of standards in education, the judiciary, law enforcement, the military and other segments of our society will create a population unable to adequately comprehend, do or respond to the challenges of democracy and culture.

Quotes to Ponder

The spiritual decline of the earth is so far advanced that people are in danger of losing their last spiritual strength, the strength that makes it possible even to see the disintegration and recognize it as such. - Martin Heidegger

Primary Ideas in This Week's Post

Kamala remains ahead in the polls, although her lead has narrowed.

Kamala's flip-flopping has now reached the extreme at which she supports a border wall. We are now in a race for who is the least principled candidate, a race that Trump should win hands down, but he is now being sorely tested.

Immigration is, like most things, a mixed bag. However, sometimes it is clearly a cultural negative.

Markets

Updated Charts

- > The US stock markets should see some volatility as they work their way higher.
 - > “The US labor market is not in equilibrium, or anywhere close to it...If current trends persist, labor demand will fall short of supply by the end of this year or in early 2025. At that point unemployment will surge.” BCA Research, 22nd August 2024
 - > Think about the selloff if Kamala is elected to lock in a 20% capital gains rate before December 31 (depending on the makeup of Congress).
 - > Any time Lyn Alden, Lacy Hunt, Luke Gromen or Luis Vincent Gave speaks, I listen.
- Listen to Lacy Hunt on the [Thoughtful Money podcast](#).

> Contemplating Immigration

You knew that somewhere in here I would say, "it's complicated," "trade-offs," "what is your objective function" and "compared to what?" These are critical lynchpins of my thought process.

Every nation, except some in Africa, is ultimately a "nation of immigrants." The US had its first influx of migrants maybe some 20,000 years ago. Human history includes continual migration and continual conquests in wars. How you look at all of this depends on your context.

Just thinking about what became the United States, there were no humans; then there were Indians from Asia; then European white settlers; forced immigration of blacks; contentious immigrations of Jews, Catholics, Irish and Asians, particularly Chinese; more Europeans; Hispanics from Cuba, then Mexico, then Central America; Asian Indians. Importantly, there are also small groups of Muslims.

We can discuss whether this is a good thing or a bad thing, but it is, and the real question is, therefore what?

Spoiler alert - I am not a big fan of diversity for diversity's sake. I think diversity is important sometimes and sometimes not. Our particular diversity is diversity within a particular tribe and not diversity, generally, but a subset of general diversity that the group finds important. My point is that migration is neither inherently good nor bad. It depends on your objectives - what do you think is important? If migration advances your objectives, then, good; if not, then not.

Why do they come? In particular, why is there unlimited demand for entry into the US today when the US has so many problems?

Compared to what?

If you are living at the edge of starvation in an economically-challenged country, the problems in the US seem small, even petty. Compared to starvation and repression, pronouns are just not a big deal. In other countries gays and trans are killed. In other countries, there are no opportunities for women, who remain chattel to men. You enthusiastically trade that for a little hassle in the US.

While our principles may be important, and at times were very important, I submit that the primary motivating force is economic - for Guatemalans and Indians alike. Guatemalans can significantly improve their standards of living and Indians can find opportunity and jobs that are limited in India. The fact that our founding principles, combined with the rich geological and mineral wealth of our territory, enabled that economic opportunity is lost on almost everybody.

Early in my thinking, it became clear that, while we were looking at income inequality and wealth inequality in the US, the worse inequality is between the less-than-a-billion in the West and the seven billion in the rest of the world. It became clear that as transportation became cheaper and populations increased that they would strain against that inequality. If you have not been outside the US, you have no idea what poverty is - none. It is often profound and omnipresent. Our poor live like kings

compared to billions of people in other countries. It became my thought that the West would literally be overrun, unless borders were enforced with walls and violence.

There are literally barbarians at the gate.

Speaking of inequality, how does morality fit into all of this?

Depends on your makeup. If you're a liberal, you care about these people on some level. Others look at the practical problem. The practical problem is gargantuan and all but unsolvable.

Let's focus on the practical problem. The GDP per capita in the US is about \$85,000. The GDP per capita for the world is about \$23,000. So, if we have one, big redistribution, which is the equitable way, you get to give up 73% of your income. Yeah, I know you really want to, but ... You really don't want to live without running water and indoor plumbing and heat and transportation and salt and sugar and raspberries and prescription drugs and This is when denial comes in particularly handy. And when border walls make sense.

So, let's quickly focus on the US and try to simplify the problem. Try to find a half-pregnant solution where I can feel good about helping some people, while increasing my standard of living.

There's a lot of discussion about how immigrants make the economy stronger. The educated do; the uneducated do not.

Think about it for a second. You are a poor Guatemalan, you show up in Texas, now what? No home, no job, no food. You put pressure on everything - housing, food, labor. You will take any job, because any job in the US pays well compared with what you are used to. You will also steal to survive.

If you are lucky, you will land in a sanctuary city that will actually provide you with housing, food and cash - far above assistance provided to citizens. You are eligible for Medicaid and you can get free healthcare at any emergency room. You put a tremendous strain on the welfare system.

The good news is that once the initial effects have worked their way through the system, illegals do begin to contribute to the economy. Initial effects include having the economy grow enough to provide jobs to both illegals and anyone whose jobs they are displacing. In many cases that takes years; in some cases a generation or more. Second generations, as a rule, are generally productive. California Democrats are

proposing an initiative that would help illegal immigrants buy homes by providing them up to \$150,000 in taxpayer funded down payment assistance.

And you wonder why they come.

That is a problem that can be more or less handled in small doses. In the doses we have experienced over the last few years, the entire economic and social system is disrupted.

Which brings up the most serious problem.

I have written at length that certain segments of the population (reasonably) resist being part of the melting pot. Many blacks want to maintain their own culture, and Muslims want to follow their religion, which includes maintaining a separate culture. The Irish ultimately joined the culture, as did Jews, Catholics, and Asians and Hispanics, generally (although, given the numbers of Hispanics, in some cases, as in South Texas, the US is indistinguishable from Mexico). In this writing, I want to focus on Muslims, who are creating serious conflicts in many countries.

The strange thing about Muslims is that many of them actually believe in the principles of their religion - something almost entirely lost on Westerners. They believe that what Allah said is fundamentally important and that they should follow the word of Allah in order to gain eternal life. Since their principles often conflict with Western culture, the stage is set for conflict. (Christianity and other religions are also often strongly at odds with Western culture, but Western culture won some time ago - sex, drugs and rock and roll win (almost) every time.)

When there are just a few Muslims, they generally keep their heads down. As their populations increase to the point that they become practical and political forces, they, reasonably, begin to follow their own culture and set up areas that are influenced by Sharia law. Since we are talking oil and water here, conflicts will increase. Sweden has around 60 no-go zones where the civil authorities have basically given up. France and the UK are experiencing riots, and France has its own no-go zones.

This (black and Muslim cultures) is not about right and wrong. This is about different worldviews. This is about irreconcilable differences that will continue and fester and create conflict.

We can't all just get along.

Ironically, in the case of blacks, they are "winning" in the sense that the mainstream culture is creating rules and processes that support and enable blacks. This is a temporary phenomenon that will likely exacerbate differences instead of narrowing them. Ultimately, a culture that dumbs itself down cannot either flourish or survive.

In the US, Muslims have not become a sufficient part of the population to create significant issues. On a local basis, they have become a majority in Dearborn, Michigan. The US may find a way to cope with a growing Muslim population, and if so, Dearborn will show the way.

While the US prided itself on being a melting pot and recently has created diversity as an artificial goal, there are tradeoffs:

Some cultures want the economic opportunities in the US, but will not join in the American culture, creating perpetual conflict. There is an argument, which I will make, that much of "white supremacy" is actually a conflict of cultures. Whites had a culture, others came in and joined in, but additional people came in, and now the newcomers want to play by a different set of rules. That's fair and democracy provides a platform on which to change the rules, as appropriate. But it does create conflict and an inordinate amount of political posturing.

New cultures change the existing culture, for better and for worse.

Huge influxes of migrants in a short period of time challenge the system's ability to cope and create stresses in the system.

There is not a right answer and, imo, we are trying all the wrong ones first. There will be immigration so long as there is a significant differential in wealth and opportunities among regions and the barriers to crossing borders are permeable. Immigration will provide benefits and create conflict. Some conflicts are irreconcilable. The culture will change.

(Since every writing is required to reference global warming at least once, I will note that immigration is a bad thing from an emissions perspective. A Guatemalan who has little opportunity to be responsible for emissions in Guatemala has unlimited opportunities in the US. I don't think this is much of an argument for anything; I am just doing my duty.)

(On Wednesday, illegals tried to hijack two busloads full of kids. That will resonate.)

Short Takes

> You would be forgiven for thinking that you have entered the Twilight Zone with Harris championing a border wall and Trump getting behind reproductive rights. I guess we entered another dimension when Harris agreed that tips should not be taxed. In her CNN interview, she said, "My values have not changed." I have never thought they did, however, her words and her values do not match.

> Speaking of the interview - 18 minutes prior to editing and transcript not released.

> Kamala things

She remains ahead in the polls, with a bump from the convention. My contention has been that was inevitable and we would learn more when things settled down in September and Kamala had more exposure. The next big event in the polling game will be the upcoming debate with Trump on September 10.

The Fed is likely to cut interest rates in September. That will be a double-edged sword for Kamala. It may cause a momentary lift in the markets, but it is also evidence of issues in the underlying economy.

Politico: "We don't want to sabotage her": Why green groups are going easy on Harris. (Kit: Harris mentioned green things only once in her acceptance speech.)

Wow! I'm back to being insufficiently cynical. Did not expect this. From *Axios* - If she's elected president, Kamala Harris pledges to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on the wall along the southern border. I am stunned at her ... flexibility. As Groucho once said, "Those are my principles, and if you don't like them... well, I have others." I really don't like many of Kamala's former principles, but I admired her for having them. Now, she's just another politician.

Her first interview was short, sweet and did not cover any new territory. The *Guardian*: "Just like at the Democratic convention, the vice-president did enough to clear the bar and do herself no harm." The liberal *GZERO* said that, "the interview consisted mostly of soft-ball questions." She did say she would put a Republican in her cabinet. *New York Times* - "... Thursday's interview was a reminder that unscripted, she can sometimes deliver discursive answers that ramble and zigzag." "Radical? Far Left? Kamala Harris's policies are just common sense to most Americans." - Bernie Sanders

> Trump things -

In accepting RFK Jr's endorsement, Trump said he would release the JFK assassination files and establish a commission to look into government assassinations more generally. It seems that was one of three conditions for RFK's endorsement, other than a cabinet position: ceasing the Ukraine war and investigating food additives.

The bargaining of terms for the debate has led Trump to threaten to pull out.
Trump Says [Elon] Musk Wouldn't Have Time to Be in His White House Cabinet,
but Could 'Consult' - CNBC

Tulsi Gabbard, who arguably sent Kamala out of the presidential race during a debate,
has endorsed Trump.

Trump's words and behavior continue to be off-putting.

This week's freebee - IVF for all.

> Americans, particularly the young, are giving up alcohol - From Demography
Unplugged -

According to a recent Gallup survey, 45% of US adults think having one or two
alcoholic drinks per day is bad for one's health. That marks a +6 percentage
point increase since 2023 and a +17 percentage point increase since 2018.

Moreover, it's the highest reading on record.

To some extent, this shift of opinion can be attributed to major epidemiological
studies suggesting that any amount of alcohol consumption may be bad for your
health. Back in the 1990s, Americans were often told that "moderate"
consumption was harmless, and perhaps even beneficial. The new message from
health researchers is much less encouraging.

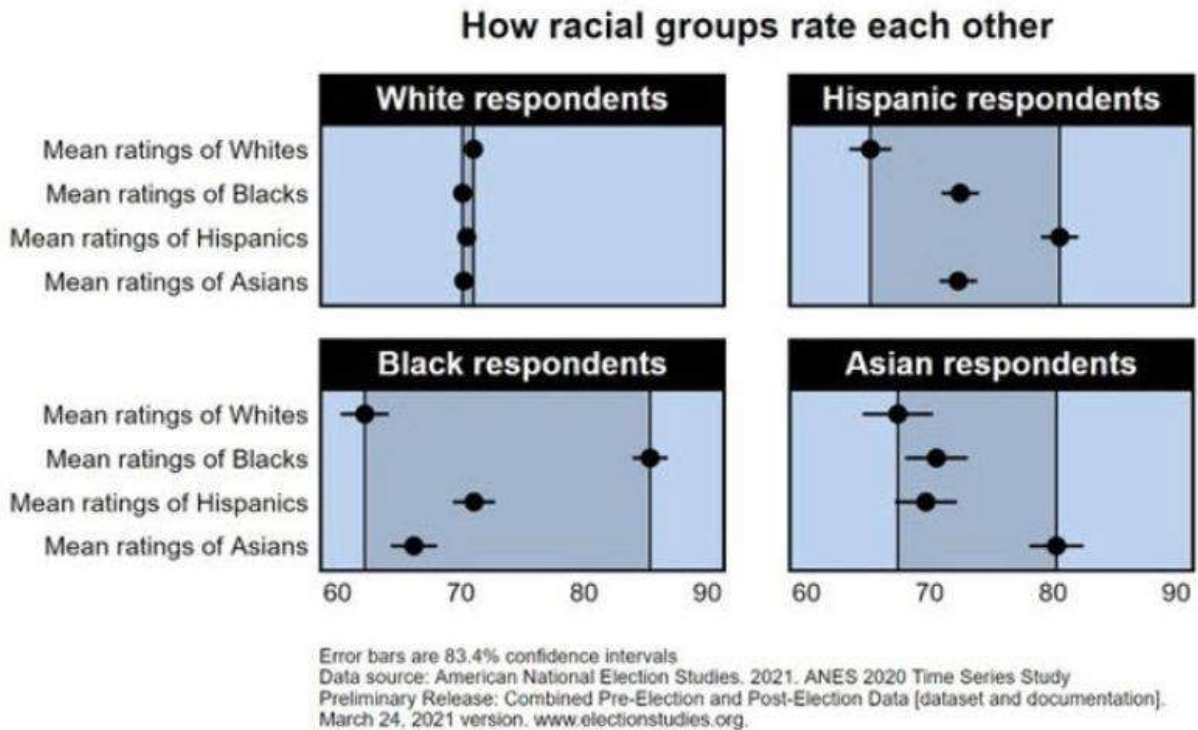
Yet there is also a generational subplot to this story. The decline in alcohol
consumption is being driven much more by younger people than older people.
By age, young adults are significantly more negative about alcohol. 65% of 18-
to 34-year-olds think drinking in moderation is bad for one's health. In contrast,
only 37% of 35- to 54-year-olds and 39% of those ages 55+ say the same thing.
That's a perception gap of over 25 percentage points, and the largest difference
ever recorded by Gallup.

> I am not an RFK Jr. fan, but someone needs to tell him that he is right and that it
does not matter -

The DNC and its media organs engineered a surge of popularity for VP Harris
based upon nothing. No policies, no interviews, no debates. Only smoke and
mirrors.

> The Supreme Court continued its blocking of some of Biden's student loan plan.

> White supremacy needs work –



Just in case you are not keeping up with "a small but growing demand," I'm here to help –

☰ NATIONAL POST Sign In

Court to decide if Ontario must pay for surgery to make vagina if patient also wants to keep penis

A non-binary Ontario resident is locked in a legal battle over public funding for surgery to create a vagina while leaving the penis intact

> If you can discuss this thoughtfully, you will get to a deeper understanding of politics and human nature –



Hillel Neuer  @HillelNeuer · 21h

Massive protests in New York, London, Paris, Berlin after Afghanistan's Taliban rulers ban women showing their faces or speaking in public.

edition.cnn.com/2024/08/22/mid...



So, remain childless, then? From *The Guardian* -

Birthstrikers: meet the women who refuse to have children until climate change ends.

> U.S. Navy to sideline 17 ships due to lack of manpower

> California legislature has passed a bill banning local governments from adopting voter ID laws for local elections to override Huntington Beach's approval of a voter ID requirement for municipal elections starting in 2026.

> *Wall Street Journal* –

There's a new U.S. surgeon general's warning: Parenting can be harmful to your mental health.

An advisory issued Wednesday by Dr. Vivek Murthy, the nation's doctor, said parents in particular are under dangerous levels of stress.

The report cites the American Psychological Association, saying nearly half of parents report overwhelming stress most days, compared with 26% of other adults. They're lonelier, too, according to cited data from health insurer [Cigna](#).

In a 2021 survey, 65% of parents said they were lonely, compared with 55% of those without kids.

> A drop in the share of Black first-year students at two elite colleges this school year has provided an early sign that the Supreme Court's decision to end affirmative action could have an impact on racial diversity, at least at some of the nation's more selective schools.

At Amherst College, the share of Black students decreased sharply — by eight percentage points — for this year's entering class, according to data released on Thursday. It decreased more moderately at Tufts University, according to that school's data. At the University of Virginia, which released its data on Friday, the percentage of Black students also dipped, but only slightly.

The new evidence comes after the Massachusetts Institute of Technology announced a sharp drop in Black enrollment, by 10 percentage points, last week.

> I can relate - really great theater - front row seat –



It Ain't Easy Being Green

> The *Wall Street Journal* - in New York, offshore wind energy electricity will cost four times current average price -

New York state signed a contract in June to buy electricity generated by two large wind farms, Empire Wind 1 and Sunrise Wind, off the coast of Long Island. The projects are expected to begin in 2026 and 2027, with power delivered to Brooklyn (Empire) and Long Island (Sunrise). The state will pay \$155 and \$146 per megawatt-hour, respectively. These prices are steep, at least four times the average grid cost paid over the past year.

States agree to pay wind-power operators—known as the “offtake price”—based on a project’s “break-even cost,” the estimated bill for building and operating the wind farm over its useful life. That is undoubtedly part of the problem. The offshore wind business off the East Coast is in turmoil. Operators have canceled projects from Massachusetts to Maryland that were due to be constructed in the next four years. Some have been delayed, while others have renegotiated their contracts at prices 30% to 50% higher than originally promised.

Two widely quoted sources of break-even costs are the U.S. Energy Information Administration and Lazard, an investment bank. In its most recent estimates, the EIA suggests the average break-even cost of offshore wind farms, adjusted to 2024 prices, is \$131 per megawatt-hour, not counting government subsidies, and \$101 per megawatt-hour after allowing for basic tax credits. The latter figure is what matters, because every offshore wind farm expects to take advantage of investment or production tax credits under the Inflation Reduction Act.

> Scientists want to genetically engineer cows’ microbiomes to cut down on methane emissions. The animals’ digestive systems rely on archaea that emit the powerful greenhouse gas. Tweaking them could be a major help in cutting climate pollution from agriculture.

> Now they've gone too far -

The Houthis have been taking target practice at ships in the Red Sea. So, we have attacked them several times to not much obvious result. However, they just caused a tanker to leak oil. That's a hanging offense.

Chinese EVs are going offline when their makers go bust. Owners are left unable to log into their car systems or start their engines.

> South Korea’s constitutional court has ruled that the country’s climate change measures are insufficient for protecting the rights of citizens, particularly those of future generations. On Thursday, it ordered the government to go back to the drawing

board to set more ambitious — and legally binding — carbon-reduction targets for 2031 and beyond.

Miscellany

Boeing Starliner astronauts stranded in space for 80 days will not return home until 2025



Wernher von Braun
@DrVonBraun

Humanity has about six months to purchase 8 billion ape costumes for the ultimate prank.

The meme that keeps on giving - from the Bee



Schrödinger's Neighbor Says Thought
Experiment Very Interesting But He'd Really
Just Like A Straight Answer On Where His
Cat Is

1. States with a smaller population than Los Angeles County

