

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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Trump Will Destroy Democracy?

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

Nothing this week.

Primary Ideas in This Week's Post

It is you who are destroying democracy. Trump is just something you conjured up as part of the process.

The election is back to being a toss-up. Kamala is probably ahead, within the margin of error.

Kamala won the debate.

Forget Musk and JFK Jr - Taylor Swift just endorsed Kamala.

Immigration is coming to a head in Europe.

Nature is healing.

Haitians are (most likely) not eating cats. Venezuelan gangs are not, either, but will become a much bigger story.

More kabuki / government shutdown games coming September 30.

Markets

[Updated Charts](#)

> No change in outlook.

> In case you missed it, another government funding "crisis" (read: kabuki) is coming September 30.

> Trump Will Destroy Democracy?

A couple of weeks ago, I noted that Democrats had changed their central theme from Trump Will Destroy Democracy, to Weird, to Freedom. I am not sure what it is now, because Joy raised its head and I am not really paying close attention.

A liberal friend, who sometimes reads my postings, asked whether I thought Trump was actually a threat to democracy.

And none other than Dick Cheney thinks so: "In our nation's 248-year history, there has never been an individual who is a greater threat to our republic than Donald Trump."

I think my friend has not contemplated my themes. Remember that among my original theses were

Civil unrest will increase.

We are likely heading for a (man) on a white horse (or maybe an oligarchy).

I did not and am not stating this lightly. I hate it. I am not unburdened by what has been. What has been was, on a relative basis and with flaws, glorious. It is an apogee that will not be exceeded for a long time.

The tendency in all things today is toward centralization, central planning and authoritarianism. Trump is simply part of that larger trend. Cheney and others are trying to stem the tide by addressing the symptoms (I do enjoy mixing metaphors). So, yeah, Trump has authoritarian instincts and his followers want him to FIX things (remember that the first association with the word, Mussolini, is that he made the

trains run on time; and no, I am not calling Trump a fascist). He will continue the increasing authoritarianism of past presidents.

Ironically, I don't think his ADD will allow him to focus long enough on the problem, so I think he will botch the program if he tries.

It will be very important that Democrats control at least one house of Congress if Trump is elected.

But the larger trend, even absent Trump, is toward increased authoritarianism.

And, the fact that Congress has vacated the field has created a vacuum that someone will step into. Those someones are the president and the Supreme Court. The democracy that we have is becoming increasingly illegitimate, opening itself up to destruction.

Democrats are the party of getting involved in our lives – for our own good, you understand. If you are a Democrat, you will tend to agree with all of this involvement as being right and necessary - we do see so many things that need to be made better, you see, and we know just how to do it - but it is increased authoritarianism. Telling people what to do and how to live their lives is not any less authoritarian because you are sure you are right and your heart is pure. I'm not certain about Hitler, but I am fairly sure Mao was convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was right.

Mussolini was also convinced of the purity of his cause. And Lenin. During the presidential debate, Kamala said that "Trump has no plan for you." Good. I am very uncomfortable with politicians that have plans for me.

As are the executive orders issued by presidents, particularly those that are unconstitutional. Biden has taken a trend that began with Obama of issuing orders he knows are "wrong," but which push his agenda or get him votes, and hoping the courts will miss them or mistakenly agree with him. He, and others, are deliberately defying our system, because I'm right and these things need to be done, you see. Forgiving student loans, for example, is simply an act of corruption and destruction - no more and no less. An act that corrupts all who look at it as they change their views of what is fair and right and begin to recalibrate how they can get theirs. As Monihan put it, "Defining deviancy down." So far, he is 0-for-all of the cases that have been adjudicated. Which has not made him stop. At some point, it becomes a game called "my way," which is, of course, authoritarian.

It is very important that the Republicans control at least one house of Congress in a Harris administration.

The current assault on free speech, from many directions, including the right, but principally from progressives, is a direct attack on democracy. Democracy absolutely requires debate and dissent.

So, yes, Trump is a threat to Democracy.

I anticipate that Harris will govern much the same as Joe did, but from considerably further left.

We are entering very difficult economic times in any event, but her economic policies are bonkers and will wound an already-crippled economy, perhaps grievously. That will create unrest and calls for more governmental intervention, which will make things worse ... If you look at Harris' past statements, you find a significant inclination toward meddling/authoritarianism. You will be reassured to learn that all of this makes things better.

The willingness to peacefully change governments is a test of the strength of a democracy. We are going to be sorely tested in the next two months.

We need to deeply understand that the US is classified as a "flawed" democracy and is ranked 29th in the world in democracy-ness, behind essentially all of Europe, Canada, Australia and Japan, and countries like Uruguay, Costa Rica, Chile, the Czech Republic and Estonia. That classification predates Trump. We have a problem and it is not a recent problem.

I see no reason to change my view that we are likely heading for a (man) on a white horse.

Democracy IS in danger.

Democracy is in danger principally because of you.

You get the government you deserve. You are conducting tribal warfare to the death. You are not demanding action and accountability from Congress. You are comfortable with debt and deficits. You demand unending goodies without cost. You are willing to follow people, like Trump and Harris, who should not be president.

Trump and Harris are both accidental, emergent properties from the system you have neglected - they are reflections of you, no more and no less.

I am not sure which is actually the greater threat to democracy, but Trump wants to be and his continuing election denial is a big problem in this regard. Harris is potentially more dangerous because she is certain she knows what is good for you. Pray that neither has both houses of Congress on their side.

How can we stop this?

I'm in the camp that believes that it has all gone too far and "nothing stops this train." Miracles do happen, however. What is required is a mass outbreak of self-discipline, reclaiming of values and financial sacrifice.

I'm taking the under. (Beth wants me to explain - betting term - one kind of bet, for example, is how many points will be scored in a game. You can bet the over or the under. So, this means the miracle ain't gonna happen.)

Short Takes

> The debate -

A Brit friend asked my view of the debate going in. In summary, I said -

Debates are a waste of time, except for their soap opera value. I don't watch them because I get frustrated, sad and irritated.

Trump needs to keep his cool.

Kamala needs to not laugh, not answer in third-grade sentences and be able to run from her very left past.

Their bases will not be moved. They are going for the, maybe, 6% who are either undecided or might switch their votes.

I was going to watch this debate for the soap opera value.

As the *Bee* put it, "Nation Eagerly Anticipates Two Brightest Minds In Country Meeting In Respectful, Productive Dialogue."

My take, after the debate, but before reading any commentary -

It was a waste of time. No soap opera value.

Kamala did what she needed to do. She actually presented well.

Trump did what he had to do and did not lose it in the face of continual attacks by Harris.

Both exceeded low expectations, but Kamala exceeded them better.

There was exactly no new content during the debate.

Although I did not keep score, there were lies and misrepresentations on both sides. Trump's subjectively seemed more numerous and more egregious.

Trump's election denial was particularly disturbing.

Trump was more evasive, but Kamala was also evasive and took the tried-and-true political path of making a point she wanted to make instead of answering the question.

Kamala didn't have much of an agenda other than spending money.

There had been buzz about Trump's losing it mentally, but there was no sign of that during the debate.

The ABC people continually fact-checked Trump and not Harris and at one point directly engaged with Trump and at another actually misstated facts. On a scale of 1-to-10, I don't care, but bad form.

My estimate is that exactly four voters were persuaded by the debate.

Ok, it is now Wednesday morning, and what do the pundits say?

Kamala won.

Where I saw Trump restraint, many commentators saw Harris successfully baiting Trump. It all depends on expectations, I guess.

Everybody noted Trump's lies but no one mentioned Kamala's (actually, the *New York Times* did).

Nobody (voters) cared much or were persuaded.

ABC blew it (although some liberals thought that engaging with Trump was "great" - depends on whose ox is being gored, I guess)

Checking back in on Friday, just before I "go to press," what did the polls say?

It's too early - no polls I respect have come out, yet. Have to check in next week.

Harris is narrowly ahead in the betting, prediction markets.

> My Brit friend responded with the following, which I strongly endorse:
Stepping back from the Trump v Harris analysis, my view is that the key people within both the Republican and Democrat parties have let the country down. When Trump refused to accept the result in 2019 and instigated the Capital Building invasion, the leaders of the Republican Party should have come out against Trump's statements and supported the election outcome. To an outsider like me, it looks as though these leaders have allowed Trump and his family to take over the party. The consequences of this if Trump loses this November are quite frightening. The leaders of the Democrat party are also culpable but for different reasons. They must have known that Biden's mental health had declined so they should have persuaded him to announce he would not run again 18 months ago. That would have given them time to run primaries and select a new candidate. The outcome could still have been Harris although I doubt that. All over the world, leaders who have been in for several years have been rejected because voters are unhappy and want to blame and punish them. Harris has a very difficult task to claim she has new ideas and plans given that she has been without any authority or influence as a VP. The Democrat candidate today should have been someone who has previously distanced themselves from some key Biden decisions so can offer a new way forward. If I were an American voter today, I would look at Trump and Harris and ask if those are the best two candidates for probably the toughest and most difficult job in the world today.

> Kamala things -

Too soon for valid polls after the debate - Harris is very narrowly ahead in the betting markets.

Dick Cheney, the Republican former vice president, said he would vote for Harris. Not the ultimate in strange bedfellows, but you can see it from here.

I'm not sure whether to laugh or cry - the *Washington Post* covers a Kamala shopping trip - "Kamala Harris just went to Penzeys Spices and bought Creamy Peppercorn Dressing Base, Fox Point Seasoning, Trinidad Lemon-Garlic Marinade, Turkish Seasoning, and Tuscan Sunset Salt Free Italian Seasoning." I'm desperately looking for news about what Trump purchased during his most recent outing. Biden and his ice cream ... I feel so disconnected.

Kamala put up a policy page on her website that mostly contained stands that were previously known. She attacked the straw man of Project 25 supporting a path to citizenship for illegals and supported an increase in minimum wage, but did not say how much. Some past positions, such as cutting funding for ICE and providing gender transition surgery to detained migrants, were not included.

Taylor Swift endorsed Kamala in post signed "childless cat lady." Much bigger than JFK Jr's and Musk's endorsements of Trump combined, even though a large number of her fans can't vote. I think it is fine for her to do so and, while I don't listen to her music, she seems like a good person, which is a rare thing in her profession. Having said all of that, because I love the wit involved and not as a political statement, I bring you the *Bee's* take: Woman Who Made Career Singing About Her Bad Choices Endorses Kamala.

Sen. Bernie Sanders on Sunday called Vice President Kamala Harris "pragmatic" for betraying progressive voters by moderating her views on fracking and "Medicare for All," telling NBC News' "Meet the Press" that Harris is "doing what she thinks is right in order to win the election," and that he still considers her to be "progressive." Bernie and I are in agreement.

The *Washington Post* ran an article on Kamala in the situation room. Brief summary - she approaches issues like a lawyer - pros, cons, strengths, weaknesses. She supported Biden's withdrawal from Afghanistan. She terminated her daily security briefings, but after her first one, her primary concern was the use of gendered language. While the article clearly worked to put her in a good light, it is an interesting read. The link is too long for my web editor to handle and bitly won't shorten it because of some branding thing, so you will have to google it. Or copy it from here

- https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/09/12/harris-commander-predictions-colleagues/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&wpisrc=nl_todayworld&utm_campaign=wp_todays_worldview&carta-url=https%3A%2F%2Fs2.washingtonpost.com%2Fcar-lnt%2F3f013b7%2F66e3b9f42032f84fb4b9ab3b%2F614f2f12ade4e27b8bbcb054%2F39%2F62%2F66e3b9f42032f84fb4b9ab3b

> Trump things -

I don't even know where to put the concept of a sovereign wealth fund in a country running \$2 trillion deficits.

Mitt Romney announced he will not be voting for Donald Trump.

Donald Trump posted to social media that he would jail "those people that cheated" during the 2020 election, including "Lawyers, Political Operatives, Donors, Illegal Voters, and Corrupt Election Officials." Speaking at a rally in Wisconsin on Friday, the former president promised that if reelected, he would "rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner unjustly victimized by the Harris regime" and sign their pardons on his first day back in office. (GZero)

Trump promised an executive order banning federal employees from "colluding to limit free speech" and to fire "every federal bureaucrat who engaged in domestic censorship under the Harris regime." He reiterated his pledge for mass deportations. Trump says no more debates.

Trump called for the elimination of taxes on overtime pay. I'm not sure who is ahead in the race for most goodies promised.

> Immigration things -

Germany's government announced plans to impose tighter controls at all of the country's land borders in what it called an attempt to tackle irregular migration and protect the public from threats such as Islamist extremism.

The controls within what is normally a wide area of free movement – the European Schengen zone – will start on Sept. 16 and initially last for six months, Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said on Monday.

The government has also designed a scheme enabling authorities to reject more migrants directly at German borders, Faeser said, without adding details on the controversial and legally fraught move.

The restrictions are part of a series of measures Germany has taken to toughen its stance on irregular migration in recent years following a surge in arrivals, in particular people fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East.

Sweden is planning to pay asylum seekers 350,000 kronor, or £25,000, to go home.

> Haitians -

“Haiti itself is a desperately poor and horrifically violent country,” Noah Smith wrote in his Noahpinion Substack. “And yet when we look at how Haitians actually do in the U.S., that story seems to fall apart. For example, although Haitian immigrants tend to be less educated than Americans, their children tend to be more educated than the general population ... Haitians' incarceration rates are also low. For Haitians who immigrated legally—like the ones in Springfield, Ohio—the rate of incarceration is even lower than the average for all legal immigrants.” However, even these compelling points miss an important element. “Merit should be decided based on individual characteristics, not what ethnic group someone belongs to. If I'm Haitian, I should never have to point to aggregate statistics ... just to prove that a Haitian can become a good American.”

> Just a flesh wound -

Social Security is facing \$63 trillion in long-term unfunded liabilities, according to the 2024 Old-Age, Survivors, Disability Insurance (OASDI) trustees report. The report looked at two things: how much money will be missing indefinitely and how much will be missing in the next 75 years. The report determined that there will be a permanent \$62.8 trillion deficit and about a \$23 trillion shortage for the next 75 years.

> The existential issues we have to face -

From the movie, "Am I a Racist?"

White guy with 3-year old daughter - her favorite is Moana, so that is deemed as "good," since Moana is not white.

She wants to dress as Moana for Halloween and that is cultural appropriation.

He is stuck, with no clear way forward.

Achieving the top of Maslow's hierarchy has its own challenges.

> This is so good, it is actually profound in several dimensions - (Beth says I need to explain, so, the point is that lingerie is everywhere so it is not special. It is everywhere because of changing values.)



I am one of the millions of grown men who cried during *Field of Dreams*. [Here](#) is the James Earl Jones speech. RIP.

> Religion? Not so much. Astrology?

In 2022, 37% of Americans aged between 18 to 29 surveyed by YouGov, a pollster, said they believe in astrology.

> Nature is healing -

The University of Pennsylvania announced Tuesday that it will no longer issue statements on social and political events. "It is not the role of the institution to render opinions—doing so risks suppressing the creativity and academic

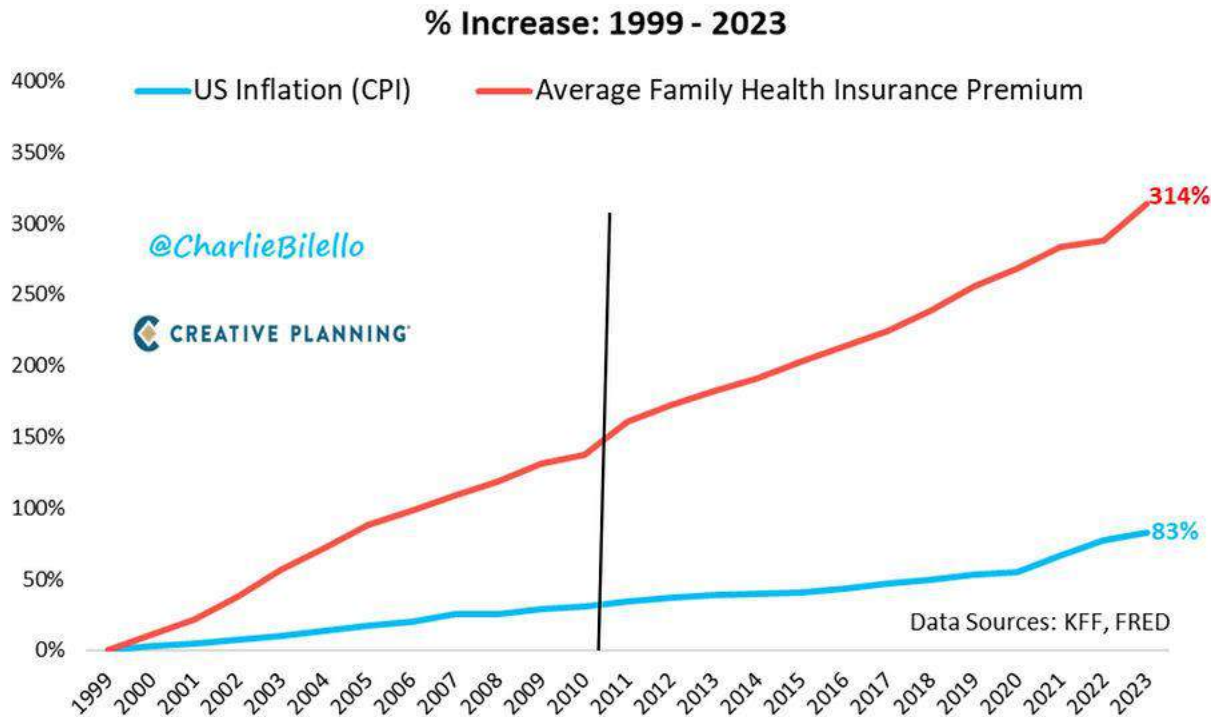
freedom of our faculty and students,” said the school’s interim president J. Larry Jameson and provost John Jackson.

> 42 state and U.S. territory attorneys general are urging Congress to mandate Surgeon General warnings on algorithm-driven social media platforms, aiming to combat the growing mental health crisis among America's youth.

> Arguably the biggest political force in the country -
When Taylor Swift endorsed Harris on Instagram, she also posted a link to Vote.gov, a registration site. In 24 hours, more than 400,000 people clicked on it.

> Sheer, undiluted insanity, and a symptom of what we have become (this is not about the corporate alternative minimum tax - did you know there was a corporate alternative minimum tax? How about the individual alternative minimum tax?) -
The Treasury Department released 603 pages of proposed ruses for the corporate alternative minimum tax.

> Perspective - ObamaCare was passed in 2010 -



It Ain't Easy Being Green

Nothing this week.

Miscellany



Jonah Goldberg  @JonahDispatch · 9h



Did someone say something about eating cats?

