

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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Freedom of Speech

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, particularly on the subject of cycles. In the end, this is a relatively straightforward story about human nature and of 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

Civilizations die from suicide, not by murder. - Arnold Toynbee
It is not necessary to bury the truth. It is sufficient merely to delay it until nobody cares. ~ Napoleon Bonaparte

Primary Ideas in This Week's Post

The presidential race remains a tossup.

We are now in the middle of the beginning of the financial crisis, signified by the Fed's rate cut.

Harris and Trump continue their race to the bottom in economic stupidity.

I have no clue which of Harris and Trump would be worse for the country.

The US continues its abysmal records in health and education.

Cat memes are fantastic.

Markets

Updated Charts

> No change in outlook.

> It turns out that the White House has also been thinking about a sovereign wealth fund. So we are going to borrow even more money to implement even more centralized industrial policy?

Well, why not.

In for a penny; in for a pound.

> Interesting discussion on MacroVoices with Jim Bianco. He thinks interest rates will go up, not down, when the Fed starts cutting. This possibility was also discussed by Luke Gromen, and that is what I am seeing in my chart on interest rates. I have been wondering how that would work. The logic is a little complex, but the primary point is that (my words) debt and deficits are now so extreme that economic outcomes will become increasingly counterintuitive.

We are now in the middle of the beginning of the end.

Just one of those funny coincidences -

On September 18, 2024, the Fed cut rates for the first time this cycle.

On September 18, 2007, the Fed cut rates for the first time that cycle.

> Interesting Doomberg interview on *Thoughtful Money* worth a listen.

I have for a long time been predicting very cheap oil. Still am. I attributed it to several causes, but primarily a slowing global economy.

Doomberg raises the proposition that there are two other contributors:

Green energy

The very low cost of natural gas, which is causing users to switch from oil products to natural gas.

> The Fed cut 0.5%. They are worried that they waited too long. Very unusual to do this just before a presidential election.

> Well worth the listen. Matt Barrie on [MacroVoices](#) discussing the state of AI.

> Freedom of Speech

The First Amendment of the US Constitution:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Seems pretty straightforward: “shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech.”

As always, the devil is in the details – Pornography? Hate speech? Violent speech? Treasonous speech? Once you start drawing lines, you restrict freedom of expression and ultimately the ability of democracy to function.

On the first level, all speech is free speech.

On the second level, free speech is what Congress and the Supreme Court say it is, with the Supreme Court being the ultimate guardian of free speech.

On the third level, free speech is what the culture enforces.

Once upon a time, the “n-word” was taking God’s name in vain.

Then it was swearing, particularly fuck and cunt and often shit (I am still amazed that I am writing these words).

Now it's the n-word ... and wrong pronouns ... and a broad array of particular things to particular people.

Speech is violence, except when I am called a white supremacist or a toxic male.

Speech is violence, except when some people yell fascist or racist.

Speech is violence, except against Israelis.

Speech is free except when the government asks social media sites to take down "misinformation" at the same time that the government is one of the, if not the, primary purveyor of misinformation.

Speech is free except when mobs prevent people from speaking.

I'll stop now, but you get the point.

Speech has never been free, but free speech is particularly endangered today.

Free speech requires a "live and let live" attitude, and we are pretty far away from that.

The dominant group will enforce its views, until there is another dominant group.

Enforcement of speech codes will require the same authoritarianism exhibited in various types of demonstrations on campuses.

A (man) on a white horse will be glad to satisfy demands that everyone do the "right" thing.

Short Takes

> Kamala things

It seems that Kamala received a bump in the polls from the debate, but you have to look very hard to find it. Still a toss up with Kamala ahead, within the margin of error .

In her next interview, she continued her debate tactics: "What would you specifically do to lower prices?" "Well, I grew up in a middle class family ..." That's probably going to become a meme. Oops. Just did. The answer to every question on X is, "Well, I grew up in a middle class family ..." It's the new, "unburdened by what has been." (Her father was a Stanford professor and her mother was a biomedical scientist.)

George Will, a monumentally significant figure in conservatism, endorsed Kamala.

Damn, life's complicated - At a Palestinian rally in North Carolina: "She is a white supremacist in black face."

Walz: "There's no guarantee to free speech on misinformation or hate speech."

The Teamsters Union failed to endorse Harris. First time a Democrat was not endorsed since 1988 (Dukakis). In a poll, a majority of members supported Trump.

Somehow I missed the primary - Pelosi - ""We had an open primary and [Kamala Harris] won it. Nobody else got in the race,"

I'm trying not to use quotes by Kamala before her recent Road-to-Damascus conversion experience, but [this](#) dovetails with my "destruction of democracy" article - "Just because you legally possess a gun in the sanctity of your locked home doesn't mean that we're not going to walk into that home and check to see if you're being responsible."

Kamala speaking to Oprah: "If somebody breaks in my house, they're getting shot. I probably should not have said that. My staff will deal with that later."

The Uncommitted National Movement, largely made up of Democrats who raised protests during the party's primaries and the party's convention, said Thursday it will not endorse Harris for president due to her views on Israel's war in Gaza.

> Trump things

Trump and Harris are both buying votes, hand over fist. Taxes on tips, taxes on overtime. Subsidies to first-time home buyers.

Boring.

However, what about me? I have to reconsider my price. Can I be bought?

Trump proposes eliminating taxes on Social Security benefits.

Am I really better than a Millennial, who sold their soul for student loan forgiveness?

As the other, great, Marx (Groucho) said, "Those are my principles, and if you don't like them... well, I have others."

Interesting proposition, Donald. Anyway you could up the ante a bit? If I am going to sell my soul, I need a pretty good price.

JD Vance acknowledges the cat and dog stories are urban legends and then rationalizes it (via CNN): "If I have to create stories so that the American media actually pays attention to the suffering of the American people, then that's what I'm going to do."

Trump says he hates Taylor Swift.

Another assassination attempt. The Secret Service was on top of this one. It is starting to look like open season and getting quickly more serious and out of hand. I don't want to even think about what happens if Trump is actually killed. Trump will cut your automobile insurance in half.

Trump is now achieving Harris-level economic stupidity. Asked how to bring down grocery prices, he replied that we should block imported food from entering the country. We are so truly screwed.

He's going to cap credit card interest rates at 10%. In case you missed Econ 101, that means most credit will simply go away.

We've still got a month and a half left. When do these two run out of promises/bribes?

> Kamala's latest new thing is "turning the page" and "charting a new way forward."

I think we need to get past two truths:

1. She is into vibes, energy, joy and will not indulge in any more policy and plans than she has to, outside of buying votes.
2. She is promising change from herself since she has been VP and did not accomplish much of anything in that role.

Let's reframe those statements in terms of reality.

1. She has decided that to win she only needs to be black, a woman and not Trump. Why complicate things? If it defies expectations or protocol, well, it defies expectations or protocol. Exhibit A is her recent touchy-feely discussion with Oprah.

2. Being a VP is not nothing, but it is pretty close. She was there because she was black and a woman and could be trusted to not screw things up. She is turning the page from that. While she needs to present as united a front with Biden as possible for appearance reasons, that does not mean that she was uniformly aligned with Biden.

The practical issues for me are her ignoring security briefings, alienating essentially her entire staff through several iterations of staff, her spontaneous vacuousness and not using the platform she had to accomplish much of anything. What "plans" she has discussed, primarily economic plans, are not only bad but destructive. There is no evidence, one way or the other, of her effectiveness on the international stage. Hers will be a "may you live in interesting times" presidency.

Trump is a disaster.

Which will be worse for the country?

I honestly have no clue. The old Kamala scares the hell out of me. The new one is engaged in kabuki. I am having difficulty finding reality.

I have the same nagging ray of optimism in the back of my head that I had about Biden - he could be ok. It was possible. He was an old, corrupt, mean, serial liar playing a grandfather on TV. But he had experience and connections and at the end of his life could be looking for a legacy.

He was a disaster, for the reasons I have discussed but that "we" don't talk about. The prices we are paying and will have to pay for his stimulus and his confiscation of Russian reserves will be significant, and then there are the energy policies and the retreat from Afghanistan, which I think figured into Putin's calculus for the invasion of Ukraine. History will not be kind.

Kamala could be ok. It is possible.

But there is close to zero evidence of that.

I am reduced to, "she passed the bar; she must be able to do something."

Like Pelosi said about ObamaCare, we have to pass it to find out what's in it.

> The answer to the question of how to bring down prices is to not start from here. That horse is out of the barn (following what I think will be an economic downturn first).

> Pope Francis said, "One should vote, and choose the lesser evil." He did not weigh in on which candidate was the lesser evil, saying, "Who is the lesser evil, the woman or man? I don't know."

> Immigration things

There is a real immigration stress problem in Springfield, even if every dog and cat is safe. Lots of moving parts. The immigrants are legal due to a Haitian exemption. I am working to separate fact from fiction, but it looks like 20,000 immigrants in a city of 60,000 before the immigration (no one is sure and the estimates range from 12,000 to 20,000). It seems like they were not "dumped" there, but it is a combination of some job availability and nationalities and cultures tending to herd together - kinda like Muslims in Dearborn or countless Chinatowns.

Real estate, hospitals, schools are all stressed by large numbers from a different culture that generally do not speak English.

On a related note, Ohio is running ads in Austin to get Austinites to move there. Pretty lame ads, but if you are wondering why the governor is even less forthcoming than governors usually are, part of it is the state's PR push. From

a recent interview with Governor DeWine, "Ohio is on the move and Springfield has really made a great resurgence."

Thomas Sowell - "Europe is belatedly discovering how unbelievably stupid it was to import millions of people from cultures that despise Western values and which often promote hatred toward the people who have let them in."

> Eating cats -

So, the whole eating cats thing became a big issue.

I would like to focus on one part of it, and that is accusing Haitians of eating cats is racist.

Of course, racist has lost its meaning. Everybody that you do not like is either racist or fascist, or both.

But, maybe I am just tone deaf.

It's cultural, and Haitians are black, which does not mean it is racist.

Many Asians eat dogs. Asians are yellow, which does not mean it is racist.

You have to tell Koreans when they come here that some things are different.

If, as a Westerner, you really want to be revolted, go to a Chinese "wet market." The number of different animals and animal parts on offer is astounding.

White people eat kangaroo - and geese.

Correlation and causation, people.

Haitians are desperately starving in their own country. They will eat anything - you and I would, too. And when they come to the US, our taboo about eating cats is not shared.

They also sacrifice cats in vodou.

That's also cultural and not racist.

The whole thing is stupid, but it is not inherently racist.

The memes have been fantastic - here are a few -

Springfield cats.





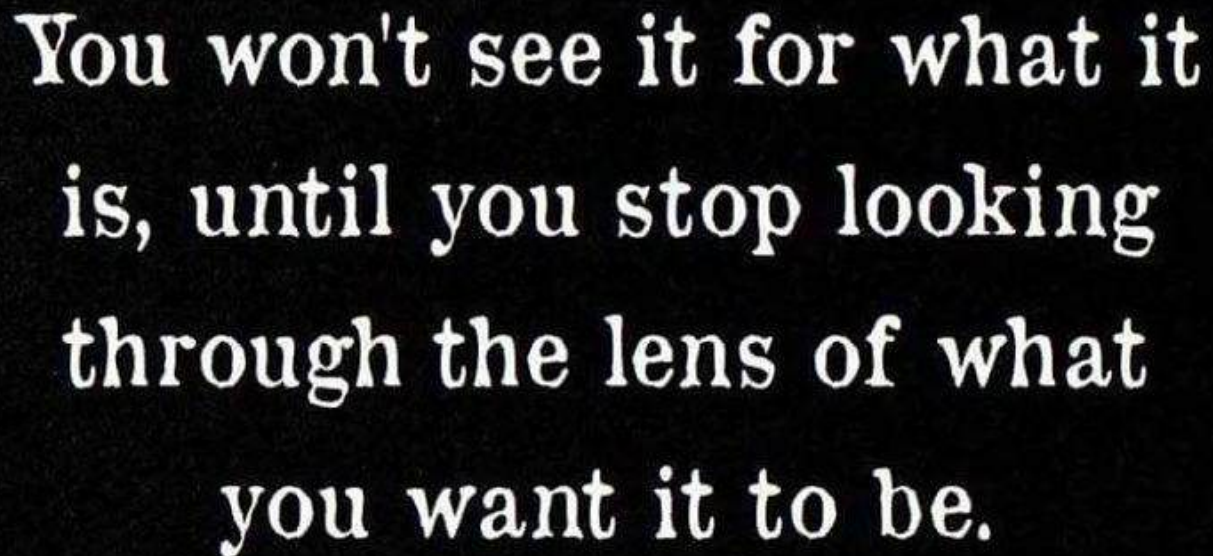
RFK Jr. Really Really Hoping Nobody Asks Him Point Blank If He's Ever Eaten A Cat

Doordash Ohio



I'll stop now.

> Profound



You won't see it for what it
is, until you stop looking
through the lens of what
you want it to be.

HW won in the responses to my article last week, Trump Will Destroy Democracy?

I think the more relevant question is what brand of toothpaste he recommends.

> Saw a video of a Proud Boys march through Springfield. Maybe 25 people. I'm continuing to think about this, but in the face of cities torched by BLM and Antifa, I am having a difficult time working up angst about (the admittedly abhorrent) Proud Boys,

The Bee comes through again, "Governor Abbott Declares Texas Sanctuary State For Memers."

(Newsome of California has just issued directives criminalizing some satire and misinformation. This is the Bee's way of refreshing the California/Texas juxtaposition.)

> *MIT Technology Review* -

Last week OpenAI released a new model called o1 (previously referred to under the code name "Strawberry" and, before that, Q*) that blows GPT-4o out of the water.

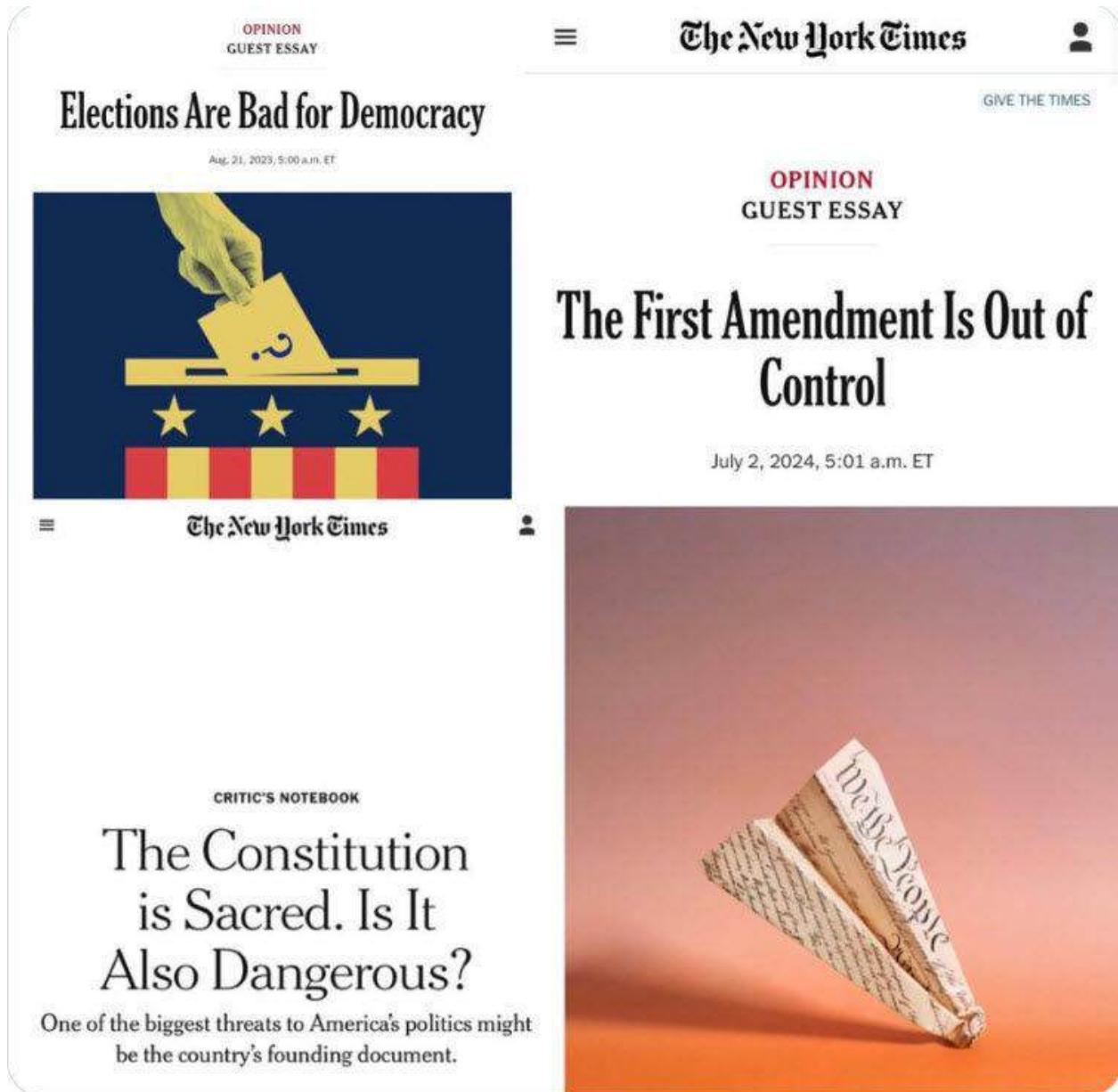
Unlike previous models that are well suited for language tasks like writing

and editing, OpenAI o1 is focused on multistep “reasoning,” the type of process required for advanced mathematics, coding, or other STEM-based questions. The model is also trained to answer PhD-level questions in subjects ranging from astrophysics to organic chemistry.

The new o1 was given an IQ test and it scored 120. I would not take this literally, but it is an example of a step toward reasoning.

> Just watched a troubling clip of Hillary on MSNBC advocating civil or criminal penalties for disseminating propaganda. A lot of people, particularly including Hillary and most on the Covid response team in Biden's administration, would go to jail.

> All the cool kids are doing it -



> Good news -

Public health data shows that US overdose deaths fell 10% nationwide between April 2023 and April 2024. In some states, such as Ohio, the drop was triple that. The findings suggest that the acute wave of overdose deaths that began during the pandemic is ending.

> Bad news -

The United States health system ranked dead last in an international comparison of 10 peer nations, according to a new report by the Commonwealth Fund.

In spite of Americans paying nearly double that of other countries, the system performed poorly on health equity, access to care and outcomes.

> More bad news -

- Two-thirds of fourth and eighth graders aren't proficient in reading, according to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a.k.a. "The Nation's Report Card."
- Absenteeism nearly doubled between 2019 and 2023.
- Between 2018 and 2023, American students' math scores dropped 13 points, reaching the lowest U.S. levels since international comparison records began in 2003.
- An independent assessment in 2023–24 shows eighth graders would need a full year to catch up to pre-pandemic levels—which is basically impossible.

It Ain't Easy Being Green

LA Times article about the environment - headline - It's Almost Shameful To Want To Have Children

> Verisk — which provides catastrophe modeling services — finds that climate change plays a minimal (if that) role in increasing economic and insured loss trends. Expected annual insured losses have almost tripled since 2012, an increase due to exposure trends alone that dwarfs any potential influence of changing climate by about 100 to 1. (The Honest Broker)

Miscellany

For some reason or another, you thought humans were the apex predator -

In reality, plants are actually farming us, by giving us oxygen daily, until we all eventually decompose so they can consume us

I'm not a big Tyson fan, but this is good -



