

# Thoughts on Coming Apart and the Coming Great Reset



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

**Kit Webster**

## Themes and Theses

### Why I'm Contemplating Out Loud

(Initially formulated in the early 90s, following decades of reading history, philosophy, religion, 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 incorporated 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 now at the beginning 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.**

**Eventually, the dollar will be inflated away and lose its reserve status. Once the old rot is cleared out, and assuming continuity, there will be the basis for the establishment of a new order.**

**There will be what Strauss and Howe calls a First Turning . It will be constructed out of the physical infrastructure, wealth, energy sources, thoughts and values in the culture at the time. At this point in time, those components are unknowable. We can anticipate that the next future will be increasingly chaotic. We can anticipate that there will be destruction, and then reconstruction from some level. We cannot yet anticipate the form of the reconstruction or the level from which it will begin.**

**(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 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 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.**

**(Added in 2025) China has won - at least for the next 5-10 years. The US is dependent on China for the materials it uses to create defense items. We literally cannot fight China without China's help. China's industrial base is impressive; the US has to rebuild. China is out-innovating the US. China is turning out more engineers and scientists than the US by far. This does not mean that China does not face challenges - demographics perhaps being its primary challenge. The US military remains stronger than China's, but in an age of drone warfare, that statement means less than it has historically. The US still has bargaining chips and will need to use them to maintain any kind of status quo.**

**(Added in 2025) AI has the potential to profoundly affect human culture. However, AI faces several significant hurdles, including the demand for massive amounts of electricity, which may not be available, and a cultural revolt against its existence. Since it could be existential, and since China is pursuing it, the US has no alternative, at least in the short term.**

**(Added in 2026) Maneuvering for control of critical materials will be a primary driver of geopolitics for at least the next decade.**

## **Why Can't We All Get Along?**

**May 1, 2026**

### **Quotes to Contemplate**

**You have to separate signal from noise. Everything to do with JD Vance, peace talks, ceasefire, retaliation, etc. is noise. The signal is that the Strait of Hormuz is closed and will remain so. We're close to shutting down the global industrial economy. - James Rickards**

**A great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself from within. - Will Durant**

**If we want everything to remain as it is, everything must change. -  
Garibaldi**

**Where in the 1913 Federal Reserve Act, the 1977 Federal Reserve Reform Act, or the 1978 Humphrey-Hawkins legislation is there any reference to “central bank independence”...? It doesn't exist. - Judy Shelton**

## **Summary of Primary Thoughts To Contemplate In This Issue**

**The world continues to grind down. Deterioration will continue.**

**The Iran War will profoundly affect the way the world perceives and implements energy.**

**We will never get along - ever. But we really wish we could.**

**The Supreme Court taking away racial Gerrymandering was the Constitutionally-correct move. However, it raises questions about how a multiethnic society can function. In the past, Irish, Jews, Catholics and Chinese kept at it until they more or less fit in and became participants in the mainstream. Today, we have not reached that point with blacks, and Muslims are waiting in the wings. Cage matches coming in every state that has a meaningful black population.**

**The Iran War officially becomes illegal tomorrow (or not). Will anyone notice?**

**Many (most?) global warming proponents are clueless (our secret word for today) and often hysterical. (Remember, I am a "believer" in global warming.)**

## **Markets**

**[Updated charts](#)**

Charts not updated.

Not much to say until the war is over.

## **Why Can't We All Get Along?**

I wrote a treatise that was pretty much of a jumble, and AI didn't think much of it, so I deleted it.

However, there were two companion pieces to it that I have included below without context, fwiw.

The first point I was trying to make is that your perceptions are a highly processed transformation of signals about reality. They are not reality.

The second was discussing the world as seen from the perspectives of an average IQ and a gifted IQ.

Moving on ...

One of the reasons my piece was pretty much of a jumble was that I was trying to do too much in a small space. I will get started now and spread it out over weeks and months.

The primary point is a reinforcement of some of my themes - there are so many different realities - one per person - that agreement is hard, perhaps impossible. Combine that with the fact that we are violent animals, ruled by emotion, and the conclusion is that disagreement and conflict are inherent and embedded in everything we do - from where to eat lunch and which cereal is best to child rearing, geopolitics and religion. We're number one no matter who "we" is.

It's a feature, not a bug.

Perhaps the place to start is reality.

There may or may not be reality, but whatever it is, we will never know it. Everything we know is constructed by heavily processed sensorial experiences, filtered by genetic mental capacity, formed by the biases of experience and freighted with emotion. (Hence the sidebars on perception and IQ below.) Each one of us - all eight billion of us - has

**different genetics, different experiences and different traumas.**

**Therefore, each one of us constructs a reality that we firmly believe is true and almost certainly, ok with absolute certainty, is not.**

**At best, we live in Plato's cave with projections of reality on the wall.**

**In reality we live in an absurd world best described by quantum mechanics which reduces to waves, fields and probability.**

**There are factors in our environment that enforce and prohibit behaviors - law, religion, peer pressure - which create enough structure for civilization to function.**

**But the underlying variations do not disappear. They are simply repressed.**

**Which is why we can't get along. Why we can never agree. Why group differences will always matter.**

**Another of our characteristics is that we are self -aware. Many of us see characteristics that we do not like and want to change behavior in others to the "right" way.**

**My poster child for this is the screen saver that says, peace and love. Or the bumper sticker that says, coexist. Or Rodney King's plea.**

**Using the woke as an example, although it pertains to essentially any other group - we not only need to find our pack, but we also need to change or convert or banish or cancel other packs.**

**The genius of democracy is actually not the many attributes it is praised for. At its heart, it is a system that allows everyone to have their say and which provides a mechanism for resolution. It recognizes that there are and always will be differences, some of which are irreconcilable and unresolvable. But it creates a definition of "fairness" that allows differences to comingle and for definitions of fair to be malleable.**

**Democracy definitely has its weaknesses and we are plumbing them now.**

**However, the simple answers to, how do we all get along as best we can are**

- Be forced to**
- Implement democracy, which provides a protected arena for conflict.**

**It is not in our nature, and we never will, get along.**

**Even a cursory look at history - all cultures and all times, 200,000 years of homo sapiens; 10,000 years of civilization - quickly reveals that this is a meaningless? silly? clueless? question.**

**But "hope springs eternal in the human breast."**

## **So, You Say You Want A Revolution?**

**(I will explicitly note any use of AI throughout this newsletter. If there is no AI-note, you can assume it is either my writing or a quote from a news source.)**

**> Virginia court rules Dems' redistricting map is unconstitutional less than 24 hours after voters approved it.**

**> Really big.**

**I discussed this a couple of weeks ago. No privileged groups in a Gerrymander. - The Supreme Court has ruled that drawing Congressional districts based on race under the Voting Rights Act is unconstitutional, 6-3. The case was about an intentionally-drawn black majority district.**

**I am really conflicted over this. For me, it is clearly the "right" outcome, consistent with the Constitution. No group should have preferred rights. At the same time, we face the practical issue of group differences, sometimes significant, and how those minority groups ever get a chance to express an opinion. The answer is as it has always been - compromise and form alliances with other groups.**

**Only, our system, unlike many parliamentary systems, does not facilitate this well.**

**At the same time, women have the right to vote, blacks are now equal in law, gays can marry and accommodations are made for the disabled. Significant changes can happen.**

**This is a fundamental issue - another one in the unsolvable category - that requires a lot of work underneath the covers to address.**

**As a practical matter, since blacks vote overwhelmingly Democrat, the ruling favors Republicans.**

**There will now be a Gerrymandering free-for-all in every state that has a meaningful black population.**

**The New York Times describes it as follows:**

**"The Voting Rights Act was supposed to end discrimination against minority voters. Did it work? A Supreme Court majority thinks so. Its ruling against a Louisiana congressional map this week didn't knock the 1965 law down, but justices said the measure was no longer as important as it once was.**

**The language on both sides is dense. Here's a distillation:**

**The court's conservative majority believes that the medicine prescribed by the Voting Rights Act has worked and we don't need to keep taking it, writes Adam Liptak, our chief legal affairs correspondent. Jim Crow is dead, and official discrimination is rare and illegal. So, the reasoning goes, Louisiana was wrong to use race when it drew up a new majority-Black congressional district.**

**The liberal minority believes the law was doing what it was designed to do in places with a history of racial discrimination. Striking down a law that was working, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote in 2013 about a similar case, "is like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet."**

**So what happens now?**

**Nick Corasaniti, who covers voting, does not mince words: The decision 'has plunged the nation into a dizzying new era of partisan conflict, most likely ushering in a forever redistricting war that could produce fewer competitive seats in Congress and further polarize American politics.'"**

**> Anybody see a trend? - Democratic Socialist Nithya Raman, dubbed "the next Mamdani," is now projected to win the LA mayoral election.**

**Alternative Universes**

I was talking with my friend, EP, the other day. She is pretty liberal, but not woke, and abhors Trump.

She was fumbling a bit when she brought up a topic that was interesting, but you could see a little, "I told you so," in it. She said that during the last presidential election I thought that Trump and Harris would be equally bad in different ways (I did not vote for either - I thought both were absolutely terrible candidates).

I had two responses:

- I really enjoy trying to figure out what comes next, knowing full well that prediction is a fool's game (but I have done pretty well with my 30-year thesis, so far).
- 20-20 hindsight is always perfect.

I still think Kamala would have been a disaster. She is so weak, and I would not have been able to have run from word salads and cackles. David Sacks says if Kamala had won the election instead of Trump: "We'd have no data centers, they'd be using AI to censor us, and they'd be promoting DEI values through AI." I think that is directionally correct. We would have hundreds of rules of proper behavior and DEI embedded everywhere. I have no idea whether she is as corrupt as Biden. I do think, based on her personal life, that she has few scruples, but that is the definition of a politician.

But, she most likely would not have threatened the end of the world. Whenever you make a bad prediction, look at your underlying assumptions. My big mistake was thinking that Trump 2.0 would look more or less like Trump 1.0. That would have been bad, but I would probably prefer a continuation of Trump 1.0 over Harris, but who knows? Back to last week's theme of picking your favorite Menendez brother.

Trump is threatening - not so much the end of the world, as its radical change for the worse.

Our world is broken. It must change. Trump is attacking some things that need change. But he is also breaking things that do not need to have been broken, and there is also the chance that he will bring the entire world to its knees.

**That is an unacceptable outcome.**

**You can mess around with a lot of things, but energy and food are not two of them. Kamala does not understand energy, but her decisions would most likely have been sub-optimal and clueless and not necessarily destructive on a massive scale.**

**So, what's the verdict?**

**In hindsight, I would pick Harris and understand that relentless cringe and cluelessness are better than destruction of parts of the foundation of our civilization.**

**EP - 1; me - 0.**

**Not so much because I was pro-Trump, which I was not, but because I was not sufficiently anti-Trump.**

**I did not see it coming.**

## **The Iran War**

**> Can you say, stalemate?**

**> The world continues to grind down.**

**> No change in my probabilities:**

**Boots on the ground - 80%**

**Use of nuclear weapons - 20%**

**(Also, Dems take House and Senate in midterms > 50%.)**

**Unless something changes, both will likely trend up next week.**

**Here's the deal.**

**This only ends with the Strait of Hormuz opening.**

**The Iranians know that the world will increasingly be in dire straights as time goes along. Therefore Trump will cave.**

**Trump knows the Iranians are suffering horribly and the blockade is working. Therefore, the Iranians will cave.**

**If Trump caves, Iran is left in charge of the Strait, but at least the world can begin to go back to some new definition of normalcy. It will take months, and "food insecurity" is now baked in, but at least things will**

**begin working again in the long term. However, Iran keeps working on a nuclear bomb.**

**If Iran does not cave and Trump does not cave, then Iran must be forced to give up the Strait. That means boots on the ground and perhaps nuclear weapons.**

**And, Iranian missiles will attack infrastructure all over the Middle East. This is one, grand, intergalactic game of chicken, with the world economy literally on the line.**

**And the clock is ticking.**

**> Erwin Chemerinsky contended that, if the war in Iran “continues through Friday without congressional approval, it will clearly be illegal, having passed the 60-day threshold and the 48-hour notice period that the president is given, under the War Powers Resolution of 1973, to conduct this kind of military operation.” Only, it gets complicated - the Trump people say the clock stopped with the ceasefire, so no violation tomorrow.**

**> NACHO - "Not A Chance Hormuz Opens"**

**> It rained in Iran, softening a multi-year drought. Make of that what you will.**

**> Here's Iran's problem with the blockade. Yes, it is not making money. But perhaps the bigger challenge is that oil has to go somewhere or you have to shut in the wells. Once all the tankers are full and the storage is full. Iran has to stop producing oil. As we have discussed previously, shutting down and restarting oil wells is expensive, time consuming and sometimes problematic. JP Morgan - "Full shut-in is estimated at around Day 30 of the blockade — which, given the blockade went into effect the weekend of April 19–20, points to approximately May 19–20, 2026."**

**> NBC News - "American military bases and other equipment in the Persian Gulf region suffered extensive damage from Iranian strikes that**

is far worse than publicly acknowledged and is expected to cost billions of dollars to repair, according to three U.S. officials, two congressional aides and another person familiar with the damage.

The Iranian regime swiftly retaliated after the Trump administration attacked on Feb. 28, hitting dozens of targets across U.S. military bases in seven Middle East countries. Those attacks struck warehouses, command headquarters, aircraft hangars, satellite communications infrastructure, runways, high-end radar systems and dozens of aircraft, according to the U.S. officials and an assessment by the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington, D.C. In the initial days of the war, an Iranian F-5 fighter jet bombed the U.S. base Camp Buehring in Kuwait, despite the base having air defenses, a rare breach that marked the first time an enemy fixed-wing aircraft has struck an American military base in years, according to two of the U.S. officials.

The U.S. bases that came under attack are home to thousands of American troops, and in some cases their families, though they were largely cleared out in the days and hours before the U.S. and Israeli went to war with Iran."

> Wisdom from reader LH - "Regarding the Iran mess, one aspect seldom considered by Americans is that those people survived Genghis Khan and have argued in bazaars for 6 000 years. Two real estate dudes will not get much."

> Luke Gromen - Trump may have extended the ceasefire because had the shooting re-started, it seems the US may have quickly run out of interceptor missiles which not only would have been a bad look, but it would have left US assets unprotected in the Gulf and Asia.

(Kit) Think about the last column. Also, this could be another motive for using nuclear weapons.

**Table 1: Status of Key Munitions**

<b>Munition</b>	<b>Unit Cost (USD)</b>	<b>Estimated Prewar Inventory</b>	<b>Estimated Use in the Iran War</b>	<b>Delivery Timeline (Months)</b>
Tomahawk	\$2.6M	3,100	850+	47
JASSM	\$2.6M	4,400	1,000+	48
PrSM	\$1.6M	90	40-70	46
SM-3	\$28.7M	410	130-250	64
SM-6	\$5.3M	1,160	190-370	53
THAAD	\$15.5M	360	190-290	53
Patriot	\$3.9M	2,330	1,060-1,430	42

> The oil crisis triggered by the Iran war has changed the fossil fuel industry forever, turning countries away from fossil fuels to secure energy supplies, the world’s leading energy economist said.

Fatih Birol, the executive director of the International Energy Agency (IEA), also said that, despite pressure, the UK should forgo much of its potential North Sea expansion.

Speaking exclusively to the Guardian, Birol said a key effect of the US-Israel war on Iran was that countries would lose trust in fossil fuels and demand for them would reduce.

“Their perception of risk and reliability will change. Governments will review their energy strategies. There will be a significant boost to renewables and nuclear power and a further shift towards a more electrified future,” he said. “And this will cut into the main markets for oil.”

Birol said there was no going back from the crisis: “The vase is broken, the damage is done – it will be very difficult to put the pieces back together. This will have permanent consequences for the global energy markets for years to come.”

> The 70s are calling. Remember when New York City went bankrupt? (It brought Beth's family to Houston, so from my point of view, a fair trade-off.) Mayor Mamdani says New York City faces a “budget crisis of historic magnitude,” asks the state for more aid.

The irony is thick. Bankrupt before the socialist could even do anything. Also, a great backdrop for his wealth tax.

> BOOM!



**Darth Powell** @VladTheInflator · 18h



Which country is America's greatest enemy?

China

Russia

Israel

Iran

2,186 votes · 5 hours left

230

438

969

32K



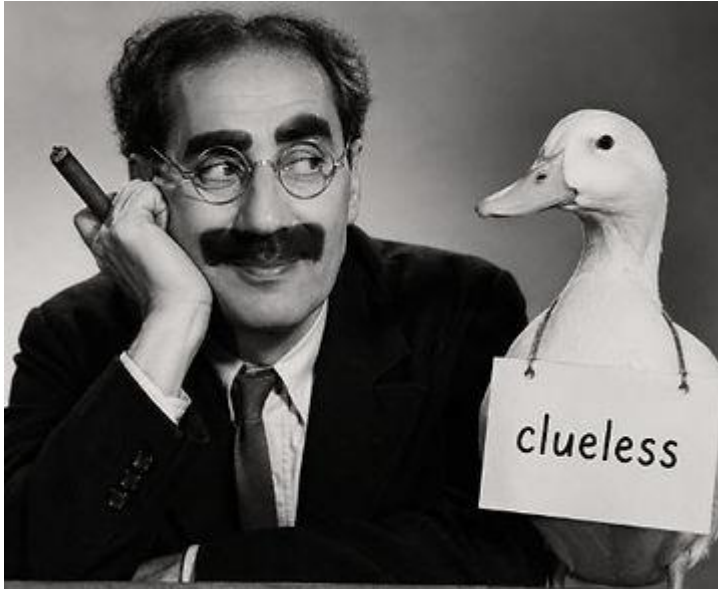
**Lyn Alden** @LynAldenContact · 41m



We're our own worst enemy.

**Absolutely no one will get this cultural reference, but Clueless is the secret word. I will overuse it today.**

**(The image was AI generated. Groucho had a duck before Aflac did. I worry about myself that I remember this at all.)**



## Short Takes

- > A ray of hope - Indiana Governor signs law that schools will teach the success sequence: graduate, work full time, marry, have kids in that order.
- > Switzerland to vote on capping its population at 10 million. Current population is 9 million; fertility rate is 1.3-ish. This is not a problem.
- > California police can now ticket driverless cars.
- > Last November, Breaking Rust became the first fully AI artist to hit #1 on a Billboard chart. Weeks later, Telisha Jones used Suno to create Xania Monet, another AI chart-topper that landed a \$3M deal.
- > Jasmine Crockett is back! I have missed her. And, since she is not running for anything, she does not have to play nice anymore. Most clueless politicians - AOC, Marjorie Taylor Greene, etc. - are just that - clueless. My response to them is usually, huh? Jasmine is clueless and in your face at the same time - my response is huh, with a smile. Jasmine's latest assertion is that Gov. Greg Abbott is DEI because he uses a wheelchair and is D as in disabled. Of course, the issue is that he

was not elected or given a leg up (hee hee) because he was disabled, which is the point of DEI.

Go get 'em, Jasmine!

> You would be shocked to know that I am not an Ilhan Omar fan, but I do feel a little guilty, English not being her first language. However, it was genuinely funny when she referred to World War Eleven.

(It is a bit strange that we use Roman numerals for some things. Arabic numbering should be good enough for both Ilhan and me. Let's go with World War 2. My name is FS Webster 3. The next Super Bowl is Super Bowl 61. All numbers should be equal. Romans were colonizers. (Arabs were also colonizers, but some colonizers are more equal than others. Romans were mostly white - Arabs win.))

> I wrote a piece several weeks ago supporting the thesis that global warming is "real."

That does not mean that many of the supporters of the global warming thesis are not zealots or idiots. It's actually quite an impressive accumulation of cluelessness. They have no idea what they are talking about. It's trendy, and if you are leftist, then your people support it. What more do you need to know?

Many, many unjustified claims and much panic. That is why I unequivocally state that you should not get your global warming news from politicians or the mainstream news. Ever.

Scientists have embarrassingly engaged in propaganda. Since global warming is politically correct, those that wish to differ have been literally eliminated from the conversation.

And many of those in the conversation have been misleading.

Now, this gets complicated, so, as usual, I will oversimplify it.

In order to model greenhouse gas production in the future you have to decide what the future looks like - population growth, energy efficiency, etc. Global warming is rife with such models and every publication of the IPCC includes the output of five or six, from really bad outcomes to very good outcomes.

For years, scientists and news outlets have been basing much of their catastrophizing on one of the worst-outcome models without discussing alternatives or the fact that it is one of the worst.

It has been known for a while that reality is not following these worst-case models - by a lot - and yet scientists and the press continue to use them. In the politically correct world, you get points for being ... well ... politically correct ... not necessarily just plain correct.

It is not an overstatement to say that much of what you read about global warming is nothing but propaganda.

Reality has caught up and a new set of reference models is being established that eliminates the former worst-case models.

Global warming is not going away, but there is a chance that the discussion around it will become more relevant.

Still, this is a cautionary tale about the power of political correctness.

And it is about holding two, opposing thoughts in your head at the same time. Global warming is occurring and many of its proponents are clueless.

 Sabine Hossenfelder reposted



**Peter Hague**  @peterrhague · 17h



No system in human history has allowed more people to sit in their garden making art than capitalism



**BIG TIM**  @OrevaZSN · Apr 26

I just really, really hate the concept of capitalism. I don't want to work my job every day. I want to make art. I want to be in my garden. I want to feel something.
















**Gallery**

## 95% Of Plastic Polluting The World's Oceans Comes From These 10 Rivers



Data source: Schmidt - Export of Plastic Debris by Rivers into the Sea (2017)

**Ranking: the 20 richest countries in the world**  
(prosperity score 2026)

Flag	Country	Prosperity score (0-100)
	Norway	77.65
	Ireland	75.06
	Luxembourg	74.39
	Switzerland	72.46
	Iceland	72.23
	Singapore	66.43
	Denmark	65.78
	Netherlands	58.17
	Belgium	54.83
	Sweden	54.62
	Qatar	50.60
	Germany	50.41
	United Arab Emirates	50.22
	Finland	49.13
	Australia	46.24
	Austria	43.46
	United States	43.39
	Canada	39.44
	Czech Republic	38.49
	France	38.12

source: HelloSafe

## Miscellaneous

With the rise of self driving vehicles, it's only a matter of time until there's a country song where the guy's truck leaves him



**Very nice**

Two communists were sitting in a cafe, when one said to the other, "Communism is the ultimate expression of generosity."

"True," the other replied.

"Case in point: if you had two houses, would you give me one?"

"Absolutely. No question."

"And if you had two cars, would you give me one?" The first Communist asked.

"Without hesitation," the second Communist replied.

"And chickens. If you had two chickens would you give me one?"

"Hm," the second Communist thought about this question for a few moments before answering. "No," he said.

"Why not?"

"Because I have two chickens."

## **Claude**

### **How the Brain Processes Vision and Hearing**

#### **Vision**

**Light enters through the cornea and pupil, gets focused by the lens, and lands on the retina at the back of the eye. The retina contains two types of photoreceptors: rods (low-light, peripheral, monochromatic) and cones (color, detail, concentrated in the fovea). These cells convert photons into electrochemical signals through a cascade involving the pigment rhodopsin.**

**Signals pass through bipolar cells and ganglion cells, whose axons bundle together to form the optic nerve. At the optic chiasm, fibers from the nasal half of each retina cross to the opposite side — this is what allows the brain to combine input from both eyes and extract depth information.**

**From the chiasm, most signals travel via the optic tract to the lateral geniculate nucleus (LGN) of the thalamus, which acts as a relay and**

**filter. From the LGN, the optic radiations project to the primary visual cortex (V1) in the occipital lobe at the back of the brain.**

**V1 extracts basic features — edges, orientation, motion direction, contrast. From there, processing splits into two streams:**

- The dorsal stream ("where/how") runs up into the parietal lobe and handles spatial location, motion, and visually guided action.**
- The ventral stream ("what") runs down into the temporal lobe and handles object recognition, faces (fusiform face area), and reading.**

**A smaller subset of retinal output bypasses the cortex and goes to the superior colliculus (reflexive eye movements) and the suprachiasmatic nucleus (circadian rhythm).**

## **Hearing**

**Sound waves enter the ear canal and vibrate the tympanic membrane (eardrum). Three tiny bones — malleus, incus, stapes — amplify and transmit the vibration to the cochlea, a fluid-filled spiral in the inner ear. Inside the cochlea sits the organ of Corti, lined with hair cells along the basilar membrane. The membrane is tuned tonotopically: high frequencies stimulate hair cells near the base, low frequencies near the apex. When hair cells bend, ion channels open and neural signals fire in the cochlear nerve (part of cranial nerve VIII).**

**The auditory pathway has more waystations than vision. Signals travel through:**

- 1. Cochlear nuclei in the brainstem**
- 2. Superior olivary complex — critical for sound localization, since this is where input from both ears first converges; it compares timing and intensity differences between ears**
- 3. Inferior colliculus in the midbrain**
- 4. Medial geniculate nucleus (MGN) of the thalamus — the auditory analog of the LGN**
- 5. Primary auditory cortex (A1) in the superior temporal gyrus**

**A1 preserves the tonotopic map — neighboring neurons respond to neighboring frequencies, like keys on a piano. Surrounding "belt" and "parabelt" regions process more complex features: pitch, timbre, rhythm, and eventually speech. In most people, speech comprehension**

localizes to Wernicke's area in the left hemisphere, while music and prosody lean right.

### **Notable Parallels**

Both systems share an architecture worth noting: peripheral transduction → brainstem relay → thalamic gating → primary cortex → hierarchical feature extraction → specialized association areas. Both preserve a topographic map from the sensor into cortex (retinotopy for vision, tonotopy for hearing). And both split into parallel streams for "what" versus "where" processing — object identity in the ventral/belt regions, spatial localization in the dorsal/parietal regions.

The biggest difference is the number of subcortical relays: hearing has considerably more, largely because precise binaural timing comparisons for localization require dedicated brainstem circuits before signals ever reach cortex.

### **Claude - 100 vs 140 IQs**

A 100 IQ sits at the population median; 140 is roughly +2.67 standard deviations, or about the top 0.4%. The gap is large enough that the cognitive differences are qualitative, not just quantitative. Here's how it tends to show up in practice.

**Working memory and variable-juggling.** Fluid intelligence correlates tightly with working memory capacity. A 100-IQ thinker can typically hold and actively manipulate roughly four chunks of information at once; a 140-IQ thinker more like six or seven. In practice that means the median person can follow a two- or three-variable argument comfortably but starts dropping or simplifying variables past that, while the high-IQ thinker can track, say, five interacting factors in a business model, a legal argument, or a scientific hypothesis without collapsing them into a single-cause narrative.

**Chain length in reasoning.** Related but distinct. At 100, deductive chains of two to three steps are reliable; errors accumulate quickly past that, and contradictions several steps removed from a premise often go unnoticed. At 140, chains of six to eight steps are typically navigable, and distant inconsistencies are more often caught. This is why mid-IQ

readers of complex policy or contract language often anchor on surface wording, while high-IQ readers spot structural implications two or three inferences downstream.

**Abstraction depth.** The median thinker handles concrete concepts and one layer of abstraction well—applying a principle to a case, using a familiar analogy. Recursive abstraction (thinking about the structure of thinking, reasoning about the framework itself, nested counterfactuals) is where the ceiling typically shows. A 140 thinker moves between object-level and meta-level more fluidly and can hold a frame while simultaneously critiquing it.

**Rate of concept acquisition.** Given the same explanation of a genuinely novel complex idea, the 140 thinker typically needs fewer examples, less scaffolding, and less repetition to form a working model. The 100 thinker can acquire the same concept but needs more worked examples, more time, and more concrete instances before the abstraction crystallizes. This is why the learning-curve gap widens in domains like formal mathematics, statistics, symbolic logic, or theoretical physics, where each new concept depends on fluent use of prior abstractions.

**Pattern recognition and transfer.** High-IQ thinkers detect structural similarity across surface-dissimilar domains more readily—the insight that a pricing problem and a biological equilibrium problem share math, for instance. Median-IQ pattern recognition tends to be more context-bound; patterns get learned within a domain but don't transfer as easily.

**Tolerance for ambiguity and multi-causality.** A consistent finding: the median thinker tends to resolve complexity prematurely into a single cause, a clean narrative, or a binary. The high-IQ thinker more comfortably holds multiple competing hypotheses suspended, weights them probabilistically, and tolerates the discomfort of "the answer is: it depends on these four things interacting." This shows up heavily in judgment under uncertainty, forecasting, and strategic analysis.

**Metacognition.** Monitoring one's own reasoning for errors—catching oneself about to commit a fallacy, noticing that a conclusion doesn't actually follow, recognizing the limits of one's own model—is more

**developed at higher IQ on average, though this one is especially modulated by disposition and training.**

**A few caveats worth keeping in mind, because the literature is more nuanced than the crude comparison suggests. Domain expertise routinely beats raw IQ: a 100-IQ specialist with 20 years in a field will out-reason a 140-IQ novice in that field on almost everything that matters. Noncognitive factors (conscientiousness, epistemic humility, intellectual honesty, grit) predict real-world decision quality about as well as IQ past a certain threshold. And IQ is essentially silent on wisdom, taste, ethical judgment, social intelligence, and the ability to decide which problem is worth thinking about—areas where high-IQ people can be strikingly weak. The 140-IQ thinker has a wider cognitive bandwidth; whether they use it well is a separate question.**