

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 five years or so 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 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.

Reality - From Plato's Cave to Dark Matter

August 8, 2025

Quotes to Contemplate

We will say it again, for emphasis: To our eyes, the US GENIUS Act and stablecoin push appear to be an elegant way to get bitcoin far higher, which will then drive higher US tax receipts (lower deficits) and higher T-Bill demand, as the US Dollar is devalued against bitcoin...strengthening USD hegemony, even as the USD is massively devalued v. bitcoin. - Luke Gromen

The past six months (masked federal police, detention camps, statist economics, corrupt appointments, Epstein whitewash) have given me a visceral and urgent appreciation of the Second Amendment, which I had previously understood only as a quaint historical artifact. - Ben Hunt

In politics, never assume that because something is insane, it will not be done. - Thomas Sowell

**There is a point in the history of society when it becomes so pathologically soft and tender that among other things it sides even with those who harm it, criminals, and does this quite seriously and honestly.
- Nietzsche**

Summary of Primary Thoughts To Contemplate In This Issue

The owls are not what they seem.

Some of the tariff agreements are kabuki, but the hammer came down on Thursday. There should be some serious shaking out coming up in the next few weeks.

Having said that, we are getting near the end of the end game with Russia and China. I think China has the advantage, while it's neck and neck with Russia.

Reality - From Plato's Cave to Dark Matter

A little while ago, I wrote a treatise on how, given our genes and upbringing, each of us creates a different reality - THE true reality, mind you. The point was, we can't all get along, and, absent a major crisis, never will, and then only during the major crisis.

Surely there must be an actual, um, real, reality out there somewhere. I see a moon of a different size and color than you do. You may think that humans have never landed on the moon or that there are aliens hiding behind it. But, surely, there's a moon up there. Right? We may never be

able to agree on exactly what it is, but there must be one of whatever it is up there.

And, look at us. We have conquered time, space and the atom. We fix hearts through small incisions in the ... thigh. We nurture 3-month premature babies to life. We have AI. We have gotten beyond the supernatural. Surely we must understand a lot about the world around us.

Only, many of us believe that the only truth is what we feel.

But back to the moon thing. We can use instruments to figure out the color and the laws of gravitation to figure out how big it is.

Only, there are theories that the gravitational constant isn't constant. $2 + 2 = 5$, if that's what I think.

Let's make this contemplation as much of a stupid-free zone as possible. Eliminating emotion and ideology (assuming that's possible), what can we objectively say about reality?

Before we get started, Gemini has produced a treatise on reality that is attached to this week's email notification.

And I want to blow you away with just one fact - we make up our minds something like a half second to multiple seconds before that thought reaches consciousness. (Of course one of THE major questions is, what is consciousness, anyway?)

Plato (c. 400 BCE) wasn't the first, but he got the ball rolling. He understood subjectivity and the different interpretations of different people's senses. He described reality in the allegory of the Cave, which is a simply wonderful contemplation and you should read about it [here](#). In Plato's Cave, humanity watches the projection of shadows on a wall and that projection is their reality. The allegory is much more than this, but this is the main point for our purposes. What we experience as reality is not actually reality and there is no way to tell what reality is. It is behind us, between us and the fire, but is distorted by the fire and the contours of the wall of the cave.

My second favorite story about reality is that of the blind men and the elephant. In my version of the story, three blind men approach an elephant. The first picks up the tail and says, "I know what an elephant

is. It is a long rope with a hairy end." Another at the foot says that the first is wrong, an elephant is like a large tree. The third at the trunk insists that it is a long, flexible tube, with air coming in and out. No one sees the entire elephant.

So, we got through the Enlightenment and adopted the Scientific Method, and that's when things got really wonky.

It turns out that many physical things are nonlinear complex systems and not solvable even in principle.

Relativity came along and began messing around with space and time - making both shorter or longer.

Quantum mechanics came along and it's just frigging nuts. Quantum mechanics makes Alice in Wonderland look like a Victorian dinner table. Nothing makes sense, even to someone who "understands" quantum mechanics.

It turns out that 95% of the matter and energy in the universe is unaccounted for.

When you see something, you do not see the camera-like picture that is in your mind. You see shapes and edges and motion. The picture is a creation of the mind.

Your eye sees perhaps 1% of the electromagnetic spectrum.

I could go on and on.

The conclusion is that we have no idea what reality is, even if we leave emotion out of it altogether.

And it mostly doesn't matter.

We all live in our own realities.

We make it up as we go along, and that works ...

Until reality intrudes.

Markets

[Updated charts](#)

> No change in outlook.

> Luke Gromen's quote, above, indicates that someone in Trump's organization basically agrees with my outlook and is playing 4-D chess with stablecoins to try to salvage as much of the situation as possible. In any event the dollar goes down. (Gromen is a wonder - subscribe to his [newsletter](#).) Digital currency is providing a ray of light in a really dismal reality.

So, You Say You Want A Revolution?

- A federal judge on July 31 blocked the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from ending temporary protected status (TPS) for hundreds of thousands of immigrants from Nepal, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

> Probably just a coincidence - Ghislaine Maxwell has been relocated to a minimum-security prison just a week after the Justice Department interviewed her about the Jeffrey Epstein case.

> Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in an interview this week that the Trump Accounts, which are aimed at helping parents save for their children's future, are "a back door for privatizing Social Security."

> It seems that Trump is spiraling ever deeper into arbitrary narcissism - Trump on weak jobs report: "We're doing so well—I believe the numbers were phony so I fired her." Now, I don't want to mislead you.

Government data varies from terribly corrupt to really well done. But usually, any finagling is done quietly, behind the scenes. Trump is going to try to influence the numbers in front of god and everybody.

> Oops - Indian oil refineries will continue to buy oil from Russia, officials have said.

> They're starting to take soda and junk food away from (food stamps).

> The Guardian had an article on Trump's mental lapses. I started discussing Biden's mental issues in 2020. It is important to distinguish between senior moments and significant decline. You build a mental model of baseline behavior and then compare actual behavior against that. It was clear to me that Biden was in decline. I expected his decline

to be normal and did not expect the acceleration. Anyway, Trump is very different. His normal mode combines ADD and Tourette's, so it is really difficult to tell what is normal-strange and what is deterioration. I joke (?) about myself that I have always had a difficulty recalling proper nouns. Don't know why; just do. So, if I begin to decline mentally, no one will be able to tell, since not being able to recall proper nouns is an early indicator. Anyway, I haven't been able to detect a decline in Trump, but the signal-to-noise ratio is terrible.

Then, he climbs on the roof of the White House and does YMCA.

> Fascinating - The House Oversight Committee is compelling the following individuals to appear for depositions through issued subpoenas around the Epstein thing:

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton: October 9

Former President Bill Clinton: October 14

Former U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland: October 2

Former FBI Director James Comey: October 7

Former U.S. Attorney General William Barr: August 18

Former U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales: August 26

Former U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions: August 28

Former FBI Director Robert Mueller: September 2

Former U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch: September 9

Former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder: September 30

> Democrats are shocked, shocked that there is gerrymandering going on. (Do not yell, hypocrisy - hypocrisy is a feature, not a bug, of politics - all politics. Some of the all-time great gerrymanders are in Illinois and Maryland - ribbons curling around most of the states.)

> Last week I said that my impression was that Trump did not read books. Reader LK disagreed, causing me to actually come up with some data to back up my opinion. I failed. See an article on this [here](#). Not a heavy hitter, but no slacker, either.

> Trump orders census that does not include illegals. Not sure how that would work since the whole census/apportionment thing is in the Constitution.

> Trump to meet with Putin, proposes trilateral summit with Putin and Zelensky.

> The jury is still out for me and ObamaGate - for Matt Taibbi, not so much - "I've tiptoed for years around what I believed to be true about this case, worrying some mitigating fact might emerge. Now, there's no doubt. Hillary Clinton got in a jam, and the FBI, CIA, and the Obama White House got her out of it by setting Trump up. That's it. It was a cover-up, plain and simple."

> Not a good sign - JD Vance's team had water level of Ohio river raised for family's boating trip

Exclusive: Incident raises questions of exploitation of public services, but Secret Service says it was requested for 'safe navigation.'

> Trump directs military to target foreign drug cartels.

When Is A Deal Not A Deal? Jonah Goldberg On Tariffs

Now, I have no objection to calling the EU agreement a political victory for Trump. But Trump was not "right about tariffs." For starters, the tariffs he originally wanted and announced to massive fanfare on "Liberation Day" didn't happen. He backed off that, because the "experts" convinced the markets, especially the bond markets, that his plan would be disastrous. And the markets convinced Trump to retreat. An enormous number of people want to airbrush this fact from the record. Instead, they insist that because the economy hasn't crashed, as many predicted after "Liberation Day," that Trump has been proven "right about tariffs."

If I announce that I am going to drink a giant jug of bleach and then I'm talked out of it by the "experts," if I then opt to drink instead a shot of bleach and survive, that doesn't mean I get to say, "I was right all along about bleach-drinking."

Then there's the problem that most of these "trade deals" aren't actually deals. They're frameworks, verbal agreements, memorandums of

understanding, and press releases. As John John Gustavsson explains for The Dispatch, the deal reached with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, isn't a trade deal. She has no authority to make a trade deal. The framework she agreed to has to work its way through layers upon layers of political and bureaucratic mechanisms.

Gustavsson writes:

First, the European Commission must approve it. That's the easy part. Then it goes to the Council of the European Union, and that's where things get interesting—or difficult, rather. The Council is roughly equivalent to the U.S. Senate, in that each member state has one vote regardless of size. For a trade agreement to pass, it typically needs a 55 percent majority—15 out of 27 states, and those 15 states must represent at least 65 percent of the Union's population.

“But,” he adds, “that is not the only hurdle, nor the biggest.” It then has to get approved—unanimously—by national governments and the European parliament. In short: It's frick'n complicated. If you want a sense of how slow Europe can be in deciding things it doesn't want to do, consider that Turkey started its application for EU membership in the 1950s. No one seems to think the Turks will be admitted before the end of the millennium.

What Trump got was a great headline.

He got similar headlines on his “deals” that aren't actual trade deals with the U.K., Japan, and other countries.

Calling Trump's Bluff

I think this is important.

As I have been stressing here, following luminaries such as Luke Gromen and Doomberg, it is clear that the US has fallen significantly behind Russia in industrial production (read, military) capability and is dependent upon China for key strategic goods, such as rare earths. My view is that Trump is bluffing with a weak hand, but all the minor players have folded in the face of his show of strength. He is still at the table and

the US still has strengths, but it is a weak hand. At some point the bluff will be called. Russia is calling it now by not backing down in Ukraine and China is calling it now by increasing restrictions on its exporting of critical materials and continuing to purchase sanctioned Russian oil. While the whole game will play itself out in the future, the break in the US facade is going to become apparent during the play of this hand. Doomberg puts it this way behind a paywall: "In our view, both the military and economic dimensions of this global conflict are approaching a dangerous phase. US President Donald Trump will soon be confronted with the prospect of either escalating the Russia and China fronts to unthinkable levels or accepting significant damage to US prestige and geopolitical power. While he's escaped many corners he's previously painted himself into, one has to wonder what realistic path exists out of this one. A resolution either way now seems imminent, and decades of geopolitical trajectory could reach a climax in the coming weeks. ... One way or another, both the military situation in Ukraine and Trump's tariff threats against those two nuclear superpowers will soon come to a head. On neither track do we see a favorable outcome for the US and its allies, and how Trump responds to such negative developments remains uncertain. Among the range of potential outcomes are some that are incredibly dangerous, and that so much of this is unfolding in real time over social media only heightens the risk." When you're running a bluff in poker, you have to decide how far you are going to take it - one "barrel (bet)", two barrels? When you get to the river, the last card in the hand, you have to decide whether to fold, and get caught bluffing but live to fight another day, or to go all in, which is the ultimate show of strength. This is where Doomberg and I think Trump is. If I were at the table, I would say that Trump has something like jack, ten, suited; China has a pair of kings; Russia has maybe a pair of tens. The board so far has been blanks through the turn (the next-to-last card), although one of the cards on the board is an ace, and it is about time to see the river. Further, I think that both Russia and China believe Trump is bluffing with a weak hand, but he may not be. Both

have called earlier bets during the hand without hesitation. The issue is that they may have to withstand that major bet on the river.

Short Takes

- > Great [article](#) by Neil Howe on how Google AI summaries will literally destroy the internet.
- > Really, really good - I heard Keir Starmer says that free speech is definitely allowed in the UK, and anyone who says otherwise will be fined.
- > Not funny



Dr. Matthew M. Wielicki @MatthewWielicki · 4h
The UK is literally throwing people in jail for @X posts.
[x.com/KellyScaletta/...](https://x.com/KellyScaletta/)

This post is unavailable.

- > People are truly remarkable –

JOURNAL ARTICLE

Carbon emission analysis of aortic valve replacement: the environmental footprint of transcatheter vs. surgical procedures

David Blitzer , Christoph J Meinrenken , Nora Bystadhaugen Apeltgren ,
Ximena Sosa Chavez , Olympe Durrenberger , Ajay S Jagdish , Michael Simpson ,
Nicholas Bowers , Elizabeth I James , Luigi Pirelli ... [Show more](#)

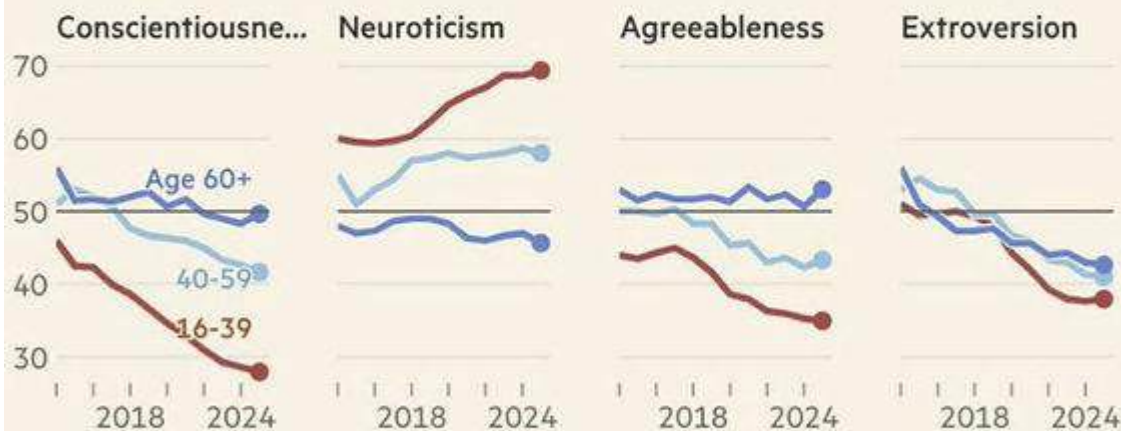
European Heart Journal, ehaf379, <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehaf379>

Published: 02 July 2025 **Article history** ▼

- > This has to be fake news - right? Survey: 77% of Zoomers have brought parent to job interview, 45% have parents call bosses regularly.
- > Kids these days –

Young adults' personalities are changing, with conscientiousness in freefall

Relative change in strength of different personality traits (2014 average = 50) by age group



Values are expressed as percentiles of the full population distribution as it stood in 2014

Source: FT analysis of the [Understanding America Study](#), based on prior work by [Sutin et al \(2022\)](#)

FT graphic: John Burn-Murdoch / @jburnmurdoch

©FT

Miscellany

In spite of all the fantastic memes, I swore to myself this would be a Sydney Sweeney-free issue.

I lied.



The Babylon Bee ✓ @TheBabylonBee · 2h



Scholars Believe David's Attention Was Captured By
Bathsheba's American Eagle Jeans buff.ly/vQGVpRy



Very nice



The Babylon Bee ✓ @TheBabylonBee · 2h



Secret Service In Awe As Trump Walks On Moderately Sloped Roof buff.ly/3UfiWNT

