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Allegorical Intermezzo - Kunstler

James Howard Kunstler

6–8 minutes

Clusterfuck Nation

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Imagine that on an April evening in 1912, the captain of the RMS *Titanic* had announced a grand ball at which the male passengers were asked to wear their wives' clothing and vice-versa.... That was approximately the condition of Western Civilization verging on springtime in 2023: preoccupied with silliness while the iceberg awaits.

But who would have thought the sinking of civilization would occur with such fantastic comic ornamentation? Men, in more ways than mere costuming, pretending to be women... incompetence honored, feted, even worshipped... intellect reduced to anti-thinking... anything of value thrown overboard in some weird post-modern potlatch ceremony of twisted moral righteousness...? But the hour is late, the party is near its end, and the iceberg is struck. The rest of the story will be you holding onto a few valuables, including your life, while the lifeboats get lowered.

From here forward, things get pretty interesting. And from here on, nobody is really in charge. The vacuum of leadership we've been living in becomes impossible to ignore, and nature (it's rumored) hates a vacuum. For the moment, circumstances are in charge, not personalities.

Look no further than the fiasco in Ukraine, engineered by geniuses of the US foreign service in some daft exercise to show the world who's who and what for. And, remind me: what was the basic idea there? To hamstring and hogtie Russia so badly that her people would overthrow the only rational head-of-state in Christendom, a figure who makes the presidents, chancellors, and prime ministers of Western Civ look like a troop of gibbering mandrills, with painted faces and blue butts, the ass-clowns of geopolitics.

Something tells me that this gang will not make it to the lifeboats. They'll be left on deck gripping bottles of single malt scotch whiskey, singing *Don't Cry for me Argentina* as the band plays, while the whole wicked colossus slides beneath the moonlight-tinted green waves. All of which is to say: these perilous and confounding times we live in are coming to a climax. Events are afoot now, choices must be made, truths will emerge, no one will be untouched, be careful who your friends are.

We're waiting for financial markets, banks, and monies to blow, as an engine will when submerged in water. It can't *not* happen, though every known device has been deployed to keep up appearances. The credibility of finance was thrown overboard a long time ago. Capital was sloshing around in the bilges as the ship heaved and pitched in the angry waters, and it had to go somewhere. The next turn will be when you go looking for where it went and you discover to your nauseated chagrin

that the capital is just... gone! Through some legerdemain of physics, it disappeared... turned into a kind of anti-matter... fell through a black hole (possibly ripped by that iceberg), or up the smokestacks, like it was never there at all.

When that happens, our collective attention finally gets galvanized as by no shock before. When capital is truly gone, transmogrified into a whole lot of nothing, the time for standing by making faces and whining is over. By the way, this is the way the world ends for the vacuum known as “Joe Biden” and the Party of Chaos he is propped up to represent. Chaos, we will be astounded to learn, is not your friend, is not the solution to anything, least of all a polity that is floundering in lifeboats over cold, dark, deep water a thousand leagues from dry land. What’s more, there are no ships coming to the rescue. Guess why they put oars in the boats. Get set to pull, me hardies!

Yes, we’re at sea now, without a compass. Yet the stars sparkle dazzlingly above, and some aboard can actually read what they say and what they point to. If safety and sanity will not find us, maybe we can pull together toward wherever they wait. My gawd, it’s going to be a long haul, but have a little faith — remember what that is? (It’s the conviction that all of us together stand in some meaningful relation to existence.) Even if you’re too mentally drained to believe it, act as if it is so. Or, in post-modern parlance, fake it till you make it.

Didn’t think it would come to this when you signed on to the voyage? I guess so. You were comfortably ensconced one winter night in the mini-McMansion, on the overstuffed sofa, entertained by some Netflix inanity, scarfing down the microwaved cheeze morsels... when the wife said, “Hey, let’s book a cruise!” Seemed like a good idea at the time, which is what everything in the annals of history is and was. And now,

look at where you are!

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James Howard Kunstler is the author of many books including (non-fiction) *The Geography of Nowhere*, *The City in Mind: Notes on the Urban Condition*, *Home from Nowhere*, *The Long Emergency* and the four-book series of *World Made By Hand* novels, set in a post economic crash American future. His most recent book is *Living in the Long Emergency; Global Crisis, the Failure of the Futurists, and the Early Adapters Who Are Showing Us the Way Forward*. Jim lives on a homestead in

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