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The Western storytelling tradition employs the dramatic arc, a template of three acts played out in this order: things are bad, things get worse, things get better. You can apply this model to just about every epic story told with rare exceptions.

ACT ONE: Things are bad.

Financial calamity. Gnashing of teeth. Fingers point in every direction, except the mirror.

The Court of Public Opinion is convened and calls upon the social sciences, in particular, the discipline of Economics to explain itself.

In a preamble to the Court, a Narrator cites a forgotten lesson from history:

“[U.S. President Herbert] Hoover’s every decision in fighting the Great Depression mirrored the sentiments of 1920s “business progressivism,” even as he understood intellectually that something more was required. Farsighted as he was compared with almost everyone else in public life, believing as much as he did in activist government, he still could not convince himself to take the next step and accept that the basic economic tenets he had believed in all his life were discredited; that something wholly new was required.”

The narrator is Kevin Baker, writing in the July 2009 edition of Harper’s magazine. He calls the piece *Barrack Hoover Obama: The Best and the Brightest Blow It Again*. The feature article, which runs several thousand words, is an instructive analysis of President Obama’s leadership, thus far.

Also in July of this year, the Queen of England finally receives a formal response to a question she put to “financial wizards” at the London School of Economics (LSE), in the wake of the credit crunch. In a three-page reply – eight months following her initial query in November 2008 – her Majesty learns that “a failure of the collective imagination of many bright people” was responsible for the inability to predict the financial crisis.

Nobody is to blame, the scholars conclude, because “at every stage,” as LSE professor Luis Garicano declared in his prior counsel to the Queen, the health of the economy was derived out of unchallenged data plugged into spreadsheets hither and yon. “Someone was relying on somebody else and everyone thought they were doing the right thing.”

EXHIBIT A: Delusion is defended perception.

The ‘best and the brightest’ did not foresee the economic calamity triggered in the events of 2008 because their sophisticated formulae could not sniff out bad numbers. The

handful of scholars that questioned the veracity of the metrics used to buttress the predictive powers of analysis were hooted down by their peers. Simply put, the wise guys screwed up – royally.

ACT TWO: Things get worse...

Representative Allan Grayson, a Florida Democrat wants to know what happened to a trillion dollars – the amount the Federal Reserve doled out since the fall of 2008. He put the question to the Inspector General at a hearing into the matter. She didn't know. "Are you trying to tell me," the freshman congressman grimaced, "that nobody at the Federal Reserve is keeping track on a regular basis of the losses it incurs on what is now a two trillion dollar portfolio?" Leaning toward the microphone, Elizabeth Coleman responded that she could not offer an informed opinion because "until we actually look at the program and have the information, we're not in a position to say whether there are losses or to respond in any other way."

EXHIBIT B: Don't tell. Don't even think to ask.

The Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi in a scrum, last summer, admitted the American people might want to learn more about the goings on of the Federal Reserve. She laughingly referenced the "secrets of the temple, which was required reading in my day."

William Greider, author of *The Secrets of the Temple* put it plainly in a recent video interview: "If the public does learn more," his index finger menacing the camera like a sword, "they will be outraged more."

And they – the 'great unwashed and slightly showered' – cannot learn much from mainstream media because it is deaf, dumb and deliberately blinded.

A daily comedy show is America's most trusted source for televised news.

Galvanized by 'crowd-sourced' media, the September "taxpayer tea party march on Washington" demonstrates the power of social networking software.

Rumours count for everything.

EXHIBIT C: Shoot the messengers. Repeat when necessary.

The Court of Public Opinion hears testimony from political scientists and their elders.

In summation: When a novel concept is advanced and has potential to challenge the status quo, the first rule of the political elite is to ignore it. If somehow the new idea prevails and enters into public discourse, the second tactic is to ridicule the source. If by some miracle, the concept threatens to take hold, the individual or group espousing the

idea is attacked. And should the innovation still stand, the political elite will then wisely co-opt the idea claiming it as their own.

ACT THREE: Things get weird...

Yes – this act is a break from the dramatic arc template; the storyline should normally have improved by now and things are supposed to get better. However, ‘things get weird’ is an acceptable variation, typical of French narratives.

Consider:

(a) The responsible parties who plunged the world into financial turmoil still have their hands on the tiller; some are being touted as heroes.

(b) A global pandemic lurks.

(c) Not to mention imminent climate change.

EXHIBIT D: Mr. Environment

Maurice Strong, known to his admirers and enemies as Mr. Environment, invested much of his professional life in service to the United Nations. Sounding a continuous alarm on environmental destruction, he had a major influence in organizing the Stockholm summit in 1972, and the Rio Earth Summit, twenty years later. He has yet to decide on whether he will attend the Copenhagen climate summit this December. His wife Hanne, a Danish citizen won't be at his side.

“One star hotels have been given special government permission to pass themselves off as three stars during the summit,” Mrs. Strong complained. “They can charge more without cleaning up their act.” International gatherings about climate change is good business – a growth industry – just one of several things that disgusts her about the evolution of the ecology movement. “My husband has put fifty years of his life into getting leaders to sit down and talk about the health of the planet,” she grouched in a conversation with Court of Public Opinion reporter Don Hill. “Things have just gotten worse.”

Nature cannot be negotiated. We'll die trying.

EXHIBIT E: Leadership, the pathology.

It has become known to the Court of Public Opinion that ‘leadership’ at every level of governance, in every institution, notably in the West, believes itself capable of resolving the crisis at hand. Some ‘leaders’ say they will work twice as hard at something that failed catastrophically just months ago. Others have declared themselves and their

organizations too big to fail. Still others demand cash infusions to feed the habit of paying bonuses to people who proffer unhealthy financial advice. All of this is hard evidence of delusional behaviour.

The Court of Public Opinion has no choice but to declare a mistrial. Leadership is mentally incapacitated and cannot be held accountable for their prior proclivities.

The Court, therefore, instructs social services to put ‘leadership’ declared unfit for duty in Western institutions, business and governance into productive custody.

EPILOGUE: Toward a happy ending.

The mental state of top ‘leaders’ – the delusion of business as usual, coupled with an addiction to greed and self-serving policy – is proof of an empathy deficit. And because “an obligation not felt,” the Canadian cultural economist Harry Hillman-Chartrand wisely notes, “is not an obligation” it is critical to begin treatment immediately.

Recovering leaders have been prescribed doses of *Community Fusion* (a unique blend of arts-based and indigenous practices), which has them singing, dancing and partaking in appropriate rituals to create the conditions for an epiphany.

With the awareness of the body of memory – the deep sense of realization of what it means to be alive and human – the world transparent to the intellect becomes apparent. And it becomes a no-brainer what to do – where to commit one’s time and resources – the well-being of the community becomes the heart of every enterprise.

As Ruben Vardanian, a successful Russian entrepreneur declared, “if we don’t pay attention to the ‘externalities’ – what’s happening at street level in this country – we cannot have a business.” Mr. Vardanian is the founder of the Moscow School of Management.

Once unhealthy delusions are shattered and empathy fills the void, there is hope for even the toughest cases.

“I eat some granola and go to my workplace where I tutor high school-leaving candidates, one-on-one,” writes disgraced media mogul Conrad Black in a blog that recounts his routine in a Florida jail. “[S]ometimes I have to deal with up to four at a time, around my desk, and talk with fellow tutors and other convivial people.”

The Court will note the word ‘convivial’ as a sign of progress. At one time, it would have been highly unlikely for Mr. Black to counsel the class of people he now writes comfortably about. He even plays for them on the piano. Imagine that.

What if administrators and managers of every sort, alongside scholars supported by institutions, and the governance that maintains the whole edifice of Western enterprise that is akin to 'pathological science' voluntarily put themselves into rehab?

Mere sobriety is never enough. There must be a change of heart. Otherwise promising vectors for change, such as 'sustainable enterprise', will be an adjunct of conventional theory espoused at business schools of management.

The Court recommends for 2010:

A rigorous programme not unlike Outward Bound, but directed *inwardly* to constitute a unique 'executive training' experience; it must appeal to every sensory modality of learning.

Certified graduates shall learn the hermeneutics of empathy – how to *Spot the Waldos!*

As a reward for good behaviour, executives may one day get a cordial visit from the Queen – instead of a scolding.

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*words: 1,675*