

Sea Monsters Threaten the World with Their Tridents. Eduard Curtin

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Sometimes you wake up from a dream to realize it is telling you to pay close attention to the depth of its message, especially when it is linked to what you have been thinking about for days. I have just come up from a dream in which I went down to the cellar of the house I grew up in because the basement light was on and the back cellar door had been opened by a mysterious man who stood outside.

I will spare you additional details or an interpretation, except to say that my daytime thoughts concerned the media spectacle surrounding the Titan submersible that imploded two miles down in the ocean's cellar while trying to give its passengers a view of the wreck of the Titanic, the "unsinkable" ship nicknamed "the Millionaire's Special." The ship that no one could sink except an ice cube in the drink that swallowed it.

Cellar dreams are well-known as the place where we as individuals and societies can face the flickering shadows that we refuse to face in conscious life. Carl Jung called it "the shadow." Such shadows, when unacknowledged and repressed, have a tendency to autonomously surface and erupt, not only leading to personal self-destruction but that of whole societies. History is replete with examples. My dream's mysterious stranger had lit my way through some dark thoughts and opened the door to a possible escape. He got me thinking about what all of us tend to want to deny or avoid because its implications are so monstrous.

The obsession with the alleged marvels of technology together with naming them after ancient Greek and Roman gods are fixations of elite technologists who have lost what Spengler called "living inner religiousness" but wish to show they know the classical names even though they miss the meaning of these myths. Such myths tell the stories of things that never happened but always are. Appropriating the ancient names without irony – such as naming a boat Titanic or a submersible Titan – unveils the hubristic ignorance of people who have never descended to the underworld to learn its lessons. Relinquishing their sense of god-like power doesn't occur to them, nor does the shadow side of their Faustian dreams.

They will never name some machine Nemesis, for that would expose the fact that they have exceeded the eternal limits with their maniacal technological extremism, and, to paraphrase Camus, dark Furies will swoop down to destroy them.

Nietzsche termed the result nihilism. Once people have killed God, machines are a handy replacement in societies that worship the illusion of technique and are scared to death of death and the machines that they invented to administer it.

The latter is not a matter fit to print since it must remain in the dark basement of the public's consciousness. If it were publicized, the game of nihilistic death-dealing would be exposed. Because power, money, and technology are the ruling deities today, the mass media revolve around publicizing their marvels in spectacular fashion, and when "accidents" occur, they never point out the myth of the machines, or what Lewis Mumford called "The Pentagon of Power." Tragedies occur, they tell us, but they are minor by-products of the marvels of technology.

But if these media would take us down to see the truth beneath the oceans' surfaces, we would see not false monsters such as the Titanic or Moby Dick or cartoon fictions such as Disney's Monstro the whale, but the handiwork of thousands of mad Captain Ahab's who have attached the technologues "greatest" invention - nuclear weapons - to nuclear-powered ballistic submarines.

Trident submarines. First strike submarines, such as the USS Ohio.

These Trident subs live and breathe in the cellars of our minds where few dare descend. They are controlled by jackals in Washington and the Pentagon with polished faces in well-appointed offices with coffee machines and tasty snacks. Madmen. They hum through the deep waters ready to strike and destroy the world. Few hear them, almost none see them, most prefer not to know of them.

But wait, what's the buzz, tell me what's happening: the Titan and the Titanic, wealthy voyeurs intent on getting a glance into the sepulchre of those long dead, while six hundred or so desperate migrants drown in the Mediterranean sea from which the ancient gods were born. These are the priorities of a society that worships the wealthy; a society of the spectacle that entertains and distracts while the end of the world cruises below consciousness.

The United States alone has fourteen such submarines armed with Trident missiles constantly prowling the ocean depths, while the British have four. Named for the three-pronged weapon of the Greek and Roman sea gods, Poseidon and Neptune respectively, these submarine-launched ballistic missiles, manufactured by Lockheed Martin ("We deliver innovative solutions to the world's toughest challenges"), can destroy the world in a flash. Destroy it many times over. A final solution.

While the United States has abrogated all treaties that offered some protection from their use and has declared their right of first use, it has consistently pushed toward a nuclear confrontation with Russia and China. Today - 2023 June - we stand on the precipice of nuclear annihilation as never before.

A single Trident submarine has 20 Trident missiles, each carrying 12 independently targeted warheads for a total of 240 warheads, with each warhead approximately 40 times more

destructive than the Hiroshima bomb. Fourteen submarines times 240 equals 3,360 nuclear warheads times 40 equals 134,400 Hiroshimas. Such are the lessons of mathematics in absurd times.

James W. Douglass, the author of the renown *JFK and the Unspeakable* and a longtime activist against the Tridents at Ground Zero Center for Non-Violent Action outside the Bangor Submarine Base in Washington state, put it this way in 2015 when asked about Robert Aldridge, the heroic Lockheed Trident missile designer who resigned his position in an act of conscience and became an inspirational force for the campaign against the Tridents and nuclear weapons:

Question: "What did the Nuremberg attorneys say about war crimes that had such a deep impact on Robert Aldridge?"

Douglass: "They said that first-strike weapons and weapons that directly target a civilian population were war crimes in violation of the Nuremberg principles. Those Nuremberg principles, which are the foundations of international law, are violated by both by electronic warfare – which is why we poured blood on the files for electronic warfare [at the base] – and also by the Trident missile system, which is what Robert Aldridge was building."

[Robert Aldridge](#) saw his shadow side. He went to the cellar of his darkest dreams. He refused to turn away. He became an inspiration for James and Shelley Douglass and so many others. He was a man in and of the system, who saw the truth of his complicity in radical evil and underwent a metanoia. It is possible.

If those missiles are ever launched from the monsters that carry them through the hidden recesses of the world's oceans, there will never be another Nuremberg Trial to judge the guilty, for the innocent and the guilty will all be dead.

We will have failed to shed light on our darkest shadows.

Writing in another context that pertains to today's high-flying nuclear madmen whose mythic Greek forbear Icarus would not listen, the poet W. H. Auden put it this way in "Musée des Beaux Arts":

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along

How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Brueghel's *Icarus*, for instance: how everything turns away

Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

We turn away at our peril.

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This article was originally published on the author's blog site, [Behind the Curtain](#).

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Featured image: A port bow view of the nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine USS OHIO (SSBN-726) secured in the water during its commissioning. The partially-constructed nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine GEORGIA (SSBN-729) displays a "Good Luck Ohio" banner nearby. Both ships are products of General Dynamics Corp. (Licensed under the Public Domain)

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