

victory in the Civil War, until approximately the end of the 19th century, the allies of the United States were or became Russia—we had no allies before that; none. We had only one thing: We had the Bey of Tunis and the United States had an alliance with the Tunisians against the Barbary pirates, early in the 19th century. That was our *only ally*, from about 1789–1793, our only ally until the 1850s. And our first important ally came in the

1850s, in terms of Russia, Alexander II of Russia.

Speed: Shocking, isn't it? The British were the enemy and Russia was the first great ally of the United States. So why do you think the opposite? We need to be more curious, don't you think? At least as Americans, and I think it probably goes for people all over the world.

Jacques Cheminade

A Culture of Curiosity and Perseverance To Explore the Impossibles

This is the edited transcript of the keynote presentation of Jacques Cheminade to Panel 4, "Classical Culture and the Dialogue of Civilizations," of the Schiller Institute's June 18–19 Conference, "There Can Be No Peace Without the Bankruptcy Reorganization of the Dying Trans-Atlantic Financial System." Mr. Cheminade is President of the Solidarité & Progrès political party in France.



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It is not well known in the United States, and even less abroad, that the names of the NASA rovers to explore Mars were given by young Americans after a national competition. The name of *Curiosity*, launched in 2011, was given by Clara Ma, 12 years old. She commented: "Curiosity is a passion that animates our daily life. Our need to ask questions and to amaze us leads us to become explorers." The name of *Perseverance*, launched in 2020, was given by Alex Mather, 13 years old, who stressed: "We will meet many setbacks on the way to Mars; however, we can persevere."

I choose to pick up these two beautiful examples of American optimism for two reasons. First, because there is underneath, a treasury of positive and rational optimism in the United States, despite the criminal behavior of most of their officials, of their elites. And the construction of the creative capacities of most of its population. Second, and mainly, I choose these exam-

ples, because such a declaration expresses something which is fundamental in the present world situation, to which peace through the long-needed bankruptcy reorganization of the dying trans-Atlantic financial system, needs an inner, *personal* inspiration for the good and beautiful.

Without it, it would be impossible to go beyond what opposes, the conflicting reorganizations and states, to reach a human, relatively higher state of thinking and acting.

When the matter of war or peace, life or death is at stake, one cannot escape from a self-conscious commitment to act according to what is more human in one's inner self, to have the curiosity to discover and the perseverance to act according to the discoverer. Clara and Alex each teaches a key lesson *without knowing it*, like always, when you teach good lessons, not by pep talks or lines, but by exposing naturally the depth of your commitment. It is what moves our hearts and creates what our former French President Charles de Gaulle called "the adhesion of sentiment and thought as a one."

It is what I sensed for the first time, when I met Lyndon LaRouche: Here was somebody who was caring for my mind. It is such a quality that we should muster within ourselves, even if imperfectly: the curiosity to explore the unknown in the outside world, and necessarily inside ourselves, and to maintain that curi-

osity for the good—perseverance.

No less is it necessary to accomplish impossible coincidence of opposites. No less, because it is what is really human in all of us, by its very nature, beyond the present disastrous state of the physical universe, which has the capacity to accomplish what appears impossible; to be in it and to step out of it, and organize others to also do it, by inspiring their own inner capacities.

A cousin of mine who escaped from a prison camp during World War II, gave me a beautiful example of that. He was only a poor farmer, but he cared for the outside world—his farm, his family, and his nation—and decided to escape. Only two other prisoners decided to follow him. He commented:

The difficult thing was not to walk out and reach my farm. It was the moment I made the decision, when I had to convince the others that I was right, and was so disappointed that only two dared to follow me. It was then that I was about to renounce my plan. But I did it.”

The moment of decision, but not free to follow the trend, or our sensuous impulses, or adapt to the situation, but free, when we sense the sublime, when the independent mind rips from us the net out of sensuality, to reach an inner sense of the common good. It is only then that we can really face evil. Schiller says,

Let evil destiny show itself to us face to face. Not in ignorance of the danger surrounding us, for this ignorance must ultimately cease. Only in the acquaintance with these dangers is there salvation for us.

Think from that standpoint about our common intervention to confront the dangers that we face here and now, today, with our salvation power, freedom, and reason. Schiller continues:

Freedom, with all of its moral contradiction and physical evils, is for noble souls an infinitely more interesting spectacle than prosperity. An order without freedom, where the sheep patiently follow the shepherd and the self-commanding will is degraded to the subservient part of a clockwork. The latter makes mind merely

into a spirit-product, and a more unfortunate citizen of nature. Freedom makes him, instead, into the citizen and co-ruler of a higher system, where it is infinitely more honorable to occupy the low-ermost place than to command the ranks in the physical order.

Considered from this point of view, and only from this one, world history is to me a sublime object. The world as a historical object is at bottom nothing other than the conflict of natural forces amongst one another, and with human freedom, the freedom of man. And history reports to us the result of this contest.

It is with such a state of mind that we can explore the impossible and change the course of history from its possible fatal fate determined by those who today command the physical order. The Bidens and those behind the Bidens, our European apparent leaders and those behind them. Not a “deep state” without face, but the perverted universe of money and weapons, the world of the City of London, Wall Street and the algorithms of Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, and Microsoft, which allow the financial forces to operate and manipulate the minds.

Our challenge is, therefore, now, to get out of their net and bring true freedom to our fellow citizens, outside of the sensuous illusions.

This makes me think now of a small French city, called Montargis, in the Loiret department. There were, just after World War I, a few dozen Chinese worker-students, no more than a few dozen. From the standpoint of the early 1920s, was it possible to figure out then that the committed freedom for the best of China was going to change world destiny? No! Impossible! As impossible to think in those years that a human-made rover would move on Mars.

Maybe as impossible today, as to uplift the American and trans-Atlantic populations to an age of reason. Unless, the first two things happen, and the deeds of Diane Sare and her followers are reason to think that the third one is in the coming to happen.

We can't proceed from a divided mind, between the sensuous feelings and the so-called conceptual thinking, to avoid the division of our world into two sections: friends and enemies. We can't fight for the coincidence of opposites in the present world, and furiously play first-person shooter videogames.

Remember that it was the jurist of the Nazi regime, Carl Schmitt, who later rejected any attempt at denazification, who not only was the theorist of the state of exception, but divided personal and international relations between, inevitably, friends and enemies. Such an acceptance of a definite fatal division and making of it a political theory, leads, fatally, first, to try to intimidate and subject the other into submission, and, ultimately, to eliminate him. Inside one's own mind, in our social relations, this leads to exclude change for the best of the other, and inevitably, to become a killer, a cost-cutter, or at best, a silly misanthrope.

Let's think of Martin Luther King's political [sermon](#), "Loving Your Enemies," to have a sense of the opposite world thinking, the culture of curiosity and perseverance, the curiosity and perseverance needed to change the other and the world, here and now.

In moments of doubt, it is the time for a devastating humor to ridicule the prevailing "principalities and powers," the time of the Rabelais, the Heine, the Cervantes, the Nasr Eddin Hodja, and, I must venture to say, the hilarious stories of Sun Wukong and the paradoxes of Zhuangzi [Zhuang Zhou]. Those confront evil with humor and focus their attacks against the egoistic and criminal figures who pretend to control power. They tell funny stories showing that it is the power that controls them, transforming them into ridiculous puppets.

The narrow-minded scholar says that Chinese tradition is unable to speak about the Tao [the way of the universe], because he's a prisoner of what he learned, what our dear Nicholas of Cusa called the Learned Ignorance, the worst ignorance of them all. This committed humor, to laugh at the respect given to those who don't deserve it, to those who don't deserve it at all, is a very powerful weapon, so powerful that at certain moments of human history, some anti-human regimes considered smiling or laughing a crime, an unbearable challenge to them.

Those humorous thinkers, those masters of irony, open our minds to get more and more deeply acquainted with Confucius and Mencius, Schiller and Dante, the Vedas and the Gospels, making of them our close and wise friends in moments of pain or suffering, like the

sublime music of Bach or Beethoven.

Let's now look at what Nicholas of Cusa had to say in his last writing, in 1464, *De Apice Theoriae, On the Summit of Contemplation*. It is a self-reflexive dialogue on what he calls in Latin, *posse ipsum*, the Power Himself, as an approximate metaphor for God, the power to accomplish the best. He says:

Through the Power Himself is meant the triune and one God, whose Name is the All Powerful, or the Power of Omnipotence, with which all things are possible and nothing impossible. Him, with the strength of the strong and the virtue of all virtues.

I don't bring this from some secret library. Nicholas himself was directly involved in the diplomatic and political life of his times. I bring this as a point of reference of our Christian culture in congruence with other cultures, which convey the decisive idea that what appears impossible at a certain level of thinking and doing, becomes possible at a higher level which then defines another impossible.

But, a last, shared warning, is that such a necessary "impossible" commitment to change our thinking and to change the state of present international relations, cannot be accomplished from outside. It is only possible internally, standing up to the social challenge of our times, and in rising above the club, thanks to our very devotion to accomplishing something, with the help of our friends, sometimes our friends from a remote past, who change the future for the better.

It means, in other words, that the human mind can conceive the incommensurate, beyond the established rules of the game, to discover new physical principles and act to give a chance for the adventure of our human species to continue, provided we remain curious and perseverant.

Let us then try to be sublime, and if more than often we fail to reach that level, let us try and try again as best we can, by doing the good. It is a matter of world peace, of life or death. We have no more than a second left to laugh at what is so pathetically, so dangerously inhuman, while the Doomsday Clock, the Clock of the Fools, keeps ticking.