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A Tale of Two Cultures (America and Russia) - Your Daily Shakespeare

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When events **do not make sense or are such as sense cannot untie**, (1) an option is to forget all about them – the head-in-the-sand solution. Another is to remember that man is but a **quintessence of dust** (2) and often, therefore, not even worth the **dust that the rude wind blows in his face.** (3)

Yet another option is an attempt at interpretation, with emphasis on ‘attempt’ and limits on ‘interpretation.’ In the instance, the events in question are: one, the claim – by the Western signatories of the so-called “Minsk Agreements” on Ukraine in 2014 – that they did not intend to respect them. And two, that the commitment by the USA to Gorbachev in 1989 not to expand NATO Eastward was

invalid for not having been set in writing.

But how can we interpret shamelessness? For to define true shamelessness, what is it but to be nothing else but shameless? At least Shakespeareanly speaking.(4)

In past similar historical occasions, perjurers usually found some fancy or preposterous reasons to justify their behavior. Often those affected by the perjury sought redress through vengeance, leading to bitter wars and to the execution of the perjurers. During the 100-year war (1337-1453), King Henry V, uncovered and executed three English traitors, the Earl of Cambridge, Lord Scroop and Sir Thomas Grey, who were working for the French king.

In other cases, such as the momentous event when Hitler broke the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939 and invaded the USSR in 1941, Germany's official reason had some pretense of authenticity, however false or questionable. Namely the alleged violations of German air space by some Russian planes.

Yet history abounds with enigmas. In that instance, some sources have claimed that Stalin was himself planning an attack on Germany. But as of today, available evidence doesn't support the claim, and suggests that Stalin ignored or pretended to ignore the reported and repeated warnings of a pending, massive German invasion.

Though even Count Schulenburg, the German ambassador to Moscow, only learned about the invasion at the last moment. And having developed strong friendships during his stay, Schulenburg was reported to be crying when he took the last train from Moscow to Berlin. For the record, he died in a German concentration camp in 1944.

Given this and other precedents, the current belligerent stance of US-NATO versus Russia is astonishing. For the Western Juntas and their puppets find no shame in hiding their bad faith

And yet an avowed impostor usually still triggers more dislike than admiration – for the difference between an impostor and a traitor is one of degree, not substance. And breach of trust, at least at large, is still rated more negatively than positively. For example, it is not something that a job applicant (as yet), would claim in his resume as a ‘strength’– e.g. “I am particularly skilled at breaching the trust placed on me by whomsoever.”

But the American and Western European actors involved in the current breaches of trust do not seemingly care. Therefore the tragic, absurd and Orwellian posture of political and Zionist America (with Europe in tow), towards the Ukrainian business and war should give us pause. Considering that history is concerned with the relation between the unique and the general. And that a historian can no more separate them, or give precedence to one over the other, than he can separate fact from interpretation. Further realizing that there are as many interpretations as **there are tongues, are hands, are accidents.(5)**

In this writing I will deal separately with the two main parties involved, Russia and the USA. For puppets nominally rule the European Union and their media is historically irrelevant.

As for the USA, the inaudible and noiseless foot of time, along with forgetfulness and dark oblivion, have erased from the collective memory the purportedly original reason that triggered the Vietnam war – and the consequent millions killed, the many maimed and the countless wounded on both sides. Namely the ‘Gulf of Tonkin’

incident. When, allegedly, North Vietnamese torpedo boats fired on a US destroyer that was in international water according to the US, and in domestic waters according to the Vietnamese. Nevertheless those involved on the US side still found it then necessary to invent a plausible cause.

But not now. What changed or what happened then between 1965 and the present? And what identifiable original or ideological cause can be found for the Western so-called 'rulers' to disregard the Minks agreements and the agreement about the non-expansion of NATO? Even the often quoted notion of so-called 'plausible deniability' has seemingly gone the way of all flesh.

One socio-political interpretation may be perhaps found well over 20 years ago. That is, a related pattern-setting event can be traced back to the Clinton-Lewinsky business. When the president of the United States had the gall to tell the nation, in prime time, that 'I did not have sex with that woman' notwithstanding ample, legal and irrefutable evidence.

That the president of the 'exceptional nation' would allow himself to be entrapped into an obvious and decidedly bawdy situation, while simultaneously showing himself as the lyingest knave in Christendom, should at least have raised some doubts about his qualifications for the position.

But it didn't, and at the time various qualified voices expressed concern about the implications of the resolution. For when a preposterous lie to the public and parliament (by the highest representative of the state) is essentially endorsed by allowing the perjurer (for he was under oath) to remain in office, a pattern and precedent is established for others to follow suit in times to come.

One obvious, recent and worthy fellow and follower is Giuseppe Biden along with his remarkable family. And we can see clearly an evolution. For what with Clinton was a matter of lying to save his bottom, with Biden lying seems actually a matter of pride. (E.G. “18 FBI agents have verified that Hunter Biden’s laptop is Russian disinformation!”)

Yet already after the Lewinsky business, the list of patent, unrestrained and preposterous lies excreted by subsequent US state department administrations would fill a long row of portable toilets and stink to high heaven. Beginning with Yugoslavia, followed by the very murky 9/11 affair, Saddam’s weapons of mass distraction, Gadhafi’s breach of human rights, Hassad’s ‘chemical poisons’ in Syria, bringing democracy to Afghanistan, Georgia, Ukraine, and the Middle Eastern terrorist groups that are enemies one day and freedom fighters the next, financed and supplied in either case by the exceptional nation.

Giving the proverbial seal of approval and certificate of authenticity to much of the above was, among others, the ex-CIA director, plump and pompous Pompeo. Who, in a relatively recent conference declared, in a vein of satisfied and entertaining pride, that (at the CIA), “we lied, we cheated, we stole. We had entire related training (how to) courses. It reminds you of the glory of the American experiment.” With the audience erupting in spontaneous applause.

Yet, it is possible to detect another ideological connection among these past events and the present – namely a clear pride in disregarding the truth. Or rather, in a brave new world and new world order, verification of truth is no longer necessary. Truth is what is declared to be by questionable academia, by imposed

ideology and by the interests that push forward academia, academics and ideology.

Donald Rumsfeld, departed and un-missed secretary of defence, said it best, “We create our own reality.” In the circumstances, it is already extraordinary that – seemingly – a majority of the American people have not followed suit. Otherwise most of us would be forced to walk around town with a loaded AK-47, and each state would be transformed into a myriad of mini-Ukraines at war with each other.

A thornier yarn to unravel or issue to interpret, in the limited confines of an essay, is the political-ideological relationship between the US and the Russian Federation.

As far as the US, my perceptions, for what is worth, derive from a possibly unwarranted extrapolation of impressions gained over the years by observing behavior, reactions, and points of view among people whom I either know personally at work, or socially, or whose manners and expressions I had occasion to follow on various media channels.

To begin with – and however obvious – it is unfair and useless to tag or label the actions of one or more US governments, politicians, questionable bigwigs or equally questionable oligarchs as representing “the Americans.”

Further considering that, historically and commercially, the evil and turbid sell more than the good and limpid. And since “to things of sale a seller’s praise belongs” the relentless media-driven emphasis on prurient narratives of evil ends up popularizing it. Considering that notoriety contains in itself an undeclared or hidden element of quasi-praise. Praise not for the evil act but for

the profit produced by the sale of evil. Therefore, in the end, the evil, the turbid and the prurient join together to maximize returns. A proposition beautifully condensed in the expression, 'anything for a buck'.

I will not pursue further this line, other than with a few remarks on what I think remains of the collective American psyche, until (if the trend continues), it will be overrun by the "new world order", transgenderism, fluid sexuality, male maternity, wokism, cancel culture and various other Gomorrish items of insanity. Leading, finally, to the satanic substitution or replacement of the Western European population, or population of that extraction, as promoted by various notorious and vocal so-called 'intellectuals'.

At the root of the historical American psyche, it could be said that there are two prevailing world-views, quite different from each other, and yet both deriving from events associated with the birth of the nation and the so-called conquest of the American West.

According to one view, man has to do with the practical, the risky, the impending and the inevitable. He must assert himself whatever the circumstances and the consequences. He is the macho man, the winner who takes all. Culture is essentially a feminine thing, as women are exempted from the masculine duties and have time to spare. A man (or a nation for that matter) who presents a posture of respect, regard, conformity to good form, aperture to disinterested friendship, interest, maybe with a view to learn the good points of the other, is essentially weak.

This version of the American man may admire Lincoln for having crushed the South, but especially for having succeeded in ignoring the statutes of the Confederation, which included the option for the

single states to leave the Union. And perhaps, above all, for having been so smart as to sell the idea that the war was declared to free the slaves, rather than to patently ignore the covenant of the Union. Can one be smarter than that?

A more modern version of the 'macho man' is captured or described by the famous sentence, 'Speak softly but carry a big stick' – a philosophy applicable to reluctant regimes, especially in South and Central America. The assumption being that genuine kindness is a sign of weakness and he who wastes his time in 'culture' is equally weak and un-suited to lead armies into battle or economists into plunder.

I am broadly simplifying and generalizing, but I have personally watched one such man (and his entourage) drive to the ground a successful and innovative Fortune 500 corporation – eventually sold to the proverbial highest bidder – and I know of other cases.

These traits describe in their entirety the class 'A' Americans, ('A' for 'arrogant' and for simplification). They are not the majority by any means and yet, by default, design, or through the inscrutable paths of fate, end up projecting abroad the cartoon-image of the 'typical' American.

'Security' is the nominal, illogical reason why this class imposes criminal measures on behalf of the rest of the nation, claiming to act for the nation's interest. Unable or unwilling to realize that the most tragic form of loss isn't the loss of security – rather the loss of the capacity to imagine that things could be different.

Counteracting the 'macho' view there is (luckily), the great majority of the 'other' Americans, who are helpful, independent, practical, kind, considerate, genuinely interested in others, generous and

helpful to their neighbors as a matter of course. These traits were equally necessary and indispensable during the 'so-called' conquest of the West. And they equally and globally describe the class 'H' Americans ('H' for 'Humanity').

It is an extremely simplified and maybe questionable view, but I think it goes beyond the mere generalization captured by the sentence, 'there are good and bad people everywhere' or similar. In fact, I do not think it is far fetched to detect, in the proliferation and almost exaltation of transgenderism, 'fluid sexuality,' etc. a kind of psychological reaction to the cult of the macho man of the American sort.

Moving now to Russia, the prevailing and official US 'macho man' attitude is reflected-in and enhanced-by the current posture of the US Administration on the Ukraine business. We should also include the non-American elephant-in-the-room affecting the whole thing. But it would un-necessarily complicate the historical perspective.

I will attempt – however cursorily – to observe Russia's current posture on Ukraine and the world at large, in the context of Russian history and of the present historical moment.

Some may recall proverbial statements by notable personalities about the mystery and the 'difficulty' of understanding Russia. Notorious is Churchill's saying about Russia being a 'riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.'

Actually, in the past, even notable Russians were not shy about the issue, admitting not to understand their own nation. So much so that Dostoyevsky, in his 'Diary of a Writer', pokes fun at this doubting class of Russians.

“In days gone by – he says – the words “I understand nothing” meant merely ignorance on the part of him who uttered them; yet, at present they bring great honor. One has only to declare with an open air and snobbishly: “I do not understand religion; I understand nothing in Russia; I understand nothing in art” – and at once he is lifted to lofty heights. And this is all the more advantageous if one, in fact, understands nothing. However, this simplified device proves nothing...”

Reasons for the air of mystery surrounding Russia, as per Churchill’s quote, or for the lack of national self-understanding, as noted by Dostoyevsky, would be but speculative. Dostoyevsky himself does not pursue this line of inquiry, other than hinting that it may be a self-satisfying form of eccentricity. There remains the fact, however, that the Russian culture and language have given the world some of the most extraordinary and unique literary masterpieces.

Historically Russian culture is the tale of three cities, Kiev, Moscow and St. Petersburg. Kiev was founded around the 8th century, Moscow in the 12th and St. Petersburg at the beginning of the 18th. For traditional chroniclers and historians, Kiev has remained the “mother of Russian cities”, and memories of its accomplishments gave to the Orthodox Eastern Russians an enduring sense of unity. Especially in the midst of religious turmoil, when the confrontation between Poland’s Catholicism and Ukraine’s Orthodox Christianity led eventually to the treaty of Pereiaslav in 1654 and the formal annexation of Ukraine to Russia. Thanks to which the Cossack ruler Bohdan Khmelnytsky, who was confronting the attacks and belligerence of Poland-

Lithuania, sought to join Russia and pledged the allegiance (of Ukraine) to the Tsar.

According to one school of thought, the year 1252 marks the beginning of the historical-cultural split between Russia and the rest of Europe. When Alexander Nevsky – a most beloved protagonist in the history of Russia – struck an agreement with Khan Bayi of the Mongol Golden Horde, whereby Nevsky could reign as Sovereign of Kiev and of all Russia.

This was a situation quite different from that in the West, where Western kings or emperors needed the benediction of the Pope and the Church to be able to reign – or, if not, suffer excommunication. And this on the ground that the Pope was the prime minister of God – and God, via the Pope, conferred on the kings the authority to reign. One historically famous consequence of this arrangement occurred when the German Henry IV was Emperor of the Western Roman Empire and Gregory VII the Pope. Henry nominated as Bishop of Milan a prelate not approved by the Pope. Whereupon Gregory VII excommunicated the Emperor, and the Emperor the Pope. In the instance Henry IV – in 1077 – had to yield and do penance by waiting in the winter snow for 3 days and nights outside the castle of Countess Matilde of Canossa (heir to a feudal domain that comprised most of Northern and a good part of Central Italy), until being received and pardoned by the Pope.

The feud became symbolic of the “Fight for the Investitures.” Meaning the fight for ‘who really called the shots’, when electing high-rank church officials, the pope or the emperor. And until about the time of the discovery of America, and sometimes even later, it was difficult for a king to reign by antagonizing (or without the approval of) the Pope. For it made it easier for rebellious princes to

disregard the authority of the king.

That German emperor's distressful pilgrimage gave rise to the saying "going to Canossa" indicating an act of repentance. Even in the late 1800 Bismarck, the unifier of Germany used the sentence, "We will not go to Canossa, neither in body nor in spirit" (*Nach Canossa gehen wir nicht, weder körperlich noch geistig*) to signal his steadfastness on a certain decision.

But the last dispute on whether it should be the church or the king to have the final say in appointing bishops or cardinals occurred during the time of another Henry IV, this time a king of France (1553-1610). Who, when essentially forced to ban the Huguenots (protestants) from France, pronounced the famous sentence, "Paris is well worth a mass" (*Paris vaut bien une messe*).

None of this occurred in Russia. Nevsky (with much questionable simplification) not having to fight in the East, was able to pursue a 'nation consolidating policy' on the Western Front. He fought victorious and legendary battles against German and Swedish invaders. And he served as Prince of Novgorod, Grand Prince of Kiev and Grand Prince of Vladimir during some of the most difficult times of Kievan Rus' history.

The difference with the West is that there were bitter and sometimes deadly religious disputes inside the Orthodox church and factions, but they did not affect (on the whole) the integrity of the state. All the while Russia could pursue her Eastern expansion mostly with agreements and treaties with various Eastern potentates.

It may be instructive to compare significant historical events during the same timeframe in Eastern and Western Europe and their

respective impact.

Nevsky's agreement with the Mongols took place in 1252, two years after the death in the West of Frederick II of Svevia, Holy Roman Emperor, who had a German father, a Norman mother and a Sicilian upbringing.

At the time of the Crusades, Frederick II (whom later historians named "the wonder of the world" due to his personality defined as 'polyhedric'), rather than fighting the Arabs and the Turks found an agreement with them – whereupon the pope excommunicated him. Frederick II' goal was to restore the glories of Charlemagne's original Western Roman Empire, established in 800 AD and later plagued by internal disputes, splits and wars.

Frederick II did not seem interested in Northern and Eastern Europe. He did not succeed in revitalizing the Western Roman empire, whereas Nevsky succeeded in building the base of the Russian state and eventually empire. To the success of one and failure of the other, historians have attributed the beginning of the difference between the developments of Russia and of the rest of Europe as well as the notably different and respective 'Weltanschauung'.

Though even before Nevsky, Pope Honorius III promoted the wars between Finland and the Republic of Novgorod, one of the important Russian medieval states, eventually incorporated into the Grand duchy of Moscow.

The pope authorized the bishop of Finland to establish a commercial embargo against the 'barbarians' (Eastern-Orthodox) who threatened Catholic Christendom in Finland. A measure echoing today's US sanctions and embargos on Russia, due to

Russia contesting American 'exceptionality' and its related pretended rights to a planetary empire.

Pope Gregory IX supported or encouraged the efforts at destroying the Orthodox Church, which culminated in a famous battle between the Western coalition (Poles, Danes, Swedes, Baltic elements and German forces – a kind of NATO of the time) against Alexander Nevsky, whose army, complemented by Mongol archers on horse – won the battle of Peipus on the frozen lake by that name (1242), now the border between Estonia and Russia. In that battle the Mongols, allied with Nevsky, forced the antagonist cavalry to retreat to the part of the lake where the ice was thinner and broke under the weight of the heavy medieval armory of the enemy.

There was a schism in the Russian Orthodox church, about 150 years after the Catholic-Protestant Western schism, triggered by Luther in 1517, with his 95 theses posted on Wittenberg's church door. But the outward causes of the Russian dispute had to do with issues that (I assume), even to a Western mind of the time may have appeared odd. Such as the advocates of unison versus harmony in singing, the use of two fingers instead of three in making the sign of the cross and similar others. Whereas the Western Schism had to do with the sought-for independence, by Luther and the Protestants, from Catholic Rome.

According to many, the most emblematic character, in the clash between Eastern and Western cultures, was Peter the Great (1672-1725). As described by an eminent Russian historian, his Russian traits were simplicity, coarseness, dislike of ceremony, conventions and etiquette, a curious sort of democracy, a love of truth and equity, a love of Russia, and at the same time "the

elemental nature of a wild beast was awake in him”. And there were traits, in Peter, that may be compared with the Bolsheviks. Some historians have defined Peter the Great as the first Bolshevik.

In the wake of Peter the Great’s era both French enlightenment and German Romanticism were imported into Russia. Emblematic of the influence that French ‘philosophes’ had on Russian culture, was the era of the reforming despots, in turn exemplified by Catherine the Great’s correspondence with Voltaire. In recent years, 26 letters of her correspondence with Voltaire were returned to Russia.

In the wake of these new links and connections a wave of admiration for France and French culture spread among the Russian nobility and intellectuals at large. It became fashionable to speak French alongside Russian at home and on social occasions. A curiosity reflected in a number of Russian novels. By the way, this is one more point that throws into ridicule the current subservience of the French government to the dictates of the EU and US. The absurdity was recently commented on, in an interview, by the grandson of Charles DeGaulle on a French YT channel. Who – Charles De Gaulle – kept France out of NATO and maintained cordial, peaceful and economically beneficial relations with the USSR even at the peak of the Cold War.

Anyway, following or out of the wave of thought inspired by Peter’s reforms, and the strong connection with European Illuminist thinking, came that stream of Russian literature that has ennobled mankind in a unique and inimitable way. And that has enabled Russia – even allowing for the intervening distortions, the folly and the absurdities of Bolshevism – to still remain, so far, a bastion of

resistance against the plague of cancel culture, wokism and the like.

In fact, in my view, even in Gorbachev (whose life, intertwined with my personal experience in Russia, I have described in a video – link at the end of this article) it is possible to find traits of two of Dostoyevsky’s brothers Karamazov, the adventurous Dmitry (reflected in Gorbachev’s daring opening towards the West) and the sincere and spiritual Alexei (reflected in Gorbachev’s belief that his Western counterparts spoke and acted in good faith).

Often, and perhaps inevitably, the persona portrayed by the corporate media is a caricature, and many, including he who writes here, are prone to be tricked or misled.

Finally and for what is worth, this write-up in no way can be considered adequate, let alone sufficient, for drawing a comparison between two states, two peoples, two histories and two cultures. In partial disculpation, I can only repeat to my twenty-five readers what Dr. Johnson said of dictionaries, “No dictionary is perfect, but any is better than none.”

Video “Goodbye Gorbachev” — <https://youtu.be/Zei7eInxJ0s>

References:

- (1) Cymbeline**
- (2) Hamlet**
- (3) King Lear**
- (4), (5) Hamlet**