

We Were Not the Savages

Again, I repeat that concluding question of [Æcornomics 7](#): “Can we find our human way out, out out, in in, to salvage ‘dwindling humanism’¹?” But now I have to hand the book whose title is the title of this transition essay.² Indeed, I have its author’s biography, and could well try to nudge us forward, our selves in our various little groups, by a native listening to Jon Tattrie.³ But my purpose here is to suggestively and effectively identify, in the next essay, a single bridge to the beyond of savagery.⁴ I am pointing to a collision of civilizations, but now a collision within.⁵ Within what? Yes, Within what. The what within is civilized, a “well of loneliness,”⁶ and yet grossly uncivilized when we are settled to leave the *moi intime*⁷ living mostly in blindness, the “life unlivable.”⁸

In the essay [Æcornomics 5](#) I moved, at some length, in the company of civilized whatters who focus on “Sustainability and Peaceful Coexistence.”⁹ I do not attempt to introduce them to the full “We” of my title, but they are a seeding seething group of discontented whats, slimly open to the core collaboration that I write of in that essay. The message of *Futurology Express* may appeal to them,¹⁰ or even the broader notion that religious people can be encouraged to

¹ *Insight*, 750. We are poised at the end of the book. There remains the problem of a fuller “**Identification of the Solution**” (*ibid.*, with the bold face in the text).

² Daniel N. Paul, *We Were Not the Savages: A Micmac Perspective on the Collision of European and Aboriginal Civilizations*, Nimbus, Halifax, 1993.

³ Jon Tattrie, *Daniel Paul, Mi'kmaw Elder*, Potterfield Press, Nova Scotia, 2017.

⁴ I think of my much younger and stumbling self of more than a quarter of a century ago pushing forward in a similar venture, “Features of Generalized Empirical Method: A Bridge Too Far,” *Creativity and Method*, Edited by Matthew Lamb, Marquette University Press, 1984. Those pointers remain there, valid and still remote from the increasing savagery that is identified better in the following essay.

⁵ Perhaps it will help you to think “ontic and phyletic collisions” in terms of “existential gap” in its ontic and phyletic forms: the topics of the last two chapters of CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic*.

⁶ “The Well of Loneliness” is the title of the nineteenth chapter of my *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History: Teaching Young Humans Humanity and Hope* (Axial Publishing, 2015). The chapter parallels—a characteristic of the book—chapter 19 of *Insight*.

⁷ The reference is to Lonergan’s musings (p. 495) on the onion layers of person and personalities in *Insight*’s dense venture into human development. We have yet to seriously begin work—the context is the here-appended W₃—on humanity’s rolling and roiling in finitude’s molecular “dynamic joy and zeal” (*Insight*, 722, concluding words).

⁸ I am recalling Lonergan’s pointing to art as a rescuer (CWL 10, *Topics in Education*, 232). Part of the “existential gap” problem mentioned in note 5 above, is that we are being- and brain-washed not to notice that life is unlivable. In the first ‘advanced’ world, toothless tots and tottering elders and all of us in between are treated with glossy decency, on the hole. “Such is the horror that has stood forth in our day” (*Method in Theology*, 40, line 10).

⁹ Their third conference is in Helsinki, June, 2019. My paper for the event is in [Æcornomics 5](#). My presentation shall push forward from that towards instituting fresh structures of collaboration.

¹⁰ My *Futurology Express* (Axial Publishing, 2013) is a “general categorial” expression of the needed structuring of global development.

come in as a back-up to global redemption: the notion that ferments forward in my five essays of *Divyadaan* (30:1) 2019.¹¹ Might some members of that group not, perhaps, find their way—it lurks there in a founding figure Arne Naess¹²—to be those “adversaries” that Lonergan wrote of at the conclusion of the essay “Healing and Creating in History”?¹³ It is important for me to quote Lonergan’s daft hope fully.

Is my proposal utopian? It merely asks for creativity, for an interdisciplinary theory that at first will be denounced as absurd, then will be admitted to be true but obvious and insignificant, and perhaps finally be regarded as so important that its adversaries will claim that they themselves discovered it.

The elder Lonergan spoke to his tribe. No one there dared denounce the collaborative interdisciplinary effort as absurd: they merely treated it as a surd outside the walls of their civilization.¹⁴ Some of his Christian followers talk of it as, yes, obvious, with a little significance as perhaps a filing system. Daniel Paul’s subtitle mentions “A Micmac Perspective on the Collision.” My Perspective is a PhilMac perspective on the Collision, and, yes, it is shared by a few daft colleagues, a few of whom are mentioned, in *Æconomics* 10, as sharing my little bridge project of July 2019. There is a little tribe in rebellion analogous to the little tribe against global madness that is meeting in Helsinki in the previous month. Are we buffoons? Certainly, the Lonergan community shows no signs of joining us in July, or even, bless our souls, talking openly of us as delusional. Perhaps there is an echo in their souls of what the brute Edward Cornwallis wrote in 1749:

To declare war formally against the Micmac Indians would be a manner to own them as free and independent people, whereas they ought to be treated as so many banditti ruffians, or rebels, to His Majesty’s government.¹⁵

At all events, this little band of ruffians are declaring war in July, with weaponry dictated by Lonergan as the key to all future “Collisions” of civilizations. The appeal is to the aboriginal civilization, the *moi intime*’s well-nest, in both ourselves and our enemies. Our enemies can keep up the learned pretense that they are not, never ever were or will be, the savages. But joining us,

¹¹ Part of my contribution to the movement of global salvaging is the encouragement of religious people converging intellectually on the need for that salvaging. The fifth essay in the volume focuses on the need for them to “find an economist,” something Lonergan asked me to do just over fifty years ago. I have failed. M’aidr!! M’aidr!

¹² See Arne Naess, “Deep Ecology and Ultimate Premises,” *The Ecologist*, vol. 18 (1988). The volume includes a special double issue (nos. 4 and 5) on “Rethinking Man and Nature: Towards an Ecological World View.” The journal is available at: <https://www.resurgence.org/magazine/ecologist/issues1980-1989.html>

¹³ *CWL* 15, *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, 106.

¹⁴ I am recalling conversations with Lonergan in Dublin, Easter 1961. He talked of the walls around Christian thinking after Trent. He weaved his way round the remark about professors being “big frogs in little ponds.” His eyes twinkled as he talked of Lorenz’s comment on Hoenen going to “the Greg”: “what a waste of a good man”. Years later I found that, while I heard that Hoenan story frequently, Lonergan had never aired it to Fred Crowe: a matter of kindness. Add the context of my final note in this essay.

¹⁵ One of two frontispiece quotations in Jon Tattrie’s book (see note 3 above).

even slimly, in Lonergan's key move, will surely show slimly to some of them, the brutal sickness and savagery of their positionings. Is this not "a measure of bluntness"?¹⁶

The little band of ruffians may well, of course, lose this battle, make no impression on the Walled Off Hot Tell,¹⁷ be slid into oblivion by Rome and Boston and Toronto and Marquette and indeed by Helsinki. But history is on our side and, yes, "We were not the savages," nor are We, where the We is the full WE of being. So, some band will emerge in the pilgrim story to cherish the full symbolism of W₃,¹⁸ and to pray luminously within that symbolism's reality "Double You Three, in me and all, Clasp Cherishing Cauling Craving Christing."

¹⁶ Most of my readers will recognize my reference to Fred Crowe's "is there not need for a measure of bluntness at this stage?" ("The Exigent Mind", *Spirit as Inquiry. Studies in Honor of Bernard Lonergan S.J.*, Herder and Herder, 1964.) See the final note (11) of [Ecconomics 8](#): my bluntness meshes with pity.

¹⁷ On my mind here were both the cosy hotel and the nutty salad! But "hot tell" does resonate with hot vulgarizations that weave apparent riches of geo-historical reference into slumming papers in serious "academic disciplines" (end of paragraph 2 of chapter one of *Method in Theology*.)

¹⁸ Appended below from page 95 of the book mentioned in note 6 above.

W₃: A Heuristic of Lonergan's Perspective

