

A Modest Proposal Lite

By Wayne Northey

In Western civilization, *logic and ethics* are usually mutually exclusive, while *ideology and ethics* are invariably bedfellows. Take Michael Ignatieff for instance, a great Canadian intellectual and current Liberal Party leadership hopeful. He salutes the United States as *Empire-Lite* (title of one of his books), and applauds its *Nation-Building Lite* program that encircles the globe. Mr. Ignatieff is doubtless a logical thinker. His views on violence however, typical of centuries-long dominant Western ethical tradition religious and secular, are profoundly *illogical*.

Prove it you say? *Like taking candy from a baby!* Article 3 of the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is said to be succinct distillation of an essential self-evident right accorded by Western civilized society to all humanity. It reads: “*Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.*” Mr. Ignatieff would argue that Canadian law upholds that universal right for every Canadian without fail. Hence, no violent act by police that deliberately takes innocent civilian life on Canadian soil is to be countenanced. *Ever!* Not even *just this once*. One might say: *no universal right lite!*

You see? I’ve just proved it – or did you miss it? Mr. Ignatieff is not ethically *logical*, rather imperially *ideological*. He is in fact, contrary to the Declaration’s Article 3, committed to the most damnable mythology/ideology the West has known: *the myth of redemptive violence*, which is *anti-Western-civilization (in theory)* to the core (and originated in the pre-Christian Babylonian creation myth, *Enuma Elish*.) One could call Mr. Ignatieff’s mythical view *redemptive violence lite*.

While Mr. Ignatieff would categorically reject all Canadian police action that calculatedly destroyed innocent civilian lives to achieve its objectives, he fairly genuflects to the U.S. Empire Terror Military Complex that *deliberately, knowingly, methodically* destroys civilians the world over. He uses quaint American spelling to designate “*lite*” such “inhuman barbarism” against civilians (President Roosevelt in 1939). He seemingly does not intend us ever to think of the mutilated bodies of innocent civilians “lit up” (another kind of “*lite*”) at hundreds of U.S. Army check-points in Iraq; of thousands more killed through “shock and awe”; and myriad lesser bombing sorties against civilians by U.S. Empire whenever wherever, etc., etc., etc. The U.S. for decades has cornered the world’s bull market on *development, distribution, and deployment* of a massive arsenal of weapons of mass destruction: biological, chemical, conventional and nuclear. Nothing remotely *WMD lite* about that Empire! On the contrary. A *Google lite* search immediately establishes this *unconscionable ethical obscenity against humanity*.

In Canada slaughter of innocent civilians would of course be condemned to the highest level by Mr. Ignatieff. In Iraq or Afghanistan (or... one could fill the rest of the page with U.S. *Empire nation-building lite* targets around the globe the last 60 years), a diametrically opposite picture emerges. For Mr. Ignatieff, so *ethically illogical* to the core, that is all chocked up to *collateral damage lite* (like 120,000 instant collateral-damage-lite victims at Hiroshima and Nagasaki). Article 3 and all civilized ethics are jettisoned – all ethical logic in fact be damned! Mr. Ignatieff would call it “*Might makes right lite*”. And he would indeed be *right*. It could also be dubbed “*Might makes right*”

ethical logic lite”, for in fact it is lacking in all ethical logic known (in theory!) to the best of civilized humanity.

Turns out Mr. Ignatieff is not such a smart man after all. He in fact is profoundly illogical. Sadly though, he is in almost universal ethical company in the West, and that for centuries. Which is precisely why Mahatma Gandhi answered Sir Winston Churchill’s question, “*What do you think of Western civilization?*” with, “*I think it would be a good idea.*”

There is perhaps only one effective stopper to the ubiquitous/iniquitous myth of *collateral damage lite*. It is a modest contribution to the great ethical non-debate about this heinous Western *slaughter-house lite* mythology. Every time Allied bombers or military personnel of any kind know there is likely to be “collateral damage” inflicted in planned offensive action (*like every time “smart” bombs are dropped, missiles launched, WMD’s deployed*), the highest ranking commander at the battlefield *must parachute in to the forefront of whatever target a personal loved one before saying, “Fire!”*. Or not give the command. Just one loved one will do. Perhaps Mr. Ignatieff for starters could offer up one of his own?

Think of it as a *modest proposal lite*.