

The Archipelago

In modern society, especially in cities, we collect ourselves into smaller groups. We do this because humans existed as tribes in our recent evolutionary past.

We find like-minded folks who hold similar ideas and beliefs and we gather around fires together. We go to bars, we go to shows, we gather and eat, we collect identities and posit the same views, for the most part. This gives us a sense of meaning, a sense of inclusion and safety with “our own.”

Most tribes only experienced their neighbours. This was because there was no mass transit, no automobile, no larger society that dictated peace and thus no one could wander past the closest neighbouring tribe.

Funny enough most neighbours have a similar name for each other. *Savage*.

This crosses time and continents. It’s something to pause and consider. In most times and places, when small groups of people lived together, their closest neighbours whom they traded and swapped wives and husbands with, who they often knew individually by name, used the word “*savage*” to describe each other. More specifically many groups had a name for themselves, which often is translated as *people* and the name for outsiders often was a variant of *savage*.

In the northeast Congo there are a pygmy people called the Bambuti, they live in the forest and interact with their closest agriculturalist neighbour, the Bantu. If you interview these two people they consider the other group to be a savage people who live a primitive and unconsidered life, one with misery and little beauty. Each group essentially describes their way of living as superior to the other. It is comical how they describe each other as primitives, especially from a modern societal perspective, where they could simply be labeled as africans living in the Congolese jungle.

And its not surprising to consider that the Bantu and the Bambuti see a country such as Canada where there are conservative Steinbach suburbanites and a indie-rock loving, progressive Winnipeg west-enders, as basically the same person.

But funny enough, in a greater society, we are easily siloed off onto our little islands of ideas and perspectives. A small tribe. Which is exactly as we were designed/evolved to be.