

Primitivism—An Illusion with No Future (Book Review)

Snowball

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Primitivism—An Illusion with No Future, by Steve Booth, available for three dollars from *News from Nowhere*, POB 10384, Eugene, OR 97440.

Primitivism—An Illusion with No Future is part of a new critical look from anarchists on the ideas of primitivism.

Steve Booth has been involved with *Green Anarchist* projects since the early '90s and has written several other books, including *City Death*, *Even Eden* and *Into the '90s*. Booth was one of three writers involved with the *Green Anarchist* newspaper who was sent to prison for “conspiracy to incite persons unknown to criminal damage” during the infamous GAndALF trials in 1997.

Here he takes a look at what primitivism is and what a primitivist believes in, looking at their ideas on progress, their use of anthropology and the problems inherent in primitivist philosophy. Booth also looks at the Unabomber and the cult of personality surrounding Ted Kaczynski.

On the subject of primitivism's origins in modernism and post modernism Booth looks at its ideas of alienation and crisis, including Herbert Marcuse and his generally depressing look at the world. Booth also takes to task primitivism's lip service to the rejection of ideology in theory but not reality.

In “Twilight of the Idols,” the author takes a very close look at the ideas of some of the more infamous writers on the subject. He examines John Zerzan's rejection of technology, language, art and symbols and its origins in the ideas of Marcuse. Then he turns his gaze on the Unabomber, and from there the views of John Moore and his move away from primitivism for his own ideas of anarcho-futurism.

The chapter on the 10 principal themes of primitivism debunks some of the ideas such as civilization, anthropology, spirituality, mass society and leftism, zero work, technology and ideology.

Personally, I found this pamphlet very funny with its cartoons and Booth's style of writing. He makes many important points on the problems of primitivism, though I found some of the personal axe grinding a bit hard to take and rather unnecessary in this well-written and researched booklet.

This isn't going to put many people off their primitivist ideas, but I hope it will at least make them think a little harder about what world they want to create. I'd recommend this booklet to anyone with an interest in the whole primitivist debate. It's important because it comes from a green anarchist and contains ideas that have too often been co-opted by primitivists.

Snowball likes to garden and hates capitalism, misanthropy and identity pimps and is a green anarchist living somewhere in Cascadia.

The Ted K Archive

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