

“Now What?": A Primitivist Strategy Proposal

RedWolfReturns

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For those of us who have come to an encounter with the primitivist vision & critique of civilization, one very big & fundamental question always seems to remain burning in our hearts & minds; “now what?” The question is certainly a damned-difficult one. It is a question I’ve wrestled with plenty in recent years and will continue to wrestle with into the foreseeable future. Just what the hell does one do next, once they finally wake up to a comprehensive critique of civilization — right in the middle of the most awesomely-powerful, destructive & dominating industrial civilization the Earth has ever seen? Any answer to such an overwhelming question is bound to sound a bit absurd depending on how you look at it (and I’m sure mine will be no exception). At any rate, the following is my own attempt to propose a reasonable & hopefully effective short & long-term strategy for primitivist action in our present context.

First of all, I think we need to begin opening space for safe-havens where people can build community & learn through daily-practice how to live in a direct, unmediated, and semi-primitive way. People need to be given the chance to re-acquire a taste for the experience of an authentic, intimate & sharing relationship with each other, the Land, and it’s Wild Life. We can begin opening space for this by purchasing small plots of land near national forest and wilderness, or by living nomadic lives while camping or squatting on national forest land (where one can legally camp at any given spot for two weeks after they’ve been discovered by the authorities, as long as no permanent structures have been built). If the Land is purchased, open it up for fellow primitivists to stay there long-term or (if they have more nomadic tendencies) as they pass through the area. People can hunt/fish/gather/trap/camp on public land, while being loosely based on private land as needed. If a squatter’s camp is erected in the national forest, its location can then be made known through informal networks so that hospitality can be extended to those who might like to come & live there as well. If we had a network of these safe-havens around North America, an informal circuit of nomadic or semi-nomadic bands (families, affinity groups, friends, individuals) could get to know each other & learn to live in new, neo-primitive ways with active support from each other. Such support would then tend to build strong bonds of affinity. The people who own any actual land bases should be fairly careful to avoid raising the attention of the state (especially while they are still in the early formative stages). And this should be fairly easy, since the primitive skills movement in America is currently fairly accepted as a quaint hobbyist activity with unmolested schools/camps springing up all over the place. Only we have to know there is more going on than just a bunch of hobbyists playing around (and since the “more going

on” will also include a lot of “playing around” this shouldn’t be such a problem). Of course, the nomadic primitivists who circuit between these safe-havens will not be restricted with this concern (except of course, while at/near the safe-haven — primitivists shouldn’t @#%\$ in their own houses, either metaphorically or literally), and as long as they remain smart relative to security culture, they can & should act/resist in any way they see fit.

It is my personal belief that non-native Americans basically need to be “re-indigenized” — we need to become truly intimate & connected with the Land again if we are ever to learn how to live without making constant war on our Wild Relations. Once opened, these safe-havens can hopefully become a place where we non-native Americans can respectfully ask the Spirits of the Land to re-create us as authentic indigenous people once again. We can follow the lead of many American Indians who are re-connecting & re-viving their Old-Ways, but there is a lot more that we non-natives will have to do in the process, because the break with Balance is so much more severe. Respectfully ask for help from traditional American Indians (and give them back whatever kind of help they ask for — build allies) in this process, but ask for even more help from the Wild Life & Spirits of the Land where you live. Also, be cautious & sensitive to the risks of appropriation when relating to the cultures of American Indians — we want to get in touch with our own hearts enough to honestly re-create **our own** authentic Earth-based cultures, rather than stealing from Indigenous Peoples as civilization is already doing. Looking into the current revival of pre-Christian European pagan spirituality may be of help here for some of us, but certainly be careful around the use of agricultural ritual & magic. And again, the primary teachers need to come directly from the Land, not from books.

Next, we need to be willing & able to defend our communities & the land upon which they depend with whatever works — whether that involves “being nice” or “being nasty” depends on an honest appraisal of the situation & what will ultimately & realistically serve the community (human and non-human). Often the best defense of the weak consists of some form & combination of camouflage, illusion, mobility & adaptability. Any actual confrontation must be approached with the utmost of care & cunning. Also, take lessons from how indigenous peoples have defended themselves & their land — everything from how the Seminoles gained the name “the unconquered” (www.abfla.com/1toctf/seminole/semhistory.html and www.seminoletribe.com) to how the Ojibwe worked with white sportsmen to stop the Crandon Mine from destroying the land upon which they depend (www.treatyland.com/index.html).

As this re-wilding movement grows among us as aspiring neo-primitive humans, we can also help to facilitate the same process on the Land itself through support for visions like the Wild Earth Project (www.twp.org). Then as more wild land opens up, more space is created for more neo-primitive safe-havens. In this way, rewilding the People will support rewilding the Land and rewilding the Land will support rewilding the People. Beyond that, once this movement grows strong enough & something happens to tip the scales (like the oil running out or Mother Earth turning the tables on agricultural civilization through climate change) then we can move towards the offensive end of the spectrum and begin to make use of any & all opportunities created by any such shift. Exactly what this will look like cannot accurately be foreseen at this point, but any actions taken will certainly grow out of the character of a rewilded & reindigenized community, and will of course reflect the Earth-intimate culture from which they spontaneously spring. Wisdom & Respect will likely be the norm for any such People at that point.

“...give me a wildness whose glance no civilization can endure...” — Thoreau

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