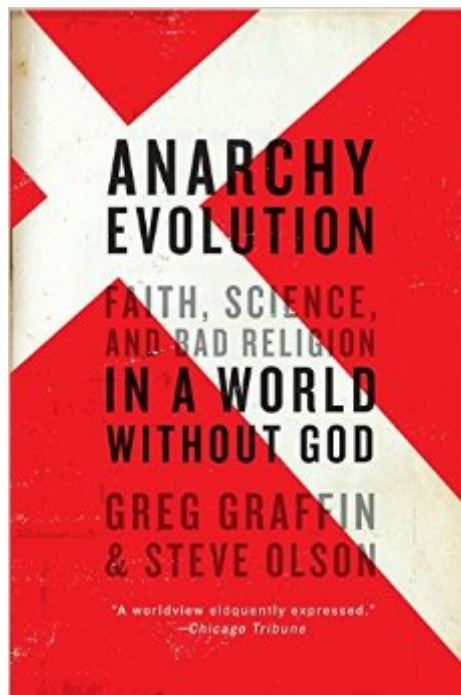


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Anarchy Evolution: Faith, Science, And Bad Religion In A World Without God



Synopsis

Take one man who rejects authority and religion, and leads a punk band. Take another man who wonders whether vertebrates arose in rivers or in the ocean. Put them together, what do you get? Greg Graffin, and this uniquely fascinating book. Jared Diamond, author of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* and *Anarchy Evolution* is a provocative look at the collision between religion and science, by an author with unique authority: UCLA lecturer in Paleontology, and founding member of Bad Religion, Greg Graffin. Alongside science writer Steve Olson (whose *Mapping Human History* was a National Book Award finalist) Graffin delivers a powerful discussion sure to strike a chord with readers of Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion* or Christopher Hitchens' *God Is Not Great*. Bad Religion die-hards, newer fans won over during the band's 30th Anniversary Tour, and anyone interested in this increasingly important debate should check out this treatise on science from the god of punk rock.

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial; Reprint edition (November 20, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0061828513

ISBN-13: 978-0061828515

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (85 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #105,406 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #83 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Atheism #165 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Science & Religion #173 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Philosophy

Customer Reviews

Here's how nerdy I am: My introduction to Greg Graffin and Bad Religion came through his doctoral dissertation, which I purchased from Graffin and got autographed. And then I read it. And it wasn't very good. Since then I've read a couple of other things that Graffin has written or co-written (*Is Belief in God Good, Bad or Irrelevant?: A Professor And a Punk Rocker Discuss Science, Religion, Naturalism & Christianity*), but nothing prepared me for just how damned GOOD "Anarchy" is. It must be said that the best parts of the book are the parts that only Graffin could have written--the autobiographical sections about his earlier childhood in Wisconsin, his transition to the California

punk scene, his approach to music, and so forth. Much of what he writes about evolutionary biology will be familiar, at least, to people who have taken some evolution classes or read books such as *Your Inner Fish: A Journey into the 3.5-Billion-Year History of the Human Body* (Vintage), and *Endless Forms Most Beautiful: The New Science of Evo Devo*. But he does have an interesting take on natural selection. Graffin makes it abundantly clear that his slightly unorthodox view of the importance of natural selection to overall evolutionary theory should give no aid and comfort to creationists (or their better-dressed cousins, Intelligent Design advocates).

I admit I was skeptical about this book. I saw the titles of the chapters included "The False Idol of Natural Selection" and "The False Idol of Atheism" and wondered just what Greg was going to be rambling about. Now, Bad Religion has been one of my favorite punk bands (and maybe band in general) for a few years now. Punk wise, their only competition for the title of favorite is the Misfits, but since the Misfit's lineup has been chaotic, Bad Religion's overall consistency (apart from the few albums without Brett) makes them the current holder of that title. I've admired Gregg for balancing a band and a PhD with a career in both teaching and science. This book has led me to a whole new level of respect for Greg and Bad Religion. Greg tells you everything you could want to know. He talks about his childhood, his high school years (which upon reading about, I STRONGLY relate to -- both of us had a small circle of friends, were into punk rock, but not the illegal shenanigans and drugs most are into, and have had a passion for science rooted in our childhoods), how the band came about (I'll leave the names that they almost called themselves as a surprise for you), how he got interested in science, and many other interesting things about his youth. As far as his adult life goes, I've come to appreciate that he balances school, science, and music with raising kids and having a wife. Greg is not arrogant about his life. He's honest about the difficulties in it, and about the mistakes he has made in his life. Other than getting to know the great singer, he presents some scientific views and philosophical views covered in the two suspect chapter names I listed above. Fear not, he's not out to destroy Natural Selection. In fact, he's just putting it in its place.

After purchasing this book based on title and author alone over 5 years ago, I finally opened it up several weeks ago and steadily plowed through it, piece by piece, any free opportunity I had. I have never been so appreciative of an author's efforts as I am with Greg Graffin and Anarchy Evolution. Growing up a punk rock kid in high school, Bad Religion was and remains one of my favorite musical groups. The depth and intelligence of their lyrics, their hauntingly beautiful

harmonies, and their stalwart dedication to improvement of their craft and society is a combination rarely found in any musical genre, and I credit their songs with advancing my views of social and environmental justice. The beauty of what Graffin does in this book is difficult to put into words. It offers something for everyone who is a fan of his work, and plenty for those who have never listened to a measure of "Suffer," let alone suffered a broken nose in the pit while stomping around to "Generator." Knowledge of Bad Religion and their songs is not a prerequisite for appreciating this book, but it certainly enhances the experience. I expected this to be a critique of static institutions and the status quo, but it is far more. Graffin seamlessly weaves between autobiographical anecdotes, evolutionary biology, contemporary philosophy, and creates a manifesto of his naturalist worldview. He is confident in his opinions, yet leaves debate open in those areas where reasoned and rational views could differ. He does not shy away, however, from shutting down those perspectives based on fallacies, fairy tales, or misinformation. Rarely does one come across a book which offers so much in such a small volume.

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