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"The State of Nature: The Political Philosophy of Primitivism and the Culture of Contamination"

Smith, Mick

Smith, Mick. "The State of Nature: The Political Philosophy of Primitivism and the Culture of Contamination." *Environmental Values* 11, no. 4 (2002): 407–25. doi:10.3197/096327102129341154 .

The "state of nature" could be understood in two senses; both in terms of its nature's current (sorry) condition and of that unmediated and pre-contractual relation between humanity and the environment posited by political philosophers like Locke and Rousseau and now championed by anarcho-primitivism. Primitivism is easily dismissed as an extreme, naive and impractical form of radical environmentalism but its emergence signifies contemporary disaffection with the ideology of "progress" so central to modernity and capitalism. This paper offers an ethico-political interpretation of primitivism's critical relation to modernity in terms of the dialectic between amorality (innocence) and immorality (guilt) within what is characterised as modernity's "culture of contamination."
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