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Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Chapter 1 The Presence of the 'Primitive': An Introduction -- Part One: Figures of 'Primitive Thinking' -- Chapter 2 The Ethnological Paradigm of the 'Primitive' -- Chapter 3 The Child as 'Primitive' -- Chapter 4 Psychopathology in the Paradigm of the 'Primitive' -- Part Two: Art, Language, and 'Primitive Thinking' -- Chapter 5 The Origins of Art -- Chapter 6 'Primitive Language' – Theories of Metaphor -- Part Three: 'Primitive Thinking' in German Literary Modernism -- Chapter 7 The “Tropological Nature” of the Poet in Müller and Benn -- Chapter 8 A Sister in Madness: Figures of 'Primitive Thinking' in Robert Musil -- Chapter 9 The Dialectical Turn of 'Primitive Thinking': The Child and Gesture in Walter Benjamin -- Epilogue -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	This book explores modernity under the spell of the 'primitive.' Proponents of the ideology of progress as well as critics of civilization, utopians dreaming of a re-enchanted existence and supporters and opponents of nascent fascism alike were all profoundly shaped by the phantasm of the 'primitive', a central element of which, this book argues, is the notion of 'primitive thought'. This comprises a distinct mode of thinking – characterized by turns as magical, mythical, mystical, or prelogical – that allows for a fundamentally different way of relating to the world. It was associated not only with indigenous cultures, but also with other figures of alterity, such as children and the mentally ill. The book examines the discourse on 'primitive thinking' in

the social sciences, writings on art and language, and – most centrally – literary works by Robert Musil, Walter Benjamin, Gottfried Benn, and Robert Müller.

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