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Author[s]: Darya Protopopova

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Primitivism in British Modernism

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and the Ballets Russes

by Darya Protopopova

It is a well-known fact that Roger Fry was interested in the primitive. His first Post-Impressionist exhibition in London was one of the chronological landmarks that allowed Virginia Woolf to observe that ‘on or about December 1910 human character changed’.¹ It is a less discussed fact that both Fry and Woolf repeatedly used examples from Russian art and literature in their campaign for modernity and liberation in fiction and fine arts. In terms of foreign influences on British intellectuals, Russian art and literature were, perhaps, the most powerful cultural discovery of the 1910s. It was the period in which Chekhov and Dostoevsky were translated adequately into English for the first time, and the Russian Ballet made its first appearance on the London stage. The popularity of the Russian Ballet and literature in early twentieth-century Britain has been viewed by critics as a result of the country’s opening up to European cultural trends during the Edwardian era. As Samuel Hynes observes: ‘European ideas forced themselves upon the insular English consciousness and so joined England to the Continent’.² I believe that the British vogue for the Russian Ballet and Russian paintings should be more outspokenly connected to the fascination with the primitive among British intellectuals of the time. I also believe that the interest in Russian art and literature among modernists such as Woolf, Fry, T. S. Eliot, Katherine Mansfield, and Wyndham Lewis in many cases illustrates

what Michael Bell defines as ‘a central paradox of Modernism: the most sophisticated achievement of the present is a return to, or a new appreciation of, the archaic’.³

Before I examine the modernists’ preoccupation with primitive art, I would like to dwell upon the difficulty of defining primitivism.⁴ Following Miriam Deutsch and Jack Flam, editors of *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History*, I use the words *primitivism* and *primitive art* ‘for historical purposes’, understanding, of course, that neither the art in question nor the peoples who produced it ‘should be considered “primitive” in the sense of crude, unformed, etc.’⁵ Michael Bell comments on the ‘natural untidiness’ of the term *primitivism*, which results from a long history of the phenomenon itself: ‘The nostalgia of civilized man for a return to a primitive or pre-civilized condition is as old [...] as his civilized capacity for self-reflection’.⁶ Modernist primitivism has, therefore, many predecessors, such as ‘the ancient myth of the golden age’ and the ‘eighteenth-century interest in the noble savage’.⁷ However, modernist primitivism differs from those earlier stylised representations of the archaic. It acquires a scientific aspect, in the sense that modernists studied what they called at the time ‘savage’ art directly, for instance, through collecting African sculpture, or through reading anthropological studies of non-European peoples.⁸ For instance, T. S. Eliot found himself exposed to ‘[t]he spectacle of non-Western societies’ at the age of fifteen, when his father took him to the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition, which took place in St Louis, Missouri, in 1904.⁹ In the manner of international expositions of the time, the St Louis World’s Fair ‘included “native villages” in which exotic peoples were presented in virtual zoological exhibits or tableaux vivants’. The Igorot village turned out to be a particular favourite of the Eliot family.

Modernists’ first-hand involvement with the primitive through the study of anthropology had both positive and negative effects on their art. On the one hand, the cultural shock from discovering new anthropological data about non-Western peoples impelled modernist writers to question their own civilisation. On the other, they were inevitably influenced in their judgment of primitive art by

the racist stance that was characteristic of anthropological works of the time: 'In the early years of the twentieth century, blatantly racist pronouncements were made with complete lack of self-consciousness'.¹⁰ Even Fry, 'a committed anti-imperialist by the early 1900s',¹¹ allowed himself superior statements such as this: 'It is for want of a conscious critical sense and the intellectual powers of comparison and classification that the negro has failed to create one of the great cultures of the world'.¹²

In modern usage, primitivism signifies the artist's fascination with Native American, Eskimo, African, and Oceanic indigenous arts.¹³ At the start of the twentieth century, *primitive* was used as an umbrella term covering all types of the West's cultural opposites: it also stood for so called 'low' art, 'the latter including the folk or "popular arts" of any culture'.¹⁴ Fry's collection contained 'tiny bronze animal ornaments from the nomadic peoples of the Steppes and everyday pottery objects from many European folk traditions', including English.¹⁵ Critics did not hesitate to use the word 'barbaric' in their discussions of non-Western cultures, and the most common comparison was between non-Europeans and children.¹⁶ A passage from Fry's article 'The Art of the Bushmen' may serve as an illustration here: 'We find, it is true, a certain barbaric crudity and simplicity which give these drawings [the rock-paintings of the bushmen of the Kalahari desert] a superficial resemblance to children's drawings'.¹⁷

The early history of modernist primitivism is described by Gertrude Stein in her *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*:

At the time [in 1906] negro sculpture had been well known to curio hunters but not to artists. Who first recognised its potential value for the modern artist I am sure I do not know. [...] In any case it was Matisse who first was influenced, not so much in his painting but in his sculpture, by the african statues and it was Matisse who drew Picasso's attention to it just after Picasso had finished painting Gertrude Stein's portrait.¹⁸

It is important to note the abruptness of assimilation of the primitive into modernist aesthetic discourse. As Jack Flam observes:

[...] only a few years before they discovered Primitive art, Western artists had been almost totally blind to it. Neither Matisse nor Picasso, for example, seems to have remarked on any of the African objects at the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, even though a number of the French African colonies were elaborately represented there.¹⁹

Fry himself did not discover Cézanne and his innately primitivist works until 1906, when he ‘caught a glimpse of Cézanne’ at the International Society Exhibition in London.²⁰ But once he discovered Cézanne, there was no way back. As Virginia Woolf writes in her biography of Fry, ‘since 1906 [...] he had been becoming more and more absorbed in the work of Cézanne in particular and in modern French painting in general’, and, therefore, in primitivism, which was the leitmotif of modern French painting at the time.

Fry believed that the cultural hierarchy which had formed in Western art criticism by the turn of the century had to be reconsidered, so that primitive and all other non-European arts would no longer be seen as inferior to the cultures of so-called civilised countries. He wrote:

It is essential that the art historian should be able to contemplate any object which can claim in any way to be a work of art with the same alert and attentive inquisition as one which has already been, as it were, canonized.²¹

He argued that primitive art could show English artists of the time a way out of what he perceived to be an aesthetic dead-end:

Why should [the artist] ... wilfully return to primitive, or, as it is derisively called, barbaric art? The answer is that it is ... simply necessary, if art is to be rescued from the hopeless encumbrance of its own accumulations of science; if art is to regain its power to express emotional ideas.²²

Fry praised primitive art for the qualities which, in his view, British art had lost over the centuries, such as ‘directness of vision’ and ‘complete freedom’.²³ He led a tireless war against what he called ‘descriptive’ art, which he argued only conveyed the outer qualities of things, neglecting

their ‘soul’.²⁴ In his search for ‘vitality’, ‘sincerity’, and ‘spontaneity’, Fry turned his critical attention to the French Impressionists, and Islamic, Byzantine, and primitive art.²⁵

In March 1910, Fry’s article on ‘Bushman Paintings’ appeared in the *Burlington Magazine*, and in November of the same year, he opened the first Post-Impressionist exhibition. Gauguin’s Tahitian paintings were the most provocative part of the show, ‘whose commemorative poster reproduced a Gauguin painting of a native woman next to a small primitive statue’.²⁶

Picasso and Matisse, ‘the most aggressive and innovative primitivizers, dominated the second Post-Impressionist exhibition, in 1912’.²⁷ Fry’s second show was received far more placidly by British audiences than the First Post-Impressionist Exhibition: ‘The reviews of this show make it clear that by the end of 1912 Post-Impressionism was no longer regarded as a loathsome disease’.²⁸ This time, apart from the French Post-Impressionists, Fry included eleven English Post-Impressionists and several Russian avant-garde artists. By that time, one of the Russian artists, Nicholas Roerich, had already acquired fame among British opera-goers, by his stage designs and costumes for the ‘Polovtsian Dances’ scene from the opera-ballet *Prince Igor*. *Prince Igor*, based on the story from Russian medieval history, was performed by Sergei Diaghilev’s company during its first London season in 1911. It featured dances of the Polovtsi, a nomadic Turkic people who inhabited the central Eurasian steppe between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. As the Russian diplomat Peter Lieven, a spectator at many of Diaghilev’s productions, observed, ‘[t]he West expected from Diaghilev not only Russian national colour, but something like Eastern Asiatic exoticism which the press and public demanded of anything Russian’.²⁹ Lieven’s description of Nicholas Roerich’s designs for *Prince Igor* demonstrates the image of Russia that appealed to Western audiences:

[Roerich’s] task of representing on the stage the boundless expanse of the Southern Russian steppes was not an easy one. [...] But Roerich was not a specialist in primitive cultures for nothing. He produced costumes

for the Polovtsi which were a combination of [the costumes of Mongoloid peoples of north-eastern Siberia and west-central Asia] [...] and the result was both powerful and convincing.³⁰

Among those Russian painters whom Fry selected for his exhibition, Roerich was not the only artist interested in the primitive. In fact, the majority of the Russian participants of the show employed various Byzantine and Russian folk techniques. For example, in Boris Anrep's 'Allegorical Composition', lent to the exhibition by Lady Ottoline Morrell, we find echoes of Russian icon painting, as well as motifs common in Russian crafts (stylised images of a bird, a flower, and a one-dimensional image of a temple). Anrep, who was a close acquaintance of Virginia Woolf (he portrayed her as Clio, the muse of history, in the mosaic floor in the National Gallery),³¹ reinforced the popular Western association of Russia with the Orient and the archaic in his article for the exhibition catalogue:

Russian spiritual culture has formed itself on the basis of a mixture of its original Slavonic character with Byzantine culture and with the cultures of various Asiatic nations. [...] Russian [art] persisted in its archaic traditions. [...] At the present day [...] [a]rtists filled with admiration before the beauty and expressivity of Russian ancient art aim to continue it, passing by the Western influence.³²

Anrep goes on to discuss Dmitri Stelletzky, who 'approaches the closest to the ancient forms' and 'uses the archaic alphabet which he finds the best medium for the exercise of his pictorial imagination'; Roerich, whose 'imagination carries him further to the dawn of the Russian life' and who 'gives an emotional feeling of the prehistoric Slavonian Pagans'; and, finally, Goncharova, 'who aims for a true representation of the ancient Russian God [...] and His saints. [...] Her saints are stern, severe and austere, hard and bitter'.³³

Associations of Russia with the primitive and the Orient persisted in the minds of British writers from very early on, starting with the first contacts made between the two countries in the sixteenth century. Richard Hakluyt's edition of *The Principal Navigations*,

Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation (1598–1600) contained descriptions of Russian manners as ‘Turkie like’, and was interspersed with definitions of ‘the Russes’ as ‘barbarous’, ‘bloody’, and ‘rude’.³⁴ Virginia Woolf uses Elizabethan impressions of Muscovy (Elizabethan and Jacobean name for Russia) when ironising her contemporaries’ fantasies about Russia in *Orlando*, where she dresses the Russian princess in ‘the loose tunic and trousers’ of the Oriental fashion and makes Orlando imagine that ‘the women in Muscovy wear beards and the men are covered with fur from the waist down’.³⁵ The image of ‘voluptuous’ Sasha, with her regal manners and attraction towards a Russian sailor, a ‘wide-cheek monster’,³⁶ also seems to have been inspired by the description of Catherine the Great and the amorous atmosphere of her court in Byron’s *Don Juan*, which Woolf read in August 1918.³⁷ In Byron’s *Don Juan*, Woolf found another British presentation of Russia as an extremely cold country, populated by wild, almost bestial people. Juan’s relatives prepare themselves for ‘emigrations’ to Russia by ‘eating ices’, and his mother, Donna Inez, expresses no concern about Catherine’s kindness towards Juan, for:

[...] At home it might have given her some vexation;
 But where thermometers sunk down to ten,
 Or five, or one, or zero, she could never
 Believe that virtue thaw’d before the river. (Canto X)³⁸

According to Byron’s narrator, life at the Russian court is excessively and chaotically luxurious, ‘a hurry / Of waste, and haste, and glare, and gloss, and glitter’ (Canto X).³⁹ At the same time, he argues that European dresses and ceremonies of the Russian nobility are only a surface, and that in an amorous ‘flurry’ one could see ‘bear-skins black and furry [...] [p]eep[ing] out sometimes [...] [t]hrough all the “purple and fine linen” worn by the Russian empress (Canto X).⁴⁰ Byron’s images provided Woolf with an example of British literary depictions of Russia as the savage Other hiding behind a civilised façade. Woolf humorously joins this tradition by mentioning that once Orlando found Sasha ‘gnawing a candle-end in a corner’:

‘True, it was pink; it was gilt; and it was from the King’s table; but it was tallow, and she gnawed it. Was there not, he thought [...] something rank in her, something coarse flavoured, something peasant born?’⁴¹

The view of Russia as ‘primitive’, in the sense of ‘pre-civilised’ or ‘the opposite of Western civilization’, remained common in Britain even when the two countries became allies in the First World War. A pamphlet about Russia from ‘The Nations of the War’ series contained the following, supposedly complimentary passage:

Russia will probably tomorrow become the pioneer of a mental revolt compared with which the French Revolution will be as nothing; for in Russia together with all the spirit of modern science there is all the virility of primitive man.⁴²

Kingsley Martin describes the fluctuation of British attitudes towards Russia during the first quarter of the twentieth century:

The story of our changing feeling towards Russia would make an amusing book. Until we [the British] became indirectly Russia’s ally early in this century, the prevailing image of Russia was that of a cruel aristocracy governing a vast horde of barbaric peasants [...] After 1904 these peasants were represented as hospitable, gentle, and soulful mystics, living close to the soil, and therefore, close to God [...] When Russia made peace under Lenin’s leadership they were again called barbarians.⁴³

The period between 1910 and 1925 was, roughly, the time when British attitudes towards Russia changed dramatically from condescension and mistrust towards an ‘uncivilised’ political enemy, to admiration of Russian art and laudatory fantasies about the ‘soul’ of Russian people. Rachel May describes the period between 1910 and 1925 as the years of the ‘Russian craze’ in Britain.⁴⁴ This does not mean, however, that the British ceased to perceive Russia as the ‘wild’ and ‘barbarous’ other. At the start of the twentieth century, types of the other with which Russia had been associated (the primitive, the Orient) were transformed into symbols of modernity and liberation in the eyes of British artists.

Members of the high society and intellectuals, who constituted the main part of Diaghilev's British audiences before the War, were enchanted by the Oriental setting of the ballets such as *Scheherazade*, *Cléopâtre*, and *Narcisse*, and by Russian folk motifs in the music and stage design of ballets like *Prince Igor*, *The Firebird*, and *Petrushka*. *The Times* applauded 'the savage-joyful panther-leaping of the men' in *Prince Igor* and the 'sensuous langour' and 'savagery' of *Scheherazade*.⁴⁵ British passion for the Ballets Russes continued after the War. The Russian Ballet attracted Fry's attention with its use of Russian folk motifs in its search for ultra-modern methods of stage design. Commenting on Mikhail Larionov's designs for the ballet *Children's Tales*, first shown in London in 1919, Fry notes their 'crude vehemence of colour which sets just the right key by its reminiscence of Russian peasant art and children's toys'.⁴⁶ In 1921, T. S. Eliot praised Igor Stravinsky's music for the ballet *The Rite of Spring*, for evoking the spirit of 'primitive ceremony' and 'possessing a quality of modernity' at the same time.⁴⁷ In his account of the Georgian cultural scene, Frank Swinnerton writes: 'To an English public weary of English things and already longing for whatever was savage and untamed, the wildness of [the Ballets Russes was] like firewater to an innocent native'.⁴⁸

The reception of the Russian Ballet and French Post-Impressionism forms an important context of Virginia Woolf's fiction. *Orlando* is not Woolf's only response to her contemporaries' fascination with the exotic. In her biography of Roger Fry, she celebrates his goal of urging English artists to 'risk [...] themselves in the main stream of European art'.⁴⁹ She attended several performances of the Ballets Russes and was well aware of the fashions inspired by Oriental motifs in Diaghilev's productions: 'Woolf not only attended salons where guests regularly wore East Asian garb, but she herself appeared at a fancy-dress party costumed as Cleopatra'.⁵⁰ She was closely acquainted with the Russian ballerina Lydia Lopokova, who regularly performed in Diaghilev's ballets and, in 1925, married John Maynard Keynes, the economist and member of Bloomsbury. References to the Russian Ballet appear in several of Woolf's novels — *The Voyage Out* (1915), *The Years* (1937), and *Between the Acts* (1941). An allusion to the Russian

dancers in *The Years* reveals Woolf's awareness of the fact that her British contemporaries applauded the exotic Russian Ballet productions because it was fashionable:

'Have you seen the Russian dancers?' she was saying. [...] And what's your world, Martin thought, as she rapped out her slender stock of adjectives — 'heavenly', 'amazing', 'marvellous', and so on. Is it 'the' world? he mused. [...]

'Marvellous!' Martin agreed. He had got the very accent, he thought; he had got it from the young man whose hair looked as if a rake had gone through it.

'Yes: Nijinsky's marvellous,' he agreed. 'Marvellous,' he repeated.⁵¹

In this passage, Woolf satirises the laudatory remarks on Russian art — and even the manner in which one pronounced them — as an essential attribute of upper-class social status in pre-war Britain. By echoing Ann's praise of one of Diaghilev's leading dancers, Martin expresses his acquiescence to her world and its unwritten rules.

A 'wild', instinctive dancing style was one of the main Russian associations for Woolf. She returns to this association in *Between the Acts*: 'Swallows darting seemed [...] to make a pattern, dancing, like the Russians, only not to music, but to the unheard rhythm of their own wild hearts'.⁵² References to the Russian Ballet in Woolf's *Between the Acts* are particularly relevant to the subject of primitivism in modernist discourse. In her last novel, Woolf is preoccupied with the primeval impulses that her English characters discover in others and in themselves. One of the characters who rebels against the conventions of propriety is Mrs Manresa who proves 'her claim to be a wild child of nature' by taking off her stays and rolling in the grass (38–9). The novel's main outsider is Miss La Trobe, whom Woolf endows with orientalist Russian looks:

[H]er eyes and something about her always made Mrs Bingham suspect that she had Russian blood in her. "Those deep-set eyes; that very square jaw" reminded her — not that she had been to Russia — of the Tartars⁵³

As an outsider, Miss La Trobe sees further than the rest of the community, during the village pageant she is organising: ‘Swathed in conventions, they couldn’t see, as she could, that a dish cloth wound round a head in the open looked much richer than real silk. So they squabbled; but she kept out of it’ (59). La Trobe’s unconventionality, symbolised by her exotic appearance, allows her to inspire people and be their leader. Before the pageant starts, one of the villagers observes: ‘People are gifted — very. The question is — how to bring it out? That’s where she’s so clever — Miss La Trobe’ (54). Her energy, which, as Woolf encourages us to think, she derives from her closeness to nature (126, 162), enables her to liberate the unconscious potential in others: ‘Mrs Swithin, laying hold desperately of a fraction of her meaning, said: “What a small part I’ve had to play! But you’ve made me feel I could have played ... Cleopatra!”’(137). However, La Trobe’s otherness is portrayed as suspicious and even threatening. Through other characters’ responses to La Trobe, Woolf dramatises the human tendency to fill gaps in knowledge with preconceived stereotypes. From fragments of knowledge about La Trobe and from the fact that ‘[v]ery little was actually known about her’, La Trobe’s fellow villagers proceed to the conclusion that, ‘perhaps [...] she wasn’t altogether a lady?’ (53). By the end of the novel, the villagers start seeing her unconventionality from a negative perspective. During the last act of the pageant — when she shows them ‘The present time. [Them]selves’ (160) — they resent her experimental message: ‘Ourselves? But that’s cruel. To snap us as we are, before we’ve had time to assume... And only, too, in parts. [...] That’s what’s so distorting and upsetting and utterly unfair’ (165).

As one of the audience interprets La Trobe’s intention, she meant to unmask ‘something hidden, the unconscious as they call it’: ‘It’s true, there’s a sense in which we all [...] are savages still’ (179). In spite of the outward agreement with La Trobe’s point, the audience members are reluctant to face their inner selves: they are more comfortable with the thought that they ‘*were* savages’ a long time ago.⁵⁴ Thus, in the villagers’ eyes, La Trobe’s otherness has become a desired and, simultaneously, feared challenge of how they are used to seeing themselves.

To mark the threatening side of La Trobe's personality as it is perceived by the villagers, Woolf orientalises her image, by making Mrs. Bingham associate her seemingly Russian appearance with 'the Tartars', thus drawing on the early twentieth-century British writings about Russia. When writing on Russian history, Woolf's contemporaries pointed out the deep influence made upon Russian culture by the Tartar yoke in the Middle Ages. For example, Harold Williams, author and Russian correspondent for *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Morning Post*, and *The Daily Chronicle*, noted in his 1914 book *Russia of the Russians* that 'Tartar rule [...] contribut[ed] in many ways to the enrichment of Russian civilisation'.⁵⁵ In portraying La Trobe as a figure of the Orient in the villagers' eyes, Woolf draws upon the early twentieth-century British fear of the Asian aspect of Russia. The scholar and socialist John William Mackail criticised that fear in his 1915 pamphlet *Russia's Gift to the World* (1915), published in Britain as a piece of pro-Allied propaganda:

It must be clear from the facts which have been here summarized that talk such as may sometimes be heard even in England, of 'the barbarous East at the gates of Europe' and the danger of an 'avalanche of multitudinous savagery', is either willful falsehood or ignorance so gross as to be equally dangerous.⁵⁶

Though La Trobe's orientalised Russian appearance is only one of the many signs of her otherness, it is the sign that is most suggestive and emblematic. As the Russian allusions in Woolf's fiction show, she was aware of her Western contemporaries' tendency to perceive the world in the dichotomies of 'us' and 'them', 'East' and 'West', 'the civilised' and 'the primitive'. Like other modernist writers, Woolf employs these dichotomies for various aesthetic purposes in her fiction, while consistently underlining their artificial, stereotyped nature.

I would like to conclude by saying that modernists' return to the archaic — either through studying ethnography, or through examining African art and designs for the Ballets Russes — was an effective way of expressing their longing for liberation and innovation in arts. It also illustrated their understanding of what constitutes the essence

of life and human nature. The effect that the primitivism of French Post-Impressionists had on modernist writers is illustrated by my last quotation — from Katherine Mansfield’s reminiscences of her first encounter with Van Gogh:

Wasn’t that Van Gogh [...] Yellow flowers — brimming with sun in a pot? [...] [T]hat, & another of a sea-captain in a flat cap. They taught me something about writing, which was queer — a kind of freedom — or rather, a shaking free.⁵⁷

Modernist response to the discoveries in painting and music demonstrates close collaboration between different arts in the modernist period. Modernists interspersed their texts with elements that they perceived as derived from painting and music, one of the most famous instances being James Joyce’s use of a fugue in the ‘Sirens’ episode of *Ulysses*. Primitive art provided modernist artists with examples of the syncretic union between the image and the idea, the form and the subject.

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- ⁴ See Marianna Torgovnick's analysis of the term 'primitive' in Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago; London: Chicago University Press, 1990), p. 21.
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- ⁶ Michael Bell, *Primitivism* (London: Methuen, 1972), p. 1.
- ⁷ Bell, *Primitivism*, p. 4.
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- ⁹ Ronald Bush, 'The Presence of the Past: Ethnographic Thinking / Literary Politics', in *Prehistories of the Future: The Primitivist Project and the Culture of Modernism*, ed. by Elazar Barkan and Ronald Bush (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 23–41 (p. 25). For Eliot's serious study of ethnography see pp. 32–41.
- ¹⁰ Jack Flam, 'Introduction', in *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art*, p. 8.
- ¹¹ Christopher Green, 'Expanding the Canon: Roger Fry's Evaluations of the "Civilized" and the "Savage"', in *Art Made Modern: Roger Fry's Vision of Art*, ed. by Christopher Green (London: Merrell Holberton Publishers, 1999), p. 130.
- ¹² Roger Fry, 'Negro Sculpture' (1920), in *Vision and Design* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1923), p. 103.
- ¹³ See *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art*, p. xiii and Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive*, pp. 18–21.
- ¹⁴ Christopher Green, 'Roger Fry's Canon — From African Sculpture to Maurice Vlaminck', in *Art Made Modern: Roger Fry's Vision of Art*, p. 184.
- ¹⁵ Green, 'Roger Fry's Canon', p. 184.
- ¹⁶ See *Art Made Modern: Roger Fry's Vision of Art*, p. 150 and *Primitivism and*

Twentieth-Century Art, p. xv.

¹⁷ Fry, 'The Art of the Bushmen' (1910), in *Vision and Design*, p. 88. Roger Fry defined children's drawings as primitive, for he believed that children were holding a less socially formulated view of the world. Both children's and primitive works of art demonstrated, in Fry's opinion, a higher degree of 'sincerity', than the artefacts belonging to the classical, 'civilised' canon of world culture. In my paper, I use the word 'primitive' in a complementary sense to that employed by Fry. In his 1910 article 'The Post-Impressionists', Fry also draws a direct parallel between primitive and children's art: 'Primitive art, like the art of children, consists not so much in an attempt to represent what the eye perceives, as to put a line around a mental conception of the object. Like the work of the primitive artist, the pictures children draw are often extraordinarily expressive' in *A Roger Fry Reader*, ed. by Christopher Reed (Chicago; London: Chicago University Press, 1996), p. 84. Fry argued that modernist artists would greatly benefit from studying expressiveness of both primitive and children's art.

¹⁸ Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1933), pp. 77–8.

¹⁹ *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art*, p. 6.

²⁰ Virginia Woolf, *Roger Fry: A Biography* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1940), p. 111.

²¹ Roger Fry, 'The Courtauld Institute of Art' (1930), in *A Roger Fry Reader*, p. 277.

²² Fry, 'The Grafton Gallery: I' (1910), in *A Roger Fry Reader*, p. 86.

²³ Fry, 'The Art of the Bushmen' (1910) and 'Negro Sculpture' (1920), in *Vision and Design*, p. 97; p. 101.

²⁴ Fry, 'The Post-Impressionists: II' (1910), in *A Roger Fry Reader*, p. 92.

²⁵ For Fry's application of the term 'vitality' to Byzantine and Islamic art, see 'An Appreciation of the Swenigorodskoi Enamels', in *The Burlington Magazine*, 21 (August 1912), p. 293 and 'The Munich Exhibition of Mohammedan Art: II', in *The Burlington Magazine*, 17 (September 1910), p. 327. For Fry's application of the term 'sincerity' to the works of Cézanne and children's drawings, see his *Cézanne: A Study of His Development* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1927), pp. 17–27 and 'An Essay of Aesthetics' (1909), in *Vision and Design*, p. 20. Fry criticised Sir Joshua Reynolds for a lack of 'spontaneity' in his *Reflections on British Painting* (London: Faber, 1934), p. 53.

²⁶ Marianna Torgovnick, 'Making Primitive Art High Art', in *Poetics Today*, 10,

(1989), 299–328 (p. 302).

²⁷ Torgovnick, ‘Making Primitive Art High Art’, p. 302.

²⁸ Hynes, p. 334.

²⁹ Peter Lieven, *The Birth of Ballets-Russes*, trans. by L. Zarine (London: Allen and Unwin, 1936), pp. 75–6.

³⁰ Lieven, p. 82.

³¹ Olga Kaznina, ‘Boris Anrep: A Russian Artist in an English Interior’, in *Journal of European Studies* 35 (3), 339–364 (p. 345).

³² Boris Anrep, ‘The Russian Group’, in *Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition (5 October–31 December 1912): Catalogue* (London: Ballantyne, 1912), pp. 18–9.

³³ Anrep, ‘The Russian Group’, p. 19.

³⁴ Richard Hakluyt, *Hakluyt’s Collection of the Early Voyages, Travels, and Discoveries, of the English Nation*, 5 vols (London: Printed for R.H. Evans, J. Mackinlay, and R. Priestly, 1809), I, p. 270.

³⁵ Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography*, ed. by Brenda Lyons (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 26, p. 33.

³⁶ *Orlando*, p. 38.

³⁷ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell, 5 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1977), I, p. 180.

³⁸ Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, in *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. by Jerome J. McGann, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), V, pp. 446–7.

³⁹ *Don Juan*, p. 444.

⁴⁰ *Don Juan*, p. 444.

⁴¹ *Orlando*, p. 38.

⁴² Anonymous, *Russia and the Russian people* (London: Nations of the War series, 1914), p. 55.

⁴³ Kingsley Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston: A Study of Public Opinion in England Before the Crimean War* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), p. 21.

⁴⁴ Rachel May, *The Translator in the Text: On Reading Russian Literature in English* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1994), pp. 30–1.

⁴⁵ *The Times*. 24 June 1911; 17 October 1911; 25 October 1911.

⁴⁶ Roger Fry, ‘M. Larionow and the Russian Ballet’ (1919), in *A Roger Fry Reader*, p. 291.

⁴⁷ T. S. Eliot, ‘London Letter’, in *The Dial*, 71 (1921), 452–55 (p. 452).

⁴⁸ Frank Swinnerton, *The Georgian Literary Scene: A Panorama* (London: Heinemann, 1935), p. 296.

⁴⁹ Woolf, *Roger Fry*, p. 158.

⁵⁰ Urmila Seshagiri, 'Orienting Virginia Woolf: Race, Aesthetics, and Politics in *To the Lighthouse*', in *Modern Fiction Studies* 50 (2004), 58–84 (p. 61).

⁵¹ Virginia Woolf, *The Years*, ed. by Hermione Lee (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2000), pp. 239–43.

⁵² Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts*, ed. by Frank Kermode (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 59–60. Further references will refer to this edition of *Between the Acts* and where possible are given in the text.

⁵³ *Between the Acts*, p. 53. I have not yet established whether this is a quotation from another text, or whether Woolf thus reports the thoughts of her own characters.

⁵⁴ *Between the Acts*, p. 27. Emphasis mine.

⁵⁵ Harold W. Williams, *Russia of the Russians* (London: Pitman and Sons, 1914), p. 13. On Harold Williams as one of the many Edwardian Russophiles, see Lea Halpern Honigwachs, *Edwardian Discovery of Russia, 1900–1917* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 1977), p. 14, p. 51.

⁵⁶ John William Mackail, *Russia's Gift to the World* (London; New York; Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), p. 48.

⁵⁷ Katherine Mansfield, *The Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by John Middleton Murry, 2 vols (London: Constable, 1928), II, p. 160.