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The relationship between the individual and the tribe in modernist works is a useful lens through which to explore contemporary attitudes towards modernity, and more specifically, towards the fate of the individual in an increasingly mechanised society. Following the popular success of ethnographic and anthropological studies such as James George Frazer’s *The Golden Bough* (1890) and Sigmund Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* (1913), the modernist era saw a surge of interest in so-called ‘primitive’ cultures, and representations emerged across the arts framing these cultures both as an idealised antidote to modernity, and as a means through which to reflect its undesirable aspects. In the visual arts, the modernist Primitivism seen in the work of painters like Paul Gauguin and Pablo Picasso, celebrated the perceived simplicity and purity of ‘primitive’ life as an antidote to the decadence and over-civilisation of modernity.¹ Yet following on from *fin de siècle* preoccupations with regression and degeneration, modernist representations of the primitive were also formed in relation to contemporary fears of primitive cultures as backward, savage and uncivilised.² The contradictions within Western responses to the primitive at this time are inherent in the ‘anti-modern’ strand of modernist works, which can vacillate in attitude between both the idealised and the fearful within an individual work. Through a close examination of two distinct works, E.M. Forster’s ‘The Machine Stops’ (1909) and Stravinsky/Nijinsky’s ballet *The Rite of Spring* (1913), these contradictory attitudes towards the primitive can be made explicit.

¹ Gillian Perry, ‘Primitivism and the Modern’, *Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction: The Early Twentieth Century*. Eds. Charles Harrison, Francis Frascina, and Gill Perry. London: Yale University Press, 1993. p. 5-6.

² James F. Knapp, ‘Primitivism and the Modern’, *Boundary 2*. Vol.15 No. 1 (1987): p. 366.

E.M. Forster is a well-known proponent of a philosophical individualism, both in his creative works and in his essay writing.³ His science fiction short story ‘The Machine Stops’, balances an idealised naturalism with a futuristic tribal society that provides a dystopic vision of subdued individuality. This coexistence of the idealised and the feared primitive is also apparent in the Stravinsky/Nijinsky ballet *The Rite of Spring* (1913). Ostensibly a work of modernist Primitivism, this ballet celebrates the vitality of ancient tribal existence, while also displaying a less obvious but no less palpable unease in the dynamics between individual and tribe. In their discomfort surrounding the tribe as a homogenised, impersonal identity, these early modernist representations build on certain Victorian narratives of modernity, which used the crowd as a symbol for a class-related fear of the masses.⁴ While for the Victorians, the crowd remained at a distance, outside the self, the early modernist ‘anti-modern’ takes this idea a step further, threatening to subsume the individual into the tribal identity. Although Forster writes from the heart of the historic English countryside and Stravinsky from the backdrop of rural Russia, their works share concerns about the project of modernity, its impact on traditional ways of life, and the implications it has for the individual within society. Yet in spite of the ‘anti-modern’ message of Forster’s and Stravinsky’s works, their uses of the primitive do not speak simply to a desire to return to a romanticised pre-modern age, but also provide a counter-argument to modernity in the links drawn between excessive modernity, industrialisation, dangerous collectivism, and the perceived savagery and homogeneity of primitive cultures.

‘The Machine Stops’ is a work of science fiction. Yet the technologically advanced society described in the story reflects the primitive in a number of ways, notably through its social structures, the totemic and ritualistic elements in the worship of the ‘book’ and the ‘cult of the Machine’, and as will be explored here, through the narrative exploitation of

³ C.B. Cox, *The Free Spirit*, London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

⁴ Michael Tratner, *Modernism and Mass Politics: Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, Yeats*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. p. 3.

taboos. The prohibitions enforced, and more importantly implied, by the society in Forster's story operate in line with Freud's description of taboos: 'Taboo prohibitions have no grounds and are of unknown origin. Though they are unintelligible to us, to those who are dominated by them they are taken as a matter of course'.⁵ The implicit nature of taboos is observable in the following exchange between Kuno and Vashti:

'I found a way out of my own'
The phrase conveyed no meaning to her and he had to repeat it.
'A way out of your own?' She whispered, 'But that would be wrong.'
'Why?'
The question shocked her without measure.⁶

Vashti's shock at being asked the question ('why?') shows that there is no answer. There is no formal rule prohibiting someone from leaving the Machine on their own, it simply isn't done. The taboo that has been broken here is that of Kuno exercising his individuality, finding his own way and shunning the paths carved out for him by society. Other examples of taboo in 'The Machine Stops' form around similarly individualistic centres: physical contact and the human body. On her journey to visit Kuno, Vashti encounters a woman who works on the transport system:

She had often to address passengers with direct speech, and this had given her a certain roughness and originality of manner. When Vashti swerved away from the sunbeams with a cry, she behaved barbarically—she put out her hand to steady her.

'How dare you!' exclaimed the passenger. 'You forget yourself!'
The woman was confused, and apologized for not having let her fall. People never touched one another.⁷

The taboo of physical contact is broken by this woman, who is described as acting 'barbarically'. This sense of over-civilisation is central to Forster's critique of modernity and myths of progress. In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud notes the general assertion of 'instinctual repression' as 'a measure of the level of civilization that has been reached',⁸ a measure by

⁵ Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*. London: Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2004. p. 22.

⁶ E.M.Forster, 'The Machine Stops', *E.M. Forster: Selected Stories*. New York: Penguin, 2001. p. 104.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁸ Freud, *Totem and Taboo*. p. 114.

which Forster's society is the height of the civilised ideal. For the people of the machine, all experience is mediated through the machine, and even the most benign human impulses, like those of steadying an older woman on a train, are repressed. In taking instinctual repression to its limits, Forster undermines the notion of 'civilisation' as expressing a trajectory of progress.

In a society wherein any infant who 'promised undue strength' is destroyed at birth,⁹ physical strength and athleticism become taboo. Kuno's surreptitious exercising reveals his understanding of the inherent prohibition in the act: he only indulges in exercise in the deserted hallways at night and in his bed.¹⁰ As with all taboos, 'the prohibition does not succeed in *abolishing* the instinct. Its only result is to *repress* the instinct',¹¹ In 'The Machine Stops' these instincts reappear through Kuno's burgeoning sense of physical selfhood and the uncanny absent-presence of the 'homeless' in the narrative; members of the community who have been cast out to die on the uninhabitable surface of the earth. Kuno's attempts to re-inhabit his own body and declare emphatically that 'man is the measure' firmly mark the individualist centre of the narrative sympathies which are set against the claustrophobic society.¹² This individualism is a recognised trademark in Forster's writing as both an essayist and novelist. As C.B.Cox states, Forster believed that,

No restrictions must be placed on individual liberty; if a man is tied down by the need to adapt himself to dogma or convention or to other people, he sacrifices some part of his essential human nature.¹³

Forster's individualism is the impetus behind this story and his use of the primitive is very much a tool in support of this ideology. Through connecting the seemingly advanced society to 'primitive' models, Forster imbues the rules of this futuristic society with the sense of 'otherness' common to an early twentieth century Western audience encountering tribal

⁹ Forster, 'The Machine Stops', p. 104

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 106-7.

¹¹ Freud, *Totem and Taboo*. p. 34.

¹² Forster, 'The Machine Stops', p. 105.

¹³ C.B. Cox, *The Free Spirit*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963. p. 87.

taboos.¹⁴ Utilising these prejudices, Forster accentuates the sense of disturbance in the story, marking any loss of individuality as a thing to be feared, and presenting the repressed elements: re-inhabiting your own body, re-connecting with nature, re-connecting with other people, as avenues for salvation.

The Rite of Spring was a collaborative work between the composer Igor Stravinsky, the choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky, and the artist Nicolas Roerich, overseen by the Director of the Ballets Russes, Sergei Diaghilev. Performed only a handful of times in its initial conception, it later came to prominence as a concert piece as the ballet itself ceased to be staged. In recent years, Millicent Hodson has pieced together the all but lost choreography of Vaslav Nijinsky using contemporary reviews, fragmented notes, and interviews with surviving dancers, contributors, and their descendants. Her reconstituted ballet was first performed by New York's Joffrey Ballet in 1987 and later by Russia's Mariinsky Theatre, whose recorded performance from *Stravinsky and the Ballet Russes* (2008) I use here. While there are obvious problems with relying on reconstituted choreography, namely the possible inaccuracies brought in through interpretive choices or educated guesswork, reference to this performance can still provide insight into the original work. As well as the reconstituted choreography, it is worthy of note that the score-in-performance in which I am interested here is also open to interpretive bias, the performance I am citing being the Mariinsky Orchestra led by Valery Gergiev which accompanies the reconstituted ballet.

The Rite of Spring is in many ways a work of modernist Primitivism, its depiction of an ancient Slavic ritual relies on a sense of ethnographic authenticity that would seem to chime with the Primitivist works of Gauguin or Picasso.¹⁵ The opening sounds of *The Rite* are the disquieting notes of a bassoon playing 'so high in its range it was all but unrecognizable

¹⁴ Suzanne Del Gizzo, 'Going Home: Hemingway, Primitivism, and Identity', *Modern Fiction Studies*. Vol. 43 No. 3 (2003): p. 498.

¹⁵ Millicent Hodson, 'Nijinsky's Choreographic Method: Visual Sources from Roerich for "Le Sacre du printemps"', *Dance Research Journal*. Vol. 18 No. 2 (1987): 7.

as a bassoon'.¹⁶ This is soon followed by other unusual members of the orchestra; the E-flat clarinet, and the bass clarinet, which will take featuring roles in this piece. As Peter Hill states, the purpose of the introduction is 'to recapture, in imagination at least, a lost musical world' and one of the most obvious ways Stravinsky achieves this is by defamiliarising the sounds of his orchestra.¹⁷ As the curtain rises, and we see Roerich's set in the background and the colourful costumes with bright patterns and animal skins worn by the dancers, the evocation of an ancient Russia is seemingly complete. In addition to these more obviously 'ancient' elements, Richard Taruskin has conducted an extensive investigation into the debt Stravinsky owed to folk melodies in *The Rite's* composition in his landmark study *Stravinsky and The Russian Traditions*. Since the publication of this monumental work, studies of Stravinsky's score have been mindful of this element of its construction, and conclusions have used these borrowings as proof of Stravinsky's own Primitivist leanings.¹⁸ While not disregarding this aspect of the ballet, its darker elements of death and the erotic reveal an altogether contrasting picture of primitive life, not as a space for creative renewal as suggested by Aaron Yale Heisler, but of dangerous collectivism.¹⁹

The sacrifice in *The Rite of Spring* represents fully the ambivalence at the heart of what 'taboo' appears to mean: 'on the one hand, 'sacred', 'consecrated', and on the other 'uncanny', 'dangerous', 'forbidden', 'unclean'.²⁰ As with Forster's story, the taboo in *The Rite* is committed through falling out of line with the rest of the tribe. In the ballet, this is shown quite literally in the section, 'Mystic Circles of Young Girls'. The maidens in white walk around in a circle, stepping in and out of each other in what Peter Hill describes as 'a

¹⁶ Thomas Forrest Kelley, *First Nights: Five Musical Premieres*. US: Sheridan Books, 2000. p. 259.

¹⁷ Peter Hill, *Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. p. 60.

¹⁸ Stephen Walsh, *The Music of Stravinsky*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. p. 42.

¹⁹ Aaron Yale Heisler, 'Literary Memory and the Moment of Modern Music', *Modernism/Modernity*. Vol. 19 No. 4 (2013): p. 697.

²⁰ Freud, *Totem and Taboo*. p. 21.

deadly game of pass-the-parcel: if the music stops on you, you are ‘it’, the chosen victim’.²¹ As one girl falls out of the circle, all the other girls turn towards her in an abrupt jerk as an ominous trumpet sounds. Re-joining the circle, the music re-starts and the game continues until a second trumpet; the girl has fallen out of the circle again. Alternating horns in quickening tones raise the sense of peril, underlining her fate as the other girls push her into the centre of the circle. For Freud, the ambivalence towards taboos he discerns in primitive societies comes from a competing sense of fear and desire:

In their unconscious there is nothing they would like more than to violate them, but they are afraid to do so; they are afraid precisely because they would like to, and the fear is stronger than the desire.²²

For the chosen one in *The Rite* the desire to be chosen, to be special, in a community of uniformity and duty must be seen as causing her to stumble. In those moments, her unconscious desire overcomes her fear of death and of the taboo. My conclusions here are in opposition to those reached by Martin Zenck, whose reading of *Totem and Taboo* as a historical document leads him to conclude that *The Rite* centres on ‘the theses of murder instead of self-sacrifice’.²³ While there is evidence to support a more aggressive reading of the primitive in *The Rite*, the fact remains that just as the violent elements move conclusions away from the ecstatic and celebratory in the final sacrifice, so the ancient and ritualistic elements prevent its classification as ‘murder’. The application of Freud’s work is in this instance much more revealing on a psychoanalytic level than as a place-holder for contemporary views. The desire for individuality demonstrated by the chosen one pushes aside the scenario of the ancient ritual to become, however uncertainly, the agency at the centre of the sacrifice.

²¹ Hill, *Rite of Spring*. p. 80.

²² Freud, *Totem and Taboo*. p. 37.

²³ Martin Zenck, ‘Ritual or Imaginary Ethnography in Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du Printemps*?’ *The World of Music*. Vol. 40 No. 1 (1998): p. 72.

In stepping out of line and violating the taboo, the girl in the centre has, according to Freud, become taboo herself. She now ‘possesses the dangerous quality of tempting others to follow [her] example’.²⁴ Like Kuno in Forster’s story, who Vashti disavows as ‘[a] man who was my son’,²⁵ the other girls distance themselves from the chosen one, pushing her away from them and back into the centre of the circle from which she is trying to escape. In both these instances, the taboo in question is one that is related to death. Kuno’s all but sentenced ‘homelessness’ renders him a dead man whose name cannot even be spoken; ‘[t]he avoidance of the name of a dead person is as a rule enforced with extreme severity’, and for *The Rite*’s chosen one, the breaking of the circle has sealed her fate as the sacrifice.²⁶ As Freud notes, primitive societies held death in peculiar regard, allocating a number of ceremonies, rituals and taboos to its observance.²⁷ In *The Rite*, this ritualistic death forms the dramatic conclusion of the work, and is proffered the necessary observances: the ‘Glorification of the Chosen One’ by the other girls, and the ‘Ritual Action of the Ancestors’ performed by the entire tribe both precede the final ‘Sacrificial Dance’, the sacred element of which is made apparent by the men kneeling respectfully, almost worshipfully as the chosen one performs the sacrificial dance. This sense of reverence is underlined in the final tableau where the girl is lifted into the air to the shrieking noise of piccolos and high strings, the finality of her death marked by a crashing mass of brass, strings and percussion. It would be rather nihilistic to conclude that death is the only release from the homogenised identity of the tribe and by extension, the elements of modern society, actual and potential, that are represented within it. It is more interesting to view these individualistic deaths as narrative rejections of the tenets on which these communities are based.

²⁴ Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, p. 38.

²⁵ Forster, ‘The Machine Stops’, p. 117.

²⁶ Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, p. 64.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-7.

As we have seen, Forster's use of taboo centralises the importance of individualism as an ideology within the framework of the text. This can be explored further in the relationship he orchestrates between the 'individual' and the 'tribe'. In 'The Machine Stops', Kuno is the character that most represents the idea of the individual. Yet even as he asserts his individuality through his actions, these very actions render him an outsider, and outcast him from the community. To understand the place of the individual *within* the society Forster has created, Vashti is a more useful character to analyse.

Vashti is the first character we meet in the story. She is 'a swaddled lump of flesh – a woman, about five feet high, with a face as white as fungus'.²⁸ At the beginning of this sentence, we might imagine this 'swaddled lump of flesh' to be a baby, and therefore be unnerved by the description of it as a 'lump of flesh'. As we learn it is in fact a woman, we can re-evaluate the term 'swaddled' to emphasise the connotations of binding and restriction, and disrupt those of care and of safety. The descriptor 'lump of flesh' remains unnerving as the stagnancy and lifelessness of that image is underpinned by her 'face as white as fungus'. From this opening description we can infer what is later confirmed by the narrative; that the individual within this society is heavily restricted and bound by rules that have all the outward appearance of being in their best interests, but which result in a state of inertness and despondency. It is also telling that this first encounter with Vashti presents her as simply 'a woman, about five feet high'. The lack of specificity in these details denies her any real substance as an individual despite her primacy in the timeline of the story.

Vashti's lack of individuality is compounded by her place within the tribe. The very first paragraphs of the story relate not to Vashti, but to her environment, 'a small room, hexagonal in shape like the cell of a bee,' implying that she is of less importance than the

²⁸ Forster, 'The Machine Stops', p. 91.

room that houses her.²⁹ This room is a ‘cell’ or prison, which as with Vashti’s ‘swaddling’ is given a more palatable veneer through its other connotations, this time in relation to the natural world. As with the twisted sense of safety and care implied by Vashti’s ‘swaddling’ the naturalistic aspect of this description contains its own subversion: like the cell of a bee, Vashti’s room is one of many. An identical duplicate:

The bed was not to her liking. It was too large, and she had a feeling for a small bed. Complaint was useless, for beds were of the same dimension all over the world, and to have had an alternative size would have involved vast alterations in the Machine.³⁰

The individual within the tribe is one of many, of significance only as part of the greater whole and therefore denied any individuality or sensitivity to what they have a ‘feeling for’. The depersonalising uniformity of tribal existence as represented by Forster is the very antithesis of his individualist ideal.

In his *Philosophy of New Music* (1949), Theodor Adorno famously condemned Stravinsky’s music as culturally regressive, and proto-fascist.³¹ While it is true that Igor Stravinsky had associations with fascism in his later career through his relationship to Benito Mussolini, it is a misstep to read this association back into his earlier works, such as *The Rite*, which while demonstrating an anti-communist tendency, betray more of a political democracy than a fascist ideology.³² The setting of *The Rite*, does indeed, as Adorno asserts, construct ‘an imaginary model of the pre- individual.’³³ Yet reading into this that ‘the growing superiority of the collective is registered – is conjured up out of the insufficiency of the individualistic condition itself’, is an assertion that does not bear up to scrutiny.³⁴ The individual in *The Rite* is presented in much the same way as Vashti in Forster’s story: the individual is subsumed into the tribal identity in a way that causes discomfort for the

²⁹ Ibid., p. 91.

³⁰ Ibid., 95.

³¹ Theodor Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. p. 112.

³² Richard Taruskin, ‘The Dark Side of Modern Music’, *New Republic* 5 (1988): pp. 28-34.

³³ Adorno, *New Music*. p. 124.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 112.

audience. The individual dancers or characters that are distinct from the group at large: the old crone, the sage and the chosen one, cannot be said to be operating autonomously. Instead, they each perform functions integral to the group and to the ritual. While the crone and the sage hold power as elders and workers of magic, the chosen one dances the first act of the ballet indiscernible from the rest of the tribe, with the implication that her eventual fate could have befallen any of them. That her individualism is asserted only at the moment of her death, highlights the danger within this repressive, homogenised society, presenting it not as an ideal, but as something to be feared. Adorno concedes this very point in his discussions of the ‘cheerlessness’ of the ballet in ‘the mood of the enchained, the unfree’,³⁵ yet this feeling is excluded from his conclusions. Adorno sees in the sacrifice of the self at the heart of Stravinsky’s ballet, both a seduction and a horror, but in concentrating on the seduction, he all but dismisses the horror, and in so doing, denies many of the ambiguities, contradictions, and complexities within the ballet.³⁶

In Millicent Hodson’s reconstruction of Nijinsky’s choreography, the girl’s eventual fate is alluded to in ‘The Ritual of Abduction’ which shows a woman standing alone in the middle of the stage with her face resting on her hand, a pose which is to be repeated in the second act, marking the beginning of the ritual of sacrifice. This piece of choreographic foreshadowing is aptly placed during one of the most erotically charged sections of the first act. The dance between couples at the beginning of the ‘Ritual of Abduction’ sees the men holding the women by the shoulders at an impersonal distance while the women keep their arms submissively at their sides, their faces turned away from their dance partners. It is clear, in Hodson’s reconstruction at least, that these women, and indeed these men, are performing a duty rather than enacting any individualistic desire. In this respect, ‘The Ritual of Abduction’ bears comparison to the later ballet *Les Noces* (1923), choreographed by

³⁵ Ibid., p. 119.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 126.

Nijinsky's sister, Bronislava Nijinska, wherein a couple goes through a ritual of arranged marriage. Whether 'The Ritual of Abduction' owes this element of the choreography to Nijinsky, whose relationship with Diaghilev is widely accepted to have been one of duty over desire, to his sister who is known to have assisted in *The Rite*, to Hodson's reconstruction, or to a combination of the three, it is not within the scope of this essay to ascertain. What is clear, and supported by the score, is that this section is what Peter Hill describes as, 'the most terrifying of musical hunts'.³⁷ The orchestration 'takes the form of a pincer movement' as on stage the men herd the women into the centre, prowling and snapping at them until two of the women are captured.³⁸ Here, as in 'Mystic Circles of Young Girls', the community is presented 'as a Damoclean sword hovering over the individual'³⁹; like the sacrifice, the 'abduction' is a ritualistic certainty, the only thing to be determined is which of them will be 'chosen'. As the forceful, intimate dance of the two captured women is underscored by the violent, percussive shriek of the strings, the implications of sexual force cannot be overlooked, nor can the sympathies of the production.

The universalised persona of the chosen one makes her fate personal to the audience. The violent, compassionless actions of the tribe in 'The Ritual of Abduction' and during the events of the second act fill us with the sense of injustice which is absent from the stage. As Peter Hill notes, the trilling flutes at the end of 'The Ritual of Abduction' are 'as indifferent to the tumult as the bassoon solo was at the end of the Introduction'.⁴⁰ The 'reptilian indifference'⁴¹ evidenced in *The Rite*'s score is echoed in the dancers, of whom contemporary reviewer Jacques Rivière wrote, 'they are lost among the horrible indifference of society...

³⁷ Hill, *Rite of Spring*, p. 66.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

³⁹ Lynn Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballet Russes*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1998. p. 68.

⁴⁰ Hill, *Rite of Spring*, p. 67.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

Their faces are devoid of any individuality'.⁴² In Rivière's description, the individual is completely lost to their tribal role, without individualised agency or personality. While this certainly comes through in the Mariinsky production, there are moments in the sacrificial dance where agency and individuality are observable. The chosen one makes repeated attempts to escape her fate only to be thwarted by her community, and displays fear in the shrinking and trembling posture she adopts as the tribe circles around her. This display of individuality is essential to engage the sympathies of the audience; the chosen one must care for the audience to care. Her response is subdued within the context of tribal existence, though that does not render it non-existent. This sense of individuality set against tribal indifference is central to the audience's reception of the work. Forster's tribe betrays a similar indifference in their attitude to homelessness, 'which means death, as we know'.⁴³ The authorial interjection here attempts to implicate the reader in the unblinking acceptance of this punishment, and as a result further distances us from the decisions made by this society. In both works our sense of injustice is exacerbated by the indifference displayed in the text or on the stage. This has implications for more political readings.

As characteristically 'anti-modern', Forster's story and *The Rite* are both responses to experiences of modernity which can be placed within a tradition. An interesting avenue in tracing changing or developing attitudes towards modernity can be explored in the relationship between the crowd of the modern city as represented in Victorian literatures, and the tribe of these early modernist works. Victorian responses to the notion of the crowd can be broadly categorised into two interconnected strands: one that revels in the anonymity of the crowd as epitomised by the figure of the *flâneur*, and another that perceives the danger of

⁴² Jacques Rivière, 'Le Sacre du Printemps'. *Nouvelle Revue Française* 5 (1913): pp. 706-30 qtd. in Lynn Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballet Russes*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1998. p. 70.

⁴³ Forster, 'The Machine Stops', p. 116.

the crowd as an anonymising space.⁴⁴ Forster's and *The Rite*'s representations of the tribe can be seen to develop from more reserved, even fearful attitudes towards the city and the crowd. Interestingly, these attitudes, exemplified here by Elizabeth Gaskell in *North and South* (1855), utilise the same primitive, animalistic vocabulary in their descriptions of the crowd which are central to these later, early modernist works:

He was on the steps below; she saw that by the direction of a thousand angry eyes; but she could neither see nor hear anything save the savage satisfaction of the rolling angry murmur. She threw the window wide open. Many in the crowd were mere boys; cruel and thoughtless, - cruel because they were thoughtless; some were men, gaunt as wolves, and mad for prey.⁴⁵

As well as the connections drawn between the 'savage' crowd and the animal, likening the men to a pack of wolves, the idea of the boys, 'cruel and thoughtless – cruel because they were thoughtless' resonates with the idea of 'the collective mind', an idea from Gustave Le Bon's *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895) on which Freud's work in *Totem and Taboo* is based, and on which both Forster's and *The Rite*'s tribes function. Le Bon's study demonstrates contemporary concerns about the so-called 'masses' and their potential for power:

Today the claims of the masses are becoming more and more sharply defined, and mount to nothing less than a determination to utterly destroy society as it now exists, with a view to making it hark back to that primitive communism which was the normal condition of all human groups before the dawn of civilisation.⁴⁶

Le Bon invokes the primitive as a warning to the comfortable middle and upper classes about the potential for harm to their society latent in these previously dispossessed masses. Pitting the crowd against the individual, Le Bon frames the threat in terms of a subsuming force, capable of altering not just society, but the individuals within that society. This narrative of

⁴⁴ John Plotz, *The Crowd: British Literature and Public Politics*. USA: University of California Press, 2000. p. 1.

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*. London: Penguin, 1986. p. 233.

⁴⁶ Gustave Le Bon, 'The Crowd: A Study of the popular Mind'. Vassiliki Kolocotroni, Jane Goldman and Olga Taxidou eds. *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004. 37.

societal degeneration through the power of the masses is echoed in the tribes of these early modernist works.

This idea of ‘the collective mind’ and the attendant fear of the masses it raises is in evidence in the tribal societies depicted in Forster’s story and *The Rite*. The society of ‘The Machine Stops’ does not rely on any central figure for authority, but rather a ‘Committee of the Machine’⁴⁷ which has obvious parallels to certain tribal societies wherein ‘communal affairs are decided by a council of elders’.⁴⁸ In their role as a council of elders the Committee puts forward no central authority, but takes on the administrative duties of the inhabitants of the machine as a council of equals with no tangible station above any other member of the community. The political structures behind life in the Machine are not foregrounded in Forster’s narrative, but the use of leadership by committee is central to uncovering his unease with any loss of individuality. A decentralised system of governance removes not just power but responsibility from the individual, opening the way for the more sinister elements of the narrative. As Freud notes of tribal communities more generally, ‘[u]nited, they had the courage to do and succeed in doing what would have been impossible for them individually’.⁴⁹

This is also true of *The Rite* wherein the tribe is operating as a unit. The responsibility for the human sacrifice in which it culminates is disseminated through the group. In both works, this type of social structure is represented as fundamental to the furthering of what the audience is encouraged to perceive as injustice. In this respect, the tribe as represented in these works can be seen in direct relation to the growth of communism on the world stage. The strength of the perceived threat can be measured in the distance which is retained between the individual and the Victorian crowd, and lost in the homogenising identity of the early modernist tribe. This is perhaps particularly true for *The Rite*, whose composer, Igor

⁴⁷ Forster, ‘The Machine Stops’, p. 100.

⁴⁸ Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, p. 2.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

Stravinsky, is known to have been an ardent monarchist, who ‘hated and feared the Bolsheviks’.⁵⁰ Interestingly however, Stravinsky’s ballet promotes democracy as much as it condemns communism. It has been widely noted that both choreographically and orchestrally, much of *The Rite* has no centre, and more accurately, that that centre is continually dissolving and reforming. In moments when all space is animated, such as during the ‘Games of the Rival Tribes’, important things are happening everywhere and can potentially happen anywhere. In this sense, there is room for an interpretation of a democratised space, in which previously overlooked areas of the stage or members of the orchestra can come to the fore.

Underlying their uses of the primitive, ‘The Machine Stops’ and *The Rite* carry strong associations with the modern in its industrial, mechanical aspect. Representations of the machine, the engine, and the experience of modernity often draw on the vocabulary and imagery of the natural and the animal for their expression in late nineteenth and early twentieth century works: ‘the famished roar of automobiles’ like ‘three snorting beasts’.⁵¹ This connection between the industrial and the natural informs and enables Forster’s and *The Rite*’s critiques of modernity from within their different modes.

The Rite plays on the ambiguities of its musical whoops, shrieks, cries, and rhythms and the formations of the disparate group dances, which can be interpreted either as primitive, animal sounds and ritualistic movements or as mechanistic, industrial noises and representations. The ambiguities between the ancient and the modern are exploited to provide a framework for critique and reflection on the modern age; a critique which finds its locus in the fate of the individual. The relationship between the ancient and the modern in Forster’s story is on the surface less ambiguous. Distinctions can be drawn between the over-civilised

⁵⁰ Robert Craft, ‘My Life with Stravinsky’. *The New York Review of Books* (1982).

⁵¹ Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, ‘The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism’. *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, eds. Vassiliki Kolocotroni, Jane Goldman and Olga Taxidou, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press (2004): pp. 249-50.

tribe of the Machine and the naturalistic potential tribe of Kuno and the 'homeless'. Forster's Machine is emblematic of the industrial, mechanical aspect of modernity and the potential Forster sees within it for harm to the individual and to familial and social relationships. The 'modern' tribe that lives in the Machine is primitivised in the narrative, the 'great development[s]'⁵² of that society approximating a reversal of the stages of civilisation delineated by Freud as 'animistic (or mythological), religious and scientific.'⁵³ This sense of societal degeneration operates alongside the awakening of Kuno's primal self, which takes the form of a sort of re-birth,⁵⁴ narrativised in evolutionary terms: 'It made me try frantically to breathe new air, and to advance as far as I dared out of my pond'.⁵⁵ These competing evolutionary timelines confuse the relationship between ancient and modern, the more 'natural' progression of Kuno's development underlining the evolutionary disturbance of the Machine. Yet there is more at play in Forster's representations than a simple opposition.

In terms of Forster's individualism, it is significant that in spite of the hope invested in Kuno's self-discovery, he never truly leaves the Machine or joins the 'homeless' who remain a narrative uncertainty. The formation of a secondary community based on the instinctual awakenings of Kuno and potentially others like him would necessarily carry tribal associations, associations which would remain unsuitable for Forster's individualist project. What Wilfred Stone views as a defeat, 'for nothing comes after. The hero leaves no heirs and no instructions',⁵⁶ I posit as a necessary end with a clear message. Forster's narrative carries hope in that it does not limit its scope to the story, but operates as a cautionary tale to an audience still able to effect meaningful change.

⁵² Forster, 'The Machine Stops', p. 115.

⁵³ Freud, Totem and Taboo. p. 90.

⁵⁴ Wilfred Stone. *The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E. M. Forster*. London: Oxford University Press, 1966. p. 153.

⁵⁵ Forster, 'The Machine Stops', p. 109.

⁵⁶ Stone, *Cave and Mountain*, p. 155.

The uses of the primitive in these early modernist works are multiform and sometimes contradictory. *The Rite* and 'The Machine Stops' both demonstrate the early modernist fascination with 'primitive' cultures, and are invested with all the ambiguities and complexities that surrounded their cultural reception in the West. The primitive in 'The Machine Stops' operates as a tool for Forster's own ideological ends, relying heavily on the position of tribal communities as the 'other' to Western societies. Yet his privileging of the 'natural' and the human in an over-civilised world demonstrates also a sense of social and creative renewal to be found in returning to an earlier existence. *The Rite* takes a similar approach. The ancient Russia at the heart of the production is in many ways that of a romanticised past, yet the sense of threat, danger, and violence that lurks within the score and the choreography rupture this idyll and bring its relevance into the present. As an extension of existing social and political concerns, the use of the tribe in these works functions on a vital and significant level that belies their classification as Primitivist in any romanticised or historicising sense.

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