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Fire As A First Cause Of Phenomenon In Gaston Bachelard's The Psychoanalysis Of Fire And Igor Stravinsky's The Rite Of Spring¹

Abstract

In this paper, the ballet of Igor Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring* is interpreted from the perspective of Gaston Bachelard's philosophical thought. Bachelard's systematic psychoanalysis of literary images in *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* is applied to the interpretation of musical images in *The Rite of Spring*. Bearing in mind that rhythm is a key characteristic of Stravinsky's composition, the paper analyses the immediate correspondences between Stravinsky's and Bachelard's perception and interpretation of rhythm in the works under consideration.

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Keywords

fire, Gaston Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*

Anticipation

In this paper, the ballet of Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) *The Rite of Spring* (*Le Sacre du printemps*) is interpreted from the perspective of Gaston Bachelard's philosophical thought. After musical analysis of the composition, Bachelard's systematic psychoanalysis of literary images related to the archetypal image of fire, presented in *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* (*La psychanalyse du feu*), is applied to the interpretation of the musical images in *The Rite of Spring*. Bearing in mind that rhythm is a key characteristic of Stravinsky's composition, the paper analyses the immediate correspondences between Stravinsky's and Bachelard's perception and interpretation of rhythm in the works under consideration – based also on Stravinsky's writings on music in *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, as well as, indirectly, Bachelard's works *Intuition of the Instant* (*L'Intuition de l'instant*) and *The Dialectic of Duration* (*La dialectique de la durée*).

I would like to emphasise that the source of inspiration for this kind of theoretical approach to music is the research of the eminent French author Michel Imberty (1943–), who considers musical style from a psychological and psychoanalytic perspectives. In contemplating Claude Debussy's (1862–1918) style in *Préludes* for piano, Imberty refers to and relies on Bachelard and his notion of material imagination, presented in *Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter* (*L'eau et les rêves: Essai sur l'imagination de la matière*). With the help of Bachelard's interpretation of the element of water and material imagination, Imberty interprets (when it comes to the semantic representation of Debussy's style in *Préludes*) a triple image of water as dual death-life / life-death opposition. Thus, Imberty analyses Debussy's art through Bachelard's interpretation of the material imagination of the element of water.

Another motive behind the application of Bachelard's method to the music of Igor Stravinsky is the fact that Bachelard had a great insight into what makes up the spirit of *fin-de-siècle*, that is, into the scientific

and artistic worlds that contribute to the formation of 'space' and the birth of the zeitgeist of *fin-de-siècle*. In this regard, Bachelard developed a specific 'Bachelardian' insight into science, literature, nature, imagination—the only thing missing is an insight into the realm of music—in which the aspirations and qualities of the spirit of *fin-de-siècle* are very much present. *The Rite of Spring* reflects the pursuit of new methods, forms, sources of (musical) knowledge and different insights into the secret of man and nature. In other words, the work reflects the explorations of *fin-de-siècle* period. Consequently, it seems that it is important and useful to expand Bachelard's multidirectional, multifaceted, and polyphonically developed laboratory by venturing into the field of music—in this case, by studying the musical interpretation of the elemental power of nature in Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.

Observation

In his engagement with the philosophy of science and epistemology, that is, the philosophical study of the elements and methods of scientific enquiry, Bachelard naturally ventured within the 'space' of human imagination. Exploring 'epistemological obstacles' in scientific knowledge, Bachelard discovers that they can be found in the unconscious of science, and that it is of great significance to explore the imagination as a part of the psychological aspects of personality that contributes to solving scientific problems, doubts and tasks, and helps in experimental laboratory research. Imagination, residing in the interspace of the conscious and the unconscious, can reveal the 'epistemological obstacles' in the unconscious of science and enable the unfettered development of scientific knowledge. Bachelard believes that imagination should be explored through art, for instance, through such literary genres as novels and poetry, since what is suppressed and perceived as an obstacle in the scientific discourse and in the development of scientific thought can be traced in literature.² It is about images, projections, associations, imaginative responses that are provoked by materialistic archetypal images of fire, water, air and earth.

2 See: H. Zwart, 'Iconoclasm and Imagination: Gaston Bachelard's Philosophy of Technoscience', *Human Studies*, No. 43 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-019-09529-z> accessed 20 November 2019, 63–64.

Bachelard's poetics of the imagination that commences (with *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* and *Lautréamont*) as a systematic phenomenology of literary images, with psychoanalysis and psychology as essential frameworks of research (as well as in later works on elements) seeks to prove that imagination rests on *a priori* structures—materialistic archetypal images of fire, water, air and earth. In other words, he argues that the imagination is predetermined, directed and shaped in accordance with the dominant images, that is, archetypes. The outcome of this research is the conclusion that 'it is possible to establish in the realm of the imagination, a *law of the four elements* which classifies various kinds of material imagination by their connections with fire, air, water, or earth.'³ In other words, Bachelard believes that since the original (archetypal) images of fire, water, air and earth govern psychological aspirations and always stimulate certain imaginative responses, artistic works always bear the hallmark of poetics of a particular element.

In this paper, I focus on the research on the poetics of fire in literary works in order to subsequently pinpoint the constants in musical discourse. This is achieved by employing an interdisciplinary method, whilst relying on basic musicological-interpretative and analytical-comparative methods, showing that the archetypal image of fire also resonates in the poetics of music.

Hypothesis of the poetics of fire

Discussing the phenomenon of fire at the beginning of *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, Bachelard claims that it is a phenomenon that has perturbed scientific research for centuries and has never been solved. He goes on to suggest that fire 'is a problem that no one has managed to approach objectively, one in which the initial charm of the object is so strong that it still has the power to warp the minds of the clearest thinkers and to keep bringing them back to the poetic fold in which

3 Serbian original: 'у поретку имагинације могуће је установити закон четири елемента који разврстава различите материјалне имагинације зависно од тога да ли се оне везују за ватру, воду, ваздух или земљу'. See: Г. Башлар, *Вода и снови. Оглед о имагинацији кретања* (Сремски Карловци-Нови Сад: Издавачка књижарница Зорана Стојановића, 1998), 9.

dreams replace thought and poems conceal theorems.⁴ Thus, since it is about the initial charm and hypnotic gaze (which is almost always the case with fire), that problem is, according to Bachelard, directly psychological. It is therefore necessary to investigate, Bachelard continues, a psychic layer that is less deep than the one in which primitive instincts develop, but which is transitional and more intellectualised.⁵ This layer, precisely because of being transitional, is pivotal for concise, scientific thought. In this regard, the study of dreams is replaced by the study of *reverie*—*reverie* before the fire.⁶

In to order to emphasise the ubiquity, and thus the significance of the phenomenon of fire, Bachelard writes, 'If all that changes slowly may be explained by life, all that changes quickly is explained by fire. [...] It is intimate and it is universal. It lives in our heart. It lives in the sky [...] It is a tutelary and a terrible divinity, both good and bad. It can contradict itself, thus it is one of the principles of universal explanation.'⁷

Bachelard's idea that all that changes quickly and that is affective is explained by fire, is supported by George Sand's (1804–1876) literary images referring to the observation of fire and the imagery of volcanoes. Hence, under a psychoanalytic interpretation of these images, Bachelard concludes that 'fire is, for the man who is contemplating it, an example of a sudden change, or development, and an example of a circumstantial development. [...] Fire suggests the desire to change, to speed up the passage of time, to bring all of life to its conclusion, to its here-after. In these circumstances the reverie becomes truly fascinating and dramatic; it magnifies human destiny; [...] The fascinated individual hears the call of the funeral pyre. For him destruction is more than a change, it is a renewal.'⁸ He concludes that the funeral pyre is a companion of evolution.⁹

Since Bachelard's philosophical laboratory concerns multidirectional and multiplex experiments, he believes that, apart from literary images, it is also necessary to look back at prehistory. In other words, the cause and the origin of fire need to be examined. Bachelard criticises

4 G. Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* [Tr. by Alan M. C. Ross] (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), 5.

5 See: Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 12–14.

6 Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 14.

7 Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 7.

8 Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 16.

9 Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 21.

scientific explanations, which keep repeating as a leitmotif, that first men produced fire by rubbing two branches together. To him, it is quite clear, in considering psychological conditions and sources of fire, that no natural phenomenon can directly inspire a primitive man to such action. In psychoanalytic observations of primitive man, and through Friedrich Max Müller's (1823–1900) study of human origin, Bachelard focuses on understanding the causes and experiences that could have prompted primitive man to rub two pieces of wood together—and finds that these are intimate experiences. Bachelard claims that it is these intimate experiences that are the first scientific hypothesis for the objective reproduction of fire.

This hypothesis can also be traced in the literary images of Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1737–1814) and Jean-Baptiste Robinet (1735–1820). By emphasising the content through the display of rhythmic, persistent and repetitive work patterns, used in rubbing stones, the writers also suggest an association of fire with comfort caused by physical heat. Bachelard interprets this phenomenon through rhythm. He states, 'It is an obviously rhythmic kind of task, a task which answers to the rhythm of the worker, which brings him lovely, multiple resonances [...] The rhythms are mutually supporting. They are mutually induced and continue through self-induction.'¹⁰ Thus, Bachelard observes that the eurythmy of one active friction determines the euphoria.¹¹

Applying the psychoanalysis of fire to the romantic depictions of Novalis (Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg, 1772–1801), Bachelard recognises the need for rubbing and producing heat as entity of Novalis's poetry. He calls this phenomenon 'Novalis complex'. Bachelard explains that the practice of causing fire by rubbing would reconstruct the prehistoric conquest of fire in its true originality. 'The *Novalis complex* is characterized by a consciousness of inner heat which always takes precedence over a purely visual knowledge of light. It is based upon satisfaction of the thermal sense and the deep-seated consciousness of calorific happiness. Heat is a property, a possession. [...] Light plays upon and laughs over the surface of things, but only heat penetrates.'¹² Thus, for Novalis, the urge to feel is greater than the

¹⁰ Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 28.

¹¹ Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 30.

¹² See: Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 40.

urge to see. Therefore, Bachelard concludes that before the Goethean light there must be assumed a gentle, uncertain warmth, inscribed in all fibres of being.¹³

Moreover, when analysing extracts from James George Frazer's (1854–1941) *Myths of the Origin of Fire*, mostly suggesting that fire was stolen (by a bird or some other animal, or even a woman), Bachelard claims that there may be an exceptional psychological state, strongly painted with affection, at the core of every advent of fire. Consequently, different types of fire can be distinguished: gentle, insidious, fierce and rebellious fire. In any case, what stands out is that the phenomenology of the original, that is, the primitive, is the phenomenology of affectivity, as Bachelard observes.

Bachelard's and Rodin's intuitions coincide in the understanding of fire as an intimate creative instinct, as a factor of our ideas and dreams. François Auguste René Rodin (1840–1917) points out that 'each thing is merely the limit of the flame to which it owes its existence.'¹⁴ And Bachelard states that fire is the 'first cause of the phenomenon.' Since, 'through fire everything changes. When we want everything to be changed we call on fire. The first phenomenon is not only the phenomenon of the fire contemplated in all its life and brilliancy during an hour of leisure, it is also the phenomenon caused by the fire.'¹⁵ Bachelard writes that 'the phenomenon caused by fire is the most perceptible of all; [...] we must grasp the point (or exact degree) of fire which leaves a mark on a substance as we do the instant of love which leaves a mark on an existence.'¹⁶ Paul Valéry (1871–1945) says in his writings about fire, 'It is an agent of redoubtable precision, whose marvellous action upon the substance offered to its heat is rigorously limited, threatened and defined by several physical or chemical constants that are difficult to observe. Any error is fatal, the piece is ruined. Whether the fire dies down or whether it blazes up, its caprice means disaster.'¹⁷

The 'autonomy' of the fire is also recognised in Jean-Louis Reyner's (1771–1814) work *On Fire and Some of Its Principal Effects (Du feu, et de quelques-uns de ses principaux effets)*. By criticising the simpli-

13 Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 41.

14 As cited in: Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 56.

15 Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 57.

16 See: Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 57.

17 As cited in: Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 57–58.

fied images of fire, Reynier writes that fire is ‘an element that revives everything, to which everything owes its existence; [...] the fire acts autonomously and action is a force that is embedded in itself’.¹⁸ Based on this statement, Bachelard notes that every critical spirit stops in front of the intimate power of the fire. More precisely, by trying to explain fire we go to such depths that it leads us to make decisions about existence and non-existence of matters, and, therefore, accentuates the fact that psychoanalysis of objective knowledge has to announce continuously its right to intimate depth and richness.¹⁹

In his work *Les Rudiments de la philosophie naturelle touchant le système du corps mixte*, Nicolas de Locques values fire for its intimacy. He writes that fire is either internal or external: the former is natural, creative and purifying, while the latter is mechanical and destructive.²⁰

There are numerous writings in which is very indicative the observation of fire as a purifying phenomenon, as it can be noticed in *The Psychoanalysis of the Fire*. In this regard, Bachelard refers to an area of purity that purification brings. It is the purity at the extreme limit, at the point of the flame, where colour fades way to almost invisible vibration, where fire dematerialises, loses its reality and becomes pure spirit.²¹ It appears to be Novalis’s purity, the transcendence, as Novalis writes, ‘Light is the essence of the igneous phenomenon. Light is not only a symbol but an agent of purity. There where light finds nothing to do, nothing to separate, nothing to unite, it continues on. That which can neither be separated nor united is simple, pure.’²² Bachelard concludes that light is not simply a symbol but also a creator of purity, noting that ‘in infinite space light does nothing. It awaits the eye. It awaits the soul. It is then the basis for spiritual illumination. Never perhaps has anyone drawn so much thought from a physical phenomenon as Novalis when he describes the transition from the inner fire to the celestial light – “My love has transformed into flame, and this flame gradually consumes all that is earthly within me”’²³

Bachelard concludes his *Psychoanalysis* by noticing that each poet should offer a diagram that would show the direction and symme-

18 Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 64.

19 See: Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 64.

20 See: Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 64.

21 See: Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 104.

22 Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 107.

23 See: Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 107.

try of their own metaphorical coordinates, precisely as a diagram of a certain flower should determine the direction and symmetry of its bloom.²⁴ There is no true flower, he claims, without that geometric correspondences. Yet, that poetic diagram, Bachelard continues, is not an ordinary sketch—it must find a way to unite ambiguities that, in themselves, can free us from realism, enable us to dream. The poetic diagram should encourage a ‘decomposition’ of forces, breaking with the naive and egoistical ideal of the unity of creation.²⁵

Essay

Creating my own imaginable diagram of Bachelard’s psychoanalytic metaphorical images, I see the ‘decomposition’ of forces in the realm that is not in the focus of the author’s research—realm of musical (metaphorical) images. Musical images that, according to the testimonies of the composer, resonate with a specific prehistoric ritual and the fundamental forces of nature, in other words, that resonate with certain archetypal materialist images. It is about *The Rite of Spring* by Igor Stravinsky.

The Rite of Spring is a ballet by Igor Stravinsky, premiered in 1913. The ballet was then performed by Sergei Diaghilev’s (1872–1929) ballet company Ballets Russes, with Vaslav Nijinsky as the choreographer (1889–1950) and Nicholas Roerich (1874–1947) as the stage and costume designer.²⁶

The theme of the ballet is of oneiric origin. Stravinsky, ending *The Firebird* (*L’Oiseau de feu*), said to his friend Nikolas Roerich, ‘I saw in imagination a solemn pagan rite: wise elders, seated in a circle, watching a young girl dancing herself to the death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the God of Spring.’²⁷ Thus, the first part of the ballet ‘Adoration of the Earth’ (*L’Adoration de la Terre*) presents rituals that celebrate the beauty of earth, nature and elements, while in the second part of

24 Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 109.

25 Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis*, 111.

26 This paper will discuss the reconstruction of *The Rite of Spring* from 1913 that did Milicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer. About this reconstruction see more in: M. Hodson, ‘Death by Dancing in Nijinsky’s Rite’, in [Severine Neff, Maureen Carr et al], eds, *The Rite of Spring at 100* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2017), 47–48.

27 See: M. Oliver, [20th century composers] *Igor Stravinsky* (London: Phaidon Press, 1995), 42.

the ballet, 'The Sacrifice' ('La Sacrifice'), a maiden, who is chosen and celebrated, performs a sacral dance and propitiates the God of Spring.

As for the ballet music, I believe it is essential to pay attention to the formation of the chord opening in 'The Augurs of Spring' ('Les augures printaniers'). Stravinsky mentioned that this chord image is 'new, not only regarding the notes, but also the rhythmic accents, and it is the foundation of the whole ballet, as if its biological pulse'.²⁸ Moreover, apart from the fact that the initial chord permeates the composition, it has a particularly important role in the final section—'Sacrificial Dance' ('Danse sacrale'). It can be stated that the mentioned formation is the root that serves for work's evolvement and a key that can solve a musical diagram of the composition, as well as indicate the direction, symmetry and the rules of its development. Therefore, attention will be paid to unravelling this chord further in the text.

It should be mentioned that a great part of the section 'The Augurs of Spring' is based on repetition, decomposition and/or progression of the first chord. Moreover, it is mostly about repetition in the form of ostinato. In this regard, harmonic rhythm and progression could not be a subject of discussion, since it is about repetition—a distinctive articulation of the same chord. Many writers dedicate their attention to analysing of the chord formation itself, since incessant repetition of this chord (without resolution) makes it a unique tonal support.

Authors who were dealing with the so-called 'Augurs chord' were trying to explain and fit it within the framework of tonality (Pierre Boulez, 1925–2016; Eric Walter White, 1905–1985), atonality (Allen Forte, 1926–2014) and octatonic (Pieter van den Toorn, 1938–). However, it seems that the chord itself tries to resist: it breaks the rules of the given systems and yet contains their elements. Interpreting it in the framework of tonality, White sees the 'Augurs chord' as an inversion of dominant thirteenth of A-flat major. Namely, in this case, the arrangement and order of the notes alter and thus the identity of the chord changes itself. Yet, the chord is unique precisely due to the registral position of single tones and interval space between them. Then, Forte tries to explain it within the framework of atonality, that is chromatic pitch classes 7–32. However, the basic form of this string also does not correspond to the distinctive arrangement of

28 See: D.K.L. Chua, 'Rioting with Stravinsky: a particular analysis of the Rite of Spring', *Music Analysis*, 26/i–ii (2007), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25171386> accessed 19 November, 63.

notes in the chord. Pieter van den Toorn performs the codification of the chord within a single octatonic set 0369. Namely, the mentioned octatonic set does not have the tones A \flat and C \flat (although they can be considered as infiltrated values within a given octatonic scale).²⁹ Therefore, it seems that the given chord image opposes and resists the strict rules of the mentioned systems. In other words, the identity of the chord is built on the elements of tonality, atonality and octatonicism, but it cannot be defined within their strict individual boundaries. The sonorous chord image at the very beginning of 'The Augurs of Spring' clearly indicates that it is about a simultaneous resonance of more harmonic strata. More precisely, it is about the major chord built on the F \flat (F \flat A \flat C \flat) and major seventh chord on E \flat (E \flat G B \flat D \flat). The presence of diatonic and altered notes in the chord is noticed, resulting in a sharp clash. In other words, the presence of diatonic and altered notes leads to the existence of two harmonic gravitations centres on a semitone, causing the aforementioned sharp, penetrative sound. More precisely, it creates a dissonant tension or friction between two different harmonic poles (see Ex. 1).

Stravinsky insists on this chord being unaltered (in terms of pitch) during the initial eight bars. Its distinctive features are the rhythmic patterns, namely, the accents, through which the composer articulates the mentioned chord. With the mark *sempre staccato*, during these eight bars, each bar or every second bar, the chord is accentuating on a different part of the measure, sporadically amplified by the horns (see Ex. 1). Therefore, this is the case of an unpredictable accentuation of chords. That results in disruption or even a lack of possibility for forming the impression of seamlessness and continuity. Since there is no harmonic progression, and the rhythmic articulation of the chord is different every time, the effect of sudden, unexpected and impulsive is created. As if it is about the articulation of continuously new dissonant instant or, in other words, its different (re)actualization. Stravinsky himself states that it is the case of 'an impulse chord that runs on the adrenaline of the moment'.³⁰ Indeed, since rapid succession and sudden accents do not allow the creation of a sense of repetition and seamlessness, it appears to us as if the moment has already passed, and a new, different one is present. It seems to be about the specific (biological) impulse of ballet that initiates music from instant to instant.

29 About these analysis see more in: Chua, 'Rioting with Stravinsky...'

30 Chua, 'Rioting with Stravinsky...', 77.

13 **Tempo giusto** $\text{♩} = 50$ (I. II senza sord.)

Cor. I. II. III. IV. V. VI. VII. VIII. *sf sempre*

V. ni II arco (non div.) *sempre stacc.* *sempre simile*

V. le tutti arco (non div.) *sempre stacc.* *sempre simile*

V. c. tutti arco (non div.) *sempre stacc.* *sempre simile*

C. b. tutti arco (non div.) *sempre stacc.* *sempre simile*

14 **solo** *mf*

C. Ingl. *f*

Fag. *f*

Cor.

Archi. *pizz.* *meno f* *f come sopra*

Ex. 1: Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*, 'The Augurs of Spring: Dances of the young girls', *Tempo giusto*, No. 13–14.

Also, these eight bars imply the notion of rhythmic 'theme' (where the scores in the horns) are seen as the head of the 'theme'), since rhythmic articulation and accentuation is a means of identifying this musical image during composition. Chord image, in terms of precise tone pitches and intervallic sonority, essentially disappears after No. 21 in the score, but Stravinsky retains and uses rhythm and articulation as a means to achieve structural symmetry. At No. 30 in the score, a recapitulation of

The image shows a page of a musical score for Igor Stravinsky's 'The Rite of Spring', specifically the section 'The Augurs of Spring: Dances of the young girls', measures 30-31. The score is written for a large orchestra and includes parts for woodwinds, strings, and percussion. The woodwind section includes Piccolo (E-flat), Clarinet in B-flat, Clarinet in B, Clarinet in B-flat, Flute I and II (divisi), Flute Solo, Flute Other, Bassoon Solo, Bassoon Other, and Contrabass. The string section includes Violin I and II (divisi), Violin Solo, Violin Other, Viola Solo, Viola Other, Violoncello Solo, Violoncello Other, and Double Bass. The percussion section includes Piccolo, Oboe, English Horn, Bassoon, and Horn. The score features complex polyrhythmic patterns and dynamic markings such as 'sempre sf', 'meno f', 'cresc.', and 'pizz.'. A rehearsal mark '31' is present at the beginning of the second system.

Ex. 2: Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*, 'The Augurs of Spring: Dances of the young girls', *Tempo giusto*, No. 30–31.

very obvious here (see Ex. 2). The mentioned techniques—polyrhythm in vertical axis, polymetry in both vertical and horizontal axes—build tension and friction among rhythmic and harmonic layers. The harmonic and rhythmic tension in the vertical axis is also transferred to a specific, tensile (metro-rhythmic) pulsing in the horizontal axis.

At No. 30 in the score, the rhythmic theme of 'The Augurs of Spring' is superimposed on the idea of 'Dances of the Young Girls.' Thus, Stravinsky performs superposition of different rhythmic layers, but also juxtaposition and synthesis. Once Stravinsky intensifies the score of the bass by exposing metro-rhythmic varied theme (No. 31 in the score), that is, by exposing dissonant ostinato in second violins and violas, with the head of the theme in first violins and cellos, each repetition is more intense and different rhythmic images and connections become more clear (see Ex. 2). The synthesis of different rhythmic images results in a growing intensity of energy and swing, and lasts until the end of this section when the accents simply stop the swing. The abrupt end suggests the indeterminacy and unpredictability of the rhythmic process.

Owing to the fact that the distinctive rhythmic 'theme' and the mentioned compositional techniques, such as polyrhythm, polymetry, metro-rhythmic variation of theme, ostinato and bitonal or polytonal relationships, are the foundation of the development of the entire piece, it is clear that rhythm plays the role of a constructive agent of the piece.

In his sketches regarding *The Rite of Spring*, Stravinsky notes, 'Music exists if there is rhythm, as life exists if there is a pulse.'³¹ It is interesting that Bachelard also believes that rhythm constitutes 'the basis of the dynamics of both life and the psyche.'³² In his works, *The Dialectic of Duration* and *Intuition of the Instant*, Bachelard gives more detailed explanations about the notion of time, continuity and the role of rhythm in continuity, that is, time. Bachelard believes that it is 'impossible not to recognize the need to base complex life on a plurality of durations that have neither the same rhythm nor the same solidity in their sequence, nor the same power of continuity.'³³ Thus, he concludes, time has but one reality—the reality of the instant, and through rhythm, that is rhythmic articulation of the instant, it creates the impression of continuity between past, present and future.³⁴ Rhythm is the factor, according to Bachelard, which connects independent instants into groups of instants; in other words, it creates patterns of instants. In that sense, time is seen

31 Chua, 'Rioting with Stravinsky...,' 77.

32 J. Rutgeerts, 'Revisiting rhythmanalysis: how rhythm operates in the work of Gaston Bachelard and Henri Bergson', *Parrhesia*, No. 31 (2019), http://www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia31/parrhesia31_rutgeerts.pdf accessed 19 November 2019, 86.

33 As cited in: Rutgeerts, 'Revisiting rhythmanalysis...,' 88.

34 As cited in: Rutgeerts, 'Revisiting rhythmanalysis...,' 93.

as a result of different rhythmic plays. Bachelard further notices that habitual rhythms construct durational continuity, thus creating a sense of self or identity.³⁵ However, he emphasises that habitual rhythms should not be understood as a mere repetition or status quo, but as a progression.³⁶ In other words, according to Bachelard, the repetitive pattern is not one without the potential to develop in course of time; on the contrary, it keeps renewing and changing, effectuating over and over.

It seems that all of the statements above explain the function and features of 'Augurs chord', as well as the process of realisation of time in Stravinsky's work. Since the 'Augurs chord' is actually an impulse chord (the real time instant, as Bachelard saw it) that, as already mentioned, runs on the adrenaline of the moment. Its distinctive metro-rhythmic articulation and accentuation in a specific stretch of time result in rhythmic patterns that are the cause for noticing recurrent chord emergence or rhythmic 'theme' during the composition. In other words, the characteristic identity of the chord is set through its distinctive rhythmic articulation in a specific stretch of time. Namely, the unpredictable accents, which affect the intensity and quality of sound, and create a sudden and unpredictable effect, indicate that it is not about a literal repetition of chords, as Bachelard points out, but an altered, different (re)invention, and thus a progression of energy.

According to Bachelard's *The Dialectic of Duration*, duration is constituted by the dual operation of such states as creation and destruction, work and repose, and affirmation and negation.³⁷ Rhythm is seen as the change or interaction between two different possibilities, 'either in this instant nothing is happening, or else in the instant, something is happening'.³⁸ Also, Bachelard mentions that rhythms are relative, dialectically conditioned by other rhythms: they intertwine and overlap, creating greater harmony of time.³⁹ Bachelard keeps in mind the orchestra when discussing this matter. In this regard, he emphasises that continuity cannot be found at the level of individual rhythms or individual performers, but at a higher level of the whole orchestra, where different instruments perform different discontinuous lines in order to

35 As cited in: Rutgeerts, 'Revisiting rhythmanalysis...', 94.

36 Rutgeerts, 'Revisiting rhythmanalysis...', 94.

37 Rutgeerts, 'Revisiting rhythmanalysis...', 95.

38 As cited in: Rutgeerts, 'Revisiting rhythmanalysis...', 96.

39 As cited in: Rutgeerts, 'Revisiting rhythmanalysis...', 96.

produce full harmony.⁴⁰ In other words, the single fundamental rhythm is not the one that dominates other instruments, but all the rhythms of various instruments brought together support and derive one from another. Therefore, time should not be realised as a single thread, but as a tapestry, where many various threads intertwine and create a rich time texture, according to Bachelard's philosophy.⁴¹ It appears that this sentence explains the realisation of time and Stravinsky's 'playing' with the rhythm in *The Rite of Spring*. Stravinsky's superposition, juxtaposition and networking of various rhythmic images (polymetry, polyrhythm, etc.) indeed results, in a sense of time, in the dense and rich texture of the piece.

Therefore, it is obvious that there are many elements that are in correspondence between Bachelard's and Stravinsky's notions and interpretations of rhythm and time. Stravinsky also mentions all this in *Poetics of Music*. He claims that music is nothing but a succession of impulse and repose, that is joining and separating the poles of attraction⁴²—which is in concordance with Bachelard's aspect of time, seen as an effect of two states, work and repose, where something and nothing keeps happening. Moreover, Stravinsky states that the breathing of music is determined by that principle, but he points out that those poles of attraction are beyond the enclosed system like the diatonic one was, and they could bring themselves together without forcing adjustment to the tonality.⁴³ It appears that Stravinsky realised that in *The Rite of Spring*.

In the composition, there are almost no unambiguous, clear and solid tonalities, these are special (harmonically multivalent) sonorities. For Stravinsky, sound and sonority are important. He composes by converging a series of sounds to a certain centre, and, if there is a centre, he finds a suitable combination. Then the composition is developed according to the principle of attracting sonority. Tonality is, therefore, subordinate to the force of attraction of sonority. When the 'Augurs chord' reappears in 'Sacrificial Dance', it is characterised by the consonances D F# A D and E♭ B♭, with an octave on D in bass (see Ex. 3).

40 As cited in: Rutgeerts, 'Revisiting rhythmanalysis...', 96.

41 See: Rutgeerts, 'Revisiting rhythmanalysis...', 96.

42 I. Stravinsky, *The Poetics of Music in Form of Six Lessons* [Tr. by Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl] (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), 35–36.

43 Stravinsky, *The Poetics of Music*, 35–36.

The image shows a page of a musical score for Igor Stravinsky's 'The Rite of Spring', 'Sacrificial Dance', measures 142-143. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. The instruments listed on the left are: Ob., Cl. in G, Cl. in Bb, Cor. (VI, VII, VIII), Fr-ha. (D), Tr-bu. (C), Tr-ba. (E-flat), Tr-ni., Timp., V-ni. I, V-ni. II, div. in 3, V-la. div. in 3, V-c., and C-b. The music is in 3/4 time and features a constant repetition of a chord. Dynamics include 'sempre', 'con sord.', 'div.', and 'non div.'. The score is marked with measure numbers 142 and 143.

Ex. 2: Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*, 'Sacrificial Dance', No. 142–143.

The constant repetition of this chord throughout the whole final section and the emphasis of the octave on D in bass enable this part to have a unique support on the tone D (some composers believe that it is about D minor). At No. 181 in the score, tone D is strengthened by an octave exposition in violins and violas, while its dominant A (in bass) appears sporadically. However, these tones are intertwined in the mostly

dissonant texture of the piece. In other words, the musical material around the tones D and A suggests that they were foreign elements. So, it seems like it is about allusion of tonality—as the designation of the human subject—which is struggling (through dense musical dissonant texture) for survival—just as the maiden fights for her survival. The tonality allusion (with sounds around the tone D) is progressively exhausted until it disappears at score number 184. It then returns at the very end (around the No. 201 in the score), but only as a flicker, as a sign of tonality needed to show that it has been demolished—just when the human subject collapses from exhaustion on the stage. Now that the analysis of particular musical images in *The Rite of Spring* is given, their interpretation from the perspective of Bachelard's psychoanalysis of fire should be provided.

Regarding the origin of the 'Augurs chord', Stravinsky said that there was no theoretical justification, but simply 'ear accepted it with joy'.⁴⁴ Therefore, the chord that creates friction between dissonant and consonant sonorities, that is two different harmonic poles, is a chord that comes from within, a chord which ear has heard and accepted with joy. Namely, it seems that it is not a chord that originates from the soul or some general inner music, but rather it can be said that it originates from the inner biological pulsations of the human body, which, in accordance with emotions, affectivity and energy stroke, accelerate, slow down or beat with irregular intensity. Since the friction of different poles and rhythmic images is present both vertically and horizontally, and bearing in mind that the topic of the ballet is related to a pagan prehistoric rite, it is easy to see the overlap with what Bachelard emphasises when he psychoanalytically observes primitive man. It is about the intimate, inner experiences that drive primitive people to rub two different pieces. In that sense, following Bachelard's psychoanalysis, it can be said that the 'Augurs chord' originates from an inner, intimate, but affective, impulse experience.

Also, there is a certain correspondence between musical images of the ballet and the literary images of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Robinet. These literary images, as has been mentioned, suggest the theme of fire through the comfort caused by physical heat. Bachelard interprets them through rhythm: it is about rhythmic work that brings

44 R. Craft, 'The Rite of Spring: Genesis of a Masterpiece', *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1966), <https://doi.org/10.2307/832386> accessed 20 November 2019, 23.

the worker beautiful and multiple resonances; about rhythms which reflect one another, which mutually induce and last through self-induction. Consequently, he states that the eurythmy of one active friction determines the euphoria. Bachelard's prominent interpretation can also be applied to musical images. The rhythms in *The Rite of Spring* are mutually induced and last through self-induction, and since Nijinsky wanted to choreograph each note with his eurythmy as if it were an act of a pagan ritual, everything together resulted in euphoria.

It should also be mentioned that the rhythmic articulation of the 'Augurs chord' on stage is accompanied by short, sharp and rhythmic jumps. The dancers perform jumps in a formed circle. The jumps cause friction between the feet and the ground, and increase body heat. This is especially important for the final section of 'Sacrificial Dance'. As the initial chord and tonal gravity toward D are connected with the Chosen One, its exhaustive and progressive repetition is followed on the stage by the exhausting jumps of the Chosen One who dances (in the centre of the circle) in that manner until she falls from exhaustion. This corresponds to those images that Bachelard marks as the 'Novalis complex'. Bachelard characterises the complex, as already mentioned, by the awareness of an intimate warmth that always surpasses a completely visual science of light. It is about the warmth that penetrates. In that literary images, Bachelard notices that the need to feel is greater than the need to see. Hence, he finds that before the Goethean light, there must be assumed a gentle, uncertain warmth, inscribed in all fibres of the beings. Since heat penetrates when it intensifies and turns into an inner flame, it consumes everything that is earthly in the subject, as Novalis writes. Thus, as in the case of the Chosen One in the ballet, the heat, both external (caused by jumps) and internal, ignites and burns everything that is earthly. Then comes renewal, purification and purity. Bachelard explains that it is purity that exists on the edge of flames, where the hue offers its place to an almost invisible vibration; where fire dematerialises, disappears and becomes a spirit. And indeed, at the very end of the composition, when a very short tonal vibration appears, everything that is tonal, which is a sign of a human and earthly subject, completely dissolves and derealises.

Finally, it is necessary to remind that Bachelard agrees with Rodin in the understanding of fire as an intimate creative instinct, as part of our ideas and dreams, as a seed. Bachelard states that fire is the 'first

cause of the phenomenon' and that one must capture the point of fire that marks one substance like the moment of love that marks one life. In that sense, since the 'Augurs chord' is the result of inner, intimate and impulsive creative power, and that it is the 'biological pulse of ballet', it can be said that in the case of this composition, and especially this chord, fire is the first cause of the phenomenon. Moreover, it seems that the 'Augurs chord' is the point that marks one substance or, more precisely, represents one substance that designates the whole music world. Everything that the chord contains and carries with it signifies and represents the development of the whole composition. In other words, the chord itself (as a representative of an archetypal materialistic image) points out to the characteristics/constants of the musical discourse that resonates with the archetypal image of fire: polyrhythm, polymetry, ostinato, polytonality or bitonality, using one chord as an aggregate of harmony of an episode or the whole section, archaicism (in melody, tonal bases of the work and orchestration), roughness of beat, sharpness of colour, among others.

Conclusion

It can be said that Stravinsky did with this work what Bachelard's aspiration in the scientific field was. By researching prehistoric rituals, he discovered the secret rhythms of spring, released them and presented a new, modern musical image of a pagan rite. In other words, it seems like he discovered the 'epistemological obstacles' in the unconscious of the art of music, so instead of percussion, which often signifies the pagan world, he uses string instruments (that is, what is associated with melody, continuity and human subject) as a battery of percussion. Stravinsky also uses tonal and diatonic elements that create dissonant tension. Consequently, everything that is a sign of human, musical subject he transforms and turns into a barbaric blow. Stravinsky offers a liberated musical discourse, that is, a specific musical metaphor of elementary, primordial and materialistic power.

Finally, based on everything that has been considered, it seems that we have proved that the archetypal core of Stravinsky's and Bachelard's work is precisely fire. In other words, it seems that fire is really the first (intimate) cause of philosophical and musical work.

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