

The Psychoanalytical Approach and Expression Shown on *The Rite of Spring* by Vaslav Nijinsky

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|---|----------------|
| I. Introduction | IV. Conclusion |
| II. Dance and Psychoanalysis | Bibliography |
| III. Psychoanalytical Expressions Shown
in <i>The Rite of Spring</i> | 국문초록 |

I. Introduction

As the 20th century began, academic research on the psychological world of humans became the mainstream. It was not about nature, history, nor approach to gods, and finally analysis of the inner side of human beings was made. It started from a group of scholars which themselves called it the psychoanalysis, suggested by Sigmund Freud himself. Finally we got to recognize the limitlessness and possibility of the human unconsciousness which we did not realize before. In 1900, after Nietzsche passed away Freud focused on the human unconsciousness by his book *The Interpretation of Dreams* and in this generation where god no longer existed artists pulled the human nature to a divine level, and they tried to put the mind of freedom in their works with impulsive and involuntary ideas. After that, Freud's work became an important stepping stone in the field of psychology and his successors expanded themselves into various fields such as analytical psychology, individual psychology, etc.

Nijinsky had achieved numerous accomplishments at Ballet Russes as a choreographer. With his outstanding senses and skills he was distinguished from others early from the days he spent at the Saint Petersburg School, and after the Giselle incident he joined the Ballet Russes and worked there receiving all the affection from Diaghilev.¹⁾ For about 5 years he had been together with Diaghilev as

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1) Debra Craine(2000), *Dance*(Oxford: Oxford University of Press), p.345.

his lover and received various privileges and affection from him, but the psychological codes that usually showed up in his work were related with desire, energy, and anxiety. In Nijinsky's autobiography he had mentioned, although in a figurative way of speech, that 'Diaghilev wanted to love two other young men as well'.²⁾ From this, we can assume that Diaghilev was more of a thing Nijinsky wanted to overcome and break free of, rather than love. In reality he did release some pieces of work which were challenging in nature. In *Afternoon of a Faun* which had its premiere in 1912, it was a piece of work which challenged the contemporary ballet style; also it was dreamlike and sexually energetic. Also in 1913 *The Rite of Spring* had its premiere with its pagan tendencies which reported the dark side of human nature. These two pieces are tremendously loved even up to this day and we can see Nijinsky's experimental and challenging spirit. His works contained primitive and underlying motions and it was a completely new attempt to break the aesthetic barrier required by reality. In his work fantasies, dreams and the word called unconsciousness was manifested as movement and it created resonance. We could take a look at the free human nature of the human spirit called dream, fantasy, and imagination which were suppressed by the human rationality and will.

Specially, the success of *The Rite of Spring* was made possible thanks to the dance of Nijinsky, the music of Stravinsky, and the script of Roerich. The music was primitive and great changes such as double tones were made, and in the means of dance variation through shocking motions were achieved by destroying the existing composition and movement grammar. Also in the script daily life of a primitive Russian village was included which was spiritual and at the same time living together with nature. They needed 100 hours of practice for their performance however they only performed 6 times and it took nearly 80 years to achieve proper exchange with its audiences because it had to overcome the awkwardness. The reason why his work was not easily accepted by the audience is because this story about violence and desire in the group of humans was quite different from other pieces of work at the time which was awkward to its audiences, rather than seeing it because it possessed a revolutionary tendency which was not acknowledged at the time.

The interesting thing of this piece is that movements which reacted to the personalities id, ego, and superego that were categorized by Freud have appeared. His work was composed of movements swept along with the anxiety, desire, violence, and the thanatoid impulse within a human rather than following the traditional descriptive structure. Psychoanalysis, which greatly affected the arts at the time, was reflected in the music, direction, and costumes as well, and through this research we can see how it was combined and expressed with the inherent unconsciousness.

This research is composed of a brief look at the outline and background of psychoanalysis, and after that it will examine the trend of unconsciousness shown in dances of modern artists' works. Modern

2) V. Nijinsky(1936), *The Scream of Nijinsky's Soul*, Translated by Lee, Deok Hee(Seoul: Pureunsup, 2002), p.449.

choreographers Steve Paxton, Pina Bausch, and Akram Khan also focused on the inner consciousness and flow of impulses and reflected them into their works. In chapter III this paper will inspect the imbalance point between id and ego by three different ways focusing especially on the work of Nijinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. Therefore we would be able to find psychoanalytical points appearing in the dance at that time and new expressions in the dance itself.

For research I have paid attention to videos of the piece and the plain texts.³⁾ I also conducted documental and investigation research and borrowed the analytical method to read the piece of art. Obviously the unconsciousness does not secure any positive verification so I hereby declare that this approach adheres to the researcher's subjective grounds. This will become the limit of this research. However I think that we will be able to track the remains of the voyage to the unconsciousness focusing on the movement, direction, and image shown distinctively in the piece.

If we look at preceding research papers, there are not that many papers which focus on *The Rite of Spring* by Nijinsky. The work of Jang, Ji Won deals with *The Rite of Spring* but it focuses on the choreography of Marie Chouinard and Angelin Preljocaj.⁴⁾ The work of Shin Sang Mi in 2009 was also about the types of motion of Nijinsky but it is far from the psychoanalytical approach.⁵⁾ We can find some researches which has Nijinsky as their theme⁶⁾ but the ones that focused on *The Rite of Spring* was restricted to documental research due to the difficulties of securing video footage. Actually it is because the original work of Nijinsky was restored as an actual performance only recently.⁷⁾

In this paper I would like to contemplate how the unconscious drive is reflected into movement based on the three keywords 'the mechanism of anxiety and desire', 'the energy of compliance and violence' and 'the thanatoid impulse' proposed by Freud to lighten the unconscious expressions

3) *The Rite of Spring* by Nijinsky, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTWJ9r-tKp8>, 2017.8.1.>.

4) Ji Won Jang(2014), Research on the comparison of different characteristics shown in each performances of *The Rite of Spring* by Marie Chouinard and Angelin Preljocaj, *The Korean Journal of Arts Studies* 9(6), pp.129-150.

5) Sang Mi Shin(2009), The Types of Vislav Nijinsky's Movements and its Meanings, *The Korean Society of Dance Collection of Papers* 58, pp.573-599.

6) Hyun Nam Kim and others(2007), The research of Nijinsky's Sexual Expressions and the Sexual Male Image Appearing in the History of the Modern Dance, *Journal of Korean Sport Research* 18(5), pp.245-235; Su In Kim(2003), The Influence of the Impressionism Art Trend which Showed in the Early Modernization Process of Dance: Focusing on Duncan and Nijinsky, *The Korean Journal of Dance Studies* 12, pp.53-76; Shin, Hye Jo(2014), The aesthetic modernity and avant-garde of Nijinsky's ballet, *Korean Journal of Russian language and literature* 24(4), pp.403-429.

7) This piece was based from when Mary Lambert was talking to Robert Joffrey and handed him the work notes. This led to the piece of art and was released to the public. In 1971, Milicent Hodson who was preparing a thesis about the Ballet Russes and the English art historian Kenneth Archer who was researching Nicholas Roerich recovered it and in 1987 the Joffrey Ballet Company performed it at Los Angeles. Afterwards in 1990, he met with the audience at Champs-Elysees where it was premiered(Do, Yoon Jeong(2013), The dance of Belle Epoque, *Revue d'etudes francophones* 23, p.152. Original reference, Marcelle Michel Isabelle Ginotp. p.34).

displayed on the masterpiece of Vaslav Nijinsky, *The Rite of Spring*. The object of study will be focused on a YouTube video which recently reenacted it.⁸⁾ I look forward for this research being used as research data for in-depth psychological analysis in future researches on works of Nijinsky.

II. Dance and Psychoanalysis

1. The Background and Summary of Psychoanalysis

If we define psychology, it is the study of the human heart. However we cannot look inside one's heart and neither can we judge it so it is only possible by looking at people's behaviors. Therefore if we redefine psychology I believe it is correct to say that it is the study of the heart and behavior of people.⁹⁾

In the beginning of the 20th century Freud found a new school with the name of psychoanalysis. It is also known by the name Freudianism. He discovered the unconsciousness which no one ever cared before and researched what kind of different behaviors and types were shown related to this. Also he analyzed the structure of the mind tracked to see if it affected the process of composing one's personality.

In 1856, the times which Freud had to face when he was born were an age of accepting new things. Charles Darwin announced the *Origin of Species* and made humans equal with other animals. He interpreted that humans can also be approached as subjects to scientific research and that we were not distinguished with other species. When Freud turned 14 Gustav Fechner established psychology and expected that since the human heart can also be a subject to study, it could be measured in actual quantities.¹⁰⁾ Along with that the physicist Hermann von Helmholtz also formalized the law of conservation of energy and attempted to conduct a scientific research on the unconscious. It is that before consciousness, there is an unconscious process beforehand which restores the incomplete information coming in from the sensory organs to deduce the original information.¹¹⁾

With this background Freud set the target of his analysis as the heart which was never considered academically. He researched the numerous layers and structures inside the human mind. He categorized the structure of a personality into three important steps. Id, ego, and superego. Id directly releases the excitement (energy) that forms in the organism after a psychological or external stimulation. It is dominated by the pleasure principle. And the ego is controlled by the principle of

8) Nijinsky's, *The Rite of Spring*, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTWJ9r-tKp8>, 2017.8.1.>.

9) Hyun Seok Kang(2014), *It is My First Time in Psychology*(Seoul: Hanbit Biz), p.18.

10) Hak Lee(1988), *Research on Freudian Psychology*(Seoul: Cheonmok Books), p.12.

11) <<http://egloos.zum.com/nullmodel/v/1801962>>.

reality rather than the principle of pleasure. Also, the superego represents a more ideal notion rather than a realistic one and aims towards completion rather than reality or pleasure.¹²⁾ In other words, we can interpret the ego as us, what we desire is the id, and what we should do is the superego. For example, we can be so happy to enter university that we may feel the impulsive id to dance on the street but considering the social attention and location the superego steps in to suppress us and keep us from dancing. Freud apprehended this as the mechanism which the heart operates.

Also, he thought that the mind structure consists of the unconscious, conscious, and preconscious. He viewed that these had endless exchanges and interactions among themselves. He compares the conscious to the unconscious as a small island in the middle of a vast sea, that it is just a very small part of it. Also, the unconscious is connected with the conscious and saves the reaction in the inner side. It would be more appropriate to say making it potential. It does not disappear, it just does not show. Like this, the unconscious saves things which were unable to find its way into the conscious and erupts itself to various images, ideas, thoughts, and hunches towards future events. It affects the thought of thinking that they are forgotten.

The three important notions dealt in psychology are anxiety, violence, and Thanatos. Freud thought that the occurrence of civilization derived from the universal suppression about the unconscious and he interpreted that from here as an option of ego-defense various instincts are released. First, he pointed out anxiety as an important factor that cannot be left out in psychological analysis and in his book *Civilization and Its Discontents* he stated that it is one of the major symptoms of psychological disorder where if the stimulation is accumulated due because of its unavailability of being released it is the process of experiencing lethargy. Just like the statement of Alain de Botton who said ‘anxiety is the maid of desire’ anxiety is an instinctive emotion to the human race and ever since humans showed themselves in this world it has been responsible as one of the numerous axes of emotions.¹³⁾ The second is the interpretation of violence. In his book he observed that if the immanent desire is directed to oneself it would lead to self-injury or suicide, and if it is directed towards others it would lead to violence. Freud interpreted violence in its environmental causes and in the perspective of instinct. He thought that it can be carried out because of an unconscious learning so it can be seen that he managed to have various interpretations on the inherent psychological causes. Third is the psychoanalytical term Thanatos. This is a desire to head towards death. He wrote *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and here he stated that Thanatos is the most ancient type of desire and it is the ultimate point of regression and a return to the basics.

Normally if we talk about the unconscious and impulse we can understand because it is usually under the influence of the pleasure principle, but in reality humans are pessimistic and we operate on

12) S. Freud(1988), pp.23-33.

13) Hong Soon Park(2016), pp.152-154.

the irrational force called instinct, and this energy becomes an important source of motivation on human actions and movements. However when the psychological balance among ego, id, and superego is broken and if this leads to actual action, it takes the form of unusual movement called violence and he apprehended that if this gets out of one's control it can finally lead to the desire of death in the end.

The unconscious internalizes and records even the most subtle and unimportant things we feel and it gets ready to react even before one realizes it. When there is a stimulation it pushes the conscious out and operates with all its strength. The birth of art begins from this kind of human psychology and builds up on it. Art creation is planned from a sudden rise of thought. Obviously not only art but Einstein also confessed that one day he suddenly got his insight. Like this, implications, ideas, or inspirations affect the conscious and finally enable one to do acts of creation. Freud emphasized that the creation of art happens on the event of manifestation of desire or sublimation, but in the case of Jung he viewed it as giving the steppingstone for a collective unconscious experience to actually come into the conscious mind. As a result, it comes from a point different from the conscious and it follows an intuitive and illogical way which is far from logicity or rationality.

2. Dance and the Unconscious

In dance, pieces where it all starts with an unconscious desire and when it starts to express itself, catches the eye. One can briefly see this through the works of Steve Paxton, Pina Bausch, and Akram Khan.

First of all Steve Paxton painted the unintended inner flow of the conscious with the body through dance improvisations. It was a process which informed that the things needed in choreography was not just intention or active self-expression. He refused the traditional value of modern dance called expression and added a negative interpretation related to emotion. Contact improvisation was a dance involving 2 people where one has to instantly react to the movement his or her partner makes. The key point here is the reaction of the internalized movement. The free unconscious is released through the body motions. It refused to be the dance as an expression of the thought process.

The choreographer Pina Bausch, who always brings the hot potato of various displays of the unconscious, came to Korea in 2014 with her piece *Full Moon*. The piece of art withholds the experiences related to the unconscious of groups of people and the peculiar psychology of the human being. The increasing, plentiful, insufficient, and dangerous experiences are released through movements. Above or below the surface, there are various daily stories which unfold interestingly with the dancer's experience and motions. The full moon does not appear in the *Full Moon*. However in the dark background next to a big rock a valley-like landscape is formed. The dancers show their own movements next to the big rock such as placing themselves in the self-made water or spraying it

around. It is as if the rock is the consciousness which weighs down on our hearts and the water is an analogy of our unconscious. Thoughts which cannot be released under the enormous conscious seems as if they are released with the spraying of water. The quantity, size, purpose of water is different to each individual and their stories are delivered melt together with the life and experiences of the dancer into a falling image. Water is the past of the dancers and at the same time operates as the motivation of reflecting the current figure. Warmth like a mother's amniotic fluid, coolness which relieves the summer heat, water is what cleanses clearly the impatience of love that was contained in one corner of the unconscious.

The hourly changing image of the moon is like our period of growth or the changing lifetime. And water envelops this moon. There is only one moon up there in the sky but if we have water the moon reflected in the water can be possessed by anyone. The moon which is in each person's heart is located vaguely within oneself but at the same time it has the potential to be enlarged infinitely in the size and content of the unconscious. As it shows in the title of the full moon which the genius choreographer chose, it is interesting to see that the darkness of the night and the brightness of the moon, along with the sky and water, which are all two opposite things, come together as one. This seems to reflect the psychological process where in the human's heart the conscious and unconscious is together and interacts with each other.

There is also a piece which contains the impulse related to Thanatos. In the *Vertical Road*(2010) by Akram Khan was based on the inspiration the choreographer received of ascension in the Islamic and Christian world when the energy related to death is released. He used the death of a human as the motif and tried to unfold various stories about the afterlife. He got remarks that stated he showed the enlightenment of horizontal and vertical life through the composition of the choreography and the movement. The life of a man ends with the flesh dying, remaining in white ashes, and disappearing with the wind. This kind of weight of life was achieved by the meeting of light and darkness, movement and stillness. Also, the tension of the music reflects how the meaning of existing is evaluated during the time process of be dualize into black and white. It throws various questions about the life of a human, climbs over the boundaries of the unexperienced or cannot-be-experienced afterlife and the unconscious and delivers the psychological strength related to the motivation of one's actions by movement.

Like this, dancing showed the things deep inside the heart in various movements. In the case of Steve Paxton his dance moves had no intentions whatsoever so it was hard to anticipate how the audience was going to accept it, but at the same time it is interesting that nothing was expected either. Along with that, Pina Bausch and Akram Khan's works turns on the unconscious by direction and material, and pulls the audience closer as the interpreters of their creative works. Their materials have exceeded the censorship of the conscious so the movement they show each moment can be understood

that it all came from the past experiences of each person. As a pure point of distinction each isolated movement of the dancers seem to me meaningful to the audience. The theme and movement released from the inner conscious appears as the most critical weapon that should be equipped in the modern arts which cry out for creative works.

III. Psychoanalytical Expressions Shown in *The Rite of Spring*

In Ballet Russes there was a planner called Diaghilev. He organized the Ballet Russes and conducted performances in Western Europe, and as the ballet group became popular he attempted flourishing artistic combinations with other genres such as music, paintings, and poems. Each year he would invite talented artists and show various works, and he played an important role for the Russian ballet to be spread across the western world. Leon Bakst, Debussy, Label, Satie, Benoit, Braque, Picasso, Coco Chanel and many more people participate in the works of Ballet Russes. Chanel participated in making the clothes for the Ballet Russes at the time, making various experimental tries and painted the stage beautifully worthy of its name as ‘modern’ with innovative costumes. Also, Igor Stravinsky also participated in dance for the first time in 1910 when he was requested for the piece *The Firebird*, and after that he also took part in various modern pieces of art such as *Petrushka*, *The Rite of Spring*, *Les Noces* which led him to be acknowledged as a great musician.

The Rite of Spring of Nijinsky was on a different track compared to the past performances by the Ballet Russes. It is because it shows movements based on the unconscious and instinctive energy. This states that in dancing, the new inner motivation which crosses the artistic boundaries about physical beauty is the important thing. This was an announcement which said that psychology can be the basis of an important piece of art, not its aesthetic value. Therefore it is safe to say that there is quite a big meaning when interpreting the movement related to it.

That is why in this research I will interpret the pieces of art focusing on the important keywords of the psychoanalytic theory. When the id that Freud emphasized is released, it is controlled by the autonomic nervous system which leads to accelerated heartbeats and sweaty palms.¹⁴⁾ Like this, the psychological instinct controls the physical body and it is shown by movement. Various layers of emotional experiences are delivered to different organs within the body and here we can observe how they are reflected and expressed. First is the ‘mechanism of anxiety and defense’ and the second is ‘compliance and violent energy’. Lastly I will interpret the piece with the theme of ‘thanatoid impulse’.

14) S. Freud(1988), p.66.

1. Unconscious Codes Shown in *The Rite of Spring*

The human unconscious is an outburst of the inner self which suddenly rises at the moment when the conscious is unable to control it. Therefore it usually consists of negative aspects. Violence, desire, impulse, brutality, fear of the human lay dormant deep below the conscious. This is the same with *The Rite of Spring*. Various emotions and desires coexist in a single piece of art like a full set and throws various questions regarding the very basic nature of humans. The piece asks us what does our existence as human beings mean. It tells us to listen to the violence, brutality, fear, and compliance with other various instinctive stories inside ourselves.

This piece was premiered in Paris, in May, 1913. Its shocking contents and movement composition had both favorable and non-favorable comments and achieved a considerable result as becoming the catalyst of modern art. *The Rite of Spring* consists of Nijinsky's choreography, Stravinsky's avant-garde music, Leon Bakst's stage, Roerich's script and stage design.¹⁵⁾ It depicted the pagan celebration coming down from ancient times as folklore in Russia, and it holds the subject matter of sacrifice for life to subsist.¹⁶⁾ It contains the ritualistic process where a chaste maiden is offered as a sacrifice to the Sun God.¹⁷⁾

At the beginning, men and women dance together and when some time has passed an old priest who is in charge of the ritual appears. When darkness falls they hold a ritual where they offer a maiden who is pure and can sustain the richness of nature. Here, the majority of people who are not picked and the few people who are picked are present with their own thoughts, stream of consciousness, and the bodily movements. As it proceeds to the final stages of the ritual the furious emotions and secretly violent inner aspects are displayed through movements.

The Rite of Spring is depicted as a festival by showing the desire of a primitive life and demand of sacrifice for the human race to continue existing. Two types of patterns repeat along its storyline, such as the selection and watching the pagan faith brought the minority and the majority, night and day, sacrifice and peace. The orderly movements with its oddly-shaped dynamic odd-number beats and the primitive, chaotic movements rule the audiences' hearts.

This piece is divided into two parts, with the first part having 8 pieces of music, and the second part having 6 pieces of music. The first part is called Adoration of the Earth, and the second part is called The Sacrifice. The movements which show perfect harmony with the music is notable. The woodwind, string instruments, percussions, and brass wind instruments come in at a discord and movements consisting the musical elements of the melody, rhythm, harmony are shown. The first part

15) Sang Mi Shin(2009), p.112.

16) Madera, Romano(2016), Dance as a Metaphor of a body-mind Integrated Education, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis and Education* 12, p.30.

17) Eric Walter White(1966), *Stravinsky the Composer and his Works*(Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), pp.177-178.

Adoration of the Earth consists songs of the following order.¹⁸⁾ The tuneless method, the effect of multiple melodies, severe dissonance, and meticulous melody division are combined with the movement. The chromatic scale progression within an octave or the complete movement reacting to the fragmentary melody is dissonant as if it was impromptu. This reflected the characteristic of the short and simple structure of moving the melody focusing on a single note within a narrow range, which was a feature of the Russian folk melody.¹⁹⁾

The flow of the inner conscious is delivered through the movement together with the music. Overall, the dance of the young maidens reacting to the staccato rhythm reflects the inner conscious. The fast and slow tempos appear sequentially and the dramatic movements reacting to the uncommon three beat fast music does not reflect the story. The fear, anxiety, shock, and other psychological changes were achieved by covering one's face with one hand or jumping with the tow knees stuck together. The dark colors of the night, the dim and depressive image, expressions swept with fear reflect the anxious inner mentality.

There are some artists who inspired the directing. One of them was Nicholas Roerich, who was a set designer, painter, and anthropologist at the time. He was interested in archeology and he created a primitive world that was dominated with ancient Russian superstitions and fear. Its contents consist of a story where a maiden in a Russian tribal society is made to sacrifice herself while dancing, and that leads to the birth of spring.²⁰⁾ He reenacted the primitive-looking costumes of the people and completed the environment where people communicated with nature through directing. He added red pigment as the people's long cherished desire for spring in the barren and snowy country of Russia, and included the worshipping towards nature by the hunched figure of the priest. He displayed the scenery of the ritual which took place in the shadowy white and green boundary radiated by nature.

2. Research of the Psychoanalytical Expressions

a. Movement as a mechanism of anxiety and defense

Movement is a manifestation of a creative idea carried out by the unconscious. Since it is not directing nor making something consciously, it is an expression towards the world of the unconscious beyond the artificial world and it has its specialness by providing experience on an uncontrolled movement. Therefore, the dance is unfamiliar. It stimulates a totally different new kind of thought from its existing ones, and has the unfamiliarity of embracing endless creative thoughts. That is why

18) Mun Hee Choi(1994), 1913 Research about *The Rite of Spring* and its Music, Ewha Womans University Graduate School, pp.17-18.

19) Eun Hye Son(2006), Research on Stravinsky's Music in High School Music Textbooks, Ewha Womans University Graduate School, p.35.

20) Susan Au(1987), *Ballet and Modern Dance*, Tralated by Chae Hyun Kim(Seoul: Theory and Practice, 1990), p.87.

The Rite of Spring could not be a repertory like the other existing ballet pieces at the time. There is just the strong impression of ‘ugliness’ in the piece. However the motive of it is significantly different from the past. This piece of art that Nijinsky narrated was a sense of beauty based on a totally different psychological motive reflecting the unconscious.

The Rite of Spring expressed the dark side of the human heart in the language of movement. It contained the unconscious in the depth of a human into a piece of art and expressed that even the primitive and instinctive impulses can become the subject matter of art. Nijinsky managed to image the heart of the unconscious desire with the irregular movements crossing across disorder and order.

The distinct feature is the shocking form of movement the heart is delivered by. Along with the simple and repetitive order which stimulates the audience, it shows a provocative movement. The petit jumps and steps with elasticity are excessive and tenacious. The various movements react to the breath of the heart and displays a complex characteristic. Also, the chaotic physical movement by the stimuli have a convulsive effect in harmony with the primal rhythm of the string instruments. It is not the orderly and harmonious movements of the former ballet, but it tells the inconvenient truth of the broken and twisted body. I will say it is a Dionysian sympathy opposing to the logical western history of Apollonian origin. Here, the intuitive learning gets activated instead of logical understanding. It is the moment when the inner unconscious takes the movement due to the outer reality to have a form, and it is also a reaction of the thrashing physical senses. Surrealists referred to the accidental action as the psychological automatic technology and this is a creative expression which refuses the planned and prepared movement.

Nijinsky’s choreography envelop the unconscious related to anxiety in an irregular sense of beauty. Jumping with one bending the knees, leaning forward, and flicking the ankle in a bobbing way is repeated. The male dancers have their back hunched, cannot even stand up properly and usually stares at the floor. Looking up at the sky is what the old priest does. The back hunched by 90 degrees towards the sky twisting the upper body delivers the terrified state of heart.

The primitive anxiety was expressed by the woman’s movement when she cracks her wrists and by the man when he clenches his fist. These abstract motions are of protruding and rough acts are quite different from the soft and smooth movements in formal ballets. It emphasizes the blunt surface of the joint and delivers the uncomfortable body and anxious feelings. The turned-in and crushed feet, the body shuddering upwards, these kinds of movements all originate from the psychological motivation of anxiety.

b. The Hidden Instincts in the Human, and Movement as Compliance and Violence

The storyline is not the main focus of *The Rite of Spring*. What we have to focus on is the irregularly changing human mentality. In the part where the maiden is offered as a sacrifice, the heavy feeling is

weighed upon us with the jumps and the dancers' walking make us feel their feeling of helplessness. Also, the faith in purity, obedience to the tradition, and the oppressive energy reflects the obeying behavior related to the endless and non-changing fate of imprisonment and obedience through its circle composition. Also, the bow-legged turned in posture tells us the state of the insane excitement and oblivion through the body, and it is also an interpretive movement of the despair and helplessness the people feel, watching the maiden's sacrifice. The interesting thing is that a new type of psychological operation was staged at a ballet piece which was excluded until now, and the ostracized inner consciousness have been depicted as a movement. Observation for the excluded had been conducted and it has been raised to the surface. This piece of art can be said that it can represent the modern art, in its means as it makes us confront the unconscious over the conscious, coincidence over fate, irregularity over balance, and nature instead of ornaments.²¹⁾ A totally new history was about to unfold.

In this piece of art, a group of people who execute violence and a woman who is forced her sacrifice due to her compliance with the group are cast light. Therefore, this piece is a tragedy itself and the sacrifice through suggestion is eventually the violence of the community. Rene Girard, who was influenced by Freud, pointed this issue of violence in the human society in his work *La Violence et le sacre*(1972). And it also checks the past where they tried to overcome violence through religion. The important thing is that in that era the sacrifice played the role of a medium to salvage the community from chaos to order, and it also had a cathartic function as well. The act of sacrifice was a project that could actively promote the feeling of solidarity and overcome the fear.

One of the types of dances that appear often in the work is circle dancing. Circle dancing is a dance where people stand as a circle and look at each other while dancing. It seems as if it symbolizes the harmony and unity since the whole community is together. However, it is a ritual to pick out a single sacrifice. Also, it is the place where the sacrifice realizes her position and acknowledges it. The spasmodic pas seul is highlighted from the surrounding circle and the people who form the circle dance separated from the sacrifice. The strength in numbers as a community, the ecstatic state of being together relieves the anxiety and pain. This is the moment of intoxication as well as the victory of the community. The form where the brutality of overlooking an individual's death and implicit potential to be a part in it was completed through the composition as a circle. The astonishing and violent aspect of forcing a human being to sacrifice oneself was executed by shifting the responsibility to one and another, and the Dionysian optimism of converting the ugly face of life to another will lies within the circle dance. The people who are experiencing change, their lives, and the compliance and affirmation of violence, the ontological principle of power is shown right here in this dance.²²⁾ Here, the strength

21) Tae Hee Kang and others(2006), *Philosophy, Reads Art*(Seoul: Dongnyeok), p.72.

22) Seung Young Baek(2011), *Nietzsche*(Paju: Hangilsa), p.39.

which makes one face with the instincts of a human and the power of movement coexist. The movement of the circle changes fluidly towards the inside, outside, and the front, which means having comfort as a community for being the witnesses of the sacrifice and at the same time turning their responsibilities to each other. It can be said that the inner consciousness related to the organized violence is reflected to the circle dance.

c. The Movement as a Display of the Thanatoid Impulse

In Freud's book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* it is the part where he states the instinct of death and Thanatos is the god of death in the Greek myth.²³⁾ This repeats the identical things and realizes the world of instinct and the unconscious by having the power of basically returning us to the inanimate world. The priest becomes the executor of Thanatos and leads on with the offer. He lies low and reacts to every reaction of the heavens and nature, and gets confirmation on the overall situation. To the ones who are alive he is a savior with both arms wide open, whereas to the ones who are about to embrace death he is the messenger of Thanatos.

Like the work of Akram Khan mentioned earlier, in *The Rite of Spring* he completed the image of a human's death in a horizontal symbolic movement, not with a vertical image. The maiden is lifted by the hands of the people at last and this symbolizes death. This means the route of death and implies that this being is no longer a material entity which exists in reality, but now separated to belong with the gods up in the heavens. It shows that she is different from the people left behind and this decorates the final ending by dramatically resolving the conflict. The vertical figure of a human is how we walk and also means each moment of life. However the horizontal figure means the moment of death where everything stops. Nijinsky uses a pose set within the work and this is the unconscious approach one takes when meeting with movement. Stopping is a completely opposing type of movement compared to survival since everything stops. In his work the action of moving has its inherent abstractness and emits its meaning.

The society has a tendency of turning the direction of violence which might harm its members towards something not themselves, something that is relatively irrelevant with the society itself, in other words a sacrifice no matter what the cost.²⁴⁾ The offering of the sacrifice to Thanatos was also one of the symbolic systems which tried to eliminate the conflict, competition, jealousy, argument, establish harmony within the community, and strengthen the social unity.²⁵⁾ In the 5th century at

23) S. Freud(1920), *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, *Complete Collection of Freud* 14, Translated by Park, Chan Bu(Seoul: Open Books, 1998), p.22.

24) Jeong Suk Park(2015), *In the name of Hysterie, sacrifice, and the father*, Ewha Womans University Graduate School, p.266.

25) Rene Girard(1972), *Violence and the Sacred*, Translated by Jin Sik Kim & Mu Ho Park(Seoul: Mineumsa, 1997), pp.19-20.

Athens, Greece, there was the Pharmakos, a human sacrificing system. This was a form where the death of a human being was justified by people who were excluded from the society such as prisoners of war, slaves, and children. Bringing death from the outside to protect the whole community is indeed surprisingly effective. It was the perfect way to sustain order and peace. The death shown in *The Rite of Spring* was one of these types. The maiden who was forced to sacrifice herself because she was powerless or excluded, was an effective sacrifice to overcome the situation and crisis. This kind of death gives a nationwide meaning and it has the history of hiding it by treating it as something that is not uncomfortable to the society. Through this piece it confirms us that the offerings and rituals which were called barbaric and pagan were the very bottom of the most basic human instincts. He managed to point out the uncomfortable psychological themes of the human and made the society face the truth by pulling it out and confronting them with it.

IV. Conclusion

Nijinsky's *The Rite of Spring* is often chosen as one of the most revolutionary pieces in the 20th century. The reason that his works are considered as masterpieces it is because he sought for the inner characteristics of the human nature in the form of abstract movements. He displayed various personalities of different colors related to things such as the unconscious and the conscious, and the human nature through his works. That point was the various interpretations of anxiety, desire, violence, and death. Afterwards *The Rite of Spring* has been interpreted by other artists such as Martha Graham, Mats Ek, Akram Khan, Marie Chouinard, Pina Bausch, Angelin Preljocaj, etc. The inner conscious each choreographer had inside themselves, their experiences and unconscious became the motivation and movement was released.

The Rite of Spring focuses on the inner consciousness related to anxiety, violence, and death. This means the destiny of human beings who only have a limited life period and the circulation of selfish violence. From anxiety to violence, and then to death, this series of spreading were all part of this piece's process. The time of this piece of art means the time of life as well as the time of death simultaneously. Death which humans face makes them shudder in fear but this piece suggests us to observe and meet at a daily level the basic instinctual fear embedded in our unconscious. Therefore, the remembrance of life is also experiencing the fear of death. It is unfamiliar, but by encountering the daily inner desires art does not function just merely as an artistic creation of a human, but it faces human beings itself through movement and lets us look at how the inner fear and unconscious changes and moves the human.

If we look around *The Rite of Spring* in psychoanalytical terms we can find two characteristics. First

is that the focus of this piece of art was on the inner unconscious, not the outer form. It refused to take the narrative structure and made the audience to concentrate on the image derived from the image. It ventured with a new type of free thoughts, not limited to the existing typical art or ways of thinking. It broke free of the conscious and expressed the unconscious motive. This was a revolutionary attempt that the modern ballet had never shown before. If we check why Nijinsky took this as his subject matter, it is because of the meaning that the inner side and nature of the human does not change and even if a great amount of time has passed it will repeatedly be regenerated. He tried various modern experiments and revolutions in ballet and he started from the psychological motive that the place of the past is not that much different from the location of our daily lives nowadays. The key feature of the human being is its instincts and this consists of emotions and reasons such as desire, anxiety, violence, and conflict. Nijinsky wanted to deliver the unknown area and the inside world where rationality does not take control with dance.

The second is that he displayed a new kind of beauty in movement not following the esthetic tendency of ballet. Overemphasized and discord movements and expressive composition were movements which reflected the fidelity of the inner conscious and the unconscious. Movement is free of any aesthetic form or stereotypes. Unconscious movements are manifested automatically. Therefore, the mysterious experience coming from the work of art is expressed in an unfamiliar and different way. That is the same with the interpretation of violence. It does not conceive the death of a maiden as a tragedy but welcomes the probability that will show with the death of the humble entity. It is as if the death had been promised by destiny and one evading their responsibility and guilt. Therefore, the frequently appearing circle dance is also a form of celebrating one's victory as well. In other words, it is the circle dance of the ones who can preserve this current situation and the recovery that through the laws of great nature that the remaining ones can sustain their hope. It is a movement as a reserve who dreams of hopes of getting better and each other becoming each other's witnesses. His dance had this kind of psychological motivation. It is not a creative expression of beauty, but it is a movement released based on the inner motive.

The Rite of Spring is a story of life and death, regression and culture, chaos and order, darkness and light, female and male. It takes the form as an event for emphasizing the crisis and unity of a society but by putting it on stage it makes the audience come face to face with the biased views, and makes them reflect upon themselves about their discriminative ideology. This work of Nijinsky²⁶⁾ has its deep meaning as one's own confessional testimony about the irrationality. The scholar Kim, Seon Young had stated that 'it is a process where psychoanalysis understands the state and movement, and

26) This is a report about the cruelty of the world's irrationality and refusing human relationships based on the classic principle. It is a method of the efforts to destroy and disassemble the new and externalizing the chaotic era and lonely human sensitivity. It is a excretion of the human desire and a shout towards every unclear things.

takes care of itself'.²⁷⁾ Likewise more than anyone Nijinsky would have wanted to deliver his state by dancing and would have wanted the people to truly understand his situation. Also, he wanted art to go forward as movements which destroys division and abnormality. In his works which contain an enormous new title, the psychoanalytical sincerity of wanting people to recognize the finite features of the human such as violence, desire, death, to look at each other, observe each other's psychological state, and console each other. Baek, Nam Jun had emphasized that "Art is an expression of instinct" and Nijinsky wanted to achieve the expression of the inner side of humans and the release of instinct. He wanted to the audience to see that even today, the truth is that anxiety, violence, and thanatoid desire are the basic characteristics that a human being possesses.

27) Refer to Kim, Seo Young(2014), *Psychoanalysis Read Through Movies*(Seoul: Eunhaengnamu).

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정신분석학을 통한 니진스키의 「봄의 제전」 해석

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20세기의 가장 개혁적인 작품으로 니진스키의 「봄의 제전」을 꼽을 수 있다. 본 작품이 위대한 것은 인간의 본성에 관한 다양한 층위를 추상적 움직임으로 표현하였다는 것이다. 인간내면의 불안, 폭력, 타나토스적 욕망을 담아내며 의식과 무의식, 그리고 인간 본성에 관한 여러 색감의 움직임을 펼쳐놓았다. 본 연구는 「봄의 제전」에 나타난 움직임과 표현을 프로이트가 제시한 ‘불안과 욕망의 매커니즘’, ‘순응과 폭력의 에네르기’, 그리고 ‘타나토스적 충동’이라는 세 가지의 키워드를 중심으로 해석하였다. 연구를 위해 작품 영상과 평문에 주목하였고 해석학적 방법을 차용하여 작품을 읽어내었다. 물론 실증적 근거를 확보하지 못한 지점에 있어서는 연구자의 주관적 사유를 견지하고 있음을 밝힌다. 그러나 작품에서 분명하게 보여주는 움직임과 연출 그리고 이미지를 중심으로 무의식으로서의 여정과 흔적을 추적해 볼 수 있으리라 여겨진다. 본 논문이 차후 니진스키의 작품연구에 있어서 심층적 심리분석을 위한 탐구 자료로 활용되길 기대해본다.

키워드: 정신분석(Psychoanalysis), 봄의 제전(The Rite of Spring), 바슬라브 니진스키(Vaslav Nijinsky), 무의식(Unconscious), 발레루스(Ballet Russes)