

DISSONANT HARMONY
***a new principle of musical
and social organization***

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We are facing today a vast and radical attempt at world-regeneration. We have come to one of the critical moments of human evolution when the struggle between particularism and universalism reaches an acute condition; when the destiny of many centuries to come hangs in the balance of our own thinking, imagining and behaving. There have been many such crises in the past; yet this which we are experiencing today is probably more far-reaching, affecting as it does the whole of the human race in a way not to be paralleled at least in historical times.

The particularistic attitude is **earth-born**; the universalistic we may call for the time being **mind-born**, it being understood that by the term mind we mean neither the brain-consciousness nor the intellect (which is but the power to synthesize sense-impressions) but the true principle of spiritual-metaphysical manhood which differentiates altogether Man from the animal and makes of him a super-earthly being.

These two attitudes give birth to two essential types of philosophy, of social order, of art. Society or any work of art (musical or plastic) is a complex whole made of many parts or units. Whether these units are human beings or musical tones or geometrical forms does not essentially matter. The important thing is the **type of organization** which makes of all these units a whole. In any period of human development a certain type of organization predominates. It is this basic type which determines the social as well as the esthetical modes of organization, Art and Society being two manifestations of the same archetypal order, of the same attitude to life which is expressed also in the dominant philosophy of the age.

From the point of view of social organization we will call these two types: the **tribal order** and the **companionate order**. From the point of view of music: the **consonant order** and the **dissonant order**.

A principle of organization means a principle of relationship between units constituting a group or a whole. A society or a work of art is a network of relations. The simplest relation is that which exists between two single units: two musical tones or two human beings for instance. What such a relation is will decide the entire question of social or musical organization.

Obviously this basic relation between two single units will depend on what these single units are as single units. Society is essentially what its individual members are; music what the individual tones or notes are, that is to say what quality and quantity of Life is manifesting through these units, whether they are spiritually living or dead, whether they emanate power in freedom or are stultified slaves to form-standards imposed from without. Man may be many things, as tones may mean many things. The individual man will always be the measure of society, whether considered as a political animal in the Aristotelian sense, as a creature of matter, or as a Free Soul, a super-earthly spiritual entity incarnating in and through a body of earth to fulfill a certain destiny. Likewise the individual tone, considered as an entity in itself and not merely as the edge of an interval (i. e. as an abstract musical note of no definite quality, intensity or pitch) will always be the measure of music in any race or period.

We must emphasize these foregoing ideas as they are not usually taken into consideration by the majority of Western thinkers, especially in relation to music. The study of the individual should be the very foundation of the study of any group or relation, social or musical. What the individual is determines ultimately what the relation will be, at any rate how it will be worked out **actually**.

However, our present task is essentially to analyze the two basic types of relationship which individuals, social or musical, may enter into. So we shall not study any longer the nature of the single individual; but let us repeat again that it is the individual which makes the relation and not a certain type of relationship which moulds the destiny of the individual, as many modern thinkers believe, in musical as well as in social-political fields.

A relation between two musical units is called an **interval**. Intervals are considered as being either consonant or dissonant; consonance and dissonance being as it were two poles. Absolute consonance is the negation of the interval, thus the unison: two tones having become one. Absolute dissonance really does not exist. No interval is absolutely dissonant; it is only more or less so. When two tones are sounded, the relation between which cannot be felt by the hearer, a discord is thus produced. We might say to precise the meaning which we give to these basic terms that a consonance is a relation which can be easily reduced to unity; that a dissonance is a relation the terms of which are constantly pulling apart; that a discord is produced by the absence of any perceived relationship between two units.

We must emphasize at the outset the fact that these three terms characterize **subjective reactions** to facts rather than facts in themselves. The difference between a discord and a dissonance is especially a purely subjective one, a constantly changing one even for a single hearer. The more developed his power of relating apparently heterogeneous elements, the smaller the field of discords for any particular hearer. This power increases by mere habit to a considerable degree. We shall refer to it subsequently as that of identifying opposites; metaphysically it is the power of relating spirit to matter, the essential characteristic of the truly human Soul.

In order to penetrate more thoroughly into the meaning of the terms consonance and dissonance, we shall study them from two different points of view which we will precise by defining a consonance in the two following ways:

1. A consonance is the product of a relation between two musical units which is natural and easy to apprehend;
2. Also of a relation which is satisfying and self-fulfilling, thus static.

1. Consonance as natural and easily perceived relationship.

The simplest and most natural relation between human beings is that which arises from physical descent, the relation of kinship. This is the basis of the tribal order of society

founded on blood relationship, on the community of ancestor. Essentially rooted in the idea of self-multiplication, on the worship of the remote and quasi-divine Great Ancestor from whose seed (for instance remember the "Abraham's seed" of the Bible) the entire tribe descended, this type of social organization is not only the simplest and most natural, but the most easy to perceive. For it manifests a unity of type, physiological and psychological. Tribesmen are easily recognized by the similarity of physiological type, by their common features and traditions or customs as well. They are all patterned more or less after the same model; personal variations of the same racial motive. In them the individual self is of relatively little moment. What counts most of all is the racial tribal self; the self which is in and of the blood; thus an earth-born physical self, perpetuated by sex contact and through a community of simple earthly spontaneous emotions powerfully influenced by geographical surroundings, climate, telluric magnetism, etc.

Tribal order is an earth-born order whose seat of government is in the blood where the personal earth-born self of man is enthroned, an autocratic master. Bound to the soil of which it is in a definite sense the flowering, it is sanctified by a tribal religion worshiping a tribal god (the deification of the blood self, first as a totem — the animal self — then as the Creator of the universe — the divine Male or Father — the typical Jehovah) and usually propitiating by sacrifices, nature-deities or forces with which a certain type of alliance is established.

The tribal order is a consonant order and thus calls for a music which is essentially consonant and melodic, i. e. which is based on the unity of the self, working however as it may through a multiplicity of natural modes related to climatic and solar (that is, physical) changes.

What are the simplest and best consonances? Those furnished by the simplest relations or proportions; as for instance 2 to 1, 3 to 2, 4 to 3, etc. These simple proportions are those encountered in what is called the Harmonic Series, the series of fundamental and overtones, the simplest conceivable **arithmetic** series starting from the unity and generated by the constant addition of the unity to itself. If a fundamental vibrates 100 vibrations per second, its overtones will vibrate respectively 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, etc. vibrations per second. The intervals generated by such a series of overtones will grow more and more complex, more and more dissonant in the philosophical sense of the term. Yet they will always be quite easily reducible to the basic unity, to the common ancestor, that is the fundamental of the series.

In the Harmonic Series we have therefore the perfect archetype and symbol of the tribe, each octave of overtones corresponding in a way to a generation. The entire Series is in a strict sense the progeny of the fundamental, the Divine Ancestor (Abraham, Manu, etc.) and a definite flow of **sympathetic resonance** is manifest in all its members.

On the Harmonic Series was based all archaic music in the ages when the tribal order was all-dominant and pure. Fragments of the Harmonic Series constituted "modes" with a definite ethos, related to particular telluric or cosmic deities and basic blood-emotions, or psychic qualities, or magnetic organic centers. Such Natural Intonation music (as Miss

Schlesinger calls it) was almost exclusively melodic, a melody being the series of modifications through which a single tone or cry (vehicle of a single self) passes in its evolutionary progress through a cycle of changes, descent into and re-ascent from matter. This self singing out its many natural transformations was not, however, a personal individual self, but the tribal self. The tribesmen might chant together, but they chanted in unison, or perhaps at the interval of octave, men and women, the first differentiation.

For the man of a tribe the man of another tribe was the foreigner, the alien, the enemy. Within the tribe the relation man to man was consonant; from tribe to tribe the relation was dissonant if not discordant. Points of view were different as well as physiological characteristics. Relation could only be realized through various subterfuges: marriage or adoption, blood-transfusion that is — or else enslavement, a dissonant relation. To pass from one tribe to the other, that was really to modulate into another mode or tonality, a slow process attended with purifactory rites of all sorts, similar to the rigorous rules of scholastic modulating in European classical music.

The same was true when later the tribe grew into a nation; when caste or class or trade differentiations became set as barriers to relationship; when true Natural Intonation modes changed into European tonalities. A group of foreigners, or of men of different castes constituted a discord. We have the idea symbolized in the myth of the Tower of Babel, a significant one indeed; the Tower being in a sense the Harmonic Series which when pushed too far from the fundamental Earth produces discordant intervals unrelatable to the basic unity.

If, however, the tribal attitude is superseded by a more universalistic one which recognizes underneath all tribal, racial differences between human beings the common denominator or the common potential synthesis: MAN; if sex, color, race, languages, creeds appear only as secondary forms through which the one universal Human Self expresses itself; if the ideal of Universal Brotherhood become a fact lived and experienced fully, then we begin to **feel consonant** toward men of all races, colors and denominations.

This MAN, common principle or common integer of all men, is obviously not a physical entity; it is a metaphysical reality — not an abstraction however for the truly spiritual man, only so for the intellectual man of the Eighteenth century type. It is not earth-born but Mind-born, or in a sense spirit-born.

Now let us realize that the fact that we are able to see MAN underneath or beyond all apparently different men does not change these men, does not change our color or bodily characteristics. It changes our **subjective attitude** toward the relation between us and others. It remains a dissonant relation from the point of view of our earth-born self and our ears; but the meaning, the significance of this dissonant relation has changed. It appears to us as a new harmony; differences have become harmonized; out of chaos hatred and war, peace and unity have arisen; conflicts have been unified **in us** into serenity, tragedy has been overcome **in us** by the higher bliss of truly understood Nirvana, which is not annihilation but the subjective realization of eternal Harmony, of eternally **dissonant Harmony**. Not a natural, but a spiritual Harmony; not a basic harmony postulated as a fact

from the beginning, but rather Harmony being won every moment of time over conflict and misery, Harmony created out of transfigured suffering.

"If you had known how to suffer You would have power not to suffer."

(Gnostic Hymn of Jesus)

Peace reached through the harmonization of conflicts or rather of differences is obviously of a much richer kind than the peace which is the natural expression of a group of similarities. The latter is the peace of the womb, the former of free and responsible manhood. When Free Men come together on the basis of responsible action, are able to coordinate their different activities so that their group becomes organic and radiates creative spirit, power, health, then we have what we can call a true universal brotherhood — which really means an organism of human Souls.

"A universal brotherhood," wrote a great sage, "is an association of 'affinities' of strong magnetic yet dissimilar forces and polarities centered around one dominant idea." Ruskin also expressed the same idea as follows "It is the great principle of brotherhood not by equality, not by likeness, but by giving and receiving; the souls that are unlike and the nations that are unlike being bound into one noble whole by each receiving something from and of the other's gift and the other's glory." We find it again in M. P. Follet's wonderful book **The New State** (group-organization, the solution of popular government) which could be translated almost entirely into a treatise of musical philosophy by substituting the term **chord** for the term **group**: "Each must discover and contribute (to the group) that which distinguishes him from the others, his difference. The only use for my difference is to join it with other differences. The unification of the opposites is the eternal process."

In other words, a brotherhood is not composed of people who are alike, but of people who are different, of people who have one common purpose and ideal expressed in as many different ways as there are individualities. It is a type of organization which begins with differences, and the first result of differences: conflicts, but which transforms antagonisms into complementary activities; which, therefore harmonizes dissonances into what we have called **Synthetic Resonances**, exactly as colors spread upon a rotating disc appear white to the onlooker.

To see complements where apparently, to the earth-born man rooted in personal selfhood, there are enemies and superficially irreconcilable opposites: this is the task of the spiritual mind, relater of spirit to matter. It is the task of the true democratic spirit in politics; the task of the composer of dissonant music, and as well of the hearer thereof. For again let us emphasize the fact that dissonant music does not **solve** once for all the problem of unification, does not resolve dissonances into consonances. It propounds problems which the hearer must solve for himself subjectively. It tries to arouse in the hearer the sense of unity, the power to synthesize disparate elements. Music, as well as life spiritually considered, is not something done, to which we have but passively to respond. It is something being done. Its function is to generate in the hearer a **new faculty**, a new

sense of life. It emanates an energy which should stir in man the fire of true selfhood, the power to bring down the highest spirit into the lowest matter. It is always in the making, and the place where it is being made is not on the instrument but in the soul of the hearer. Likewise Democracy is not a static fact; it is a perpetual bringing forth of new powers, a perpetual transmutation of the physical order into the metaphysical order: a constant regeneration — or, if unsuccessfully accomplished, a constant degeneration.

Dissonant music is thus the music of true and spiritual Democracy; the music of universal brotherhoods; music of Free Souls, not of personalities. It abolishes tonalities, exactly as the real Buddhist Reformation abolished castes into the Brotherhood of Monks; for Buddhism is nothing but spiritual Democracy. All democratic units are free and independent; self-sufficient; yet all recognize the Law of the Group, which is in a sense their collective Higher Self.

Likewise in the true dissonant music which moves spirit-ward, what we have called **Syntonic Music**, all tones are free, independent, **living** realities and not intellectual abstractions; and they come together into vast groups according to cosmic laws of organization which, when recognized intuitively by the hearer, unify them into great brotherhoods of tones, great energetic seeds that grow and flower within the soul of the hearer and rouse life. Every man is his own unifier, and spiritual life is a constant integration of the disparate Many into the homogeneous One.

2. Consonance as Satisfying Relation.

The foregoing has shown already how the ideal of dissonant music negates that of static satisfaction and inertial peace. But let us study this point somewhat more closely.

Classical music is based on the principle of tonality. A tonality is constituted by the grouping of seven notes within the interval of an octave, each note of which has a definite place and fulfills a definite function in relation to the others. The intervals between these various notes are fixed; some are called consonant, because they present a character of finality; others are called dissonant because they must be resolved into consonant ones. Consonances therefore are static, dissonances dynamic. A dissonance is used in theory only as a transition between consonances. It indicates motion, and therefore emotion. As long as a dissonance is not resolved into a consonance suspense reigns. Fulfillment, satisfaction come as the consonance is sounded.

But is it music's purpose to procure satisfaction? This question brings us to the age-old problem of the hedonistic versus the tragic conceptions of Art. Is Art to bring us pleasure, or is it to help us to live a fuller, richer and thus more dynamic and tragic life? Is it to be a relaxation, an escape from life-problems ; or an energization and regeneration of our own vital forces that will enable us to face life with increased strength and to draw there from deeper meanings? If Life is eternal and motion unceasing, can a music be true to life which would end anywhere, or be fulfilled at any point?

For the **syntonist** who deals spiritually with dissonant harmony there can be no finality, no satisfaction at any point, therefore no **physical plane consonance**.

Dissonances are synthesized into harmonic resonances which are relatively consonant on the spiritual plane, i.e., in the subjective consciousness of the hearer. These higher consonances break again into higher dissonances. There is no definite finality to the process. It is really unending, like life itself.

Call this the glorification of Divine Unrest if you wish. Whenever the Soul loses its nature-born earth-born sense of relationship with the blood-fed personal selves and leaves caste, tribe, country and wanders as a mendicant in the quest of God or of the Grail; when it takes up the Crusade for the regeneration of the Jerusalem within, then follows tragedy, then loneliness and poverty. It is the tragic life, the sacred life: the life of rebirth. It leads through dissonances and emotional storms and purifying fire to Harmony and Light, synthesis of colors. This Light is that of the Self that shines within; not that of the physical sun.

To reach up to that synthetic Harmony means as well, if not most of all, the descent or incarnation of the Self. That symbolical yet actual assuming of the flesh by the spirit is really what a sacrament intends to represent: the archetype falling upon the man and regenerating him. Music can be courted for the pleasurable sensations it procures; but it may also be revered as a sacrament, as a true consecration, which means always a tragic happening, in the real sense of the term tragic.

But sacred music is not religious music. Religious music is that which "binds back" distressed souls, souls afraid to face the loneliness of the spiritual quest; it puts to sleep the little ones with glorious opium-like dreams. Sacred music is a stirring, exalting, regenerating power, burning up strong souls that have courage and vision, that are able to stand unafraid and say "yes" to all sufferings and all tortures, because of having the inner power to resolve all contradictions and all pain into a higher Harmony. Such music is the source of power, a kind of cosmic electricity.

The more intense the dissonances which have been harmonized, the more intense and powerful will be the tone-spark uniting the poles of the dissonant relation. A dissonant series of harmonies is like an electric battery; the tension generates energy. A musical composition is a form designed to release tone-energy. It is not intended to give pleasure, to satisfy and fulfill. Its purpose is to **work**. It is a kind of psycho-spiritual engine which works by creating currents of induction in the organism of the hearers attuned to it.

In other words sacred music is always magical music, the purpose of all magical incantations being to force down some Power (be it an elemental force or a Soul) into incarnation. Dissonant music which can be called "syntonio" is thus a symbol and a part of the true spiritual sacred life whose aim is essentially the calling upon the Self to take possession of the body once the latter has become purified.

Such music is not natural or spontaneous or earth-born. It does not belong to the tribal physical order of life, but to the metaphysical mental realm where Man is master of Nature, within and without. It does not belong to the sphere of culture proper, but to that of civilization.

Let us define these two terms: culture and civilization, in their historical and philosophical sense. By so doing we shall be able to get a somewhat different idea of the opposition of the two kinds of social-musical order: the consonant and the dissonant. (1)

If one studies from a world-wide point of view the evolution of the many races which, one after the other, have played their part in the pageant of humanity and disappeared, one comes to note that at a certain moment of the evolution of every race something takes place which can be considered the birth of the characteristic culture of that special race. That is to say, a time comes when, the physiological and psychical type of the race having reached a certain point of definiteness and condensation, the peculiar approach to life, the characteristic world point of view which belongs to that human type finds expression in cultural, i. e., social, artistic, mental-emotional forms. A culture is born which in time will grow, mature, crystallize and degenerate.

A culture is essentially a natural, spontaneous phenomenon. It has a basic relation to the soil wherefrom it sprang, to the type of nature-forms surrounding it. It is the flowering of life-experiences, of physical-emotional experiences, the conventionalized reaction of the race at large to such experiences, which really belong to the race rather than to any single human being. Cultural growth is therefore merely the prolongation of the race's physiological development, very much as the flower is the prolongation and transformation of the leaves.

We might also say that a culture is the cream of the race's daily experiences. It is inherent in every typical activity of the race, the very essence of such activities which assure the physical perpetuation of the race. It is born out of the creative joy of the man who has toiled well and sings out this joy resulting from the normal fulfillment of organic function — or else it is born out of the suffering caused by the inhibition of such natural functions when the race is subjected to social tyranny, misery and hunger. In both cases the reaction to life is immediate, direct.

However, a time comes when, as the result of the working of many forces, a sort of fermentation occurs within the race. Some men are born whose minds begin to question the natural laws, the instinctual reactions of the race; whose strongly individualized spirits break forth from the racial womb and whose visions reach to universal rather than geographical horizons. To the satisfaction and inertial peace of earth-born man, they oppose their feverish search for a ceaselessly evading Truth which does not belong to this or that type, to this or that race or continent, which being **true** must be permanent and not subject to modifications (or modulations) ; which thus cannot be born out of ever-changing natural sensorial experiences but needs be the manifestation of some metaphysical changeless reality.

Dissatisfied, wandering from place to place, questioning, denying, protesting against all set institutions whose holiness rests on mere physical-physiological foundations, they stir more and more minds. A sense of self-overcoming takes hold of the most advanced or the most restless men. It leads to the search for adventures, be these physical or metaphysical; to **the quest for gold or the quest for God**. Both quests lead to tragedy. The former

eventually gives rise to a mercantile class accumulating wealth, which builds cities; the latter to a class of spiritual seekers renouncing natural joys and the fulfillment of natural instincts, damming in their natural impulses so as to reach thereby eternal spiritual wealth, the possession of God: ecstasy, celestial beatitude, Nirvana, liberation from geographical, earthly, physiological bondage; for to them instincts and natural desires have come to mean bondage and animality.

The results of these quests are on one hand the big world-cities living by international trade, ceaselessly occupied with the extension of their markets, increasingly imperialistic and autocratic, feeding on the surrounding country which now has in a sense become the dull "province"; on the other hand communities of ascetics, of beings consecrated to a "higher life" — the natural life of the old culture-man being termed as a result the "lower life" of the senses. Both the big cities and the monasteries (or mystical brotherhoods, at times giving hospitality to both sexes) are essentially cosmopolitan. They are "cosmic" and no longer geographical. They are little cosmoi in miniature, either universal brotherhoods or world-fairs (turning soon into brothels) as the case may be; but always casteless, always beyond geographical and ethnological differentiation, a gathering up of various types brought together because of a common faith and worship, or because of a common craving, the craving for financial or intellectual wealth. Mind or the Soul thus supersedes Blood as a center of organization. The dissonant or companionate order takes the place of the consonant or tribal one: civilization overcomes culture, the main characteristic of civilization on the objective plane being both world-cities and monasteries (or brotherhoods).

Many thinkers of our generation, Spengler especially, consider civilization as being but the disintegrating phase of culture. But this is so only to the personal earth-born man, for whom civilization means the end of all that was dear and beautiful to him. Civilization is like the seed which begins to kill the plant the moment it develops within the plant. The seed is the changeless reality of the vegetable life; it reproduces itself constantly. It sacrifices itself in springtime so that the plant may be; and it destroys the plant from within from the time it is materializing again within the flower. Culture is the leaf and flower-aspect of the plant; civilization the seed-aspect, physical manifestation of the archetypal reality of the species.

Thus there is a fundamental conflict between culture and civilization; and this conflict is not between a living and a decaying stage of the same thing, but between two worlds of being, two fundamental attitudes to life, two different cosmic orders.

In terms of music world-cities produce what might be called generically Jazz, using the term in its widest sense as a world-phenomenon, not only as known today but as well as we would have found it in Alexandria or Byzantium for instance. Monasteries, or rather Gnostic brotherhoods (using also the term Gnostic in its general philosophical sense) produce the real Sacred Music, which later degenerates into religious music proper.

Jazz is the typical product of the world-city, of its feverish excitement and personal loneliness, of its confusion of types, styles and modes, of its alcoholic spirit (truly the product of the decay of the cultural fruit), of its mad craving for escape from the ugliness and mechanization of the city-life, the mob-life. It is thus the negative and materialistic

aspect, the shadow of the spiritual regeneration of earth-man into Mind-man, which takes place in the very midst of the age of cultural disintegration, in the city but not of the city, or to say truly THROUGH the city. The few strong Souls who accomplish such regeneration "save" a few who answer their call; they lead them to the sacred brotherhoods, real Arks of Noah in whom the spiritual elite of mankind escape the doom of the age of decay, of the Dark Ages, the Winter of the racial cycle. They become thus the **seeds** of what in time will be the next culture. They are the Preservers of life, of the Archetype of the Human Species; that is of Civilization, metaphysical and changeless, the true seed of MAN.

Dissonant music is thus seen as being the music of civilization, the music of MAN. As civilization opposes natural instincts, dams natural impulses in order to release power and mental energy, so dissonant music is based on the hindering of the natural flow of overtones, the basis of consonant music.

An analogy will make this point still clearer. Culture is like the little mountain stream bouncing beautifully from rock to rock, singing out its clear joy under the glorious shade of trees pushing further on the skyward impulse of the mountains. Civilization is like a vast artificial lake jailed in by huge dams, collecting all the little streams in its cold stillness interrupted only by the buzzing of the turbines generating electrical power, a power which is not, like the power of the sap in trees, an earthly impulse reaching up toward the physical sun, but which recreates the sun and conquers darkness for the greater work of men that are essentially minds, and masters.

This electric power is neither good nor bad, constructive nor destructive. It may be used for ethical or unethical purposes, to exalt or degrade mankind. It will be the one or the other according as the user is a selfish or a selfless being; according as he is an ordinary city-man or a consecrated spiritual being.

This is equally true of dissonant music. A dissonance is a **field of tension** out of which something emanates, what we have called synthetic resonance. This is really tone-energy, an energy unclassified as yet by modern science, but perhaps akin to what has been called by some **odic energy**, or perhaps nerve energy under certain conditions. At any rate it is power which can be used indifferently in a constructive or in a destructive way.

The typical city-music is meant to excite the physical and emotional nature of the city-man whose senses have been dulled or satiated by artificial and wasteful living; it must procure thrills and thus accelerates a truly disintegrative process. On the contrary, real Sacred Music fulfills a regenerative function. Truly enough regeneration may have to begin, and in a sense always must begin with some sort of destructive action; but the process as a whole is one of conscious deliberate transmutation.

It must destroy. It must burn, what? The shells of the past culture, the crystallizations of this once living reality which has now become a corpse: today, shells of European tonality, shells of dilettantism, of virtuosism, of this artificial mental science which is a denial of the true spiritual life that harmonizes spirit and matter and never denies the latter. All these, and many others, must be destroyed when then have reached a certain point of solidification. But the spiritual man, the man bent upon the reaching out toward rebirth,

toward metaphysical birth, is building while he destroys. The seed destroys the plant, but builds itself: the vehicle **Hamsa** for the higher archetypal life of the species.

We are facing therefore the world-wide problem of regeneration of musical substance, as well as of social substance. We are at the critical time when a sort of neutral point is reached: the seed point. The old culture is practically dying, is hardly more than a shell. Civilization is upon us. As we shall face it, so will we be led toward regeneration or degeneration.

The danger lies in the inheritance from the past; and this is very clear in the realm of contemporary music. For there among those who are working uncompromisingly along the line of dissonant music (which does not include the so-called neo-classicists) we find two main groups which can be said to be represented by two great musical figures: Scriabin and Schönberg. The former was the father, or we might say the mother, of what we have called **syntonism**, the spiritual attitude towards dissonant harmony. He was the first to discover the basic law of dissonant chord-building and his later works are filled with this regenerative mystic power to which, however, so few are able as yet to respond. Handicapped as he may have been by European tradition, yet the very essence of his music is non-European, non-cultural and truly **sacred**. A typical mystic reaching up to ecstatic union with the divine Self within, he stands at the threshold of the true music of MAN. Being a mystic he does not incarnate the more characteristic power of mastery. His was a feminine nature, the very fruition of the Russian race. But others will come to embody the other pole of the syntonism attitude.

Schönberg, the Austrian, is on the other hand a typical product of the European life and mentality. Beginning with a post-Wagnerian type of musical emotionalism he went down into the very abyss of cultural disintegration, of personal dissolution, that is to say, he expressed in his music the realm of the subconscious of which his compatriot Freud made such a striking, if usually misleading analysis — the realm of broken down feeling and neurosis, the realm that is to be compared to the soil of a forest in the Fall when masses of leaves are decaying and emanating a pungent fragrance, intoxicating and elusive. In his latest works, however, he has felt the need to give more cohesion to this strange substance by returning to the old scholastic European ideals of intellectual virtuosity. The result is a music which **looks** most interesting on paper, a sort of cross-word puzzle — obviously the end of a process, the shadow of the spirit of true civilization, feeding on the refuse and waste-matter of a cultural cycle whose hour of death has struck: anarchical music made coherent by an artificial, personal and intellectual system of regulations, instead of syntonism music, building its dissonant harmonies as **forms of power** through which the energy of Soul may be released.

We believe that America is the typical land of civilization; that is to say the land where the universalizing forces of humanity along the lines of mental and energetic development will in time be especially focused. It is a strong and fiery continent, a tragic continent; a continent built on the principle of dissonance we might say. The Rocky Mountains almost from South to North poles are not unlike a huge spine, dividing the continent into two great

magnetic regions of opposite polarities. America is the land of duality; thus it was called by the old Brahmins Patala or the Antipodes or hell, that is to say the abode of matter and mind, of all dual manifestations, in opposition to their land which was that of unity and spirit.

America is a land of energy, cruel and relentless at times (as when glorified in some Amerindian religions), tremendously vivifying at others. It is a land of mental magic — as we can see even today from the spread of mental sciences so-called, commercialized hypnotism, etc. In such a land music must needs become a strong power. It may become so for good or evil; therefore our heavy responsibility during this transitional period, this so-called Aquarian age, an age during which the powers of MAN, metaphysical powers, are to be stirred into enhanced activity.

Europe has bequeathed us a heavy and sombre heritage of materialism, despotism and false intellectuality. Even in her music and its tonalities one can feel the very soul of feudalism, of fortified separateness on one hand, of scholasticism on the other. If that is the mould into which the energy of this continent is to be poured dire results must ensue. The European microbe will become a colossal monster here. If in the contrary America feels her basic unity with the soul of ancient India, her polar opposite, then the real identification of the opposites may take place, Heaven and Hell may be married; and in a sense civilization and culture.

For if civilization is the seed and culture the plant and its green substance, it is easy to see that the two are really one, however opposed the magnetisms and life-directions of each. Likewise consonance and dissonance are but two poles of the same substance, of SOUND. The one ever penetrates the other, the one ever becomes the other. Music is the glorification of both.

1. Editorial Note: Rudhyar developed his views on Culture and Civilization fully in **Crisis, Culture and Creativity**; Quest Books, 1979.