Saint and Sinner

The years spent in Frankfurt saw the emergence of three marked developments in Percy Grainger's character and music. They were to become the nuclei around which the rest of his life and personality growth revolved and for this reason these years must be considered as the most crucial period of his life. In the order of importance given to them by Grainger himself, these three elements were: the development of unorthodox and colourful sexual appetites, the evolution of a highly idiosyncratic personal philosophy based on the concept of 'racial charactology', and the maturing of an individual musical style.

In one of the many rambling autobiographical essays written in his adult years, Grainger remarked: '[...] so by sixteen or seventeen I was already sex-crazy'. The psychological data lying behind this statement are not difficult to determine. The omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent mother figure and the weak, downtrodden and eventually outcast father figure made for an overwhelming identification with his mother. Rose was for Percy the symbol of fertility, wisdom, beauty and all-provision. This was complicated by the fact that his childhood had been starred of the element of play and companions of his own age, which led to an excessive degree of introspection. If pure Freudian methodology were to be applied at this stage, all might have augured for an adulthood of homosexuality. And this element was, indeed, to be ever present in his psychological make-up.

Experiences of cruelty, harsh discipline and punishment in both physical and mental forms were also part of his childhood and these served as the main direction pointers for the eventual channelling of his sexual urges. Allied to this kind of experience was the literary diet of his childhood:

Between seven & ten I read a lot of Homer & phrases like 'The javelin crashed through the shield' were always on my lips. Later on when I was ten or twelve when I read the Icelandic Sagas the thought of the battleaxe hewing from the shoulder to the waist gave me the greatest mental delights. In the meantime, I had read in Dickens passages such as the one where Nicholas [Nickleby] strikes the schoolmaster on the cheek leaving a livid streak—& all sorts of stories—one about a boy leaving home to join the circus & being whipped by the circus manager [...]. These passions were quite unconscious & I had no idea what caused me to shake with delight when I read such descriptions [...] each person must have some subject that fires him to madness, whatever it is. To put up with less seems crazy.2

It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that Grainger's 'home-ground' where sexual expression was concerned was to be flagellation. And by the age of sixteen he already begun auto-erotic experiments in sadomasochism. The whip, then, was no longer simply an instrument of anger or punishment; instead it had become a means of expressing his innermost urges.

He went on to write:

Out of this World of violence, war, cruelty & tragedy, my longing to compose arose. Many children are cruel to animals & many little boys harsh to little girls, but this fierceness wanes as they grow up. But I never grew up in this respect & fierceness is the keynote of my music [...]. What is all this unrelieved misery for? I haven't the faintest idea. Is it because our era (with its myriads of young men doomed to facing death in the sky & wholesale drownings in the sea) needs to have its injustices to the young brought home by art?3

And again:

The object of my music is not to entertain, but to agonize—to make mankind think of the agony of young men forced to kill each other against their will & all the other thwartments & torturings of the young.4

Art for Grainger, therefore, was partly a protest against the evil of the world, & this artistic protest came to be born through a strange metamorphosis of his awareness of what he always admitted as being the cruelty and evil in his nature. But he was forever confusing symbol with reality and once during the Second World War he said to a news reporter, 'I am

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2 'Grainger's Anecdotes'.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 During the Great War, Grainger started work on a piece later entitled The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart. He often described this as 'the first specifically conscientious obiter music' ever written.
Since the beginning, the character of the room has been one of simplicity. The furniture is minimal, the walls bare, and the overall atmosphere is one of quiet contemplation. The windows look out onto a serene garden, with the sound of water and birds providing a soothing backdrop. The lighting is soft and natural, enhancing the peaceful ambiance of the space.

As we move through the room, we can see the care and attention that has been put into every detail. The wooden floors creak softly underfoot, and the curtains billow gently in the breeze. The paintings hanging on the walls are of local landscapes, painted by a renowned artist from the region. Each piece tells a story of the land around us, and adds a touch of elegance to the room.

Throughout the house, the same attention to detail can be seen. The textures of the fabrics, the craftsmanship of the furniture, and the choice of colors all contribute to a sense of harmony and balance. It is clear that the occupants of this home have a deep appreciation for the beauty of simplicity, and have created a sanctuary where they can retreat from the hustle and bustle of the outside world.

The garden outside is a testament to this appreciation. Lush and green, it is a place of relaxation and tranquility, with paths winding through the trees and flowers blooming in vibrant colors. It is a fitting extension of the interior space, and a reminder of the beauty that can be found in the simplest of things.
In many regards, the user of our present "cultural" equipment is the same as any other child. He is a toy to be played with, an object of amusement and entertainment. Just as toys are designed for children, so too are the media of popular culture. The same principles that govern the design of children's toys apply to the construction of popular culture. In both cases, the user is encouraged to enter into a world of imagination and fantasy, a world that is safe and secure. This is why I refer to this period as "the age of innocence."
And later he wrote:

"If you think the sport's spirit the war..."
Letter from Einstein to A.A. Michelson, July 20, 1940.

Dear Mr. Michelson,

I was very much interested in your letter of April 11, 1940. I am glad to be able to express my thanks for the kind words.

Sincerely yours,

Albert Einstein
Create the Stronger Flexes His Muscles

[Image of a page from a book]