

On the Ending of Songs: Pan-Eroticism and Green-Abjectionists

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*"The old voice of the ocean, the bird-chatter of little rivers,
(Winter has given them gold for silver
To stain their water and bladed green for brown to line their banks)
From different throats intone one language.
So I believe if we were strong enough to listen without
Divisions of desire and terror
To the storm of the sick nations, the rage of the hunger smitten cities,
Those voices also would be found
Clean as a child's; or like some girl's breathing who dances alone
By the ocean-shore, dreaming of lovers."*

Robinson Jeffers

The name of the poem by Jeffers quoted above is Natural Music. It speaks of music heard with ears that are ready to hear it. Music of lovers by ocean shores, away from cities and nations. The question I have is, do we have ears to hear, and if you did, would you dance to it?

Music fills space, like a shadow emanating from the body that created it. I'd go as far as to say that music is the shadow a body casts on the ground of silence, through the harmonies it creates. Like a shadow, music affects the space and those within it, changing the relationship towards the environment. It is a quality to experience, changing the topography, while leaving it the same in appearance.

Philosopher David Abram has described our shadows as nights that manifests between our bodies and the ground we stand upon. We all know the night as the uncanny space we encounter daily, as this celestial body we stand upon moves through the cosmos. The night is a strange but familiar space and our shadows are nights that we bring with us, as we move upon this celestial body, as celestial bodies. There is a quality to a shadow that is wild and untameable – perhaps why what is taboo is so often hidden by shadows.

I stood in night and shadows a couple years ago, during the badger cull, in a small wood, located between 5 fields, at some time between 2 and 3 am, and for a moment stared at the moon and the stars. All around me I could hear the activity of those to which the woods are home. Me, and my companions (other hunt-saboteurs), had just been round the fields and we removed what had been left to trap those who live beneath the trees I was in that moment standing under. The shadows were strange but inviting, and there was a sense of freedom in that space, that would be impossible on the streets of a city, bathed in the lights from the buildings and cars. As we walked across the field that the car was parked in the entrance of, there was a sudden change in the air, when we heard the sound of a shot. And the musicality of that space fell silent to our ears.

Like how we all have experienced what it is for streetlight, lamplight or a computer screen to break the space that night brings, you and I will both have experienced what it is for a song to be broken. The light cuts through the space, like a knife slicing through the flesh of the moment. The ending of a song leaves space affected. The topography shifts and the quality of the space changes.

The philosopher Schopenhauer said, “*Music expresses only the quintessence of life and its events, never these themselves*”. As for the song I heard that night during the badger cull, it ended in the arms of those wishing to harmonise with it. It was a silence that screamed out and hung in our ears like tinnitus. What happens when the music, the quintessence of life, ends?

Climate change is the ending of a song but is music none-the-less. Climate change is an arrangement of discordant sounds, which fills this space like a shadow, as a piercing note that reverberates between and behind everything, psychically underneath everything and overpowering everything in body. The shadow envelops us and leaves us in an indefinite space, where boundaries are blurred, and routes are uncertain. This shadow is formed by the displacement of the suns light upon the body this culture has built. It is an uncanny melody, expressing the ending of one song and the beginning of another. It is sung almost entirely through inhuman means, flash flooding, hurricanes, wildfires and the warming of global temperatures, but we almost only try to listen through the human ears of science.

Climate change is the emergence of a geophonic symphony, that reverberates through primordial elemental resonating chambers, like the wind and the sea beating upon a cliff’s edge. The volume of this music is elevated through the instrumentation of anthrophonic melodies, which bring energy to the performance and influences the timbre created.

Other songs, fusions of biophonic and geophonic orchestral arrangements, whose shadows have not yet been enveloped by this space and so go unheard by those of us not close enough to hear, are being sung. They are beautiful melodies, whose temporal harmonies rise and fall with the sun and the moon, flowing like a river towards the sea, only to evaporate and crescendo upon the earth, through the eros of gravity, as rain. Like a free-form jazz performance, the artistry of this music is spontaneous. We bathe in the shadows these songs create, when we fall in love with the uncanny beauty they cast upon the ground.

There are other synthetic, dull, monotonous and discordant compositions, the sounds of the machines that are the instrument of the violation of the earth — Leviathan. These melodies surround the bodies they come into contact with, vibrating against and through them, as a violating force. The space instantly appears different, for the affect these shadows have on the light, the ground and the soundscape.

But what happens when the music ends? What happens when there are no shadows? Would it be for the blinding light, that joins the sound of the machines and overpowers the space; or would

it be the darkest space of the night, where all that can be heard is the last sounds of geophonic processes of the wind and rain?

We feel the sadness of thousands upon thousands, millions upon millions and billions upon billions of songs ending, within the multiplicity of compositions that is the sound of this singing and breathing earth. Of course, all songs come to an end, as is life, and songs of mourning are sung. But like the lights that deny the night the wild of the shadows, for the needs of the city streets and buildings, many (most) songs are being denied space to resonate and reverberate, in a way that is an interruption, rather than an end.

What would it mean for us to join those biophonic and geophonic melodies being denied and to sing along? We sing and dance almost entirely to anthrophonic music, as we are almost entirely interested in the instrumental machinery of Leviathan. What would it mean for us dance to their primordial music? The philosopher Nietzsche said, *“And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music”*. Maybe to dance in the music of the inhuman shadows is to be mad or insane, to those who listen with human ears.

If when we breathe, we offer ourselves to the world through exhaling and draw the world in through inhaling, perhaps we inhale the songs of the world we are immersed within and are extensions of. They would then get drawn into our bodies and become aspects of the compositions we resonate. Perhaps when breathing in the shadows, the strangeness of that uncanny space enters into us. Would that familiar, but dark, space be anything but insanity to those who hide from their own shadows, as the songs they are?

My experience is that to dance to non-anthrophonic songs can only be insanity to most within this culture, including most “radicals” (as most “radicals” will only sing anthrophonic songs) – as biophonic and geophonic music does not come from this culture. This is mirrored in the words of anarchist poet Renzo Novatore – *“(b)ecause, beyond all slavery and every dogma, we saw life dance free and naked”*. To dance within the shadows, with the uncanny, away from the street light and other lights (of God), is to Be-in a space that is beyond(-as-infront-behind-above-underneath-and-between) slavery and dogma.

We’ve moved with the music of the song of anthrophony, the machine of Leviathan, the orchestral arrangements (and rearrangements) of this culture. We’ve done this through much of our lives – for many of us most. We know the compositions well, through their mechanical reproduction. We have lived and live within the instruments they resonate through. The sound of a car, or computer’s hard drive working, is more familiar to us than the sound of the sea, or foxes calling in the night. The voices of scientists, politicians and priests draw most of us in more, as they sing the anthrophonic songs we have been raised listening to. When the birds cry out in the morning most don’t listen to what it is they sing, and because when do not listen, we cannot dance to their songs.

Rather than continuing with the mechanical reproduction of this boring choreography, let’s dance and be seen as insane by those who can’t hear the music!

This is something I have sought to do throughout my process of rewilding. I have danced naked under the shadows cast by trees, to the songs of birds and bugs, who danced naked with me. I have stood on the side of hills and felt the wind, as geophonic music, against my body, and cried out in song, becoming a small part of the composition of the melody. These would be moments of madness to anyone who only listens to anthrophonic music, who only appreciates the inhuman for what it brings to the song of humanity – they felt mad first time I did it.

Music is carried upon the air, as shadows flow through, landing upon the body of the earth. Anarchists who embraced naturism, after(/while) witnessing the changes that the industrial revolution brought to the world-as-they-were-thrown-into-it, found the air less beautiful for the anthrophonic melodies that were being carried through the atmosphere — *“(t)he air is poisoned by chemical effluents and factory smoke ... The water is poisoned by the refuse of the cities and the runo from the elds carries along the stench” Emile Gravelle*. The anthrophonic melodies, contrasted with the biophonic and geophonic melodies they loved, led to their position of — *“The Naturists want the Earth to return to the state of Nature, namely, natural life without cultivation, total nature” Emile Gravelle*.

Some might treat the naturists as committing a form of naïve-dualism, where, by believing in the myths of civilisation, they ascribe to the notion that civilisation has managed to build(/compose) a space where nature-is-not — the anthrophonic song triumphing over Being (something the shadow of climate change is placed to destroy all notion of). Whether or not they did or didn’t hold this perspective cannot be known, and seems irrelevant to me, if we place the message they brought with them not in the context of embound space, but as different songs — geophonic, biophonic and anthrophonic — being sung, within the same acoustic space. The naturist-anarchist position seems best summed up as a fierce and defiant love/desire to dance within geophonic and biophonic music — *“Let us live in, love, experience and protect Nature, but let’s not deify it, or idolize it or raise temples to it or found a new religion based on dogmas suppressed by free minds; let’s struggle for the existence of natural laws, the only laws we accept! And we will be happy, men and women both, for life will be Joy and Happiness and the Earth may be a Paradise and the present-day social Hell will have disappeared with the Civilization—use- less, vile and disgusting—that created it. Down with Civilization! Long live Nature!” Henri Zisly*.

I share in Zisly’s desire not to deify “nature”. Deifying “nature” makes an Other, that is at a distance — and you can only dance where you are. Paganism, as far as I have encountered it, seems an anthrophonic song about geophonic and biophonic songs, that seeks to illuminate the shadow of the music it sings about. This has left me in a strange space, given how drawn I feel towards hylozoic and panpsychist metaphysics, regarding the energy of Life/mindedness as a basic property of matter, which is very similar to the pantheistic beliefs of pagans, deep ecologists and Gaia theory advocates I read and pagans who read me, but feel an aversion towards paganism. What I feel drawn to, and what dancing to the music Jeffer’s, Nietzsche, Zisly and so many others who had/have ears to listen to means (or at least appears to mean), is pan-eroticism. (While paganism/pantheism seeks to illuminate and make clear through spirituality, pan-eroticism dives into the shadows, as an uncanny space, and enjoys the mystic-beauty as a space of uncertainty.)

When writing on pan-eroticism, anarchist writer Feral Faul (/Wolfi Landstreicher) wrote — *“(w)e want to be their lovers, to join in their beautiful, erotic dance. It scares us. The death-dance of civilization freezes every cell, every muscle within us. We know we will be clumsy dancers and clumsy lovers. We will be fools. But our freedom lies in our foolishness. If we can be fools, we have begun to break civilizations chains, we have begun to lose our need to achieve. With no need to achieve, we have time to learn the dance of life; we have time to become lovers of trees and rocks and rivers. Or, more accurately, time cease to exist for us; the dance becomes our lives as we learn to love all that lives. And unless we learn to dance the dance of life, all our resistance to civilization will be useless. Since it will still govern within us, we will just re-create it.”* I know that I am a clumsy lover of wild-Being, as I move across the body of the earth, casting shadows on the ground, trying to

listen to the songs around me. I know that before madness and insanity, I am a fool, desperately seeking the beauty of the shadows I am throwing myself into.

The sensation of paneroticism is something entirely different from the nature-spectacles of documentaries that are little more than anthrophonic pornography of “nature”, where the relationship is entirely alienated as there is no positivistic-sensual experience of those biophonic and geophonic spaces to dance within. Paneroticism occurs, instead, in those iconoclastic spaces, where you find yourself naked within the world. Where “nature-porn” offers serious scientific information, singing anthrophonic songs of “nature”, paneroticism is a space of foolish joy to be in dancing to different songs.

The ideology of most within eco-discourse – especially “Greens” – is one of abject seriousness, framed in a form of Realism chained to the notion of *realpolitik*. “Is that realistic, really?” or “how much can you really accomplish by ...” is the go-to response for any idea or action, that seeks to go further than attempting to appeal to law-makers. This ideology is one I call green-abjectionism – i.e. green-abjectionists practice green-abjection, which is the act of casting off(/rejecting) ideas and actions, within ecological discourse and revolt, that do not fit within the Realist metaphysical-paradigm of *realpolitik*, out of disgust for not singing the anthrophonic song.

Green-abjectionism casts aside biophonic and geophonic music, in favour of the realisation of the anthrophonic. In doing so they say, “this is not me; I do not stand in this shadow; I will not dance to this music”. Within post-structuralist and psychoanalytic discourse, the abject is that which is found to be repulsive/disgusting and is so rejected as part of semiotic-identity.

There is nothing of foolishness and pan-eroticism within green-abjectionism, only the seriousness of the synthetic dull, monotonous anthrophonic music of these systems. Green-abjectionism relies entirely on the instruments of Leviathan and so can only reproduce the same serious melodies that have filled this space, whose lights have cast the shadows we have come to know as “radical” space. The absurd and foolish liminal spaces of the inhuman, abhuman, post-human and non-human spaces, whose pan-erotic lycanthropic dances seek the melodies of the biophonic and geophonic music, must be abjected, in the name of progress and sustaining the violence of this culture, as *species-being*.

Rather than the reductionism of scientific-ecology (a mirror image within the left of scientific-socialism – particularly with regard to social-ecology) that naturalises “humanity” (elevating humanity above its image of “nature”), or the ritualistic spiritualist-pantheism of deep ecology that humanises “nature” (elevating the image of human in “nature” above “humanity”) – both serious tasks – the feral dances pan-erotic weird-ecology are ludic processes that displace all authority, leaving everything as absurd, indefinite and confusing. This is somewhat similar to the *laughter of ecognosist* that philosopher Timothy Norton uses in his concept of Dark Ecology; where ecological awareness, alongside the horror, guilt and sadness, a sense of ridiculousness, that is weird and beautiful, manifests and everything becomes a great big cosmic joke – *green nihilism* as I have previously described this space. All sense of being able to control the melodies of the biophonic and geophonic, of being able to use the anthrophonic melodies to prevent the song of climate change from being sung, or of being able to form any totalising sheet music or choreography, collapse into absurdity, hilarity and a beautiful pessimism, that leaves you dancing to the music, trying to sing with it and laughing, in pan-erotic love of its beauty.

The actions of groups like Extinction Rebellion, whose recent activities have brought eco-pessimist topics, such as the likelihood of near-term mass-starvation, to mainstream discussion,

are found to be tragi-comic acts, desperately trying to save the anthrophonic music and its instruments – the machine of Leviathan – by affecting the composition, to quell the fury of the geophonic melodies of climate change. Revolution, as an anthrophonic composition, with all its seriousness and scientific-methodology, becomes a ridiculous act, where the “revolutionaries” are mirror images of corporate-punk bands, who become co-opted into the system they are attempting to challenge. Struck singing the songs of realpolitik, leftists tie themselves to green-abstractionism, unable to imagine anything other than the meliorist rhetoric about civilisation’s progress.

The Hegelian optimism towards the concept of the dialectic, as Marx envisioned, is one of the primary reasons for this lack of willingness to dance to non-anthrophonic music. Marx’s love for the sound of an architect’s design being built, over the sound of bees buzzing, as they build their hive, is upheld within the space of green-abstractionism. Deviating from the teleological trajectory has got to be worse, because, as optimists, they know that this progress is the best of all possible worlds. As such, any music that is not the anthrophonic song has got to be worse and must be cast aside.

This is why paneroticism, or paganism/pantheism will always seem mad or foolish to green-abstractionists.

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