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# Papers

Explorations into Children's Literature

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## **‘Something of You that You Couldn’t Tell Me with Words’: Music, Affect, and Social Change in Gregory Maguire’s *I Feel Like the Morning Star* and Emma Trevayne’s *Coda***

Elizabeth Braithwaite

### **Music and Revolution**

‘Music’, laments eighteen-year-old Anthem in Emma Trevayne’s *Coda* (2013), ‘used to be a voice against injustice. And now it *is* the injustice’ (p. 89, emphasis in original). The capacity of music to change people’s psychological and physiological states is a major part of how the dystopian authorities in the post-disaster society into which Anthem was born keep control over their citizens. This ability that music has to influence people individually or as a group is also an important mechanism, however, in the overthrow of those same authorities. Music as a tool for facilitating action against injustice is also explored in Gregory Maguire’s *I Feel Like the Morning Star* (1989), from which the quotation in the title of this paper is taken. Various real-world examples also show how music has been closely entwined with social revolution, such as in the overthrow of British monarch James Stuart in the seventeenth century (see Harol 2012, p. 583), the twentieth-century civil rights movement in America (see Friedman xv), the 2011 toppling of President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia, and also the removal from authority of Husni Mubarak in Egypt (see LeVine 2012, p. 794). Anthem’s statement about music as a voice against injustice invites the reader to see the young man’s struggle against the repressive Corporation as part of a long line of revolutions in which music has played a major role. Both *I Feel Like the Morning Star* and *Coda* show how tonal-rhythmic patterns coded by a given culture as ‘music’ (see Elliot 2000, p. 85) can inspire social and individual change by bringing people closer to a sense of who they intuit themselves to be and by facilitating intrapersonal and interpersonal communication at a level deeper than words, which positions those involved to challenge the stultifying and life-threatening dystopia in which they live.

### **Surviving the Disaster without Really Living?: *I Feel Like the Morning Star* and *Coda***

Both novels are set in dystopias after major, world disasters, which in the case of *I Feel Like the Morning Star* was atomic cataclysm approximately five years before the narrative begins. Most of the action in the novel takes place within the Pioneer Colony, a subterranean, highly sophisticated bunker designed to support and protect a limited number of people in the event of global catastrophe. Life in the Colony is tightly controlled both through strict rules and the sedative drug larmer. Three teenagers, Sorb, Mart, and Ella, eventually secretly decide to leave the Colony, taking the children of the Pioneer with them. Ella was a keen musician before the disaster, and her time spent with the hidden piano, as well as her secret singing lessons with former opera singer Mem Dora, help Ella come to the point when she can help lead the children to safety.

*Coda* also takes place in a highly controlled dystopia. When medical supplies ran low in the pulse bomb war some 100 years earlier, it was discovered that music could help alleviate pain. The dystopian ruling authority, known as the Corporation, keeps power by forcing children at the age of three to be implanted with a computer chip in their brain, which enables the Corporation to record people's memories and to control them by dint of addictive 'encoded' music. It is illegal to make music other than that produced by the Colony, but teenage Anthem is a keen and talented musician who meets with an underground (literally and metaphorically) band of musicians. They use their music secretly to inspire others who wish to rebel, and eventually overthrow the Corporation.

### **Music, Affect and Dystopia**

These young adult novels suggest that music's ability to influence social change happens largely at the level of affect. Drawing on the work of Virginia Demos, Anna Gibbs (2001) defines affects as 'muscular and glandular responses which, when linked with thought, become feelings able to be elaborated into the more complex blends of affects which comprise emotion.' Affect is thus embodied, as indeed is music, which 'can *cause* or *induce* a listener to actually feel the bodily sensations that are interpreted as distinct emotions such as pride, sadness, joy' (Tan et al. 2010, p. 246). The embodied nature of music is crucial to its capacity to enhance human agency, both at the individual level and in larger groups. As Anne Torkelson (2012) notes, 'Throughout history, music has affected our individual emotions, touched our souls, shaped our characters, influenced our actions, and brought people

together' (pp. 39–40). Silvan Tomkins (1984) identifies nine types of affect, of which *interest* or *excitement*, *enjoyment* or *joy* are the two types most often associated with the music in which the protagonists are voluntarily involved (p. 167). The notion of voluntary involvement in music is important here, because drugged and encoded music is also used as a form of control in *Coda*, and in *I Feel Like the Morning Star* the publicly available music is limiting and unsatisfying for the protagonist.

Both novels are dystopias in that each text outlines 'a non-existent society [...] considerably worse than the society in which [the] reader live[s]' (Sargent 1994, p. 9). However, they are critical dystopias 'in that they do not give up on hope' (Bradford et al. 2008, p. 139). Music plays a key role in the construction of that hope, especially in the way it enables the young protagonists to gain increased agency within the tightly-controlled society. In *I Feel Like the Morning Star* the relationship between Ella and her singing teacher, the former professional singer Mem Dora, helps Ella to learn more about her own deceased parents, her past, and ultimately her sense of who she really is. Music for Mem Dora is inextricably linked with her own sense of self, her kidnapped child, and her memories of her dead husband who had also been a political activist, as well as being intensely political for Mem Dora herself (Maguire 1989, pp. 224–25, 197). She had been a protest singer before the disaster, which included singing against the fallacious promise that the Colonies could somehow save everyone in the event of a war (p. 197), and the Council members wanted her to sing in the Pioneer Colony to prove that 'there was no dissension' (p. 228). The song 'Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child', which Mem Dora sings as Ella and the other young people escape, is generally regarded as having originated as a spiritual sung by slaves (see King and Ripley 2013) and is particularly apposite for Mem Dora, who is herself the descendant of slaves (p. 122). It is also true for all the inhabitants of the Colony who are 'a long, long, long way from home' (p. 253), in the sense of being far away from a place where they can do more than simply survive from day to day.

Both novels describe the physiological and psychological effects of music, whether in purely instrumental pieces or in songs. Yet they differ in how they address the function of music in their respective societies. In *I Feel Like the Morning Star*, music has a relatively small role in the society. There is an incompetent choir, and music lives in the individual memories of citizens, such as the elderly Mem Bettina who sings her mother's songs from the farm on which she grew up as a way of keeping herself sane and amused while undertaking the hard

and tedious job of harvesting food for the Colony (pp. 157–9). Ella herself has a sense that music is one of the few private commodities in the Colony. She thinks that ‘if music couldn’t be your own language, from and to yourself, then what could?’ (p. 34). For both characters, music is a way of holding onto their past and a sense of their own identity.

*I Feel Like the Morning Star* is relatively unusual in its close descriptions of the theoretical structure of the music, discussed below, and *Coda* is also unusual in that music plays a pivotal role in controlling the population by dint of the encoded tracks to which people are compelled to listen. Nonetheless, both texts affirm the capacity of music entwined with affect to move, control, and inspire both listener and performer. Recently, a number of scholars have noted the importance of music in the popular *The Hunger Games* trilogy (Torkelson 2012; Gant 2012). However, unlike Katniss Everdeen, Ella in *I Feel Like the Morning Star* and Anthem in *Coda* see music as crucial to their lives and sense of self from the beginning. In contrast to Katniss’ initial belief that music is ‘somewhere between hair ribbons and rainbows in terms of usefulness’ (Collins 2008, p. 211), music in both Maguire’s and Trevaune’s novels is an integral part of the protagonists’ lives from the beginning of the narrative. Music for Ella and for Ant frees them to develop their own sense of agency and help others escape or overthrow the dystopian authorities.<sup>1</sup>

### **Dancing about Architecture? The Problem of Writing about Music**

Exploring the effects of the embodied, contagious nature of affect and music is one of the key ways in which both Maguire and Trevaune deal with the challenge of depicting in words the effects of music. To quote the variously-attributed phrase, ‘writing about music is like dancing about architecture’ (see Klein 2005, p. 1). How, then, is it possible to write about music, to immerse a reader within a character’s musical experience, simply by using words? Marie Thomson and Ian Biddle (2013) speak of ‘the question shift[ing] from “what does music mean?” to “what does music do?”’ (p. 19), and both novels deal with the problem of representing music in words by describing it in terms of how it makes people feel and how it encourages them to behave.

Noga Applebaum (2010) notes that music in science fiction for young readers often expresses the protagonists’ ‘inner selves’ (p. 65). For both Ella and Anthem, music resonates metaphorically and literally with their core sense of their identity, a sense that is fragmented

in the dystopias in which they live. Carrie Hintz and Elaine Ostry (2003) write that, '[i]n dystopias for young readers, conformity kills individual creativity, resulting in a dull, oppressive society' (p. 8). For Ella, the opportunity to play the piano is, as her friend Mart says, 'something of you that you couldn't tell me in words'. Although, appropriately, Ella doesn't respond in words to Mart's comment, she is 'chilled that he could read her so well' (Maguire 1989, p. 125). At the same time, she finds it difficult to play, having been so long without music, this 'inner voice that had been so long denied that it was now almost mute' (p. 62). As with *Coda*, there is a sense that music expresses something of a person that cannot be expressed in verbal discourse, reflecting DeChaine's (2002) rhetorical question, 'How can I hope to bring together the depth, sensuality, and power of this affective experience in mere language?' (p. 81), where language implicitly refers to words. When Ant plays with his band he thinks, 'Music. This is normal. Right now, right here, I know who I am. My body moves without conscious orders from my brain, a link to melody and rhythm that runs in my blood' (Trevayne 2013, p. 232). Music expresses physically who and what Ant intuitively feels himself to be.

The bodily effects of music are therefore important in both texts, and in *Coda* the embodied nature of music was the catalyst for it to become a form of social control. The encoded music produces physical and psychological addiction, but the unencoded – and illegal – music that Anthem and his band create is also described in terms of its effect on the body. For example, Ant describes how the '[s]tale, ordinary air transforms to song in my lungs, a cloud of warm air that spreads out from my chest and sets my limbs buzzing' (p. 28), thereby showing how the music he plays by choice sets him free, even briefly, from the stultifying life he leads in the dystopian society. He later describes how 'instruments come in one by one and I inhale, my pulse setting itself to Mage's beat' (p. 59), showing how his body responds to the music beyond his conscious control. For Ella in *I Feel Like the Morning Star*, her memory of a melody from Goringham's *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra* is described as 'beating and whipping' (Maguire 1989, p. 248) as she considers escape, and her recollection of the middle section of Gustav Holst's *Jupiter* calms her. George Steiner (1989) writes that music is simultaneously 'cerebral in the highest degree' and 'somatic, carnal and a searching out of resonances in our bodies at levels deeper than will or consciousness' (p. 217), which both Ant's and Ella's experiences demonstrate. In other words, music is both intellectual and embodied: it can affect the mind and the brain, and also the body, and often not in the way that a listener or performer chooses, whether it be a person's pulse adjusting to that of the

music, as Anthem describes above, or as a means of calming a person in a moment of great challenge as it is for Ella as she helps lead the escape from the Pioneer Colony.

### **Music and Embodiment**

This notion of embodiment is particularly important in young adult dystopian fiction. In dystopias adult authorities seek to control both mind and body of the adolescent, and thus the process of physical maturation (especially sexual development) is particularly challenging for the young adult (Day 2014, p. 76). Michel Foucault (1977) writes that '[a] body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed or improved' (p. 136), and both societies seek to control the individual bodies of their citizens and the social body as a whole in order to prevent rebellion. This control is particularly obvious in Ant's job in *Coda*, where he contributes energy from his body to the Grid to keep society functioning, a job which is likely to take years off his life (p. 25). In *I Feel Like the Morning Star*, the authorities exert psychological control through the sedative drug larmer and the strict regulations that restrict freedom of movement around the Colony. Music enables the protagonists to challenge how they are being subjugated and violated since it heightens and sharpens awareness of both the physical and the social body in positive ways that bring about agency, and thus can be a tool for revolution.

Balaka Basu, Katherine Broad and Carrie Hintz (2013) note that '[t]he YA dystopia's rigid and repressive regimes are often enforced through the enslavement and silencing of citizens, and several methods are used to achieve this' (p. 4). In *I Feel Like the Morning Star*, strict rules, sedation, and the silencing of dissidents via the 'lisopress' (a kind of electro-chemical lobotomy) keep the population docile and disinclined to question the status quo. As Ella suggests, it is no coincidence that almost fifty per cent of the teenage population within the Colony have been subjected to the lisopress (p. 128): 'Maybe kids are lisopressed because they're still brave enough to fear, or antsy enough to dream' (p.131). Hagar (2012) also notes that '[t]he monotonous sterility of the underground setting and the lethargy of its inhabitants contrast strongly with the inquisitiveness and courage of the [central] teenagers' ( p. 293). In this regard, music is particularly important for teenage Ella because it enables a link with her past as well as giving her courage for the future. When Mart shows Ella the hidden piano, she responds, 'This is like a miracle. It's as good as going home, or almost' (p. 24). In *Coda*, the encoded music that causes physiological and psychological dependence, as well as strict punishments for people who disobey the rules, such as rendering dissidents deaf, keeps most

of the population acquiescent. As Ant says, ‘these days, they just need our ears to keep us in line’ (Trevayne 2013, p. 40).

Because of the capacity of music to draw people together in both a physiological and a social sense, the two texts also suggest that music can bridge the problem of the controlling dystopia and the potentially out-of-control adolescent body. The body of an adolescent is in a liminal space, as many writers have noted. Roberta Seelinger Trites, for example, talks of ‘adolescents’ extreme anxieties about their physical bodies’ (2000, p. 149). Music enables this to be mitigated. In an early scene in *Coda*, during which Ant has been playing with his band, he says:

I’m part of an intangible hugeness. We are all connected, united, looking to each other for cues and playing our parts. A dance, but here my mind is mine and I control every movement. (p. 28)

Ant’s physical body is controlled in the early part of the novel through his contributing energy to the Grid, but his mind, and the band of which he is part – a musical body, so to speak, as well as a type of social body – are controlled not by the dystopia but by the goals of the band and by the music itself. His experience of himself as both an individual and part of a group shows a further way in which music enhances agency and intersubjectivity. His experience can therefore be seen as an example of what Stephen Malloch and Colin Trevarthen (2009) term ‘communicative musicality’ (p. 4). Musicality, they explain, is ‘an expression of our human desire for cultural learning, our innate skill for moving, remembering, and planning in sympathy with others that makes our appreciation and production of an endless variety of dramatic temporal narratives possible’ (pp. 4–5). Thus for Malloch and Trevarthen, any sympathetic interchange has musicality about it. Ant’s description highlights the way in which he is open to others and is aware that they are open to him, in a dance-like interchange that creates something bigger than the individuals involved.

Playing music thus enables Ant to connect with other people, while also retaining his sense of self. Karen Coats (2012) explains that ‘when we feel uneasy or at odds in our emotional register, we can use our bodies to change our feelings, either by making ourselves look good, or by doing something, [. . . such as] performing music [. . .], that makes us feel more aligned with our ideal image of ourselves’ (p. 121). For Ant, making ‘real’ music, as opposed to the controlled, drugged music of the Corporation, allows him to feel closer to his true self and to those around him. Ant also says of the band that ‘[t]he only thing we have going for us is that

we sound *real*' (p. 108, emphasis in original). The repeated use of the term 'real' in relation to unencoded music – some eleven references within the novel – highlights the difficulty of trying to put into words the effect of what music actually is. The closest Ant gets to defining real music is when he says 'I know what real music is. Untainted sound, the pure beauty it is supposed to be' (p. 35). This calls upon a discourse of nature as linked with beauty, in contrast to the technology through which the Corporation controls its citizens.

### **'Communicative Musicality' – Drawing People Together**

Linde Wotton (2012) writes that 'communicative musicality is also seen as the basis of group cohesion, and as such, contributes to human survival through social grouping' (p. 50). Although for Malloch and Trevarthen, and Wotton, 'communicative musicality' refers to interactions not all of which would not fall into a more conventional definition of music (such as verbal communication), the communicative nature of sonic events which are culturally coded music plays a key role in the capacity of Ella and Ant to resist dystopian power.

In addition to communicative musicality, one of the key ways in which music brings people together and brings about social change is through the spreading of affect. Gibbs (2001), for example, writes that 'bodies can catch feelings as easily as catch fire', and Thrift (2008) notes that 'affect spreads, sometimes like wildfire' (p. 235). 'Bodies' in this context is understood to mean the human body, the social body, and the crowd body. The importance of the social also reinforces the link between music and affect for, as Jeanette Bicknell (2009) writes, '[m]usic's attraction and power over us [. . .] stems from its elemental social character. [. . .] Any so-called 'private' experiences of music are derivative, secondary, and carry a social meaning' (p. viii). In both novels, the private musical experience of the protagonist, or one shared only with another individual or small group, becomes public in the sense of challenging or escaping the dystopia. In *Coda*, the revolution is brought about through involvement in unencoded music, which begins as a private experience for Ant and his fellow band members, and gradually draws more people into the (literally) underground revolution. Ant explains that they will use 'unencoded music as a way of gathering, spreading the word somehow' (p. 88). The contagious nature of the unencoded music is described in a range of ways, such as 'the single, many-headed creature on the dance floor' (p. 126), the 'hypnotic' nature of the music, which 'flows over the audience', and the way in which the crowd 'mov[es] to [Anthem's] songs' as if it were a single being (p. 112). This is not the kind of indoctrination or false unity that the Corporation seeks to instil in the populace, but natural,

communicative oneness, brought about through the physiological and psychological effects and affects of the music.

Music as contagion in *I Feel Like the Morning Star* is most obvious when Ella and her friends lead the children out of the bunker. Ella has various pieces of music playing in her head that assist her in leading the children out, and the melody is described as ‘contagious’ (Maguire 1989, p. 250). Mem Dora provides a distraction by breaking into song as they escape. The adult members of the Colony are ‘mesmerised’ by her singing (p. 252), with the officious Mon Conway finally showing ‘penitence and longing’ (p. 253). Mon Conway is only a few years older than Ella, and his descent into the conforming nature of officialdom has shown the possible fate of Ella and Mart unless they escape the dystopia. Mem Dora’s singing has seemingly stripped away the façade of adulthood assumed by Mon Conway and he senses through the music the cost of his choice to conform.

### **Music, Nature, Memory and Relationships**

Both texts also present music associated with nature, positive memory, and nurturing relationships. In *I Feel Like the Morning Star*, Mem Bettina, who sings songs from her farming district, cannot remember the name of the district, ‘just it is home’, and the song that she sings was a favourite of her mother’s (p. 158). This link with music and a pleasant childlike state reflects Luigi Longhin’s (2011) assertion that:

[T]he unconscious meaning of music can be understood in terms of its ability to recoup the affective world of both the pre-natal stage, that is, the ‘paradise lost’, and the post-natal stage, in that music has the function of representing our emotional life in terms of a symbolic language. (p. 277)

The connection between music and childhood is particularly obvious in *Coda* when people hear unencoded music for the first time. As he looks at their faces, Anthem thinks that ‘it’s like when I watched Alpha and Omega [his younger siblings] learn to walk, their tentative amazement at this *thing* which had never been available to them before’ (Trevayne 2013, p. 115). The connection between music, memory, childhood, and nature is especially obvious in the final scene of *Coda* which is set in a ‘warm, soft’ park that is ‘hailed in mist’ (p. 307) in which Ant sits with his young siblings, and his girlfriend Haven, who has been punished by having been made deaf. Haven’s ability to experience the vibration of the music by placing her hand between the guitar that Ant is playing and his body emphasises the importance of embodied music. Ant is acutely aware of the generational musical link between his mother, a

talented violinist, himself, and potentially his younger siblings: ‘Music – real music – runs down the curve of my mother’s violin bow and along my guitar strings and maybe, maybe, into their veins’ (p. 307). The book concludes with the interconnection between music, new life, and nature:

My fingers find the frets easily, effortlessly, and each plucked note is light, breezy – a single leaf on one of the nearby trees. [. . .] I run out of songs I want to play and keep going, making up anything that sounds like the sunshine, the warmth of the day, the quiet knowledge of freedom.

No one stops me. (p. 308)

The improvisatory nature of Ant’s music provides a powerful contrast to the life-denying control of the Corporation.

Similarly, in *I Feel Like the Morning Star*, the empowering musical experience of Ella in creating music stands in sharp contrast to the coldness around her. As with *Coda*, music is legally available in the post-disaster society, but not music likely to contribute to personal agency. Ella refuses to join the choir because the conductor is incompetent and is secretly mocked by the adults while the children fool around. The titles of the songs sung by the choir also suggest a naive attempt to cling to the past: ‘Peace Comes Once a Year’ and ‘Brightly Burning’. Notably, however, the music itself is not described, which is in keeping with the depiction of music as a tool for freedom, deep interpersonal communication, and self-expression, all of which the Colony represses. Ella says, ‘I don’t want to make fun of music. I want it to be serious’ (Maguire 1989, p. 95). For her, simply creating sounds that are culturally coded ‘music’ is not enough; the motivation behind creating the music is important. Her experience of the singing lesson with Mem Dora contrasts markedly with the description of the choir: after her lesson, Ella feels ‘swamped and damp with the sound of singing, hungry, thirsty, and satisfied all at the same time’ (p. 100). This sense of physical and psychological satiation is not one encouraged by the Colony.

The energising and contagious power of music that respects the musical form itself, even if that music is not technically perfect, is also emphasised in *Coda*. When people come to hear the band play, Ant hopes that the contagion created by the music will start the revolution to

overthrow the Corp. The experience of being part of live music and the way in which it makes Ant feel both more himself, and beyond himself, is expressed in both physiological and affective terms:

Electricity bubbles along my veins, set to the frenzied pulse of the music. I can barely even feel my hands anymore, just sound and strings and restlessness. Explosive energy pools under my tongue, and the only way to let it out is to sing louder, free my voice until it hits the back wall, send it flying over faces I can't see anymore. (Trevayne 2013, p. 114)

This contrasts markedly with his experience of being compelled to listen to Corporation-encoded music. Although Ant says that 'he feels alive, human, expansive' and that 'everything is good and right' he also knows that the encoded music is 'pull[ing him] into its lies' (p. 41). Unlike the pleasure he has performing live music with the band, Ant despises himself for submitting to the encoded music to which he has been forcibly addicted.

Unsurprisingly, just before Ant finally succeeds in killing President Z, the President admits that she has never been musical (p. 293). For her, music is to be combined with mind-altering substances to control others. For Ant, however, music is a form of self-expression, and a way of validating his own existence: '[T]his is what they take from us. [...] The right to express ourselves. They take it and use it to kill us, instead' (p. 116). The Corporation wants to enhance physical pleasure when listening to music, but only as a means of making people addicted and therefore malleable, rather than for the empowering reasons that Ant makes music. The authorities promote physical and psychological dependence through the encoded music, in contrast to the kind of liminal, transformational space (see Braithwaite 2014) that Ant finds through making music. Unencoded music promotes affect, notably joy and excitement, which are potential challenges to the control wielded by the Corporation.

### **Music, Sexuality and Sensuality**

For reasons of social control as well as physical practicality given limited resources, sensuality is not a key feature of life in the Colony. The 'amity rooms', for example, are designed to provide a place where sexual needs can be satisfied (Maguire 1989, p. 78), but neither sensuality nor sexuality is promoted (Maguire 1989, p. 78). By contrast, Ella's music creates a situation in which the physical and the mental are combined, sometimes in ways that challenge individual characters. For example, when Ella tries to sing the Handel Hornpipe, 'her eyes closed, her eyelids looked soft, translucent, like the gloss on the inside of the

seashell. Mart could stare at her for an hour when she looked like that' (Maguire 1989, p. 17). Affect here is linked with physicality and sensuality. The link between music and sensuality takes on sexual overtones when Ella first sees the piano, which is described as 'a paramour, an illicit lover waiting to be touched. For the first time in her life she knew what it meant to have her heart in her throat' (p. 22). This kind of visceral emotion is not part of the Colony's life, and Ella's reaction demonstrates the power in her life of even the prospect of music.

Music is also closely linked with sensuality and sexuality in *Coda*; Ant, for example, speaks of 'Johnny's heavy darkly sensuous song' (Trevayne 2013, p. 28) in their first band rehearsal. And when Ant is making love with Haven, he says 'Her body is the warmest instrument and our breaths synchronize to something more harmonious than music' (p. 257). Unencoded music has been so strong in Anthem's sense of who he is and the possibility of freedom that the notion of his making love with Haven being even more 'harmonious' demonstrates the depth of his attachment to Haven.

### **Music, Words, and Moving towards the Future**

One of the ways in which *Coda* and *I Feel Like the Morning Star* differ is the extent to which each novel talks about lyrics and how the music is described. *I Feel Like the Morning Star* includes more lyrical references and also offers analyses of music in relation to Western conventions, thus interpellating the reader as someone who will at least understand the concepts of these conventions, even if s/he is not familiar with them. For example, when Mart first asks Ella to play the hidden piano, Ella 'pressed a chord on the piano lightly, a major seventh; its poignant expectancy trapped her in a terrible, hopeless, hollow mood' (Maguire 1989, p. 63). This description assumes that the reader is at least intuitively familiar with the diatonic, octatonic convention of the tonic note followed by the leading note (the seventh of the scale) sounding like it needs to be resolved to another chord, most likely the tonic chord, or the chord on the sixth of the scale.

Similarly, when Ella, Mart and Sorb are leading the children to freedom, and Mem Dora sings, the music is described in terms of diatonic harmony: 'she sent the note rocketing up a sixth, and buffeting down chromatically in a short whisper, clear as amber and as thick in tone' (p. 251). Some of the lyrics are given – 'Sometimes I feel like a motherless child', 'A long, long, long way from home' (pp. 252, 253) which are also apt for the situation in which the young people find themselves. They are effectively motherless children, leaving the

parents who can only offer them a future stuck forever in a ‘calcifying present’ (p. 200) which is also falling apart (p. 155). Similarly, the use of the real world song ‘Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child’ positions the reader to see the escape from the Colony as part of a similar history, notably that of the Afro-American slaves. The scene in which Ella is looking after the children in class contrasts markedly with the escape scene: in the classroom, they are described as singing ‘*Here we are together, in the afternoon class*’ (p. 51), but no further information is given about the melody. Because the trite lyrics do not successfully scan, it is likely to be hard for the reader to imagine them being sung. The song therefore comes across as more a classroom management tool than a manifestation of music, and more of a tool to suppress affect than it is to enhance it.

In *Coda*, the reader notably learns little about the song lyrics performed by Ant and his band. Early on, Ant speaks of his friend Johnny ‘sing[ing] about a girl he loves, a theme that’ll never die, no matter what the Corp thinks up to mess with music next’ (Trevayne 2013, p. 59), but not much else is said. When Ant and the band are forced to record music for the Corporation to use to control the populace, Ant speaks of ‘the lyrics, nauseating, Corp-friendly message made bearable by the knowledge of what we are going to do with them’ (p. 264) as part of their revolution. *Coda* suggests, therefore, the sound itself and the experience of ‘unencoded’ music are important, rather than the lyrics. It is the affective experience of being involved with music that is significant. As Ant explains when someone at one of the concerts complains that he does not feel anything:

‘That’s because this is *real* music, and you’ve got to want it. You’ve got to *let* it get inside your head. Do that, and the high is better than some processed drug. That’s what the Corp keeps from you so that they can make us listen to the stuff that will kill us’. (p. 115).

Personal autonomy is central to embodying an affective response to the music.

However, only by hearing, performing, experiencing and sharing music is Ant in a position to take a major role in overthrowing the dystopian Corporation, and only through the contagion of music entwined with affect are others moved to join him. The embodied, affective, driving force of music is also a major part of what gives Ella the courage to take the little children and help lead their escape from the Pioneer Colony in the hope of a better life. Both novels suggest that music is more than simply patterns of sound that are culturally tagged to be ‘music’— it can be a powerful, confronting, affective, and effective force that is deeper than

words and which helps to bring the protagonist to a fuller sense of self, of agency, of intersubjectivity, and assists that person ultimately in leading others towards freedom.

## Notes

1. For an explanation of the difference between ‘freedom from’ and ‘freedom to’, see Fromm 1994, p. 34.

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