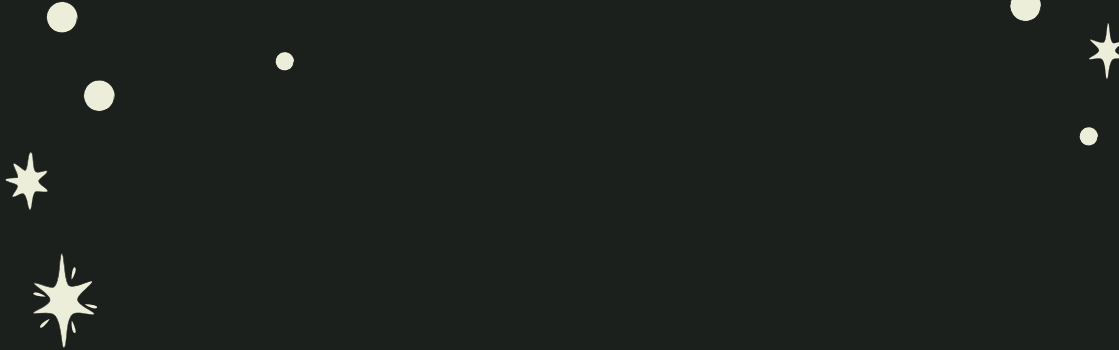


SWARM

ANSWERING THE CALL







It's minutes before the show. Pulses race to the buzz of ear-splitting static. From the pit and the stands, a roar: thousands of people gathered for a singular purpose. Tonight we're more and less than ourselves, one body, a collective consciousness —

A SWARM.



SWARM: ANSWERING THE CALL


A My Chemical Romance Fanzine, created by and for fans

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All Swarm Zine profits to benefit Black and Pink. www.blackandpink.org

SWARM

ANSWERING THE CALL

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ON WITH THE SHOW...

AFTER EXTERMINATION

(OR: MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE IS DEAD! LONG LIVE MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE!)



I. My Chemical Romance is a band that's always been obsessed with endings. From its very beginning, MCR has revolved around the concept of *the end*.

But for all that it is obsessed with endings, MCR is perhaps more invested in the question of *what happens after a thing is gone*—echoes, afterimages, *life after death*. My Chemical Romance has always been a project invested in its own legacy.

This investment in legacy is not nostalgia, nor empty reanimation. This is My Chemical Romance as a living band, after its end. MCR always was bound to carry on after death, even long before any shadow of return.

It's no surprise, then, that in Auckland, MCR began closing out the Return tour through a return of its own. The only place we could ever truly close this chapter of rebirth was *through return*.

II. Beyond serving as the *beginning of the end*, Auckland introduced a

new Gerard Way outfit: gray blazer, white button-up, black tie, gray skirt. Throughout the Return tour, Way's outfits have served as points of grounding, gesturing towards themes and narrative arcs. The skirt suit, too, was part of a narrative, one ending the Return tour by returning to the beginning in obliquely returning to 9/11.

Way's skirt suit, too, was a meditation on legacy.

Much has already been written about Way's decision to wear skirts as part of the Return tour, particularly in an era of organized right-wing terror against queer and trans people. But this figure—not a character, and *not a costume, not exactly*—also returns us to another rumination on endings and beginnings that has been consistent throughout the Return tour.

By becoming a vessel for violence but not succumbing to it—instead, being remade through violence, becoming unkillable through rotting immortality—

Way's final figure returns us to the end of the world. The end of all things. The apocalyptic.

This too is a meditation on legacy.

III. In our apocalyptic ¹ age, there's been a notable turn towards looking backwards. As incomprehensible terror becomes quotidian, nostalgia promises an easy remedy. Returning to a simpler, easier, better past is a no-brainer when Armageddon lies on the horizon.

Nostalgia promises an impossible return to a fictive elsewhere; it functions as a process of mythmaking, what political theorist Cedric Robinson describes as "displacing the real."

We imagine an impossible return to a perfect past and a pure scene headed by its kings and occasional queen. But what parts of the real had to be displaced for us to produce such an impossible past? Which populations, whose pain, what violence had to be done for us to canonize a scene to yearn for?

What does any of this do for us?

If legacy is life after death, nostalgia is the living dead, keeping the very forces that allow us to be exterminated in place.

My Chemical Romance's meditation on legacy is not the kind of empty nostalgia that allows for the conservatism of a violent, pragmatic present to continue on. It stares the end in the face and looks towards what comes after. It is life after the end.

MCR's approach to legacy is that glancing towards queerness's horizon, even in welcoming its extinction. It is glancing towards what queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz describes as, a "[pulling] from the past...to push beyond the impasse of the present."

A meditation on legacy, not to stay within that legacy, but to move beyond the empires of the here and now.

Worlds will end. The apocalypse will arrive. We will face extermination. But we cannot be satisfied with canonization of nostalgia. We cannot become complacent in gilded cages.

Like My Chemical Romance, we must embrace the tremendous possibilities of rebirth that come from the world's end, from the very apocalyptic that is seen as unfathomable. And in doing so, like Way's Auckland character, we will live to see what happens beyond attempted extermination.

Crawling through the ruins—undead,
unkillable, very much alive—through the
ashes of empire, we will say: fuck you. 🐜

¹Nevermind that for communities of color, Black and Indigenous communities especially, the end of the world has already happened. The apocalyptic is an everyday event, a structure, borne through the very material experiences of dispossession.