

A musical cover is, in its essence, a misrepresentation. To reproduce a song is to incur the risk of troubling the originality of an artistic statement, to present it anew, to add to or remove from it. The musical cover is, in its essence, a misplacement; an artistic statement, otherwise congealed in form, is desacralized, transported into different temporalities, different spaces, different voices, different languages. The musical cover is, in its essence, a translation. An exposure – or the possibility thereof.

To cover something is to protect it, to insulate that thing from external influences – to make it precious, unique, secure. For music, to cover a song is to protect it exactly by exposing it to external touch; to cover a song is to yield different listenings, or the very possibility of different listenings to begin with. A cover opens up, paradoxically as it is, the possibility of discovery.

Personally, however, I have always thought of musical covers as a tangential response to things that were denied. At least for us, born in places in which we consumed a history in which we were denied participation; we from the so-called Third World, Global South, or any other title we have been given without consenting to. When it comes to music, we learned to deeply love a song, a musical act, an artist, and at the same time to not have access to their artistic *presentness*; because we were always reaching towards without grasping, we learned to delegate our emotional connection with some artists to an external placeholder, a Third, a thespian impersonation. Lights out, enter “the cover”: the performance of performance(s), an act of homage, always already introduced as hanging by a thread. A cover participates in its own economy, walking on the fine line between copyright infringement, deep respect, admiration, appropriation, re-narration, and – as said before – the possibility of misrepresentation. The listener, unrested, at the end of an endless waiting for that untouched, utopian essence not to be messed with, or to be messed with *just enough*.

Any musical cover is, in its essence, the very denial of essence. And it is exactly in this moment of denial, in the break with the idea of essence, that its potential is revealed, *in a Fred Moten mood*. A chord with a different voicing, a note held just a tidbit longer, the presence or absence of a modal flourish: a cover contains everything but the original, or the very possibility of originality to begin with.

To cover something (up) is to hide it from view. To prevent looks being directed at it. To cover (up) something is also, paradoxical as it is, an act of revealing: covered

words may give way to chords, letters may be given different readings, signifiers, different durations in and with time, and yield different (re)orientations, *in a Sara Ahmed mood*. To cover something is to constantly de- and re-equalize it to the taste of the coverer, or to open up for the very possibility of de- and re-equalizing it to begin with.

Personally, however, I think of the twelve-bar blues, and the sort-of fixed structure it has which is always giving birth to entire worlds. In Latin America the blues, much like the sustained *legatos* of its musical and verbal language, is hauntological. The blues never happened in Latin America; in its stead we got the Tango, *in a Belchior mood*. The idea of the blues is, for us, a reminder of our solitude, our eternal becoming; a rehearsal of rehearsal for the performance of performance(s). That incessant vibrato reminding us that instability is our verse, chorus, and coda; that every fourth we raise contains the inevitability of its lowering. The blues transports our hearts to a past we never saw happening, but have (perhaps unwillingly or unknowingly) participated in its making. Or perhaps we dreamt of it, swimming in late night radio waves and mistranslated liner notes. Much like the cover, we are being constantly discovered; the blues is always happening in Latin America.

To cover something is, indeed, to recover it. To come and rescue the *work* – italized as it is – from its pedestal, to replace it with a temporary, humble copycat of an original which never was. To recover all these hauntological lost meanings and give them new directions. To (re)cover is to care, to fulfill these (historical and sonic) gaps with multitudes, lines flying out, out of reach and perhaps never (or forever) returning, *in a Gilles Deleuze mood*. To (re)cover is, indeed to move the *work* within infinite sonic possibilities. To entice new listenings, new forms of making – and holding – space. To give *work* new territory; the territory of the unimagined, the territory of the not yet possible, but at the same time always already there. Or at least the possibility thereof, if we got the right mood.