

Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing

Dr Neville Buch¹



Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing

Abstract

This essay explores the profound psychological, aesthetic, and existential reasons why experiencing a live concert by the dream-pop band Cannons induces overwhelming tears. Integrating Josh Adler's Conscious Systems Theory (CST) and quantum aesthetics, Martin Heidegger's phenomenology of finitude, Ernest Becker's denial of death, Gaynor Macdonald's relational ontology, and Dr. Neville Buch's *Dynamic of Cognition* (DoC) framework, the analysis

¹ Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) has been fairly used in the production of this work. The tool used is Google NotebookLM (recently rebranded as Gemini Notebook). It is an AI-powered virtual research assistant and thinking partner designed to help a person interact deeply with their own documents. Unlike general chatbots, it is source-grounded, meaning it only generates answers based on the specific PDFs, documents, or links uploaded. The A.I. process in the production of this work has been limited to the attached (prompts) on each of the questions in turn. This ensures an accurate reading of each source. The author then rearranged and re-edited the answers the A.I. provided. The human author publishes this work. A.I. is never an author when used properly. This assistance is not qualitatively different from a human research assistant when that assistance is deemed to have no authorial status but is acknowledged.

Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing

outlines five interconnected dimensions of human existence. It demonstrates that: (1) Love is intrinsically both the pain of vulnerability and the flourishing of life—it is the very essence of *Lebensphilosophie*; (2) Music acts as a quantum, multi-dimensional resonant medium that imprints neural microtubules, transforming raw sensory perception into transcendent qualia; (3) Human flourishing (*eudaimonia*) requires abandoning Cartesian individualism to embrace *pañsar* (“thinking as caring”), relational holding, and the developmental transition from “Junior” utility to “Senior” social accountability; (4) Loneliness arises from modern “denoetization,” market-driven atomization, and the trauma of unreciprocated or lost connection that traps the self in an “analytical abyss”; and (5) A Cannons concert triggers tears because its immersive dream-pop soundscape and haunting lyrical motifs (*Fire for You*, *Carousel*, *Bad Dream*) temporarily rupture the ego's protective armour. In that cathartic moment, suppressed existential angst, grief, and longing are transmuted into shared relational holding, allowing the listener to experience the “great health” of emotional convalescence and communal oneness.

Introduction

Music possesses the singular capacity to penetrate the defensive armour of adult life, bypassing rational cognition to evoke tears that feel both painful and profoundly liberating. When standing amidst a crowd at a live performance by the American indie dream-pop band Cannons, listeners frequently report an inexplicable wave of emotion—a sudden welling of tears that arises not merely from sadness, but from a deep, resonant catharsis. To understand why a Cannons concert brings tears requires examining the fundamental structures of human existence: the dual nature of love, the transformative power of musical qualia, the requirements for genuine human flourishing (*eudaimonia*), and the pervasive roots of modern loneliness.

By weaving together continental phenomenology, quantum biological aesthetics, and sociological analysis, this essay demonstrates that the tears shed at a live performance mark the precise boundary where individual isolation dissolves into shared human presence.

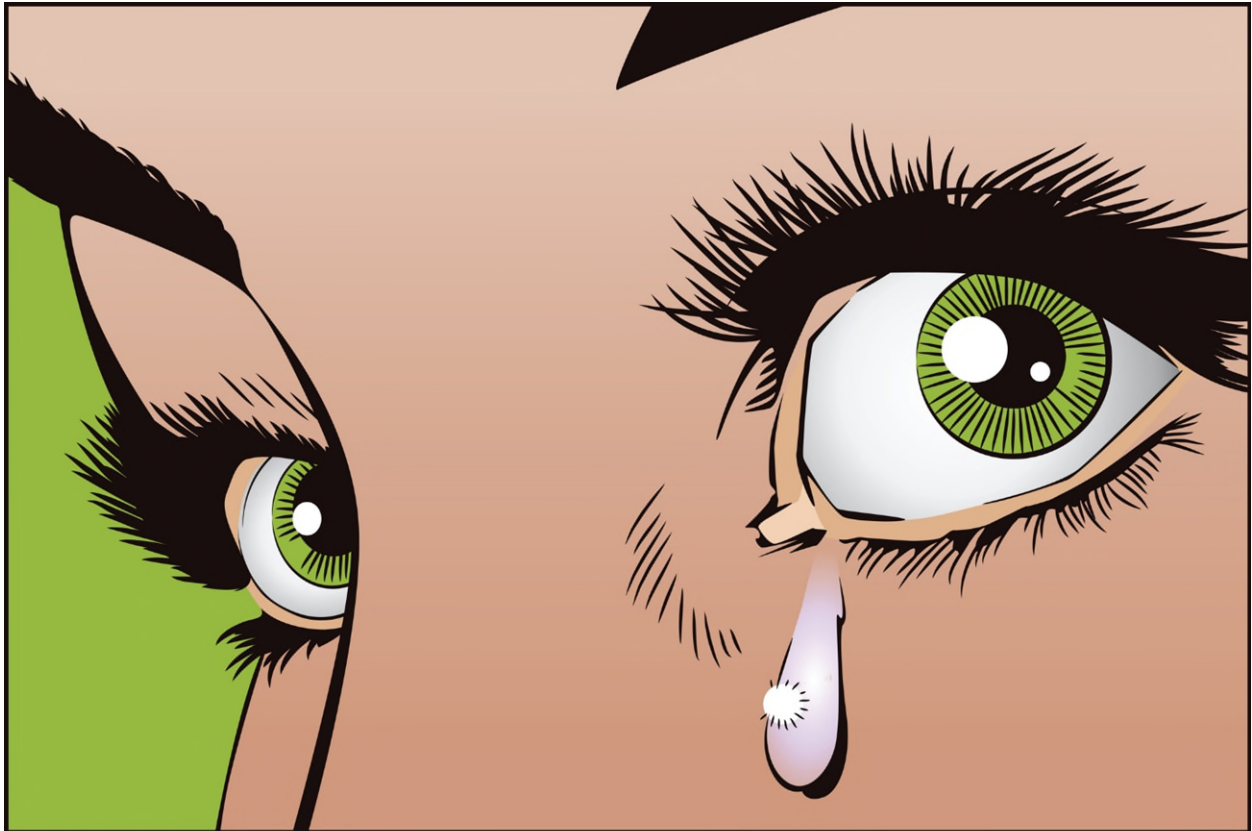
1. Love as Pain, Flourishing, and the Essence of Life

To understand human emotion, one must first recognize that love is neither a tranquil sentiment nor a simple reward; it is an active, dialectical force that encompasses both acute suffering and supreme flourishing. As Dr. Neville Buch asserts in *Buch's Existential Thesis*, a human being is a creature defined by a dialectic between divine qualities of unity and light, and degenerative qualities of fragmentation and darkness. Within this existential tension, love operates as the central *Lebensphilosophie* (Philosophy of Life) that defines human authorship.

Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing

Love is inherently painful because to love is to bind oneself to that which is finite, vulnerable, and impermanent. As the poet W. B. Yeats poignantly expressed in his meditations on transience: “*Man is in love and loves what vanishes, / What more is there to say?*” (Yeats 1928 cited in Corby 2007, p. 4). When an individual opens their heart to another—whether in romantic intimacy, parental devotion, or communal solidarity—they expose themselves to the inevitability of loss, grief, and the “crucible of care”.

This dialectic is vividly documented in *The History of Ruth*, where love is experienced as a 28-year romance that eventually confronts the “cruel diagnosis” of terminal illness. The profound pain of watching a beloved suffer from glioblastoma reveals that love cannot be separated from the grief of missing them; the void left by their absence becomes an enduring “ghostly presence”.



Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing



Yet, as Friedrich Nietzsche observed, pain and flourishing are “sisters and twins that either grow up together or remain small together” (Nietzsche 1882 cited in Runstrom 2015, p. 124). One cannot purge the capacity for suffering without simultaneously destroying the capacity for joy. Love is flourishing precisely because it provides the procedural shield—what Buch terms **panser** (“thinking as caring”)—that protects human particularity and dignity from the cold, calculating logic of mechanistic reductionism.

In the lyrics of Cannons, this tension is expressed with raw immediacy: in *Fire for You*, the singer laments, “*I was on fire for you / Where did you go? / I could have died for you / How could you not know?*” (Cannons 2019, p. 1). The song captures how love elevates human vitality to an

Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing

absolute flame (“I was alive with you”), even while exposing the heart to freezing isolation (“but you brought in the cold”). Love is both the wound and the healing; it is, in its fullest ontological sense, Life itself.

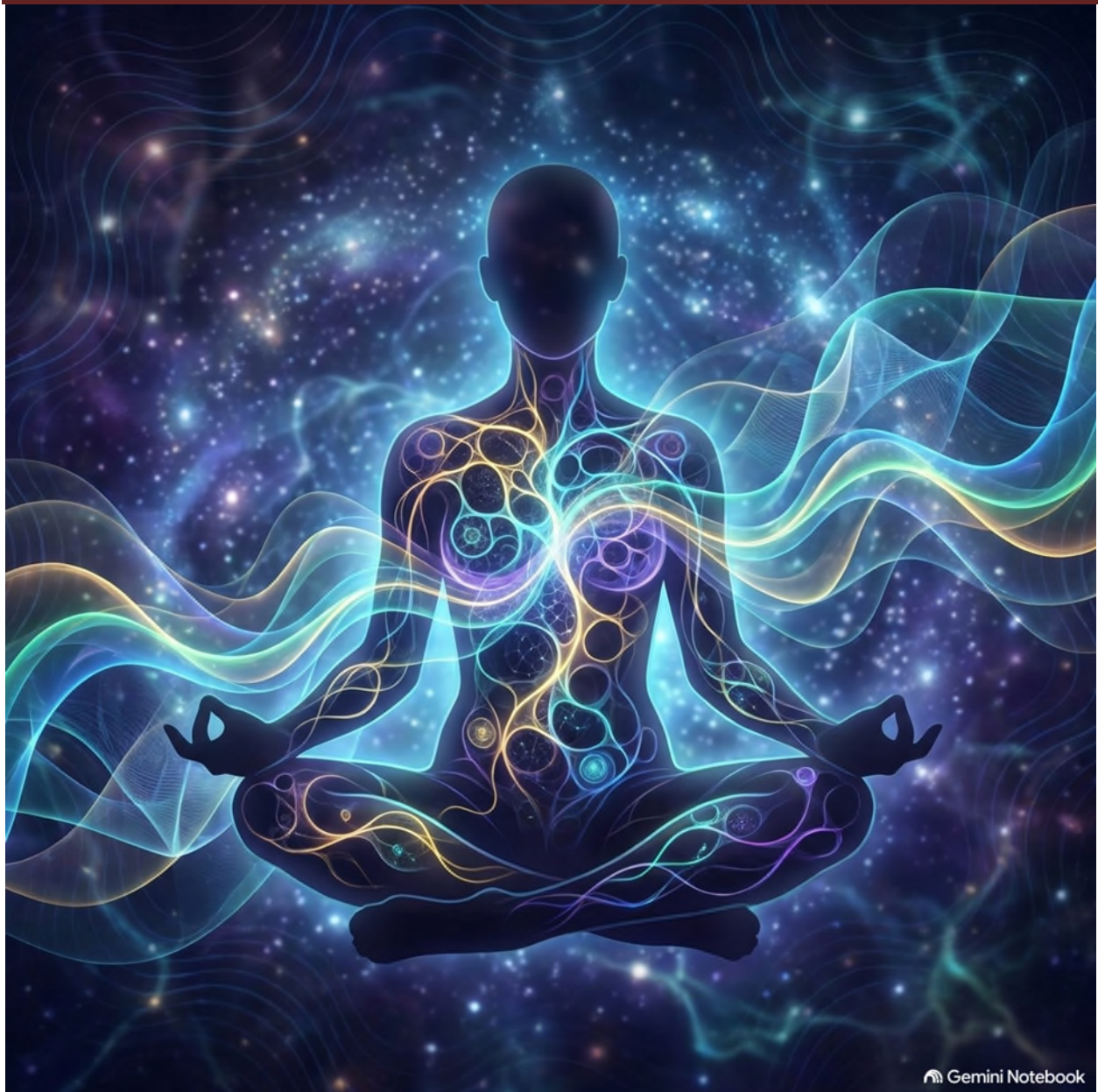
2. How Music Transforms Life: Quantum Biological Aesthetics and Intersubjective Resonance

Music does not merely entertain the conscious mind; it fundamentally transforms the biological and ontological structure of lived experience. In conventional materialist models, music is reduced to air pressure waves hitting the eardrum and firing auditory nerves. However, as Josh Adler demonstrates in *The Open Mind: A Phenomenology*, Conscious Systems Theory (CST) recognizes that performed music operates beyond local material dimensions.

Drawing on Stuart Hameroff and Roger Penrose's model of Orchestrated Objective Reduction (Orch-OR) and Giulio Tononi's Integrated Information Theory (IIT), CST demonstrates that acoustic vibrations permeate the body's hydration reservoirs and stimulate the “choir of microtubules” within neurons throughout the central nervous system. These neural microtubules integrate sound vibrations into dynamic, high-dimensional qualia compositions:



Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing



While a materialist view might analyse a composition in three spatial dimensions, performed music amplifies integrative properties into qualia that imprint the listener in up to sixteen dimensions of sensory and subconscious information.

Furthermore, as Umberto Eco outlines in *The Open Work*, an aesthetic creation functions as an “open work” that “locates the infinite at the very core of the finite” (Eco 1989 cited in Adler 2017, p. 131). Music transforms life by offering a non-local, open structure that allows the listener to step out of mechanized “clock-time” and enter Henri Bergson's *durée*—a continuous, indivisible flow of reality where past memories, present sensations, and future possibilities merge into a single stream of consciousness.

Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing

When sound vibrations fill a space, they create a shared field of “Total Field Presence” (TFP), aligning the biological rhythms of diverse individuals into a collective, syntropic resonance. Music transforms life by temporarily lifting the heavy burden of egoic self-preservation, allowing the soul to experience its inherent interconnectedness with the cosmos.

3. What Should a Person Do to Flourish? (Eudaimonia, Panser, and Relational Holding)

If human life is bounded by finitude and vulnerability, what must an individual do to achieve true flourishing? The answer provided across the literature requires moving away from the “Junior” mindset of vocational utility toward Aristotelian flourishing (eudaimonia) and a relational ontology.



Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing



To flourish, a person must execute four essential life transitions:

1. **Reject Cartesian Individualism for a Relational Ontology:** As anthropologist Gaynor Macdonald establishes, modern biomedical culture suffers from a Cartesian paradigm that views personhood as an isolated, brain-bound mechanism. This non-relational model breeds fear and social death. To flourish, one must embrace a *relational ontology*, recognizing that to live is to be held in connection. Human beings are inherently social and precarious; well-being is not achieved through solipsistic independence, but through mutual holding, social health, and intersubjective care.

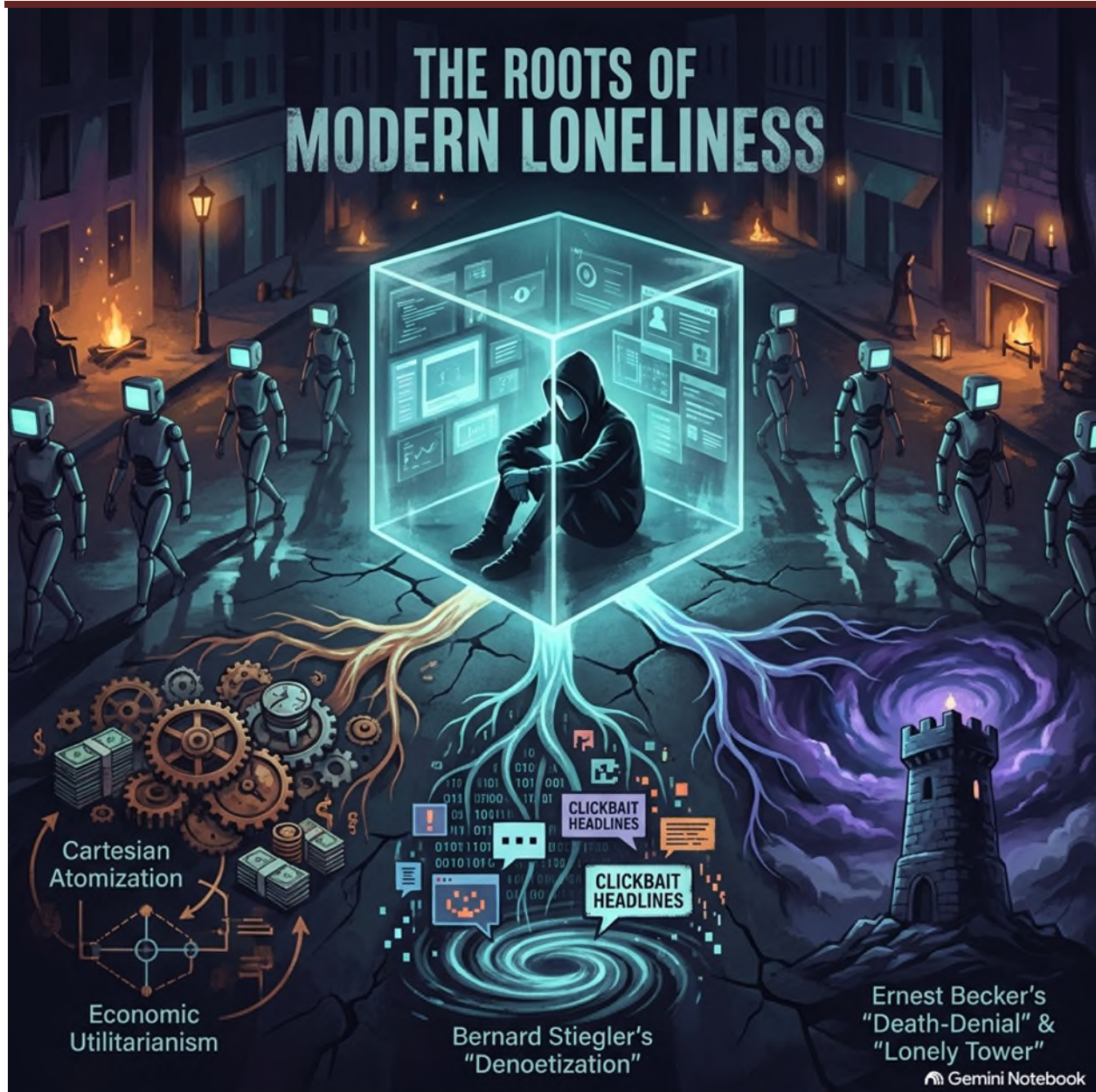
Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing

2. **Deploy Panzer ("Thinking as Caring") as a Cognitive Shield:** Within Neville Buch's Dynamic of Cognition (DoC) framework, a person flourishes by integrating the Five Intentions of Being—Self, Mind, Reason, Utility, and Love (*Panzer*). *Panzer* acts as an intellectual and emotional shield that protects human particularity from the "coldness of calculation". To flourish, one must practice *Verstehen* (empathetic understanding), becoming a "remarkable listener" who seeks the hidden wholeness in others rather than reducing them to economic or administrative coordinates.
 3. **Ascend from "Junior" Docility to "Senior" Accountability:** Flourishing demands a developmental ascent where the individual stops acting as a passive conduit for institutional rules ("Junior" mindset) and reclaims human authorship over their narrative ("Senior" state of social accountability). This involves adopting Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy—linking rigorous critique to informed, reflective action (*praxis*) to transform one's environment.
 4. **Convalesce Through Existential Authenticity:** In Martin Heidegger's terms, true flourishing requires confronting our "being-towards-death" (*Sein-zum-Tode*) rather than fleeing into public "idle talk" (*Gerede*). By running ahead (*Vorlaufen*) into the certainty of finitude, existential anxiety is transfigured into "unshakable joy" and resolute. Similarly, Nietzsche reminds us that flourishing is a process of continuous *convalescence*—embracing setbacks, sickness, and pain as the necessary stimulus to achieve a "great health" (*amor fati*).
-

4. The Ontological Abyss: Why Am I So Lonely?

Loneliness is one of the most pervasive maladies of modern existence, yet its roots are far deeper than mere physical solitude. The literature reveals that profound loneliness stems from three intersecting structural and existential forces:

Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing



- **Cartesian Atomization and Economic Uselessness:** In secular, market-driven societies, social value is defined economically. When individuals are evaluated strictly by their cognitive speed, memory, or commercial productivity, those who suffer from illness, aging, cognitive decline, or non-conforming career paths are systematically disconnected. As Macdonald highlights, “disconnection begins with economic uselessness”. When the intergenerational contract of mutual holding breaks down, the individual is abandoned to an isolated Cartesian cell, experiencing “social death” long before biological demise.

Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing

- **Algorithmic Denoetization and the “Automatic Cultural Man”:** As Bernard Stiegler observes, digital capitalism induces “denoetization”—the systematic destruction of deep human attention and reflective judgment by commercial algorithms. Simultaneously, anthropologist Ernest Becker describes how the vast majority of people become “automatic cultural people” who are “tranquilized with the trivial”. These individuals keep their heads down and robotically repeat pre-made cultural slogans to flee from existential anxiety. A reflective person seeking genuine depth finds themselves utterly alone, surrounded by a society that “will not see and ears that will not hear”.
- **The “Lonely Tower” of Unreciprocated Love and Finitude:** Loneliness reaches its acute, painful peak when a profound relationship is severed by illness, death, or unrequited longing. In literary history, the melancholic thinker is depicted in Milton's and Yeats's “lonely tower”—a figure sitting beside an open lamp at midnight, inhabiting a no-man's-land between life and death.

This is the exact emotional state voiced in Cannons' *Bad Dream*: “*I bought a ticket to your show / Did you see me? Did you know? / I was standing in the back row / With the lights down low... I been living in a bad dream*” (Cannons 2021, p. 1). Loneliness is the agonizing realization that one is standing in the dark row of an indifferent universe, holding a vast capacity for love and truth that finds no receiving shore.

5. The Cathartic Epiphany: Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears

Why, then, does standing in a crowded venue listening to Cannons perform live unleash such an uncontrollable release of tears? The phenomenon is a complex aesthetic, psychological, and biological epiphany where all four preceding dimensions converge.

Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing



A. Microtubular Qualia Imprinting and Dream-Pop Field Dynamics

Cannons' signature sound—characterized by shimmering vintage synthesizers, pulsating basslines, reverberant guitar hooks, and Michelle Joy's ethereal, hypnotic vocals—is structurally engineered for deep aesthetic resonance. As Adler's Conscious Systems Theory explains, these specific sound frequencies are absorbed throughout the listener's sensory resonators, stimulating the neural microtubules and generating high-dimensional qualia.

The shimmering synth waves create an “open” field dynamics that temporarily disarms the brain's rigid, predictive filtering networks. The listener's consciousness enters an “emergent adaptive resonance,” expanding beyond local embodiment into a probabilistic realm of shared awareness.

B. Lyrical Evocation of Vanishing Love and Heartache

The thematic core of Cannons' discography revolves around the bittersweet nostalgia of love, heartbreak, and temporal movement. In *Carousel*, the lyrics evoke the painful cycle of emotional longing: “*I was shattered in pieces / I was spinning around and around and 'round / In a carousel of heartache... Ooh, I've been singing in my heart for you*” (Cannons 2026, p. 1). In *Hurricane*, the music promises a transformative, atmospheric elevation: “*I can bring a change... I'm coming back like a hurricane / I'm gonna take you higher / On a cloud of silver haze*” (Cannons 2022, p. 1).

Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing

When these songs are performed live, they act as an aesthetic catalyst that directly names the listener's unspoken grief, lost loves, and unfulfilled desires. The music reflects Yeats's truth that we love what vanishes, bringing the listener face-to-face with the precious, fragile nature of their own history.

C. The Rupture of Defensive Armour and Release of Existential Angst

In everyday life, human beings build elaborate “character armours” and daily distractions to suppress their existential anxiety and mortality. We pretend to be fine, “tranquilized with the trivial,” hiding our loneliness and fear.

A live Cannons concert violently shatters this defensive illusion. The sheer volume, pulsating light shows, and collective energy act as an abrupt “running ahead” that wrenches the individual away from the tranquilizing influence of “The They” (*Das Man*). The suppressed angst, the accumulated fatigue of surviving in an atomized world, and the unexpressed tears of a lifetime suddenly break through the shattered armour.

D. From Cartesian Isolation to Shared Relational Holding

Most crucially, a concert transforms private isolation into shared relational holding. Standing shoulder-to-shoulder with hundreds of strangers who are all absorbing the exact same acoustic frequencies, the listener realizes that their secret pain, loneliness, and longing are not uniquely theirs—they are the universal heritage of the human species.

In the language of Gaynor Macdonald, the concert space establishes a temporary *relational ontology*: the isolated individual is reconnected, “held in relations” by the music and the surrounding crowd. The tears that stream down the listener's face are not tears of despair; they are tears of convalescence. They mark the triumph of *panser*—the realization that despite the “crucible of care,” despite the “carousel of heartache,” human existence remains an achingly beautiful, shared journey.

Conclusion

A Cannons concert brings tears because it accomplishes what modern technocratic society systematically prevents: it forces us to feel the full, unvarnished weight of our human existence. Through high-dimensional musical qualia, dream-pop aesthetics, and haunting lyrics of vanishing love, the music breaks open our defensive routines, exposing the raw existential tension between our finite vulnerability and our infinite capacity to care.

Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing

The tears shed in the glowing darkness of the concert hall are proof that we are not biological machines or isolated economic units. They signify our awakening from the “bad dream” of modern atomization into a shared stream of consciousness. In those tears, we experience the dialectic of life itself: we grieve what we have lost, we honour our deep loneliness, and yet, held in connection with others, we affirm our existence with an exuberant, transcendent joy—truly declaring, despite all finitude, “*Thus I willed it*”.

Bibliography

Adler, J. (2017) 'The Open Mind: A Phenomenology', *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 7(2), pp. 126–167. doi: 10.4236/ojpp.2017.72009.

Arendt, H. (1958) *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Arendt, H. (1978) *The Life of the Mind*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Becker, E. (1973) *The Denial of Death*. New York: Free Press.

Bousso, R. S., Serafim, D. F. and Rocha, A. C. (2010) 'The Relationship Between Religion, Illness and Death in Life', *Revista Latino-Americana de Enfermagem*, 18(2), pp. 156–162.

Buch, N. (2025) *The Dynamic of Cognition: A Methodological Tool*. Brisbane: Management Institute for Contributory Economy, pp. 1–8.

Buch, N. (2026a) *Buch's Existential Thesis*. Unpublished manuscript, Dr Neville Buch, pp. 1–3.

Buch, N. (2026b) *The Landscape Intellectual History of Jack McKinney and Judith Wright: Thinking Deeper*. Dr Neville Buch, 2 July 2026, pp. 1–24.

Buch, N. (2026c) *History of Ruth: The Crucible of Care. Grief as Philosophy in Practice (The Disease)*. Dr Neville Buch, 8 June 2026, pp. 1–8.

Cannons (2019) *Fire for You*. Single track lyrics from *Shadows* EP.

Cannons (2021) *Bad Dream*. Single track lyrics.

Cannons (2022) *Hurricane*. Single track lyrics from *Fever Dream* album.

Cannons (2026) *Carousel*. Track lyrics from *Everything Glows* album.

Corby, J. (2007) 'Death in Life and Life in Death: Yeats's Romanticism', *Journal of Academic Perspectives*, pp. 1–18.

Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing

Eco, U. (1989) *The Open Work*. Translated by A. Cancogni. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Heidegger, M. (1927/1962) *Being and Time*. Translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson. London: SCM Press.

Ingram, A. (2006) 'Death in Life and Life in Death: Melancholy and the Enlightenment', *Gesnerus*, 63(1-2), pp. 90–102.

Macdonald, G. (2018) 'Death in Life or Life in Death: Dementia's Ontological Challenge', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 33(97), pp. 289–307.

McKay, A. (dir.) (2021) *Don't Look Up*. [Film]. Hyperobject Industries / Netflix.

McKinney, J. P. (1971) *The Structure of Modern Thought*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Nietzsche, F. (1882/1974) *The Gay Science*. Translated by W. Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books.

Nietzsche, F. (1887/1967) *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by W. Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books.

Runstrom, M. R. (2015) *Death in Life Approaches to the Contemporary Denial of Death*. MA Thesis, Pacifica Graduate Institute, pp. 1–145.

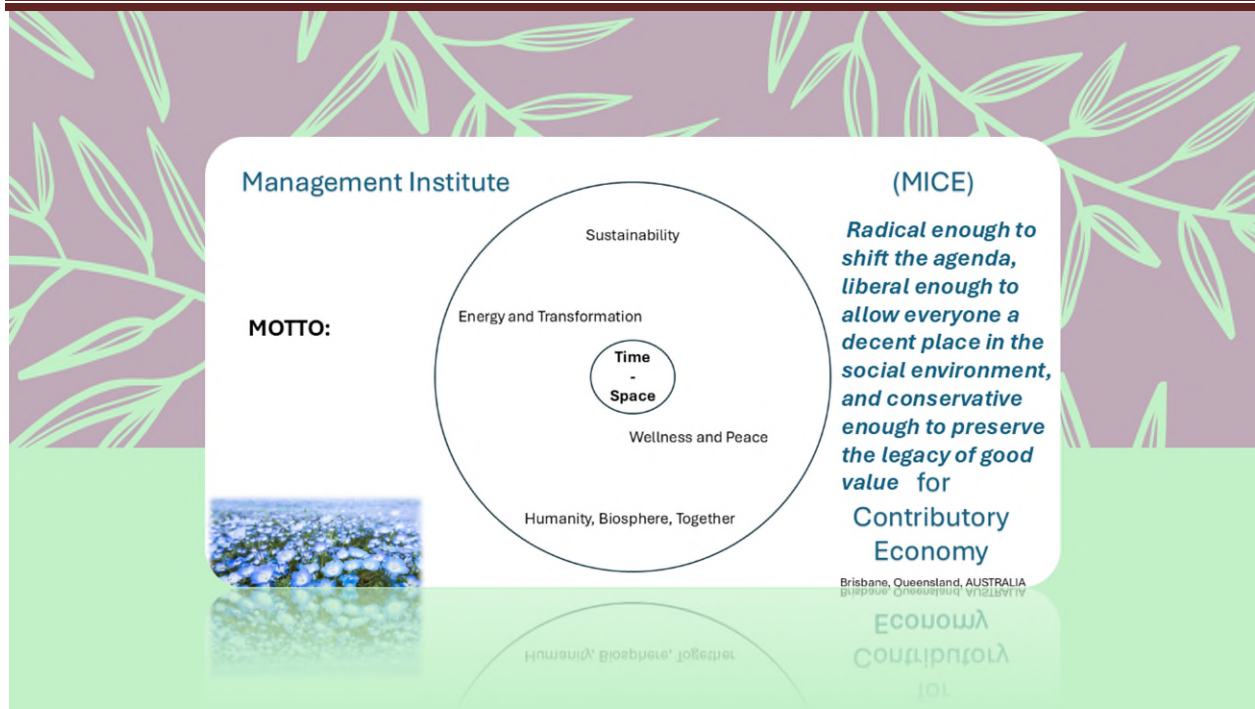
Stiegler, B. (2014) *Symbolic Misery, Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*. Translated by D. Ross. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Stiegler, B. (2025) *The Immense Regression: What is Called Caring?* Volume 1. Translated by D. Ross. Berlin: K. Verlag.

Tononi, G. (2008) 'Integrated Information Theory of Consciousness: An Updated Account', *BMC Neuroscience*, 9(58), pp. 1–20.

Wright, J. (1992) *A Human Pattern: Selected Poems*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson.

Why a Cannons Concert Brings Tears: Love, Music, and the Phenomenology of Human Flourishing



Take the [MICE Quiz](#)