Orgasms (from *Adorno's Noise*)

Carla Harryman

tis issue robbing pope sucking spear transit splash oops bore eye fro eye hire harrow guarded leer trap fire slurry badge adage craze

speak speak speak engineer linger rotund dusty ust ust uh

hoe oat toe below spire rain stamen stick rat earth reeves heavy slob oh sorrow mow

spot smear spot squashed stadium clinging pillar out hear a-rear basting let low lyric violet storm

loaned honey nothing doing behind gravy train evil fell to slow entrance gained a billow in the random rain

never never adumbrate never fever scumbling punchable larynx snot god sported inside mountain yawn swerve gliding dust to dust hard shadow phase hammy maverick nut there scratching crevice hording hot snow ocean bosses suds scribble which ways blacking

chancy chaos gouge loony brighter than tune

may may may may may may max may max may max ayax

razor ruby bird seared near her area reached piper ripping rail

low light lit little tick flea migrant sip pissy wit twill twill low will piano frill label slain hero palo o opal laughing harrow barracuda amour our radio crash

not on my time happy not on my time mad not on my time money not on my time skin not on my time merry not on my time dig not on my time fanny not on my time sorrow not on my time sand not on my time sun not on my time moon not on my time hills not on my time rivers not on my time rinse not on my time cloud not on my time vapor not on my time film not on my time shame not on my time hover not on my time blow not on my time sassy not on my time slow not on my time honey not on my time more

defeat effete defeat effort defeat fort defeat eat eat de teat at art faart or fete tete ear eat fete tete do to oat to o deaf effort fort ore eee or taa tort or at eat taa tat or de de ten effete neat tete defeat

lulu lang loop bay bay bay rad hip hole cleave o decalogue boober hover mine hammer am

bubble slumber pressure song cover over every wrong abridge my sigh with over wing oh swim again beyond thy hand

points are reached at every point slimmed mirror prunes mere mourning rave

Everyone now began to tear at Adorno. An orgasm is an elegy. I can't explain this rationally. It's site-specific emotion lodged in a small barking noise—an escape hatch in the negative dialectic.

This is what he might have desired during the student protest in 1969. The emotion that corresponds to the practice of oppression is contempt. If I had been among the students in Frankfurt, would I have opened up my leather jacket and showed him my breasts in a parodic manner, in solidarity with a leaflet that proclaimed "Adorno as an institution is dead?"

Direct socialization is structurally determined by the patriarchal or Oedipal family, so the gender politics of parody is hopeless if you want meaningful social change. In this story however the people live and Adorno dies. Yet I am convinced that I would have refused to think of Adorno or any individual as an institution and instead would have removed myself from the scene and posed as "the small time expert," a sexless menial. In my rejection of revolt, I would have underscored my subject position as a mirror of the fragile component of the social sexual contract. Adorno was attracted to, in fact relied upon, mimesis. Did I desire him even after he forgave me for faking the orgasm? But how do I know that I wouldn't have been instead liberated from this inclination to withdraw, to pose, and to think at a remove? What if I had become activated—I can well imagine this. Even as I write, I can feel some odd source or space that's as much physical sensation as idea located inside—it's probably in everybody's brain—wanting activation.

With a flick of the switch aggression exposes erotic drives to blindness. On the other side of this blindness is an orgasm in the public void.

An orgasm *is* an elegy in which there is no consolation. Machines, like orgasms, are inconsolable things.

Adorno metamorphosed from an instrument to a machine to the unnameable, a figure in the Beckett he had admired. Text is the electricity that moves the body from one thing to the next even as it cannot break out of its instrumental rationality.

With the books in his brain stem shifting their weight hurriedly, he sought comfort in nonhuman Valais in southern Switzerland. The poet Rilke had a few things to say about this spot: I hide my shame below the figure of his agonistic remorse. In respect to mountains like these, Kant refers to "a voluptuousness for the mind in a train of thought that [he] can never fully unravel." Why is it that I wish for the mountain to remain where it is and for the unraveling to continue beyond such words? Adorno has responded thus: "To enter nature," signifies "seeking out unconscious existence at the very place where it is most clearly revealed in the phenomenal world." Adore, whose name became No for an instant, wanted to be elevated by or into the irrational at the site of a gathering of "dissimilar human beings." "The need to protect sexuality has something crazy about it." The need to protect sexuality has something crazy about it.

About has something crazy about "it." About has something crazy about it. About has something crazy about it. About it.

Sources: Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1988), 93, 106, 111; Rebecca Comay, "Adorno's Siren Song"; Lorenz Jäge, *Adorno: A Political Biography* (2004), 192-210; and Andrew Hewitt, "A Feminine Dialectic of Enlightenment?" in *Feminist Interpretations of Theodore Adorno* (2006), ed. Renée Heberle, 53, 94.