



Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century, Twentieth Anniversary Edition

By Greil Marcus

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Greil Marcus, author of *Mystery Train*, widely acclaimed as the best book ever written about America as seen through its music, began work on this new book out of a fascination with the Sex Pistols: that scandalous antimusical group, invented in London in 1975 and dead within two years, which sparked the emergence of the culture called punk. “I am an antichrist!” shouted singer Johnny Rotten?where in the world of pop music did that come from? Looking for an answer, with a high sense of the drama of the journey, Marcus takes us down the dark paths of counterhistory, a route of blasphemy, adventure, and surprise. This is no mere search for cultural antecedents. Instead, what Marcus so brilliantly shows is that various kinds of angry, absolute demands?demands on society, art, and all the governing structures of everyday life?seem to be coded in phrases, images, and actions passed on invisibly, but inevitably, by people quite unaware of each other. Marcus lets us hear strange yet familiar voices: of such heretics as the Brethren of the Free Spirit in medieval Europe and the Ranters in seventeenth-century England; the dadaists in Zurich in 1916 and Berlin in 1918, wearing death masks, chanting glossolalia; one Michel Mourre, who in 1950 took over Easter Mass at Notre-Dame to proclaim the death of God; the Lettrist International and the Situationist International, small groups of Paris?based artists and writers surrounding Guy Debord, who produced blank-screen films, prophetic graffiti, and perhaps the most provocative social criticism of the 1950s and '60s; the rioting students and workers of May '68, scrawling cryptic slogans on city walls and bringing France to a halt; the Sex Pistols in London, recording the savage “Anarchy in the U.K.” and “God Save the Queen.”

Although the Sex Pistols shape the beginning and the end of the story, *Lipstick Traces* is not a book about music; it is about a common voice, discovered and transmitted in many forms. Working from scores of previously unexamined and untranslated essays, manifestos, and filmscripts, from old photographs, dada sound poetry, punk songs, collages, and classic texts from Marx to Henri Lefebvre, Marcus takes us deep behind the acknowledged events of our era, into a hidden tradition of moments that would seem imaginary except for the fact that they are real: a tradition of shared utopias, solitary refusals, impossible demands, and unexplained disappearances. Written with grace and force, humor and an

insistent sense of tragedy and danger, *Lipstick Traces* tells a story as disruptive and compelling as the century itself.

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Editorial Review

Review

A coruscatingly original piece of work, vibrant with the energy of the bizarre happenings it maps out. (Terry Eagleton *New York Times Book Review*)

That Marcus can kick off and end his exhaustive, but always clear-headed, cross-epochal trek with the Sex Pistols?and make it all cohere?is but one indication of how fully he meshes the academy and the gutter. (Katherine Dieckmann *Village Voice Literary Supplement*)

Lipstick Traces has the energy of its obsessions, and it snares you in the manner of those intense, questing and often stoned sessions of intellectual debate you may have experienced in your college years. It was destined, in other words, to achieve cult status. (Ben Brantley *New York Times*)

In 1989, Harvard University Press published *Lipstick Traces*, the second book by the American writer and critic Greil Marcus. It was a dazzling creation, mapping out an untold 'secret history' which connected the Sex Pistols, the Dadaists, the Parisian événements of 1968, that legendary subversive clique the Situationist International and an Anabaptist revolt in 16th-century Germany, led by a notorious libertine named John of Leyden. Among the book's most ardent fans, it sparked real epiphanies... It stands as a singularly idiosyncratic product of a genre-cum-tradition rooted in the business of writing about musicians and the whirl of ideas that once surrounded them... [Marcus] manages some of the finest music writing ever to make it on to the page... My 20-year-old copy of *Lipstick Traces* is the one book I would save from my proverbial burning house. (John Harris *The Guardian* 2009-06-27)

For anybody who wants to go deeper into the ontology of an idea that animates a kind of music, or is illuminated by that music, read Greil Marcus's *Lipstick Traces*, just reissued in an expanded edition for the book's twentieth anniversary. I often say that *Traces* is the best book ever written about music, even though it's not actually about music: it is about the life of an idea. (Sasha Frere-Jones *New Yorker online* 2009-10-21)

I first read *Lipstick Traces* as a penniless traveler, hiding in the bathroom of a late-night express train from Cologne to Berlin. My paranoia was considerably eased as I delved into the lives of various misfits and aesthetic revolutionaries throughout the twentieth century. As dawn broke and the train pulled into the station, I disembarked, feeling not shell-shocked from the conductor's repeated passes to my stall, but decidedly refreshed. (J. Scott Burgeson *East Bay Express* 1998-01-01)

The 'secret' of Marcus's history is its poetry...widely separated persons and events call out to each other and 'connect' precisely because so many of ordinary history's causal and syntactic arrangements have been positively negated. (Jerome McGann *London Review of Books* 1989-01-01)

Greil Marcus has developed an ability to discern an art movement, or an entire country, lurking inside a song. (*New Yorker* 2004-01-01)

Probably the most astute critic of American popular culture since Edmund Wilson. (D. D. Guttenplan *London Review of Books* 2007-01-01)

About the Author

Greil Marcus is the author of *The Doors*, *Mystery Train*, and other books.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kara Corbett:

This book untitled *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*, Twentieth Anniversary Edition to be one of several books this best seller in this year, this is because when you read this book you can get a lot of benefit into it. You will easily to buy that book in the book store or you can order it by using online. The publisher of the book sells the e-book too. It makes you more easily to read this book, because you can read this book in your Touch screen phone. So there is no reason for your requirements to past this e-book from your list.

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Spent a free time for you to be fun activity to try and do! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Will you something different to fill your own personal free time/ holiday? Could be reading a book may be option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing that you ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the reserve untitled *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*, Twentieth Anniversary Edition can be fine book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Elizabeth Givens:

Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century, Twentieth Anniversary Edition can be one of your starter books that are good idea. We all recommend that straight away because this guide has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into pleasure arrangement in writing *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*, Twentieth Anniversary Edition although doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource information that maybe you can be among it. This great information can certainly drawn you into new stage of crucial pondering.

William Hill:

As a college student exactly feel bored in order to reading. If their teacher inquired them to go to the library in order to make summary for some reserve, they are complained. Just tiny students that has reading's spirit or real their pastime. They just do what the teacher want, like asked to go to the library. They go to right now there but nothing reading very seriously. Any students feel that examining is not important, boring and also can't see colorful pictures on there. Yeah, it is to be complicated. Book is very important in your case. As we know that on this period, many ways to get whatever you want. Likewise word says, ways to reach Chinese's

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