

‘The Whole Thing is over by Nine O’ Clock’: The Rude Mechs’s adaptation of Greil Marcus’s *Lipstick Traces*

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*Act Three was great in Reinhardt’s play—
Six hundred extras milling.
Listen to what the critics say!
All Berlin finds it thrilling.
But in the whole affair I see
A parable, if you ask me.
“Revolution!” the People howls and cries
“Freedom, that’s what we’re needing!”
We’ve needed it for centuries—
Our arteries are bleeding.
The stage is shaking. The Audience
Rock.
The whole thing is over by nine o’clock*

—Kurt Tucholsky on the 1920 Max Reinhardt production of Romain Rolland’s *Danton* quoted in Marcus’s *Lipstick Traces*.¹

The Austin, Texas-based Rude Mechs Theatre Company’s production of *Lipstick Traces* has been performed many times between July 1999 and May 2003 in Austin, New York City, Seattle, Los Angeles, and Salzburg, Germany, to warm critical and popular response.² The show is a seventy-five-minute theatrical interpretation of rock music critic Greil Marcus’s 1989 book of the same name. This work, which took its name from a pop song, is “a secret history” of the twentieth century that links together Dada, Punk, the 1950s revolutionary Situationist movement, and sixteenth-century heretic John of Leyden in its narrative of negation. Ultimately covering almost five hundred years of history in its 487 pages, Marcus’s book is exhausting, if not exhaustive, despite its readability.

Necessarily selective, *Rude Mechs’s Lipstick Traces* told Marcus’s story primarily through the mouths of Dada Drummer Richard Huelsenbeck (1892-1974),

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French Situationist Guy Debord (1932-1994), punk rocker Johnny Rotten (b. 1956), and business impresario Malcolm McClaren (b. 1946).³ McClaren, along with Dr. Narrator, a black-clad pseudo-academic, served as an onstage audience for the other “performers.” Dr. Narrator also served as a guide through the play’s historiography, offering contextual information and diagrams to supplement the performance’s actions, which, in its attempt to capture the associative fury of Marcus’s book, juxtaposed events from different times and places on stage. Most of the events that the Rude Mechs chose to stage, however, were performances: auditions, cabaret acts, public lectures, movie screenings, and TV appearances.

This decision was not merely theatrically expedient; in addition to providing drama and excitement, the Rude Mechs’s choices argued that performance was a place where nothing is true and everything is possible. As writer/adaptor Kirk Lynn claims, these performances are important because “they actually change something somehow”: when Rotten opens his mouth, “the cabaret Voltaire is born again, which is a beautiful sentiment and strangely possible.”⁴ Put slightly differently, as director Shawn Sides suggests in the same interview, these moments “where anything could happen” break the habits of everyday life, and one sees not the “have-to’s” but the “what-if-nots.”⁵

I enjoyed the Rude Mechs’s production, but I left the theatre uncertain as to whether and how these moments, as re-presented in the theatre, could actually inspire what-if-nots. Marcus’s most sustained meditation on theatricality, performance, and possibility signals a similar ambivalence. In a rant from *Lipstick Traces* that directly precedes Tucholsky’s poem, he states:

As a member of a society where the values I was raised to believe in, values that as I learned to make my own choices, I came to cherish, are every day insulted, mocked, scorned, and on the part of those in power are every day progressively destroyed . . . as such a person I am filled with despair and disgust, I am filled with murderous fantasies whenever I permit myself to stop and think for more than a few minutes at a time. I suppose I am drawn to the performing space because I imagine that there I might find my own kind of insult mockery and scorn, because there I might find my murderous fantasies dramatized and affirmed. But I am also drawn to it because it is a laboratory of change as good as any other; because I have found out that what is said there is sometimes said with more clarity and more mystery than what is said anywhere else; because I know that one can leave a nightclub with the feeling that nothing will ever be the same. But as I move off to the long look at those things that were, for a short time now long past, brought to bear in a

few performances, performances played out in small stages or in the pages of obscure publications, it is worth attending to a version of the performing space as a place where revolution goes to die, where its spirit, to use a favorite situationist word, is recuperated, where the shout of what should be is absorbed into the spectacle of what is, where the impossible demand is brought back into the fold of expectation and result, where the disease of collective vehemence is cured.⁶

As Marcus's digression suggests, inasmuch as it is a book about Dada and punk, *Lipstick Traces* is also an exploration of the possibilities of performative thinking and doing as historiography and political praxis, however unconventional, "unaffirmative," or unsuccessful. It is also the product of Reagan-era political disenfranchisement. Despite his misgivings, however, Marcus's secret history of negation, just like the play it inspired, finds its center in performance, particularly performances that break down the secure boundary between audience and actors, art and life, instead of, following Antonin Artaud, being a site where we are taught first and foremost that, "[we] are not free [and] the sky can still fall on our heads."⁷ Placing Marcus's book, its subjects and its performances within the theatre space materializes the rock critic's negative dialectical probing, while providing no easy answers. It is the sustained tension between performance and theatre, rage and containment, sense and nonsense that make Marcus's book, and the Rude Mechs's theatricalization of it, meaningful sites within which to question our assumptions about the relationship between performance and politics.

Whereas past criticism of Marcus's *Lipstick Traces* has concentrated on its historiographical methodology, challenge to academic disciplinarity and place within the development of cultural studies, this essay focuses on performance in Marcus's work and the implications of performing Marcus's work.⁸ I argue that the Rude Mechs's production not only underscored Marcus's ambivalence about performance, but exposed the problem at the heart of contemporary "avant-garde" theatre: that the capitalist models these theatres are increasingly asked to participate in compromise both the avant-garde theatre's questioning of "business as usual" politics and its challenge to the inhibiting strictures of everyday life. Despite these restrictions, however, the Rude Mechs's *Lipstick Traces* revealed the ironic truth that it may be during the theatre's most self-conscious instances of performance that the real is born from the spectacle, making incisive and irreducible political critique strangely possible, if only for a moment.

Thus, I consider not only how Marcus posits performance as the place where the "secret history" of the twentieth century is played out, but also analyze how his understanding of the rupture between representation and reality within performance articulates his methods of analysis. In doing so, I necessarily evaluate Marcus's

implicit and explicit evocations of Frankfurt School philosopher and music critic Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), particularly Marcus's inheritance of Adorno's conceptions about the culture industry, negative dialectics, and performance. When approaching *Rude Mechs's Lipstick Traces*, I explore the problems created when Marcus's performative history is placed within the spatial, discursive, methodological, and institutional limitations of contemporary theatrical production. The articulation between Marcus's subjects, his book, and its performance re-assesses the complicated relationship between revisionist imaginings of Frankfurt School philosophy and contemporary downtown, if not necessarily avant-garde, theatre practices.⁹ Seeing hope in negation rather than affirmation, I, like Marcus and Adorno before me, enact a negative dialectical analysis that seeks not to reconcile the practices of my subjects, but to place them in an uneasy tension with each other, avoiding any type of material or theoretical resolution. I believe that the aesthetic experience of that lack of reconciliation in itself is crucial to understanding the works I write about and the specific cultural moment of my writing: on the eve of the second inauguration of George W. Bush.

As such, I have resisted making a unidirectional argument about its subjects, believing that such an enterprise would defeat my purpose. In this spirit, I have modified, if not entirely eschewed, the conventions of traditional argumentation as a conscious attempt to penetrate the subjective madneses and passionate affinities of *Lipstick Traces's* cast of characters. Thus, I see this essay as a constellation of shifting relationships within the material rather than a road map through it. As Adorno himself claims in "The Essay as Form":

Thought does not progress in a single direction; instead its moments are woven together as a carpet. The fruitfulness of the thoughts depends on the density of the texture. The thinker does not actually think but rather makes himself into an arena for intellectual experience, without unraveling it. While even traditional thought is fed by impulses from such experience, it eliminates the memory of the process by virtue of its form. The essay, however, takes this experience as the model, without, as reflected form, simply imitating it. The experience is mediated through the essay's own conceptual organization; the essay proceeds, so to speak, methodically unmethodically.¹⁰

Accordingly, this investigation depends on a flexible and playful use of performance theory and its terminology. Nonetheless, I have chosen to use a vocabulary about performance primarily designed to describe theatrical and musical events created for audiences and/or political demonstrations whose efficacy is based on interaction with a public. Therefore, unless otherwise stated,

the term “representation” usually designates cultural entities that were created as reproductive of experience in life, whereas the term “real” is used to indicate unrecuperated, if not entirely unmediated, experience. While acknowledging that this distinction is based on the assumptions of the historical avant-garde rather than speech act theory or contemporary performance theory, given my subject matter, I retain it so as to properly engage the Rude Mechs, Greil Marcus, and Theodor Adorno’s theoretical interventions and discursive conventions. Each of these artists and theorists, for better or worse, made their critiques by breaking down the boundaries between art and life while not suggesting that the actual construct of these oppositions was in itself false. Their work is dependent on these distinctions being maintained and challenged rather than being abandoned as obsolete. As such, “performative” here designates employment of the methodologies of performed art that asks for embodied enactment whereas “theatricality” indicates the conscious use of conventions of theatre performance.

I provide these definitions for the sake of methodological clarity; nonetheless, I also follow Adorno’s suggestion that “the essay’s manner of expression is to salvage the precision sacrificed when definition is omitted, without betraying the subject matter to the arbitrariness of conceptual meanings decreed once and for all . . . Not less, but more than a definitional procedure, the essay presses for the reciprocal interactions of its concepts in the process of intellectual experience.”¹¹ That being said, this intellectual experience will proceed starting with the best beginning I can find: Marcus’s first thoughts on performance.

When You Feel a Shove, Shove Back:

Greil Marcus and the Unutterable Dialectic of Performance

Lipstick Traces begins with a story about the Sex Pistols, but it is the story that ends the book that matters most: the narrative of the 1964 Free Speech Movement rally that Marcus participated in as a graduate student. This infamous event, which took place in UC Berkeley’s Sproul Plaza, marked a climactic moment for the student group whose activism for social change that simultaneously inspired protests throughout the country and enraged university administrators on its own turf. As Marcus describes it, after a mollifying speech by a university official, Mario Savio, the “stuttering Demosthenes of the Free Speech Movement” went to mount the stage and was overtaken by police, “inspiring a situation which was only chaos.”¹² The rupture between the expected program and the actual event provides a blueprint for the moments of slippage between the representational and the real that Marcus spends the rest of the book sorting out.

The location of this radical shift from representation to the real was often the audience itself. In 1964, police action transformed Berkeley students from spectators into participants. In 1978, it took the form of a shove: when Marcus is pushed at a Sex Pistols concert, he realizes that the appropriate response is to shove back;

Rotten's violence and negation having invaded the audience space even though he stayed on stage.¹³ In 1968, by acting on their rage at the blank screen that Debord called a movie (titled *Hurlements en Favor de Sade*), his audiences made the screening into a situation, retaking the lived experience of the space of exhibition and refusing to be a society of spectacle. Shooting into the crowd, the Dadaists performed the ultimate provocation: performing violence on their audience, destroying the boundary between real and representation. More importantly, in each and every case Marcus analyzes, the audience ceased to be an audience. These disruptive moments were not articulations of affirmative social or political praxis: the shove back and the shout do not try to be part of the solution to avoid being part of the problem. Negating representation was their only aim. Revolting against audience expectations, these events forced their audiences to experience what they were doing not as art separate from life, or as acts that "represented" a pre-existing real, but as provocations that challenged that divide. Consequently, these performances actually happened. They did not stage revolution; they inspired it.

For Marcus, "this is actually happening" becomes a leitmotiv throughout the text, leaving the mouth of Pete Townshend and finding a home everywhere from 1916 Zurich to 1978 San Francisco. It is between these two cities and times that "this is actually happening" becomes inextricable from the utterance of the unutterable: the bond Huelsenbeck and Rotten share. For Huelsenbeck, the horror of the Great War stripped language of meaning forcing him and Cabaret Voltaire founder Hugo Ball (1886-1927) to abandon the one they knew and create another. For Rotten, embodied disgust at 1970s British life and his place in it took over the need for discourse, his inarticulate rage less a sign of his inability to make a statement than a signal that statements could not cut it anymore. Punk, in Marcus's words, became a "moment in time that took shape as language anticipating its own destruction."¹⁴ The power of these performances, then, was not in how they used language as a meaning-making tool, but its opposite: how they stripped language of usefulness by communicating through utterances that challenged assumptions of meaning. No one really "understood" Huelsenbeck's quasi-primitive *Umba Umbas* or the "unspeakable confusion in the last minute of 'Holidays in the Sun'"¹⁵ At the same time, while it's true that Rotten "never learned the language of protest," it is also clear that he sometimes spoke as clear as a bell, his listeners' horror being a reaction to knowing exactly what he was saying.¹⁶

The same could be said of Artaud, who haunts Marcus's imaginings even though he is never cited. Artaud's desire for the theater that "lies halfway between gesture and thought" is fulfilled in many of the performances *Lipstick Traces* mentions.¹⁷ Whether or not this focus is related to an unacknowledged inheritance from the Situationists is open to question. What is not is how Rotten fulfilled Artaud's claim that "language can not be defined except by its possibilities for extension beyond words, for development in space, as opposed to the expressive possibilities of spoken

dialogue.”¹⁸ The link between the two is clearest in performance. One need only remember Artaud’s 1947 radio “performance” of *To Have Done with the Judgement of God*, where his mental confusion and physical wasting sharpened his ability to fulfill his own prophesy. The obscenities, screeches, and groans that accompanied his blasphemous description of a desiccated God doomed the Western world by attacking it at its very core just like the punks did.¹⁹

The root of Marcus’s fascination with the paradoxical language of protest, however far it stretches, was born in a different moment of confusion. Marcus’s mention of Savio’s stuttering when he recounts the Berkeley Free Speech rally is no accident. As a performer, Savio was a sophisticated and eloquent speaker whose mastery of argument and verbal elegance made him the “star” of a much larger movement. In private discourse, however, Savio was often inarticulate and fought a stammering problem.²⁰ The struggle between sense making and nonsense-making makes him Rotten and Huelsenbeck’s logical forefather.²¹ Marcus’s valorization of his aborted 1964 speech negated his earlier affirmative social praxis and championed the power of abandoning eloquence at a moment of crisis. If Savio would have spoken, his audience may have been dazzled by his performance, remaining merely silent listeners. It is here, then, that “inarticulation,” the breach between representation and real, and the transformation of the audience into activists form the primal scene which fuels Marcus’s book.

It is also here that Savio, Huelsenbeck, and the rest meet a very strange bedfellow: Theodor Adorno. Marcus realizes the irony: as he suggests, Adorno never condoned Dada, “likely wretched when he heard Elvis Presley, and no doubt would have understood the Sex Pistols as a return to Kristallnacht if he hadn’t been lucky enough to die in 1969.”²² Best known for his critique of the capitalist popular culture, his antipathy for mass movements is also well known. Adorno’s run from the lecture hall and lack of practical engagement in student movements transformed him from hero to persona non-grata in the 1960s, making him a sort of Anti-Savio. Nonetheless, the German’s rage and distrust of corporate language make him an essential part of the story. Like Marcus, Adorno depends on performance, particularly musical performance, as a utopian mode through which aesthetic experience can avoid being recuperated by dominant social structures despite the ubiquity of crass commercialization called the culture industry. And it is only through re-imagining Adorno’s “performance theory” that Marcus can find the punk in pop.

**Fragments from a Rock Critic's Damaged Life:
Marcus, Adorno, Critical Negation, and Performance**

Adorno's writings on music are vast and varied, unsystematic, and contradictory. Seeking art that embodied a truth-value, he found music the best site to demonstrate his emergent mode of dialectical inquiry. Contrasting music with other art forms, he claims "interpretation of literature is understanding literature, interpretation of music is performing music."²³ Performance, then, is an objectification of music and its subjectification, a process that in its "moment" reveals the historical position of music and its non-identity with its interpretation.²⁴ The lack of separation between making art and interpreting it stops the work from having a trans-historical meaning which would risk its becoming a given or a mere product of leisure culture. Adorno's elaboration of a theory of the world *via* music formed the roots of his theories on language, history, and totalitarianism, much of which Marcus has read carefully and integrated seamlessly within his own work on popular music.

In *Lipstick Traces*, however, Marcus's evocation of Adorno relies primarily upon his engagement with *Mimima Moralia* (1951), a book constructed of aphoristic essays from his Los Angeles days, or, as the subtitle suggests, "excerpts from a damaged life." Admitting that it "may be the gloomiest book ever written," Marcus's essay reads like an excerpt from his own damaged life as a rock critic looking for the punk in pop.²⁵ Using Adorno's analysis of social totality, in which the mass production of the American post-war culture industry buys off any resistance, he attacks both the banality of 1980s rock stardom and its assurance that the audience will be reached, even if it is with the pandering U.S.A. for Africa's "We are the World." Going on, Marcus considers just how these mechanisms have shut down stalwart pockets of resistance, such as Bruce Springsteen and the Mekons, finding compromise in the first instance and evidence of a bitter nostalgia waiting for extinction in the second.²⁶

In *Lipstick Traces*, published just a few years later, the rock critic turned Adorno on his head, refuting the views he voiced within *The Culture Industry*, where he claimed that mass recording in itself necessitated that music function as solace. Countering Adorno's claim that the familiarity this type of recording allowed—which led pieces of music to be hummed on the way to work—meant that these fragments would always be recuperated, Marcus finds negation in one of the 70s most quotable lines: I am an Antichrist.²⁷ In the prologue, he describes a cartoon that depicts Monty Smith as a shabby man with a tin whistle speaking Johnny Rotten's famous line to the dismay of the nice ladies having tea inside a café. Jokes about punk, pop, and career failure aside, Marcus claims that the quoted line still conjures up his memory of that first line of *Anarchy in the UK* and the feeling of fear Rotten's threatening and true proclamation inspired. In fact, it happens every time he listens to the record. Later in the same paragraph, he suggests that these words "are like someone saying the Germans are coming! And there's no way

we're going to stop 'em!"²⁸ Going on about "Anarchy in the UK," Marcus admits: "It is just a pop song, a would-be, has been hit record, cheap commodity . . . It is a joke—and yet the voice that carries it remains something new in rock'n'roll, which is to say something new in postwar popular culture: a voice that denied all social facts, and in that denial affirmed that everything was possible."²⁹ It is not until some sixty pages later that he openly engages the Frankfurt School, however. Seeing punk as fake culture become real, he claims:

Punk was the most easily recognizable as the new version of the old Frankfurt School critique of mass culture . . . But now the old premises of the old critique were exploding out of a spot no one in the Frankfurt School, not Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, or Walter Benjamin would ever have recognized: mass cultures pop cult heart. Stranger still: the critique of mass culture now paraded as mass culture, at the least as protean, would be mass culture.³⁰

It is despite punk's emergence as part of Malcolm McClaren's "cash from chaos" scheme, mass recording, and its sometime requisite quotability that the music resisted recuperation. It resisted because of how it was *performed*, on stage and in everyday life. Punk's opaque and revelatory signs, its various physical uglinesses, made ordinary social life seem like a trick—the result of sadomasochistic economics—the secreted truth that underpins the entire system. Marcus and Adorno, despite their very different opinions on mass recorded music, share a belief in art's ephemeral moments as containing the possibility of embodying subjective and world historical truth. Marcus's negative dialectical positioning of Adorno depends on performance as historical articulation; at the same time, understanding the *Rude Mechs's Lipstick Traces's* relevance requires detailed historical analysis of Adorno and Marcus's own performance theories.

The first pages of Marcus's *Lipstick Traces* compares "I am an Antichrist" to "the Germans are coming." This comparison makes overt the two historical panics that underlie the authors' respective gloominesses. For Adorno, the line in the sand is the Holocaust, after which fascism transformed into mind control. In his seven-year-long Los Angeles exile, he saw no hope to resist an all-inclusive thought machine as terrifying as the Germany he had fled in 1938: the commercialization of mass culture that he dubbed the culture industry. For Marcus, it is the eight-year rule of the Reagan-Bush administration and the candy colored pop music that obfuscated the economic violence they wrought on the United States that is to blame. Contrasting 1977 with 1985, Marcus comes to the conclusion that even Bruce Springsteen, whose music describing American dispossession indicts the system, has been tempered by his audience's respectful silence and his new unwillingness to be a crank.³¹ Seeing Adorno's hope, "evanescence," as inconceivable within the

contemporary pop milieu, Marcus almost settles for the same bitter sentimentalism he diagnoses in his predecessor. In separate essays from *In the Fascist Bathroom*, he contrasts two indicative moments for the performer he sees as Elvis's inheritor. In 1980, he paints the following picture:

Two nights later, on October 27 in Oakland, the best seat in the house—front row on the center aisle—was the prize of a small blond woman, a thirty three year old attorney from San Francisco named Louisa Jaskulski. She spent the first hour and a half dancing in front of her chair—nothing fancy, just the sweetest most private sort of movements, the kind of dance one might do in front of a mirror. She was so expressive she seemed to add a dimension to every song and in the second half of the concert Springsteen responded in kind. He leaped from the stage and, with a gesture of gleeful courtliness, offered Jaskulski his arm, whereupon the two cakewalked up to the aisle to the astonishment of everyone in the arena. This wasn't Elvis bestowing a kiss on a lucky female, who then, *according to an inescapable script*, collapsed in tears like a successful supplicant at Lourdes; prancing down that aisle Springsteen was not a star and Jaskulski was not a fan.³²

If the scene seems somewhat familiar that's because it is. You saw it in the 1984 video for "Dancing in the Dark." Describing that performance, Marcus holds forth in a whole different tone:

You could see what was wrong with *Born in the USA* when you turned on the television and saw Springsteen in his first in-the-flesh video—He looks made up. Moving across the stage in *seemingly choreographed* marks on the board jerks, he grins like a supper club singer doing Gloomy Sunday while communicating boundless love for the crowd. One is made to see a wide eyed girl pressing against the stage; Springsteen takes her hand, lifts her up, and dances with her as the video fades out. From show to show he really does this—but this girl is too cute, and the routine makes something that actually happens into something that could never happen. The next time you pay your money, enter a hall and see Springsteen sing his songs, it will make you think that the woman whose hand he takes is a plant.³³

What is interesting here is Marcus's delineation between theater and performance, although those are not the terms he uses. Nevertheless, in the first instance, what sets Springsteen apart from Elvis is that the latter uses an inescapable script, while the former "wings it." In the second, he condemns Springsteen precisely because his moves are choreographed. The sticking point, then, is the script of the rock star's movement, an inherent problem in live musical performance. Springsteen's gestures are not only a repetition, but something even more reprehensible, evidence of staged repetition controlled by someone other than Springsteen.

Marcus's comments on the Boss echo Adorno's diatribe against the role of the conductor, particularly the conductor of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, who held totalitarian rule over its music while lurking unseen. In the end, this experience of aesthetic totalitarianism is exactly what the "Dancer in the Dark" video delivered to its viewers.³⁴ To Marcus, this performative crying wolf is indicative of the era. Springsteen's second performance is narrated in an essay titled "Four More Years." The choreographed movements he locates on Springsteen's newly videogenic body are found much more conspicuously in President Ronald Reagan, whose purchase of the Boss's music to articulate his vision of America was (and still is) nothing less than revolting. So, while it would be easy to see Marcus's critique as a wholesale condemnation of "staged" rock videos as a medium, his argument is a historically specific one. Like Adorno, Marcus extracts political criticism from musical performance to make coercive methodologies visible at their particular cultural moments. In this case, what scholar Martin Puchner might call Marcus's anti-theatricality was born in a fear of rehearsed repetition indicative of 1980s politics, the teleprompter, and the emergence of the political public as "an audience to be reached."³⁵ It was Marcus's fear that an audience that would sit quietly in their seats and watch the Gipper's performance in front of them that led him to the Situationist-inspired critique of 1980s politics, not a blanket rejection of theatricality.

All is not lost, however; Marcus defends his heroes. Listening to the rest of *Born in the USA*, he finds the way out of the mess when he encounters Springsteen's title track. A stinging indictment of the plight of Vietnam Vets that hits where it hurts, the song is "clandestine communication" in a pseudo-Stalinist era which needs no censorship; "Born in the USA" is an unexpected injury, which leaves the knife in the heart of America despite its surroundings.³⁶ Springsteen's lyrics reveal unintentional truth, Adorno's negative articulation of Benjamin's dialectical image in which the relationship between past and present becomes visible in a heartbeat, the emerging picture working not to betray itself, but to provide the rare opportunity to view a real "truth" of the present.³⁷ Marcus also finds that his objects sometimes speak against themselves. Their hidden uglinesses making their way through society's attempt to obfuscate their cries.

His hope, however, is rooted in past rather than present reality, and it is just as contradictory as Adorno's occasional glimpses at a silver lining. An affirmation from negation, *Lipstick Traces* was written from the rubble of Marcus's Reagan era essays, his disenchantment with 1980s pop sending him on his course to find punk wherever and whenever he could. Claiming that what the Frankfurt School theorist "lacked was glee," Marcus imagines punk as "Adorno performed," fantasizing *Minima Moralia*'s fragments being spit out by Rotten himself as gleeful enactment. In contrast to their recuperation as slogans by 1960s student radicals who chanted them, quoting them like dreaded fragmented leitmotifs, their 1970s incarnations neither inure their audience nor provide easy affirmation.³⁸ Instead, by denying utopia and embodying the irreconcilable ugliness of their society as provocation, 1970s punk lives in dialectical relationship to political praxis. In itself, Marcus's valorization of punk's grunts and screams, of "language anticipating its own destruction," may have given Adorno pause, running the risk of being politically regressive rather than resistant. For the Frankfurt School diva, "nonsense" was only politically articulate when it was positioned as sense, as in the case of his assessment of Beckett's drama, whose clowns reveal the era's apocalypse.³⁹ Marcus makes the argument, however, that in their moment these gestures were a violent desecration of sense as appropriate in his era as Beckett's drama was to post-World War Two Europe. A fly in the ointment of Hegelian reconciliation, Rotten's refusal to use the discourse of political change negated social facts, resisting the culture industry by articulating his disarticulation with the world around him.⁴⁰ Simply put, the Sex Pistols were Beckett in reverse: instead of performing an articulate disarticulation of social conditions, they enacted a disarticulate articulation of them.

Marcus revises Adorno as he reveres him, yet he adamantly retains a commitment to performance as a negative dialectical methodology, setting him apart from contemporary theorists who reject dialectical thinking. According to his detractors, he also may have inherited Adorno's penchant for overreaching misinterpretations of music and history, making him a faulty Marxist who unnecessarily rejects progressive politics to boot.⁴¹ Nonetheless, Marcus's reassessment of the Frankfurt School, in which he employs Adorno's principles of close reading of performance and enacts the distinction between performance and theatricality inherent to such readings, is at the forefront of revisionist criticism of Adorno.⁴² This re-assessment is crucial to understanding the quandary in which "downtown theatre" finds itself today and analyzing the methods by which many artists attempt to escape from it.

I Will Not Sit in Your Audience Box!: the *Rude Mechs*'s *Lipstick Traces*

Despite reviews that suggested otherwise, translating the events of *Lipstick Traces* to the stage seems especially apt considering the centrality of performance to Marcus's secret history.⁴³ First, the uncapturable moments of negation embodied

within representation are more easily found on stage than in its textual remains. Huelsenbeck's poetry was certainly more palpable in performance. T. Ryder Smith's enactment made words lose their signifying sense right before the audience.⁴⁴ His words really happen before us. They appear not to have been written before the moment they were uttered. The simultaneous poem, performed by Smith, James Urbaniak, and Ean Sheehy, had the same effect, seeming more radical in performance than on the page. Marcus himself admits that he did not understand what happened at the Cabaret Voltaire until he saw the play, claiming that when he saw the performance he "finally understood it."⁴⁵

The possibilities of theatrical juxtaposition complemented *Lipstick Traces*'s structure. Debord, Huelsenbeck, and Rotten's presence onstage together erased the chronological horizons that separated these historical actors, allowing them to coexist in the audience's present imagination. Most importantly, the play caught the visceral connections between the different eras' performances. Allowing the similarity between Huelsenbeck's sound poetry and Rotten's rendition of Alice Cooper's "18" to co-exist onstage embodied Marcus's methodology, which de-centered a teleological view of history to illuminate the margins. By replacing an explanation of influence with the confluence of performance, the production made the visceral argument behind *Lipstick Traces* more evident than text alone ever could. The eerily present Dada Death, who haunted numerous scenes, reminded audiences and actors of the ultimate negation that inspired these early twentieth-century performances. Doubling Smith, who was actually mortally ill at the time, his combination of comic grotesque and looming horror raised the stakes of the production even when it was at its most ludic.

These terrors, however, were intermittent and the production's historiographical challenge was equally inconsistent. Reading Martin Puchner's recent article, "Society of the Counter Spectacle: Debord and the Theatre of the Situationists," I realized I was not alone in my disquiet about the show. Pinpointing the problem succinctly, Puchner suggests that what hindered the *Rude Mechs*'s *Lipstick Traces* was its belief in theatricality—a belief that led the Mechs to stage interruption rather than to interrupt, to lecture its audience rather than to provoke them—or as he claims at the end of his article "to make a spectacle of critique rather than a critique of the spectacle."⁴⁶ Voicing his problem with the performance as a whole, he states: "Up on stage, *Lipstick Traces* was no longer an archeology of the fleeting and ephemeral, but its re-staging; not a secret history, but its disclosure, commented on and framed by the explanatory discourse of an omnipresent narrator."⁴⁷ Going on, he attacks the mode of the narrator as well as her presence onstage, claiming that her "overly pedagogical tone" placed her at odds with the very avant-garde practices she described.

I would add that Lana Lesley and her comrade Malcolm McLaren's interventions conflict with *Lipstick Traces*'s authorial tone as much as they do its historiography.

Marcus went through great pains to extricate himself from traditional constructs while not apologizing for his methodology. The performance did the opposite by infusing itself with a self-conscious awareness. When presenting scenes that are hypothetical in Marcus's imagining, Sides and Lynn chose not to leave the ambiguity present but to editorialize indeterminacy, suggesting at the end of various scenes that "that never really happened" or asking for them to be redone "as in a movie."⁴⁸ These comments negated the performance's possibilities rather than expanding them, making the enactments safe jokes instead of real challenges. Alongside ribbing about *Lipstick Traces's* far-fetched historiographical methodology, the Rude Mechs effectively denied that performance historiography could be a new way of doing history and of thinking about it. Consequently, the production lapsed back into a pseudo-postmodern skeptical irony with multiple narrators that strove to tie up the loose ends of history, however ironically.

The play's final moments did just that. First, Rotten delivered a monologue about the Sex Pistols and societal hate, then Lana Lesley returned for a five-and-a-half-minute history of the twentieth century complete with cue cards. Soon after, McClaren made his final appearance, upending Rotten's speculations by querying, "What is history? Perhaps it's getting the last word."⁴⁹ Lesley, meanwhile, concluded the show with these words:

The story is . . .
 endemic to the twentieth century
 Nihilism pulls the trigger
 But negation assumes other people,
 Calls them on the phone
 From inside a London tearoom,
 Two well-dressed woman stare at a shabby old man with a tin
 whistle in the rain outside
 Because a life infused with surprise is better—
 NARRATOR gets cut off by a blackout
 Sound Cue: PUNK ROCK, Very Loud
 Slide: Fin.⁵⁰

This final moment makes a valiant attempt at reproducing Marcus's performative historiography—the affirmative negation Marcus chases throughout the book—where a moment of performance re-writes history in an instant. Nevertheless, the scenes that precede Lesley's final monologue undermine this possibility because McClaren's speech, which iterates that history is written by the victors, follows hard upon Rotten's dictum to escape totalizing structures. Given that McClaren's history as a narrator throughout the play makes him an "authority," if an ironic one, he wins the argument. McClaren enacts a dramaturgical closure impossible

to overthrow. Despite the fragmentary pathos of Lesley's coda and the real look of horror on her face, the last scene's interruption by loud punk music, a blackout, and the almost Godardian appearance of the final title card, the play's "inconclusive conclusion" never escapes a coy wink wink, nudge nudge. Even as its last word is interrupted, *Lipstick Traces's* history of explanation prevents it from being a play on a scrap heap. And even if one argued that such a scrap heap would be nihilism instead of negation, the production choices made elsewhere stop her last ditch efforts from being that phone call.

Village Voice reviewer Jessica Winter pinpoints this dramaturgical problem in the following remark:

The rueful Brechtian maneuvering (admittedly strained at times) negates Pete Townshend's encomium, "When you listen to the Sex Pistols . . . what immediately strikes you is that this is actually happening"—and so does putting Townshend's words in the mouth of their flamboyantly cynical manager. (McClaren/Greenspan poses his cigarette at such an ostentatiously awkward angle that it's a distancing gesture in itself).⁵¹

By reminding spectators that what was in front of them was *not* happening, *Lipstick Traces* created a distance between audience and actors. At the same time, the familiarity most spectators probably had with presentational staging techniques, especially multimedia bombardment, made them less than disruptive. The recent surge of video projection use in theatre performance has concentrated on employing it either to display additional background information of the "based on a true story" type or to provide narrative structure for plays without one. *Lipstick Traces's* projections did both of these things.

Lana Lesley's questions and Debord/Urbaniak's answers aided and abetted this mission. Frustrated by the *Hurlements* screening, Lesley finally asked Urbaniak, "You expected the audiences to sit through this?" He answered by *telling* her and McClaren about how radical the film was in its time, in turn letting us, the contemporary audience know exactly how we were to understand the event.⁵² At other moments, when left untutored as to meaning, we were led instead to reverence. During Rotten's final speech, a real evocation of the terror, the microphone rolling across the floor after its cessation, the onstage audience conditioned us to respond to it with rapt attention. Lesley's lean forward acknowledged that something important was being said, and one should sit in one's seat and listen quietly, doing nothing. As Puchner accurately claims, "while we watch the audience onstage, the actual audience is left in the dark and positioned merely to absorb an historical curiosity: no reaction is expected or invited."⁵³

When the Mechs addressed the lack of audience response, it only did so with a tired downtown irony, a special sort of late 1990s recognition of the limitations of theatrical performance even as it performs. In Lesley's first monologue she claims, "We have a show for you tonight! It is not for theatre-goers at all, but for others, who unfortunately couldn't make it."⁵⁴ Soon after, she asked the theatre audience not to cheer or boo but "to just sit still like at the theatre. Let's practice, very good."⁵⁵ Her critique of theatre behavior is funny, self-deprecating, and self-conscious. Unfortunately, Lesley's jest disarmed itself. The night I attended the performance, the audience dutifully obeyed the Narrator even as they laughed at themselves, her punch lines leaving most people unperturbed. Lesley's comments inspired not a bit of revolt. Perhaps because she did not want one.

Lipstick Traces's inability to take up the challenge of having an unruly audience was exemplified by the Mechs's response to a Situationist intrusion into one of their performances. As the *Austin Chronicle* review tells the story:

There was the malcontent Situationist—believe it or not, says Lynn, there are still some of them around—who came to see the show. He wouldn't pay, but was let in anyway, and started prowling around the aisles. When the show was about to start, he was asked if he wouldn't mind taking a seat, and he replied (and each of the Rude Mechs does a slightly different but invariably hysterical impression of this): "I will not sit in your audience box." He instead sat off to the side and kept moving around. (Richardson says that was all very amusing, but if anyone tries it again, they'll be thrown out; "Tell the audience they have to sit in the audience box.")⁵⁶

Visionary crank though he might have been, the Situationist was always already historical in the Mechs's imagination ("yes, they still exist!"). He was a bit of a joke; his refusal, the subject of their show, is an annoyance rather than a challenge. It is difficult to take the Mechs's staging of the Situationists for real when they do not take Situationists for real. Ultimately, the intruder's unruliness did not lead the Mechs to question the theatre, but to capitulate to its needs, a byproduct of their will to survive by making art by any means necessary. The Mechs, of course, understand this themselves:

We are not punk rock! Sides, Lesley, and fellow Rude Mechanical Sarah Richardson all scream in answer to Lynn's insinuation that the troupe possesses something of the Sex Pistols' cursing, chaotic "playfulness and stupidity." Of course, grants Lynn, "We like being known around the community as hard drinkers,

loudmouth, potty-mouthed people, but ultimately that's not very punk rock. We don't . . ."

Throw TVs out windows?

"Well, we do that. But then we wake up early and actually do work in the office and get concerned about our corporate sponsorship. Maybe if we had a good manager, we could turn into a punk rock theatre . . . we need a Malcolm. We need to put an ad in the paper. "One Malcolm needed to sell us out."⁵⁷

Ultimately, analyzing this situation indicts not the Rude Mechs, but the system they were forced to work within. What is interesting to me is how the Mechs's reaction to the Situationists in question and their admission of their own financial limitations are not analyzed as part of the same problem. Although these comments are culled from the same interview and narrated in a single article, neither the Mechs nor Ada Calhoun connect these two stories. In short, the economic strictures of theatrical production are only used to critique the artists' own lifestyles, not the material and theoretical possibilities of the work. And it is in this specific cultural and historical moment, albeit in much altered form, that malcontented musicologist Theodor Adorno re-enters the scene.

All the World's (Not?) a Stage:

Adorno, Debbie Harry, and the New Theatrical Dialectic of Enlightenment

In his 1931-33 essay "A Natural History of the Theatre," Adorno launches into a diatribe that could be taken straight out of Antonin Artaud's seminal 1938 *Theatre and Its Double*. Speaking of the development of the dome in the opera house Adorno suggests,

Those who sit nearest to it, who for a small sum of money, and at the farthest remove from the stage, know that the roof is not firmly fixed above them and wait to see whether it won't burst open one day and bring about the unification of the stage and reality which is reflected for us in an image composed equally of memory and hope. Today, when the stage is bound by the text and the audience by bourgeois conventions, the gallery is the only part of the theater which is open to true improvisation.⁵⁸

The fact that Adorno looks for an ideal unification of art and life in the negative example of modern theatre architecture reveals a different side of his performance theory. Adorno's well-documented critique of Wagner, which subsumes Nietzsche's own, is, as Puchner argues elsewhere, a very particular type of anti-theatricalism.⁵⁹ Equating total theatricality with Fascism, Adorno was one among many to suggest Wagner as emblematic of all that was wrong with modernity. Greil Marcus and

Theodor Adorno both theorize performance from the vantage point of the music concert, paying special attention to the use of space. And, as such, both of them are suspicious of the comfort of protective representationalism, in the form of text or over-rehearsed repetition, inscribed within particular performance spaces that can surround their audiences—whether in a small club, an opera house, or a sold-out stadium.

Adorno's critique manifests itself today in the heart of spaces once seen as removed from bourgeois conundrums: theaters below Manhattan's Fourteenth Street. *Lipstick Traces's* producers configured Soho's black box Ohio Theatre into a proscenium faced with orderly rows of seats for its paying spectators. The seats met both the general expectations of the theatre and the specific ones harbored by the Foundry Theatre's audience, who, when paying fifty dollars a ticket, assume they will be able to sit comfortably for the show, even though they may be willing to stand for Mick Jagger at twice the price. This audience-friendly attitude is a departure from practice emergent in the 1960s and 70s when spectators were forced into uncomfortable positions in unfinished spaces to watch shows. Replaying Adorno's criticism of the music hall, the reconfiguration of comfort and leisure as part of the downtown theatre experience is as economic as it is aesthetic. I attribute this change not to generic artistic conservatism, but to the economic reality of downtown theatre: a reality the Mechs hint at when admitting that they show up at the office at 9:00 a.m. With more and more dependence on audience revenue and grants designed to help such theatres "build audiences," making spectators uncomfortable is too much to ask. Thus, even though the Foundry Theatre's mission statement claims that it "aspires to assemble a community of artists with revolutionary ideas for the theatre," which "invite audiences to visit unexplored landscapes of thought," ultimately these products must occur within the confines of the "theatre."⁶⁰ Going on, the mission statement describes its commitment to "plays that provoke new questions for our times and compel us to reconsider the impact of theatre on the larger society" in the form of "commissions to artists, roundtables, conferences, and town meetings, inviting members of other communities to join us in forging unconventional answers to conventional questions."

I do not wish to criticize the Foundry's mission, which I generally applaud, yet its textual form as a "statement" reveals that the contemporary financial climate places strictures on the work that it produces beyond ticket price and venue. To make itself fundable, the Foundry needs to prove a very particular type of artistic efficacy—one which not only instructs and delights, but also creates a community—especially a community that one day can pay for its own art: arts funding designed to end the need for arts funding. To accomplish this goal, the Foundry has to rely on the rhetoric of progressive political change, the very antithesis of negative dialectics and punk rock, inscribing a latter-day enlightenment discourse in the process. I am not saying, of course, that all avant-garde theatre artists are

unknowingly coerced into using this rhetorical language or that such language is incapable of articulating non-financial artistic goals. I am also not condemning the desire for sizable theatre audiences or performance-inspired *communitas*. What I *am* suggesting is that downtown, if not necessarily avant-garde, theatre has replaced shock with solvency. In short, many not-for-profit theatre companies have been forced to champion survival in the form of small business success within a capitalist model. The *Lipstick Traces* after party is an example *par excellence* of this development. The party, which no doubt was designed to raise money, or more likely, reduce production debt, depended on corporate sponsorship in the form of in-kind contribution from Absolute Vodka and Manic Panic, the cosmetic company which sells “punk” to suburban teenagers across America.⁶¹

If punk was Malcolm McClaren’s publicity stunt made real by performance, then the performance of *Lipstick Traces* transformed punk back into small-scale commerce. Heed the story of the hair product that brought it to us: Manic Panic. Although the company started out in 1977 with two hundred dollars and two racks of clothes, it is now a five million-dollar corporation. Nonetheless, the corporation still views itself as a stalwart small business run by two punks who had part in an early version of Blondie, remain friends with Deborah Harry, and still play regularly in a band. Their claim that they “don’t just sell these products, but live them” is hard to counter if you look at the website.⁶² Advocating small businesses such as Manic Panic, who in turn support all things punk, may have become the new alterity—if not the new negative dialectical stance. Re-living punk as a lifestyle may be part of that stance, faux-hawk be damned. Debbie Harry herself came to *Lipstick Traces*’s opening night, and, unlike the unnamed Situationist, no one saw her as a relic.⁶³ The opportunity to be heard again, if not actually to be seen, was not lost on the “real” Malcolm McClaren. After *Lipstick Traces* closed in New York, the erstwhile entrepreneur repeatedly called the Foundry Theatre’s office to get a videotape of the production to heat up his lukewarm career.

Taken together, the stories and rumors behind *Lipstick Traces* point to the uneasy relationship between cash and controlled chaos in contemporary downtown theatre. To make the production pay for itself, the show had to be hot, a little wild, but ultimately understandable. Thus, as much as a night of challenge and interruption might have been more true to its source material, such a difficult performance might have alienated rather than “alienated” the Rude Mechs’s audience. Ultimately, *Lipstick Traces* had to reassure even as it challenged. So, although the show began with the combination of an in-your-face rant and disorienting sound effects, just a few moments later we had to be told “Good Evening and welcome to *Lipstick Traces*. It’s going to be fine.”⁶⁴ The narrator’s frenzy throughout the play was only a response to source material’s cluttered historiography, not to its political stance or its challenge to the demarcation between the representational and the real. Lesley claims it will be difficult for her because “she believes it,” but not for

the audience whom she assumes does not? Or does not want to? Either way, the juxtaposition between “this is really happening” and “its going to be ok,” two of the three phrases the Mechs have chosen as slogans in their press, website, and program cancel each other out. The third, “Do you ever feel you’ve been cheated?” might serve as a fitting response. Yet, like Marcus, I was not filled with complete dismay. My negation found a small affirmation in actor T. Ryder Smith’s most Adornan moments.

Smith, as Huelsenbeck, enacts an important repetition with a difference. Early in the *Rude Mechs’s Lipstick Traces*, he re-enacts a manifesto turned sound poem, which critiques the power of language. Smith shoots a gun into the audience then turns it on himself before he even begins the speech. A bit later, he enacts a lecture about the Dada movement that replaces the manifesto with an explanation. After a spiritless re-enactment of the first shooting, he goes on, gets shot by Dada Death and harbors a delayed reaction, fake blood spilling out of the side of his mouth several beats after he takes the bullet. Together, these performances indicted not only Huelsenbeck’s lecturing but the production’s as well, suggesting that *Lipstick Traces* was smarter than itself. Or, rather, that, like the chaos that emerged from cash, a critique of the spectacle could emerge from the spectacle of critique in the form of a pseudo-academic lecture. Like the punks before him, Smith performed Adornan aphorisms with a ferocity that erased their history as the counter-culture platitudes of black-clad poseurs.

In his famous defense of autonomous art, “On Commitment,” Adorno remarked “the stance of the lecturer conceals a clandestine entente with the listeners, who could only be truly rescued from illusions by refusal of it.”⁶⁵ In the same essay, he calls for art that “resists through its form alone the course of the world, which permanently puts a pistol to men’s heads.”⁶⁶ Funnily enough, when Smith places a *fake* gun to his head during a manifesto we are strangely frightened. And, when during a lecture that happened differently, describing events that did not occur—Huelsenbeck reacts to a false fatal shot that an actor dressed as Dada Death fires—we can see all at once the REAL course of the world, a world that in all of its terror, places an actual gun to our heads every single day.⁶⁷ The *Rude Mechs’s Lipstick Traces* proves that representation, performance, or perhaps even theatre *can* birth the real, reminding us that when, as passive audience members, “we gaze too long at monsters, we risk becoming one ourselves.”⁶⁸ One could accuse me of being paranoid. Today, however, when ruled by a cowboy president who is continually “sending a message,” the entente between lecturer and listener may be just that dangerous. The violent terror and self-hatred in Smith’s eyes eradicates any comfortable irony *Lipstick Traces* acquired in performance, if only for a moment: a moment that haunts me some three years after I first saw the production. Yes, *this is actually happening*. In fact, it already has.

Notes

1. Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989) 151.

2. *Lipstick Traces*, adapt. by Kirk Lynn and the Rude Mechs, dir. by Shawn Sides, Ohio Theatre, produced by the Foundry Theatre, New York, 8 May 2001. The Foundry Theatre's New York run of the show played from May–June 2001 at the Ohio Theatre. Tour information taken from *Lipstick Traces Home Page*, accessed 12 March 2004 <<http://www.lipsticktraces.com>>.

3. Marcus's cast of characters is exhaustive. Nonetheless, the names listed here are the stars. Briefly described, German Richard Huelsenbeck was an expressionist poet who joined the Dada movement as a "neo-primitive drummer" in Zurich in 1916, took Dada back to Germany in 1917, ultimately ending his career as a psychoanalyst in New York City under the name Richard Hulbeck. Guy Debord, born in Paris, joined the Lettrist movement in 1950, was a founding member of the Situationists in 1957 and participated in the Revolutionary praxis in Paris in 1968. The Situationists were dedicated to troubling the process through which everyday life became increasingly mediated by staging political protests they called "situations," paradoxically enough, often using the film medium to do so. Today, Debord is best known for his work on media culture, the *Society of the Spectacle*. His death in 1994 is widely believed to have been a suicide. Johnny Rotten, born in 1956 as John Lydon in London, England, was the lead singer of the Sex Pistols. Today he is a free-lance journalist. Malcolm McClaren is an entrepreneur, who after opening his clothing store SEX, became the manager of the Sex Pistols. He is still around promoting himself as an icon.

4. Ada Calhoun, "Everything is Possible Again," *Austin Chronicle* (1 September 2000), accessed 23 August 2001 <www.auschron.com/issues/dispatch/2000-09-01/arts_feature.html>.

5. Calhoun.

6. Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* 151.

7. Antonin Artaud, "No More Masterpieces," *Theatre and its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove, 1958) 79.

8. For example, see Gilbert B. Rodman, "Making a Better Mystery out of History," *Meanjin* 52.2 (1993): 295-312; and Barry Faulk, "Tracing *Lipstick Traces*: Cultural Studies and the Reception of Greil Marcus," *Works and Days* 11.1 (1993): 47-63.

9. The problem with using the term avant-garde to describe contemporary theatre has been debated at length. See Arnold Aronson, *Avant Garde Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2000) for a succinct review of the arguments and a survey of the term's historical usage. Martin Puchner, "Society of the Counter Spectacle: Debord and the Theatre of the Situationists," *Theatre Research International* 29.1 (2004): 4, also addresses this argument.

10. Theodor Adorno, "The Essay as Form," *Notes to Literature*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia UP, 1991) 1:13.

11. 12.

12. Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* 444.

13. 90.

14. 82.

15. 436.

16. I thank the spectators and fellow presenters of "Rock and Roll only forget: The Secret History of Greil Marcus, American Studies, Cultural Criticism, and Popular Music," *American Studies*

Association Convention, Renaissance Hotel, Washington, D. C. , 8 November, 2001, whose insightful comments helped me make this observation.

17. Antonin Artaud, "The Theatre of Cruelty, First Manifesto," *Theatre and its Double*, trans. Richards 89.

18. 89.

19. This performance was recorded in 1947. It was released as Antonin Artaud, *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu / To have done with the Judgement of God*, Harmonium Mundi, 1986. It is available in textual form in Antonin Artaud, *Four Texts*, trans. Clayton Eschelman and Norman Glass (Los Angeles: Panjandrum, 1982) 61-4.

20. Doug Rossinow, "Mario Savio and the Politics of Authenticity," *The Free Speech Movement: Reflections on Berkeley in the 1960s*, eds. Robert Cohen and Reginald Zelnik (Los Angeles and Berkeley: U of California P, 2002) 534-5. Although Marcus thinks of the 1964 moment as a footnote, this publication has made it a part of mainstream history. Marcus himself contributed to the collection.

21. Of course, Richard Huelsenbeck is much older than Mario Savio. Nonetheless, in Marcus's genealogy, it can be argued that Savio became Huelsenbeck's forefather—as it was Savio's actions that inspired Marcus to begin his investigation of Dada and Punk.

22. Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* 72.

23. Theodor Adorno, "Music and Language: A Fragment," *Quasi Una Fantasia*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (New York: Verso, 1992) 4.

24. See Shierry Weber Nichol森, *Exact Imagination, Late Work: On Adorno's Aesthetics*, (Cambridge: MIT UP, 1999) for an excellent analysis of Adorno's aesthetic theories.

25. Greil Marcus, "Alone and Forsaken," *In the Fascist Bathroom* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) 297.

26. 299-301.

27. I refer here to Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry* (London: Routledge, 1991).

28. Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* 1.

29. 2.

30. 70.

31. Marcus, "Alone and Forsaken" 299-301.

32. Marcus, "The Next President of the United States," *In the Fascist Bathroom* 161-162. Italics mine.

33. Marcus, "Four More Years," *In the Fascist Bathroom* 269.

34. Martin Puchner analyzes Adorno's critique of the conductor as part of his criticism of "gesture" in Wagnerian Opera in *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, and Drama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2002) 47-48. Adorno's most extensive writing on Wagner is contained in *In Search of Wagner*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: NLB, 1981). Adorno's comments on Toscanini, in which he related conducting to musical fetishism is contained in "On the Fetish Character of Music and the Regression of Listening," *The Culture Industry*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 2001) 29-60.

35. I am referring to his argument in *Stage Fright*.

36. Marcus, "Four More Years" 271.

37. See Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations* (Schoken: New York, 1969) 245-55, for a more nuanced explanation of this phenomenon, which is outside the scope of this essay.

38. Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* 73.

39. Theodor W. Adorno, "Trying to Understand Endgame," *Notes to Literature* 1:257.

40. Theodor Adorno, "On Commitment," *Aesthetics and Politics: Ernst Bloch, Georg Lukacs, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno* (New York: Verso, 1992) 183. His comments on Dada are quite interesting. He does not dismiss the Dadaists's tactics completely. Instead he claims that these tactics "become merely infantile when it starts to claim theoretical or social validity."

41. Reviews of *Lipstick Traces* provide these various criticisms. See Terry Eagleton, rev. of *Lipstick Traces*, *Village Voice* 9 April 1989: 12; Jon Erickson, rev. of *Lipstick Traces*, *Discourse* 12. 1 (Fall-Winter 1989-1990): 129-35; Andrew Ross, "The Rock and Roll Ghost," *October* 50 (1989): 108-17; and Gene Santoro, "This Magic Moment," *The Nation* 29 May 1989: 744-6.

42. See, for example, James Harding, *A Writing on the Ruins* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997) and many of the essays in Nigel Gibson and Andrew Rubin, eds., *Adorno: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

43. Gordon Cox, "A Johnny Rotten Traced to its Roots," *New York Newsday*, 11 May 2001, accessed 23 August 2001 <www.lipsticktraces.org/newsdayreview.html>. The author claims that the production is "staggeringly unlikely inspiration for a theatre event." Puchner ("Society" 5) meanwhile claims that although he disagrees with many of the Mechs's decisions, he sees why, considering Marcus's emphasis on performance, making the book into a theatre event was such a temptation.

44. The extraordinary nature of Smith's performance is mentioned both by Jessica Winter, "'Dada Bing Dada boom' Greil Marcus's Sex Pistols," *The Village Voice*, 16 May 2001, 74, accessed 8 August 2001 <www.lipsticktraces.org/voicereview.html>. Ben Brantley, "A Lecture on Punk Might Not Be What You Think," *New York Times*, 11 May 2001, late ed.: E5, accessed 8 August 2001 <www.lipsticktraces.org/nytimesreview.html>, states that Smith's performance makes words "slowly shed their meaning."

45. Quoted in Jeff Saloman, "'Lipstick Traces': An Unruly Ode to Punk as History's Nay Vote," *New York Times*, 6 May 2001, late ed.: 7+, accessed 12 August 2001 <www.lipsticktraces.org/nytimesreview.html>.

46. Martin Puchner, "Society of the Counter-Spectacle: Debord and the Theatre of the Situationists," *Theater Research International* 29 (March 2004): 13.

47. 5.

48. Kirk Lynn, *Rude Mechs's Lipstick Traces*, unpublished script, ts., adapt. of Greil Marcus's *Lipstick Traces* (2001) 22.

49. 32.

50. 33.

51. Winter 47.

52. Lynn, *Lipstick Traces* 18.

53. Puchner, "Debord" 13.

54. Lynn, *Lipstick Traces* 4.