Spirit Tactics, Exorcising Dances:
De Certeau's Foxlike Chorines and Mage

ABSTRACT:
In Michel de Certeau's *Invention of the Everyday*, improvisational community dance function as a catalyst for the subversive art of the oppressed, via its ancient Greek virtue/power of *mētis*, being "foxlike." And in de Certeau's *The Possession of Loudun*, this foxlike dance moves to the stage, as an improv chorus that disrupts the events at Loudon when reimagined as a tetralogy of plays at City Dionysia. More precisely, Loudun's tetralogy could be interpreted as a series of three tragedies and one comedy, the latter of which involves the chorine nuns' channeling of anomie into a proto-feminist transfiguration. More precisely, the tactical prowess of the nuns' chorus leader, namely the prioress Jeanne des Anges, elevates her to the status of an angelic prophet, which in de Certeau's theatrical dancing critique makes her the Loudun tetralogy's Dionysian, foxlike mage. In conclusion, this analysis suggests de Certeau's relevance for revolutionary social justice today.

Keywords: Michel de Certeau; Greek tragedy; demons; possession; Dionysus

Inspired by the creative uptake of Michel de Certeau's work by the Argentinian decolonial feminist philosopher María Lugones, the present article offers a reinterpretation of his most Anglophone-influential text, 1980's *L'Invention du quotidien: Arts de Faire*, in partnership with a more representative historical work, 1970's *La Possession de Loudun*.[1] Though the former book has been translated into English as *The Practice of the Everyday*, I will stay closer to the original French title here, preferring *Everyday Invention: Arts of Making Do*. And the latter book I translate as *The Possession of Loudun* (not "at," as with the English translation), as de Certeau there is concerned more with the all-too human forces that grip the entire town of Loudun (than with the alleged demonic possession of the Ursuline nuns).[2] Unfortunately, aside from Lugones,

[1] For more on Lugones' uptake and revision of de Certeau's "tactics," see Joshua M. Hall, "An Intimate Trespass of *Peregrina* Chorines: Dancing with María Lugones and Saidiya Hartman," *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 28(2): 2022, 96-122.

[2] The prima facie challenge of this attempted textual duet is suggested by Buchanan's passing reference to *The Possession of Loudun* as "an experiment in historiographic writing which bears scant resemblance to *The Practice of Everyday Life*" (3).

there has been minimal Anglophone philosophy scholarship on de Certeau.[3] There are of course, however, Anglophone cultural studies scholars who engage extensively with him, and generally in ways that are consonant with the present investigation.[4]

Here, the first section argues that improvisational community dances (such as salsa) ideally exemplify de Certeau's analysis of tactics as an art of subversion that centers on the ancient Greek virtue/power of *mētis*, which I translate as being "foxlike," and which is preserved and perfected in a kind of transhistorical choreography between living dancers and the spirits of their ancestors. There are multiple advantages of this tactical translation of *mētis* as foxlike. First, it involves no sacrifice of literal or straightforward meaning, because "foxlike" is literally synonymous with "cleverness" or "wiliness," both common translations of *mētis*. Second, "foxlike" evokes that most gracefully dancelike and androgynous mammal species, equipoised halfway between a masculinized wolf and feminized cat, thus foregrounding the centrality of gender to de Certeau's analysis. Third, from this reference to the fox, a species valorized in more than one global tradition as a powerful trickster figure, "foxlike" also suggests the deployment of anthropomorphic and figurative foxes to represent socialist bandits. Examples include Disney's animated *Robin Hood* and *Zorro* (Spanish for "fox"), masters of de Certeau's prized art of "tactics," and resonant with his sympathy for real-life heroic figures such as Che Guevarra.[5] Finally, via the synonym "foxiness," foxlike also suggests the historical tendency to

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[3] The few exceptions include Wim Weymans, Peter Burke, and Stephen Hartnett.

[4] See, for two examples, Ben Highmore, *Michel de Certeau: Analyzing Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2006); and Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and its Other* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995). Also citing de Certeau, and clearly indebted to him, is anthropologist James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992). Scott even briefly discusses *mētis* and foxlike folk heroes, though not directly in relation to de Certeau (164).

[5] See, for example, Burke 30.

hypersexualize women with this virtue or power. In Loudun, for example, one can see this in the "possessed" nuns who were oppressed by an eroticizing male gaze. Notably, however, this gaze ultimately fails in the singular case of the prioress, Jeanne des Ange, since (as the English saying goes) "you can't outfox the fox." In sum, translating *mētis* as "foxlike" foregrounds issues of gracefulness, androgyny, animality, tricksters, banditry, and the sexualization of powerful femmes—all relevant when applied to social justice, as below.

The article's second section transposes this foxlike art from the oppressed streets to the stage, by reimagining the events at Loudun as a teratological tetralogy (that is, a demonological four-play series) that could have been submitted as an entry in the ancient Greek festival of the City Dionysia, of which the possessed nuns constitute the Dionysian chorus, and of which de Certeau's text is a theatrical dance critique. The conclusion to these three tragedies (of plagues, religious wars, and unjust conquest) is a comedy of anomie, which Jeanne des Anges (whose name means "Jean of the Angels") seizes as an opportunity for proto-feminist transfiguration, rising to the status of an angelic mystical prophet, thereby making her, in de Certeau's dancing critique, Loudun's Dionysian, foxlike "mage." In this figure, finally, one can perceive vividly the appeal of de Certeau to Lugones, his relevance for transformative social justice, and the liberatory power of Dionysian theater, as I have explored elsewhere in the first two parts of a series of three essays, of which the present investigation composes the finale.[6]

In this larger context, one important implication of the present investigation is that a philosophical exploration of the historical work of de Certeau, such as *The Possession of Loudon*, reveals that he also possesses a continuing relevance and resourcefulness for

[6] For the other two parts of this larger project, see Joshua M. Hall, "Schiller's Dancing Vanguard: From Grace and Dignity to Utopian Freedom," *Idealistic Studies* 53(1): 2023; and "Pregnant Materialist Natural Law: Bloch and Spartacus' Priestess of Dionysus," *Idealistic Studies* 52(2): 2022, 111-132.

philosophies of social justice, including feminism. As Highmore notes, de Certeau's commitment to the latter was strong enough such that, in the pro-Lacan psychoanalytic association of whom he was a founding member, the Freudian School of Paris, he sided with fellow member Michéle Montrelay's "insistence that the school provide space for discussing feminist issues – a position actively supported by de Certeau," even though this was so contentious that it helped precipitate the school's "acrimonious dissolution" (52). In short, de Certeau offers a re-politicized analysis of Dionysian theater of vital important to gendered justice today. I will now close this introduction with a sketch of this social justice application, to be fleshed out by the remainder of the investigation.

I hereby propose ten strategies for transformative social justice, choreographed from ten improvisational dance tactics in de Certeau's two books. The first four strategies, derived from *Everyday Invention*, center the present; and the last six strategies, derived from *The Possession of Loudon*, concern the past as a template for the present and future. First, effective political resistance necessarily involves the repurposing theft of oppressors' resources, as exemplified by the Indigenous resistant-oppressed, in our now pervasively colonized world. Second, key loci for this decolonizing-repurposed-theft include artistic practices that are perceived as lowly, trivial, and banal (such as social dances like salsa); because such small, humble, overlooked, and denigrated practices can nevertheless catalyze great sociopolitical transformations. Third, these decolonial-repurposed-thieved-arts are further empowered by theatrical restaging, especially when that involves the performance of "ordinary" folks. Fourth, the central power of such decolonial-repurposed-thieved-arts-restaged lies in their being foxlike, which requires a practical wisdom of cunning, a sensitivity toward one's animal embodiment and kinship with patronized species (such as foxes), and a willingness to engage in improvisation, artifice, and deception.

Shifting from present guidelines to past templates, the fifth strategy is to reinterpret past sociopolitical transformations alongside their contemporary artistic practices, which illuminates our closeness to other times and places, insofar as they all share our investment in the arts. Sixth, reinterpret these sociopolitical transformations as *themselves* artworks, which illuminates various forms of marginalized agency, analogues of which might be marshaled today. Seventh, in critiquing these transformation-artworks, the choice of which artists to center is paramount, because focusing on resistant-oppressed artist-agents reveals moments of surprising victories against overwhelming odds, which put today's comparatively lesser obstacles in an empoweringly hopeful perspective. Eighth, interpret such transformation-artwork-artists in their own multiple generative contexts, which undermines the false impression that such events are rare and uncontrollable—and fosters, instead, an appreciation for the ways that multiple lines of causality converge to create lacunae of artistic-political opportunity. Ninth, deflationary, realistic critique of overrated artist-agents counters the reduction of humans to absolute evil, and raises awareness of underrated artist-agents who, foxlike, exploits oppressors' all-too-human failings. Finally, recognize the enormous power of comedy when wielded by genius resistant-oppressed artists, including its power to self-transform from mere humor (in their own eras) to serious transformative social justice (in future eras).

I. Spirit Tactics

In this first section, I will flesh out the first four strategies summarized above, namely (1) decolonizing theft, (2) scavenging arts, (3) restaging everydayness, and (4) being foxlike. Starting with decolonizing theft, at the beginning of *Everyday Invention: The Art of Making Do*, introducing one of his most popular terms, de Certeau claims that "Everyday life invents itself by

poaching in countless ways on the property of others" (xii). There is much condensed here that is important for the present investigation. First, the book's titular invention is reflexive, a self-invention, which aptly characterizes the identities of improvisational community dancers. Second, that self-invention is a matter of trespassing (walking where forbidden) to appropriate the property of others, which (following Ernst Bloch, following Schiller) I will term "banditry." Third, this self-inventing banditry cannot be quantified or classified fully, because it happens in indefinitely many ways, which are precisely the ways of stories, which in turn define the communities where they are told. Fourth, there is an implicit Marxist dimension here implied by the dichotomy between the propertied and propertyless. Thought together, the previous points collectively suggest the consummate Anglophone figure of subversive heroics, the abovementioned Robin Hood, who became an outlaw after the crime of poaching

Elaborating on this banditry, de Certeau affirms that the book's titular "making" (*faire*) "is a production, a poiēsis—but a hidden one," what he later terms a "bricolage" (xii, xviii). The implication here is that everyday folks are artists, specifically clandestine poets. And as I have argued elsewhere, following Etienne Bonnot de Condillac (whom de Certeau himself later invokes), poetry can be meaningfully understood as derived from dance, a verbal artistry built on dance's nonverbal artistry (138). Counterintuitively, this hidden artistry, according to de Certeau, takes shape via people's "consumption" of cultural productions, specifically through their selective appropriations thereof, like Robin Hood's poaching of Sherwood Forest's deer.

In a real-life example of a disempowered community, de Certeau notes that "the ambiguity that subverted from within the Spanish colonizers' 'success' in imposing their own culture on the indigenous Indians is well known" (xiii). To wit, the Indigenous Americans "often *made* of the rituals, representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different than

what their conquerors had in mind" (xiii). With this invocation of the colonial *enceuntro*, it becomes clearer that there is a power-stratified core to de Certeau's analyses here, making it essential that banditry artists should target only those with unjust power and privilege. In Certeau's (scare-quoted) words, the bandit stands with "the 'common people'" against "the 'elites'," with "ruses" that "compose the network of an antidiscipline" (xiii, xv).

Shortly thereafter, de Certeau further refines this analysis of banditry, introducing his most popular pair of concepts, "tactics" and "strategies." The latter he defines as "the calculus of force-relationships which become possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an 'environment'" (xix). And "tactics" is "a calculus which cannot count on a 'proper' (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality" (because the "place of a tactic belongs to the other") (xix). Note that both tactics and strategies are forms of calculation, and thus reasoning. Moreover, both concepts are defined less by inherent properties than by the contexts in which they are deployed. Put differently, strategy is reasoning in a fortress in the distance, while tactics is reasoning far from home but in close contact with the other. As the latter examples suggest, whereas strategy is timelessly trapped in the present, tactics is a syncopated weaving of future from past.

Put in de Certeau's later dancing rhetoric (regarding "dances between readers and texts"), tactics is dancing rationality, fit for dancers as perpetual nomads in a stolen world.[7] "The weak," as de Certeau paraphrases this point, "must continually turn to their own ends forces alien to them" (175, xix). Just so, dancers too primarily move through positions of weakness vis-à-vis a surrounding, dance-fearful world (as for example with the homophobic stigmatizing of men

[7] Hartnett also quotes this passage, and notes another passage in which de Certeau strategically deploys the rhetoric of dance (286, 287).

dancing ballet), and dancers must coax bodies (our own and others' bodies) to dance rather than just be. These dances too, as de Certeau writes of his tactics, involve "clever tricks, knowing how to get away with things, 'hunter's cunning,' maneuvers, polymorphic simulations, joyful discoveries, poetic as well as warlike" (xix). It is a matter of being as clever of a subversion-artist as the foxlike Robin Hood or Zorro. "The Greeks," de Certeau adds, "called these 'ways of operating' mētis," immortalized by Homer in the poetic figure of Odysseus, that founding foxlike hero. I return to this central concept below.

Anticipating de Certeau's own naming of "dance" a few pages later (where he describes reading as involving "leaps over written spaces in an ephemeral dance"), improvisational community dance arguably constitutes a superior metaphor for the disruptive sociopolitical effects of tactics, which in Certeau's metaphor "introduce a Brownian movement into the system" (xxi). That is, whereas Brownian motion is utterly random and mechanically deterministic, improvisational community dances reflect the purposefulness and freedom of the common people (which de Certeau takes great pains to valorize). Such dances clearly also privilege "turns," which de Certeau associates with tactics, via the academic discipline of rhetoric (where these turns are called "tropes"). This centrality of turning is true of these dances, not only in the literal turns of their choreography, but also (in Certeau's words) in their "ways of changing (seducing, persuading, making use of) the will of another (the audience)" (xx). Finally, many such dances share tactics' "goal" of a "*therapeutics for deteriorating social relations* and make use of techniques of re-employment in which we can recognize the procedures of everyday practices" (xxiv). Regarding the latter, de Certeau affirms, "A politics of such ploys should be developed" (xxiv). To elaborate, many improvisational community dances (a) are intentionally therapeutic, (b) both deliberately and spontaneously "poach" everyday bodily movements for

reworking into their choreographies, and (c) are frequently deployed in pursuit of political subversion of oppressive and unjust conditions. Consider, for example, salsa dancing's role in the 1970s in Latin American rights protests.[8]

Given all these resonances between tactics and dance, my contribution to de Certeau's worthy program is to consider improvisational community dances as examples and catalysts of this subversive art, by both engaging in those dances today whenever possible, and also seeking historical examples of these dances. For one thing, such dances move in a space somewhere between the everyday and the art world, as I have elaborated elsewhere in a theory of social Latin dance as a decolonizing and reconstructive gestural discourse. For another thing, at least from an elitist "high art" perspective, such dances also move in a space between literal dance (epitomized by ballet) and figurative dance (epitomized by arrhythmic swaying in the club). In other words, improvisational community dance is what happens when ordinary people creatively appropriate the community's inheritance of movement styles, defying the judgement of artworld elitists who refuse to recognize those practices as dance at all.

More specifically, the present investigation, with its linkage of *Everyday Invention* to *The Possession of Loudun*, is concerned with the transposition of this improvisational community dance onto the theatrical stage, in what might be understood as a Dionysian improv dimension to an otherwise conventional theatrical production. This is precisely how I suggest tactically reimagining the allegedly demon-possessed Ursuline nuns and their leader, Jeanne des Anges, namely as improvising their everyday community dances for the increasingly public stages of the

[8] For more, see Juliet McMains, *Spinning Mambo into Salsa: Caribbean Dance in Global Commerce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), as well as Joshua M. Hall, "Afro-Latin Dance as Reconstructive Gestural Discourse: The Figuration Philosophy of Dance on Salsa," *Research in Dance Education* 22(1): 2020, 73-87.

exorcisms, playing the role of intoxicated maenads, gyrating, howling, and contorting when strategically released from their shackles to summon the appearance of fallen angels.

To make this transposition from street to stage, and from the everyday to the tragic, de Certeau's discussion of "the ordinary man" in Freud proves helpful. This ordinary man (or the Ursuline nun/chorine, for de Certeau's Freud), "plays out on the stage the very definition of literature as a world and of the world as literature," as for example on the literal and figurative stages of Loudun, where an otherwise noble and respectable group of nuns spasmed and gestured wildly for hungry audiences from across Europe (2). "As the representative of an abstract universal," de Certeau continues, "the ordinary man in Freudian theory still plays the role of a god who is recognizable in his effects, even if he has humbled himself and merged with superstitious people" (3). By serving Freudian discourse as "a principle of totalization and as a principle of plausibility," the ordinary man, according to de Certeau, "functions here in the same way as the God of former times" (4).

This god, I interpolate, could easily be Dionysus, and the "superstitious people" could be his worshipping chorines. It is also true of membership in this chorus of ordinary men, as de Certeau writes (following Wittgenstein), that "it consists in being a foreigner *at home*, a 'savage' in the midst of ordinary culture, lost in the complexity of the common agreement and what goes without saying" (13). In tragic terms, the chorus is a group of artists, nomadic within normality, who represent the "savagery" of other times and places. They are, therefore, the kernel of otherness that prevents the utter collapse of the home society into bland homogeneity, the exotic laws of the Other that, by contrast, buttress the legitimacy of the community's own laws.

Similarly resonant with Loudun's dancing chorines is de Certeau's analysis of "tactical trajectories," an etymological "thrown-across touching," like community dancers who find

themselves thrown into complex dance histories, touching each other in ways that our ancestors have passed down through the rituals that are community choreography.[9] De Certeau chose the word "trajectory," he explains, "to suggest a temporal movement through space" (like the unfolding dance performance itself) rather than "the *figure* that these points form" (like the infamously inadequate attempts to render these processes in some standardizable notation such as Labanotation) (35).[10] "Like the 'spirits' of former times," in de Certeau's words, these ancestral dancers "constitute the multiform and occult postulate of productive activity" (35). Dancers too, self-consciously or no, summon the spirits of dancers past, which is also what I am attempting to do, here and now, between my own spirit and those of my readers. In support of this analysis of tactical spirits, Ian Buchanan claims that "the concept of 'haunting' it itself magical," and that "it is the very terms 'ghostly', 'uncanny', and so forth that are the truly fantastical elements in de Certeau's discourse, and not their putative referents" (24).

On a similar note, de Certeau's later analysis of Kant's conception of tact makes judgement itself into a kind of dance. More precisely, the dance of judgment, de Certeau writes, "does not bear on social conventions" alone, "but more generally on the *relation* among a great number of elements," and it "exists only in the act of creating a new set by putting one more element into a convenient connection with this relation" (73). For example, "one adds a touch of red or ochre to a painting," or, in my own dancing terms, one more turn or spin in a dance (73). "The transformation of a given equilibrium into another one," de Certeau concludes, "characterizes art," and dance is arguably the consummate art of bodily equi-librium, "equal"-

[9] This is also comparable to what dance theorist Judith Hamera calls "technique," a rich, multimodal language incorporating not only verbal language, but also spatiotemporal positions, postures, gestures, fashion, etc.

[10] For more on this point, see Joshua M. Hall, "Rearticulating Languages of Art: Dancing with Goodman," *Evental Aesthetics* 3(3): 2015, 28-53.

"freedom" (73). In recognition of this fact, de Certeau affirms it himself in the next paragraph, explicitly naming dance yet again. "Dancing on a tightrope," de Certeau begins, "requires that one maintain *an equilibrium* from one moment to the next by recreating it at every step by means of new adjustments," in order to "maintain a balance that is never permanently acquired," wherein "the practitioner himself is part of this equilibrium that he modifies without compromising it" (73). This art of practical experience, he adds, "has the form of a *pleasure*, relative not to an exteriority, but to a mode of exercise" (74). This tactful dancing "ties together (moral) freedom, (esthetic) creation, and a (practical) act" —three elements already present in his concept of perruque (stealing time and resources from the boss to create one's own work while on the clock) (74). Thus, dance again resonates with the banditry art of a subversive thief of capital, like Robin Hood or Zorro.

De Certeau then applies this art of dancing judgment to his own primary disciplinary art, and in a way that anticipates my interpretation of *The Possession of Loudun* as a theatrical dance critique of the events at Loudun as a tetralogy of plays in the City Dionysia festival. To wit, "narrated history creates a fictional space," he claims, and "moves away from the 'real'—or rather it pretends to escape present circumstances: 'once upon a time there was…'," and in "precisely this way it *makes* a hit ("*coup*") far more than it describes one" (79). In short, such history "is itself an *act of* tightrope-walking," or in German, tightrope dancing (79). Additionally, on the next page de Certeau describes the most famous example of such an artful historian, Michel Foucault, as a "dancer disguised as an archivist" (having already described Foucault's method in dancing term (80).[11] Just so, on my reading, de Certeau is a dancing historian, whose "possession" and "sorcery" twirl and slide in a failed search for a proper name.

[11] Regarding his concept of procedures, "Foucault offers a variety of synonyms, words that dance about and successively approach an impossible proper name") (de Certeau, 45).

So important is this disciplinary dance for Certeau that he lingers on it for the next section of this chapter, devoted to the historian and anthropologist Marcel Detienne. The latter's work, de Certeau observes, characterizes "the storyteller" in the community as "privileging two figures in which the Greek art of thinking is particularly active: the dance and combat, that is, the very figures that the writing of the story makes use of" (81). Thus, as evidenced by prominent anthropologists' thematization of dance, their disciplinary discourse (like history) is also, for de Certeau, a dance.

Reinforcing my interpretation of dance as consummate foxlike art, de Certeau's next paragraph returns to the topic of mētis. Like this foxlike virtue/power, improvisational community dance, too, can be broken down into de Certeau's three "elements." To wit, dance (1) "counts and plays on the right moment in time (*kairos*)"; (2) "takes on many different masks and metaphors: it is an undoing of the proper place (*le lieu propre*)"; and (3) "disappears into its own actions, as though lost in what it does, without any mirror that re-presents it: it has no image of itself" (82). To elaborate, dance is (1) a perfect example, as I have elaborated elsewhere, of the incisive timing of syncopation (slipping into the moment between expected/imposed musical beats); (2) plays a central role in the masks of the theater and the metaphorical resources of various philosophers (including de Certeau, as is hopefully becoming clear); and (3) possesses the structure (in Nelson Goodman's terms) of self-exemplification.

Equally resonant with improvisational community dance is de Certeau's graphic representation of mētis, the foxlike "ultimate weapon" that gave to Zeus—father of Dionysus—"the supremacy over the other gods," and which "also defines an esthetics"—including that of Dionysus' theater (82). There is one key difference, though, between de Certeau's presentation of mētis and such dances, namely that every moment of the latter offers the potential for this

intervention, thus making them radically more transformative than other everyday practices or narrations thereof. As de Certeau writes of mētis, the "foreignness" of such a dance "makes possible a transgression of the law of the place," and its "'coup' modifies the local order" (85).

More precisely, this strike modifies the local order within—and note in what follows that de Certeau yet again deploys the rhetoric of dance at a key moment in his discursive dance— "a pirouette due to the return of a time" (85). This strike, he continues, "calls for a tightrope-walker's talent and a sense of tactics; it is the sense of art" (85). In short, the master of the foxlike tactics must be what Nietzsche's spirit of the philosopher most wants to be, a dancer. Finally on this point, like a community dance among a myriad of strangers, acquaintances, and friends, this foxlike dance "develops an aptitude for always being in the other's place without possessing it, and for profiting from this alteration without destroying itself through it" (87).

Also relevant for de Certeau's theatrical dance critique of Loudun's tetralogy is the famous chapter of *Everyday Invention* entitled "Walking in the City." First, the second section, alluding to Virgil's goddess Rumor, is entitled "*The chorus of idle footsteps*," which already suggests the Dionysian chorus (97). Second, that dance-resonance is then reinforced by de Certeau's naming of "dances" immediately thereafter, writing that his "phatic" function of walking in the city "goes on all fours, *dances*, and walks about," as all "the modalities singe a part in this chorus" (99). Third, de Certeau names "dancing" in the next section, "Walking rhetorics," when he links walking's "turns (*tours*) and detours" to rhetoric's "stylistic figures," yielding "the figures of walking (a stylized selection among the latter" of which "is already found in the figures of *dancing*)" (100). Finally, and most importantly from this "Walking in the City" chapter, de Certeau writes of how these tactical dances afford "a certain play within a

system of defined places," and authorize "the production of an area of free play (*Spielraum*, or "dance room") on a checkerboard that analyzes and classified identities" (106).

The dance connection here is that, as I have elaborated elsewhere, Hans-Georg Gadamer observes that the German word *Spiel* can also be translated as "dance." Thus, de Certeau's space is also one for "free dancing," breaking down the rigid rules for dichotomous black-and-white moves on the checkerboard of a corrupt world. Moreover, like the tragic antihero of the Loudun tetralogy's third play, "Conquest," these free dance spaces "are the object of a witch-hunt" (106).[12] More specifically, witches, like spirits, and dancers, move on a diagonal, tracing Deleuze's lines of flight in zigzags across the otherwise orderly grid. Thus, with these spaces' eradication, as with priest Grandier's execution, "The habitable city is thereby annulled," because "Haunted places are the only people can live in," precisely because they are filled with "spirits," which de Certeau describes as voices that "move about, like *dancers*, passing lightly through the field of the other" (106, 108, 131). That is, one can only live in a place with the spirits of those who danced before, a connection to whom is maintained at least at the level of unconscious habits and bodily memory, "remaining in an enigmatic state, symbolizations encysted in the pain or pleasure of the body" (108).

To summarize this first section, de Certeau's everyday art of subversion is ideally exemplified in improvisational community dances, whose central virtue/power is being foxlike, and whose primary technique is an improvisational intervention into the moment, drawing on memories of shared histories by channeling the choreographic techniques of their ancestor dancers, whose spirits still haunt the only places that we dancers can call home. Viewing this activity sympathetically, one might call it a kind of summoning, or an invocation of the gods, the

[12] Weymans asserts, on the contrary, that "The role of 'protagonist' in this story is assigned to priest Grandier" (171).

valorized power that defines the figure of the mage. But under this colonized, heteropatriarchal order, against which our everyday subversive dances strive, that activity is more likely to get twisted, causing us to see dancers as passive rather than active, fettered rather than empowered, and demeaned by demons rather than assisted by angels, in something that is called, damningly, "possession." It is no accident, therefore, that the author of *Everyday Invention* also wrote *The Possession of Loudun*, to which the second section turns.

II. Exorcising Dances

In this second section, I turn to the next five strategies from de Certeau for transformative social justice listed above, namely (5) juxtaposed events/arts, (6) sociopolitical events-as-artworks, (7) centering the resistant-oppressed, (8) contextualizing event-arts, and (9) deflating overrated artist/agents. Beginning with juxtaposed events/artists, in support of my dance-theatrical interpretation of *The Possession of Loudun*, de Certeau compares the events to a specific concert dance artwork. "Framed upon a stage, the debate [over the reality of the possessions] is organized into two camps, as in that 'Ballet' danced by the boarders of a Jesuit college in honor of the taking of La Rochelle," a key battle in Louis XIII's suppression of the Protestant uprising in Loudun's region of France (28). In the ballet, entitled "The Conquest of the Chariot of Glory by the Great Théandre," this titular "god-man" Louis XIII was "aided by the shepherd Caspis, his first and principal minister, against the Charmes, which are Heresy and Rebellion" (28). In short, de Certeau writes, the "Conquest" ballet was a "choreographed drama" before "the violent one of the possession" (28). Further supporting my dancing interpretation, dance is also explicitly named in the archive of historical documents. Defending the reality of demonic possession against a counterargument that "dancers and tightrope walkers, to amaze a

public or simple folk or get money from them, sometimes rise suddenly erect upon their feet"—which marvel Loudun's nuns were also alleged to have performed—a physician writes that "when dancers rise to their feet, they are not lying down flat, but hold themselves in a curled position, as Trucardo de Naples has depicted it in a line drawing" (139). Thus, both de Certeau's history and the event itself explicitly invoke dance.

Returning to the beginning of de Certeau's theatrical dance critique, its Preface sets the stage by describing a cyclical return of society's repressed, which aligns well with the annual ritual of the City Dionysia. "Normally, strange things circulate beneath our streets," de Certeau begins, but "a crisis will suffice for them to rise up, as if swollen by flood waters," and then it "comes as a surprise when the nocturnal erupts into broad daylight" (1). This "lurking force," he elaborates, "infiltrates the lines of tension within the society it threatens," like a subversive dancing spirit, using "the means, the circuitry already in place, but reemploying them in the service of an anxiety that comes from afar, unanticipated" (1). This description also applies to the plot of Euripides' play *The Bacchae*, where Dionysus as the foreigner-at-home and his Asian chorines overturn patriarchy by turning its shadows against it.

Also like Dionysian theater, which in its tragedies (according to Aristotle) cathartically purged the Athenians' negative emotions, events such as the Loudun possession involve what de Certeau calls the "languages of social anxiety," which he compares to "scars" that "designate in advance the signs and location of a flight (or return) of time" (1). And historically, he adds, "these strange movements have often taken the form of the diabolical" (2). Essential for de Certeau is the fact that these demonic eruptions indicate both "an end that cannot be spoken," and also "an uncertainty before the future," in relation to which these "deviltries" are "at once symptoms and transitional solutions" (2). In other words, when society is rapidly changing, it

generates enormous anxieties which manifest in what initially appear as mere illusions, such as demons and devils, but which ultimately function more like mythological apparatuses that are redeployed to help give birth to a new society from out of the society that is perishing.

Given these Dionysian theatrical resonances, de Certeau aptly titles his next section "Loudun: A Theater" (2). The possession of the town, he explains, can be understood as one of many extended performances in "the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century," an era "rich in demons" (as one historian quipped) (2). In this historical period, de Certeau continues, possessions "became a great public trial" that was also a "theater," a "circus," and "a confrontation between science and religion" (3). For example, "The show was staged in Loudun for almost ten years," not a bad run by Broadway standards; and, as arguably in New York, so in Loudun, the "diabolical" was "gradually becoming profitable" (3). In other words, with the devil "slowly becoming civilized," possession's "horror was transformed into a spectacle, the spectacle into a sermon" (3). In terms of Marx's famous quip that tragedy recurs historically as farce, in Loudun this process was greatly compressed, which is what it makes it possible to interpret these events as a tetralogy of plays at the City Dionysia, with three tragedies (plague, wars, and conquest) and a comedy (anomie turned proto-feminist triumph).

Crucially, in de Certeau's theatrical dance critique of Loudon's Dionysian tetralogy, "Contrary to the way things were in the time of sorceries," he affirms, "the possessed have the floor" (8). The feminist investment in this approach, yielding the dance stage to the female survivors rather than the male predators, also manifests in de Certeau's distinction between "possession" and "sorcery." The latter, he writes, historically "came first" (before possession), and "raged" in France, Germany, Switzerland, England, and the Netherlands (among others), "but not, it seems, in Spain or Italy" (3). More generally, "sorcery seems to delineate two

Europes: the northern, in which it abounds, and the southern, in which it is rare," and it is "predominantly a rural phenomenon" (4). As for possession, "It first appears, tentatively, in isolated female cases," and instead of rural is "urban" (4). "The former binary structure (judges—sorcerers) becomes ternary, and it is the third term, the possessed women, that receives an increasing share of public attention" (4). Interestingly, "the women have become victims, and are no longer guilty," while the sorcerers "are frequently priests, physicians, or well-educated people, sometimes considered to be 'libertine'" (4). This is also true of the character of Dionysus in *The Bacchae*, slandered as a sorcerer and criticized for his association with young women (4).

This overlaying of northern/southern, rural/urban, and male/female dichotomies, I add, recalls the historical feminizing of (a) southern, darker-skinned peoples in densely urban centers, by (b) north/western European, lighter-skinned peoples in rural areas. In Loudun's case, this seems to imply that a sorcerer (without possession) could only be a rural, white male, while nonwhite men and women of all races could only be possessed. And that, in turn, makes this sorcery/possession dichotomy the most important (albeit understated) one in de Certeau's entire theatrical dance critique. Because while the (relatively) empowered man Grandier is falsely accused of sorcery, I would argue that the (relatively) disempowered woman Jeanne des Anges, who is falsely accused of being possessed, is ultimately transfigured into a positive, proto-feminist version of a sorcerer. Or, in my preferred terminology, a "mage," since that term lacks the gender markers and pejorative connotations of "sorcerer"). In other words, the tactical magic of Loudun is not demonic masculinity, but humane feminine (foxlike) artistry.

In support of this interpretation of Jeanne des Anges as proto-feminist mage, de Certeau primes his readers from the beginning to suspect that there are also powerful and positive spiritual figures in Loudun, because on "the map of mid-seventeenth-century France, the cases of

possession and the most 'devout' (in the most positive sense of the term) groups are often found in the same places" (5). The reason, de Certeau explains, is that a "cultural transformation seems to marginalize all the expressions of the sacred, from the most suspect to the purest," and (quoting Alfred Jarry) "possession by the Holy Spirit and by the devil are notably symmetrical" (5). For example, "Jeanne des Anges herself," who is "the most famous of the possessed, would appear afterward, during the last twenty-five years of her life, in the persona of a 'mystic' visionary" (6). More generally, de Certeau claims that Loudun manifests, in William Blakes' words, "a marriage of heaven and hell," whose central feature is "metamorphosis," which affects not just Jeanne and her chorines, but the entirety of Loudun, France, and ultimately even the whole modern world (6). Taking just one example from Loudun, de Certeau notes that today it is filled with "too many phantoms," and its streets are traversed by a tourists' "walking tour," wherein "the quest for the past has taken the shape of a legend, and the itinerary has become a kind of initiation" (7). This recalls *Everyday Invention*'s account of artful walking, and the spirits that haunt city streets.

I now turn to the historical context for Loudon's possessions, which I am calling the first and second tragedies in the Loudun tetralogy. Regarding the first, involving plagues, de Certeau writes that, in "1632, the city of Loudun was sorely tried by the plague," with "3,700 deaths out of a population of 14,000," which was, in turn, "a tragic repetition of the plague of 1603" (11). The upshot of this first tragedy is that "There is no doubt that the plague traumatized the city" and "upset the mental and intellectual structures, causing first, through terror, mystic élan and mortifications, and later, beneath the obstinate silence of heaven, blasphemy and Saturnalia" (12, 13). Thus, anticipating the fourth (anomie) play in the tetralogy, even before the alleged

possessions, the people's responses to the plague were also dichotomous, and terminated in hedonistic anomie, for lack of a divine response to the community's unbearable suffering.

One possible reason for this perceived absence of a Supreme Being during the plague is suggested by the second tragedy of the tetralogy, namely the "War[s] of Religion, which had bloodied Loudun's streets fifty years earlier," and which "tore God limb from limb" (13). In de Certeau's later elaboration of these wars, "Huguenots and Catholics had been massacring one another in the same places where, in 1632, they were satisfied with disputation" (24). "Held by the Huguenots, besieged by Catholic forces and occupied by them," Loudun "was then taken back, pillaged, and burned by the Huguenots," and then a decade "later the Catholics took their revenge" and "perpetrated the same destruction" (24). By the time of the possession, though, The Edict of Nantes (1598) had "made Loudun a 'safe place' for the Protestants," rendering the town "an outpost, a frontier town, as it were, beyond the regions in which Protestantism was dominant, farther to the south and the west" (24). Though no longer by physical violence, "Catholics and Protestants continued to defend their respective groups, either by centralization" of power (under Louis XIII and his chief advisor Richelieu), "or in opposition to it," allied with the local Protestant authorities seeking greater autonomy from prince and pope. "Henceforth," in short, "right would be defined in terms of the state" (26).

Turning, on this note of state power, to the tetralogy's third tragedy, the conquest of Loudun by King Louis XIII's exorcising agent, it begins with some Ursuline nuns reporting "phantom-like 'apparitions'" to the authorities, specifically a "black ball moving across the refectory," followed by "a man, seen only from the back" (13). This latter figure, though initially described as possessing "the traits of Moussaut, the deceased chaplain," was later identified as "the haunting figure of the parish priest" (52, 14). However, contra the elitist view that ordinary

people are helplessly gullible and superstitious, de Certeau documents their immediate skepticism in this instance. “Yet in the town, people were already saying that this was nothing but ‘imposture’” (14). More precisely, after a few days of such attempted exorcisms, “Urbain Grandier was designated by name as the sorcerer,” thereby becoming what I interpret as this third tragedy’s antihero (19).

As to Grandier’s qualifications for the role of tragic antihero, he clearly possesses the tragic flaw of hubris. For example, de Certeau notes that the influential French historian Michelet dismissed the priest as “conceited, vain, and a libertine, who deserved, not the stake, but life in prison” (53). Similarly, according to a more sympathetic contemporary, though Grandier was “tall and good-looking, with a mind both firm and subtle,” and “expressed himself with great ease and elegance,” he was also “proud and haughty to his enemies,” and “jealous of his rank and never relinquished his own interests,” thereby earning himself “many enemies” (53). In addition to this first tragic flaw, apparently obvious to previous historians, de Certeau appears the first to suggest another, much more serious one, namely sexual exploitation. For example, de Certeau notes that Grandier “makes the conquest of” a townsman’s “eldest daughter, Phillippe”; and though a child from this union is “attributed to” another woman, “the Loudunais are not so easily fooled” (58). Perhaps the worst offense, though, is his seduction of an unmarried young member of congregation, for whom he served as confessor, thus betraying his sacred oath and exploiting his enormous power advantage over her (59). In sum, though Grandier is innocent of literal demonic sorcery, he is guilty of the metaphorical version, thus justifying the distrust of the townsfolk whom he proudly held in contempt.

Grandier’s written words also got him in further trouble, including his alleged authorship of a political “pamphlet against Richelieu” (70). De Certeau notes that, on the one hand, the

cardinal doubts the reality of the possession, having "no illusion about the 'simplicity' that 'ordinarily accompanies piety'," and being "hesitant about these religious women who *appear* possessed" (74). On the other hand, Richelieu "does not tolerate a troublemaker who is perhaps also a pamphletist, in an era still close to the Ligues and Wars of Religion," and thus "Grandier is the price of a political policy" (74). To exact this price, Richelieu enlists Jean Martin, baron de Laubardemont, who "finds in the royal crusade a quasi-sacerdotal power" and "acquires and gives himself a role of spiritual director in the name of that investing of religious authority in the civil authority" (76). That is, although Laubardemont is officially an appointee of the king, and thus a secular/civil authority figure, he nevertheless acts "as the spiritual protector and director of the Ursulines," as later memorialized in a poem from a "Loudon flatterer" in the figure of the king's avenging archangel, St. Michael (76). Thusly angelized, the baron only reinforces the allegedly demonic nature of his humanly vicious prey, the predatory priest Grandier.

Grandier is initially accused of sorcery by, among others, Jeannes des Anges, and though she later passionately recants—and even attempts suicide due to guilt over his impending death—the exorcising authorities never relent (166). The reason, according to de Certeau, is that Loudun and its world, in its painful transition from religion to science and from exorcism to medicine, needed a sacrificial scapegoat, for which "sorcery" gave unimpeachable justification. "*Sorcery* is a word that, in its indeterminacy," de Certeau explains, "designates and synthesizes everything threatening" (19). Everything, that is, except for the agency of women.

This is precisely how Jeanne des Anges manages to survive the tragic antihero's death, and to become the heroine of the Loudun tetralogy's fourth play, a comedy of anomie. Like a real-life foxlike Robin Hood or Zorro, she seizes an opportunity for proto-feminist transfiguration. Fleshing out this figure, de Certeau observes that, regarding a piece of her

writing from 1644 (twelve years after the alleged possession), it is easy "to perceive her sharp, coquettish lucidity, which always anticipates the expectations of her interlocutors" (29). He then quotes from Jeanne des Anges' letter at length, as follows:

> The devil would often beguile me by an enjoyable little feeling I had from the agitations and other extraordinary things he brought about in my body. I took an extreme pleasure in hearing it spoken of, and was pleased to appear more wrought up than the others, which gave great strength to these accursed spirits, for they take great pleasure in being able to amuse us with the sight of their operations, and in this way they gradually creep into souls and gain great advantage over them. For they act in such a way that their malice is not apprehended (29).

Note her proto-feminist twisting of the patriarchal oppression (of the church and its male god) into an advantage for the women disempowered thereby. In my view, this ideally exemplifies de Certeau's dance of subversion from *Everyday Invention*.

More specifically, on the one hand, Jeanne des Anges titillates and intrigues the reader with coy references to her "enjoyable little feelings"; while on the other hand, she humbly reminds them of her weak innocence (as a woman by whom the demons' "malice is not apprehended"). Moreover, lest she appear uncontrite, Jeanne proceeds to insist (contra the exorcists who "told me it was the demon who gave me those feelings") that "my conscience, which was my judge, gave me no peace," because she was "so wicked" (30). For example, she relates how, "during the first days when Father Lactance was given to me to be my director and exorcist, I disapproved of his way of conducting many small matters" (30). In sum, Jeanne writes, "I know very well that I did not perform" such acts "freely, but I am very sure, to my great embarrassment, that I gave the devil occasion to do it" (31).

Foxily, Jeanne's letter thus indirectly affirms her virtue with the strength of her self-excoriations, and implicitly minimizes the very wickedness in her that the letter explicitly affirms, by exemplifying it with only trivial examples. Any man with a hint of chivalry would of course be ready to spring to her defense, which (as she herself notes, making her the grateful rescued maiden), is precisely what her exorcists do when they protest the passivity in her vis-à-vis before the demonic which she boldly and brilliantly affirms. In other words, she showed to the masculinized devil the same submission and obedience to which she would be expected to give to any other male (father, husband, or god). Jeanne thus both shows and says her female channeling of demonic power. But the patriarchists will not listen.

III. Angelic Prophet, Foxlike Mage

In this final section, I turn to my last strategy from de Certeau for transformative social justice, namely (10) self-overcoming comedy. As the last point in the previous section suggests, the Loudun tetralogy's comedy of anomie is humorously dominated by Jeanne and the chorines' slapstick improvisational choreography. De Certeau notes that, in the earliest recorded archival documents, "The proper names of demons (Astarte, Zabulon, and so forth) correspond to possessed nuns, who take on the voices and faces of roles long set by tradition" (15). Put in Dionysian theatrical terms, the nuns are chorines, drawing on a religious tradition to resurrect mythological characters through nonverbal and verbal performance. In the archival documents, the latter include (a) "involuntary laughter" and "strange changes in their bodies and spirits, such that they would lose all judgment and be vexed with great convulsions," (b) various jokes (such as "the prioress' demon" claiming after a barking laugh to be John the Baptist"), and (c) times when a nun would "shout, grind her teeth, and stick out her tongue" (16, 17, 18).

Supporting my dance-theatrical interpretation of the exorcisms, de Certeau quotes a witness's observation of the allegedly possessed nuns, when they were sequestered during the trial, as follows: "Visit them privily when they have goodly intervals," the observer suggests, and "You will see well-behaved, modest [members of a] religious [order] who do some needlework or spin before you, who take pleasure in hearing God spoken of, and in learning ways to serve him well," behaving "with as much peace and repose of mind as if they were not possessed" (87). Once on the stage, however, everything changes. Initially, while still calm, they are chained, but "as soon as the demon appears, the girls are untied and left in complete freedom, so that they are bound as girls and set free as demons" (87). Counterintuitively, but suggestively of the erotic power dynamics involved, the intoxicated patriarchs empower their maenads' dance.

For example, de Certeau writes that at one exorcism performance, Jeanne des Anges "designates the seven [demons] who have taken up residence in her," specifying "from the outset, by her contortions and successive masks, the leitmotifs and the 'style' proper to each of them (for example, blasphemy, obscenity, or mockery)" along with "their respective stage 'entrances'" (38). More generally, "What makes the discourse of possession possible, what ultimately authorizes it," de Certeau explains, "is that the nun must not remember what happened" (40). For in this way, the demonic discourse is maintained as a "pure text, a language without subject, an organization in which roles are devised and in which 'proper' names are recited," those of the demons (40). In short, "One must be 'possessed' by these words, without understanding them" (41). Because with understanding, there might come agency, and empowering these holy chorines is something that the patriarchal forces will not tolerate.

Instead of listening to their autonomous speech, in other words, the nuns' male tormenters insist on reading the signs of their bodies, wherein the dancing dimension of the

chorines' performance comes into clearer focus. That is, "from the outset the demon expresses himself in another language," de Certeau claims, "which in Loudun becomes much more essential: a body language" (44). More specifically, "Grimaces, contortions, rolling of the eyes, and so forth, little by little constitute the devil's lexicon" (44). Deploying the rhetoric of choreography, de Certeau describes this demonic language as consisting of "the contradictory movements of gesture," which language is "obsessively" consumed by the judges and audience of this command performance (44). Striking again a feminist note, de Certeau observes that "The religious women are alienated by this public way of looking at them, far more than by the devil" (45). As an example of the intensity of this bodily affirmation, de Certeau notes that one "demon" utters the phrase "God—the Flesh," which he parses as making God "no longer the subject that sustains the surface of things" (46). Instead, through this "Flesh," according to de Certeau, God "is brought back to a surface of which he occupies only one spot; he is given there, immediate and exposed" (47). In short, the body absorbs, by becoming it, the Supreme Being.

But this radical affirmation of the dancing bodies of the chorines ultimately backfires against the patriarchal institutions, prompting de Certeau himself to use the word "feminist" to describe the chorines' defiance (albeit in scare quotes, perhaps from concern for anachronism). For example, in the nearby town of Nancy, ten years prior to the events in Loudun, the target of another charge of "sorcery" was (like Grandier) a male authority figure (in Nancy's case, a physician). In this way, a "'feminist' rebellion," de Certeau asserts, "targets, disguisedly, the traditional power, occupied by a new field of knowledge" (53). That is, the disempowered women, like Robin Hood in Sherwood Forest, foxily strike back at their masculine oppressors.

Here, the chorines' biography is germane. De Certeau quotes one of their contemporary defenders, who writes that "these young damsels set out as 'Amazons' on spiritual crusades to

regions abandoned by charity, education, and contemplation" (89). These "Amazons," de Certeau affirms, echoing this defender, "are educators, well educated, of good families, and of that young congregation of 'Amazons' that knows the value of obedience but whose [nuns] could often tell their curé a thing or two" (104). Thus, de Certeau concludes, "From another perspective, the possession is equally a rebellion of women: women who are aggressive, provocative, exposing to the broad daylight of the exorcisms their desires and demands, beneath the mask of those devils that have many uses" (104). In short, the demonic becomes for these women a tactic, an art, a form of perruque, a dance of liberation.

Unparalleled in this practice is the foxlike queen of these Amazonian chorines, Jeanne des Anges, who justly reigns over the finale of de Certeau's theatrical dance critique of the Loudun tetralogy. For example, he describes how the prioress foxily outmaneuvered her final and most famous exorcist, the celebrated mystic Jean-Joseph Surin (on whom de Certeau wrote his dissertation). "As is her custom," de Certeau observes, "she 'applies herself to knowing his mood' and, by 'a thousand and one little dodges,' she eludes him" (206). In other words, unlike Grandier, who transposes his mother's manipulations of him onto those more vulnerable than himself, Jeanne des Ange out-manipulates her more unjustly-empowered manipulators, in a kind of spiritual jujitsu, or what de Certeau calls "tactics." More generally, "she already play-acts what she is beginning to desire," which terminates in Surin getting his wish: to be himself possessed by the devil so as to homeopathically heal the possessed women, like a shaman who self-purifies before purifying the tribe (206). As one might have predicted, given the prioress' foxlike artistry, as "Surin's state deteriorates, the prioress' [state] improves" (207). Meanwhile, she gets one last invaluable education for her later transfiguration. "From Surin, she learns the

whole vocabulary of *mystics*," de Certeau writes, "at the same time, no doubt, that she intuits its meaning" (211).

Humorously, de Certeau's last chapter, "Triumph of Jeanne des Anges" begins with her allegedly miraculous vision of what he terms "The Handsome Angel," and which she describes as "my good angel who was of rare beauty, having the form of a young man of about eighteen," with "a head of long, shiny blond hair" (213). Later, as Surin recalls, Jeanne commissioned a painting of this angel with "the face of Saint Joseph," and added "a wig like" that of a certain prince whom de Certeau describes as follows: "The amorous conquests of this fair-haired dandy, who would later be called *le roi des Halles*, were as famous as his duels" (213). According to Jeanne, this angel "applied an unction" to her side, where an intense pain had been tormenting her, and thereby cured her wound forever.

Crucially for her eventual fame and power, "five large drops of this divine balm" were left behind on her chemise, which she proceeded to parade around France—in a five-month, victory tour de force, establishing her mystical and prophetic supremacy (214). No less a figure than King Louis XIII, along with other European monarchs and nobles, kissed the hand of Jeanne des Anges, on which the names of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus had mysteriously appeared (before, as de Certeau wryly notes, a visitor managed to flick off part of the name with his finger) (216, 221). Undeterred, Jeanne des Anges, de Certeau concludes, "will become, thanks to her 'angel,' the receptacle of a knowledge of the afterlife, the prophetess of the future of souls, the depository for counsels from heaven, the organizer of a pilgrimage and an office of good works, the head of a whole network of spiritual associations (221).

But if Jeanne des Anges rose high, she also started on a plateau, as her "her parents were of illustrious birth" (221). At age four or five, she was sent to live with her aunt, where "she

acquired a sound knowledge of Latin"—the very language that, during her exorcisms, she vehemently denied ever having learned, in order to buttress the reality of the possessions (222). As a young nun, "Intelligent and flexible, skillful and zealous, she makes herself indispensable" (223). When the Ursuline convent was first planned, she maneuvered her way into it. "They made some objections," she recalls, but "I did not give in to any of them," and instead "employed all kinds of stratagems to achieve my plan" (224). "'*Little dodges*,' she says: the adjective," de Certeau notes, "punctuates the entire *Autobiographie*" (225). In other words, "The word that minimizes the affirmation is already a flight, at the same time as being a wink of someone who is never really there" (225). Jean of the Angels is, in other words, "never identical with her personas" (225). She is, in de Certeau's dance, Loudun's Dionysian, foxlike mage.

Considering the above analyses, Anglophone philosophy clearly has missed much in overlooking de Certeau entirely, or in seeing in him only the tactics/strategy distinction (from *Everyday Invention*) reworked by María Lugones. Indeed, de Certeau both provides significant conceptual support for the philosophy of transformative social justice today, and also exemplifies the marginalized liberatory power of Dionysian tragicomic theater. Thus, the rehabilitation of de Certeau is simultaneously a timely political rehabilitation of Dionysus and his tragicomic theater, for a world today that is exhausted from backsliding and starving for transformative social justice.

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