Chapter 3

Michel de Certeau and Resistance as the Practice of Everyday Life

Michel de Certeau regards resistance as inherent in the everyday practices of life and allows, for instance, a sphere of autonomous action and self-determination even to the seemingly passive consumer. Certeau theorises how a "nobody" – the ordinary, passive consumer – through the everyday practices of life is capable of becoming a producer and, hence, of reconfiguring a given order. According to him, everyday practices like reading and writing also characterize ways of consumption. The ways of consumption of various products [like stories, legends, newspaper and articles of the dominant order] can make innumerable transformations that may signify a normally hidden production.

Certeau was born in 1925 in Chambéry, Savoie (France). His eclectic education contributed to the combination of history, psychoanalysis, philosophy and social sciences in his works. He obtained degrees in classics and philosophy from the Universities of Grenoble, Lyon and Paris. He undertook religious training at a seminary in Lyon where he entered the Jesuit order (Society of Jesus) in 1950, was ordained in 1956 and received a doctorate in theology in 1960 from the Sorbonne after completing a thesis on the mystical writings of Jean-Joseph Surin. He was one of the founders of the journal Christus in the year of his ordination. Greatly influenced by Sigmund Freud, Certeau along with Jacques Lacan was also one of the founding members of École Freudienne de Paris, an informal group which served as a focal point for French scholars interested in psychoanalysis. An article published by Certeau, dealing with the events of May 1968 in France, brought him to public attention. While teaching at different universities in Geneva, San Diego and Paris, Certeau produced a string of works in the 1970s and 1980s that demonstrated his interest in mysticism, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis. He died on 9 January 1986 in Paris ("Michel").
Certeau combines disparate scholarly interests to analyze the humblest concerns of the ordinary who try to lead dignified lives in their everyday practices. One of the most influential works of Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), a translation of *L’invention du quotidien Vol.1, Arts de faire’* (1980), studies the everyday life to bring out the inherent power of everyday practices. These practices constitute resistances to the oppressive systems in order to democratize them. Certeau draws brilliantly on immense theoretical resources – analytic philosophy, linguistics, sociology, semiology and anthropology. The book is neither a study of popular culture nor of everyday resistances to regimes of power, but attempts to outline the way individuals navigate everything – from city streets to literary texts – poach the territories denied to them and, thus, bring changes in existing rules and practices.

*The Practice of Everyday Life* marks a turning away from the producer (writer, scientist, city planner) and the product (book, discourse, city street) to the consumer (reader, pedestrian). As Certeau considers the individual to be an incoherent plurality of the sociological, economic and psychoanalytic determinants in whom the "operational logic" (or ways of doing) constitutes a culture, this individual – a passive consumer in the global order – becomes his central concern (Introduction xi-xii). It is this passive consumer who creates spaces for himself or herself and also brings changes through countless ways of consumption. Certeau attempts to bring out the production implied in the very ways of consumption. For him, the everyday practices or modes of consumption constitute multiform resistances that are capable of transforming a given unjust order. He concentrates on reclaiming autonomy through a non-conformist manipulation of ways of consumption.

According to Certeau, the 'use' or 'consumption' in the everyday practices of reading, writing and speaking can manifest resistance. For him, resistance is basic to everyday practices. The products (stories, legends, discourses, newspaper articles,
television) of the dominant order are consumed variably by the user (consumer) through everyday practices. In fact, consumption insinuates itself silently and invisibly everywhere to bring innumerable and infinitesimal transformations in the imposed order. The transformations that occur within the dominant cultural economy create a difference or similarity between the production of an image and its secondary production (hidden in its utilization). Thus these practices adapt the imposed order to the interests of the users/consumers.

Certeau uses the example of Spanish colonizers who imposed their culture on the indigenous Indians (the users, non-makers). The Indians responded by transforming rituals, representations and laws imposed on them even as they were subjected to Spanish colonization. The outwardly assimilated Indians thus subverted the norms without rejecting them. They deflected the dominance of the Spanish and escaped it without actually leaving it (Certeau xiii). The innovations or differences created by the users enable them to establish their own rules and secure a meaningful space for themselves while remaining assimilated in the order. The user in the contemporary global order is supposed to be passive or, in other words, a non-maker. But Certeau thinks that this non-maker manipulates spaces even through passive consumption to create a network of operations. He calls this an anti-discipline and a logic of unselfconscious thought which disrupts the logic of the established order (xiii). As everyday practices, the ways of operating that involve a way of making, a way of thinking and a way of acting that escape or exceed dominant ideologies, these are capable of evading the imposed discipline and constructing an alternative order (xv).

Certeau contends that everyday practices like speaking, walking, reading, writing, travelling, dwelling and cooking are significant as they construct their own specific logic and space. These practices make the consumers "the unrecognized
producers, poets of their own acts, silent discoverers of their own paths” who produce "wandering lines" and trajectories by obeying their own logic in "the jungle of functionalist rationality" (Certeau xviii). These trajectories trace the ruses of 'other' interests and desires. So these are neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop. It is to be noted that the vocabularies of the established language (of newspapers, television, supermarkets or museum sequences) remain subordinated in them. This makes a "trajectory," a "transcription" – a line that can be reversed and read in both the directions, and not a simple movement (xviii). It articulates multiform resistance by exhibiting tricky and stubborn procedures that elude discipline without going outside the given field. These characteristics of the trajectory make Certeau formulate a theory of resistance based on everyday practices (96).

Everyday practices of the "microbe-like" unrecognized people, asserts Certeau, create resistances that threaten the dominant order (94). These resistances lead to the proliferation of new combinations of powers because everyday practices resist the suppression of the panoptic administration. When these new combinations of power proliferate beneath the discourses that ideologize the society, they bring inversions, displacements and accumulations that redistribute spaces in the established order (94-96). It is because of their capacity to shape spaces that everyday practices have been called "spatial practices" by Certeau. The spatial practices discover the hidden and silenced, and while doing so, lead to the (re-)emergence of the marginalized vocabularies (as in stories and legends). Since the spatial practices constitute an anti-discipline that proliferates in the technocratic structures, these are capable of deflecting the gaze of power and reorganizing the order. Spatial practices like speaking, reading, writing, walking, cooking, dwelling and travelling also organize an ensemble of possibilities. While making the possibilities "exist" as well as "emerge," and moving them about to invent others, the spatial practices carry out a process of reorganization and redistribution (98).
According to Certeau, the ordinary, the Nobody, the Everyman, or the other, in literary works or discourses is capable of defining a space. The spatial practices enable the ordinary to deflect the normal functioning of the dominant structures by composing a network of anti-discipline. Certeau, like Sigmund Freud and Michel Foucault, believes in the strength of the ordinary. He believes that the ordinary is capable of defining a space by deviating from rule-governed practices as well as re-organizing the given structures through their everyday practices. Certeau sees the ordinary acting out the text, universalizing the character and thus turning an apparently mad discourse to wisdom. Owing to everyday practices, the ordinary, other or anti-hero is not a ridiculous laugher trapped in common fate (as thought of in the sixteenth-century). Rather she is a philosophical topos who formulates "a universal connection between illusory and frivolous scriptural productions and death, the law of the other" while defining "literature as a world" and the "world as literature," asserts Certeau (2). Thus Certeau assigns prominence to the ordinary – the anonymous murmuring of voices of societies in all ages – and their mechanisms and ways of operating.

The floodlights, says Certeau, have moved away from the actors possessing proper names and social blazons, and towards the chorus of secondary character and the masses. The ordinary squats at the centre and ordinary language challenges the dominant ideologies. In order to bolster his contention, Certeau refers to the Wittgensteinian model of language. Wittgenstein brings back words from their metaphysical state to everyday use, which disallows the metaphysical overflow because it imposes authority and renders the common language meaningless. Wittgenstein privileges the ordinary language (Certeau 9-10). The popular, ordinary language of legends, miracles, tales and beliefs questions the "reason" behind power and the hierarchies of knowledge. While doing so it reveals the inequalities hidden in
the established order and produces a "song of resistance" (18). As this language recognizes and endures repression, injustice and a non-coincidence of fact and meaning, it gives rise to voices and movements of resistance. These voices in turn create another space by telling a (miraculous) truth equivalent to a political ideology. In this way they subvert "the fatality of the established order" (17). The tales and stories comprising the everyday practices reverse the relationships of power. Such a reversal ensures the victory of the unfortunate in a fabulous and utopian space. It is this space, asserts Certeau, that protects "the weapons of the weak against the established order" (24).

According to Certeau, the ordinary equip themselves with a weapon which he calls a tactic. "Tactics" are the tricks or the arts of the weak – the "last resort" of the weak that helps them to inscribe displacements in the prevailing order for its reorganization (Certeau 37). Tactics manifest in the modes of consumption or in spatial practices. According to Certeau, a tactic is "a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus" that becomes "the space of the other" (37). It re-introduces "popular" techniques – countless ways of making do by refusing the "strategies" of the dominant. It is analogous to la perruque21 that proliferates in the modern world to make spaces for the weak, the passive users or the consumers (32). Therefore, Certeau considers popularization or degradation of culture to be a gap of varying proportions opened by the consumers (users) through modes of consumption.

In order to explain the term "tactics," Certeau draws a distinction between "strategies" and "tactics." The calculation and manipulation of power relationships that is possible because of the isolation of a subject (having will and power) from an environment is termed as a "strategy" by Certeau. He adds that every strategic rationalization delimits one's place in a world. The strategy, owing to a mastery of

21. "the wig"- worker's own work disguised as work for his employer (Certeau 32).
time through the foundation of an autonomous place, defines the power of knowledge that transforms uncertainties of history into readable spaces. Be it military or scientific, a strategy is a specific type of knowledge sustained and determined by the power that provides a place, observes Certeau. And a "tactic" plays on this imposed terrain of the strategy. As a tactic lacks proper locus, it de-limits the exteriority; it operates in isolated actions, blow by blow, and takes advantage of the opportunities available (Certeau 35-37). It enables the "weak" subject to juxtapose diverse elements to shed a different light on an area through the subject's way of operating. Therefore, a tactic cracks, fragments, cross-cuts and hits the framework of a system to manipulate the given order of things. This creates a difference that in turn makes a space for the weak.

The distinction suggests that strategy is related to power and visibility, but tactic is a tool of the weak and invisible. Certeau illustrates this distinction with the theories of the Sophists. He explains that the Greek rhetorician Corax makes the weaker position emerge stronger and turns the tables on the powerful by using the opportunities offered by a particular situation. Corax makes the worse argument seem better and thus inscribes a tactic. This tactic becomes a logic of articulating situations and the will of others in ways that favour the weak (Certeau xx, 38). It also intervenes in the organization of space. Therefore, it gains validity in relation to time and space to bring about change in the foundational structures of power and, hence, effects a radical transformation. If the strategic model constructs the political, economic and scientific rationality, the tactic seizes opportunities, manipulates events and turns them into opportunities (xix). Hence, strategy and tactic become two logics of action. Tactics are the manipulations related to the ways of changing (by seducing, persuading, making use of) the will of another. Whenever an expansion of technocratic rationality occurs, it leads to innumerable tactics of the invisible that can reconstruct the order in different other ways.
In order to bring out the interplay of forces in the everyday practices or ways of consumption, like reading and writing, that produce an anti-text to alter the system, Certeau analyzes the rhetoric and semiotics of tactics. He studies the linguistic combat that resists the order, power and strategies to reveal the voices of the marginalized. He also draws a homology between the arts of thinking, speaking and acting (39).

Rhetoric, according to Certeau, offers an array of figure types for the analysis of the continuous and permanent ways of everyday acting. The verbal economy, condensation, double-meaning, misinterpretation, alliteration, displacement, etc. bring out the repressed and create myriads of invisible movements of resistance in an established order (xix). When the political and economic strategies deny access to the required space, tactics creep into the system to create a resistance that tries to acquire the denied space. The weak or the marginalized consumer detaches herself from the vast framework, pulls tricks, uses tactics and tries to outwit the dominant forces to produce a transformed and better order. In this manner the spatial practices of the consumers reappropriate the product-system. Such a reappropriation aims at "a therapeutics for the deteriorating social relations" (xxiv).

Certeau considers the tactics of the weak or the invisible to be of great significance, for they are the movers and initiators which trigger transformative fragmentation in the social fabric. This results in the reorganization of spaces. As tactics bring movement as well as change in the otherwise immobile order, they break the inertia of consumption and change the passive consumers into producers. They even lead to visibility and audibility of the 'weak.' Obviously, the two logics of action, strategy and tactic, arise from the two facets of usage or consumption. Being woven into everyday practices, both strategy and tactic are related to everyday struggles and hence make resistance a practice of everyday life. Certeau does a kind of politics for change when he inquires into the public (democratic) image of the multiform and
microscopic connections between the manipulation and massive reality of social activity. He asserts that the everyday practices of reading inscribe changes in the structures of cultural politics. It is a process of silent production. Similarly, writing through tactics – like invoking foreign dialects, re-emergence of the vocabularies and subjects that have been silenced or marginalized – lead to the re-emergence of the unthinkable and the unnamable.

Certeau is of the view that tactical manipulation reframes the strategic order of the dominant. He makes a comprehensive analysis of the acts of speaking, walking, reading and writing because the tactical manipulation of these spatial practices initiates movements of resistance. The analysis reveals that speakers, readers or writers inscribe their messages in the contemporary productivist technocratic order to make comparable changes and to secure spaces in that order. Certeau compares the acts of speaking and of writing to the acts of walking. He concludes that these acts appropriate a space of enunciation and also lead to movements that bring transformations.

Certeau holds that speaking operates within the field of a linguistic system to establish or re-establish a relationship of time and place for the appropriation and reappropriation of spaces. Like the act of walking, the "pedestrian speech act" moves out of the limits of graphic representation to proceed towards the inaccessible (Certeau 97-98). This movement or speech both organizes an ensemble of possibilities and actualizes it. With the example of Charlie Chaplin and his cane, Certeau shows that the spatial practices of speaking and walking are also movements of resistance that bring transformations. Chaplin uses his cane to do unusual things and so goes beyond the limits of utilization by multiplying the possibilities of the cane. Chaplin actualizes a few possibilities made available by the constructed order as well as increases the number of possibilities. He also creates shortcuts and detours while
walking. He also forbids obligatory or accessible paths which lead to prohibitions. This demonstrates that the walker Chaplin makes a selection: he either chooses or displaces in order to create frameworks of enunciation (98-99).

For Certeau, a long poem on walking may be a manipulation of spatial organization that neither conforms to nor is foreign to the panoptic. It inserts many social, cultural and personal references and citations that create ambiguities. Such ambiguities displace, distort and divert the coherent meanings to constitute a "wandering" of semantics. This is produced by the masses and by stories and legends. So the stories and legends invent spaces and store up the rich silences (the world's debris and left-overs from the nominations and taxonomies). In other words, these stories play on the void of the discourses to define places. They distort the coherent meanings of the discourses to classify and analyze identities. The discourses saturate places with signification to the extent of choking them. This can even usher in totalitarianism. So the places invented by the stories and legends crack such systems, suspend the symbolic order, annul the habitable spaces and make spaces for those considered to be insignificant.

The stories about places are makeshift things furnished by the "left-overs." This constitutes a heterogeneity that manifests the ambiguities that are capable of displacing and distorting the imposed order. Thus the stories construct a relationship between spatial practices and the constructed order. Therefore, walking about and travelling – the itinerant function of physical movement in the legends and stories – open up the space to the different (the silenced, the marginalized). A travel may explore the deserted places by way of detour through distant places. It may lead to the discovery of relics, fleeting visions of the countryside and of fragments of music and poetry. Hence, a walking exile produces a fiction that characterizes dreams (created by pedestrian rhetoric and condensation) which invent spaces by displacing the given order (Certeau 105-07).
When the surface of the imposed order is flooded by the hidden, oppressed desires and struggles of the silenced in the stories, it can bring inversions (Certeau 108). The stories symbolize the pain or pleasure of the body of the inward by turning to histories (pasts) that are not allowed to be read. According to Certeau, the act of moving about the city – walk or travel related to childhood experiences – is the pedestrian unfolding of the stories accumulated in a place. It undoes the readable surface as it proliferates and floods the private and public spaces to create within the planned city "a metaphorical or mobile city" (of dreams, wishes, desires) (110). These dreamt-of places inaugurate the possibility of another space as well as constitute a resistance of the "unsigned, unreadable and unsymbolized" non-producers. In these ways, the everyday practices of speaking, walking, travelling, reading and writing manipulate the power relationships, and can even turn a minority into a silent majority.

Certeau regards the spatial practice of reading as an act of poaching. The wandering eyes of the reader drift across pages to infer meanings of the words. The reader poaches on another person's text and gets transported into it to pluralize herself in it (Certeau xxi). She re-invents the dominant text just as a renter changes a rented apartment by furnishing it with countless 'differences.' Reading modifies its object and instils into it a will to rewrite so that a new, reformed and reconfigured order could be established. Thus reading and writing become inseparable.

Certeau supports his assertion with the help of research in the psycholinguistics of comprehension – particularly by referring to the distinction between "the lexical act" and the "scriptural act" in reading (168). He notes that the process of reading parallels the deciphering of letters as well as of meaning. It anticipates a hypothesis and paves the way for writing. Since reading modifies its object, it is not a passive consumption. The passivity of reading changes into a mode of production.
when the reader (a consumer) through the act of reading (consumption) creates something new. And it is this interplay of implications and expectations that reorganizes the readable space (170).

The reader detaches the text from its origins, combines the fragments and through an indefinite plurality of meanings creates something unknown in the space so organized. Certeau holds that the reader neither takes the position of the author nor an author's position. He invents something different in the texts than what these texts intended. The travelling eye of the reader drifts across the page to bring about metamorphoses and anamorphoses of the text. When the reader breaks up the literal meaning of the text into a plurality of meanings, she begins to reorganize the text afresh. Thus the act of reading changes the text into a "cultural weapon, a private hunting reserve" that also legitimizes the plurality and works to produce spaces for the weak and the marginalized (Certeau 170-71).

Certeau situates reading at the intersection of social stratification and poetic operations. The literal meaning of a text reflects a social hierarchization. It makes the text a reproduction of the socio-cultural relationships. As long as the reader conforms to the information distributed by the officials of an institution (or the elite), the plurality of the text remains concealed. But when the reading operations manipulate the cracks and insinuate their inventiness to bring out the concealed story of the invisible that is not in conformity with the story told by the "masters" (framers or determiners of the literal meaning), the resulting plurality reorganizes the spaces (Certeau 172). Certeau obviously does not believe in reading the text according to the literal meaning because in that case social relationships determine the meaning which obscures the text. For him, reading is being elsewhere, in another world that is concealed in darkness by social determinants. It is from there that the reader brings changes in the social relationships that over-determine her relation to the text. As the
reader deterritorializes herself and oscillates between a nowhere and what she invents (through transformations), the outcome is a silent production. The strategies of the dominant order are thus challenged and changed through the tactics of reading (173).

According to Certeau, the spatial practice of reading allows the readers to become travellers who move across lands owned by someone else. Readers, like nomads, poach their way across fields they do not own and despoil "the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves" (Certeau 174). Reading detaches the text from its soil and offers greater possibilities of moving about which in turn multiplies spaces leading to an autonomy that knows no fetters of the dominant determinants. Through the mobility of the eye, reading unmoors the subject from the scriptural place and reduces the written text to an object to emancipate the silenced body (176).

Like reading, the scriptural play or act of writing formalizes a space and brings invention and inversions through manipulation of the exteriority. It allows one to act for social efficacy, transform it and lead to the production of a system. The island of the page becomes a transitional place where the scriptural enterprise makes inventions and inversions to form new products. The "received" things, the indexes of a certain "passivity" of the subject with respect to a tradition, are thus transformed through writing, observes Certeau. The scriptural enterprise retains within itself what it receives from outside and creates internally the instruments for an appropriation of the external space through the power of fabricating the object. Hence, writing envisages a change in every area, including the political, the economic and the administrative.

According to Certeau, writing achieves this appropriation of the external space through "stylistic figures" (rhetoric). Rhetoric is a combination of style and use. For Certeau, 'style' is a linguistic structure that manifests on the symbolic level. It is an individual way of being in the world whereas 'use' for him indicates the elements of a code that refers to the social phenomenon. Style processes the symbolic; and both
style and use intersect to form "a way of being and a way of operating" (Certeau 100). The rhetoric organizes and actualizes an ensemble of possibilities. Certeau compares the "tours and detours" of the "walking passers-by" and the turns of phrases to explain this reorganization (100). He perceives the diverse rhetorical operations – the figures like synecdoche and asyndeton – to be similar to the diverse act of walking – like leap, skip and hop. Such amplifications or reductions, argues Certeau, shape a space.

Certeau contends that synecdoche, asyndeton and ellipsis characterize a symbolic order of the unconscious as well as the processes of subjectivity in a discourse. The comparison of the linguistic formations with the pedestrian processes demonstrates that the spatial practice of writing is inseparable from the dreams and desires of an order which re-invents life (Certeau 103). With the creation of a "nowhere in places," the stylistic figures change the spaces into passages and eventually liberate spaces that could be occupied. The rhetorical operations give beautiful names to the hidden and thus resist the technocratic power to create a place for them (104-05). The juxtaposition of the various figures articulates the lacunae of the imposed order: the ellipses and drifts change this into a sieve-order. Such an order is characterized by a heterogeneity that produces an "anti-text" within the structured space of the text. This anti-text enables the movements of resistance to produce other possibilities in given order (107).

The text constructed on the page has power over the exteriority because the blank page is a space that delimits a place of production for the subject. And this place on the page from which the ambiguities of the world have been exorcised is available for a partial but regulatable operation. Therefore, it becomes an autonomous surface for the subject who accords a field of operation, confronts various objects and

22. Amplifies the spatial element, names a part instead of the whole - sail for ship (Certeau 101).
23. Reduces the spatial element through a selection or skipping over links and whole parts, suppresses the linking words like conjunctions and adverbs within a sentence or between sentences (ibid. 102).
exercises his will. The linguistic fragments or materials – words, sentences, figures – produce an order through the articulation of thoughts to trace a trajectory on the page (another world, the text) (Certeau134). As the system of linguistic fragments formalizes a space and constructs another world, it refers to the reality from which it is distinguished. Therefore, it comprises a movement that brings change in the order. The inversion that the scriptural system effects represents a movement that transforms the subjects, which Certeau compares to the practice of walking.

Thus the scriptural project on a blank page constitutes, according to Certeau, a society with respect to the past and produces a new history through a fabrication (that either amplifies or reduces). This may constitute or inaugurate progress or a revolution (Certeau 135). Writing combines amplification and reduction and accumulates the past to alter the order. It isolates the subject and objectifies the language to challenge the dominant socio-economic and political codes for transformation. And this, claims Certeau, is the tactic of writing that opposes strategies. He illustrates this with the help of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. According to Certeau, Crusoe awakens to the capitalist and conquering task of writing. When Crusoe writes his diary, it gives him space to master time and things. It also enables him to produce what he wants (136). Writing articulates and develops identity and places. The new writing overturns the writing of the erudite as it redefines the invisible and the inaudible. Consequently, this tactical writing takes forward the revolutionary task of producing an identity and providing it with a space. Since this project makes use of the marginalized vocabularies, it also leads to the re-emergence of the marginalized (137-38).

Certeau calls this re-emergence the return of the marginalized and explains it with the example of a man dying in a hospital. The dying man is an isolated object driven out of society. He is also the one who ceases to exist in the speech of the
family. Analogously, the excluded or marginalized remain non-signifiable objects exiled into a foreign land. As a deviant in an institution (hospital) – organized by and for the conservation of life – the dying man surrounded by silence is put away for "an anticipated mourning" (Certeau 190). The dying man falls outside the thinkable and is a subject at the extreme frontier of inaction even if he is left in the field circumscribed by the possibilities of treatment. Thus he enters a region of meaninglessness. Because the absence of work is "non-sense" in our society, it eliminates the dying man from the discourse that tirelessly articulates tasks. Wrapped in a shroud of silence the dying man thus becomes the unnamable, a mere "lapse" in discourse (191). As the dying man is set aside in the secret zones (hospitals, prisons, refuse dumps), he becomes foreign to his people and a non-signifiable object in an "elsewhere" called death (192). Death sticks him away in antiquated spaces (as religious beliefs and languages), displaces him and deprives him of any sense. Certeau observes that death in such instances becomes the unthinkable and the unnamable but re-emerges in disguise. On being invoked in foreign dialects, the repressed – "death" – returns in an exotic language (of past, ancient religious, or distant traditions) which marks the return of the excluded in disguise.

Certeau says that texts proliferate around death without words. Literature focusses on this meaninglessness as it articulates the position of the subject with respect to death (the silence of the subject). Between the haunting fear that underlies the struggle for life and the act of dying, there is a possibility of speaking. So dying also becomes a speech that articulates the collapse of possessions and representations of the subject and says nothing other than the loss out of which saying is formed. Since the possibility of dying functions in the "in-between space," death or nothing actually defines speaking (Certeau 193). For Certeau, death denotes a loss and is the index of alterity. So a text or writing is a representation of the dying, of waste-
products and of loss which constructs a hidden meaning. On account of being formed from the loss – from what cannot be said – writing forms the impossible adequation between presence and lack. Certeau remarks that writing spells an absence which becomes both a precondition and a goal for the process of inversion (reversal). Thus the spatial practice of writing articulates the exteriority that eludes it and proceeds by successive abandonments of occupied places (194-95). It manipulates the in-between space where a loss (lapse) of production of goods creates the possibility of an expectation (a belief), the desire from the other and an altered attention for the survival of the dying (or already dead). It is this articulation and manipulation in fiction that makes writing reconstruct as well as initiate a process of change.

Such reconstruction allows the reappearance of the indiscreet 'other' whose place the social text wanted to take within the space of a book. Writing, says Certeau, marches through the territory of the enemy (dominant order), the very area where loss prevails, to produce sentences with the lexicon of the mortal, in proximity to and even within the space of death. It dramatizes the place of elimination, the inseparable excluded element (whose question is raised repeatedly by sexuality or death) and thus composes a space in conformity with one's will constructing a vision for the future. This makes the scriptural project produce an advancement of "a will-to-do, a progress" (Certeau 196). It is to be noted that while doing so, writing also articulates itself on a body. The traditional ways of power writing on the back of its subjects (in the case of a servant, the master's hand writes on the servant's skin), the parchment of skin, has been replaced by papers and books in modern times. Certeau sees the book as a metaphor of the body and remarks that the writing of law still requires a body. Thus in the event of crisis, the law again writes itself on bodies instead of papers. In such a condition the printed text refers to what is printed on the body, affects its subject/object with pain or pleasure, and turns it into a symbol of the other. Since a
body is constantly required for the inscription of law, the living beings are "packed into a text " (as products are canned) and transformed into signifiers of rules (an "intextuation") and the logos or reason of society "becomes flesh" (an incarnation) which makes a book out of the body (140).

Among the texts selected for the study, Govardhan's Travels, Animal's People and The God of Small Things exhibit such articulations as have been theorized by Certeau. The act of suffering by being branded with red hot iron with the mark of the Name and of the Law as in case of Govardhan, by undergoing the deformity of the body as in the case of Animal and by brutal beating as in case of Velutha exemplify the writing of law on bodies. Corporeal writing by the group's law, asserts Certeau, is accompanied by the pleasure of being recognized. This kind of urge to become an identifiable and legible word in a social language, of being changed into a fragment within an anonymous text and of being inscribed in a symbolic order does not belong to an author. This suggests that a printed text may repeat the ambivalence of pain and pleasure of the other and this process can form an offensive frontier that organizes social space. The process separates the text and the body as well as links them. It permits the acts that would make the textual fiction of the model to be reproduced and realized by the body. Between the laws that change and the living beings that pass by, the textual fiction exhibits the "stable tools" – objects made for squeezing, holding up, cutting or confining the bodies like shining iron and steel, dense wood, solid and abstract figures – that outline the movement of a suspended justice. These objects punctuate spaces, form networks and branch patterns as they allude to the "symbolic corpus" (dominant law) on one side and to the carnal beings on the other (Certeau 141). This panoply of instruments (reserved in storage places, ready for use or left over after use on bodies), according to Certeau, outlines in "dotted line" the relations between rules and bodies that are equally mobile (141).
The idea of a physics of bodies in movement within a bodily space – the dream of a mechanics of distinct elements correlated by propulsive forces, pressures and changes in equilibrium – is manoeuvred to carry out various operations in the act of writing. Certeau makes a comparison of these operations to surgery that replaces or repairs the defective organs of the body. The operations of the scriptural project create resistances against the unjust order to bring desired changes in the social fabric. Certeau's conviction that writing seeks to remove the "excessive, diseased or unaesthetic" things (organs) from the society (body) and that it seeks to add what it lacks hints at the possibility of an equal order. Writing constructs another world which is actually dictated by reality itself. It articulates the real and produces stories to make people believe in the change which would reconstruct the unjust order. Surgery replaces dysfunctional or atrophied organs; writing cuts, tears out, extracts, removes parts of the 'diseased body,' assembles the body, sews it together and instals it into the system after changes (Certeau 148). Hence, writing transforms individual bodies into a body politic to construct new identities after repairing and educating the body through a network of fabrications which make them autonomous (143).

As writing becomes a process that repairs the order, it becomes a power in the hands of the marginalized or, for that matter, also in the hands of a "bourgeoisie." It ignores the significance of the letter for the privilege of birth, and thus substitutes it. Writing acquires the "right to reclaim, subdue or educate history" (Certeau 144). It not only assures a transformation but also conceives an order that produces the text (a body). This text or fiction forms "paving stones and paths, networks of rationality" through the incoherent universe (144). Thus it protects the rights of the fragmented and exchanges their flesh for a glorious body to secure an equal place in a just order for them.
The text resists the dominant law as it voices the cry of the weak and puts forth their claim to autonomy and to the right to repair the social fabric. Therefore, the imposed disciplinary codes of the order – be it dressing up according to a particular fashion or selecting food prescribed by traditions – to which the bodies conform, can be remade by this dual operation that characterizes writing (Certeau 147). Instead of crushing or branding the weak, writing makes the body tell a code (the social language). According to Certeau, it first atomizes and then multiplies the constraining networks of exchange that make the individual conform to rules. By doing so writing passes from a discourse to a story that is interlaced with the dynamics of the bodies which become signs, to find in a discourse the means to transform themselves into a unit of meaning as well as an identity. Thus the tireless inscriptions of the discourse are perforated with lapses – the cry and revolt of the unnamed. The flight or escape (deviation) from the law of the named in the stories transforms the dying and the obscure into a recognized expression. This enables the act of writing to radically reconfigure the order (147-49).

A story makes a journey and re-organizes the available space through displacements. This makes writing of stories a spatial practice (Certeau 116). According to Certeau, stories "carry out a labour that constantly transforms places into spaces or spaces into places" (122). They awaken the inert objects, like a table or a forest, to play a role in the environment. The inert objects emerge from stability – a place where they lay motionless – into the foreignness of their own space to bring transformations (118). Therefore, stories not only provide knowledge of the order of places but also organize new trajectories and movements. The narration of tours brings out the forms of the imposed order and the maps that colonize the spaces.

According to Certeau, a small bedroom in a house might indicate that one cannot do

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24. It implies stability. The objects determine place (Certeau 122)
25. It is composed of mobile elements. The actions of the subjects determine space (ibid. 122)
anything in them and the legendary long-lost attic that could be used for everything might refer to what can be done. This pertains to the treatment of spaces (122).

Certeau takes the magisterial tribunal, the contradictory statements made by disputing parties and the interlocutory judgments in a story, etc. to be the labor of literature. These compose spaces, and so verify, collate and displace the established frontiers. He states that the function of the stories is to de-authorize an establishment, to displace or transcend limits and to set up an opposition within the closed field as well as to authorize the subject with social actions to mark out boundaries and open a field for themselves (125). Therefore, the stories create heterogeneous spaces and, through an interaction among things, animals and human beings give rise to a "logic of ambiguity" which then can mobilize displacements and inversions (128).

The "logic of ambiguity" in a fiction can voice non-identities and can give visibility to their unnoticed suffering (Certeau 178). Certeau holds that a transition of authority from religious and political institutions to the tactics of 'making-believe' in the present times leads to new political formations. He considers fiction to be a manifestation of these tactics and humanity to be a creation of narratives, debates and stories. Since the narratives fabricate the real and guide a belief to action, they may give rise to movements of resistance that bring transformations in society. Certeau terms the modern society as "a recited society" (as the narrations or stories make people believe) (186). Story-making fabricates realities and is related to the making of beliefs. It has the potential to translate seeing into believing, which in turn gets translated into doing that may change the configuration of the established order.

According to Certeau, modern society is "a recited society" in three senses: "it is defined by stories, by citation of stories and by the interminable recitation of stories" (186). The semblance of the real in stories or fiction fosters beliefs which influence "the ways of operating" – seeing, speaking and acting. This in turn can give momentum to movements of resistance that create spaces for the silent, the non-
producers and the passive non-identities (both subjects and objects). The credibility of fiction and politics lies in a belief that has a reality value. So both these become comparable for Certeau (Rancière also draws a similarity between the two, which will be noted in Chapter 4). The citation becomes the "ultimate weapon" for making people believe as it institutes the real. Fiction, observes Certeau, is a perpetual self-citation that leads a country to belief. It also creates opinions, brings reversals and even reforms in the nation (188). The narrativized order of modern fiction foregrounds the hidden truths and realities and gives visibility to the non-identities. Certeau even asserts that the invisibility of the real in traditional fiction has been replaced by the postulation of its visibility in the modern times (187). Since writing brings changes in the ways of believing and doing, Certeau focusses also on the role of fiction, advertising, media and political representation because these can give visibility to the non-identities.

Certeau, thus, explores the potential of spatial practices of walking, travelling, speaking, reading and writing to generate resistances to the dominant order and to reconfigure that order to make it more democratic and participatory. He uses the insights provided by various fields of knowledge and draws on the unconscious and repetitive elements of everyday practices. According to him, the tactics of consumption of the ordinary could actually be their strengths, and these convert them from passive consumers into silent producers. Since the tactics of speaking, writing and reading manipulate the given order, reverse their strategies and make space for the ordinary, these may become the forces of resistance that actually pave a fresh path. They can initiate a movement of change to improve the situation for the ordinary.

Ben Highmore elaborates on the obligation that cultural studies have to the ordinary. He focusses on Raymond Williams’ insistence that culture is ordinary.
Highmore also endorses Williams' assertion that everyday/ordinary practices provide a number of rhetorical tropes related to literature. For Williams', everyday experiences of the working class are a version of the culture that is ordinary. Thus literary works bring a better understanding of this culture. The process of creation encompasses the ordinary way of life. If in Williams' perception the ordinary infects the literary culture from "below," Roland Barthes sees the ordinary as infecting it from "above" (Highmore 253). Highmore construes Barthes' microanalysis of myths of 'French daily life' as an evidence of allegiance to the ordinary. It is the ordinary/everyday that helps to arrive at the deep social totality. Highmore then reads Certeau to discuss the ethical implications of the anthropological or ethnological framework that cultural studies employ while attending to daily life.

Highmore writes: "De Certeau's work sets out to provide an ethical provocation . . . accompanied by an invitation to 'listen otherwise' to the ordinary and to the texts it might hide in . . . [which is] crucial for re-imagining the practice of ethnography" (254-55). Highmore surveys the itineraries of Certeau's diverse writings that attempt to map ethnology the business of writing the culture that is ordinary. His analysis of Certeau's views on writing emphasizes its power of displacement and spatial organization. He attaches special importance to Certeau's concept of scriptural economy as it continually finds new ways to erase and inscribe ordinary culture (256).

The Freudian notion of the "return of the repressed" is central to Certeau's work. Hence, Highmore examines in Certeau the operations of ego and consciousness that repress the traumatic material only to find it return. The "lived-ness of everyday life (the overflowing everyday), repressed by the mechanisms of the official writing of culture, returns surreptitiously in fragments, in traces, as a scarcity" (258). So the reading of the texts or discourses has much to do with the interpretation of the "repressed" (dreams and desires) of the other as they manifest the "voice of the
people." The heterogeneous "voices" of repression disrupt the order of official writing to bring in the everyday/ordinary culture in plenitude, which inscribes the will to power. They point to the possibility of return of the repressed as they are triggered by strategic writing/discourses. The latter privilege an authentic voice of the popular, of the everyday, states Highmore, to generate new forms of reading and writing. They also bring out the significance of obscure everyday practices as ways of operating capable of bringing changes (259).

The abandoned and salvaged objects murmur and dream of countless combinations of existences, and so the repressive operation ironically becomes a "royal road" to an overflowing everyday that has the potential to usher in reforms. Highmore notes that the scriptural economy vivifies the "presence of absence" of daily life and embodies the desire of the ordinary. The tactics of writing thus suggest an inventive response (ethical and pleasurable) that relates everyday pursuits to particular circumstances (262).

Certeau's insights, which focus on the resistances of the ordinary, can help in the analysis of fiction insofar as it carves out representational spaces for the ordinary murmurings through various kinds of spatial practices. The insights enable the reading of texts to trace the trajectories made through tactics. This way of reading also helps to trace the silences inscribed in various texts in the current globalized context. Certeau's approach also reveals the conflicts in the socio-economic distribution and political order as well as the resistances that can disturb functionalist calculations. Most importantly, Certeau's theoretical framework breaks the illusion of inertia of the multiform activities of daily life to define them as movements of change in the order. Certeau's insights give visibility to gaps, lapses and various disparate forces that disturb the superficial equilibrium of the predominant discourses. In the specific context of our project, his vision of fiction as constructing the future can help in
interpreting those textual circumstances and events in the selected fiction that envision a future.

The writer, for Certeau, tries like a dying man to articulate the repressed and inscribes on a black page the desire for survival and change. The acts of reading and writing as envisaged by Certeau involve a revival which recalls Camus's conviction of the aesthetic resistance as a renaissance. This is an affirmation of the role of fiction in reforming the given order. Certeau's use of the everyday/ordinary, including the methods of their consumption, is a contribution to consolidate the resistance of the marginalized. His work is significant for suggesting certain ways in which the current systems of sense-making can be significantly transformed. The everyday phenomena that Certeau uses for his analysis are of immense importance in these times, for he explains how the inconspicuous, the weak and ordinary make use of the strong to create a sphere of action for self-determination within the constraints of a given order. Writing, for instance, makes the ordinary conspicuous. It also brings out their resistances which deflect the technocratic order to pave a path of progress. Certeau's theoretical framework that regards resistance as a practice of everyday life reappropriates the space of socio-cultural production in a way that empowers the ordinary to realize their dreams to make the order effectively democratic.