

Le mystique de la vie quotidienne:
An Approach to the Theological Framework of Michel de Certeau



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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my supportive parents, my soon-to-be wife,
and my family members who emboldened me to persevere in learning,
including the ones who did not live to see me finish this project.
I am blessed to have an abundance of encouraging voices.
To all of you, thank you.

Soli Deo Gloria

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SHORT ABSTRACT

As scholarship engaging the interdisciplinary work of Michel de Certeau has increased since his death in 1986, there remains considerable disagreement as to what role Christian theology played in his academic career. While some scholars suggest his cultural analysis develops away from theology, other research avoids the question of his religiosity altogether. This project addresses the ways in which Certeau's theology influenced his wider cultural analysis. In close textual studies of Certeau's *oeuvre*, this project asks: what theological concerns motivated Certeau's critical engagement with such a variety of disciplines, and what kept him from writing more overtly theological texts like his mentor, Henri de Lubac? Though Certeau rarely engages in doctrinal debates or biblical studies, I argue that Certeau's theology forms the epistemological foundations from which he embarks on his intellectual wonderings. By discerning his key theological impetuses among his cultural analysis, this study shows a theological framework implicit within Certeau's work on Jesuit spirituality, his socio-political writings on resistance, and his later research into psychoanalysis and spirituality. While his analysis of heterologies leads him to the limits of orthodoxy, Certeau's implicit theology generates insights into the relationship between religious studies, theology, and the role of belief in cultural theory. To accomplish this project, I track Certeau's theological concerns through his main spheres of cultural analysis: historiography, geography, social semiotics, psychoanalysis, mysticism, and everyday life. Through his early research with Jesuit sources, his socio-political turn in response to the student revolt in 1968, and then the final decade of his life with positions in Paris and California, I demonstrate the consistency of his inquiry into the nature of religious belief.

LONG ABSTRACT

Since the late 1960s, Michel de Certeau has grown in popularity as a multifaceted, interdisciplinary cultural theorist. With his education and professional life beginning in Lyon and Paris, Certeau first gained international acclaim after the translation into English of *L'Invention du Quotidien*, or *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Across the course of his professional career, Certeau held academic positions in history, cultural history, psychoanalysis, and anthropology with various universities and institutes in Paris, Geneva, and California. While Certeau was trained as a theologian and his mentor was Henri de Lubac, one of the 20th centuries most influential Catholic theologians, the nature of Certeau's theology and religious belief has been taken seriously by only a few scholars. Particularly among English speaking academics, Certeau has rarely be treated as a religious thinker. It is the purpose of this thesis to first articulate the gap in scholarship surrounding Certeau's theological influences and impetuses and then to argue for how his theology and religious belief shaped the various disciplines and phases of his career, including his work in historiography, social geography, social semiotics, psychoanalysis, mysticism, and his study of everyday life.

Since Certeau defined himself as a historian and his theological development grew amidst his historiographic studies in the mysticism of the 16th and 17th century Jesuits, chapter one explores the relationship between Certeau's implicit theology and his writings on historiography. Certeau's understanding of historiography grew out of his study of Jean-Joseph Surin, an extraordinary Jesuit in the 17th-century whose life raises numerous questions about the nature of religious authority and dwindling ecclesial and institutional power that Christianity holds within culture. I show how Certeau's theological concern for oppressed voices, "the silenced of history," differs from the Neo-Marxist view of history, which was *en vogue* in Paris during Certeau's lifetime. Certeau's account of history, influenced by his theology, led to his later work on everyday life. In providing this connection, I demonstrate a consistency of Certeau's theological motivations across his life and research, arguing against those who would see a point of departure away from theology in Certeau's academic career. I focus Certeau's distinctive account of historiography, influenced by his implicit theology, around the concepts of belief, memory, and narrative. I also demonstrate that Certeau's account of belief and its relationship to structures of "truth" and authority are indispensable from his understanding of the praxis of collective memory, his analysis of the transitions in the structures and authorities of the culture, and his analysis of writing history in the present.

Following the first chapter covering narrative, memory, and how history is told in the present, in chapter two I argue for the uniqueness of Certeau's account of space as influenced by his theological understanding of space and embodiment. This chapter explores the advantages of Certeau's account of space versus other voices on space within critical theory, such as Henri Lefebvre. Within the *oeuvre* of Certeau, a chapter on space and embodiment would naturally follow his understanding of historiography, since for Certeau, history is a praxis combining space

and story while the *habitus* is produced and reproduced in these spacial stories. Belief operates and is manipulated and sustained through embodiment, which he drew in part from Maurice Merleau-Ponty. What I argue in this chapter, which will lead to the chapter on spirituality and mysticism, is that this embodied believing as understood by Certeau accounts for what he understood as *le mystique* and subversiveness within the symbolic order. Certeau's account of space and time are rooted in an understanding of immanence, where God saturates time and space, empowering subversive and creative endeavours from "non-places" or spiritual places. This chapter also draws out some of Certeau's insights and theological concerns following the events of May 1968, particularly how space and speech were effected by the student revolt and the police state in Paris.

As space and speech were intertwined in Certeau's reaction to May 1968, chapter three argues for the theological concerns connected to his account of social semiotics, another disciplines which Certeau research heavily, yet the connections between his theology and his social semiotics have rarely been investigated. As Certeau is known amongst 20th century cultural theorists for his "wanderings" and, at times, lack of clarity, this chapter has presented the consistency of his theological influence, beginning with his early work on 16th and 17th-century Jesuit mystics and writings with Jesuit journals, to his more overtly political writings in the aftermath of the student revolution in Paris in 1968, and into his later years in the 1970s and 1980s which focus predominantly on mysticism and psychoanalysis, while still engaging themes in semiology. Certeau's theological concerns for the symbolic order and his post-structural influences are most clearly evidenced in his account of social semiotics. I demonstrate how Certeau's theology, as it pertains to social semiotics, can best be understood as emerging in the space of God's absence and God's silence. The relationship between modern language and modern doubt engenders the dominance of modern semiotics over against previous forms of meaning shaped by faith and revelation and mystical experiences as well as polices forms of communication and semiosis that function contrary to the transcribed, written code of the elite. Thus, Certeau showed an affinity towards the subversive character of alternative forms of communication that are not confined to literal relationships between words and what they represent, such as *patois* and *glossolalia*, and therefore disrupt the hegemony of the symbolic order. Lastly, this chapter will argued for the affective and embodied nature of social semiotics linked with Certeau's theological concern for the body. In making these claims, this chapter raises questions as to Certeau's understanding of theological language, which will be considered in the context of his psychoanalysis.

Chapter four answers questions raised in chapter three on the affective nature of language and continues to connect Certeau's theology with another disciplines, psychoanalysis, that has rarely been considered alongside Certeau's religious belief. In 1964, Certeau was one of the founding members of the Freudian psychoanalysis school in Paris with Jacques Lacan. Certeau's account of psychoanalysis brings together the praxis of history and narrative to belief and openness to the *Other*. From the social semiotics of the previous chapter, his account of meaning, representation, and desire will be traced into his psychoanalysis. The chapter investigates key themes within Lacanian psychoanalysis and how Certeau interacted with them theologically. The

relationship between speech and psychoanalysis will be developed further into his account of *desire* and *rupture* in relation to the work of Lacan and Jesuits who first utilised psychoanalysis as a tool for reading culture rather than individuals. I then show the theological motivations for Certeau's links in his psychoanalysis to the empty tomb, as God's absence becomes the locus of desire and longing for transcendence. Certeau drew upon the image of the empty tomb as the ground of possibility for Christian faith and theological language, encouraging a type of modesty and humility that made room for a plurality of voices to speak, informing his heterology.

Following his account of psychoanalysis and the centrality of the *Other* in his cultural theology, chapter five argues for the consistency of his cultural analysis, theological impulses, and his later works on mysticism and heterology. This chapter provides greater specificity to Certeau's account of the *Other* while connected *Otherness* throughout his various disciplines utilised in his cultural analysis. In order to provide clarity to this elusive account of mysticism, I explore Certeau's relationship with Henri de Lubac, their disagreements, and the impact of de Lubac's censoring and exile from the Jesuit order during the 1950s, particularly how the silencing of errant or heretical voices by academic or ecclesial authority influences movements around mysticism or transcendence. I demonstrate how Certeau's understanding of mysticism differs from key voices in this field, such as William James and Evelyn Underhill, due to his theoretical proficiencies in socio-linguistics and historiography, which as I have shown are intertwined with his theology. Even Certeau's account of mysticism has often been separated from his theology and his heterology. I argue for a consistency across Certeau's mysticism, theology, and heterology in his concern for marginalised voices and hope for Christianity to make space for new voices and *Other* expressions of alterity and *mystique*. Lastly, this chapter explores the implications of Certeau's heterologies in the context of a theology of religions.

The final area of cultural analysis which marks Certeau's academic career but has not been thoroughly investigated for its theological underpinning (particularly in connection to his other disciplines) is his study of everyday life. This sixth and final chapter argues for the theological foundations and concerns which contribute to Certeau's most well-known work, *L'Invention du Quotidien*, while showing the consistency of the theme of the ordinary in connection to his theology across the breadth of his career. The weight he placed on speaking and semiosis allowed for unique insights into both the role of power in censoring language but also the revolutionary capacity of language. Originating during the lifetime of Certeau, there developed a sophisticated, interdisciplinary lens of analysis that explored the nature of everyday life as a matter of critical studies. Certeau developed a unique voice within what is now a field of critical theory surrounding the ordinary experiences of daily life. I demonstrate the central role of belief, which is theological in scope, within the ordinary, everyday human experience and the disruptive capacity of belief to reimagine the symbolic order away from social hegemony and into creative social solidarity. This final chapter builds on the previous connections made between Certeau's theology and his understanding of history, space, language, the *Other*, and marginalised religious expressions.

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Si igitur ego me riddidero omni possibili modo bonitari tuae similem, secundum gradus similitudinis ero capax veritatis. Dedisti mihi, Domine, esse et id ipsum tale, quod se potest gratiae et bonitatis tuae continue magis capax reddere. Et haec vis, quam a te habeo, in qua virtutis omnipotentiae tuae vivam imaginem teneo, est libera voluntas, per quam possum aut ampliare aut restringere capacitatem gratiae tuae; ampliare quidem per conformitatem, quando nitor esse bonus, quia tu bonus, quando nitor esse iustus, quia tu iustus, quando nitor esse misericors, quia tu misericors, quando non nisi omnis conatus meus est ad te conversus, quia omnis conatus tuus est ad me conversus, quando solum ad te attentissime respicio et numquam oculos mentis avertio, quia tu me continua visione amplecteris, quando amorem meum ad te solum converto, quia tu, qui caritas es, ad me solum es conversus. Et quid est, Dominie, vita mea nisi amplexus ille, quo tua dulcedo dilectionis me adeo amorose amplectitur?

Nicolai de Cusa, De visione dei (1453)

Thus in a work placed under the sign of "facility," he gives himself credit for just one thing, in his prefaces or his letters: his "immense labor," from archive to archive, from observation to observation, from doctrine to doctrine or mission to mission, in order to "hear" what other witnesses have to say and to attempt in that way to open up to that folly a path in history.

Michel de Certeau, "The Gaze Nicholas of Cusa" (1984)

INTRODUCTION: Certeau, Cultural Theory, and Cultural Theology

The focus of this dissertation is the cultural theory and theology of Michel de Certeau, the French Jesuit who lived from 1925-1986. A scholar known for his exceptional interdisciplinary acumen, Certeau held academic positions in France and the United States while exploring a variety of disciplines including historiography, psychoanalysis, social geography, and religion. Certeau was a well-known cultural theorist within French culture, and his popularity grew after his untimely death in 1986. Research exploring Certeau's erudition and theoretical depth has grown considerably since the 1980s, yet there are still certain aspects of his thinking that have yet to be fully examined - namely, his religious belief.

As scholarship engaging the interdisciplinary work of Michel de Certeau has increased since his death in 1986, there remains considerable disagreement as to what role Christian theology played in his academic career. While some scholars suggest that his cultural analysis developed away from theology, other research avoids the question of his religious themes and Jesuit commitments altogether. Particularly among English-speaking scholars, there often remains a tendency to frame Certeau as a Jesuit scholar by training but once he began to produce manuscripts with non-religious publishers and teach at state universities in France and the US, his thinking developed away from religious belief. This project aims to determine to what extent and in what areas Certeau's theology influenced his wider cultural analysis.

In order to address Certeau's theological impetuses and my claim that Certeau is often treated as a non-religious writer, I will first begin this project with an account of the context and background of Certeau's religious and professional journey. Next in this introduction, I will show the gaps in research in secondary literature around the religiosity of Certeau in regard to his

cultural theory and how my research provides a unique bridge between the key texts on Certeau's cultural analysis and the theological roots and aims of his writing career. Then this project begins with a detailed outline of the structure and methodology of how I will argue for the theological substrates of Certeau's cultural analysis as well as the roots of the theological themes which form the consistent lanes by which Certeau explores various academic disciplines.

0.1 Certeau's Origins and Context

Before providing the methodology, literature review, and key themes of this dissertation, it is necessary to provide a brief biographical summary of the life of Certeau and the dates of his major philosophical contributions in order to best introduce the scope and unique specificity of my project. The particularities and context of Certeau's professional career will become more clear through this project, such as his works on the early Jesuits, his response to May '68, his work on everyday life, and his final manuscripts. For this section, I will provide contextual and thematic details about Certeau, focusing on his education and religious vocation as well as the beginning of his academic vocation upon completing his doctorate in 1960.

Michel de Certeau was born on 17th May, 1925 in Chambéry in Savoie, France to modest provincial aristocracy. The eldest son in a devout Catholic household, Certeau's family owned the land on which a number of religious orders lived and carried out their mission. Within this context, Certeau felt called into a religious vocation at an early age, claiming boldly at the age of

fourteen, “Moi, je serai prêtre . . .”¹ The 1930s and 40s were years of great turmoil in France, so Certeau’s years of formation and coming to terms with his Catholic faith were fraught with international and local conflict.² France declared war on Germany in September 1939, and the eight months later, in May 1940, the Nazi troops began to aggressively take the region of northwestern Europe. By mid-June, Paris had fallen, and a new prime minister, Philippe Pétain, had been placed in power. The “étrange défaite” came on 22 June 1940 when the Nazi-complicit government signed an armistice with Germany, confirming a crisis of French culture, a shaking felt by people like Certeau who saw the rise of traditionalist and conservatives who sought to counter the influence of avant guard and more progressive movements in the arts, literature, and

¹ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002), pp. 29-30. Dosse’s doctoral thesis was on the life and legacy of Michel de Certeau. His extensive biography of Certeau represents the only significant narration and analysis of Certeau’s background and personal vocation as a Jesuit, academic, and priest. The biographical and archival research within my thesis will regularly refer to Dosse’s text, *Le marcheur blessé*. Dosse was advised by Luce Giard, Certeau’s friend and collaborator. Giard became the editor for Certeau’s unpublished manuscripts following Certeau’s death in 1986. For the majority of this project, Giard and Dosse represent the key biographical and historical resources for this thesis.

² French people who were adolescents in the 1940s, the years Certeau was an adolescent and began university, have been studied in French history for their *mémoire collective* of the war and French defeat. Luce Giard, Certeau’s close friend, colleague, and editor remarked on Certeau and this period of French cultural history: “What specifically marked his generation was the common, painful experience of the shock, felt in his adolescence in 1940, when he had to witness — rage pulsating in his veins — the annihilation of the “old country” in resignation, fear, shame, and disorder. He retained its unforgettable lesson, which often returned through the detours of his conversation, to the effect that no places exist for children to obey their fathers, and even less, to accept the currency of their discourse of value or the code of honour whose celebration of these fathers, in their agreement with authorities, are forever ready to perpetuate . . . He knew he was leading this labor of emancipation to a painful phase of sundering, of distance taken from earlier assurances, sometimes to the point of a break without possibility of return But the construction of his autonomy, the removal of the “obviously” received facts of a tradition, a milieu, a family, meant staying faithful to the inner voice of the adolescent of 1940 who had refused the resignation of the fathers (most of them in power), support for the old Marshall [Pétain], the moralising discourse of the defeat that a sinful France really deserved. . . From the difficult years of 1940-1944, he retained this certitude: no one can ever be absent from the public sphere, because no one can elude his or her political responsibility played a role in what is everyone’s struggle. . . If he was rarely bothered with establishing proceedings of judgment or with defining, the rules that dictate their functions, for limit was absolutely crucial to nourish the fire of a need, the courage of a radicality in which, one day, there would extend a liberty embracing all at once action, speech, understanding, and belief.” Luce Giard, “Introduction: How Tomorrow is Being Born,” in Michel de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech & Other Political Writings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. xi. This quote is also cited similarly, though not in its entirety, in Graham Ward, “Introduction” in *The Certeau Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwells Publishers, 2000), pp. 3-4.

philosophy.³ Chambéry and Grenoble, where Certeau attended university, were within a demilitarised zone. However, these cities were close to areas occupied by Italian forces as well as the town of Vichy, the *de facto* capital of the quasi-police state and the new authoritarian government. In 1945, the year Germany surrendered to the Allied forces, Certeau took a year off as “qui traverse même une crise dans sa vocation.”⁴ During this year, he was finalising his degree in scholastic philosophy while serving as a chaplain to the students of Grenoble. He then attended seminary in Lyon, the city which Charles de Gaulle called “la capitale de la Résistance.”⁵ The theme of resistance would permeate Certeau’s writings as his seminary in Lyon consisted of a “Résistance spirituelle,” a collective of Christians engaged in the Resistance beginning in 1940 and carrying their efforts in rebuilding French culture and spiritual identity in the years following the Second World War.⁶

Certeau’s formation in the cultural and spiritual resistance of Lyon was also set within a period of remarkable intellectual and theological scholarship and devotion among the Society of

³ “L’Étrange défaite,” or strange defeat, is a phrase made popular by the French historian, Marc Bloch, who was tortured and executed by the Gestapo in 1944. The strange defeat describes the collective loss felt by the French as they conceded to the power of the Nazi military regime. Bloch was an academic historian, a founding member of the Annales School in Paris, who fought in French military before being captured for aiding the French Resistance (which will be discussed further in chapter one). See Marc Bloch, *Strange Defeat* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997 [1944]).

⁴ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 38.

⁵ Henri Noguères, *Histoire de la Résistance en France de 1940 à 1945: Tome 1* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1976); Olivier Wieviorka, *The French Resistance* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 116. Noguères was a part of the French Resistance as a young man and later became an influential journalist and historian. Noguères wrote an extensive, five-volume history of the French Resistance in which he explored the diverse and intricate network of Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Jewish, Conservative, and Marxist people from across a variety of socio-economic classes and professions. Within the French Resistance, there were those who engaged in guerrilla warfare and acts of sabotage against the Nazi and Italian military, but there were those who also focused on spiritual resistance, or those like Marc Bloch who built up cultural resistance in writing, literature, and the arts, believing that Nazi fascism was not only a danger to the French people but also a danger of eradicating the beauty of French culture.

⁶ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 39.

Jesuits.⁷ In Lyon, there was a district on a hill called Fourvière, which was the location of Jesuit residences, monasteries, and schools of theology. Certeau felt called to Lyon and Fourvière, in particular, because of the depth of theological exchange at the time. In many respects, the Jesuit residences and schools in Fourvière were the origins of “nouvelle théologie,” a movement within Catholic theology which criticised a neoscholastic dominance in 20th century theology and instead emphasised a return to patristic sources. Nouvelle théologie would include influential Jesuit figures such as Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner, Joseph Ratzinger, Hans Küng, and Jean Daniélou.⁸ Lyon was also the location of clandestine publications during the period of the French Resistance, such as *Témoignage chrétien*, or *Christian Testimony* which was published in 1941. *Christian Testimony* was an expression of a spiritual resistance against Nazism. Christian leaders, many of whom were Jesuits, felt that it was the Gospel and Christian virtues that would ultimately overthrow fascism. On the editorial board of the *Christian Testimony* was Henri de

⁷ Certeau’s graduate and vocational development took place in two influential cities, Lyon and Paris. For the intersection of the religious, political, and cultural context of Certeau’s formation in Lyon and Paris, see Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) and Sarah Shortall, *Soldiers of God in a Secular World: Catholic Theology and Twentieth-Century French Politics* (Cambridge, MA, 2021). This context of Certeau Jesuit communities and the influence of the French Resistance provided several key relationships for Certeau. Luce Giard was a student with Certeau in Lyon under Henri de Lubac and Jean Daniélou. See François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau*, pp. 38-42.

⁸ See John Kirwin, *An Avant-garde Theological Generation: The Nouvelle Théologie and the French Crisis of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 6-10. “The *nouvelle théologie* countered that Neoscholasticism was strangling authentic Christian thought and had itself caused the rationalistic dualism at the heart of the crisis between the Church and the modern world. . . . The *nouvelle théologie* was mainly comprised of Jesuits based at the Fourvière theologise in Lyon, France and Dominicans at Le Saulchoir, first lacerated in Tournai, Belgium and then Paris. They sought a greater theological appropriation of modern categories of history, concrete philosophy, and political engagement. Drawing on the philosophy of Maurice Blondel (1861-1949), they embarked on a method called *ressourcement* which attempted to ‘return to the sources’ and recover various Neoplatonic Patristic writings which offered a counter-theology to the Neoscholasticism dominant at the time. Led by Jesuits Henri de Lubac (1896-1991), Jean Daniélou (1905-1974), Henri Bouillard (1908-1981), Gaston Fesserd (1891-1978), Yves de Montcheuil (1900-1944), and Dominicans Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895-1990), Yves Congar (1904-1995), Louis Charlier (1898-1981), Henri-Marie Féret (1904-1992), and René Draguet (1986-1980). They published a host of important books and articles in addition to making available in translation a number of Patristic writings. Although initially censured and disciplined, their thought triumphed in the sessions of the Second Vatican Council and is universally seen as having great theological import. First termed the ‘*nouvelle théologie*’ in a critical article published in *L’Osservatore Romano* in 1942. . . .” p. 6. See also Jürgen Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie: New Theology: Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2010), pp. 3-14. For the intricacies, debates, and theological richness of *nouvelle théologie*, see Hans Boersma, *Nouvelle Théologie & Sacramental Ontology: A Return to Mystery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Lubac, who would become a mentor to Certeau particularly through the 1950s. Certeau entered the Jesuit order at the age of 25 in 1950 and was ordained a priest in 1956.

Certeau's relationship with Henri de Lubac would significantly mark the rest of his life.⁹ These two Jesuits met in Fourvière, where Certeau admired his elder Jesuit's study of medieval exegesis. About the relationship between Certeau and de Lubac, François Dosse wrote, "À chaque moment majeur de son parcours au sein de la Compagnie, Certeau réaffirme à Henri de Lubac à quel point il est celui qui guide ses pas. En 1956, moment de son ordination sacerdotale, il lui écrit, 'Je sentais mieux que jamais, ce jour-là, tout ce que je vous devais et combien j'étais dépourvu pour vous en dire ma reconnaissance.'" ¹⁰ Certeau wrote letters to de Lubac throughout much of his life, referring to him as his father and inspiration. However, Certeau's first years in the Jesuit order were the years that de Lubac spoke of as his own "dark years." De Lubac was removed from his position with the Catholic University in Lyon and the Jesuit seminaries and residence at Fourvière for his critical studies on certain dogmas, such as original sin and the

⁹ Henri de Lubac entered the Jesuit Order in 1914. He was ordained a priest in 1927, and then he was appointed a professor with the Catholic faculty at Lyon in 1927 and eventually the chair of fundamental theology. In the 1930s, de Lubac taught a course a year at the Jesuit seminary at Fourvière, where he lived beginning in 1934. During the war, de Lubac and Jean Daniélou published a series of journals focusing on the revival of patristic studies and sacred tradition. De Lubac would become a controversial figure in the 1950s, experiencing censorship from Rome and the leaders of the Jesuit order, a situation which will be further explained in chapter five of this thesis. After a period of censorship, de Lubac became a profound figure in 20th century Catholic theology for his influence on the Second Vatican Council and his focus on Eucharistic theology, historical theology, ecumenicalism, covenantal theology, and ecclesiology. See François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau*, pp. 38-41.

¹⁰ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 52. [At each major moment of his journey within the Company, Certeau reaffirms to Henri de Lubac just how much he is the one who guides his steps. In 1956, at the time of his priestly ordination, he wrote to him, 'I felt more than ever, that day, all that I owed you and how much I needed to tell you my gratitude.'" *Trans.*] For this thesis, I will use an official English translation when available. Otherwise, I will provide my own translation of a French text in the footnotes. I will indicate that this translation is my own by providing the English translation in brackets followed by *Trans.*

existence of Hell.¹¹ Though de Lubac was removed from his posts in Lyon, he was relocated to a Jesuit community in Paris in 1950. In this same year when he entered the Jesuit order, Certeau was also sent to Paris by his superiors for formation and studies, thus allowing for their relationship and the influence of de Lubac on Certeau to continue. De Lubac was allowed to return to teaching in 1958, but his censorship and suspension effected Certeau's relationship with both the Catholic Church and academia as the themes of censorship, authority, and representation were consistent important themes throughout Certeau's research career. Encouraged by his Jesuit superiors, Certeau studied religious history at the Sorbonne, completing his doctorate in 1960 on the history and theology of the first generation of Jesuit leaders.¹²

To complete this section on Certeau's background and context necessary for my thesis, I will briefly cover his academic career. The movements and significance of his career, lasting nearly two and half decades, will become clearer as this project proceeds, but it is necessary now to introduce various stages, places, and key publications of his professional life. Before completing his doctorate, Certeau began working as an editor and writer for *Christus*, a Jesuit journal of theology, spirituality, and cultural studies. The 1960s and early 1970s were a period of professional and intellectual growth for Certeau. De Lubac, now in good standing with Rome, had become an institutional and authoritative voice for the Second Vatican Council, beginning in

¹¹ Henri de Lubac was one of four Jesuits that faced censorship and discipline from Pope Pius XII. Henri Bouillard, Alexandre Durand, and Pierre Ganne were also removed from their posts in Lyon. Pope Paul VI reinstated de Lubac nearly eight years later. Pope Pius XII was critical of de Lubac and his mentor, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. De Chardin was an influential, though controversial, Jesuit for his research seeking to combine Catholic doctrine with Charles Darwin's evolutionary biology. Certeau and de Lubac worked together editing de Chardin's *Lettres à Leontine Zanta*, which was published in 1965.

¹² The Society of Jesus (the Jesuit Order) was founded in 1540 by Ignatius of Loyola and his companions. Ignatius with Francis Xavier, Pierre Favre, Alfonso Salmeron, Diego Laínez, Nicholas Bobadilla, Simão Rodrigues form the first generation of Jesuit leaders. Certeau's dissertation primarily covered the spiritual diary and prayer book of Pierre Favre, who was the "most active disseminator of [Ignatius of Loyola's] spirituality." Favre, like Certeau, was from the Savoy region of France. See Willem Frijhoff, "Michel de Certeau (1925-1986)," in Philip Daileader and Philip Whalen (eds.), *French Historians 1900-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 77-92.

1962. Certeau wrote extensively on the Second Vatican Council for *Christus*, serving as a theological advisor for the Council alongside his mentor, though Certeau was not appointed to as prominent or official of an advisory role. It was during the same period of the Council, 1962-1965, that Certeau began to interact professionally with Jacques Lacan, establishing the Freudian School of Paris in 1964. Certeau's affinity with Lacan and psychoanalysis, as well as his critiques of Catholic institutions and dogma, were concerning for Henri de Lubac.¹³ In 1967, Certeau would take a new position at *Études*, a Jesuit journal combining orthodoxy and humanism in its exploration of global issues and a variety of disciplines.¹⁴ Certeau wrote feverishly in response to the student revolt in May 1968, publishing many articles through *Études*.¹⁵ After his response to the events of May '68, he accepted a post at Paris VIII (Vincennes). In 1972, he took up a more permanent position at Paris VII (Jussieu). By this point, de Lubac was not responding to Certeau's letters, and in 1971, de Lubac's disagreements with Certeau had become quite public.¹⁶ But while de Lubac had been reestablished in the Jesuit order and as an authority in the Roman Catholic Church, Certeau had become a public voice in France.

When Certeau took a permanent position at a state university in Paris, he had already published a number of manuscripts and articles, and not just under Jesuit publishers. In 1960, Desclée de Brouwer published Certeau's translation and introduction of Pierre Favre's journal, a

¹³ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 55.

¹⁴ In chapter six, I will provide greater specificity to Certeau's work with *Christus* and *Études*.

¹⁵ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau*, pp. 157-171.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 55. In chapter five, I will provide greater detail to Certeau's points of departure from his mentor, Henri de Lubac. Certeau's letters during the late 1960s and early 1970s reveal a sincere desire to reestablish a familial bond with de Lubac, apologising for any offence and seeking to talk through in private points of disagreement. In *Les Églises particulières dans l'Église universelle* (1971), de Lubac publicly distanced himself from Certeau saying, in effect, that Certeau's utilisation of de Lubac's latest manuscripts was "in direct opposition to the whole of my thought." See Henri de Lubac, *The Motherhood of the Church: Followed by Particular Churches in the Universal Church and an Interview Conducted by Gwendoline Jarczyk*, trans. Sergia Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), p. 41.

substantial archival tasks that demonstrated Certeau's training and skillset in scholarly writing on historical subjects.¹⁷ After Favre, Certeau focused on the infamous Jesuit exorcist, Jean-Joseph Surin, publishing an edition of his *Guide spirituel pour la perfection* in 1963.¹⁸ In 1964, as mentioned above, he worked with Henri de Lubac on the letters from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin to Léontine Zanta, one of the first women in France to receive a doctorate degree. Certeau continued his work on Surin and published *Correspondance* (1966), with more than 1500 pages of Surin's letters, sermons, prayers, and journal entries, complete with Certeau's annotations and cross references to Surin's allusions. Then, in response to the events of May '68, Certeau published *La prise de parole: pour une nouvelle culture*.¹⁹ Inigo Bocken noted that in this text Certeau "applied his insights on the role of the mystics in the 16th and 17th centuries to the protesting students in the streets of Paris."²⁰ Certeau's response to the student revolt, his erudition of this cultural moment following the postwar decade and the presidency of Charles de Gaulle, garnered both national readership and respect within the Parisian academic community. From 1968 to 1971, he was the professor of psychoanalysis and history at the new experimental University of Paris VIII-Vincennes, and then in 1971, he was selected at the chair of cultural and historical anthropology at the University of Paris VII-Jussieu. To be approached for the chair position at Paris VII-Jussieu meant that he had risen to a level of prominence in French academia and culture beyond the context of the Jesuit order. Certeau would remain at this

¹⁷ Pierre Favre, *Mémorial*, trans. Michel de Certeau (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960).

¹⁸ Jean-Joseph Surin, *Guide spirituel pour la perfection*, ed. Michel de Certeau (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963). Part of the originality of my project is how I show the influence of Certeau's early work on Favre and Surin on his later work on everyday life and cultural theory.

¹⁹ Michel de Certeau, *La prise de parole: pour une nouvelle culture* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1968).

²⁰ Inigo Bocken, "Everyday life as divine practice: Modernity and transcendence in Michel de Certeau," in Wessel Stoker and W. L. van der Merwe (eds.), *Looking Beyond? Shifting Views of Transcendence in Philosophy, Theology, Art, and Politics* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 174-175.

post until 1978. From his articles and manuscripts written in response to May '68, he was hired by the French Government to develop a research team to speculate the impact of these events on the French culture. Certeau carried out this research through the 1970s, and it would ultimately become his most well-known work, *L'invention du quotidien. Vol. 1, Arts de faire*' (1980) or *The Practice of Everyday Life*.²¹ Further details of Certeau's professional life in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly his research within cultural history, historiography, and psychoanalysis, will be explained as this project proceeds.

0.2 Reception History and Context

Part of the challenge of any thesis exploring the thought of Michel de Certeau is his reception history. After a prolific career of writing and teaching in Paris, California, and Geneva, Certeau died of pancreatic cancer in 1986 at the age of 61. By this stage of his career, Certeau had grown in popularity due to his writings on everyday life and response to the student revolts in Paris in May 1968. In 1978, Certeau moved to California to take up a position at the University of California, San Diego. University of California Press published *The Practice of*

²¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). One of the last of Certeau's works to be published before his death, *The Practice of Everyday Life* is considered to be a foundational text in the burgeoning field of everyday life studies. Tony Bennett and Diane Watson (eds.), *Understanding Everyday: Sociology and Society* (Oxford: Blackwells, 2002); J. D. Douglas, "Understanding Everyday Life," in J. D. Douglas (ed.), *Understanding Everyday Life* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1970). Lois Gillman (ed.), *Alienation, Everyday Life, and Postmodernism as Critical Theory* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996); Karl Klare, "The Critique of Everyday Life, Marxism, and the New Left," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, vol. 16 (1971-1972); Laurie Langbauer, "Cultural Studies and the Politics of the Everyday," *Diacritics*, 22.1 (1993): pp. 47-65; Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Susan Willis, *A Primer for Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 1991); Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002); Michael Gardiner, *Critiques of Everyday Life* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), Michael Sheringham, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 3. Sheringham writes that "if we look back . . . we can see that the quarter-century or so leading up to the 1980s saw the elaboration of a cluster of closely-knit ways of thinking about and exploring everyday life that planted the question of the everyday at the heart . . . of the twentieth century and into the new millennium." Sheringham, Highmore, and Gardiner have significant portions of their research dedicated to Certeau.

Everyday Life, representing his first major work to be translated into English. Published in 1984 before his death, this text would influence much of Certeau's reputation as a presumably non-religious thinker. Certeau moved back to Paris in 1984, and at the time of his death in 1986, Certeau was the *directeur d'études* (research professor and director) at the prestigious École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.²²

There is reason to believe that Certeau became increasingly non-religious throughout his career. While Jesuits like de Lubac largely wrote more dogmatic and historical theology following the Second Vatican Council, Certeau's did not overtly engage in the theological debates of his time, such as issues around tradition, the authority of the canon, ecumenicalism, issues surrounding the priesthood and the laity, Eucharist, fundamentalism, creationism, and political theology. In 1986, Adrien Demoustier, a Jesuit priest and professor in Paris, collaborated on *Le Voyage Mystique* with Luce Giard following Certeau's premature death.²³ Demoustier described Certeau's intellectual journey, particularly when he left Paris for a position with the University of California, San Diego:

Il vit désormais sur un poste-frontière, envoyé et s'envoyant lui-même chez les « infidèles », explorant au plus profond la logique et l'étrangeté de l'incroyance présente. La Compagnie de Jésus ne fait pas appel à lui pour ses propres Facultés de philosophie et de théologie. . . Or la pensée de Michel de Certeau relève de cet effort nécessaire de mobilité qui empêche le savoir de se figer sur ses certitudes et ses acquis; elle est d'abord attentive à ce jaillissement venu d'ailleurs, de plus loin et de plus profond, qui relance le mouvement au long d'une trajectoire de vie; par son exigence et sa densité, elle demande des interlocuteurs plus avancés. Comme le dira avec justesse un de ses proches, Michel de Certeau ne fournit pas de réponse à des questions difficiles, il se tient dans la question et la tient ouverte dans toute sa rigueur, avec lucidité, sans complaisance. Ce n'est pas seulement par la force d'une déduction toute d'intelligence qu'il pointe si clairement la relation

²² Willem Frijhoff, "Michel de Certeau (1925-1986): A Multifaceted Intellectual," in *Spiritual Spaces: History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau*, ed. Inigo Bocken (Leuven: Peeters/Titus Brandsma Institute, 2013), p. 8.

²³ Luce Giard (ed.), *Le Voyage Mystique : Michel De Certeau* (Paris: Recherches de Science Religieuse, 1988).

constitutive qui attache la production de l'historien à son lieu institutionnel et social.²⁴

A simple reading of Certeau, and Demoustier's quote, might suggest that Certeau had left ties with theology and the Jesuit order. Commenting on how scholars view Certeau's religiosity, Philip Sheldrake wrote:

Overall, I seriously question the assumption among some English-speaking social scientists that de Certeau's life and writings are neatly divisible into two parts—a first religious part up to the early 1970s and then a second social scientific period when theological interests and a religious narrative are essentially absent. I do not believe that de Certeau left theology behind or moved in some simple way into a form of postmodern fragmentation and dispersal. However, the problem with some attempts to retrieve him as a religious thinker, for example by “Radical Orthodoxy” theologians, is that they concentrate too much on his explicitly religious writings and bypass the implicit yet real religious underpinning to much of his social scientific writing.²⁵

In an other article, Sheldrake spoke again to the issue of Certeau as a religious thinker. On the one hand, he questioned any assumption that Certeau's religiosity was absent in the later phases of his career. On the other hand, he was critical of any “attempt to retrieve Certeau as a religious thinker” that was overly focused on preserving church doctrine or the authority of church.²⁶

²⁴ Adrien Demoustier, “Histoire, institution et mystique; Jésuites des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles,” *Le voyage mystique, Michel de Certeau* (Paris: Recherches de Science Religieuse, 1988), pp. 62-63. [He now lives on a frontier post, sent out and sent himself to the “infidels,” exploring in depth the logic and the strangeness of contemporary unbelief. The Society of Jesus does not appeal to him for its own faculties of philosophy and theology. . . . However, the thought of Michel de Certeau comes from this necessary effort of mobility which prevents knowledge from freezing on its certainties and its achievements; it is first of all attentive to this springing up from elsewhere, from further away and from deeper, which relaunched movement along a life trajectory; by its requirement and its density, it requires more advanced interlocutors. As one of his relatives will rightly say, Michel de Certeau does not provide answers to difficult questions, he sticks to the question and keeps it open in all its rigour, with lucidity, without complacency. It is not only by the force of an all-intelligent deduction that he points so clearly to the constitutive relationship that attaches the production of the historian to his institutional and social place. *Trans*].

²⁵ Philip Sheldrake, “Michel de Certeau: Spirituality and The Practice of Everyday Life,” *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, Volume 12, Number 2 (Fall 2012): 207.

²⁶ Philip Sheldrake, “Spiritual Horizons: Michel de Certeau, Every Practices, & the City,” in *Spiritual Spaces: History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau*, ed. Inigo Bocken (Leuven: Peeters/Titus Brandsma Institute, 2013), p. 77.

Part of the issue at stake with Certeau is the lines and definitions between religious studies, theological studies, and secular scholarship. Furthermore, the relationship between religious studies and theological studies as well as the definitions of secularity and secularism have shifted considerably since the time of Certeau's writings and even since the 1990s and early 2000s when some of the first manuscripts (in English) exploring Certeau were published.²⁷ Since neither the transitions in the studies of religion and theology nor the divergent accounts of the secular within a pluralistic society can be adequately accounted for in this thesis on Certeau, the scope of my project will use "religious" and "non-religious" as oppose to secular (unless when clearly defined) due to the wide variance of understandings around secularity, both in the mid-twentieth century and in contemporary scholarship.²⁸

²⁷ See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1963); Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Faith and Belief: The Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Nicholas Lash, *The Beginning and the End of "Religion"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Donald Wiebe, *The Politics of Religious Studies: The Continuing Conflict with Theology in the Academy* (New York: Palgrave Publishers, 2000); Slavoj Žižek, *On Belief (Thinking in Action)* (London: Routledge, 2001); Linell Elizabeth Cady and Delwin Brown, *Religious Studies, Theology, and the University: Conflicting Maps, Changing Terrain* (Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 2002); Michele Dillon, *Postsecular Catholicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Wessel Stoker and W. L. van der Merwe (eds.), *Looking Beyond? Shifting Views of Transcendence in Philosophy, Theology, Art, and Politics* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012); Mariano Barbato, *The Pope, the Public, and International Relations: Postsecular Transformations* (London: Basingstoke Press, 2020); Scott Marcel, "Keeping Theology and Religious Studies Together." *NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* 76.1 (2022): 1-17. While hardly an exhaustive list of the key texts which have signalled the various shifts in thinking around the division between religious studies, theological studies, and secular scholarship, these authors, particularly Smith and Wiebe, argue against definitions of religious studies or theological studies that would separate religious studies from confessional belief, or that would likewise separate theological studies from pluralism, doubt, or agnostic scholarship.

²⁸ Within this thesis, I will use both "religiosity" and "theology" in referring to physical, institutional, and theoretical categories which consider (either by nature, design, or intention) matters of God(s), the *Other*, alterity, transcendence, divinity, or mystery. Here, I am drawing from Fergus Kerr, Philip Sheldrake, Inigo Bocken, and Eveline van Buijtenen for their expanded understanding of religion and theology as well as their understanding that Certeau has contributed to a wider cultural and theoretical view of religion and theology. See Fergus Kerr, "The Essence of Christianity: Notes after De Certeau," *New Blackfriars* 54.643 (1973): 545-556; Philip Sheldrake, "Michel De Certeau: Spirituality and The Practice of Everyday Life," *Spiritus* 12.2 (2012): 207-216; Philip Sheldrake, *Explorations in Spirituality: History, Theology, and Social Practice* (New York: Paulist Press, 2010); Inigo Bocken and Eveline Van Buijtenen, *Weerbarstige spiritualiteit: Een inleiding in het denken van Michel de Certeau (1925-1986)* (Vrije Uitgevers, De; Auflage, 2016).

What then is to be made of Certeau's religiosity? His longtime collaborator and the executor of Certeau's literary estate, Luce Giard, claimed more than once that the questions of God and belief permeated Certeau's writings and thought processes.²⁹ Julia Kristeva, the Bulgarian-French philosopher and semiotician, described Certeau as "un des esprits les plus hardis, les plus screws, les plus délicats de notre temps."³⁰ Praising the legacy of Certeau, she predicted that because of the writings of Certeau on religious history that one day mysticism and spirituality will need to be reintroduced into schools and university curricula (the Sorbonne, for example, is a state university where the teaching of theology in a secular context has been contentious). She also gave him credit as "parler de l'inconnu sans nécessairement le nommer Dieu."³¹ Jean Lebrun, the French journalist, professor, and public intellectual, was fascinated by Certeau's telling of *La possession de Loudun*, the famous 17th century possession and exorcism.³² He saw in Certeau's research a depth of spiritual devotion, noting that Certeau devoted his entire life to the study of questions surrounding religion and spirituality. Gwendoline Jarczyk, the philosopher and religious historian, called Certeau a mystic when she wrote, "Mystique, Michel de Certeau le fut, et peut-être surtout parce qu'il l'ignora."³³

²⁹ Luce Giard, "Introduction: Michel de Certeau on Historiography," in Graham Ward, ed., *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000):18-19; Luce Giard, "Introduction: Opening the Possible," in Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, xii; Luce Giard, "Michel de Certeau's Heterology and the New World," *Representations*, 33 (1991): 212-226.

³⁰ Julia Kristeva as quoted in François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 21. [one of the boldest, strongest, most delicate minds of our time. *Trans*].

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21. [talk about the unknown without necessarily naming it God. *Trans*].

³² Michel de Certeau, *La possession de Loudun* (Paris: Julliard, 1970, 1980, 1990).

³³ Gwendoline Jarczyk as quoted in François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 21. [A mystic, Michel de Certeau was, and perhaps most of all because he was unaware of it. *Trans*].

This project seeks to hold together what Demoustier, Kristeva, and Sheldrake have said about Certeau. First, Demoustier is right to note points of departure between Certeau and Catholic theology. Certeau's critiques of theology as a discipline and the Church as an institution will become clear through each chapter. Kristeva, who researched alongside Certeau in Paris with Lacan, acknowledged Certeau's nuancing of discussions of faith and spirituality while not naming God as God. Then Sheldrake, a scholar of Christian spirituality, argues that Certeau maintained a theological component throughout each stage of his career. Herein lies the crux of my research project: how and why does Certeau maintain a theological impetus while not writing overtly theological research? If, in fact, a "religious underpinning [remained] implicit in his social scientific work," how does religious belief underpin or influence the shape of Certeau's social and cultural theory? If Sheldrake is right, then what theological motivations and concerns continue throughout the various stages of his career?

0.3 Gaps in Scholarship on Certeau

In order to address the theological impetuses, motivations, and themes present to the work of Michel de Certeau, I will explore the international breadth of scholarship engaging his life and philosophy. Throughout this thesis, however, I will demonstrate a gap in the scholarly research surrounding Certeau, particularly in regard to his relationship with and use of theology and religion. Following this literature review explaining the gap in research on Certeau's religiosity, I will outline the originality of my project in bridging this gap.

When considering the legacy of Certeau, his untimely and premature death has considerably shaped the interpretation, scope, and reception of his writings. Certeau was not able to complete a number of his philosophical projects, including his research on heterology and on

mysticism, and the second volume of *The Practice of Everyday Life* was edited and compiled with articles from other authors more than ten years after his death.³⁴ The timing of these publications and incomplete projects has led to speculation and errant assumptions or, at least, a limited understanding of Certeau's *oeuvre* from those engaging his scholarship. For example, three key texts exploring the legacy of Certeau are Jeremy Ahearne's *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other* (1995), Ian Buchanan's *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (2000), and *The Certeau Reader* (2000) edited by Graham Ward.³⁵ While the theoretical sophistication and contributing influence of these texts to this thesis cannot be overstated, they fail to consider a range of publications from Certeau simply because these English texts were published before Luce Giard was able to edit and publish more of Certeau's writings. *La lieu de l'autre: Histoire religieuse et mystique* (2005) and *La fable mystique: xvi^e - xvii^e siècle: Vol. II* (2013), for example, were not available to Ahearne, Buchanan, and Ward at that time of their influential research. Inigo Bocken explains: "The problem with these 'first-generation' interpretations is that the authors were not able to refer to important later books by Certeau, published by Luce Giard."³⁶ Because of the timing of Certeau's death in 1986, his later writings on mysticism and belief were either not completed, as in the case of the second volume of *The*

³⁴ See Wlad Godzich, "Foreword: The Further Possibility of Knowledge," in Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. vii-xxi. Certeau's project on mysticism was to consist of at least two volumes, only one of which he completed before his death. See Michel de Certeau, *La fable mystique: xvi^e - xvii^e siècle: Vol. I* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982). See also Luce Giard's introduction, "History of a Research Project," *The Practice of Everyday Life: Volume 2: Living & Cooking* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. xiii-xxxiv.

³⁵ Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1995); Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publications, 2000); and Graham Ward (ed.), *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

³⁶ Inigo Bocken, "Nomadic Theory – Michel De Certeau's Theory of Everyday Life and Early Modern Mysticism." *Arts & Humanities* 10.2 (2016): 93. See also Brenna Moore, "Spiritual Spaces: History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau, edited by Inigo Bocken," *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, 24 (2015): 738-739

Mystic Fable, and since these writings were not available, Certeau appeared to some scholars as less prone to explore issues of religion at the end of his life. For example, in 1996 Jeremy Ahearne wrote, “Although Certeau would rarely return in his writings after the mid-1970’s to the question of contemporary Christian belief as such, the analytic and figurative frameworks generated by this reflection continue to inform his thought.”³⁷ While it is central to this thesis that Certeau’s thought was continually informed by the “analytic and figurative frameworks” developed by his reflection on the Christian faith, research and publications of Certeau’s writings since the “first generation” of Certeau scholars have shown that Certeau did, in fact, return to question of Christian belief beyond the mid-1970s.³⁸ With a similar point to the issue of “first generation” scholars of Certeau not having access to the whole of his corpus, Antonio Eduardo Alonso also notes that certain English translations, mainly *The Practice of Everyday Life*, have been given greater attention and significance than other texts. Alonso calls *The Practice of Everyday Life* “a ‘canon within the canon’ for many contemporary appropriations of Certeau.”³⁹ Alonso, Bocken, and Brenna Moore have argued that a reading of Certeau that overemphasises *The Practice of Everyday Life* has the propensity to interpret Certeau as a non-religious thinker,

³⁷ Jeremy Ahearne, “The Shattering of Christianity and the Articulation of Belief,” *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 77, No. 909 (November 1996), p. 493.

³⁸ See Michel de Certeau, *La lieu de l’autre: histoire religieuse et mystique* (Paris: Seuil, 2005) and Michel de Certeau, *La fable mystique: xvi^e- xvii^e siècle: Vol. II* (Paris: Gallimard, 2013). To this point, I am not trying to overstate any disagreement with Ahearne. To Ahearne’s point, *La lieu de l’autre* and *La fable mystique Vol. II* are less focused on “contemporary Christian belief” than Certeau’s work in the early 1970s, such as *Le christianisme éclaté*, “How is Christianity Thinkable Today?” or his work with the publication, *Le récit évangélique*. However, I am proposing that to say that Certeau “rarely returned” to matters of Christian belief after the mid-1970s is an overstatement and part of the problem with certain readings of Certeau’s career trajectory. See Michel de Certeau & Jean-Marie Domenach, *Le christianisme éclaté* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974); Michel de Certeau, “How is Christianity Thinkable Today?” in *The Postmodern God*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford, Blackwells Publishers, 2000 [1971]), pp. 143-155; and Claude Chabrol and Louis Marin (eds.), *Le récit évangélique* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1971).

³⁹ Antonio Eduardo Alonso, “Listening for the Cry: Certeau Beyond Strategies and Tactics,” *Modern Theology* 33:3 (July 2017): 371.

since his studies in everyday life are not overtly theological (as chapter six of this thesis will discuss).⁴⁰

To clarify this gap in scholarship between Certeau's cultural analysis and religiosity, I will further address the key studies on Certeau's writings and influence, highlighting contributions to the burgeoning array of scholarship on Certeau while still noting when Certeau's religious belief has not been taken into full consideration. With the "first generation" of scholarship on Certeau, Jeremy Ahearne's *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other* (1995) remains one of the most influential works on Certeau due to Ahearne's in depth knowledge of French language and culture. Ahearne is especially insightful on the centrality of Certeau's understanding of the *Other* and how Certeau's heterology informs other areas of his cultural analysis, such as his historiography and psychoanalysis.⁴¹ However, Ahearne's book only focuses on Certeau's writings after 1970 due to at least two overstatements. The first is that Certeau "was not interested in producing a systematic doctrinal edifice," and in line with this observation, Ahearne focuses on Certeau's "intellectual itineraries" without acknowledging an "interpretive system."⁴² The second overstated observation is how Ahearne describes and utilises Certeau's "founding rupture" (*rupture instaurice*) in relation to May 1968 as a way to focus

⁴⁰ See Antonio Eduardo Alonso, "Listening for the Cry," 371-377. See also Inigo Bocken, "Introduction," in *Spiritual Spaces: History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau*, ed. Inigo Bocken (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), pp. 1-4; and Brenna Moore, "Spiritual Spaces: History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau, edited by Inigo Bocken," 739.

⁴¹ Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 9-34.

⁴² Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other*, p. 3. As previously mentioned above, Philip Sheldrake and Luce Giard have noted consistent themes and continuity with Certeau in regard to his questions around the nature of belief - religious, theological, and cultural belief. See Luce Giard, "Introduction: Michel de Certeau on Historiography," in Graham Ward, ed., *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000):18-19; Luce Giard, "Introduction: Opening the Possible," in Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, xii; Luce Giard, "Michel de Certeau's Heterology and the New World," *Representations*, 33 (1991): 212-226. See also Philip Sheldrake, "Spiritual Horizons: Michel de Certeau, Every Practices, & the City," in *Spiritual Spaces: History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau*, ed. Inigo Bocken (Leuven: Peeters/Titus Brandsma Institute, 2013), p. 77. See also Fergus Kerr, "The 'Essence of Christianity': Notes after de Certeau," *New Blackfriars* 1973-12, Vol.54 (643): pp. 549-550.

solely on Certeau's works in the "second period" of his life, namely his writings after May 1968.⁴³ While there are some accuracies and insights in Ahearne's framework (or avoidance of an overarching framework) and observations around Certeau's wanderings and *rupture*, the effect of how Ahearne frames his study of Certeau is that he avoids Certeau's religiosity with a "purely organisational manoeuvre," as Ian Buchanan observes. Referring to Ahearne's research, Buchanan writes, "My point is that denying the existence of an overarching thesis spanning the entirety of [Certeau's] career, to the extreme even of ignoring a consistency of method and a durability of epistemological substrate, is really just another way of avoiding the issue of Certeau's religiosity."⁴⁴ Buchanan's book, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (2000) is significant for its philosophical erudition, bringing a thoroughly nuanced analysis of Certeau's relationship with and contrast to other theorists and Continental philosophers of the 20th century, such as Walter Benjamin, Jean-François Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Lacan, and Algirdas Julien Greimas as well as the American philosopher and Marxist political theorist, Fredric Jameson. In response to Ahearne, Buchanan seeks to hold to an overarching epistemological (postmodern) framework while covering the range of disciplines and cultural critiques in Certeau's philosophy. In doing so, he frames Certeau as a postmodern thinker.⁴⁵ Commenting on the impact of Buchanan's work, Inigo Bocken argues Certeau is often treated as a postmodern

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

⁴⁴ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 12

⁴⁵ Buchanan defines postmodern in the following quote: "By postmodern I mean a loss of the possibility of originality, which is articulated in two ways: (1) the limit on the number of stories that can be told; (2) the exhaustion of stylistic inflection and variation." Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, pp. 81-83.

philosopher in 21st scholarship and his religiosity is rarely taken into account.⁴⁶ Rather than framing his research in the 1970s like Ahearne, Buchanan makes clear in his introduction, “I should add, too, that the ‘theological’ Certeau and the deeply ‘French’ Certeau remain inaccessible to me for obvious reasons of background and disposition and I have not tried to tackle these aspects of his work, . . .”⁴⁷ While he does not deny Certeau’s religiosity, he admits that his work does not incorporate the theological and religious components of Certeau’s cultural analysis. My research seeks to carefully consider the “theological Certeau” and the “implicit yet real religious underpinning” of Certeau’s philosophical questions and cultural critiques and, in some ways, provide a corrective to the influence of the “first generation” of Certeau scholars, insofar as they did not adequately account for Certeau’s religiosity.⁴⁸

This is not to say that all research on Certeau in the 1990s and early 2000s framed him as a non-religious intellectual, but it is important to see the gaps, limitations, and contributions of previous scholars on the life and legacy of Certeau and how scholars account for whether or not theology and religious belief informed his writing at each stage of his career. This thesis is indebted to scholars like Graham Ward, Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, Philip Sheldrake, Fergus Kerr, and, more recently, Amy Hollywood and Brenna Moore, for providing several

⁴⁶ Inigo Bocken, “Introduction,” in *Spiritual Spaces: History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau*, ed. Inigo Bocken (Leuven: Peeters/Titus Brandsma Institute, 2013), pp. 1-3; Inigo Bocken and Eveline Van Buijtenen, “Inleiding,” in *Weerbarstige spiritualiteit: Een inleiding in het denken van Michel de Certeau (1925-1986)* (Vrije Uitgevers, De; Auflage, 2016), pp. 12-24.

⁴⁷ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, p. 9.

⁴⁸ The “theological Certeau” and the “implicit yet real religions underpinning” are phrases taken from previous quotes from Ian Buchanan (*Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, p. 9) and Philip Sheldrake (“Spiritual Horizons: Michel de Certeau, Every Practices, & the City,” p. 77).

articles which are among the few to have investigated the theology and religiosity of Certeau.⁴⁹

This thesis will bring together their theological insights as tools to investigate the implicit religious underpinnings of Certeau's cultural analysis and show the consistency of his concerns for religious belief across the various phases of his professional career.

0.4 A Note on Language, Translations, and Intentions

As this is a thesis written in English and explores the work of Certeau, a French scholar, I will now provide a brief comment on my use of translations and original languages. When an official English translation is available, such as *The Possession at Loudun* (1996) translated by Michael B. Smith or *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) translated by Steven F. Rendall, I will use the official English translation in the body of this thesis and footnote the publication of the source material.⁵⁰ However, if the official English translation is not available, I will use the original French quotation in the body of this thesis and provide my translation in the corresponding footnote. I will indicate that it is my translation each time by placing my translation of the quote in the footnote within closed brackets and followed by "Trans," expressing that this is my translation of the original source material.

⁴⁹ Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, "The Otherness of God," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100.2 (2001): 349-364; Amy M. Hollywood, "Love Speaks Here: Michel De Certeau's Mystic Fable," *Spiritus* 12.2 (2012): 198-206; Fergus Kerr, "The 'Essence of Christianity: Notes after de Certeau,'" *New Blackfriars* 1973-12, Vol.54 (643): 545-556; Brenna Moore, "How to Awaken the Dead: Michel De Certeau, Henri De Lubac, and the Instabilities between the Past and the Present," *Spiritus* 12.2 (2012): 172-79; Philip Sheldrake, "Michel De Certeau: Spirituality and The Practice of Everyday Life," *Spiritus* 12.2 (2012): 207-224; Graham Ward, "Michel De Certeau's 'Spiritual Spaces,'" *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100.2 (2001): 501-517. See also Inigo Bocken's English collection of articles found in Inigo Bocken (ed.), *Spiritual Spaces: History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau* (Leuven: Peeters/Titus Brandsma Institute, 2013).

⁵⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun*, trans. Michael B. Smith, fwd. Stephen Greenblatt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

On the subject of languages, Certeau's international influence has resulted in a number of studies and collections of articles in other languages, primarily Dutch and German. For example, in 2007, Marian Füessel edited a collection of articles which represents the first scholarly publication on Certeau in German, highlighting his multifaceted career, the international appeal of his cultural theory, as well as the traces of Jesuit spirituality within his philosophical explorations.⁵¹ Another recent book which brought together a rich array of cultural and religious scholarship was Inigo Bocken and Eveline van Buijtenen's *Weerbarstige spiritualiteit: Inleiding in het denken van Michel de Certeau* (2016).⁵² Though this text has not been translated into English, it is worth mentioning because it is one of the only studies that incorporates the most recent of Certeau's posthumous publications. While I have tried to incorporate the wealth of international secondary scholarship, I must express my limitations in reading Dutch and German. That being said, the impact of the "first generation" of Certeau scholars: the overemphasis on *The Practice of Everyday Life*, the view that Certeau experienced a *rupture* away from religious belief, and the avoidance of Certeau's religiosity in connection to his wider cultural analysis and philosophical rigour - these issues largely persist among English-speaking scholars. As a thesis written in English, I will speak primarily to the problems I see within Anglo-American scholarship surrounding Certeau. I will make extensive use of the French secondary scholarship, particularly the work of François Dosse and Luce Giard, as well as the Dutch, German, and other international scholars of languages besides French and English, though not to the same extent.

⁵¹ Marian Füessel (ed.), *Michel de Certeau: Geschichte – Kultur – Religion* (Konstanz, Germany: UVK-Verlag, 2014).

⁵² Inigo Bocken and Eveline van Buijtenen, *Weerbarstige spiritualiteit. Inleiding in het denken van Michel de Certeau* (Heeswijk-Dinther, NL: Berne Media, 2016).

0.5 Outline and Methodology

In order to bridge this gap in research and approach the implicit theological substrates, influences, and concerns which inform Certeau's philosophy and cultural theory, this thesis contains six chapters, each exploring and connecting a central theme within Certeau's thinking. The structure of this thesis will follow into the themes of historiography, social geography, social semiotics, psychoanalysis, mysticism, and everyday life.

Since Certeau defined himself as a historian and his theological development grew amidst his historiographic studies in the mysticism of the 16th and 17th century Jesuits, chapter one explores the relationship between Certeau's implicit theology and his writings on historiography. Certeau's understanding of historiography grew out of his study of Jean-Joseph Surin, an extraordinary Jesuit in the 17th-century whose life raises numerous questions about the nature of religious authority and dwindling ecclesial and institutional power that Christianity holds within culture. I show how Certeau's theological concern for oppressed voices, "the silenced of history," differs from the Neo-Marxist view of history, which was en vogue in Paris during Certeau's lifetime. Certeau's account of history, influenced by his theology, led to his later work on everyday life. In providing this connection, I demonstrate a consistency of Certeau's theological motivations across his life and research, arguing against those who would see a point of departure away from theology in Certeau's academic career. I focus on Certeau's distinctive account of historiography, influenced by his implicit theology, around the concepts of belief, memory, and narrative. I also demonstrate that Certeau's account of belief and its relationship to structures of "truth" and authority are indispensable from his understanding of the praxis of

collective memory, his analysis of the transitions in the structures and authorities of the culture, and his analysis of writing history in the present.

Following the first chapter covering narrative, *habitus*, and how history is told in the present, in chapter two I argue for the uniqueness of Certeau's account of space as influenced by his theological understanding of space and embodiment. This chapter explores the advantages of Certeau's account of space versus other voices on space within critical theory, such as Henri Lefebvre. Within the *oeuvre* of Certeau, a chapter on space and embodiment would naturally follow his understanding of historiography, since history is a praxis combining space and story while the *habitus* is produced and reproduced in these spacial stories. Belief operates and is manipulated and sustained through embodiment, which he drew in part from Maurice Merleau-Ponty. What I argue in this chapter, leading to the chapter on spirituality and mysticism, is this embodied believing as understood by Certeau contributes to his unique cultural theories around *le mystique* and subversiveness within the symbolic order. Certeau's account of space and time are rooted in an understanding of immanence, where God saturates time and space, empowering subversive and creative endeavours from "non-places" or spiritual places. This chapter also draws out some of Certeau's insights and theological concerns following the events of May 1968, particularly how space and speech were effected by the student revolt and the police state in Paris.

As space and speech were intertwined in Certeau's reaction to May 1968, chapter three argues for the theological concerns connected to his account of social semiotics, another disciplines which Certeau research heavily, yet the connections between his theology and his social semiotics have rarely been investigated. As Certeau is known amongst 20th century

cultural theorists for his “wanderings” and, at times, lack of clarity, this chapter has presented the consistency of his theological influence, beginning with his early work on 16th and 17th-century Jesuit mystics and writings with Jesuit journals, to his more overtly political writings in the aftermath of the student revolution in Paris in 1968, and into his later years in the 1970s and 1980s which focus predominantly on mysticism and psychoanalysis, while still engaging themes in semiology. Certeau’s theological concerns for the symbolic order and his post-structural influences are most clearly evidenced in his account of social semiotics. I demonstrate how Certeau’s theology, as it pertains to social semiotics, can best be understood as emerging in the space of God’s absence and God’s silence. The relationship between modern language and modern doubt engenders the dominance of modern semiotics over against previous forms of meaning shaped by faith and revelation and mystical experiences as well as polices forms of communication and semiosis that function contrary to the transcribed, written code of the elite. Thus, Certeau showed an affinity towards the subversive character of alternative forms of communication that are not confined to literal relationships between words and what they represent, such as patois and glossolalia, and therefore disrupt the hegemony of the symbolic order. Lastly, this chapter will argued for the affective and embodied nature of social semiotics linked with Certeau’s theological concern for the body. In making these claims, this chapter raises questions as to Certeau’s understanding of theological language, which will be considered in the context of his psychoanalysis.

Chapter four answers questions raised in chapter three on the affective nature of language and continues to connect Certeau’s theology with another disciplines, psychoanalysis, that has rarely been considered alongside Certeau’s religious belief. In 1964, Certeau was one of the

founding members of the Freudian psychoanalysis school in Paris with Jacques Lacan. Certeau's account of psychoanalysis brings together the praxis of history and narrative to belief and openness to the *Other*. From the social semiotics of the previous chapter, his account of meaning, representation, and desire will be traced into his psychoanalysis. The chapter investigates key themes within Lacanian psychoanalysis and how Certeau interacted with them theologically. The relationship between speech and psychoanalysis will be developed further into his account of *desire* and *rupture* in relation to the work of Lacan and Jesuits who first utilised psychoanalysis as a tool for reading culture rather than individuals. I then show the theological motivations for Certeau's links in his psychoanalysis to the empty tomb, as God's absence becomes the locus of desire and longing for transcendence. Certeau drew upon the image of the empty tomb as the ground of possibility for Christian faith and theological language, encouraging a type of modesty and humility that made room for a plurality of voices to speak, informing his heterology.

Following his account of psychoanalysis and the centrality of the *Other* in his cultural theology, chapter five argues for the consistency of his cultural analysis, theological impulses, and his later works on mysticism and heterology. This chapter provides greater specificity to Certeau's account of the *Other* while connected *Otherness* throughout his various disciplines utilised in his cultural analysis. In order to provide clarity to this elusive account of mysticism, I explore Certeau's relationship with Henri de Lubac, their disagreements, and the impact of de Lubac's censoring and exile from the Jesuit order during the 1950s, particularly how the silencing of errant or heretical voices by academic or ecclesial authority influences movements around mysticism or transcendence. I demonstrate how Certeau's understanding of mysticism differs from key voices in this field, such as William James and Evelyn Underhill, due to his

theoretical proficiencies in socio-linguistics and historiography, which as I have shown are intertwined with his theology. Even Certeau's account of mysticism has often been separated from his theology and his heterology. I argue for a consistency across Certeau's mysticism, theology, and heterology in his concern for marginalised voices and hope for Christianity to make space for new voices and *Other* expressions of alterity and *mystique*. Lastly, this chapter explores the implications of Certeau's heterologies in the context of a theology of religions.

The final area of cultural analysis which marks Certeau's academic career but has not been thoroughly investigated for its theological underpinning (particularly in connection to his other disciplines) is his study of everyday life. This sixth and final chapter argues for the theological foundations and concerns which contribute to Certeau's most well-known work, *L'Invention du quotidien*, while showing the consistency of the theme of the ordinary in connection to his theology across the breadth of his career. The weight he placed on speaking and semiosis allowed for unique insights into both the role of power in censoring language but also the revolutionary capacity of language. Originating during the lifetime of Certeau, there developed a sophisticated, interdisciplinary lens of analysis that explored the nature of everyday life as a matter of critical studies. Certeau developed a unique voice within what is now a field of critical theory surrounding the ordinary experiences of daily life. I demonstrate the central role of belief, which is theological in scope, within the ordinary, everyday life human experience and the disruptive capacity of belief to reimagine the symbolic order away from social hegemony and into creative social solidarity. This final chapter builds on the previous connections made between Certeau's theology and his understanding of history, space, language, the *Other*, and marginalised religious expressions.

Chapter 1: Historiography, Culture, and the Praxis of Everyday Life

In addressing the gap in scholarship and in arguing for consistency across the various disciplines of Certeau's interdisciplinary *oeuvre*, this chapter investigates the implicit religious underpinnings of Certeau's account of history. This chapter will show the ways in which Certeau's account of belief is intricately linked with his understanding of the praxis of history, his analysis of the transitions in the structures and authorities of the *habitus* (particularly compared with Michel Foucault), and his analysis of everyday life and temporality.⁵³ In order to provide an analysis of Michel de Certeau's account of historiography and religious belief, it is necessary to explore the ways in which Certeau is responding to movements in social and critical theory around the philosophy of history and the concept of everyday life. I will make a case that Certeau's own account of history was a subversive practice consisting of the use of memory, narrative, and believing. In arguing for these three concepts within Certeau, I will provide a necessary connection between Certeau's religiosity and theological concerns within a key discipline within Certeau's *oeuvre*, historiography. In this way, I will begin to bridge the gap in scholarship between Certeau's cultural analysis and his view of religious belief.

⁵³ It is important to note that what is meant by culture for Michel de Certeau, when compared with other writers of his time, more closely mirrors (though not without nuance and distinction) the *habitus* of French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu. See Graham Ward, "Introduction," in Graham Ward (ed.), *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), pp. 2-5. While Ward is right to draw a strong comparison between Certeau and Bourdieu's vision of culture, Certeau's noticeable points of departure from *habitus* will be taken into account in the sixth chapter of this text, where resistance and agency will be explored, these beings agency and resistance. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 86. [See section 2.4 of this thesis].

1.1 Certeau and the Roots of his Historiography

Michel de Certeau is known for his creative interdisciplinary style of writing. Weaving together various types of analysis from any number of disciplines was in many respects the nature of scholarship and cultural engagement of Paris in the mid 20th century. According to Luce Giard, when asked about his professional identity, Certeau most often answered that he was a historian.⁵⁴ The obvious question is presented, as Luce Giard suggests, “what type of historian was Certeau?” This section seeks to answer questions surrounding how Certeau’s account of history interacts with his religiosity. I argue that the best way to address the implicit religious underpinnings of his historiography is through an understanding of his account of belief, the ordinary, and the present.

The beginning of Certeau’s relationship with historiography can be traced to his entry into the Jesuit order and his doctoral research in theology. Certeau was ordained a priest six years after joining the Jesuit order in 1950. In Paris, he began attending lectures on religious history at the École pratique des hautes études, particularly those of Jean Orcibal and Roland Mousnier, each being experts in the field of religious history from various political and theological lines of inquiry.⁵⁵ Certeau’s research in this period, coupled with his work with the journal, *Christus*, explored certain developments of mysticism in the Catholic church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including the life and writings of the Jesuit mystic, Jean-Joseph Surin (1600-1665). The legacy of this period and its effect on Certeau’s development as a historian can be seen in his doctoral thesis on Pierre Favre (1506-1546), a companion and co-founder of the

⁵⁴ Luce Giard, “Introduction: Michel de Certeau on Historiography,” in *The Certeau Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwells Publishers, 2000), pp. 17-18.

⁵⁵ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé* (Paris: Découverte, 2002), pp. 85-108.

Jesuit order with Ignatius of Loyola. While Certeau finished this thesis in 1960, he continued to publish and reflect on both Favre and Surin and the transitions of religious belief and ecclesial authority within the culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth century throughout most of his academic career.⁵⁶ According to Luce Giard and Ian Buchanan, Certeau's research and work within the Jesuit order, particularly before the student revolt in Paris in May 1968, was predominately preoccupied with the history of religion.⁵⁷

While his work on Favre will be further addressed in chapters three and five of this thesis, this current chapter answers the questions: "what was the nature of Certeau's inquiry into Surin and religious history, and how does it relate to his perception of history and religious belief?" Jean-Joseph Surin was a French Jesuit mystic who was commissioned in 1634 by the French Prime Minister, Cardinal Richelieu, to lead the exorcism of the community of Ursuline nuns in Loudun. Certeau's text from 1970, *La Possession de Loudun*, consisted of both a selection of primary materials from the events in Loudun as well as his analysis on the transitions in religious authority and cultural belief during the seventeenth century. While Ian Buchanan is not wrong in describing *The Possession of Loudun* as "an experiment in historiographic writing which bears scant resemblance to the *The Practice of Everyday Life*," to say they these texts do not share central themes and questions about the nature of belief on everyday life and historiography would be incorrect.⁵⁸ In *The Possession of Loudun*, Certeau described the public inquiry into the demonic episodes of the small community of nuns as rending the "complex fabric of everyday life" in two, showing an ability to read through the archives and historic

⁵⁶ Certeau's most significant publications engaging Surin are Certeau, *Correspondence* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1966) and Certeau, *La Possession de Loudun* (Paris: Julliard, 1970). Additional publications include Certeau, "Les Oeuvres de Jean-Joseph Surin," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 40 (1964): 443-476; 41 (1965): 55-87; Certeau, "Jean-Joseph Surin, interprète de Saint Jean de la Croix," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 46 (1970): 45-70.

⁵⁷ Luce Giard, "Michel de Certeau's Heterology and the New World," *Representations*, 33 (1991), pp. 212-226; Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), pp. 2-8.

⁵⁸ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 3.

records to explore how ordinary life was effected by this challenge to religious belief.⁵⁹ Speaking in 1973 of his research on Surin and his developments in historiography, Certeau described in *L'Absent de L'histoire*, “[L’histoire] suppose un écart, qui est l’acte même de se constituer comme existant et pensant aujourd’hui. Ma recherche m’a appris qu’en étudiant Surin, je me distingue de lui.”⁶⁰ While later texts of Certeau such as *L'Ecriture de l'histoire* (1975) and *La Fable mystique* (1982) made the connection more explicit, Certeau’s graduate research into religious history and subsequent research about Surin revealed his belief in the inherent separation between past and present, a separation that is essential to the praxis of writing history. His historiography framed the work of history as that which is happening right now, “existing and thinking today.” For Certeau, the history written about Surin in the 1960s was effected by both Charles de Gaulle (President of France from 1959-1969) and Cardinal Richelieu (French Prime Minister from 1624-1642). In referring to the interplay in historiography between past and present, Certeau wrote, “Other wars transform the history of Loudun into the legend of the present.”⁶¹ This tendentious relationship navigated by the historian engenders a precarious dialogue about the nature of the past, or in this case, the nature of Surin. A dialogue occurs in the present in which Surin, of course, is not actively involved.

1.2 Certeau and Historiography: Belief, Memory, and Narrative

1.2.1 Belief

⁵⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 24.

⁶⁰ Michel de Certeau, *L'Absent de L'histoire* (Paris: Mame, 1973), p. 158, quoted in François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé* (Paris: Découverte, 2002), p. 266. [[History] assumes a gap, which is the very act of constituting oneself existing and thinking today. My research has taught me that by studying Surin, I am differentiated from him. *Trans*].

⁶¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun*, p. 13.

The nature of the distance between past and present, between Certeau and Surin, engenders a prerequisite of writing history - belief. For Certeau, to engage in history was to believe. Belief shapes the praxis of historiography as well as the bearing that narratives have upon the practices of what is remembered. Belief is why some fictions are remembered and others are forgotten. Luce Giard, in the introduction to the 1997 edition of *Culture in the Plural*, writes that belief is rooted in authority and that these fictions or what is believable maintain their believability not because they are real or true but rather when they are situated in the “legitimacy of authority.”⁶² This is part of why Certeau begins *The Writing of History* with such an in-depth look at the transitions in authoritative structures in various cultural moments in recent European history; if religious tradition, religious experience, scientific experimentation, *avant-garde* artist expression, or personal conscience are understood as meaningful or authoritative, then the various fictions that are most believable and the practices they inform will be represented and reproduced quite differently.

Furthermore, Certeau’s position that “history assumes a gap” separates history as *Other*, and this encounter with an unknown, unsure alterity engenders belief.⁶³ The experience of the historian is irreversibly separated from the experience of the subject in history, and the plurality and alterity of these experiences require the historian if they are to write history to invest in a proposition. The facts of this proposition are presented through narrative rather than scientific reason. Certeau’s definition of belief in *The Practice of Everyday Life* involves more of a volitional act in uncertainty than a logical debate between truths; belief is the “subject’s

⁶² Luce Giard, “Introduction: Opening the Possible,” in Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, p. xii.

⁶³ The *Other* is a common trope in critical theory, philosophy, and religious studies. It is a word ripe with meaning and disagreement. In second section of chapter four of this thesis, I will provide greater clarity to Certeau’s use of the *Other*, including distinctions around *other* or *Other*. I will discuss how Certeau utilises the ideas of *Otherness* from both Jacques Lacan and Emmanuel Levinas. For now, it is worth understanding the *Other* as an inaccessible, open frontier of alterity. The *Other* is an acknowledged, though often subconscious, degree of separation of someone or something that is not “me” and which I cannot define or control. At times, the *Other* references to deity, transcendence, revolution, the marginalised, and infinitely more, but I will further clarify these points in chapter four.

investment in a proposition, a modality of assertion and not its content.”⁶⁴ In *La Faiblesse de croire*, Certeau writes, “Fondamentalement, être croyant, c'est vouloir être croyant,” communicating a deeper modality of desire at work in believing, a modality which is at work in the present.⁶⁵ As it relates to historiography, In *La Fable Mystique* (1982), Certeau writes:

It seems according to the text, the same act of believing subtends the diversity of experience and modes of transmission. It is as if the ‘attention’ and ‘interest’ that characterised the faithful ear were to remain stable, as if it were a blank, an empty space to be filled. There is, between those diverse, mobile, active hands and that fixed ear, an odd remove. This suggests the division, dramatically lived through by Surin, between the outcast *I* of the witness and the unknown realm of the other.⁶⁶

For Certeau, the diversity of human experience, the plurality of archival sources, and the distance between past and present are among the many components of the praxis of writing history which engender belief.

How could history be otherwise than unsure? History books begin with a present. They are constructed on the basis of two series of data: on the one hand, the ‘ideas’ we have about a past, ideas that are still conveyed by old material, but along pathways instituted by a new mentality; on the other hand, documents and ‘archives’, remains saved by chance, frozen in collections that attach meanings to them that are also new.⁶⁷

Here, I am bringing together Certeau’s explicit mention of the uncertainty of history and what Jeremy Ahearne and Ian Buchanan observe in Certeau’s historiography, that is belief is both a

⁶⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 178.

⁶⁵ Michel de Certeau, *La Faiblesse de croire*, ed. Luce Giard (Paris: Seuil Editions, 1987), p. 295.

⁶⁶ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Vol. 1: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 185.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

chief concern and operation of history-making.⁶⁸ However, where Ahearne and Buchanan acknowledge the crucial role of belief within Certeau's historiography, they do not incorporate the religious nature or belief, even though Certeau's source material and archival work was clearly religious and theological in scope.

For instance, see how Certeau discussed belief in terms of religious belief and the crisis of faith in the seventeenth century, particularly by incorporating Surin's writings: "I say that, though the profession of atheism be no ordinary thing among Christians, it is nonetheless a temptation that carries rather naturally in the mind.' . . . He adds that the God proposed by the Church 'though He be the object of ordinary faith of most Christians, is not so believed as to prevent several from having opposition thereto, and sometimes violent temptations against faith, to which the good are often subject.'"⁶⁹ Referring again to the crisis of belief in the context of the exorcism of the Ursuline nuns, Certeau wrote,

From this perspective, the possession set the partisans of d'Armagnac in opposition to those of Richelieu. The central power, by its action, mobilised the former and frustrated the interests of the latter, regardless of their religious motivations. The beliefs of both parties were secularised and displaced by becoming invested or enlisted in a contest with stakes that were of a different nature. Politics was the axis that was quietly replacing frames of reference that had become debatable, and therefore doubtful.⁷⁰

For Certeau, even when belief is secularised, he was inquiring into the shifting nature of religious belief and its ramifications in a shifting cultural landscape. Similarly in *L'Ecriture de l'histoire*, originally published in 1975, Certeau described the complexities of religion and doubt with the rise of the modern nation state over the last three centuries.

⁶⁸ Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 26-29. Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, p. 16.

⁶⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun*, p.101. Here, Certeau is quoting Surin's *Science expérimentale* from 1663.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

The very term designating it now acquires a new meaning. *Religion* no longer signifies a religious order or the Church in the singular. . . It is a socioeconomic positivity bound to a body of abstract hypothesis. . . A totality is set in place that must be understood, criticised, or situated according to criteria which are not its own. The *quod creditur* (what is believed) is dissociated from the *fides qua creditur* (faith which causes belief) and is transformed into “belief” in the objective sense of the term. The contents of belief are subject to analysis from an increasing distance in respect to the act of believing. Religion tends to become a social object, and hence an object for study, in ceasing to be for the subjects that which allows them to think or to behave.⁷¹

Thus, in the praxis of writing history in the present, Certeau was concerned with the changing nature of belief and religiosity. Not just for an analysis of the past, but since the writing of history was an operation of the present, he demonstrated a reading of culture that focused on the current state of religion.

1.2.2 Certeau and Historiography: Memory and the Present Everyday Life

The practice of history and history-making and the shifting nature of belief also involve the complexities of memory in the present. Rather than situating history in the past, Certeau was adamant that the “place” of history is happening now as history is written.⁷² What is presently believed about history is dependent upon what is remembered or not remembered through the cultural narratives in relation to the present day shifting authorities of culture. How then was history, belief, and the ordinary of the present day related in Certeau’s historiography? The answer involves Certeau’s unique account of collective memory.

⁷¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 152.

⁷² See Michel de Certeau, *La prise de parole, et autres écrits politiques* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1968) and *L’écriture de l’histoire* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1975). The process of writing history as well as speaking (story telling) are cultural modalities essential to Certeau’s conceptuality of historiography. Additionally, the relationships between the practices of writing, reading, and speaking constitute the formative themes of *L’invention du quotidien. Vol. 1, Arts de faire* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1980). The act of writing and speaking and their relationship to Certeau’s religiosity will be covered in chapter three on social semiotics.

First, Certeau saw collective memory as a present act of volition, an act that is at times so ordinary, it is unconscious. Collective memory involves deciding what is not history and what is not authoritative - i.e. what is believable and meaningful. Rather than being concerned with the truth of the past, Certeau described in *Heterologies* that the role of the historian is not speaking the truth but “diagnosing what is false.”⁷³ As a professor at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, he designed and instructed a program on “the historical anthropology of beliefs.”⁷⁴ As one invested in the historical transitions of beliefs and authorities on “truth,” Certeau demonstrated, particularly in *L'Ecriture de l'histoire*, a deep suspicion of history as fact or truth-telling, often putting words like “facts,” or “events,” or even the “past” in quotations. He was suspicious of this nomenclature as he believed these words could be taken for granted by the discipline as historians ignore their own collective memory and beliefs in relation to the past.

Second, Certeau argued that collective memory does not disclose the truth or what is real but rather what is remembered and rehearsed.⁷⁵ Describing the collective memory of the “Indians” of Latin America, Certeau wrote, “Dominated but not vanquished, they keep alive the memory of what the Europeans have ‘forgotten,’ — a continuous series of uprisings and awakenings which have left hardly a trace in the occupiers’ historiographical literature.” Certeau continued, “A unity born of hardship and resistance to hardship is the historical locus, the collective memory of the social body, where a will that neither confirms nor denies this writing of history originates. It deciphers the scars on the body proper (*le corps propre*) — or the fallen

⁷³ Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), p. 200.

⁷⁴ Luce Giard, “Introduction: Michel de Certeau on Historiography.” In Graham Ward (ed.), *The Certeau Reader*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), p. 17.

⁷⁵ The theme of *mémoire collective* (collective memory) has grown into a topic of considerable study since Certeau, though often it is explored as cultural memory. While these terms are not interchangeable, Michael Sheringham provides an analysis of Certeau’s understanding of memory and everyday life which incorporates both collective and cultural memory. Michael Sheringham, “Cultural Memory and the Everyday.” *Journal of Romance Studies* 3.1 (2003): 45-57.

‘heroes’ and ‘martyrs’ who correspond to them in the narrative — as the *history* yet to be made.”⁷⁶ Depending on the place and space, a culture remembers and believes history in a plurality of ways and rehearses and replays these memories while choosing to “forget” other memories in an attempt to “decipher the scars.” Place and space within cultural production and the writing of history will be delineated further in Chapter 2, but for now, it can be said that history is an operation of place, that is, how a culture remembers its past is not a recovery of the truth or objectivity but rather a reflection and mirroring gesture of the ideologies and power operations of the present time in which the praxis of history and everyday life takes place. As the discipline of history is often reluctant in its resistance to the powers of its place and merely becomes a consumer product of these operations, it becomes the role of the honest historian to name the false memory as well as what is forgotten in the product of professional history writing.

Third, collective memory and the related role of historiography within culture have considerable bearing on everyday life, particularly the practices of everyday life in relation to the powers and structure that dominate a culture. This process of filtered historiography that forgets certain aspects of history and social memory has an analogous relationship to present practices that forget the subject of professional academic discourse.⁷⁷ When investigating the social theory of Foucault and Bourdieu for instance, Certeau argues that framework of *savoir-faire*, defined by method and theory, becomes set apart from practices that have not yet entered into the ongoing “reserves for enlightened knowledge,” even for writers such as Foucault and Bourdieu who are suspicious of power structures within formalised scholarship.⁷⁸ Just as the “Indians” of Latin America were “forgotten” within European historiography, certain practices that are not

⁷⁶ Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other (Theory and History of Literature)* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 226 - 227.

⁷⁷ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, p. 38.

⁷⁸ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 64-65.

investigated by academic discourse are also “forgotten” and left outside of formalised knowledge. He argues that the arts are able to be invested in these memories and practices that scientific disciplines (in which he includes history) lay aside. In which case, “a problematics of lag or delay is introduced into the reaction between science and the arts. A temporal handicap separates the various kinds of know-how from their gradual elucidation by epistemologically superior sciences.”⁷⁹ Everyday life and the Certeau’s vision of historiography are intimately connected because they occupy this gap or lag. History takes for granted its act of forgetting which sustains the fiction it creates as well as the disciplines that substantiate that fiction. Social sciences take for granted their selectivity in an analysis of some cultural beliefs over others. The practices of everyday life and ordinary, unconscious beliefs are examples of such cultural practices that are taken for granted.

A sort of knowledge remains there though deprived of its technical apparatus (out of which machines have been made); the remaining ways of operating are those that have no legitimacy with respect to productivist rationality (e.g. the everyday arts of cooking, cleaning, sewing, etc.). On the other hand, what is left behind by ethnological colonisation acquires the status of a ‘private’ activity, is charged with symbolic investments concerning everyday activity, and functions under the sign of collective or individual particulars; it becomes in short the legendary and at the same time active memory of what remains at the margins or in the interstices of scientific or cultural orthopraxis.⁸⁰

The point he is trying to articulate is not just that disciplines leave out certain memories or practices, but that it is these memories and practices that have formative influences on collective memory, historiography, and everyday life in meaningful ways, in essence through belief and narrative.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 67.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 69-70.

1.1.3 Certeau and Historiography: Narrative and Belief

What is remembered as a part of collective memory and the place it marks out is a function of narrative. In describing Certeau's use of narrative, Ben Highmore writes, "Literature is where commentaries on historicity are produced, where a grammar of historical action is revealed, and where remembering and forgetting are figured as essential and cultural elements."⁸¹ Highmore goes on to explain that narrative within culture is more authentic in avoiding totalizing claims of absolute truth - i.e. historical facts. In avoiding this account of history, Certeau's account of narrative focused on the role of narrative in the present and everyday life.⁸² Certeau focused on practices and narrative, which together occasions the space for everyday experiences to be connected and situated in context.

Scholars such as Michael Gardiner, Michael Sheringham, Ben Highmore, and Ian Buchanan note that Certeau's use of narrative in describing social practices accounted for a plurality of perspectives and interpretations of the other, which Certeau labelled, "heterology."⁸³ Gardiner explains, "Certeau's attempt to develop a 'heterology,' a plurality of meaning-constitutive practices, as against the official practice of historiography and sociological analysis, is intended to highlight and preserve the irreducible multiplicity of human social and cultural forms."⁸⁴ Narrative as a tool of analysis and place of cultural meaning is able to account for

⁸¹ Ben Highmore, *Michel de Certeau: Analyzing Culture* (London: A&C Black, 2006), p. 120.

⁸² Certeau accounts for Foucault's reading of narrative within culture in a chapter, "Micro-techniques and Panoptic Discourse," in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other (Theory and History of Literature)* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). Certeau is critical of Foucault's understanding of narrative as ideological, power based, and manipulative. Ben Highmore suggests that in reaction to this, Certeau's account of narrative is less ideological and more based on the practices that are immersed in the unending, ubiquitous streams of narratives saturating culture. See Ben Highmore, *Michel de Certeau: Analyzing Culture* (London: A&C Black, 2006), pp. 126-137.

⁸³ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, pp. 68-85; Michael E. Gardiner, *Critiques of Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 21, 162-179; Ben Highmore, *Michel de Certeau: Analyzing Culture*, pp. 127-137; Michael Sherringham, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 212-227.

⁸⁴ Michael E. Gardiner, *Critiques of Everyday Life*, p. 162. Heterology, or more clearly, the study of *Otherness*, will be further discussed in chapters four and five.

heterologies and the frontiers of cultural practices. Certeau saw narrative as more than the space for cultural activity, but also narrative shapes cultural activity ideologically. “Narration does indeed have content, but is also belongs to the art of making a *coup*.”⁸⁵ However, the telos of narrative is often elusive to the people involved in making the cultural narrative. “In the narrative, the figure steers clear of the powers that would colonise the mind and body.”⁸⁶ What this means is that narrative has a shaping capacity over the form, direction, and meaning of everyday life and its inhabitants, though often in unconscious ways or ways that make the actors seem like passive bystanders to cultural narrative.⁸⁷

1.2.4 Certeau and Historiography: History, Mystery, and Resistance

Additionally, I will like to briefly reiterate and clarify two other elements, mysticism and resistance in everyday life, found in Certeau’s historiography which allude to his religiosity and also anticipate chapter five on mysticism and chapter six which covers everyday life and resistance. Michael Sheringham and William Cavanaugh point out the illusiveness and plurality of practices, narratives, and beliefs which make them “heterogenous and transgressive” and all the more useful for Certeau.⁸⁸ While the force of Certeau’s critique of hegemony and proclivity towards resistance can be felt more strongly at certain stages in his development, namely after the revolt in Paris in May 1968, his critique of hegemony and insistence on resistance can be found in his early work on the history of the Ursuline Nuns and Surin as well as his later work on

⁸⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 79.

⁸⁶ Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 152.

⁸⁷ Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, p. 154-155.

⁸⁸ Michael Sheringham, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 215; William Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Christian Practices of Space and Time* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2003). Cavanaugh argues, taking from Certeau, for the role of stories and practices in forming the imagination in often unconscious and elusive ways.

mysticism as rooted in his praxis of history. Certeau's early research into Surin and historiography reveal a profound suspicion of mastery and authoritarian representations or institutions of knowledge.⁸⁹ Certeau continually expressed sympathy for Surin's bouts of insanity, uncertainty, and his propensity to be misunderstood, which bears a stark contrast to the firm-handed authority of Cardinal Richelieu. This dynamic in how Certeau viewed Surin and Richelieu parallels his sympathy towards other mystics or strange religious types and how they are treated by certain iterations of academic history.⁹⁰ For example, in *The Mystic Fable, Vol. 1: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Certeau reflected on his work on Surin:

My work on mystic writings— which began with years of peregrination in French and foreign archives, caverns in which the tenacity of research masks the solitary pleasure of the lucky find—wended its way through the labyrinthian detours of establishing critical editions. It comes from many a sojourn in these remotes corners of the past that reveal to the historian the infinitude of a local singularity. These paths cannot be forgotten. They initiate us into a strangeness that never stops surprising us and dominating our expectations. . . In this process, a 'negative work' is carried out within the double 'fiction' of images of the past and of scientific models. The historian delves within that space, sculpturing a historiography. The accumulated, corrected documents must acquire the capacity to alter, by their resistance, the body of hypotheses and codifications on the basis of which we try to interpret them. The mystics, too, lead us back to these particularities that block the demonstrations of meaning. Interspersed in their writings are the 'almost nothing' of sensations, of meetings or daily tasks.⁹¹

Certeau's inquiry into mystic belief and the praxis of openness to the other reveal the possibility for historiography to resist dominating modes of historical analysis which lay aside the "almost nothing" regularities of daily life. For the Catholic church and the French government, the

⁸⁹ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé* (Paris: Découverte, 2002), p. 266.

⁹⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Vol. 1: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, see "Introduction" and pp. 179-195. See also Henri Laux, "Michel de Certeau lecteur de Surin: Les enjeux d'une interprétation." *Revue De Theologie Et De Philosophie*, 136.4 (2004): 329-332.

⁹¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Vol. 1: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, pp. 9-10.

episodes of Loudun and the curious legacy of Surin illustrate the lack of efficacy in prevailing forms of authority and meaning to attend to everyday life, the *Other*, and death. (Death will become a more central theme for this thesis in the fourth chapter which engages Certeau's psychoanalysis). Or as mentioned before, history by nature "forgets" the perspective of those seen as the Other in history, like the "Indians" of the Americas. At the very least in Certeau, these conditions in historiography provide the opportunity to resist the dominant modes of meaning and authority that silence other voices. The resistance operates, even unconsciously, in the lives of the mystics like Surin, who in believing and openness to the *Other*, be it God or even the Devil, subvert the absolutes of assumed cultural establishments as well as the ordinary, everyday lives offer a type of transformation from the margins.⁹²

The nature of everyday life, belief, and resistance will become more evident in chapter 6 of this thesis when I argue for Certeau's unique vision of spirituality and subversiveness. For the present chapter, it is necessary to understand that everyday life is thus sustained and transformed in many ways by cultural forces which are hard to grasp and map out, similar to the elusive, shifting nature of belief. Again in the case with the "Indians" in the Americas, Certeau often used the example of how the Europeans "forgot" the history of the Indians and rewrote their past and present in terms of European culture, yet in response, Certeau felt that the Indians were able to subvert European culture by reappropriated the dominant culture through their own customs. Everyday life, though oppressed by the European settlers, was reenacted from the margins by the Indians by taking their imposed customs, religion, food, language, etc. and reimagining them through Indian culture. Chapter 6 of this thesis will map out the development of historiography and the study of the ordinary as a subject of cultural analysis to provide clearer insights into the distinctiveness of Certeau's historiography and the implicit theology in his connection between belief and everyday life.

⁹² Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun*, pp. 5-6.

Chapter 1: Conclusion

This chapter has argued for the connections between Certeau's account of historiography and his religiosity in terms of belief, memory, narrative. Certeau was concerned with mobility and transitions in belief as a result of the decline and deterioration of "authority."⁹³ The capacity of an authority to provide legitimacy and credulity is a function of historiography, or in other words, what a culture determines to be authoritative is a direct result of how that culture rehearses its history.⁹⁴ If belief is "the subject's investment in a proposition, the act of saying it and considering it as true" and if what is truthful and legitimate is a function of the practice of history in a culture, then belief and historiography must be intimately connected for Michel de Certeau.⁹⁵ In this context, I have argued that Certeau's account of the practice of history provided a unique vision of historiography and cultural theory that critiques the hegemony of power and knowledge in disciplines of social and cultural studies. In doing so, Certeau was able to present believing as a praxis of narrative and resistance against hegemony in everyday life. This will be further demonstrated throughout my thesis but primarily in Chapter 6. In addition to everyday life, I have also used this chapter to briefly introduce other key themes in this thesis Certeau, such mysticism, heterology, space, and desire. These themes will be further explained as this projects proceeds through the next chapters.

As belief in recent centuries has undergone significant transitions and influences, it is important to remember that Certeau was consistently committed in his research to a serious investigation of transcendence, God, the *Other*, and related concepts of religion were the subject

⁹³ Michel de Certeau, "Believing and Making People Believe," In Graham Ward (ed.), *The Certeau Reader*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp. 120.

⁹⁴ Michel de Certeau, "History: Science and Fiction," In Graham Ward (ed.), *The Certeau Reader*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp. 46.

⁹⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 178.

or space for how people believe, even if it meant they seemed to reject them. He was also invested in how history is written, believing that narrative shapes the way shifting structures of authority contribute to the transformation of cultural beliefs. In order to build on this chapter and continue to bridge the gap in research on Certeau's religiosity and the influence of his concerns for and critiques of religion on his cultural analysis, there is more to address in terms of narrative and belief. The interwoven nature of Certeau's multidisciplinary research means that his use of theoretical concepts overlaps with various disciplines. Narrative and belief were also central to his study of social geography, which is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: Embodiment and Social Geography

The previous chapter covering Michel de Certeau's historiography introduced several key concepts connected to both Certeau's cultural theory and implicit theology. Belief and narrative are both intricately tied to Certeau's understating of space. It is the intention of this chapter to discern the implicit religious underpinnings of Certeau's account of space, or in other words, his cultural theory in social geography, another integral discipline within Certeau's *oeuvre* that has rarely been connected to his religiosity. In doing so, I will further articulate the distinctiveness of Certeau's cultural theory, in the case of this chapter, in regard to his social geography. In order to best understand the distinctiveness of Certeau's use of space, I will critically compare and contrast Michel de Certeau and with a key figure and Certeau's contemporary in the field of social geography, Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991). In analysing Certeau's account of space alongside Lefebvre's, this chapter anticipates the ways in which Certeau's account of space and everyday life are intimately connected to his understanding of belief and its revolutionary potential for *la vie quotidienne*.⁹⁶ Though connections can be traced between Certeau and Lefebvre's views of space, particularly in regards to embodiment, the dynamism of space, and the experience of space in everyday life, I will argue that Lefebvre's historical materialism,

⁹⁶ *La vie quotidienne* is translated into English as "everyday life." According to Benjamin Highmore and Michael Sheringham, the legacy of Karl Marx and Georg Simmel made room for everyday life to become a subject of critical inquiry in a variety of disciplines including economics, sociology, psychoanalysis, and history. See Benjamin Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2001); Michael Sheringham, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Highmore's work dedicates one chapter to Henri Lefebvre and one chapter to Certeau, the only chapters in this text which focus on a single author. Similarly, Sheringham's work focuses on primarily on four authors, two of which are Lefebvre and Certeau.

influenced by Hegel and Marx, weakens his account of subjectivity and space. Certeau, in his proclivity towards the *Other* and embodiment in place (drawn in part by Merleau-Ponty) offers a more subversive alternative. More precisely, Certeau's "spiritual space" and "ethical turning" in a "practiced place" provide a more compelling account of the body in space than Lefebvre's "third space" as I will explain.⁹⁷

Feeling that Marx had new answers to reveal for the challenges faced by the amalgamation of the polity and capital, Lefebvre's critique of history brought together Marx's reinterpreting of historical progress with Lefebvre's own analysis of the spacio-temporal. As it relates to Certeau, this analysis would be seen most clearly in three volumes across his lifetime on everyday life, *Critique de la vie quotidienne* (1947, 1961, and 1981). However, Certeau only mentioned Lefebvre once, only in a footnote. Christian Schmid summarises Lefebvre's aim in theorising the production of space as an attempt to construct "a materialist version of phenomenology," a project which Lefebvre assumed Merleau-Ponty failed to complete.⁹⁸ If Schmid is correct in his analysis, how does Certeau's reappropriation of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body succeed where Merleau-Ponty's and, as I will argue, Lefebvre's accounts of space fail? As Certeau and Lefebvre's themes were undeniably similar and they were both scholars in the academy in Paris during the student uprising in May 1968, the relationship and contrast between Certeau and Lefebvre's account of space and everyday life will be the main

⁹⁷ Se-Yong Jang, "The Spatial Theory of de Certeau, a Vagabond in Stray Space," *Localities*, Vol. 5 (2015), pp. 89-102; Graham Ward, "Michel de Certeau's 'Spiritual Spaces,'" in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100:2 Spring (2001), pp. 501-517.

⁹⁸ Kanishka Goonewardena, "Marxism and Everyday Life: On Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord, and some others," in *Space, Difference, and Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, ed. by Kanishka Goonewardena, Stevan Kipfer, Richard Milgram, and Christian Schmid (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2008), pp. 129-131.

focus of the second chapter of this thesis where belief, space, embodiment, and everyday life will be considered.

2.1 Certeau, Lefebvre, and the Student Uprising in May 1968

Why provide a comparison of Certeau and Lefebvre's account of space, and why frame this comparison in terms of belief and revolution or the subversive potential of everyday life? In May 1968, Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre were both leading cultural theorists in Paris when a student uprising took place that would permanently mark French intellectual history. Having already established a prolific career as an academic and public intellectual, Lefebvre was a professor in Nanterre, the area of Paris where the burgeoning riot began. According to Lefebvre's telling of this momentous occasion (and according to relevant scholarship), his lectures played a pivotal role in the riot's inception.⁹⁹ As an active voice in the intellectual and culture scene in relation to the Situationist International and the New Urbanism in Paris prior to the 1960s, Lefebvre was both geographically and ideologically closer to the events of May '68.¹⁰⁰ Certeau was also deeply invested both in the initial fall out of the revolt and the years

⁹⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Explosion: Marxism and the French Upheaval* (New York: NYU Press, 1969); Kristin Ross and Henri Lefebvre, "Lefebvre on the Situationists: An Interview," *October*, Vol. 79 (Winter, 1997), pp. 69-83; Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2006), pp. 21, 39-45; Stefan Kipfer & Richard Milgrom, "Henri Lefebvre — Urbanization, Space and Nature: Editors' Preface," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 13:2 (2002), pp. 37-41; Kanishka Goonewardena, Stefan Kipfer, Richard Milgrom and Christian Schmid, "On the Production of Henri Lefebvre," in *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre* (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2008), pp. 2-7.

¹⁰⁰ Kristin Ross and Henri Lefebvre, "Lefebvre on the Situationists: An Interview," pp. 3-5. The Situationist International was an organized collective and collaboration of philosophers, artists, political writers, and professors critical of advanced capitalism and its influence on society and culture at large in Europe in the mid-twentieth century. One of its key framers, Guy Debord, and Henri Lefebvre worked together in Paris, a central locality of the movement.

following the legacy of May '68. As the uprising deescalated, he experienced a considerable amount of anxiety with the lasting effect that the more pro-establishment resolution to this short revolution would have on belief in the political, the religious, and in belief itself.¹⁰¹ Following the revolt, the government of Charles de Gaulle returned with more force, and the urbanists movements and *situations* dwindled as this police state returned. This is not to say that “. . . nothing happened in '68,” nor to diminish the cultural significance of the event itself, but rather to draw attention to Certeau and Lefebvre, the level at which May '68 was both influenced and analysed by French cultural theorists, and to highlight the pivotal themes of this situation.¹⁰² Much of Lefebvre's work on space and everyday life predates the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1974, Certeau was appointed by the French Ministry of Culture to write on current trends and upcoming developments in culture and society in the aftermath of the student revolt.¹⁰³ The manuscript which followed from this commissioning was the two volumes of *L'Invention du quotidien*, or *The Practice of Everyday Life*.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Michel de Certeau, *La culture au pluriel* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1987), pp. 11-34; *L'invention du quotidien I: Arts de faire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), pp. 201, 259-74; *La Prise de Parole: Pour une Nouvelle culture* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1968); *La Prise de Parole et Autres Ecrits Politique*, ed. L. Giard (Paris: Seuil, 2005), pp. 40, 64. See also Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (New York: Sage Press, 2000), pp. 34-36.

¹⁰² Kristin Ross begins her seminal account of these events with this provocative statement from well-known German sociologist, Wolf Lepenies, and his lecture at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, October 1999. According to Ben Highmore in *Michel de Certeau: Analysing Culture* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2006), p. 75, the most exhaustive and analytically rich account of the May '68 remains, as I would argue, Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

¹⁰³ Michael Sheringham, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 212.

¹⁰⁴ Certeau brought Luce Girard and Pierre Mayol onto the French Ministry of Culture project as collaborators. The first volume produced, *L'Invention du quotidien I, Arts de faire (The Practice of Everyday Life Volume I, Art of Doing)* (Paris, Union générale d'éditions, 1980), was written by Certeau. The second volume, *L'Invention du quotidien II, Habiter, cuisiner (The Practice of Everyday Life Volume II, Living and Cooking)* (Paris, Union générale d'éditions, 1980), was written by Girard and Mayol, though taken from interviews with Certeau. See also Michael Sheringham, *Everyday Life*, p. 214.

One of the elements of cultural theory which Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre drew out in innovative ways in relation to the events of May '68 (though Lefebvre's work begins before the 1960s) is the notion of space, particularly in regard to the Marxist critique of the effects of capitalism and the related age of marketing and mass media on everyday life - *la vie quotidienne*. Lefebvre's work on space grew in response to the way "modernisation" had effected the city, the culture, and the individual. In short, space was a way to discuss the abstraction and separation he felt from the systems of modernisation that seemed to dominate the urban landscape, be it the abstraction of work or industry, economics and consumption, as well as political ideologies and government. These concerns were crucial to May '68. Everyday life bears the disillusion of this abstraction, Lefebvre might say, through boredom, loss of relationships and community, and even disillusion with oneself.¹⁰⁵ Not dissimilarly, Certeau felt that space was crucial to conversations in cultural theory surrounding perception, social representation, and resistance to power. Certeau was concerned about the way the hegemonic police state was restricting free speech and censoring the way history was represented.¹⁰⁶ If scholars such as Kristin Ross, Ben Highmore, and Catherine Driskoll are right in their analysis that the revolutionary impulse which erupted in the May '68 moment was also what encouraged the multiple critical inquiries into the space of everyday life and the potential for this space to be subversive, then it would be helpful to compare and contrast Michel de Certeau and Henri

¹⁰⁵ Kanishka Goonewardena, Stefan Kipfer, Richard Milgrom and Christian Schmid, "On the Production of Henri Lefebvre," in *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre* (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2008), pp. 13-15.

¹⁰⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson Smith (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992), pp. 1-15). See also Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, pp. 60-68.

Lefebvre's accounts of space in regard to cultural theory and everyday life.¹⁰⁷ Both of their own corpuses attest to the precedence space and everyday life play in their respective projects. A comparison of these two cultural theorists, who were both deeply effected by these events, serves to provide new insights into both of their cultural ontologies of space, while at the same time emphasising the culturally subversive potential for new iterations of everyday life and space. While connections can be made between Certeau and Lefebvre on story, space, and moments/events, Certeau moved on from Lefebvre through Merleau-Ponty to have a more formidable account of the phenomenology of the body and the place of the *Other*. Through the themes of the body and the *Other* and in contrasting Certeau with Lefebvre, I will demonstrate aspects of the implicit theology in Certeau's cultural analysis of space.

2.2 Lefebvre and Certeau Share Space

Henri Lefebvre is considered by many to be the foundational voice in the cultural theorisation of space.¹⁰⁸ While he wrote or edited seventy-one books in his lifetime, spanning from 1901-1991, his most groundbreaking and lasting work remains his text, *La production de l'espace*, according to Edward Soja.¹⁰⁹ This text as well as his other works, *Critique de la vie quotidienne II* and *Fondements d'une sociologie de la quotidienneté*, engaged similar themes as

¹⁰⁷ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, pp. 104-106. Catherine Driskoll, "The Moving Ground: Locating Everyday Life," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100:2 Spring (2001), pp. 381-398; Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 146-153; Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, pp. 143-145.

¹⁰⁸ David Harvey, "Afterward," in Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Cambridge MA: Cambridge Press, 1991), pp. 425-430; Rémi Hess, *Lefebvre et l'aventure du siècle* (Paris: Éditions A.M. Métailié, 1988), pp. 7-15; Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-And-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwells Publishing, 1996), p. 6.

¹⁰⁹ Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-And-Imagined Places*, pp. 6-7. See also Stuart Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible* (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 1-5.

Michel de Certeau's work, particularly *L'invention du quotidien* and *La culture au pluriel*.

Unfortunately, Certeau's life was neither as long nor as prolific. Even though their lives and themes overlapped considerably, Lefebvre's work is conspicuously absent from Certeau's writings.¹¹⁰ Yet while Certeau's explicit mention of Lefebvre is minimal, there are noticeable parallels in Lefebvre and Certeau on the themes such as space and event, story, representation, and embodiment. Some scholars, such as Derek Schilling, would suggest that Lefebvre's status and influence in Paris during the time of Certeau should not be taken for granted, such that Certeau's minimal mention of Lefebvre is a mute point, since he would have been at least indirectly in conversation with Lefebvre just by engaging topics such as space, everyday life, and the events of May '68.¹¹¹ Other scholars such as Ian Buchanan and Andy Merrifield claim that Certeau's minimal use of Lefebvre reveals Certeau's consideration for Lefebvre's understanding of space but ultimately, Certeau's account of space demonstrated points of departure away from Lefebvre.¹¹²

While Kanishka Goonewardena, Stevan Kipfer, Richard Milgram, and Christian Schmid in their collection of essays on *Reading Lefebvre* are right in saying that Lefebvre's anti-structuralist cultural critique "differs clearly" from Certeau, it is necessary to draw together some key connections before accounting for how they differ.¹¹³ Both authors' understanding of space

¹¹⁰ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 109.

¹¹¹ Derek Schilling, "Everyday Life and the Challenge to History in Postwar France: Braudel, Lefebvre, Certeau." *Diacritics*, 33.1 (2003): 23-40.

¹¹² Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, p. 109; Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, pp. 40-45.

¹¹³ Kanishka Goonewardena, Stevan Kipfer, Richard Milgram, and Christian Schmid, "On the Production of Henri Lefebvre," *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, pp. 13-15.

showed a keen awareness and concern for how Cartesian logic and scientific rationality has reduced the notion of space to a type of Euclidean geometry. They both feared that scientific considerations for space posit the nature of space, moments/events, narratives, and embodiment as abstractions, beyond the physical contexts of everyday life with its relationships and representations.¹¹⁴ The first parallel I will argue for between Lefebvre and Certeau's notion of space is an understanding of the role moments or events play in everyday life and cultural transformation. The second parallel is their use of narrative in cultural theory. The third parallel is their explanations of the body in space. However, with each of these three parallels, I will argue for how Michel de Certeau provided developments and points of departure away from Lefebvre, particularly with respect to events, embodiment, and the place of the *Other*.

2.3 Lefebvre and Certeau on Space: Events and Moments, Compared and Contrasted

While Certeau's use of space and culture can be traced to Pierre Bourdieu and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, his understanding of events is similar to Henri Lefebvre. For Lefebvre, Certeau, and indeed for Merleau-Ponty, life is spacial, and space is existential (and political, engaging and staging one's beliefs and ideologies).¹¹⁵ Set within a three sided cultural analysis of space (*espace perçu*, *espace conçu*, and *espace vécu*: see footnote), Lefebvre understood events to be significant *moments* in history which reiterate and/or organise systems of social, mental, and

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 25-27.

¹¹⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1974), pp. 3-22. Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du Quotidien* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1980), p. 117. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 346. According to Ian Buchanan in "Heterophenomenology, or de Certeau's theory of space," in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* (2001), Certeau's mobilisation of Merleau-Ponty rather than Lefebvre's reaction to Merleau-Ponty (as narrated by Christian Schmid, "Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space: towards a three-dimensional dialectic," in *Space, Difference, and Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, pp. 38-40) is a key distinction between Certeau and Lefebvre as it relates to phenomenology and the body.

physical space.¹¹⁶ Lefebvre most often used the word “moments” to describe “modalities of presence,” meaning that moments and events can take many forms and occurrences, but what makes it a moment or an event is its impact, transformation, or transcendence of social space. For instance, *espace perçu*, *espace conçu*, and *espace vécu* are “moments of social space.”¹¹⁷ In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre describes the transcendent influence of moments on the construction of space: “The cradle of absolute space - its origin, if we are to use that term - is a fragment of agro-pastoral space, a set of places named and exploited by peasants, or by nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists. A *moment* comes when, through the actions of masters or conquerors, a part of this space is assigned a new role, and henceforward appears as transcendent, as sacred (i.e. inhabited by divine forces), as magical and cosmic.”¹¹⁸ For Lefebvre, a moment has the capacity to reconfigure the social space and redistribute meaning and symbolism at a cosmic level and in everyday life. Goonewardena, Kipfer, Milgram, and Schmid observe, “. . . Lefebvre’s notions of ‘moment’ highlight temporalities which conflict with linear-repetitive time either within the residualised habits of daily life or in intense periods of political struggle. It is through such events as May 1968 that “the city becomes a momentary work of art which promises to sublimate philosophy and desalinate the aesthetic form the purview of specialised activity.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace*, pp. 35-39. Espace perçu, espace conçu, and espace vécu are Lefebvre’s three fold analysis of space which are perceived space, conceived space, and lived space.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 40.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 241.

¹¹⁹ Kanishka Goonewardena, Stevan Kipfer, Richard Milgram, and Christian Schmid, “On the Production of Henri Lefebvre,” *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, p. 15. Here, these scholars are referencing, in part, the work of Sarah Nadal-Melsió.

Similarly for Certeau, events reorder space and its symbolic representation.

This residue of events depend on an invisible and single actor, recognisable only by the regularity of the rumbling or by the sudden miracles that disturb the order. The machine is the *primum moven*, the solitary god from which all the action proceeds. It not only divides spectators and beings, but also connects them; it is a mobile symbol between them, a tireless shifter, producing changes in the relationships between immobile elements.¹²⁰

In this light, space is not so much the container of events, but rather events themselves take part in the social construction of space. More precisely for Certeau, the ways in which events are reproduced and rehearsed inscribe and reinforce the social structures of space. For example, Victory in Europe Day festivities and parades re-inscribe the “event” of V. E. Day and reconstructs the ‘event’ in the collective, cultural memory, uniting the spectators to the *primum moven* and its original participants. Events for Certeau or moments for Lefebvre can take many forms or iterations beyond geometric space or chronological time such as love, the body, propaganda, the act of painting, and the painting itself (Lefebvre discusses this example to great lengths in *The Production of Space*). Of course, the events of May ’68 were also a moment.

While Lefebvre and Certeau’s account of space and event share some commonalities, their respective understandings of history provide a contrast in their understandings of space. In remembering the historical event of May ’68, Kristin Ross points out that Lefebvre’s proclivity to “moments” in history was distinct from Certeau’s account of “events history.”¹²¹ To further

¹²⁰ Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 113.

¹²¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 15-16; Kristin Ross and Henri Lefebvre, “Lefebvre on the Situationists: An Interview,” pp. 72; Sam Halvorsen, “Taking Space: Moments of Rupture and Everyday Life in Occupy London,” *Antipode* Vol. 47 No. 2 (2015): 401–417; See also Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 40-60.

this contrast, in *Henri Lefebvre on Space*, Łukasz Stanek traces Lefebvre's account of moments to Hegel.

In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre follows Hegel and explains the concrete universal as constituted by the three 'moments' of universality (or generality), particularity, and singularity. They are called 'moments' by Hegel in order to underscore that universality, particularity, and singularity cannot be sharply distinguished and to stress their tight logical, ontological, and epistemological bond — a principle of reciprocal entailment and inseparability that is reflected in Lefebvre's theorising of moments of space.¹²²

Lefebvre defined moments as the attempt to “achieve the total realisation of a possibility.”¹²³

While Lefebvre's understanding of the ability to realise possibility is set within a Hegelian understanding of history, Certeau, as a self-identified historian and not a Hegelian, accounts for events in way that sees the frontiers of space as opening up new possibilities in relation to the representation of the event. For Certeau, the total realisation of history is not as important as the way history is remembered and rehearsed. It is the writing of history that establishes events as such, and in the writing and reading of history, events are able to construct social space according to how history is remembered. Space and events for Certeau are in constant flux, as inhabitants are not passive spectators but are active participants remembering the event and reconstructing social space in the process.

2.4 Lefebvre and Certeau on Space: Narrative and Story, Compared and Contrasted

¹²² Łukasz Stanek, *Henri Lefebvre on Space: Architecture, Urban Research, and the Production of Theory* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), p. 139.

¹²³ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life, Volume 2* (London: Verso, 2002), p. 348.

The second parallel in the work of Certeau and Lefebvre on space can be seen in their use of narrative or story. A key point of departure one must take into account from the onset of understanding both of these authors accounts of narrative is that Certeau narrated his account of space within a different understanding of culture than Lefebvre.¹²⁴ It is important to note that what is meant by culture for Michel de Certeau, when compared with Lefebvre, more closely mirrored the *habitus* of French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, where as Lefebvre draws much of his cultural analysis from Hegel and Marx. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Certeau developed the notion of fable or story as having considerable bearing on and through the *habitus* primarily by organising space and events.¹²⁵ Bourdieu and Certeau felt that the practices that give structure and organisation to a society are hewn by assumptions, beliefs, and an unconscious reception and projection of such structures. These projections and internalisations are the *habitus*.¹²⁶ The practices of everyday life express an assumed reality, which at the same time afford the opportunities for individual and communities to subvert.¹²⁷ While Certeau and Bourdieu described the unconscious ways in which individuals and communities internalise and project the culture around them, Lefebvre describes culture more in terms of conflict and agency, where individuals have greater awareness and potential control of what aspect of culture one

¹²⁴ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (New York: Sage Press, 2000), p. 109.

¹²⁵ See Graham Ward, "Introduction," in *The Certeau Reader* ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), pp. 2-5.

¹²⁶ See Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 116; *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990), p. 56. I should note that Ian Buchanan contrasts Certeau and Bourdieu's view of culture and the *habitus*. See Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, pp. 18, 31, 88.

¹²⁷ Pierre Bourdieu and Michel de Certeau were professors in Paris at the same time, and though Bourdieu's earliest works on social theory were published towards the end of Certeau's academic career and life, Graham Ward argues that they share similar understandings of the process of social representation and social conditioning in culture. Graham Ward, "Introduction," in *The Certeau Reader* ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), pp. 7-10.

internalises and acts upon. Certeau and Bourdieu accounted for agency and conflict, but they recognised that the individual cannot stand at a distance from the *habitus*; one is an active participant, caught in the flow of internalisation and projection. It was not a matter of agency within the *habitus* for Certeau and Bourdieu but rather going in the awareness of how the *habitus* is being inscribed onto the individual and developing a resistance to the ways in which oppressive regimes are controlling it.

In accounting for culture, stories played at least two crucial roles in relation to space and *habitus* for Certeau. These roles for narratives within the *habitus* represent another development beyond Lefebvre, particularly in terms of place. First, the stories of the *habitus* mark out the relationship between places (*lieu*) and space (*espace*) in the *habitus*. Drawing primarily from Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Certeau wrote, “The law of the ‘proper’ rules in the place: the elements taken into consideration are beside one another, each situated in its own ‘proper’ and distinct location, a location it defines. A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions.”¹²⁸ The dormancy and stability of *lieu* is contrasted by dynamism and mobility of *espace*. As a part of the *habitus*, space entails the direction and mobility of elements and characters it marks out, while still being a product and imagination of the members of the *habitus*.¹²⁹ Secondly, stories actuate the relationship and interplay between spaces and places. A story “constantly transforms places into spaces and spaces in places,” by narrating directions, limits, and activity.¹³⁰ Certeau provided the example of a novel opening up the spaces (*espace*) of scenes which occasion the

¹²⁸ Michel de Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life*, p. 117.

¹²⁹ Ian Buchanan, “Heterophenomenology, or de Certeau’s theory of space,” *Social Semiotics: A Transdisciplinary Journal in Functional Linguistics, Semiotics, and Critical Theory*. Vol. 6.1 (1996): 128.

¹³⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life*, p. 118.

drama of the plot, while still being interrelated and dependent to the constancy of the medium of text (place) in writing. Yet as the text is read and interacted with by an audience, a space is imagined where the meaning of the text and its reactions open up a new frontier.

On this subject of story, both Certeau and Lefebvre understood moments/events to be bound to space and narrative, though with a few different nuances.¹³¹ In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Certeau said, “From morning to night, narrations constantly haunt streets and buildings. They articulate our existences by teaching us what they must be. They ‘cover the event,’ that is to say, they make our legends (*legenda*, what is to be read and said) out of it.”¹³² As the narratives which cover events reproduce and mark out the boundaries and horizons of social space, there is a limitless character to the ways in which events are rehearsed, remembered, and reinterpreted - often through story. “Spacial stories” rehearse both the space and the events, and they have the capacity to reimagine both the space and events in an infinite number of ways. It is also through spacial stories of events that the *habitus* is told what is real and none real, what is present and what is absent, based on how these events are represented.¹³³ Certeau and Lefebvre were clear that both history and story are more than just the chronological representative of events. However, Certeau added the nuance of distinguishing between events as merely the unfolding sequence of actions, places, and relationships in history and how these events are retold, reimagined, and relived through the praxis of writing history and the re-

¹³¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. xiv-xx.

¹³² Ibid., p. 186.

¹³³ Ibid., pp. 115-117, 150-151.

envisioning of space that is opened up in this story telling.¹³⁴ For Certeau, it is the way these events are remembered and told that reflect and help produce the spaces of representation and social constructs. Indeed, the primary way they reflect and produce these spaces is how they are remembered and reenacted. Rather than a static view of either these events or the spaces they produce, Certeau understood this cultural mechanism of writing and telling history to occur and produce itself in limitless ways in society.

Now whenever we seek the ‘historical meaning’ of an ideology or of an event, not only do we encounter methods, ideas, or styles of understanding, but also the society to which the definition of what has ‘meaning’ is always referable. If, therefore, we face a historical function specifying the ceaseless confrontation between a past and present — that is, between what had organized life or thought and what allows it to be thought nowadays — there exists an infinite series of ‘historical meanings.’¹³⁵

What is consistent with the ceaseless confrontation between the past and present, between the irrecoverable event and the constantly rehearsed event, is the impassability of this separation and the absence from place it creates and sustains. “If every event is an entry or an exit, then the myth tells the nowhere of the event or of an event that does not take place. . . . The solitary machine [producing language] makes the Eros of the dead function, but this ritual mourning (there is no other) is a comedy played within the tomb of the departed (*l’absent(e)*).”¹³⁶

L’absente represents the lack, the absence, and the irrevocability of what once took place. It is in ritual and social practices that the *habitus* inscribes the event as it reenters into the space of story

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp. 12-14. and Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l’espace*, p. 48.

¹³⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988 & 1992), p. 34.

¹³⁶ Michel de Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life*, p. 150. The use of tomb as a metaphor is worth noting as Fergus Kerr notes the crucial role it plays in Certeau’s implicit theology and cultural theory regarding security and God’s absence but also the humble faith and openness necessary for Christianity today. See Fergus Kerr, “The Essence of Christianity,” *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 52 (1973): 545-546.

telling. There, the *habitus* bears witness again to the event in its absence, yet it is the very absence of the event and its irrecoverableness which provide the conditions of possibility for belief. Part of what I am trying to show is that Certeau, as a historian, accounted for the praxis of history, memory, and this internalization and projection of stories to a deeper and more nuanced degree than Lefebvre.

Another nuance that Certeau accounted for far more than Lefebvre is the idea of place (*lieu*). Place is does not seem to be a real concern for Lefebvre. Andy Merrifield, a renown scholar on Lefebvre and cultural theory, wrote an article in 1993, where he uses Certeau to “reconcile” as it were what he felt was lacking in Lefebvre’s account of space or rather what Lefebvre did not make explicit. For Merrifield, the “Cartesian philosophical strait jacket” confining space and place to abstractions have hindered conversation around the basic ontological nature of place itself.¹³⁷ Though Merrifield does not say this here, it would seem that Lefebvre, himself, is guilty of some levels of abstraction in regard to space but particularly in regard to place, as Lefebvre is curiously silent on this subject. Certeau, on the other hand, spoke of place often, and Merrifield admits that his account of place on Lefebvre is that of Certeau’s.¹³⁸ Places were significant for Certeau and for the purposes of the subversiveness of everyday life because as stories mark out the frontiers of places and spaces, alternative spaces and alternative places open up where those who feel suppressed by the powers of society can in freedom and secrecy work out a subversion. Certeau called the site of this activity the “nonplace,” because it happens in the unseen peripheral, the place of the outcast.

¹³⁷ Andrew Merrifield, “Place and Space: A Lefebvrian Reconciliation,” *Transaction of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 18 No. 4 (1993): 516.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 531.

2.5 Lefebvre and Certeau on Space: Embodied Space and the *Other*, Compared and Contrasted

The third parallel between Certeau and Lefebvre's account of space can be seen through the theme of embodiment. Embodiment is an example of the concept in cultural theory known as spacial hybridity in that human persons can share space, while according to Certeau and Lefebvre each body is its own space. This connection between Certeau and Lefebvre on the dynamism of space, story, and moments can be seen through this anthropological notion of spatial hybridity, which means that a diversity of spaces can exist all at once and share *space* in the process. Engaging all of Hegel's universality (or generality), particularity, and singularity of space, spatial hybridity alludes to the relationality of space as the singularity and particularity of space is not eliminated by its combination with the other space or spaces occurring simultaneously.¹³⁹ Each body carries its own history, potential, *telos*, representation, interpretation, etc.; all of which outlining a diversity of spaces when bodies are together. This notion springs most explicitly from Lefebvre's *espace perçu*, *espace conçu*, and *espace vécu* and his insistence that these are different spaces that are always held together, even though contradictory at times. This is part of what makes space dynamic rather than a static and empty continuum to be filled with people, objects, and actions. Rather, the interplay between the singularity of spaces and the phenomena experienced as a part of each, constantly are produced and reproduced in anthropological expressions in culture - i.e. human activity. "Codes will be seen as part of a practical relationship, as part of an interaction between 'subjects' and their space

¹³⁹ Kanishka Goonewardena, Stevan Kipfer, Richard Milgram, and Christian Schmid, "On the Production of Henri Lefebvre," *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, pp. 7-16.

and surroundings. I shall attempt to trace the coming-into-being and disappearance of codings/decodings. My aim will be to highlight contents — the social (spatial) practices inherent to the forms under consideration.”¹⁴⁰ The relationship between spaces and the bodies of human participants in space and the codes they actuate reveal events and moments, the coming-into-being, of places and spaces. The tendency of Marx, and therefore Lefebvre, to situate culture and its production around everyday life is central to this analysis of shared space and places. Andy Merrifield, Kanishka Goonewardena, Kristin Ross, and Edward Soja give a tremendous amount of credit to Lefebvre for his ability to push Marxism outside the common framework of Marxist theory and into a more robust analysis and far-reaching embrace of the *quotidienne*, as well they should.¹⁴¹

Certeau’s allocation of this interplay between cultural production and reproduction from within the site and space of bodies, which are a part of the production and reproduction of the stories, shared in this affinity for *la vie quotidienne*.¹⁴² This analysis of culture flows from the ground up, particularly in the city, as the ordinary people walking through the streets both shape and are shaped by the stories and moments which make up the city. Certeau called these ways in which bodies move through the city in telling stories “bodily writings.” Bodily writings are the medium through which the *habitus*, though made up of these body which walk and write, stays “daily and indefinitely Other.”¹⁴³ “The authors . . . share the perception that in contemporary

¹⁴⁰ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 18.

¹⁴¹ Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, pp. xxxii; Kanishka Goonewardena, “Marxism and Everyday Life,” pp. 123; Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, pp. 191; Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-And-Imagined Places*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁴² Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 93.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 96.

cities, physical urban places and virtual space become profoundly entangled with one another in the networked and mobile uses of media and technologies. In other words, urban spatiality today is essentially (re)produced in people's media-related and technology-mediated activities."¹⁴⁴ Such activities of everyday life illustrate the bodily writing and the ways in which space is shared (spacial hybridity).

This account of embodiment, story, and *habitus* seen through bodily writing presents an important nuance in the human experience of culture. In this way, I believe Certeau provides an account of space and embodiment with more subversive potential than Lefebvre's rendering of space. It is not that Lefebvre avoided the body; his allegiance to the materialism of Marx as well as his stance against a Cartesian abstraction of analysis requires him to give the body its due diligence. For example, he regretted, "Western philosophy has betrayed the body."¹⁴⁵ Elsewhere, he elaborated on the body, "The whole of (social) space proceeds from the body, even though it so metamorphoses the body that it may forget it altogether — even though it may separate itself so radically from the body as to kill it."¹⁴⁶ "Considered overall, social practices presuppose the use of the body: the use of the hands, members and sensory organs, and the gestures of work as of activity unrelated to work."¹⁴⁷ Yet as Edward Soja observes, "Lefebvre's triad of perceived space, conceived space, and lived space oscillates between trying to push the boundaries of his

¹⁴⁴ Seija Ridell and Frauke Zeller, "Mediated Urbanism: Navigating an Interdisciplinary Terrain." *International Communication Gazette*. Volume: 75 issue: 5-6 (2013): 437-451. Graham Ward draws out this concept of a mediated society in terms of Certeau in "The Weakness of Believing: A Dialogue with de Certeau," *Culture, Theory and Critique*, 52:2-3 (2011), pp. 233 -246.

¹⁴⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 407.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 405.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 40.

theory's conceptualization and trying to be able to account for common categories such as the "body" and "mind."¹⁴⁸ In this tension, Lefebvre often failed to situate the interplay and construction of space around the site of human perception and representation - the body. If Christian Schmid is right in his summary of Lefebvre's aim in his theory of the production of space, that is "a materialist version of phenomenology," a project which Lefebvre assumed Merleau-Ponty failed to complete, then how does Certeau's reappropriation of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body and the Other succeed in ways that both Merleau-Ponty and Lefebvre do not?¹⁴⁹

First, in avoiding a mass scale critique of collective politics utilised by Marx and Lefebvre, Certeau was able to see the place of the body in more subversive and nuanced ways in which everyday life can "resist" the negative impositions and fragmentations of mass, capitalist culture.¹⁵⁰ Kanishka Goonewardena understands this key difference between Certeau and Lefebvre as Certeau's aversion to "totalising language," by which she means that Lefebvre's analysis does not leave room for a plurality of perspectives, subjectivities, or spaces of or from the *Other*. Because everyday life remains at the level of Lefebvre's critical analysis, *la vie quotidienne* does not condescend into the mundane and ordinary for Lefebvre as Certeau was able to demonstrate. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Certeau gives the example of walking as

¹⁴⁸ Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-And-Imagined Places*, pp. 31.

¹⁴⁹ See Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). The *Other* is of far more importance in the work of Certeau than Lefebvre. I will elaborate more on the meaning of the *Other* in the chapter four on psychoanalysis [see section 4.2.2] and chapter five on mysticism. For Certeau, the *Other* is a category understood by the psychoanalysis of Jaques Lacan, being that it is often a place, space, perspective, or representation that is unconscious to the dominant paradigm.

¹⁵⁰ Kanishka Goonewardena, "Marxism and Everyday Life: On Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord, and some others," pp. 129-131.

resistance. Just as stories are written in the space of walking in the city, so too there is a role of resistance in the mundane and ordinary which narrates and resists the space around it. “Walking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc., the trajectories it ‘speaks.’ All the modalities sing a part in this chorus, changing from step to step, stepping in through proportions, sequences, and intensities which vary according to the time, the path taken and the walker.”¹⁵¹ In other words, the most mundane actions of ordinary life are given and give real meaning. Certeau’s account of the body and space, though not exhaustive, was able to avoid the major pitfalls of abstraction in innovative ways, at least, in part, by nuancing an understanding of everyday life in a way that is not totalising.¹⁵² Goonewardena is right in saying, “In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, much of the exalted resistance [as oppose to revolution] lies in ‘walking, reading, decorating, cooking’ and so on, that is, in the realm of consumption rather than production, making it easier for not only resourceful subalterns but members of the intellectual establishment to join the ‘transgression’ of something.”¹⁵³ In a way that may seem counter intuitive, *la vie quotidienne* seems to be accounted for to a greater degree in this anti-totalising understanding of the body and subjectivity in cultural theory.¹⁵⁴

Secondly, in understanding the body as the condition of possibility for space, Certeau was able to open the possibility for subjectivity in relation to the *Other* in a way that Lefebvre does not.

¹⁵¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 99.

¹⁵² Kanishka Goonewardena, “Marxism and Everyday Life,” p. 130.

¹⁵³ Ibid., pp. 130-131.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 130. See also John Roberts, *Philosophizing the everyday: Revolutionary praxis and the fate of cultural theory* (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2006), pp. 28, 87-99.

Abstract space functions ‘object-ally,’ as a set of things/signs and their formal relationships: glass and stone, concrete and steel, angles and curves, full and empty. Formal and quantitative, it erases distinctions, as much those which derive from nature and (historical) time as those which originate in the body (age, sex, ethnicity). . . . The dominant form of space, that of the centers of wealth and power, endeavor to mould the spaces it dominates (i.e. peripheral spaces, and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there.¹⁵⁵

Apart from Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, Lefebvre was not able to hold the body and perception as theoretically close as he might wish. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre seemed to suggest that the body is a passive victim of dominant space which reads identity upon the body, at times in violent ways. To Lefebvre’s point, this is not to diminish the reality of violence in space, but rather to reveal the ways in which his account of the body is not as developed in terms of subjectivity. Distinctly, Certeau utilised Merleau-Ponty’s deeply embodied phenomenology. As Ian Buchanan notes, Certeau and Merleau-Ponty refuse to allow bodies to be prey to everyday life, but rather the players and makers of everyday life. “Space is not simply the location of everyday life, it is its product. . . . Bodies do not exist in space; space is, rather, the means by which bodies are and can be connect.”¹⁵⁶ This deeply anthropocentric account of space provides a more compelling narration of subjectivity at the site of the body, because it takes into account the phenomenological ways in which the body, as the site of the production of space, actively engages and recreates space. “It is this integration of body and space that prevents

¹⁵⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. David Nicholson-Smith (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992), p. 49.

¹⁵⁶ Ian Buchanan, “Heterophenomenology, or de Certeau’s theory of space,” p. 123.

heterophenomenology's conceptualisation of the social from falling into solipsism, despite insisting on perspective."¹⁵⁷

In avoiding the Marxist tendency to absolute and totalising language, Certeau avoided giving absolute, unilateral language to the domain of subjectivity, increasing its range of dynamism, while at the same time opening up the possibility for the space of the *Other* and what he would call, "non-place."¹⁵⁸ For Certeau, this "non-place" or similarly "absent space" (Graham Ward focuses on this as "spiritual space") was the place of possibility for ethical turning and intentional transformation of space, even if it is subtle resistance.¹⁵⁹ "[Certeau] even subverted the originality of alternative space, and foresaw an absent space where a non-place of frustration, silence, expulsion and secession could be realised. Absent space is a space of the *Other*, but it is also a space where neither the territory of the other or of the self becomes absolute."¹⁶⁰ The "non-place" is where the subjectivity of Certeau's account of embodiment in space and his opening to other perspectives and accounts of place reaches the conditions of possibility for subversive potential. There, stories and events can be told in ways that create new spaces, new representations of social structures and movements, formed in resistance to oppressive regimes.

In the same way as the voodoo Loas, the "spirits" and voices from another realm, the-stories of miracles are also songs, but serious ones, relating not to uprisings but to the recognition of the permanent repression. In spite of everything, they provide the possible with a site that is impregnable, because it is a nowhere, a utopia. They create another space, which coexists with that of an experience

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁵⁸ Se-Yong Jang, "The Spatial Theory of de Certeau, a Vagabond in Stray Space," *Localities*, Vol. 5 (2015), p. 94. Non-place refers to a non-circumscribable opening in which freedom and a lack of definition provides that which is not the self to be what it determines.

¹⁵⁹ Graham Ward, "Michel De Certeau's 'Spiritual Spaces,'" *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100.2 (2001): 501-517.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 100.

deprived of illusions. They tell a truth (the miraculous) which is not reducible to the particular beliefs that serve it as metaphors or symbols. They exist alongside the analysis of facts, as the equivalent of what a political ideology introduces into that analysis.¹⁶¹

These are the spaces and places defined by frontiers and horizons not boundaries, as Certeau would say. Lefebvre's account of space does allow for resistance, but that resistance is viewed narrowly through agency and violence as opposed to Certeau's more nuanced accounts of embodiment, perception, internalisation, and resistance in everyday life.

Chapter 2: Conclusion

Drawing from the previous chapter on Certeau's account of historiography and narrative, what I have shown in this chapter, by focusing on three points of comparison and contrast between Lefebvre and Certeau, story, event, and embodiment is Certeau's more rich and nuanced account of space in light of the body, everyday life, and subversive activity, such as the May '68 revolution. Much of Certeau's account of space resonated with Lefebvre's theory of the production of space. They shared the corporeal nature of the production of space, including a shared affinity for embodiment. They both placed a high valuation on story as well as the importance of the space shaping character of stories as they give way to events and moments (Certeau will press this further into a connection between story, event, and believing). Certeau and Lefebvre also provided a rich geographic account of the dynamism of space as it is shared, produced, and reproduced. Yet for all of their similarities, Certeau avoids totalising critiques, which allows space for other perspectives as well as provides a rooted, down-to-earth account of resistance in everyday life. I contend that Certeau's rendering of the body and the space it

¹⁶¹ Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 18.

actuates provides a more compelling course for human subjectivity and resistance by taking into account a phenomenology of the body in a way that leaves space for the *Other*. This chapter has continued to bridge the gap in scholarship on Certeau's religiosity by demonstrating Certeau's concerns for the *Other*. This was a more compelling account, for Certeau, because it is from the space of the *Other*, the non-place, that subversive, cultural change takes place.

CHAPTER 3: Subversive Semiotics: Certeau's Theology and Socio-Linguistics

As narrative and belief form an essential basis by which Michel de Certeau understood history and space, so too the modalities by which narratives are received and rehearsed within culture must be taken into account in order to comprehend the relationship between Certeau's theology and cultural analysis. How do cultures tell and believe these history-making and space-shaping stories according to Certeau? "Speech and writing, reading and listening, constitute a dominant organising problematic across the plurality of Certeau's intellectual ventures."¹⁶² These forms of communicating meaning dramatically effect not only the form of narratives but also their content and reception. It is the purpose of this chapter to argue for the theological and religious concerns that motivated and informed Certeau's semiotic landscape.¹⁶³ By articulating the development of Certeau's understanding of cultural systems that create and organise meaning, semiotics, and the questions as to what level Certeau's theology influenced his semiology will be addressed. This chapter will begin with a short survey of the structuralist context in which Certeau studied and taught social semiotics in Paris. I will then explain Certeau's intellectual and theological development in his research on Jesuit mystics as it pertains to social semiotics. Subsequently, I will argue that Certeau's analysis of modern language pressed into a theological vision of secularity. What follows from within Certeau's reading of the secularity of modern language is the tendency for hegemonic control and the hierarchy of the

¹⁶² Jeremy Ahearne, "Introduction," in *The Certeau Reader* ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwells Publishing, 2000), p. 153.

¹⁶³ In this chapter when speaking of semiotics or social semiotics (*sémiologie*), I believe Certeau is in agreement with Ferdinand de Saussure, at least in terms of scope, in speaking of "*une science qui étudie la vie des signes au sein de la vie sociale*." Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours De Linguistique Générale* [4. éd.] ed. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, and Albert Riedlinger (Paris: Payot, 1949), p. 33. [. . . a science that studies the life of signs within social life. *Trans*].

symbolic order to dominate social semiotics. Thus, I will argue for a relationship between Certeau's theology and his socio-political vision of language, as can be seen in his accounts of subversive linguistic expressions such as *patois* and *glossolalia*. Finally, as embodiment has previously been shown to be central to Certeau's theological concerns in relation to his cultural analysis of space, Certeau's understanding of social semiotics further supported the importance of the body.

3.1 Poststructuralism, Semiotics, and Certeau's Context

First, it is necessary to provide a few contextual notes and definitions to the study of social semiotics in Paris in the mid-20th century. In 1950, Certeau joined the Jesuit order in Lyon, and over the next decade, he was ordained as a priest and completed his doctorate in Paris. As it pertains to theology and semiotics, Certeau's intellectual and religious developments matured during the time of "l'engouement pour le structuralisme."¹⁶⁴ The legacy of Ferdinand de Saussure influenced the establishment of semiotics as an academic discipline in Paris, where during Certeau's time of study, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Louis Althusser, Jacques Lacan, Roland Barthes, Louis Marin, and Jacques Derrida were all instructors.¹⁶⁵ Certeau was a member of several Parisian institutions, such as the École Pratique des Hautes Études and affiliated centres at the Sorbonne, where he was immersed in the philosophy of *le langage* and its influences on cultural analysis.

¹⁶⁴ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002), p. 142. [the craze for structuralism. *Trans.*]

¹⁶⁵ See François Dosse, "La traversée sémiologique," in *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, pp. 296-316.

While there were several concurrent movements in Paris arguing for the cultural and ontological essence of semiotics, Certeau interacted most with structuralism and authors reacting against the structuralist understanding of language. Objecting to certain aspects of structuralism, authors like Certeau, Derrida, Foucault, and Kristeva would later fall under labels such as poststructuralist, neo-structuralist, and deconstructionist.¹⁶⁶ While it is not the purpose of this chapter to exhaust the structural/poststructuralist polemic, Certeau often utilised certain words and frameworks that can only be understood within the context of this debate, particularly the French words *parole* and *économie*.

Synoptically, the structuralist position, related to figures like Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes, was a reaction against previous understandings of language.¹⁶⁷ One of these philosophies of socio-linguistics, developed through the 18th and 19th centuries, can be described as “liberal humanist” or Neo-Kantian. The basic understanding was that through reason and free will the individual had the capacity to say what they mean and accurately depict reality via language. This also meant that language had the capacity to depict what is real. Thus, both reason and language enabled the individual to perceive and represent reality as is. The relationship between words and what they signify was primarily a matter of human agency, and this relationship communicated something “true” and transcendent about what is signified, even

¹⁶⁶ Joddy Murray, “Michel de Certeau’s Language Theory,” *Journal for College Writing* 6.1 (Dec. 2003): 19-33.

¹⁶⁷ In October 1966, there was a symposium at John Hopkins University entitled “The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man.” In part, it was a collaboration between the Humanities Center at John Hopkins University and the École pratique des hautes études, which was an institution where Certeau attended and taught courses. René Girard, Tzvetan Todorov, Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, and Jacques Derrida were just a few of the many esteemed international scholars presenting at the conference. Certeau was still a young scholar at this point and had not published widely on the philosophy of language. Not only was the conference a defining moment in the ongoing understanding of structuralism, but it also communicated the plurality of viewpoints within structuralist critiques. See Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (eds.), *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1970). The introduction indicates that nearly all of the authors present at the conference have taken issue with the label, “structuralist.” See pp. xv - xix.

if within a limited understanding. Through reason and human agency, there can be an accurate correspondence between what humans say and what they mean, between words and what they signify. In response to this vision of language, scholars such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes argued not only that human reason is limited, but also that human language is shaped by time, place, and culture. Rather than centring the phenomena of language around the individual, structuralist concepts of language focused on the reality of systems of political, economic, and social relationships. The network of these relationships shape individuals, languages, and the limits of truth and meaning in society. The individual's perception of reality and knowledge is limited by the structure of language, and language itself is shaped by socio-political systems.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, the relationship between signs and what they signify is not a relationship between the human capacity for language and ontological reality but rather a relationship between the structure of language and human conceptions of reality. In this system, language exists as an abstraction over against human persons and communities.

As will become more evident in this chapter, Certeau remained invested in these debates around language throughout his professional life. While embracing several organisational aspects of structuralism, he also provided plethora of critiques and nuances. In an article originally published in 1969 as “Les sciences humaines et la mort d’homme,” Certeau sought to nuance the structuralist notion of meaning.

In keeping with this theoretical rigour, meaning must be grasped in terms of *relations* (and no longer as something hidden-and-seen); for propositions, texts, or institutions, as for the words of a language, the value according to each element is determined and can be explained only by the relations into which it enters. What must be rediscovered is the overall *organization* of meaning which has determined specific meanings, and to which the elements of those meanings refer

¹⁶⁸ John Sturrock, *Structuralism*, intro. by Jean-Michel Rabate (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), pp. 4-5.

in referring to each other. Thus a ‘reason’ becomes apparent which is in fact a mode of being signified by a system of words. An order appears— the order of ‘structures.’¹⁶⁹

Certeau echoed the structuralist critiques of reason while alluding to the limits of structuralism’s ability to account for the plurality of meaning and experience. Referring to Certeau’s work on structuralism in the 1960s, François Dosse writes in his seminal biography of Certeau:

Nous sommes à un moment où ce paradigme est à son apogée, entraînant avec enthousiasme toutes les sciences humaines dans l’élaboration d’une sémiologie générale. Dans ce milieu d’historiens du religieux pour l’essentiel peu concerné par cette effervescence, Certeau suscite l’enthousiasme des [ses étudiants] qui y voient de nouvelles sources d’inspiration. Son exposé sur le structuralisme revient à montrer la fécondité d’une méthode qui pose le problème du statut de la référence et de la vérité.¹⁷⁰

While Certeau was able to attract an audience with his proficiency in sociolinguistics, his courses on structuralism developed in response to certain concerns with the structuralist framework. “Il se demande si ce type d’analyse rend bien compte de tous les éléments d’une expérience humaine collective . . . [La] dimension de sens n’est pas ‘expliquée’ par le structuralisme.”¹⁷¹ What Certeau and scholars like Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault questioned about structuralism was its ability to provide an organisational understanding of the variety of human experiences of communication, interpretation, and above all, subjectivity.

Foucault’s *Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (1966) and Derrida’s

¹⁶⁹ Michel de Certeau, “Les sciences humaines et la mort d’homme,” *Études*, 329 (March 1969): 344-360. This article and translation is found in Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 175.

¹⁷⁰ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, p. 223. [We are at a time when this paradigm is at its peak, enthusiastically involving all the humanities in the development of a general semiology. In this milieu of religious historians for the most part little concerned by this effervescence, Certeau arouses the enthusiasm of his students who see it as a new source of inspiration. His talk on structuralism comes down to showing the fruitfulness of a method that poses the problem of the status of reference and of truth. *Trans.*].

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 224. [He wonders if this type of analysis captures all the elements of a collective human experience. . . [The] dimension of meaning is not explained by structuralism. *Trans.*].

De la grammatologie (1967) also critiqued structuralism's political organisation of sociolinguistics for developing a hegemony of knowledge.¹⁷² The importance of these texts for the study of socio-linguistics cannot be covered in this brief contextual section. However, it is worth noting that Certeau engages these "post-structuralist" influences at length in several of his texts, including *L'Absent du histoire*, *L'Invention du Quotidien*, and *La Culture au Pluriel*.

In relation to the post-structuralist concerns for the philosophy of language, Certeau frequently employed two words, *parole* and *économie*, that further illuminated not only his critiques of structuralism but also the post-structuralist perspective of Derrida and Foucault. *Parole* (speech) has a rich lexical history in the writings of French sociolinguistics. In *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916), Saussure distinguished between *langue* and *parole*, positing *langue* as the abstract system of language present in the "collective consciousness."¹⁷³ "In separating language [*langue*] from speaking [*parole*] we are at the same time separating: (1) what is social from what is individual; and (2) what is essential from what is accessory and more or less accidental. Language is not a function of the speaker; it is a product that is passively assimilated by the individual."¹⁷⁴ For Derrida, the notion of collective consciousness fostered not only the illusion of objectivity but also the persistence of binary hierarchies, such as light/dark, male/female, urban/rural, and in this case, *langue/parole*.¹⁷⁵ While Certeau agreed with Derrida that these binaries are problematic and contribute to hegemonic structures, Certeau

¹⁷² Philip Pettit, *The Concept of Structuralism: A Critical Analysis* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 38-40. *De la grammatologie* contains Derrida's thorough critique of Saussure.

¹⁷³ John Sturrock, *Structuralism*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁷⁴ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. by Wade Baskin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), pp. 14.

¹⁷⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2016), pp. 30-31.

focused on the potential for speech (*parole*) to resist the hegemony of the symbolic order. On the generative capacity of *parole*, Certeau wrote, “Speech that had become a ‘symbolic place’ designates the space created through the distance that separates the represented from their representations, the members of a society and the modalities of their association. . . It escapes outside of structures, but in order to indicate what is lacking in them, namely, solidarity and participation of those who are subjected to them.”¹⁷⁶ More than Derrida, Certeau saw the capacity of speech to subvert the hegemony of the socio-political nature of language. An important distinction is that Certeau believed that the propagation of this hegemony is partially attributable to written language.

One of the ways in which Certeau explained the complicated matrix of the symbolic order and its power is through the word, *économie*. The French *économie* is more akin semantically to the Greek, οἰκονομία, or the Latin, *oeconomia*. These words allude to a network of relationships, a household, in which the connection between its systems, elements, and components connote meaning in how they refer to each other. *Économie* alludes to the collective mentalities that are shared within a culture.¹⁷⁷ Certeau used this idea to show how communication forms the substance of these relationships, and it is important to note that he was adamant that theology does not stand outside of this web of relationships. Even when theology is considered to be divine revelation or mystical dictation, the language employed is part of a society, culture, and network of symbolic relationships (*économie*). “Par exemple, une forme de religion ou de théologie renvoie par son organisation propre, par la nature de sa hiérarchisation,

¹⁷⁶ Michel de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech & Other Political Writings*, trans. by Tom Conley (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 9-10.

¹⁷⁷ Jeremy Ahearne, “Introduction,” in *The Certeau Reader*, pp. 153-154.

par ses thèmes doctrinaux, etc., au type de société, de culture et d'économie qui l'explique. Son inscription dans cet ensemble est précisément le mode de son intelligibilité."¹⁷⁸ Moreover, *économie* is motivated by certain forces that seek to maintain control, or it mobilises language to capture (*prise*) the variant voices or meanings that would disrupt "le mode de son intelligibilité." This chapter will later explore the relationship between *parole* and Certeau's understanding of a "scriptural economy."

To conclude this section on the context of Certeau's socio-linguistics, when speaking of semiotics or social semiotics (*sémiologie*), I believe Certeau is in agreement with Ferdinand de Saussure, at least in terms of definition, in speaking of "*une science qui étudie la vie des signes au sein de la vie sociale*."¹⁷⁹ However, unlike Saussure, Certeau was critical of the hegemonic nature of the network of relationships between signs and signifiers, as well as the structures which compose them.

3.2 Certeau, Semiotics, and his Jesuit Writings

Now that the context and definitions have been discussed, I will proceed to argue for the theological concerns that motivate Certeau's critical analysis of socio-linguistics. The purpose of this section is to show the formation of Certeau's inquiry and analysis of social semiotics, from his early work on Jesuit mystics to his writings in response to the student revolt in May 1968. During this period, there were key developments in Certeau's theological framework which

¹⁷⁸ Michel de Certeau, "La rupture instauratrice ou le christianisme dans la culture contemporaine," *Esprit* Nouvelle série, No. 404.6, (JUN 1971), pp. 1184-1885. [For example, a form of religion or theology is linked by its own organization, by the nature of its hierarchy, by its doctrinal themes, etc., to the type of society, culture and economy that explains it. Its inscription in this whole is precisely the mode of its intelligibility. *Trans.*]

¹⁷⁹ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours De Linguistique Générale*. [4. éd.] ed. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, and Albert Riedlinger (Paris: Payot, 1949), p. 33. [. . . a science that studies the life of signs within social life. *Trans.*]

informed his cultural engagement. A surface-level reading of Certeau's work, coupled with much of the early scholarship on Certeau in the English-speaking academy, would suggest that Certeau gradually transitioned from Jesuit spirituality and Christian theology to a more secular analysis of culture, language, and history.¹⁸⁰ However, the majority of recent scholarship (including Anglo-American, French, Dutch, and Latin American) agrees that, just as Certeau never left the Jesuit order, he also never abandoned the theological framework by which he navigated his inquiries into cultural studies. As François Dosse says, “. . . lui l'érudit qui avait consacré toute sa vie aux études religieuses.”¹⁸¹ Later, Dosse quotes Paul Valadier to say, “Ceux qui le connaissent savent qu'il restait fidèle à la démarche de toute sa vie: homme de foi, de fraternité avec tout homme, homme des frontières, Michel de Certeau, très typique en ce sens des missionnaires jésuites qu'il avait tant étudiés, ne restait pas en repos dès qu'un horizon inconnu s'ouvrait à lui.”¹⁸² The result of this section will be greater clarity around what Philip Sheldrake, as

¹⁸⁰ Brenna Moore, "How to Awaken the Dead: Michel De Certeau, Henri De Lubac, and the Instabilities between the past and the Present." *Spiritus* 12.2 (2012): 172-79. See also her review of *Spiritual Spaces: History and Mysticism in Michel De Certeau*, edited by Inigo Bocken. in *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 2.4 (2015): 738-39.

¹⁸¹ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002), p. 21. [. . . he the scholar who devoted his whole life to religious studies. *Trans.*]. See also p. 371. For scholars that agree that Certeau is consistent in his rootedness in the Christian religion, see Jeremy Ahearn, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 1-5. Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, "Michel de Certeau (1925-1986): Introduction," in *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1997), pp. 139-140; Inigo Bocken and Eveline Van Buijtenen, *Weerbarstige spiritualiteit: Een inleiding in het denken van Michel de Certeau (1925-1986)* (Vrije Uitgevers, De; Auflage, 2016), pp. XX; Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 3; Luce Giard, "Introduction: How Tomorrow is Being Born" in Michel de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech and Other Political Writings* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. ix-x; Pierre Gisel, "La pertinence théologique de la pensée de Michel de Certeau: L'indiscipline de l'interdisciplinarité." *Teología y vida*, 57.2 (2016), pp. 279-280. Brenna Moore, "How to Awaken the Dead: Michel De Certeau, Henri De Lubac, and the Instabilities between the past and the Present." *Spiritus* 12.2 (2012): p. 172. Philip Sheldrake, "Michel de Certeau: Spirituality and The Practice of Everyday Life." *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, 12.2 (2012), p. 207.

¹⁸² François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, p. 23. [Those who knew him knew that he remained faithful to this walk his whole life: man of faith, of fraternity with every man, Michel de Certeau, very typical of the sense of the Jesuit missionaries he had studied so much, would not remain at rest when an unexplored horizon opened before him. *Trans.*] quoted from Paul Valadier, "Un pèlerin des frontières," *Le Monde* (janvier 1986): pp. 12-13. This quote bears a somber connection to the final lines of "White Ecstasy," one of the final written works of Certeau before his untimely death.

mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, describes as Certeau's "implicit yet real religious underpinning to much of his social scientific writing."¹⁸³ In other words, this section further explores the developments of the "theological Certeau," whom Ian Buchanan acknowledges but does not engage.¹⁸⁴

3.2.1 Certeau, Semiotics, and his Jesuit Writings: Favre

Michel de Certeau's first publications on Pierre Favre and Joseph Surin during the late 1950s and early 1960s revealed certain aspects of his unique blend of theological inquiry and social semiotics, particularly the relationship between the philosophy of language and God's speaking and/or silence. Being a Jesuit throughout his adult life, Certeau published his first professional writings with journals supported by the Jesuit order. In 1962, Certeau began to serve as the assistant editor to *Christus*, a journal of Ignatian spirituality and theology that was invested in the proceedings of the Second Vatican Council.¹⁸⁵ Under the mentorship of Henri de Lubac, Certeau's doctoral thesis and first publications explored the writings and life of one of the original members of the Jesuit order, Pierre Favre.¹⁸⁶ *Le Mémorial de Pierre Favre* contains Certeau's translation of much of Favre's Latin and Spanish writings and includes an extensive

¹⁸³ Philip Sheldrake, "Michel de Certeau: Spirituality and The Practice of Everyday Life." *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, 12.2 (2012), pp. 207.

¹⁸⁴ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 9.

¹⁸⁵ For Certeau's relationship to the Second Vatican Council, see François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, ch. 7 - 8.

¹⁸⁶ The nature of Certeau's relationship with his mentor will be further discussed in chapter five of this thesis covering the theme of mysticism. Certeau's relationship with Henri de Lubac became a public dispute in which de Lubac published *Les Églises particulières dans l'Église universelle* in which he disassociated himself from Certeau quite forcefully. However, the public rejection of Certeau by the famous Jesuit theologian certainly contributes to the errant perception that Certeau developed away from theology. See François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, pp. 39-40.

introduction by Certeau himself. In a journal entry introducing this manuscript, Certeau described Favre in the following terms:

En lui-même, ce journal est avant tout le témoignage d'une expérience religieuse qui se cherche dans la vérité, sans aucun souci d'exemplarisme. C'est un dialogue avec soi-même, moyen d'un dialogue avec Dieu. . . [La] démarche de Favre consiste d'abord en une recollection des moments privilégiés qui indiquent, dans une vie, la venue et la volonté de Dieu. Elle suit donc les cheminements subtils de la mémoire, et tend à reconnaître, dans les divers événements que retient le souvenir, une continuité plus intérieure; elle découvre un dynamisme d'ordre ontologique, source de stabilité, de force et de contemplation. En devenant une attention mystique à l'action cachée mais universelle de Dieu, *la memoria* perçoit au cœur de ce mystère l'unité du temps et la vérité de chaque activité.¹⁸⁷

Pointing to the early connection between Certeau's social semiotics and theology, this quote highlights how Certeau received from Favre a didactic relationship between God and human beings. God not only speaks, but also inhabits the languages and mechanisms of meaning (i.e. context, symbols, syntaxes) of human cultures. For Certeau, this was possible due to the manner in which God speaks to human beings, which is not only synchronously easy for them to understand but also rife with symbols and signifiers that communicate meaning, the same semiotics by which human beings communicate meaning. Anticipating Certeau's more overtly theological exhortations for the Christian church in "How is Christianity Thinkable Today?" and "L'Extase Blanche," Certeau spoke to the ontological significance of God's *l'act de se parler* in Favre's writings. This would seem to provide the foundation for his deeper exploration on social semiotics in the 1970s: *Ich et Du se cherchant dans l'épaisseur d'une même langue*, which

¹⁸⁷ Michel de Certeau, "Le « Mémorial » du bienheureux Pierre Favre," *Annales de l'École pratique des hautes études* 68 (1959): 148-149. [In itself, this journal is above all the testimony of a religious experience which seeks itself in the truth, without any concern for exemplarism. It is a dialogue with oneself, a means of a dialogue with God. . . [Favre's] approach consists first of all in a recollection of privileged moments which indicate, in a life, the coming and the will of God. It therefore follows the subtle paths of memory, and tends to recognise, in the various events retained by the memory, a more interior continuity; he discovers an ontological dynamism, a source of stability, strength and contemplation. By becoming a mystical attention to the hidden but universal action of God, *La Mémorial* perceives at the heart of this mystery the unity of time and the truth of each activity. *Trans.*]

eventually developed into a philosophy of modern, secular language in light of God's apparent silence and the growing cultural sentiment that God is dead.¹⁸⁸ This raises questions as to the relationship between modern language, modern doubt, and secularity. As Certeau would later articulate in *L'invention du quotidien* (1980), secularity is related to the perceived absence of God's voice.

The sacred text is a voice, . . . it is the advent of a "meaning" (*un "vouloir-dire"*) on the part of a God who expects the reader (in reality, the listener) to have a "desire to hear and understand" (*un "vouloir entendre"*) on which access to truth depends. For reasons analysed elsewhere, the modern age is formed by discovering little by little that this Spoken Word is no longer heard, . . . One can no longer hear it. "Truth" no longer depends on the attention of a receiver who assimilates himself to the great identifying message. It is the result of work — historical, critical, economic work. It depends on the "will to do" (*un vouloir—faire*).¹⁸⁹

As the voice of God, the Spoken Word, is no longer heard and the human desire to hear it has dissipated, modern language manifests a desire for secular control.¹⁹⁰ "The disappearance of the First Speaker creates the problem of communication, that is of a language that has to be *made* and not just *heard* and *understood*."¹⁹¹ This dynamic of divine absence and the control that seeks to fill the vacuum left behind by the perceived absence of the Spoken Word, connects the socio-political angle of Certeau's semiotics with his theological concerns.¹⁹² Concerning this socio-political and theological connection with the perceived absence of God's voice, Certeau wrote:

¹⁸⁸ Michel de Certeau, "L'énonciation mystique," *Recherches de science religieuse*, 64, no. 2 (1976), pp. 183-215.

¹⁸⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. 137.

¹⁹⁰ Jeremy Ahearne, "Introduction," in *The Certeau Reader*, pp. 154-155.

¹⁹¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 138.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 241-242. "Ce pouvoir, essentiellement scripturaire, ne conteste pas seulement le privilège de la « naissance », c'est-à-dire des nobles : il définit le code de la promotion socio-économique et domine, contrôle ou sélectionne selon ses normes tous ceux qui possèdent pas cette maîtrise du langage. L'écriture devient un principe de hiérarchisation sociale qui privilégie l'écrit, le bourgeois, aujourd'hui le technocrate." Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1980), p. 24.

The capitalist scriptural contest is articulate on that loss and on the gigantic effort of 'modern' societies to redefine themselves without that voice. The revolutionary task is only a major result of that effort. It is inseparable from the message that up to that point had always signified their end for other civilisations (none of them survived the death of its gods): "Our gods no longer speak to us — God is dead."¹⁹³

In many ways, Favre's spirituality of a God who speaks was the shadow of Certeau's mystic speech and analysis of modern language - in the absence of God's voice and a lack of human attentiveness to divine allocution, humans seek control through language, while certain voices are silenced, censored, and marginalised. The relationship and significance of God's speech and the transcendence of human language to everyday life, however, was present in Certeau's first publication on the early Jesuit, Favre: "la vie de Favre lui est devenue l'expérience quotidienne du Dieu vivant, Un et trine."¹⁹⁴

3.2.2 Certeau, Semiotics, and his Jesuit Writings: Surin

Certeau's theological concern for oppressed voices in "the life of signs within a social life" developed further through his elucidating work on Jean-Joseph Surin as well as his trips to South America in the early 1960s. Jean-Joseph Surin was considered a prophetic figure in the Jesuit order during a time of reform in the Catholic Church. Even now, he is remembered for his role as pastor and exorcist in the case of the demonic possessions of the Ursuline nuns in the city of Loudun between 1632-1637. While Certeau's own analysis of Surin and the conflicting historical accounts of the demonic episodes were discussed in greater detail in *La Possession de*

¹⁹³ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 137.

¹⁹⁴ Michel de Certeau, "Introduction," in Pierre Favre, *Le Mémorial de Pierre Favre*, ed. Michel de Certeau (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960), p. 95. [the life of Favre for him the everyday experience of the living God, One and Triune. *Trans.*]

Loudun (1970), Certeau's concern for the mystical *Other* and *other* voices, voices excluded from what is remembered in historiography, can be found earlier in his introduction to *Guide spirituel de Jean-Joseph Surin*, which he edited in 1963.¹⁹⁵ While his editorial notes and introduction to *Correspondance de Jean-Joseph Surin* contain his inquiries into mysticism and spirituality (which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter six), one can see Certeau wrestling with both the complexity of writing history and also the semiological implications of determining which narratives are the "true" history, meaning, for Certeau, which stories communicate the greatest extent of what actually happened historically and symbolically. The historical accounts of the *Possession* are conflicting due to the complicated nature of Surin's exorcism, particularly his dubious relationship with the Prioress of the Ursulines, Jeanne des Anges, who was the focal point of the demonic crisis.¹⁹⁶ Other scholars have noted that it is impossible to provide a coherent narrative of these extreme spiritual events.¹⁹⁷ The difficulty of analysing this event would prove to be crucial for Certeau's intellectual development. The task of researching Loudun combined the problem of offering a coherent narrative for a history which obviously silenced certain perspectives (i.e. the first priest was executed as the scape goat as well as many of the

¹⁹⁵ Michel de Certeau, "Introduction," in *Guide spirituel de Jean-Joseph Surin* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963), pp. 18, 49-50. The significance of God's speaking act is also present in this introduction. "Par la Parole qui le révèle, Dieu éveille dans les hommes un mouvement qui vient de lui, témoignage de l'Esprit, profonde attirance qui n'est pas seulement, pour le chrétien déterminé une proximité cachée, mais la voix de son âme et la conscience d'un instinct nouveau." p. 48.

¹⁹⁶ Michel de Certeau, *La Possession de Loudun* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970). Certeau's erudition and tension are captured in his opening chapter to this text, "L'histoire n'est jamais sûre." [History is never sure]. By the 1630s, Loudun was already ravaged by war and plague, and the political and social tumour was only accelerated by the local magistrates and authorities, for whom the possession of the nuns (Ursalines are a cloistered, enclosed community) and the public execution of the priest, Urban Grandier, as the scapegoat became a public spectacle and grasp for power. By the time Surin was called upon to lead the exorcism, the impotence of the social and religious authority of the Church was already laid bare.

¹⁹⁷ Douglas E. Christie, "Things that used to be familiar . . . become strange": de Certeau and the *Possession at Loudun*," *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, Volume 12, Number 2 (Fall 2012), p. 192. It should be noted that this article fails to reference Certeau's extensive introductions and celebrated mastery of Surin's theology and spirituality in both *Guide spirituel de Jean-Joseph Surin* and *Correspondance de Jean-Joseph Surin*.

nuns who were publicly tried and humiliated) with the equally problematic work of discerning the mystical, apophatic spirituality of Surin, which at times verged into what the Catholic Church characterised as heterodoxy.¹⁹⁸ The complicated nature of these simultaneous tasks compelled Certeau's suspicion that the official accounts of God or history, as substantiated by Church doctrine or the academy, are not always what is truthful or accurate, nor are they the meaningful character by which social life is organised.¹⁹⁹ Certeau's suspicion led him to ask: who is speaking? What is being said? What is recorded and in what language? What authority validates meaning? While these questions are engaged by Surin's own *Science expérimentale* in many respects, they are questions forcefully addressed not only in Certeau's work on historiography [see section 1.2.1], but also in *La Prise de parole* (1968). As Surin's case both haunted and inspired Certeau throughout his life (in *La Fable mystique*, one of his last published manuscripts,

¹⁹⁸ Surin's form of exorcism was described by Certeau and contemporary historical theologians as unusual and peculiar. Surin would speak to the demon-possessed in a soft whisper in their ear, like one would speak to a lover. Surin felt that the intimacy and love of Christ would be the power which won the freedom of the demoniac. The nature of this intimacy and wooing, for Surin, would cause the boundaries between the exorcist and the demon possessed to lose their distinction. Case in point, Surin's life after the events of Loudun are as confusing as they are tragic. He went through seasons which he later described as his own possession. He tried to take his own life. See Certeau's "Introduction" to *La Possession de Loudun* as well as Douglas E. Christie, "Things that used to be familiar . . . become strange," pp. 190-195.

¹⁹⁹ Peter Burke. "The Art of Re-interpretation: Michel De Certeau." *Theoria*. No. 1 (2002): 27. Certeau, as Peter Burke examines, views Surin in the mystical tradition of the early monastics: a mysticism marked by love and intimacy, apophatic theology, God and nothingness, and the purity of desire. Though absent from Burke's essay, Certeau edits numerous letters and written works of Surin in *Correspondence* that speak to mystical theology which influenced Certeau's own theology and cultural analysis. Surin writes, "La première est une disposition d'indifférence à tout. Pour à Dieu pleinement, il faut être dans une indétermination générale et n'avoir attache à rien en particulier. Nous voyons maître pour faire ses commandments, il y vient libre et sans être vide de tout dessein propre, ne voulant pas plus une chose que l'autre, n'excluant rien de ce que Dieu peut vouloir d'elle, ne faisant aucun choix et ne se prescrivant rien en particulier." *Correspondance de Jean-Joseph Surin*, ed. Michel de Certeau (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1966), p. 1267. For other examples of Surin's spirituality, see pp. 420, 453, 574. See also Rayiv Torres Sánchez, "La Soledad De Lo Uno: mística y teología negativa en la obra de Michel De Certeau." *Logos: Anales Des Seminario De Metafísica* 50 (2017): 245-60.

he calls Surin, “*mon gardien*”), so too did Certeau’s concern for marginalised voices, *le langage de l’autre*, develop through researching *La Possession*.²⁰⁰

3.3 May 1968 and the Socio-Political Nature of Semiotics

After completing his work on the Jesuits (Pierre Favre and Jean-Joseph Surin), Certeau published his first significant manuscript (*La Prise de Parole*) to be circulated outside the Jesuit community.²⁰¹ The timing of his research and trips to Latin America anticipated his writings on the social revolution in Paris in May 1968. While the ontology of God’s speaking and the oppressed voices of history form a significant foundation and unifying thread to Certeau’s cultural analysis on language, these themes must be considered in the context of his first visit to Latin America in 1966. The following year, Certeau published five different articles on the theological and cultural situations he witnessed, articles which, as noted by Peter Burke, have not been reproduced in any language.²⁰² One of these articles demonstrated Certeau’s appreciation for Che Guevara’s revolutionary movement, as well as Certeau’s ability to weave together

²⁰⁰ Douglas E. Christie, “Things that used to be familiar . . . become strange,” pp. 191-192. “de Certeau’s thoughtful and capacious use of documentary sources—they comprise a remarkably large portion of the book—remains an important reminder of how the simple gesture of giving voice to multiple witnesses, especially the marginalised, can destabilise the authority of received interpretations arising from the centres of power.” For the French distinction between *la langue* and *le langage*, see Jeremy Ahearne’s work in “Part IV: Other Languages: Speech and Writing,” in *The Certeau Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwells Publishers, 2000), p. 185.

²⁰¹ Michel de Certeau, *La Prise de Parole - Et autres écrits politiques* (Paris: Seuil, 1968). The student revolution occurred in Paris in May 1968. This book was published in October 1968. See Luce Giard, “Introduction: How Tomorrow is Being Born,” in Michel de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech & Other Political Writings*, trans. Tom Conley, intro. by Luce Giard (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 1997), p. xvii.

²⁰² Michel de Certeau, “La vie religieuse en Amérique Latine,” *Etudes*, 326 (1967): 108-113; Certeau, “Amérique latine: ancien ou nouveau monde? Notes de voyages,” *Christus*, 55 (1967): 338-351; Certeau, “Che Guevara et Régis Debray,” *Etudes*, 327 (1967): 624-629; Certeau, “La parole du croyant dans le langage de l’homme,” *Esprit*, 35 (1967): 455-473; Certeau, “L’injustice sociale dans le Nordeste,” *La Croix*, 21-22 May (1967). See Peter Burke, “The Art of Re-interpretation: Michel De Certeau,” *Theoria*. No. 1 (2002): 27-37. I credit Burke for listing these articles and noting their lack of circulation beyond the 1960s.

religious studies and cultural analysis.²⁰³ In 1967, he co-edited a volume entitled, *La Solitude, une vérité oubliée de la communication*, a work invested in the social nature of communication. However, his first book, *La Prise de Parole* (1968), marked a significant shift in the scope of his analysis, with his theological foundations now being peripheral to his socio-political and symbolic reading of communication.²⁰⁴

A symbolic revolution, therefore, either because it signifies more than it effectuates, or because of the fact that it contests given social and historical relations in order to create authentic one. After all, the ‘symbol is the indication that affects the entire movement, in practise as well as in theory. From the beginning to the end, speech is what has played the decisive role, . . .’²⁰⁵

This is taken from the first chapter of *La Prise de Parole* in which Certeau began his analysis of what transpired in the student revolt of May 1968 — he called it *une révolution symbolique*. Rather than focusing on the politics of Charles de Gaulle, the economic plight of post-war Paris, or even the rhetoric of the protests, Certeau focused on symbols, signs, language, and the manner in which human freedom of expression, particularly *parole*, was called into question through this event. “From the taking of the Bastille to the taking of the Sorbonne, between the two symbols, an essential difference characterises the event of May 13, 1968: today, it is the imprisoned speech that was freed.”²⁰⁶ In six chapters he demonstrates a rich semiological analysis through which, as

²⁰³ Michel de Certeau, “Che Guevara et Régis Debray,” *Etudes*, 327 (1967): 624-629.

²⁰⁴ Michel de Certeau, *La prise de parole. Pour une nouvelle culture* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1968). This is the first of Certeau’s manuscripts that contains only his own writing, meaning that it does not contain edited works from any other author. The book first appeared in shorter form, six chapters dedicated to the revolution of signs, symbols, and language which occurred May 1968. His editors noticed the influence of his trips to South America, so in later editions more articles from Certeau which elaborate his understanding *une révolution symbolique*. In these new editions, the seventh chapter is explicitly about the growing resistance to the Catholic establishment in Brazil, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, and Paraguay. See Luce Giard’s, “Introduction: How Tomorrow is Being Born,” in Michel de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech & Other Political Writings*, p. xvii.

²⁰⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech & Other Political Writings*, trans. by Tom Conley, intro. by Luce Giard (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 1997), pp. 5-6.

²⁰⁶ Michel de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech & Other Political Writings*, p. 11.

Jeremy Ahearne describes, he poetically illustrated the processes of socio-political control that modern society exercises through the mechanisms of language and the policing of voices.²⁰⁷

Certeau's comparison between the Bastille (1789) and May 1968 constituted a vivid reference to French cultural history, and it garnered the attention of both the protesters and the French government. As a result, where once this Jesuit journal editor and archivist was known predominantly in ecclesial communities, he was now drawing the attention of a diverse, national audience.²⁰⁸

Though Certeau's audience and cultural reach increased, he continued to examine the relationship between religious authority and social semiotics. Following the student revolt, his work on the symbolic order also focused on sacred scripture as it sustains a complicated matrix of symbols and language, and holds variant levels of authority not only within the Church but also society at large. In 1968, he co-led a research group at École Pratique des Hautes Études with the now well-known semiotician, Louis Marin. For two years in the Sorbonne, they specialised in a semiotic analysis (*semantique, naratif, et stylistique*) of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.²⁰⁹ This study led to a publication, co-edited by Certeau, entitled, *Le Récit évangélique* (1971): a collection of articles analysing the use of proper names, narrative structures, enunciation, and representation in the language of the Gospels. Additionally, together with Louis Marin and Claude Chabrol, Certeau co-edited an edition of the journal, *Langages*,

²⁰⁷ Jeremy Ahearne, "Introduction," in *The Certeau Reader*, pp. 154-155.

²⁰⁸ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, p. 445. "De manière très étonnante, cet homme des marges qu'est Certeau devient ainsi la source essentielle d'inspiration de la politique culturelle conduite par le gouvernement français dans les années 1970."

²⁰⁹ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, pp. 142-143. The most famous publication to come from this group is Louis Marin, *Sémiotique de la Passion. Topiques et figures* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1971). This study contains multiple references to Certeau's work on narrative and speech. See pp. 195-200.

entitled “Sémiotique narrative: récits bibliques.”²¹⁰ This edition was also published in 1971 but focused on the semiotics at work specifically in the passion narratives. According to Marin, Certeau was a significant influence on this intersection between biblical studies and semiology, though he was not officially acknowledged as an editor on either of these publications.²¹¹ Although Certeau’s own writings at this time were not overtly theological in scope, his leadership at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Études on the intersection between biblical studies and semiology reflected his on going interest in the analysis of theological texts. More precisely, he was invested in a critical reflection on the interchange between Christianity and social semiotics. For the overall argument of this thesis, it is worth noting that these research projects took place after what Jeremy Aheare described as Certeau’s *rupture* away from Christian belief.²¹²

In 1974, Certeau was commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture to employ his interdisciplinary approach in reporting the altered cultural landscape that precipitated from the revolutionary events of May 1968. As his work became more widely discussed outside the Catholic Church, Certeau was already working on the revolutionary and oppressive capacity of language in *Une politique de la langue. La Révolution française et les patois* (1975). While *La Prise de Parole* explored the relationship between revolution and language in light of the events of May 1968, *Une politique de la langue* investigated the nature of language within the French Revolution. Certeau’s analysis of the politics of language was set within the context of the French government’s endeavour to unify all the *patois* under one *langue nationale*. For Certeau,

²¹⁰ Claude Chabrol and Louis Marin (eds.), *Le récit évangélique* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1971); and Claude Chabrol and Louis Marin (eds.), “Sémiotique Narrative: Récits Bibliques,” *Langages* 6^e année, n°22, (1971).

²¹¹ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, 142-150.

²¹² Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other*, p. 3 [See section 0.3 of this thesis].

patois (and later *glossolalia*) signify a subversive space in social semiotics where elocution and alterity form a powerful, creative agent for remapping social space. *Patios* have subversive potential because they are shared oral languages rather than written languages. Due to their oral nature, *patios* are more embodied, argued Certeau, and less susceptible to abstraction and therefore control.²¹³

The subversive potential of speech, explored in *La Prise de Parole* and *Une politique de la langue*, is clearly evident in the *L'Invention du Quotidien*. Published in 1980, *L'Invention Du Quotidien* (*The Practice of Everyday Life*, as translated by Steven Randall) was the product of six years of interdisciplinary study commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture. In one of the crucial chapters of this text, which explores the hegemony of the symbolic order, Certeau argued that once a culture is dominated by a singular, written language (*l'économie scripturaire*), then the “voices of the people” can be silenced and disciplined under a controlling system of official signs.

The installation of the scriptural apparatus of modern “discipline,” a process that is inseparable from the “reproduction” made possible by the development of printing, was accompanied by a double isolation from the “people” (in opposition to the “bourgeoisie”) and from the “voice” (in opposition to the written). Hence the conviction that far, too far away from economic and administrative power, “the People speaks.” This speech is alternatively seductive and dangerous, unique, lost (despite violent and brief outbreaks), constituted as the “Voice of the people” by its very repression, the object of nostalgic longing, observation and regulation, and above all the immense campaign that has rearticulated it on writing by mean of education.²¹⁴

²¹³ Michel de Certeau, Dominique Julia, and Jacques Revel, *Une politique de la langue. La Révolution française et les patois: l'enquête de Grégoire* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1975). pp. 107, 155-164. See also François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, pp. 311-312.

²¹⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), pp.131-132.

Certeau spoke to the aspects of modern language that marginalised or disciplined certain forms of expression. The discipline from academic, professional, and legal communication is largely a written practice. Certeau argued that as this practice is formed and reproduced through a written economy (i.e. network of communication and meaning based on texts), it not only creates distance between inscribed semiotics and the "voice," or oral forms of communication, but it also marginalises people groups whose primary form of communication is oral rather than proper, written French. The double meaning of "discipline" translates from French to English, meaning that Certeau alluded to the ways in which the modern discipline of writing censors and corrects other forms of communication. Moreover, in Certeau's view, the written economy of language is used to establish the authority of the political order as well as the symbolic order. For example, in *Une politique de la langue*, Certeau adduced the notion of written codes, laws, and circulated letters of government sanctions as evidence of the ways in which the Parisian government, through the means of written language, reestablished its authority and censored divergent forms of French. On the other hand, forms of oral communication can disrupt this scriptural economy by which the dominant forms of power sustain their authority and representation.²¹⁵ The plurality of registers and accents, which allows for a word (a set of signals and signifiers) to be pronounced in different ways or even convey a different meaning in certain regions of France, communicates an instability in the national structure of symbolic order.²¹⁶ Echoing Foucault's *Les mots et les choses*, Certeau maintains that the written order "heirarchises" the structures of language and meaning, authenticated by the authority of a national written language, where the

²¹⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. by Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 180-185. See also Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and its Other*, pp. 70-75.

²¹⁶ Michel de Certeau et. al., *Une politique de la langue*, pp. 110-116.

“lower form” or ordinary language is marginalised from the urban centres of power.²¹⁷ This process of marginalisation is facilitated by professional education and the development of print technologies, shifting the balance from oral to textual culture. However, this semiotic system of control can be subverted through *patois* and ordinary language.²¹⁸

We are subject to, but not identified with, ordinary language. . . It encompasses every discourse, even if human experience cannot be reduced to what it can say about them. In order to constitute themselves, scientific methods allow themselves to forget this fact and philosophers *think they dominate it* so that they can authorise themselves to deal with it. In this respect, neither touches the philosophical question, endlessly reopens by that ‘urge’ that ‘pushes man up to run up against the limits of language’ . . . [Philosophy] has indeed taken it (i.e. ordinary language) for a formal object while according itself a fictional mastery over it, *and* into sciences, which have excluded it in order to accords themselves an actual mastery.²¹⁹

The link between this systematised linguistic control and Certeau’s vision of theology is his conviction that theology has the capacity to function as a type of formal philosophy that accords itself as a “fictional master” over God and culture. In this way, Christian theology participates in systems of suppression and marginalisation of certain dubious voices. Certeau argued that

²¹⁷ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 13.

²¹⁸ This level of Certeau’s argument in *L’Invention Du Quotidien* makes significant use of Wittgenstein’s critical return to the ordinary, “le retour critique de l’ordinaire.” This understanding of the ordinary and what Certeau utilises from Wittgenstein will be examined further in the sixth chapter of this project covering everyday life. It is important to note in this section that *patois* and ordinary language (i.e. the mundane, uneducated, slang) form a subversive social space within the symbolic order. “The usual ways of speaking do not have any equivalence in philosophical discourses, and they are not translatable there because they are richer and more varied than [philosophical] discourses. . . The critical return of the ordinary, as Wittgenstein understands it, must destroy all varieties of rhetorical brilliance associated with powers that heirarchise and with nonsense that enjoys authority.” Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven F. Rendall, pp. 12-13.

²¹⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 11.

European Christianity has often aimed to be the master of what is true, “scientific,” or most meaningful in culture, thus contributing to the regulation of the symbolic order.²²⁰

3.4 Alternative and Embodied Social Semiotics

Within the complex *économie* of religious authority and symbolic order, Certeau focused on at least one other expression of subversive semiosis in addition to *patios*. While further analysis of Certeau’s account of language, particularly mystic speech and ordinary language, will be explored in chapters five and six covering mysticism and everyday life respectively, *glossolalia*, or speaking in tongues, offered a test-case for Certeau’s matrix of inquiry into the socio-political nature of embodied spirituality, orality, and semiotics. Although the phenomenon of *glossolalia* had been explored by well-known psychoanalysts and semioticians, such as Oskar Pfister and Ferdinand de Saussure, Certeau’s exploration focused on the capacity of mystical utterances to disrupt semiotic systems.²²¹

A strange fact: this fiction of language does not cease to be taken for a language and treated as such. It is ceaselessly obliged ‘to mean’ something [*vouloir dire*]. It excites an unwearying impulse to decrypt and to decipher that always supposes a meaningful organisation behind the sequence of sounds.²²²

Even in the seeming lack of intelligibility in glossolalia, the same impulses to communicate and to deduce meaning from elocution persist. Rather than investigating what “speaking in tongues”

²²⁰ Michel de Certeau, “La rupture instauratrice ou le christianisme dans la culture contemporaine,” *Esprit*, Nouvelle série, No. 404 (6) (JUIN 1971): 1177-1178. Certeau remarks in a footnote to the introduction of this article that the term, “scientific,” does not equally translate across disciplines and context. It is an example of how the dominant framework for social semiotics validates certain voices or perspectives over others.

²²¹ Elliot Cooper, “The Flourney Affair: An Inquiry into Ferdinand de Saussure’s Analyses of *Glossolalia*,” *Cahiers Ferdinand De Saussure* 70 (2017): 131-42. Oskar Pfister, *Die psychoanalytische Methode* (Leipzig: Verlag von Julius Klinkhardt, 1913) which contains a chapter on “religious glossolalia” (Cf. Oskar Pfister, *The Psychoanalytic Method*, trans. Charles Rockwell Payne (New York: Routledge, 1917), 230-234).

²²² Michel de Certeau, “Vocal Utopias: Glossolalias,” p. 33.

means to the doctrine of the Church or the Holy Spirit, Certeau placed particular emphasis on social semiotics and *glossolalia*'s resistance to the hegemony of the symbolic order. Regardless of being pathological or empowered by the Spirit, these experiences, Certeau claimed, communicate something of the supposed relationship between language and meaning. "The act of speaking, fragile to circumstance, subject to the difficulty of beginning and to the peril of failure, introduces schism and dissent into the harmony (supposed by language) between sound and sense. Although language has neither beginning nor end, speaking gives to the voice, to its troubles, to its jubilation the pathos of time — that is to say, the accidents of beginnings, returns to originary non-sense, failures, and defections."²²³ Here, as well as in *La Fable mystique*, Certeau's analysis of *la langue de mystiques* suggests that a genuine mystical experience fosters new social and generative space within the social and cultural *économie*. For when religious experiences reside within the limits of language, they remain under the control and limitations of the symbolic order.²²⁴ The point being that *glossolalia*, similar to *patois*, holds "metalinguistic value" in revealing the power and meaning of the act of an utterance itself, especially in the

²²³ Ibid., p. 40.

²²⁴ The limitations of language is a constant in global theological discourse across traditions and eras, and Certeau did not presume to present a novel take on what can be said of God or transcendence. In *La Fable mystique* and in the posthumous collection of essays, *Heterologies*, Certeau included in this discussion of the works of Meister Eckhart, Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Pseudo-Dionysius, Jean-Joseph Surin, and voices from apophatic theological traditions, particularly within the Jesuit order. What this project demonstrates, particularly in this chapter and the next chapter on psychoanalysis, is that Certeau should be included in this discourse on the relationship between language and religious experience due to his unique combination of semiotics, theology, psychoanalysis, and his view of resistance to hegemonic power. The last chapter of this project explores the final key in Certeau's nature of religious discourse, *la vie quotidienne*. Certeau's Ignatian influence and study of the mysticism of Surin engendered a proclivity for the ordinary, which is often absent in discourses on theological language. Theologically, there are justified critiques of Certeau's aversion to language and structures of meaning, namely through the implications of the Incarnation, the *Logos*, and divine revelation, as seen in the work of other Jesuits, such as his mentor, Henri de Lubac, and Jean Daniélou, but these will be discussed in the following chapters within the context of psychoanalysis and mysticism. See Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, "The Abrahamic Voyage: Michel de Certeau and Theology", *Modern Theology*, 12 (1996): 1-26; Peter Burke, "The Art of Re-interpretation: Michel De Certeau." *Theoria*. No. 1 (2002): 33-35; and Rayiv Torres Sánchez, "La Soledad De Lo Uno: mística y teología negativa en la obra de Michel De Certeau." *Logos: Anales Des Seminario De Metafísica* 50 (2017): 245-260.

modern semiotic culture where utterance has been devalued.²²⁵ Furthermore, Certeau believed that *glossolalia* and *patois* served as examples *par excellence* of the affective and embodied nature of language. The value of the physiology of speaking and listening transcends intelligibility, and the desire to communicate and connect with something *other* persists even in “non-sense” or “primitive” speech. Here, Certeau echoed certain post-structuralist deconstructions of what is real and what is represented.²²⁶

A key feature characterising both *patios* and *glossolalia* in Certeau’s social semiotics is that they were both thoroughly embodied enterprises. Embodiment was central to Certeau’s philosophy of language as a method of avoiding the potential abstraction of social semiotics.²²⁷ In Certeau’s view, the role of the body in relation to language and structures of meaning functions on at least two important levels, both of which seek to avoid abstraction and the neglect of the socio-political context. First, as mentioned, a thorough account of semiology has to take into consideration the physiology of semiotics, that bodies with mouths, ears, and brains are integral to the *économie* of meaning. While *patois* and *glossolalia* are not equal in their scope of representation (*patois* are often dialects of an understood language), they have the potential to open up new social spaces. These alternate forms of elocution are creative and subversive, because they are inherently embodied practices, meaning they are not strictly bound by frames of representation, intelligibility, and systems of signs and signifiers. For Certeau, the systems of semiotics, the symbolic order, are prone to hegemony in their abstractions, yet his subversive modalities within social semiotics are generative not in the abstract, but only in their relation to

²²⁵ Michel de Certeau, *L’Invention du quotidien*, pp. 228-232.

²²⁶ Michel de Certeau, “Vocal Utopias: Glossolalias,” pp. 35-42.

²²⁷ See Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and its Other*, pp. 104-130; Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, pp. 80-81.

physical bodies.²²⁸ Secondly, as the body functions as an anchor to keep semiotics from being abstracted from the physicality of speech and the reception of signs, the body was also used by Certeau to keep his socio-political analysis of the hegemonic control of technocratic language from also being abstracted, lest his critique become a form of the same processes of languages he was criticising. In speaking of the use of higher forms of language and their policing of subversive modes of communication, Certeau said the following:

There is no law that is not inscribed on bodies. Every law has a hold on the body. The very idea of an individual that can be isolated from the group was established along with the necessity, in penal justice, of having a body that could be marked by punishment, and in matrimonial law, of having a body that boodle be marked with a price in transactions among collectives. From birth to morning after death, law “takes hold of” bodies in order to make them its text. Through all sorts of initiations (in rituals, at school, etc.), it transforms them into tables of the law, into living tableaux of rules and customs, into actors in the drama organised by social orders.²²⁹

It is the body that is censored and “marked” in the policing of the body politic. Certeau pressed into certain matters of police brutality and the violence of oppressive regimes in *L’Invention du quotidien*.²³⁰ Furthermore, there are theological inferences from the *Logos* becoming flesh (i.e.

²²⁸ Certeau would suggest that these practices are less prone to abstraction. I am drawing from Certeau in *Une politique de la langue* and in “Vocal Utopias: Glossolalias,” where he takes great effort to locate and describe the phonetic, “guttural” sounds of these alternative speech practices, even transcribing the infantile “babble” of one glossolalist. While it seems unprecedented to compare the guttural nature of one form of utterance to another, the point Certeau was pressing is that the body’s role in *dire*, *faire*, and *la parole* must not be underestimated. See Michel de Certeau et al., *Une politique de la langue. La Révolution française et les patois: l’enquête de Grégoire* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1975); Michel de Certeau, “Utopies vocales: Glossolalias,” *Traverses* 20 (1980): 26-37.

²²⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 139. On this point, Certeau was fascinated with any symbol or sign physically manifested on the body, such as tattoos, wedding bands, the stigmata, branding, and even clothing to an extent. They became a constant point of references in *L’Invention du quotidien* and both volumes of *La fable mystique*. See Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, pp. 80-81.

²³⁰ The implications for Certeau’s work have inspired research into post-colonial theory. For example, see Tan See Kam, “Making Space for Heterologies: De Certeau's Links with Post-colonial Criticisms.” *Social Semiotics: Michel De Certeau* 6.1 (1996): 27-44.

punished flesh on the cross) within Certeau's wider understanding of language and embodiment. Certeau translated the logic of the incarnation onto a meta-analysis of the corporeality of semiotics and the socio-political power of communication. These are "enfleshed" social realities. "These writings carry out two complementary operations: through them, living beings are "packed into a text" (in the sense that products are canned or packed), transformed into signifiers of rules (a sort of "intextuation") and, on the other hand, the reason or *Logos* of a society "becomes flesh" (an incarnation)."²³¹ The implications of this Christological allusion are extrapolated to a greater level within his psychoanalytical inquiry. Thus, it is impossible to fully explain Certeau's use of the Incarnation with respect to language without engaging Jacques Lacan and his psychoanalysis. For Certeau, the absence of Christ's body was more important than what this body did with its physicality. As a symbol of the absent body of Jesus (*le disparu*), the empty tomb served as the key image of Christianity, rather than the Incarnation.²³² However, within the context of this chapter, the role of embodiment within Certeau's social semiotics was reflective of the theological substrates of his thinking rather than an example of Certeau's developments away from theology.

²³¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 140.

²³² Frederick Bauerschmidt, "The Abrahamic Voyage: Michel de Certeau and Theology," *Modern Theology*, 12/1 (1996): 1-26.

Chapter 3: Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to argue for the development and relationship between Michel de Certeau's theology and his socio-political account of semiotics, another important discipline within Certeau's cultural analysis which I have connected to his religiosity. While Certeau is known amongst 20th century cultural theorists for his "wanderings" and, at times, lack of clarity, this chapter has focused on his theological influences, beginning with his early work on 16th and 17th century Jesuit mystics and publications with Jesuit journals, to his more overtly political writings in the aftermath of the student revolution in Paris in 1968. First, Certeau's theology, as it pertains to social semiotics, can best be understood as emerging in the secular space of the perceived silence of God. Second, the relationship between modern language and modern doubt engenders the dominance of modern semiotics over against previous forms of meaning shaped by faith, revelation, and mystical experiences. Modern language also polices forms of communication and semiosis that function contrary to the transcribed, written code of the elite. Thus, Certeau showed an affinity for the subversive character of alternative forms of communication, such as *patois* and *glossolalia*, that are not confined to literal relationships between words and what they represent. Lastly, this chapter has argued that the embodied nature of social semiotics alludes to the substrates of Certeau's theology. However, these relationships raise important questions that have yet to be answered in this reading of Certeau. What are the limits of theological language and what can it say of divine experiences? What are the theological implications of deconstructing the ontology of the linguistic relationships between *res* and *signum*? Beyond the subversiveness of certain forms of communication, does theology offer any resistance to the hegemony of meaning described in Certeau's semiology or is theology

altogether part of the problem? These questions are raised by Certeau's account of theology and social semiotics, but they must be addressed in the contexts of his psychoanalysis and mysticism. For example, *I* and *Thou* were psychoanalytic categories for Certeau as much as they were philosophical or theological categories. Psychoanalysis and Certeau's use of Jacques Lacan formed the basis for Certeau's understanding of absence and desire, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: The Historical and Epistemological Hallmarks of Certeau's Theory and Theological Inferences of Psychoanalysis

The previous chapter raised questions about the capacity of language to express reality, alterity, and theology. However, if not understood properly, the psychoanalysis-derived theological inferences of Certeau's social semiotics must be understood within the wider context of Certeau's psychoanalysis. Christ's absent body and the nothingness of God are constant themes for Certeau and are deeply rooted in psychoanalytic theory, most notably the work of Jacques Lacan. In providing the context and the theological concerns for Michel de Certeau's psychoanalysis, this chapter will begin to provide clarity on what can be said of God and desire. The psychoanalytic perspective must be taken into account in order to understand Certeau's cultural analysis in the following two chapters covering mysticism and his vision of everyday life. In order to bridge the gap in research between Certeau's religiosity and his psychoanalysis, this present chapter begins with an articulation of Certeau's association with Lacan, including his main influences from Lacan and the meaning of certain Lacanian terminology.

Certeau's relationship with Lacan was birthed out of the Jesuit community in Paris, and so the next section in this text will argue for the relationship between Jesuit theology and Lacanian psychoanalysis as seen in the writings of Certeau. The connections between spirituality and psychoanalysis must also be considered within the context of the structuralist/poststructuralist issues discussed in the previous chapter on social semiotics. Thus, my argument for Certeau's use of theology and psychoanalysis will further explain Certeau's social semiotics, particularly in regard to theological themes and the capacity of language in order to make clear his understanding of language and its capacity in relation to alterity. The final section addresses the interplay between Certeau's social semiotics, psychoanalysis, and his theological concerns

around the absence of God and spirituality. The empty tomb and the absent body of Christ form a key image that Certeau employs to discuss death, absence, desire, the *real*, and other psychoanalytic ideas. Following a chronology of Certeau's connection to Lacan, the themes that will assist in revealing Certeau's account of psychoanalysis and theology are (1) a deemphasis of the *Ego*, (2) the *Other*, (3) the absence of God, and (4) *rupture*. Chapter five of this thesis will further investigate Certeau's cultural analysis and religiosity, but before we can investigate Certeau's account of mysticism and alterity, we need to understand his position on psychoanalysis and his relationship with Lacan.

4.1 A Chronology of Lacanian Influence on Certeau's Psychoanalysis and Philosophy

What is the relationship between Certeau and psychoanalysis? Since Certeau was a priest and historian and not a clinician, what assistance or leverage did Certeau find in the theory and language of psychoanalysis? While Certeau's influence from psychoanalysis is known, the details and history of how Certeau garnered the insights of figures like Freud, Lacan, and his Jesuit brother, Louis Beirnaert, are not well researched. The track of his journey towards psychoanalysis has been described by Luce Giard and François Dosse. However, English-speaking scholarship which often misreads Certeau failing to properly take into account his religiosity [see section 0.3], has yet to investigate the relationship between Certeau and Lacan in terms of theology and religion. For example, the 2014 influential volume *Theology after Lacan*, edited by Creston Davis, Marcus Pond, and Clayton Crockett, includes articles from well-known authors such as Slavoj Žižek and Carl Raschke, but it fails to mention Certeau altogether.²³³

There are Spanish-speaking scholars, in Mexico and Argentina specifically, that have inquired

²³³ Creston Davis, Marcus Pond, and Clayton Crockett (eds.), *Theology After Lacan: The Passion for the Real* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014). Indeed, the argument should be made, further research permitting, that Certeau interprets key psychoanalytic concepts, particularly those tangential to theology, in ways contrary to how this volume understands Lacan's understanding of *the Other*.

into the relationship between Lacan, Certeau, and theology, though these works have not been translated into English.²³⁴ Luce Giard's introduction to the French and Spanish translations of Certeau's *Histoire et psychanalyse. entre science et fiction* (which also has not been translated into English) contains insights into Certeau's courses in psychoanalysis. Andrés Freijomil argues that Certeau used psychoanalysis as a way to delimit the capacities of certain disciplines, particularly psychoanalysis and history.²³⁵ In doing so, Freijomil brought attention to the formation of Lacanian thought in relation to the death of god philosophy. This theme within psychoanalysis, including Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, proved to be central to Certeau's inquiry and utilisation of psychoanalytic methods, as will be revealed with Certeau's use of the crucifixion and empty tomb of Christ. The Mexican psychoanalyst, Juan Alberto Litmanovich in *Entre dos, Psicoanálisis e historia: La Noción de Acto en Michel de Certeau y Jacques Lacan* articulates the interplay between the politics of psychoanalysis and historiography and the limits of these disciplines with respect to theory, practice, and narratives of the past.²³⁶

Certeau found in psychoanalysis an interdisciplinary space within which he could address spiritual, mystical, and/or theological themes beyond the confines of strictly religious terminology. While his early work was strictly editing and writing for religious journals, Certeau's turn towards psychoanalysis occurred while he developed an ability to address a wider audience. As François Dosse explains, "Pour Certeau, le savoir psychanalytique est un continent à parcourir pour aller plus loin dans la compréhension de l'expérience spirituelle des mystiques,

²³⁴ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002), p. 187. Dosse describes a *nouvelle génération* of psychoanalysts in Mexico (I have added Argentina) who have been inspired by Certeau, particularly his combination of historiography and Lacan. See J. A. Litmanovich, *Cuando el archivo se hace acto. Ensayo de frontera, entre dos, psicoanálisis: M. de Certeau y Jaques Lacan* (Mexico City: Ediciones de la Noche, 2000); and Andrés Freijomil. "Clío, Entre Freud Y Lacan: El Gesto Psicoanalítico En Michel De Certeau." *Prohistoria* Vol. 13 (2009): pp. 164-169.

²³⁵ Andrés Freijomil. "Clío, Entre Freud Y Lacan: El Gesto Psicoanalítico En Michel De Certeau." *Prohistoria* 14 (2010): 169-194.

²³⁶ Juan Alberto Litmanovich, *Entre dos, Psicoanálisis e historia: La Noción de Actor en Michel de Certeau y Jacques Lacan* (Mexico City: Paradiso Editores, 2010).

sans pour autant enfermer l'interprétation en lui appliquant des schémas cliniques qui auraient prétention à en donner le sens ultime.”²³⁷ However, the discipline of psychoanalysis, particularly in the middle of the 20th century, was not a unified set of methods or theories. Certeau's interaction with psychoanalysis was an example of the controversy of the discipline. Certeau writes in his *Histoire et psychanalyse*: “At issue is, finally, the psychoanalytic tradition itself; for Lacan, this central question stands between Freud's texts (to which he calls us back) and the psychoanalytic disciples (whom he wishes to train).”²³⁸ Here, one can sense Certeau's training in archives and historiography, but more importantly, he focused on Lacan's significance in shifting the focus of psychoanalysis towards a return to Freud (or Freud's texts) and in doing so the psychiatric intentions of psychoanalysis slowly began to pale in comparison to the function of psychoanalysis in the humanities. As a result, Certeau was able to mobilise insights from psychoanalysis, particularly from Lacan's reading of Freud, into mapping the functions of the unconscious, the Other, nothingness, desire, and *rupture* as they pertain to historiography, studies of mysticism, and the symbolic order. Before discussing the implications of Certeau's use of Lacanian terminology, it is necessary to provide the context of Jacques Lacan and his influence on Michel de Certeau.

Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) was a key influence in establishing psychoanalysis as a predominant academic discipline in the 20th century. Developing Freud's analysis of the unconscious in relation to structuralist notions of language and the symbolic order, Lacan was responsible for spreading the influence of psychoanalysis into other streams of thought,

²³⁷ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002), p. 319. [For Certeau, psychoanalytic knowledge is a continent to be explored in order to go further in understanding the spiritual experience of mystics, without, however, locking up the interpretation by applying to it clinical schemes which would claim to give it its ultimate meaning. *Trans*]. This is my own translation. As with previous chapter, I will use official English translations when available. Otherwise, I will indicate my own translations in the footnotes with *Trans*.

²³⁸ Michel de Certeau, “Lacan: An Ethics of Speech,” trans. by Marie-Rose Logan, *Representation*, No. 3 (Summer, 1983), pp. 21-39. Originally published in Michel de Certeau, *Histoire et psychanalyse entre science et fiction* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), pp. 239-268.

including medicine, linguistics, history, and theology. Lacan's influence grew mainly as a consequence of his persuasive teaching and oration. He held seminars consistently from 1953 until the later states of his life, filling rooms to capacity with sometimes 700 to 800 people in attendance. Prominent continental figures have spoken to the lasting impression of attending these seminars, people such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, Paul Ricœur, Roland Barthes, Philippe Sollers, and Michel de Certeau.²³⁹ Though he trained future psychoanalysts, he is remembered for teaching the rudiments of psychoanalysis to a variety of individuals from different academic disciplines.

Similar to the developments of psychoanalysis in France, Lacan's work and legacy are formulated through conflict and disagreement. In *Psychoanalytic Politics*, Sherry Turkle described the French medical and psychiatric communities, even academia, as decidedly "anti-psychoanalysis."²⁴⁰ However, following Freud's publication of *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and *The Psychopathologies of Everyday Life* (1901), a group of wealthy French dignitaries, such as Marie Bonaparte, were crucial to the protection of Sigmund Freud during the world wars as well as the proliferation of his psychoanalytic and philosophical teachings.²⁴¹ Princess Bonaparte was significant for Lacan's interaction with psychoanalysis, particularly because she was instrumental in establishing the Société Psychanalytique de Paris (SPP). In order to disseminate the influence of Freud and psychoanalysis into the mainstream of Parisian culture and the intellectual *milieu*, the SPP sought to standardise psychoanalysis in line with medical codes and prevalent psychiatric procedures. "The Société Psychanalytique de Paris (SPP) emphasised the biological and medical aspects of psychoanalysis and required anyone who wished to become an

²³⁹ Madan Sarup, *Jacques Lacan* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), p. ix.

²⁴⁰ Sherry Turkle, *Psychoanalytic Politics: Jacques Lacan and Freud's Revolution* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1992), p. 27.

²⁴¹ Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan: Routledge's Critical Thinkers* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2005), p. 9.

analyst to first undergo medical training.”²⁴² While Lacan began his studies in medicine and finished his doctorate in psychiatry in 1932, he resisted the overshadowing of psychoanalysis by the medical sciences.²⁴³ Lacan had been an active member of the Dadaist and Surrealists, and consequently, there was a deeply aesthetic and literary component to both Lacan’s writing and practice of psychoanalysis. Following his doctorate, he began his career as a public intellectual, where he was seriously involved with both the SPP and the Surrealists. He also underwent psychoanalysis sessions from the most famous and influential analyst at the time in the SPP, Rudolph Loewenstein. As Lacan developed in his own training as an analyst, his influence and reputation spread throughout the Situationist movement. A personal friend to André Breton and Salvador Dali, Lacan later becomes the psychoanalyst of Pablo Picasso. Inspired by these artists and revolutionaries, Lacan took issue with the growing establishment of the SPP.

Firstly, Lacan felt that the medical and biological training required for analysts to become members of the SPP betrayed the philosophical, historical, and semiological capacity of psychoanalysts. Having been trained as a psychiatrist, Lacan resisted the replication of psychiatry onto psychoanalysis.²⁴⁴ Secondly, Lacan argued against the growing influence of the Ego in psychoanalytic discourse. “Ego-psychology” was promulgated by none other than Rudolph Loewenstein, Lacan’s analyst. Lacan felt that the emphasis on the Ego overdetermined psychoanalysis away from the influence of the Real, the Other, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic; themes that were central to Certeau. As the emphasis within Anglo-American psychoanalysis during the mid 20th century shifted more towards the Ego, Lacan resisted the influence of his analyst, Loewenstein, and ultimately left the SPP along with several other analysts in 1953. Unbeknownst to Lacan, he and his fellow dissenters had also left the International Psycho-

²⁴² Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan*, p. 4.

²⁴³ Madan Sarup, *Jacques Lacan*, p. xi.

²⁴⁴ Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan*, pp. 7-8.

Analytical Association (IPA)— in effect, losing their good standing with the official governing body of analysts. The following ten years of petitions and debate between Lacan’s newly organised Société Française de Psychanalyse (SFP) and the official IPA only increased the influence and popularity of Lacan. The Situationist Inc. was also established during this time, the founders of which were open about Lacan’s instrumental influence.²⁴⁵ However, the IPA took issue with Lacan’s critique of the medical and biological agendas in psychoanalysis as well as his unorthodox approach as an analyst. For example, Lacan was known for not abiding by the required time limits for a certified session. Thus, Lacan and the SFP were rejected from the IPA in 1963.

At the time, Certeau was beginning his career as an academic and editor of Jesuit journals. The previous chapter discussed his participation in the École pratique des hautes études. The timing and structuring of the advanced schools in Paris provided the opportunity for Certeau to learn from Lacan directly. When Lacan and the SFP were no longer acknowledged by the wider body of official psychoanalysts in 1963, Lacan started another institute for psychoanalysis called the École Freudienne de Paris (EFP), which soon began holding seminars at the École Normale Supérieure (ENS), the preeminent school for advanced studies in Paris. While Louis Althusser was responsible for Lacan’s seminars taking place at the ENS, it is more important to note that the ENS holds close affiliation and proximity to the École pratique des hautes études, so that when Lacan began his now renowned seminars in January 1964 at the ENS, Certeau was in attendance. “Certeau, qui est membre de cette école dès sa création, correspond au profil recherché par Lacan qui entend ouvrir son groupe à des non-praticiens de la psychanalyse capable de la faire rayonner dans d’autres savoirs.”²⁴⁶ This seminar resulted in one of Lacan’s

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁴⁶ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, p. 164. [Certeau, who has been a member of this school since its creation, corresponds to the profile sought by Lacan, who intends to open his group to non-practitioners of psychoanalysis capable of making it illuminate other areas of knowledge. *Trans.*]

key texts, *Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse* (1973). Minutes into these seminars, Lacan would explain, “I think you will agree that I am having recourse neither to gossip nor to any kind of polemic if I point out here what is simply a fact, namely that my teaching—specifically designated as such—has been the object of censure by a body calling itself the Executive Committee of an organisation calling itself the International Psycho-analytical Association. Such censorship is of no ordinary kind, since what it amounts to is no less than a ban on this teaching—which is to be regarded as nil and void as far as any qualification to the title of psychoanalyst is concerned.”²⁴⁷ In this same introduction, Lacan would acknowledge the presence of Claude Lévi-Strauss and the director of the ENS, M. Robert Flacelière. Lacan resisted the IPA, because he firmly believed that intellectuals beyond the medical field could practice psychoanalysis. In turn, he taught “lay analysts” how to read Freud and utilise not only the sessions of psychotherapy but also the foundations of psychoanalysis to support other disciplines in cultural analysis.

Even before Certeau was a student in Lacan’s now famous seminars in 1964, he was shaped by the interplay between Jesuit theology and Lacanian psychoanalysis. A key figure of this interplay was Louis Beirnaert. Though older, Beirnaert was a Jesuit contemporary of Certeau and a close friend of Jacques Lacan. Certeau and Beirnaert lived together in the *Communauté Jésuite* in the 1940s, early in Certeau’s studies.²⁴⁸ By this point, Beirnaert was already

²⁴⁷ Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge Publishing, 2004), p. 3. The volume is translated from *Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1973). Both volumes were edited by his son-in-law, Jacques-Alain Miller, who was instrumental in Lacan’s École Freudienne de Paris. In regards to Lacan’s relationship to theology, Lacan draws an analogy between his rejection from the International Psycho-analytical Association to the “excommunication” (which is also the title of Lacan’s introduction to the seminar) of Baruch Spinoza from the Jewish community in 1656. Spinoza was a key figure in Lacan’s development. Though Lacan grew up in a privileged Catholic family in Paris, Lacan hung an outline of Spinoza’s *Ethics* in his room. While the Church in the 17th century considered Spinoza an atheist, Lacan’s interaction with the existence of God, particularly in relation to the *Réel* and the unconscious bears striking parallels to Spinoza’s inquiry into God’s existence. See Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan: Routledge’s Critical Thinkers* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2005), pp. 3-4. Furthermore, Certeau paid careful attention to how Lacan understood the *Other*, which Certeau develops through his ability “penser ensemble entre Ignace et Lacan.” Certeau’s ability to develop his cultural analysis in conversation with both Ignatian spirituality and Lacanian psychoanalysis will be further explored in chapter six, which focuses on everyday life.

²⁴⁸ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, pp. 319-321.

researching and teaching on the usefulness of psychoanalysis for the Ignatian daily examen as well as the usefulness of the *Exercises* for psychoanalysis. Unlike Certeau, Beirnaert was both a priest and a practising psychoanalyst. Lacan would later acknowledge Beirnaert's contribution with Certeau in helping establish the École Freudienne de Paris in 1964.²⁴⁹ Beirnaert's influence on Certeau can be felt not only in Certeau's interaction with Lacan regarding concepts of God but also in his earlier work on Pierre Favre and Jean-Joseph Surin in relation to concepts of psychoanalysis. In *Histoire et psychanalyse*, the influence from Beirnaert and his combination of psychoanalysis and with Jesuit writings is noted in the introduction written by Luce Giard.²⁵⁰ Dosse notes how Beirnaert's influence can be seen in Certeau's use of desire, a type of theological and psychoanalytic lens to desire, which will be further discussed in this and the following chapters.²⁵¹

Certeau's interaction with psychoanalysis cannot be divorced from his interaction with Lacan, which as I am arguing, is a theological concern. While it would be inaccurate to reduce Certeau's psychoanalysis to theology, it would be equally inaccurate to separate them. As Dosse describes, "Certeau s'adresse donc à ce public averti en rappelant les origines catholiques de

²⁴⁹ Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan & Co: A History of Psychoanalysis in France, 1925-1985* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 205.

²⁵⁰ Luce Giard, "Un chemin non tracé," introduction to Michel de Certeau, *Histoire et psychanalyse: entre science et fiction*, pp. 35, 41-42. "Le troisième membre du trio de l'AMAR, Louis Beirnaert, eut une influence directe sur Michel de Certeau." Giard observed how Beirnaert and Certeau were both founding members of the Association médico-psychologique d'aide aux religieux), and both Jesuits were editors for the journal, *Études*. "...bientôt remarqué pour la qualité de ses travaux, Michel de Certeau se transforma dès lors en historien des XVIe et XVIIe siècles. ... Après avoir traduit et commenté le *Mémorial* de Pierre Favre Certeau rencontra la grande ombre de Jean-Joseph Surin. ... Pour les gens du Grand Siècle, l'identité jésuite de Surin, la qualité la formation intellectuelle de son ordre ajoutaient à la valeur exemplaire de son cas. Michel de Certeau composa sur cette affaire un magnifique petit ouvrage, fondé sur une lecture subtile des documents d'époque, lecture menée en historien, conclue en termes inspirés de l'anthropologie et de la psychanalyse: la possession ne comporte pas d'explication historique véritable puisque jamais il n'est possible de savoir qui est possédé et par qui. Le problème vient précisément du fait qu'il y a de la possession, nourrissons de aliénation et que l'effort pour s'en libérer consiste à la reporter, à la refouler ou à la déplacer ailleurs: d'une collectivité à un individu, du diable à la raison d'Etat, du démoniaque à la dévotion."

²⁵¹ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, p. 321.

Lacan . . .”²⁵² What follows in this chapter is a linking between psychoanalysis to theology and spirituality, acting as a prelude to the following chapter on mysticism.

4.2 Common Themes in Lacan's and Certeau's psychoanalyses

Having provided the context in which Certeau interacted Lacan, it is important to outline key elements of Lacanian thought and then illustrate their influence on Certeau. By doing so, I will define the crucial themes in psychoanalysis that feature in Certeau's theology and cultural theory. The themes that will assist in revealing Certeau's account of psychoanalysis and theology are (1) a deemphasis of the *Ego*, (2) the *Other*, (3) the absence of God, and (4) *rupture*.

4.2.1 Common Themes: The *Ego*

The first element of Lacanian psychoanalysis which influenced Certeau's work was the deemphasis on the *Ego* in psychoanalytic theory. As previously mentioned, Lacan was resistant to the notion of the Ego superseding other foundational elements of psychoanalysis. Indeed, it can be said that in Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, the Ego plays a more minor role with respect to the subconscious, particularly in comparison to the Real and the *Other*. This is not to overstate Lacan's reaction against Ego-psychology. As Lacan explains in his seminal work, *Ecrits*,

There is nothing here that is not justified by my attempt to refute the misguided idea that there must be something, anything whatsoever, in the subject that corresponds to a reality [*réel*] system—or even, as people in other circles say, to a characteristic function of reality. It is to this very mirage that a theory of the ego is currently devoted which, in basing itself on the return Freud assures this agency in his *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, goes astray since that text

²⁵² Ibid., p. 187. [Thus, Certeau addressed this informed public by reminding us of the Catholic origins of Lacan. *Trans.*] By *public averti*, Dosse is referring to the l'Ecole freudienne de Paris as well as the wider Parisian academy influenced by the legacy of Freud.

includes nothing but the theory of identification. The aforementioned theory [ego psychology] fails to refer to the necessary antecedent . . . ²⁵³

In many respects, what Lacan was referring to as the antecedent of ego psychology was an inclusory gesture towards social psychology, the reality of the individual's social context and the presence of discourse around the *Other*. Lacan identified an over-emphasis on the Ego that weakened the capacity of psychoanalysis from its strengths in meta-psychology and cultural analysis. Lacan and Certeau felt that certain cultural settings, particularly in American academic communities, were more hospitable to readings of Freud and psychoanalysis that more often drew upon "ego psychology." In *The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*, Lacan continued being inimical to psychoanalysis' capitulation to "ego-psychology," arguing that much of the proliferation of the *Ego* in academic and clinical studies take place in English speaking contexts due to a tendency in English morphology to over-identify "wording" with the user's intent.²⁵⁴ As it pertained to Certeau, the direction of Lacan's critique of English morphology is not as important as his overall resistance to "ego psychology." Drawing on Lacan, Certeau felt that the *Ego* and Loewenstein's interpretation of Freud continued primarily within the context of American individualism.²⁵⁵ Consequently, Certeau's use of psychoanalysis did not focus on the Ego, but rather the Ego was an element of a wider focus upon utilising themes from psychoanalysis to articulate the individual within the presence of the *Other* and the Real.

Logée dans le vide laissé par les philosophies de la conscience (Sartre, etc.) et, depuis 1968, avançant là où le structuralisme s'effrite, la psychanalyse française

²⁵³ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), p. 69. This translation is the first English volume of Lacan's original publication: *Écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966). The clarifying notes in the translation were added by Bruce Fink.

²⁵⁴ Jacques Lacan, *The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Anthony Wilden (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1968). pp. 59-61.

²⁵⁵ Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 11.

l'ézarde aujourd'hui tout le champ des sciences humaines, et jusque leur vulgate, en y introduisant la question du sujet. De cet expansionnisme tous azimuts, on pourrait supposer les variantes réparties entre deux positions où remontent de très anciennes tradition philosophiques. L'une, à figure anthropologique, serait en histoire le retour d'une *quasi-ontologie*, elle vise un savoir qui rende le moi présent aux symboles qui sous-tendraient toute expérience humaine. L'autre, définissant le sujet à partir du point où l'institution du langage s'articule sur l'organisation biologique, perdrait finalement la forme que lui donnée Lacan dans le plus remarquable (et le plus historiographique) de ses séminaires (1959-1960): un « éthique de la psychanalyse ».²⁵⁶

In other words, the *Ego* is set within a matrix of symbols that form the foundation or undergird (*sous-tendent*) all human experience. Inspired by Lacan, the significance and influence of the *ego* does not supersede the semiosis it inhabits. While the previous chapter addressed aspects of Certeau's inquiry into this symbolic foundation, here is an example of how Certeau's semiology and psychoanalysis must be held together. However, how does Certeau understand *L'autre* (the other) in relation to semiotics and the language of God? And if Certeau's psychoanalysis is less about the *Ego* and more invested in understanding alterity, *quasi-ontologie* (quasi-ontology), absence and desire, and embodiment (a move away from Lacan), what does this mean for his theology?

4.2.2 Common Themes: The Other

To understand this quasi-ontology and the wider cultural analysis addressed in Certeau's psychoanalysis, one must understand his use of *l'autre* (the *Other*) and his depictions of alterity

²⁵⁶ Michel de Certeau, *Histoire et psychanalyse: entre science et fiction* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1987), p. 102. [Housed in the void left by the philosophies of consciousness (Sartre, etc.) and, since 1968, advancing where structuralism is crumbling, French psychoanalysis today cracks the entire field of the human sciences, and even their vulgate, by introducing the question of the subject. From this all-out expansionism, one could suppose the variants distributed between two positions where very old philosophical traditions go back. One, with an anthropological figure, would be in history the return of a quasi-ontology, it aims at a knowledge that makes the ego present to the symbols that would undergird all human experience. The other, defining the subject from the point where the institution of language is articulated on the biological organization, would ultimately lose the form given to it by Lacan in the most remarkable (and the most historiographical) of his seminars (1959-1960): an "ethics of psychoanalysis." *Trans.*].

and heterology with proper respect to his theological and Lacanian influence. Heterology is used by Certeau to indicate science or theories of the *Other*.²⁵⁷ Drawing from Certeau's account, Richard Terdiman notes that heterology itself is a project acknowledging the "otherness of alterity," that otherness itself is a field that is other.²⁵⁸ This vision, I believe, resonates with Certeau's imagery of horizons and frontiers, which he often employed in considering accounts of alterity. While Claire Colebrook in her survey of poststructuralist theory, *New Literary Histories*, provides greater specificity to the *other* (lower case "o") in Certeau beyond that of Ian Buchanan and Richard Terdiman, she delineates the meaning of the *other* across the various disciplines tangential to Certeau's heterological discourse.²⁵⁹ Although she is correct that Certeau's allusion to and erudition of the *other* is vastly interdisciplinary and infers various "frontiers" of alterity depending on the context, I argue in the coming section that the key disciplines within Certeau's heterology are psychoanalysis and theology (i.e. theology with respect to Certeau).²⁶⁰ Rather than a specified void or symbolic counterpoint, Certeau used the *Other*, though not equally

²⁵⁷ Claire Colebrook, *New Literary Histories: New Historicism and Contemporary Criticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 128-130.

²⁵⁸ Richard Terdiman, "The Response of the Other," *Diacritics*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Summer, 1992): p. 7.

²⁵⁹ Claire Colebrook, *New Literary Histories*, p. 128-129. "... for a concern with the 'other' was granted a primacy in all [de Certeau's] work. For de Certeau the 'other' of strategic rationality occurs in the form of a tactic. . . . For the obedient subject, then, the 'other' is memory — other times which can disrupt the logic of the present. For historiography, the 'other' is the past; for reason the 'other' is mysticism; while for travel-writing the 'other' is figured through different cultures." This is neither an exhaustive nor definitive list of the *other* and its respective disciplines. Colebrook is rather trying to provide to give words to the plurality of the *other*, an account of heterology she emphasises more than Buchanan or Jeremy Ahearne. Since this variety of Certeau's account of the *other* is notably more important to Colebrook than the delineations above, I will proceed to account for the diversity and interdisciplinary inquiry into heterology via Certeau's interdisciplinary grasp and use of theology and psychoanalysis, both of which are left out of Colebrook's analysis of Certeau. Colebrook's point on the diversity of Certeau's account of the *other* is supported by the fact that Certeau asked for the collection of essays on the subject to be entitled, *Heterologies*. The plural nature of heterology is noted by the editors of the collection of essays, which was published the year Certeau died.

²⁶⁰ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), pp. 68-69. In one way, I am following Buchanan's account of Certeau's heterology. At the beginning of his chapter on the subject, Buchanan writes that Certeau's heterology is the combination of two inquiries, that of historiography and psychoanalysis. In seeking to account of the "theological de Certeau," which Buchanan notes earlier in this text, I argue that Certeau's heterology is no less than a combination of psychoanalysis and theological inquiry, noting that I have previously accounted for Certeau's theological critiques of historiography in previous chapters [see section 1.2.3] and now alluding to the Jesuit lens of his proclivity for psychoanalysis.

across the scope of his career, as a departure and a disclosure; as an indeterminable horizon that is always in relation but always separate.²⁶¹ As theology and psychoanalysis are indispensable for Certeau's heterology, Graham Ward and Ian Buchanan both note that Certeau weaves in and out of Lacan's understanding of the *Other* (including the big *Other*) and Emmanuel Levinas' *Other* (though for the sake of this chapter, the focus is on psychoanalysis and Lacan).²⁶² For Lacan, "the Other must first of all be considered a locus, the locus in which speech is constituted."²⁶³ As it pertains to theology, the obvious question for Certeau, or any of these writers, is whether or not the *Other* is God or some similar place-holder conceptuality of the divine. The answer is not as obvious, particularly for Certeau who was prone to "wander" in the socio-linguistic landscape to and from definitive accounts or definitions of alterity. From Lacan, Certeau emphasised the discourse of the *Other* rather than its identity. At the same time, Lacan distinguished between the big *Other* and with the little *other*, delineated by the upper case or lower case letter "o." The lower case *other* in Lacan was of little influence on Certeau, as it pertained to the type of alterity that was the *ego*, as the *ego* was *other* to the individual. This *other* involved the alterity of the imaginary, the mirror stage, and perception. While these themes are crucial for deeper understanding of Lacan, they are rarely referenced across the work of Certeau. The upper case *Other* was far more influential for Certeau. It was used by Lacan in at least two ways. The first was to designate the symbolic order, "the overarching "objective spirit" of trans-individual socio-linguistic structures configuring the fields of inter-subjective interactions." The second way that

²⁶¹ See Wlad Godzich, "The Further Possibility of Knowledge," in Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. xx. "This other, which forces discourse to the meandering appearance that they have, is not a magical or a transcendental entity; it is the discourse's mode of relation to its own historicity in the moment of its utterance."

²⁶² Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 69. Graham Ward, "Introduction," in *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), p. 7. While Buchanan and Ward briefly mention the influence of Levinas on Certeau's account of the *other*, little work has been done on the details of how Levinas' *other* shapes Certeau's cultural analysis much less Certeau's theology. As Lacan's psychoanalysis is what is discussed in this chapter, the next chapter on mysticism will explore the aspects of Certeau's *other* which more resemble Levinas.

²⁶³ Jacques Lacan, *The Psychoses 1955-1956: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book III*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), p. 271.

Lacan used *Other* was to referred to a symbolic place holder of “power and/or knowledge (whether that of God, Nature, History, Society, State, Party, Science).”²⁶⁴ For this reason, I have been using *Other* in this chapter as Lacan’s upper case *Other* will prove to be the most relevant. However, the point is not that Certeau garners the resources of Levinas and Lacan to mark the *Other* in terms of Christian theology, but rather that Certeau adds the resources of Christian theology to articulate the ontological, socio-symbolic, and psychoanalytic importance of the *Other*.²⁶⁵ Furthermore, while we have articles and chapters devoted to the project designated by Certeau as “hétérologies,” Buchanan notes that Certeau’s enterprise on the *Other* was paused so that he could publish at length on mysticism.²⁶⁶ Was this transition a shift in themes for his writing or rather does Certeau’s account of the *Other* develop into a type of mysticism? I believe this transition is significant as I hope to show how Certeau’s account of the *Other*, when viewed through the lens of his psychoanalysis and theology, leads to his understanding of the *real* and death, which ultimately lead to his unique insights into theological language, mystical experience, and religion’s place within culture ultimately derive. Let us consider the *Other* in Lacan as discussed in Certeau with reference to its quasi-ontology of *the real*.

²⁶⁴ Adrian Johnson, “Jacques Lacan,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2018): 2.3.

²⁶⁵ Again, this seems to be a use of the *Other* that is Lacanian and theological. “In other words, what we already know about a fundamental experience that is not a random experience, an out of date production of priests, namely, the question does God exist? We perceive that this question only takes on its weight because precisely it depends on a more fundamental structure, namely, at the locus of knowledge can we say that in some way knowledge knows itself? It is always in this way that I tried, for those who listen to me, to displace this question that can only be the object of a wager about the existence of God, to display it onto something that can be well and truly articulated, [the *Other*]. Namely, that however we support the function of knowledge, we are not able, it is a fact of experience, to support it except by articulating it in the signifier.” Jacques Lacan, Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XVI: From an Other to the other 1968-1969*, trans. Cormac Gallagher (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002), Seminar III, p. 18.

²⁶⁶ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 69. See also Wlad Godzich, “Forward: The Further Possibility of Knowledge,” in Michel de Certeau, *Heterology: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). Godzich wrote the forward for this manuscript treating Certeau’s heterologies project as ongoing. The detail of Certeau’s interdisciplinary treatment of the *other* is a fascinating companion to these essays by Certeau given that Certeau died that same year. Later in this thesis, I will utilise Godzich’s insights to speculate on where Certeau was directing his work on the *other*; but this must include the next chapter’s content on mysticism, particularly Certeau’s essay, “White Ecstasy.”

In an article written in 1981, the year following Jacques Lacan's death, Certeau elaborated on the profundity of Lacan and the significance his contribution to his own theory. What is obvious from this text is Certeau's deep admiration for Lacan as an intellect.²⁶⁷ As Lacan inspired a shift in psychoanalytical trends away from movements premised on the ego, so did Certeau draw from Lacan a psychoanalysis of language, history, politics, and spirituality. Where psychoanalysts often wrote about the *Other* in terms of psychology and theologians in terms of God, Certeau found freedom from Lacan to speak of the other in terms of God but with rigour across disciplines, particularly semiotics.²⁶⁸ In the article written following Lacan's death in 1981, "Lacan: An Ethics of Speech," Certeau writes, ". . . the *Other* is not only the ghost of a God removed from the history where the passage of his believers remains nonetheless engraved, but also the general structure whose theory is made possible by the erasure of the religious positivity and by acceptance of its mournings."²⁶⁹ The ethereal nature of the *Other* in Certeau, echoes Lacan across the disciplines Certeau explored. Just as the weakening of religious structures in the 16th and 17th century (as Certeau demonstrates often but specifically in *Mystic Fable* and *Possession of Loudun*) diminished the number of believers who acknowledged the existence of God, Certeau argued that the decline in shared cultural meaning, in regard to language and art for example, communicates the absence of an understanding of the *Other*. That is, what is accepted across disciplines changes, and the general structure of what determines truth from fallacy is *Other*, just as God is *Other*. This thesis addressed the issue of the *Other* in historiography in the first chapter, wherein the *Other* is portrayed as the aspect of reality that always eludes us, the perspectival entity that is invariably present but remains unrecorded in

²⁶⁷ Michel de Certeau, "Lacan: une éthique de la parole," in *Le débat*, 22 (November 1982), pp. 54-69. It later appeared in English as "Lacan: An Ethics of Speech," trans. by Marie-Rose Logan, *Representation* 3 (1983), pp. 21-39. It is now reproduced in Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 47-64.

²⁶⁸ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, p. 334.

²⁶⁹ Michel de Certeau, "Lacan: An Ethics of Speech" trans. by Marie-Rose Logan, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, p 61.

history (i.e. the viewpoint of the conquered or the civilizations not recorded). However, Certeau elaborated further on Lacan's notion that there is an *Otherness* in the structures of discourse that is analogous to the *Otherness* and absence of God. According to Giard and Dosse, this is yet another paradigm of Certeau elaborating upon a Lacanian concept, where heterology is latent within the disciplines which shape the knowledge and meaning that constitute our impressions of the *Other*.

This aspect of Certeau's heterology, as Terdiman suggests, where the formulation or approach to *Otherness* (in any discipline involved) is in itself *Other*, drew from Lacan's analysis of language and structures of thought. Lacan's expanse of the *Other* as a field or discourse without boundaries or designations is seen in the following:

The ideal no doubt is that this mystical "I speak" will bring about in analytic experience the effect, the image of the appearance of the truth. It is here precisely that it must be understood that this emitted truth is suspended there, caught between two registers, those whose two limits I posed precisely in the two terms that figure in the title of my seminar this year ["From an Other to the other"]. Because this *either* [between an Other and the other], a reference to the field where the discourse of the subject would take on its consistency, namely, to the field of the Other that I defined as this locus where every discourse at least posits itself in order to be able to offer itself to what is or not its refutation. That it can demonstrate, and in the most simple form — you will excuse me for not having the time to do it today — that the problem of whether or not there is a God who guarantees as for Descartes the field of truth is completely uncalled for. It is enough for us that it can be demonstrated that in the field of the Other there is no possibility of a complete consistency of discourse . . .²⁷⁰

The elusive nature of the discourse about the *Other* means that it will always be an unspecified field. A greater issue for Lacan than the identity of the *Other* is the nature of what can be communicated truthfully. Ian Buchanan and Jeremy Ahearne emphasise that Certeau, inspired by Lacan, frequently presented the *Other* in relation to language, meaning, and authority rather than

²⁷⁰ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XVI: From an Other to the other 1968-1969*, trans. Cormac Gallagher (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002), Seminar I, pp. 14-15.

prevailing arguments around metaphysics. Similar, in the quote above, Lacan is not interested in the issue of God's existence but the discourse in the field of the *Other*.²⁷¹ The nuance of Certeau's blending of the *Other* with a psychoanalysis of language and meaning was seen in his tribute to Lacan. Again from "Lacan: An Ethics of Speech:"

But what is, after all, this Other whose irreducible brilliance streaks through the entire work? "the Other is there precisely as it recognised, but as it is not known." "This Other [is] what I call here *the dark God*." Such formulations and a thousand others similar to them, like the analyst's apparatus, gradually bring the strange impression that the house is haunted by monotheism. This monotheism resides in the concepts scattered throughout the discourse, concepts whose theoretical (and/or mythical) promotion is most often marked by a capital letter: *the* Word [*Parole*] is articulated on *the* Other by *the* Name of the father, *the* Desire, *the* Truth, and so on. Repeated through is the monotheistic form of the capital singular, an index of something which, under the signifier of the Other, always amounts to the same.²⁷²

From Certeau references to Lacan, there are points in Lacan's psychoanalysis that are haunted by monotheism, revealing a lingering affinity for the *Other*. Perhaps it was because of his reading of Lacan, coupled with his own Jesuit origins, that Certeau used the *Other* and even "God" as more symbolic notions or tools for discourse. However, Certeau did this in a way that was more theological than Buchanan and Ahearne acknowledge. In some respects, the weight and challenge of Certeau's work lies in this connection between theology and this type of psychoanalysis, or as Dosse says of Certeau, "... le situant au cœur de cette gageure, de cette tension qui semblait impossible à penser ensemble entre Ignace et Lacan."²⁷³ How then did

²⁷¹ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, pp. 68-76; Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other*, pp. 9-18.

²⁷² Michel de Certeau, "Lacan: An Ethics of Speech" trans. by Marie-Rose Logan, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, p 59. Certeau is quoting from (as it appears in his footnotes): Lacan, *Les Psychoses: Le Séminaire, Livre III* (Paris, 1981), p. 48 and *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1978), p. 58.

²⁷³ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, p. 23. [placing it at the heart of this challenge, of this tension which seemed impossible to think together between Ignatius and Lacan. *Trans.*].

Certeau speak of the *Other*? The simple theological assignment would be to find the big, transcendent *Other* in Certeau's cultural inquiry. But, as Frederick Bauerschmidt summarises:

However, if such a formation implies that God is to be thought within the confines of alterity, it is misleading with regard to Certeau's thought because, for him, God is *non aliud* (not other). This is a point on which he underwent some change and clarification. In earlier works such as *L'étranger* [1969] he could speak of the "Other-God [*Dieu Autre*]" and refer on occasion to an uppercase Other. In the early 1970s, he would still write "Jesus is the Other," and even in a 1982 work we find the uppercase Other. Yet from the beginning he seems more interested in particular others than in a transcendent Other . . .²⁷⁴

Frederick Bauerschmidt, Graham Ward, and Arthur Bradly reference this transition, reflected in this quote, around the nature of the *Other* in Certeau.²⁷⁵ They all reference this citation from the early 1970s, mentioned here by Bauerschmidt, from Certeau's *La faiblesse de croire*. Admittedly, these voices are important for the field of research on Certeau in order for scholars to take his theology and religiosity seriously, but it is important to hold together Certeau's heterology with his use of psychoanalysis. The full quote, only partially recounted by these authors, points to the linguistic and psychoanalytic inferences Certeau intends with his use of *Other*.

La nouvelle utilisation sociale des signes religieux retrouve, mais à un autre niveau, leur fonction traditionnelle de porter les questions qui concernent la vie, la mort, le salut, les relations avec l'invisible et les ancêtres, la localisation du « plus fort » dans le jeu et sous le masque des hiérarchisations sociales, le sens dernier des choses. Mais cette reprise n'est pas une continuité. Elle se sépare du passé par une dénivellation fondamentale dans les situations. Si les questions demeurent, la réponse qui leur était apportée par ce langage religieux est devenue incroyable. Si le rapport à l'autre rest, aujourd'hui comme heur, essentiel à la constitution du sujet individuel ou collectif, cet autre n'est plus Dieu. Quand les langages

²⁷⁴ Frederick Bauerschmidt, "The Otherness of God," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100:2 (2001): p. 351.

²⁷⁵ Arthur Bradly, *Negative Theology and Modern French Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 56. Graham Ward, "Introduction," in *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp. 5-10 and *How the Light Gets In: Ethical Life I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 276.

religieux resurgissent dans nos sociétés, c'est donc sans la croyance qui les parlait.²⁷⁶

For the theologian looking for Certeau to expound on the transcendent *Other*, *cet autre n'est plus Dieu* [this other is no longer God], seems like a dead end.²⁷⁷ Then in "The Weakness of Believing," Certeau spoke in similar way, "God is just a word."²⁷⁸ However, in a lecture entitled, "How is Christianity Thinkable Today?" Certeau spoke critically of "death of God theology," both as a detraction away from Christian theology and as a hindrance to Christian collegiality.²⁷⁹ The *Other*, for Certeau, was not used as the symbolic, great transcendent authority or as an ambiguous, distant *Other* that is now dead, but rather as the locus of discourse, as per Lacan. This symbolic space in language was explored in Certeau's heterology project but was further explained theological by the empty tomb.

4.2.3 Common Themes: The Absence of God

Here, at the intersection of Certeau's psychoanalysis and theology, Certeau is not speaking of God's death, but God's absence. The absence of God, related to his use of *Other*, is a combination of his theorising of language, psychoanalysis, and theology. When Certeau says,

²⁷⁶ Michel de Certeau, *La faiblesse de croire* (Paris: Éditions Du Seuil, 1987), p. 244. [The new social use of religious symbols rediscovers, but at another level, their traditional function of raising questions concerning life, death, salvation, relations with the invisible and the ancestors, the location of the "strongest" in the game and under the mask of social hierarchies, the ultimate meaning of things. But this recovery is not a continuation. It separates itself from the past by a fundamental difference in level in the situations. If the questions remain, the answer given to them by this religious language has become incredible. If the relationship to the other remains, today as yesterday, essential to the constitution of the individual or collective subject, this other is no longer God. When religious languages resurface in our societies, it is therefore without the belief that spoke them. *Trans.*]

²⁷⁷ I am echoing a critique from Creston Davis, Marcus Pound, and Clayton Crockett. In their introduction to a collection of essays entitled, *Theology After Lacan: The Passion for Real*, they critique a tendency of "death of God" theology to embrace Lacan. See Creston Davis, Marcus Pound, and Clayton Crockett, "The Real Introduction," in *Theology After Lacan: The Passion for the Real*, eds. Creston Davis et al. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014). pp. 2-9.

²⁷⁸ Michel de Certeau, "The Weakness of Believing: From the Body to Writing, a Christian Transit," in *The Certeau Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwells Publishers, 2000), p. 228. The quote originally appears in Michel de Certeau, *La faiblesse de croire* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987), p. 289.

²⁷⁹ "How is Christianity Thinkable Today?" was originally a lecture given at the University of St. Louis in 1971. It is now reprinted as Michel de Certeau, "How is Christianity Thinkable Today?" in *The Postmodern God*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford, Blackwells Publishers, 2000), pp. 143-155.

“God is just a word,” he is referencing, Emmanuel Levinas.²⁸⁰ It was mentioned before that Graham Ward and Ian Buchanan note that Certeau used both Levinas and Lacan in their respective understandings of the *Other*. Levinas is known for his phenomenology more than his psychoanalysis, but Certeau embraced, though not explicitly, Levinas’ account of the *Other* as beyond language or consciousness. Fergus Kerr, similar to Ward, argues that Certeau drew from Levinas, particularly *Totality and Infinity* (1961), in that separation and difference mark the *Other* as *Other*.²⁸¹ Additionally, this separation of the infinite (though Certeau does not use this terminology) is beyond consciousness and language.

Building from Levinas and Lacan, Certeau communicated a modest theology of alterity and belief by way of the symbol/picture of the empty tomb. Fergus Kerr goes as far as to call the empty tomb an ideogram of Certeau.²⁸² Certeau seems to have first referenced the empty tomb as an object and sign in 1966 in a journal article: “And so in days gone by, certain brave and faithful men came in the small hours to visit the place where Jesus should have been lying as an object and a sign; but they discovered an ‘empty’ tomb, and they were filled with ‘amazement.’ What Christian is there who was not been filled with amazement, at some similar ‘emptiness.’”²⁸³ Later, in “How is Christianity Thinkable?”, Certeau wrote, “The empty tomb is the condition of possibility for a spiritual knowledge, i.e., for a ‘verification’ which expresses itself and extends into the era of the word and the Spirit. Each Christian language refers to the same even, but does

²⁸⁰ See Michel de Certeau, *La faiblesse de croire* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987), p. 289. The footnote reads, “Voir Emmanuel Levinas, *En découvrant l’existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*, 2^e éd., Paris, Brin, 1967, p. 217-236, « Langage et proximité », surtout le passage intitulé « Ce n’est qu’un mot » (p. 235-235).

²⁸¹ Fergus Kerr, “The ‘Essence of Christianity: Notes after de Certeau,” *New Blackfriars*, 12, Vol.54 (1973): 545-556.

²⁸² Fergus Kerr, “The ‘Essence of Christianity: Notes after de Certeau,” 549-550.

²⁸³ Michel de Certeau, “Cultures and spiritualities,” *Concilium*, No. 19 (November 1966): 9.

not give us what disappeared to make it possible.”²⁸⁴ If Mari Ruti and Drew Dalton are correct in that, for Levinas, desire, even desire for the *Other*, is motivated by abundance rather than absence, then Certeau’s understanding of the absence of the *Other* was more influenced by Lacan.²⁸⁵

But this fidelity itself is not of an objective kind. It is linked with the absence of the object or of the particular past which inaugurated it. The past is not our security. . . The Christian language begins with the disappearance of its “author.” That is to say that Jesus effaces himself to give faithful witness to the Father who authorises him, and to give rise to different but faithful communities, which he makes possible. There is a close bond between the absence of Jesus (dead and not present) and the birth of the Christian language (objective and faithful testimony of his survival).²⁸⁶

How then does the absence of Jesus give rise to theological language, and what does Certeau ultimately believe can be said about God? Firstly, to the authoritarian dogmatism of theological epistemology, Certeau held up the confused figure of Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb as the counter. “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” (John 20:13). God is absent and so faith begins. “The important thing is not to speak about the death of God, but to accept the limits of Christianity and the death of universalism as a way of recognising our bond with the others and, through them, with God. . . The problem is less the death of God than the death of our ideological reassurance of our missionary totalism.”²⁸⁷ Certeau encouraged a modesty within the hermeneutics of Christian theology that recognised its dependence on the absence of God. Secondly, for Certeau, this absence was layered in

²⁸⁴ Michel de Certeau, “How is Christianity Thinkable Today?” in *The Postmodern God*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford, Blackwells Publishers, 2000), p. 145.

²⁸⁵ See Drew Dalton, *Longing for the Other: Levinas and Metaphysical Desire* (Pittsburg, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2009). Mari Ruti, *Between Levinas and Lacan: Self, Other, Ethics* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), p. 136.

²⁸⁶ Michel de Certeau, “How is Christianity Thinkable Today?” in *The Postmodern God*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford, Blackwells Publishers, 2000), p. 145.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

psychoanalysis (i.e. absence generates desire for the *Other*) and theology, which made room for plurality. Certeau adds, that theologically, it was Jesus' departure that made a way for Pentecost, the gift of the Spirit where a plethora of languages proclaimed the works of God.

Recognising our limits articulates Christian language — social, liturgical, theoretical, etc. It points the meaning of Christianity as a necessary relation to the necessarily different. It is referred to the act which made the Gospels possible and which they recount the death of Jesus. For Jesus to die, is to “make room” for the Father and at the same time “make room” for the polyglot and creative community of Pentecost, for the plurality of the Scriptures, for the multiplicity of the future Christian generations. The gesture of making room for the multiplicity of Christian languages in relation to the invisibility of the Spirit inaugurates a structure of communication where a plurality of members (or of authorities) is only revelation of spiritual meaning.²⁸⁸

Certeau encouraged a departure from objective securities. Instead, he directed Christians to embrace the absence of God as the vehicle for a Christianity that was “still alive,” but only if it understood its frailty, weakness, and contingency. There is more to say about how this theology of God's absence influenced Certeau's account of mysticism, but this will be discussed in the following chapter.

4.2.4 Common Themes: *Rupture*

Having discussed the interplay between psychoanalysis and theology, leading to an understanding of God's absence, it is now necessary to understand Certeau's use of the words *rupture* and its related theme of “the real” as these themes further reveal the theological interworking of Certeau's use of psychoanalysis. Richard Terdiman remarked in an article on Certeau, “What the nineteenth century contributed to the problematic of the *Other* was to make clear how uncertain is the meaning of the word “real” ...”²⁸⁹ Certeau's analysis revealed a unique

²⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 151-152.

²⁸⁹ Richard Terdiman, “The Response of the Other.” *Diacritics*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1992): 5.

relationship between alterity and social semiotics with the aid of psychoanalysis and his proclivity for mysticism, themes significant to the final stages of his research in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As it pertains to psychoanalysis, Certeau endeavoured to communicate a certain affective and embodied nature essential to communication and the structures of meaning as well as the silenced voices on the margins of society.

It has been challenging to translate the term *rupture*, as used in Certeau's work, into the English language, because it has wider semantic range in French and connotes certain psychoanalytical implications. As it pertains to Certeau's theology, Certeau employs the themes *rupture* and the *real* in considering human limitations, the limits of consciousness and language, but also like his semiotics in the previous chapter, the capacity of voices from the margins and mystical experiences to open up new social spaces, in resistance to the domineering nature of modern language, similar to how he understood Pentecost.

The genesis of these themes can also be traced back to Jacques Lacan. In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, which again was based on Lacan's seminars that Certeau attended, Lacan said, "The primary process —which is simply what I have tried to define for you in my last few lectures in the form of the unconscious — must, once again, be apprehended in its experience of rupture, between perception and consciousness, in that non-temporal locus, I said which forces us to posit what Freud, calls in homage to Fechner, *die Idee einer anderer Lokalität*, the idea of another locality, another space, another scene, the between perception and consciousness."²⁹⁰ *Rupture* is the breakdown in this system of intelligibility

²⁹⁰ Jaques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), p. 56. The original French edition of this text is entitled *Le Seminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XI, 'Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse'* (Éditions du Seuil, 1973).

between perception and consciousness.²⁹¹ But as he draws together theological and psychoanalytic themes, sometimes *rupture* is translated as “conversion,” because Certeau often used it within a spiritual or religious context, though not exclusively.²⁹² The point being that the system of signs and signifiers, of representation and reality, have the potential to close in on itself if subversive or transformative voices or experiences are introduced. Certeau described his own *rupture* happening during the events that unfolded in May 1968.²⁹³ At that moment, whether or not the students or protesters accomplished anything was not what mattered; for Certeau, what mattered was that certain aspects of the symbolic order were silenced by an oppressive police state in Paris. The *rupture* occurred as this symbolic oppression was exposed by the student revolution. The empty tomb is also a *rupture*.

A ‘rupture’ is a constant element in the spiritual life. . . It is immanent in the spiritual attitude, but it increases in proportion to the boldness of the faith that God initiates, sustains, and dashes to the ground always through the instrumentality of some human pattern of events. This boldness may assume

²⁹¹ It should be noted that Certeau was not criticising the existence of systems of intelligibility or written symbols of meaning, but rather, he expressed concern about a professionalised culture and Christian church that would prefer certain forms of intelligibility over others. He is especially concerned when church authority mirrors the written law’s authority and dominance over a culture. For Certeau, the language of Christianity must not shut out the voice of the people or the spiritual expression of “la langue de l’autre.” See François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, pp. 107, 630-635. See also Michel de Certeau, *La Fable mystique: XVIème et XVIIème siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982), pp. 23-24.

²⁹² Fergus Kerr, “The ‘Essence of Christianity: Notes after de Certeau,” 549-550. Kerr quotes Certeau’s article from 1966 in *Concilium*, a Catholic academic journal.

²⁹³ Michel de Certeau, *La faiblesse de croire* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987), pp. 183-226. There remains some interpretive disagreement surrounding the impact of this rupture in Michel de Certeau’s life. Jeremy Ahearne presented the first “full length” study of Certeau’s thought. However, in his introduction he states that he focused on Certeau’s publications from 1970 onward due to this “*rupture instauratrice*,” claiming that his thought “broke away” from his previous research circles and, possibly, his spirituality. Ian Buchanan writing in a critical study on Certeau in 2000 suggests that Ahearne possibly overstated the impact of this rupture for the purpose of “avoiding the issue of Certeau’s religiosity.” Buchanan seeks to value the integrity and impact of this rupture in Certeau’s life while still holding that Certeau’s epistemological substrate (presumably, his faith) remained a constant point of reference, even it passed through phases and *departures*. Buchanan, as noted in the Introduction of this thesis, admits from the beginning of his study of Certeau that he is not exploring the theology or religious aspects of Certeau’s thought. I hold that this *rupture instauratrice* must be set in the context of his spirituality, psychoanalysis, and semiotics, which is to suggest that it does not mark a radical, epistemological shift in Certeau’s thought. On the other hand, this study echoes Ahearne in using this rupture to help organise Certeau’s thought into certain phases, which could be Ahearne’s point altogether. See Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other*, p. 5, and Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, pp. 9, 12.

different forms, but it always consists of being read to go to the extreme point in the tensions and ambitions belonging to a particular time, and of taking seriously a network of relationships in order to await and recognise in them the coming of God. This serious outlook may even be the origin of the Christian's dismay. He is surprised that when he launches out in full faith and with all his heart in human history, he is met with a "vacuum," as much on the part of the religious teaching as in the activities and the knowledge which could yet, in a given situation, provide a meeting-point with God. . . This is a trial that comes to any Christian. . . And so in days gone by, certain brave and faithful women came in the small hours to visit the place where Jesus should have been lying as an object and a sign; but they discovered an "empty" tomb . . .²⁹⁴

While Certeau's use of *rupture* was never separate from the theological, there were points in his career when they were more focused on cultural linguistics and psychoanalysis. In *Histoire et psychanalyse entre science et fiction* (1987), which was only published after his death, Certeau spoke of the ways in which narratives and science are used to communicate what is real; yet there are limitations on the capacity of narratives and science to present a comprehensive field of meaning to reality. Furthermore, the lexical capacity of human beings to engage this field of meaning through social signs is also limited, meaning that our languages and collections of symbols fail to adequately communicate what is real.²⁹⁵ *La fable mystique* (1982), which was Certeau's last full manuscript before his death, focused on the need for *the real* to break through these semiotic limits, rupturing human boundaries of social space, to make room for experiences of alterity, be it God, other people, or some transcendent good. "The regular life, the religious congregations, the lay associations, the administering of the sacraments and their pastoral regulations, and the popular missions were all responses to the prime necessity of a rupture that organised (after the manner of a "departure," a wall, a social selectivity, a secret, etc.) the circumscription of a field for specific practices. The "mystic" groups and kinds of discourse offer

²⁹⁴ Michel de Certeau, "Cultures and spiritualities," trans. J. E. Anderson, *Concilium*, No. 19 (November 1966):9. Quoted in Fergus Kerr, "The 'Essence of Christianity': Notes after de Certeau," *New Blackfriars* 12, Vol.54 (1973): 549-550.

²⁹⁵ Michel de Certeau, *Histoire et psychanalyse entre science et fiction* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), p. 210.

a variant of these social redistributions of space by and for new practices, a variant that at once calls into question the autonomizing of a new historical figure and the *passage* from one socio-cultural economy to another.”²⁹⁶ The aspects of religious life that are considered ordinary and meaningful grew out of certain ruptures in the past.²⁹⁷ Certeau suggested that there was a need in spiritual communities to empower, or “autonomise,” certain forms of *departure*. At times, this led Certeau to be sympathetic with perspectives that others deemed to be dangerous or unorthodox, like the mysticism of Jean Joseph Surin. Certeau saw in Surin a cultural force rooted in experiences of God, mystical encounters, which *rupture* the signs and signals that contain and/or control spirituality. Furthermore, since the Christ event is at the heart of Christianity (a *rupture* that births new spiritual practices even new languages), there is a constitutive character of Christianity that necessitates an ever-increasing space for endless *ruptures* and *departures* (Certeau did not make the end of these ruptures clear).

Sur l’histoire du christianisme *objectif*, lisible, dicible, connaissable, elle articule le *silence* immense *de la pratique*, le travail qui n’a cessé de proportionner des ruptures (contemplatives, prophétiques, missionnaires, sociales, politiques, etc.) à des clôtures (institutionnelles, théologiques, etc.), c’est-à-dire l’opération multiforme des initiatives qui sont nées d’un écart par rapport à l’enseignement reçu et qui ont « donné lieu » à d’autres élaborations. Irréductible au langage, prenant sens grâce à lui et offrant de nouveaux espaces, cette praxis faite de dépassements et de départs est fondamentalement *conversion* des lieux.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable Vol I*, p. 21.

²⁹⁷ In “How is Christianity Thinkable Today?” originally a lecture given at the University of St. Louis, Certeau describes the “Christ event” as a type of rupture which birthed these practices. Michel de Certeau, “How is Christianity Thinkable Today?” in *The Postmodern God*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford, Blackwells Publishers, 2000), pp. 143-155.

²⁹⁸ Michel de Certeau, “La rupture instauratrice ou le christianisme dans la culture contemporaine,” p. 1210. [On the history of objective, readable, sayable, knowable Christianity, it articulates the immense silence of practice, the work which has never ceased to proportion ruptures (contemplative, prophetic, missionary, social, political, etc.) to closures (institutional, theological, etc.), that is to say the multifaceted operation of initiatives which arose from a deviation from the teaching received and which “gave place” to other developments. Irreducible to language, taking on meaning thanks to it and offering new spaces, this praxis made up of going beyond and departing is fundamentally a conversion of places. *Trans.*]

“Political, scholarly, and religious discourses, for example, all progressively close themselves off to that which emerges where voice ruptures or interrupts a series of propositions, to that which is born where the other is present.”²⁹⁹

4.2.5 Common Themes: Desire

Related to his use of *rupture*, the affective nature of Certeau’s vision of psychoanalysis was further demonstrated in his consistent use of *vouloir* - to desire. Certeau did not take for granted the wider linguistic implications of the verb constructs *vouloir-dire* (to mean), *vouloir-entendre* (to understand), *vouloir-faire* (to want to do).³⁰⁰ As Certeau understood semiotics, desire is constitutive of meaning, beginning with God’s desire to communicate.

The sacred text is a voice, . . . it is the advent of a “meaning” (un “*vouloir-dire*”) on the part of a God who expects the reader (in reality, the listener) to have a “desire to hear and understand” (un “*vouloir entendre*”) on which access to truth depends. For reasons analysed elsewhere, the modern age is formed by discovering little by little that this Spoken Word is no longer heard, . . . One can no longer hear it. “Truth” no longer depends on the attention of a receiver who assimilates himself to the great identifying message. It is the result of work — historical, critical, economic work. It depends on the “will to do” (un *vouloir-faire*).³⁰¹

In the absence of God’s voice and human desire to hear it, modern language manifests a desire to control.³⁰² “The disappearance of the First Speaker creates the problem of communication, that is

²⁹⁹ Michel de Certeau, “Vocal Utopias: Glossolalias,” trans. Daniel Rosenberg, *Representations*, No. 56 (Autumn, 1996): 29-47. The article was originally published as “Utopies vocales: Glossolalias,” *Traverses* 20 (1980): 26-37.

³⁰⁰ Michel de Certeau, *L’Invention du quotidien*, p. 201-205.

³⁰¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Stephen F. Randall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. 137.

³⁰² Jeremy Ahearn, “Introduction,” in *The Certeau Reader*, pp. 154-155.

of a language that has to be *made* and not just *heard* and *understood*.”³⁰³ This dynamic of divine absence and the control that seeks to fill the vacuum left behind by God’s silence connects the socio-political angle of Certeau’s semiotics with his psychoanalytical lens.³⁰⁴ Philip Sheldrake and François Dosse both connect this meta-linguistic nature of desire to Ignatian spirituality.³⁰⁵ Certeau makes this link in a lesser known article on the Ignatian Exercises, wherein he presents the etymological connection between *vouloir* (to desire) and *volo* (the will) to be a matter of theological significance in understanding the presence of God in daily life.³⁰⁶ As it pertains to semiotics and psychoanalysis, *the Other* and *volo* are used even at the limits of language when the desire for the *Other* [see the previous section 4.2.2] and meaning call into question “la stabilité ontologique” (ontological stability) between signs and reality, between *res* and *signum*.³⁰⁷ *Patois*, glossolalia, and mystic speech (l’*énonciation mystique*) depend more on the

³⁰³ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Stephen F. Randall, p. 138.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 241-242. “Ce pouvoir, essentiellement scripturaire, ne conteste pas seulement le privilège de la « naissance », c’est-à-dire des nobles : il définit le code de la promotion socio-économique et domine, contrôle ou sélectionne selon ses normes tous ceux qui possèdent pas cette maîtrise du langage. L’écriture devient un principe de hiérarchisation sociale qui privilégie héir le bourgeois, aujourd’hui le technocrate.”

³⁰⁵ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, pp. 330-333. Philip Sheldrake, “Michel de Certeau: Spirituality and The Practice of Everyday Life,” p. 213.

³⁰⁶ Michel de Certeau, “L’espace du désir our le “fondement” des *Exercices spirituels*,” *Christus*, No. 77.20 (janvier 1973), p. 125. “Aussi la tactique ignatienne ramène-t-elle le retraitant à l’indéterminé de ce vouloir en vue d’une nouvelle détermination de ses objets,” as quoted in François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, p. 332.

³⁰⁷ Michel de Certeau, “L’*énonciation mystique*,” *Recherches de science religieuse*, 64, no. 2 (1976): 201. There are resonances with Rowan Williams’ well known work on Augustine’s use of *res* and *signum* in “Language, Reality, and Desire in Augustine’s *De Doctrina*,” *Journal of Theology & Literature* Vol. 3, No. 2 (July 1989): 138-150. Certeau focused on the semiotic limits in theology but also in the limits in a meta-analysis of language. “Since Saint Augustine, ancient tradition distinguished two classes of symbols. Some were *signa propria*, that is, things we use to designate something else, things that are therefore ‘instituted’ to signify. Thus, they were called *instituta* or ‘intentional,’ or *voluntaria* (Bonaventure). They worked on the model of words, which were indeed instituted to say “something other” than what they are. The other category consisted of things (*res*) that, in addition to their proper meanings, received from God the function of designating other things. These received from God the function of designating other things. These were realities of natures (things, persons, numbers, places, times, gestures, etc.), but transposed (*translata*) into signs by the divine will. These *signa naturalisa* escaped the human codifications of meaning. It was therefore necessary to learn how to ‘interpret’ them on the basis of an intelligence that ascend to the divine will, then descend towards its inscription in the opacity of ‘natural’ things. They were the province of a “spiritual” or divine hermeneutic.” The point being that Certeau calls into questions the relationship between language and meaning in relation to theology but also in relation to desire. This will be explored further in the next chapter on mysticism. Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable Vol. 1: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 91-92.

desire for meaning than the ontological relationships between words and reality. For example, Certeau often referred to songs and music, particularly the music used by mystics, for their capacity to point beyond intelligible semiosis. While the relationship between psychoanalysis points to a number of questions around the capacity of theological language as well as Certeau's intersection between religious pluralism and heterologies (i.e. what is Certeau's account of secularity?), these questions can only begin to be addressed in the context of a deeper inquiry into his theological foundations of religious studies and mysticism, which is the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Jacques Lacan's influence on Michel de Certeau can be chiefly felt in his use of psychoanalysis. Lacanian psychoanalysis represents a "rebel" movement within the wider disciplines of psychoanalysis in the mid-20th century, particularly in Paris. Not only did Lacan, like the Frankfurt school, utilise themes of psychoanalysis across disciplines and readings of culture (including linguistics, history, politics, and metaphysics), but he also felt that non-analysts should be able to study and use the tools of psychoanalysis in a variety of ways. Drawing from the influence of previous Jesuits, Certeau was already willing to employ psychoanalysis and its language (use of language) in his own work on historiography and spirituality. Later, Certeau became one of Lacan's students in Paris during several of his key seminars that have proven influential for not only psychoanalysis but also 20th century philosophy as well. Certeau particularly employed Lacan's understanding of the *Other*, or rather the questions and discourse surrounding the *Other*. For both authors, the question of whether or not the *Other* was God or divine transcendence was not as important as what the discourse of language was communicating about alterity in using the word *Other*, and even for Certeau in using the word "God." Lacanian understandings of desire are rooted in the absence of the *Other*,

regardless of its identity. Thus, Certeau drew upon the image of the empty tomb as the ground of possibility for Christian faith and theological language, encouraging a type of modesty and humility that made room for a plurality of voices to speak of heterology. What follows from this chapter is an exploration of the implications of Certeau's account of God, particularly God's absence, and what this might mean for his analysis of religious, spirituality, and mysticism. My argument is that Certeau's heterology project led into his later work on mysticism, providing the context for his exploration of mystical texts, which will now be examined.

CHAPTER 5: MYSTICISM, LANGUAGE, AND HISTORY

The nature of this thesis has examined the influence and significance of Michel de Certeau's religiosity. I have shown through the introduction and the first four chapters covering historiography, socioal geography, social semiotics, and psychoanalysis how scholars central to research on Certeau, such as Jeremy Ahearne and Ian Buchanan, have openly acknowledged their avoidance of Certeau's theological substrates. Similarly, much of the English-speaking scholars on Certeau treat him as a non-religious, a-theological thinker. Yet while there is an acknowledged gap in the scholarship on Certeau on the nature of his theology and religion, Certeau is partly responsible for this gap. A surface level reading of Certeau could infer that he that he transitioned away from his Jesuit origins (writing on Pierre Favre and Jean Joseph Surin) to his more political and cultural philosophy as in *The Capture of Speech* (1968), *Culture in the Plural* (1974), and *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1980). It was noted in the first chapter of this thesis on historiography that writers like Ian Buchanan, central to current scholarship on Certeau, noted that Certeau's most famous work, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, bears little resemblance to his other texts on mysticism, such as *The Possession of Loudun* (1970).³⁰⁸ This chapter covering mysticism and the next chapter covering everyday life will further counter authors influenced by the "first generation" of Certeau scholars [see section 0.3] to show the connections between Certeau's engagement with resistance, theology, and everyday life. For this chapter, it is important to note that Certeau's final manuscripts were on the transitions in cultural and religious understandings of mystical discourse, *The Mystic Fable, Volume I: The Sixteenth and*

³⁰⁸ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 3. Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984). Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

Seventeenth Centuries and *The Mystic Fable, Volume II: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth*

Centuries.³⁰⁹ Thus, in showing the constancy of Certeau's implicit religious underpinning, I am demonstrating that any analysis of Certeau's thought that implies a transition away from theological or religious studies would be inaccurate, or at best, incomplete.

This chapter will argue for the distinctiveness of Certeau's unique critiques and insights into theological and religious studies as seen in his writings on spirituality, religious history, and critical theory. I argue that the best way to frame Certeau's historical analysis of spirituality and critiques of Christianity is under the heading of "mysticism," and I will acknowledge the wider growth of mysticism as a field of interdisciplinary scholarship. Rather than a peripheral line of inquiry, Certeau's interests in mysticism addressed the questions of belief and God that flow through his entire corpus.³¹⁰ I will show this link through beginning this chapter with some provisional background details and insights into the development of Certeau's analysis on mysticism, including his work on Jesuit history. Next, by providing clarity on the field of mysticism, both at present and in the context of Certeau, I will argue for the unique insights around language, the individual, and historiography that Certeau combines in a distinctive analysis within the field of mysticism. I am engaging the field of mysticism for the fact that Certeau spent multiple chapters in his final manuscripts, *The Mystic Fable, Volume I* and *II*, to delineate what words, such as "mystic," have meant throughout the past several centuries in relation to theological knowledge, religious experience, and most importantly for Certeau,

³⁰⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume I: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume II: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). The first volume of *Mystic Fable* was published in 1982, and the second volume was published in 2005, compiled by Luce Giard, translated by Michael B. Smith, with specific instructions from Certeau.

³¹⁰ Luce Giard, "Introduction: Michel de Certeau on Historiography," in Graham Ward, ed., *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp. 18-19; Luce Giard, "Introduction: Opening the Possible," in Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, xii; Luce Giard, "Michel de Certeau's Heterology and the New World," *Representations*, 33 (1991), pp. 212-226. See also Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, "Michel de Certeau (1925-1986): Introduction," in *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1997), pp. 139-140; and Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, "Introduction: Michel de Certeau, Theologist," in *The Certeau Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwells Publishers, 2000), pp.209-213.

cultural linguistics.³¹¹ Lastly, I will use this chapter to provide clarity to the contrast between Certeau and his mentor, Henri de Lubac, as an opportunity to show the distinctiveness of Certeau's account of mystical texts.

5.1 Certeau's Development Related to Mysticism: Favre and Surin

In order to address the complex and interdisciplinary nature of Certeau analysis of mystical texts, it is necessary to provide the context and origins of Certeau's formation around mysticism and introduce key themes related to his analysis of mystical texts and subject matter. In the first chapter of this thesis covering historiography, I provided a brief introduction into Certeau's engagement with Jean-Joseph Surin (1600-1665) [see section 1.1], and in the third chapter of this thesis covering social semiotics, I provided a brief introduction to Certeau's work on Pierre Favre (1506-1546) [see section 3.2.1]. It is important to have provided these two chapters on historiography and semiotics prior to this current chapter on mysticism as Certeau's account of mysticism was deeply historiographic, linguistic, and rooted in the relevant cultural contexts as oppose to those who focused on the mysticism of subjective, personal experiences.³¹² In regard to his own introduction into mysticism, Certeau wrote:

³¹¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume I: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, pp. 79-112.

³¹² While this may seem like an over-generalisation, there is some consensus in religious and psychological studies on how personal experience was treated in the early stages of Mysticism as its own discipline. William James wrote, "The force of personal faith, enthusiasm, and example, and above all the force of novelty, are always the prime suggestive agency in this kind of success. If mind-cure should ever become official, respectable, and entrenched, these elements of suggestive efficacy will be lost. In its acuter stages every religion must be a homeless Arab of the desert. The church knows this well enough, with its everlasting inner struggle of the acute religion of the few against the chronic religion of the many, indurated into an obstructiveness worse than that which irreligion opposes to the movements of the Spirit." *The Variety of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Longman, Greens, and Company, 1917), pp. 111-112. If Certeau was resistant to a psychoanalysis of the *Ego* and individual as was demonstrated in the previous chapter, then it would follow that he would be resistant to an individualist interpretation of mystical experience. Moreover, Certeau's analysis of mysticism centred around shared sociological and cultural semiosis rather than an analysis that was extrapolated from individual testimonies. See Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*; trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1986), p. 80-100; Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume Two: The Sixteenth And Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Luce Giard and trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 1-26.

My work on mystic writings—which began with years of peregrination in French and foreign archives, caverns in which the tenacity of research masks the solitary pleasure of the lucky find—wended its way through the labyrinthian detours of establishing critical editions. It comes from many a sojourn in these remotes corners of the past that reveal to the historian the infinitude of a local singularity. These paths cannot be forgotten. They initiate us into a strangeness that never stops surprising us and dominating our expectations. . . In this process, a ‘negative work’ is carried out within the double ‘fiction’ of images of the past and of scientific models. The historian delves within that space, sculpturing a historiography. The accumulated, corrected documents must acquire the capacity to alter, by their resistance, the body of hypotheses and codifications on the basis of which we try to interpret them. The mystics, too, lead us back to these particularities that block the demonstrations of meaning. Interspersed in their writings are the ‘almost nothing’ of sensations, of meetings or daily tasks.³¹³

This quote introduces several important themes within Certeau’s account of mysticism, including the separation between the study of mysticism in the present and the events of mysticism recorded in the past [see section 1.2.1]. There is also the separation in language itself between the words used and what they to describe, which are often effable experiences. The French and foreign archives referred to in this quote are the records of Surin and Favre. As the previous chapters have demonstrated the relationship between Surin, Favre, and the Certeau’s analysis of history and language, so this section will show how Certeau’s work on Surin and Favre’s historical and linguistic emphasised his exploration of mysticism.

5.1.1 Certeau’s Development Related to Mysticism: Favre

At the beginning of his career, the first several publications of Michel de Certeau were centred around the figure of Pierre Favre, and the nature of Favre’s texts would mark Certeau’s career. As Kathryn Crim writes, “From the time of his dissertation research on the sixteenth-century Jesuit Pierre Favre at the end of the 1950s until his death, de Certeau’s readings in the

³¹³ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Vol. 1: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, pp. 9-10.

genre-defying texts of early-modern Christians was his first and last project.”³¹⁴ The first book by Certeau was a volume of Favre’s personal writings, *Mémorial*, which was edited by Certeau and published in 1960. The purpose of this edition was to detail the journal of one of the companions of Ignatius of Loyala during the foundation of the Jesuit order. In his introduction to this volume, which is nearly 100 pages, Certeau articulated that part of the purpose of this text was to explore the origins of the Examen, noting how the journal was written by Favre as a conversation with both God and himself.³¹⁵ While this may seem like an obvious aspect of Jesuit spirituality (which will be discussed further in the following chapter on the theology of everyday life), the conversational nature of Favre’s journal, the multiple languages involved (including Latin, French, and Spanish), and the process of translating the “aesthetics” and “poetics” of Favre engendered an evolving analysis into the nature of spiritual language. Norihiro Morimoto argues for the lasting effects of Favre on Certeau, saying Favre’s journal was “matière à réflexion.” Morimoto explains, “Objet littéraire pourtant, difficile à appréhender, et cela d’autant plus que Favre « ne s’adressait qu’à lui-même » et que le lecteur doit y entrer « sans y avoir été invité ». . . . cette expérience de lecture particulière, nous le verrons, va hanter notre auteur toute sa vie. Si . . . , lui-même l’est du Mémorial à triple titre de traducteur, d’éditeur et d’historien, jouant un rôle de préfacier de façon moins esthétique que rationnelle, moins poétique que

³¹⁴ Kathryn Crim, “The Ghostly Gait of Michel De Certeau,” *Qui Parle* 25.1 (2016): 222.

³¹⁵ See Michel de Certeau, “Introduction,” in Pierre Favre, *Mémorial*, translation and introduction by Michel de Certeau, (Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1960), p. 82. “Étroitement lié à la conception ignatienne de l’examen, le journal exprime sous forme de discussion avec soi-même le dialogue avec Dieu : en reconnaissant dans son action le « mouvement » de Dieu, l’apôtre collabore de mieux en mieux à l’œuvre qui lui indique sa propre « vocation », et discerne en lui les résistances qui s’opposent encore à l’activité créatrice de Dieu.”

discursif.³¹⁶ Morimoto is not clear on how Favre haunted Certeau all his life. Indeed, Certeau's final work, the two volumes in the 1980s of *The Mystic Fable*, contain no more than a cursory reference to Favre. While it would take more than a chapter to defend Morimoto's assertion, it is helpful to note the linguistic and poetic challenge of Certeau as the translator and editor to Favre.

As Favre's journal was a curious genre of self dialogue, Certeau used the introduction to Favre's work to avoid an account of Jesuit spirituality that was overdependent or an overestimate of individual autonomy and experience. While Favre's personal journal disclosed personal experience, Certeau nuanced the interiority of Favre's spirituality with an emphasis on the revelation of God, God's dynamism in the world outside of Favre.³¹⁷ The interiority of the spiritual life is set in context with in the limitations of individual human persons, meaning that

Mais, d'autre, part, la vie intérieure n'était pas autonome; elle n'avait pas en elle-même sa propre fin; elle faisait partie de tout ce qui unit l'homme à Dieu. Elle se référait intrinsèquement à la vie active et aux réalités qui la définissent. . . Comme chaque moment particulier, dans l'expérience interne, devenait un point de référence pour le moment précédent et pour le suivant, de même l'action devenait un critère de la vie intérieure . . .³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Norihiro Morimoto, "Michel de Certeau et les préfaces des mystiques," *Les Dossiers du Grihl* (2018): p. 5. [Favre presents a literally object, however, that is particularly difficult to grasp because he "was speaking only to himself" and the reader must enter it "without having been invited". . . and this particular reading experience, as we shall see, will haunt our author [i.e. Certeau] all his life. Yes, . . . , he, himself, is in the *Mémorial* in the triple capacity of translator, editor, and historian, writing the preface in a way that is less aesthetic than rational, less poetic than discursive. *Trans.*] On the other hand, it is worth noting that Pierre Favre is conspicuously absent from Francois Dosse's seminal biography, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002), which remains the authority on the Certeau's life. Certeau's "rôle de préfacier" with Favre is not mentioned at all. Favre is only mentioned one time (p. 248), and the reference is merely a minor note about one of Certeau's reading groups in Paris in the 1960s.

³¹⁷ See Michel de Certeau, "Introduction," in Pierre Favre, *Mémorial*, pp. 14, 17, 20, 54, 88-90.

³¹⁸ Michel de Certeau, "Introduction," in Pierre Favre, *Mémorial*, p. 17. [But on the other hand, the interior life was not autonomous; it did not have its own end within itself; it was part of all that unites man to God. It intrinsically referred to working life and the realities that define it. . . As each particular moment, in the internal experience, became a point of reference for the previous moment and for the next, so action became a criterion of the interior life. . . *Trans.*]

The limits of interiority, the individual, and autonomy will be further emphasised, though not without nuance, in the research that followed from his work on Favre.³¹⁹ Yet even in his work on Favre, Certeau was not merely reacting against individualism (even the individualism of movements in psychoanalysis as discussed in the previous chapter), but rather Certeau was developing a level of analysis that focused on shared linguistics and cultural patterns of meaning.

5.1.2 Certeau's Development Related to Mysticism: Surin

Unlike the work of Pierre Favre, the influence of Jean Joseph Surin on Certeau's study of mysticism became increasingly more pronounced through Certeau's career, culminating in the publication of *La Possession de Loudun* (1970) during in the middle stage of his career. Surin is also an important character in both volumes of *The Mystic Fable*. In Certeau's work on Surin, the deemphasis on the individual's experience and the greater emphasis on language and cultural context remains. However, the legacy of Surin is far more controversial than that of Pierre Favre, for the processes of historiography combined with the clarification of semiotics and cultural meaning grew in importance in Certeau's analysis. The complicated history of Surin, the priest, exorcist, and mystic, developed, for Certeau's philosophy, a sophisticated account of the structures which validate religious and spiritual meaning. Chapter one of this thesis brought into focus Certeau's dictum: "History is never sure." [see sections 1.2.1 and 3.2.2]³²⁰ Along with his work on Favre, Certeau's analysis of Surin brought into focus the inseparable break between the past and present. The task of searching through the archives of a complicated mystical letters and the accounts of demonic possession, all within the context of a increasing "secular" academy, accentuated the distance between Certeau and Surin. In the early 1970s, Certeau writes in

L'Absent de L'histoire, that history "assumes a gap, which is the very act of constituting oneself

³¹⁹ See Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 99, 206.

³²⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* trans. Michael B. Smith, p. 1.

existing and thinking today.” Certeau continued, “My research has taught me that by studying Surin, I am differentiated from him.” As was discussed in the chapter on historiography, Certeau argued that the philosophical and cultural movements of his present time influenced his writing of historical texts far more than the history he was reading: history is an operation of the present [see section 1.1].³²¹ In the foreword to *The Possession at Loudun*, Stephen Greenblatt explains, “Here, because of the task set before himself, his unique weaving together of Christian mysticism, strenuous political and sociological analysis, psychoanalysis, and scrupulous attentiveness to the voice of the *Other* is clearer and more easily grasped than anywhere else in his works.”³²²

The uncertainty of history, complicated further by the impassible distance between the past and present, led Certeau to avoid ontological proclamations and focus on the social and cultural transitions that occasioned the complexities of *The Possession at Loudun*. Certeau’s “strenuous political and sociological analysis” delved into the 17th centuries shifting religious, political, and scientific authorities. In seeking to not be overdetermined by his own context or underdetermined by the *Other* of history, Certeau balanced and nuanced his theological and historiographic analysis. Part of this nuance comes from his observation that mystics and the possessed often occupy the same social space in society: the *Other* and the fanatical. Note how Certeau combines these themes of fringe social space, the uncertainty of history, and the socio-cultural transitions (metamorphosis) in society:

³²¹ Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), p. 200. See also Douglas E. Christie on Certeau, “The intense instability that marks their encounter, their respective experiences and the necessary fluidity between the language of possession and the language of mysticism reveal the immense difficulty facing anyone, especially the historian, who would offer an interpretation of this event.” “‘Things that used to be familiar . . . become strange’: de Certeau and the *Possession at Loudun*,” *Spiritus* 12 (2012): 190–191.

³²² Stephen Greenblatt, “Foreword,” in Michel de Certeau, *The Possession of Loudun*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. xi.

Mysticism and possession often from in the same pockets win a society whose language thickens, loses its spiritual porosity, and becomes impermeable to the divine. In such a case, the ration to a “beyond” vacillates between the immediacy of a diabolical seizure and the immediacy of a divine illumination. . . This is a characteristic train of possession, which coincides with one of the themes of baroque art — metamorphosis. The instability of the characters, the reversals of experience, the uncertainty of limits indicate the mutation of a mental universe. Like the grotto in Florence in which Bernardo Buontalenti sculpted human bodies still indefinite in the primitive mud, which lets them emerge or pulls them back into it (it is unclear which), so Loud — tucked away in a French province, on the border between Catholic and Protestant convictions that oppose and relativize each other — constitutes a world poised between what is disappearing and what is beginning. Complex, at once savage and subtle, it is a place of instability.³²³

This place of instability, “society’s shifting sands,” called into question not only the value systems of the past but also the present. Certeau was very attentive to these questions, noticing that what is deemed as mystical and what is deemed as demonic is often a matter of who is watching. Certeau continued:

These metamorphoses— which can be deciphered through the series of episodes that constitutes, over almost a decade, the war of Loudun— extend into the successive interpretations given to the events. . . In different cultural spaces the old debates serve new causes. Other wars transform the history of Loudun into the legend of a present. Yesterday’s antagonists, mobilised by the participants in more recent conflicts, offer the latter a means of entering into a dialogue with their own devils. In part, historians perform the service to society of putting the vocabulary of a past at its disposal. The figures of former times become the eponymous heroes of a present.³²⁴

What of mysticism then? Certeau’s point was clear about the complexities and distance of history, but for his Jesuit brothers, Certeau was not just dealing with history but rather spiritual, mystical, and ecclesial texts and events of history. Certeau was more balanced and nuanced in his analysis of the past, drawing from the *Annales* school (which will be further explained in chapter

³²³ Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun*, p. 6.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

six]. Still, he was not opposed to confessional statements, even theological judgments, about the past he was interpreting. In Certeau's conclusion to the Loudun texts, he wrote, "The possession has no "true" historical explanation, since it is never possible to know who is 'possessed' and by whom. . . The historian himself would be fooling himself if he believed he was rid of that strangeness internal to history by placing it somewhere on the outside, far from us, in a past closed with the last 'aberration of yesteryear, as if 'possession' were over with the possession of Loudun."³²⁵ Some readers might conclude that Certeau was speaking of literal demonic possessions in the present, and of course, he might be. However, when taking into account the cultural scope of Certeau's writing and his nuancing of what possession is, he seemed more concerned with a type of academic discipline that would be quick to marginalise dissenting voices; voices that might be labeled demonic too quickly. On this same point but in another text, Certeau said, "The mystics were for the most part from regions or social categories which were in socio-economic recession, disadvantaged by change, marginalised by progress, or destroyed by war. The memory of past abundance survived in these conditions of impoverishment, but since the doors of social responsibility were closed, ambitions were redirected toward the open spaces of utopia, dream, and writing."³²⁶ Certeau was concerned that historians, or any academic voice, would be invested in processes that "eject those dangerous individuals from any social body" and place them in establishments intended for the purpose of isolating them in a place of alterity. "Historiography can be placed among these 'establishments,' to the degree that it would be required to prove that manner of alterity, glimpsed at Loudun, is only a legend or a past, an eliminated reality."³²⁷ Again, the issue is not in terms of history; Certeau makes that clear. The issue is whether or not Certeau makes this case about spiritual history and to the extent to which

³²⁵ Ibid., p. 227.

³²⁶ Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1986), p. 84.

³²⁷ Ibid., p. 227.

historical theology and theological investigations of history and texts has tendency (or goal) to eject certain *Others* from an accepted social body, be it the academy of the Church. In the final section on theology, this matter will be of greater focus in conversation with Certeau's mentor, Henri de Lubac. In many ways, the relationship between the present and spiritual/mystical texts of the past is what generated the strain in their relationship, but before this is discussed, it is necessary to set Certeau's engagement of mysticism within the wider context of the burgeoning scholarship around mysticism.

5.2 Mysticism Defined And/Or Explored

In providing details around the growing field of mysticism, I would further demonstrate Certeau's distinctiveness in his account of mysticism within his cultural analysis as well as continue to bridge the gap in scholarship surrounding the influence of his religiosity. The study of mysticism is a complex and growing interdisciplinary field, and multiple authors have noted Certeau's significance in this evolving field.³²⁸ In this section, I will first introduce the study of mysticism at the beginning of the turn of the 20th century. Using Certeau's overview of the field of mysticism, I will demonstrate the contrasts between Certeau's engagement of mysticism with other influential figures in the field. I will use these contrasts to reveal the uniqueness of Certeau's philosophy and theology. Though Certeau did not discredit individual experiences, his emphasis on the social, culture, and historic context of the transitions in understandings of mysticism set him apart from his predecessors and contemporaries. Certeau's analysis of mysticism reiterates the social and cultural semiotics prevalent in Certeau's writings. In revealing these contrasts, I will briefly discuss the nature of the terms I am using in relation to the fields of

³²⁸ See Edward Howells, "Mysticism and the Mystical: The Current Debate," *The Way Supplemental* 21 (2001): 15-24; Julia A. Lamm, "A Guide to Christian Mysticism," *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Christian Mysticism*, ed. Julia A. Lamm (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), pp. 1-24; Bernard McGill, "The Genealogy of Mystical Traditions," *The Oxford Handbook for Mystical Theology*, eds. Edward Howells and Mark A. McIntosh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 65-85.

study and context that Certeau engaged. Then I will make clearer the philosophical importance of his approach to mysticism as well as his unique theology of religions at work in his analysis.

Research into the nature of mystical experiences is as diverse and historic as the study of religions. Several influential works focusing on the categorisation of mysticism were published around the turn of the 20th century, including texts from Emilie Durkheim, William James, Evelyn Underhill, Friedrich von Hügel, and Aldous Huxley. While authors such as Underhill and James focused on mystical experience as somehow intrinsic to religion or anthropology, Certeau's research was motivated by questions around shifting political and religious authority in the 16th and 17th century. Certeau argued that the idea of mysticism developed its own field of study in relation to the rise of modern sciences and the proliferation of church dogma. "Michel de Certeau traced *la mystique* back to the early seventeenth century, arguing that the term emerged precisely with the modern world and its sense of loss of, and nostalgia for, the presence of God. At the same time, it was also used as a way of delegitimising and thus marginalising certain religious moments . . ." ³²⁹ In regards to mysticism, Certeau makes his purposes clear:

I will limit this examination to two surveys, in order to consider (1) what general *function* has been attributed to mysticism in the system of the social sciences since the beginning of the century; and (2) in which regions of knowledge (psychological, sociological, etc.) and categories (the pathological, the marginal, etc.) the *objects* singled out from within mystic documentation by these sciences are presented. This twofold survey is in answer to two simple questions: (1) *What is involved* in the resurgence of mysticism in the context of the social sciences? (2) *How* is it treated in the context of these disciplines? The one focuses on specifying the interest in the problem; the other on the objective form it may take. ³³⁰

³²⁹ Julia A. Lamm, "A Guide to Christian Mysticism," *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Christian Mysticism*, ed. Julia A. Lamm (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), p. 2.

³³⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume Two: The Sixteenth And Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Luce Giard and trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 10-11.

The exact use and meaning of the French, *mystique*, will be addressed below, but it is worth noting here the first distinction between Certeau and other studies in mysticism, that being Certeau's emphasis on the historical developments surrounding Western depictions of mysticism. The influential works on mysticism include Richard Burke's *Cosmic Consciousness* (1901), William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), Friedrich von Hügel's *The Mystical Element of Religion* (1908), and Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism* (1911).³³¹ Though as important as these texts remain, it worth noting that they do not form the basis of Certeau's corpus on mysticism.³³²

Perhaps, the most influential voice currently in the field of Christian mysticism is Bernard McGinn. Most recently, Bernard McGinn's work on Christian mysticism has influenced the philosophical analyses of mystical experiences studied across disciplines and various religions and non-religious experiences. In McGinn's works, *Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism* and *Foundations of Mysticism*, McGinn acknowledged the importance of Certeau's

³³¹ Richard Maurice Burke, *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 2005); William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience : A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Longmans, Green &, 1902); Friedrich von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion: As Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends* (London: E. P. Dutton, 1908); Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: The Development of Humankind's Spiritual Consciousness* (London: Bracken, 1911).

³³² In his article entitled, "Mysticism," Certeau notes, "A significant debate. It was recorded over a period of thirty years in a particularly rich group of publications dedicated to mysticism; these publications included contributions from ethnosociology (in France, for example, from Emile Durkheim's *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* [1912] to Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's *L'expérience mystique et les symboles chez les primitifs* [1938]); from phenomenology (from Heiler to Rudolph Otto and Mircea Eliade); from literary history (*The Mystical Element of Religion* by Friedrich von Hügel [1908] to the eleven volumes of *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux* by Henri Brémond [1917-32]); from philosophy (notably William James in 1906, Maurice Blondel, Jean Baruzi in 1924, Henri Bergson in 1932); from the diffusion of Hinduism and Indian Buddhism in Western Europe, to which Romain Rolland, René Guénon, and Aldous Huxley contributed, in addition to L. de La Vallée-Poussin, Olivier Lacombe, Louis Renou, and others. This abundant output has included positions that are quite different, but it seems to have in common the connection of mysticism to the primitive mentality, to a marginal and threatened tradition existing within Christian churches, to an intuition that had become foreign to the intellectual understanding, or better still, to an Orient where the sun of "meaning" would rise at the moment that it set in the West. From the beginning, the mysticism discussed in these works had for its place an *elsewhere* and for its sign an *anti-society* which nevertheless would represent the initial ground [*fonds*] of man. A way of considering and defining mysticism that we still recognise today dates from this period . . ." Michel de Certeau, "Mysticism," trans. Marsanna Brammer, *Diacritics* 22:2 (Summer 1992): 12. This quote is taken from a translation by Marsanna Brammer in 1992 of an article written by Michel de Certeau originally published in *Encyclopaedia universalis* in 1968. My point in raising awareness to the sources and context of Certeau's approach to mysticism is to begin to highlight an element Certeau's writing in this field that was significant. In focusing on mysticism, even studies on mysticism, in terms of social and cultural practice, Certeau opened a space within the field of mysticism that moved intentionally beyond scope of the individual person.

work as an innovation in shifting the focus of mysticism.³³³ As Philip Sheldrake summarises, “Certeau’s interest in mysticism as a *social practice* rather than simply subjective experiences brought him close to the emphasis on mysticism as a way of life present in other recent commentators such as Bernard McGinn.”³³⁴ What social practices did Certeau’ focus on in mysticism rather than “subjective experience?”

5.3 The Distinctiveness of Certeau’s Account of Mysticism: Language and Historiography

In order to argue for the distinctiveness of Certeau’s account of mysticism I will focus on two social practices: language and the writing of history. One key social practice that was unique and revolutionary in Certeau’s study of mysticism was the emphasis on language. As Certeau was resistant to the individualisation of psychoanalysis and he focused on the cultural and linguistic ramifications of Lacan [see section 4.2.1], he also emphasised the cultural and linguistic implications of mysticism rather than the individual psychology of religious experience. “Certeau’s emphasis was on the fact that mysticism is socially, historically and linguistically conditioned . . .”³³⁵ This does not mean that Certeau did not value the individual religious experience but rather that he was aware that the emphasis on the individual mystical experience in writers like William James and Walter Terence Stace was both historically conditioned and contingent on the context and medium of language.

The interest in mystics and the fascination they inspire imply a new kind of relationship with religious. In the West, the study of mysticism is currently less determined by the scientific necessity of defending the mind against churches that are today increasingly in the minority. but because of this new situation, this study has been led to consider mystical language as a symbol—possibly a metaphor—of

³³³ Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century* (London: SCM Press, 1992), pp 310-313.

³³⁴ Philip Sheldrake, “Unending Desire: De Certeau’s ‘mystics,’” *The Way Supplement* 102 (2001): 39.

³³⁵ Edward Howells, “Mysticism and the Mystical: The Current Debate,” *The Way Supplemental* 102 (2001): 22.

a hidden “Essence” that must be identified philosophically, or a ‘meaning of life’ to be elucidated in the conceptual terms of a society that has ceased to be religious. From this point of view, mysticism is less a heresy or a liberation from religion than an instrument for the work of unveiling, within religious itself, a truth that would first be formulated in the mode of a margin inexpressible in relation to orthodox texts and institutions, and which would then be able to be exhumed from beliefs. The study of mysticism thus makes a nonreligious exegesis of religious possible. It also gives rise, in the historical relation of the West to itself, to a reintegration that radiates the past without losing its meaning.³³⁶

In many ways, Certeau’s work was an attempt to ground the analysis of mysticism in the shared phenomena of language and history rather than personal mystical experiences. Similar to the shift in psychoanalysis in the previous chapter, where *Ego* psychology was of greater importance in the English speaking academy, the analysis of mysticism, at least in the English texts listed by Certeau in the earlier quote, were prone to a psychology of the personal experience of religious or nonreligious phenomena.

This emphasis on shared language and cultural semiosis was a highly nuanced approach to mysticism, taking into account the heterology of language and culture.

At the threshold of mystic discourse, an elsewhere is engraved upon language . . . If there is an understanding between speakers, it is not, then, based on an accepted truth but won a way of acting or speaking that uses language as an endless betrayal of the intention. It is taken for granted between us— mystic discourse says in effect to its readers — that we use language as the metaphor of speaking subjects.³³⁷

Inspired by Certeau, Bernard McGinn similarly “challenged an over-emphasis on separated and paranormal experiences, emphasising instead sustained processes and bringing to the fore 'forms

³³⁶ Michel de Certeau, “Mysticism,” trans. Marsanna Brammer, *Diacritics* 22:2 (Summer 1992): 24.

³³⁷ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume I: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 175-176.

of language.”³³⁸ The “elsewhere” of mystic language is not merely a heterology but a history; meaning that mysticism is a field in which the space between words and what they represented is a great distance. The heterology of the semiotics around mysticism was also paralleled by the *otherness* of mysticism in relation to European institutions, such as the Church, the university, or the political entanglements of the nation state between these institutions. Certeau was keenly aware, as disclosed in the first chapters of *The Mystic Fable, Vol. I*, on how each of these institutions had ways of approving, within their language, what was the authorised forms of knowledge and religion, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *la mystique* became a complicated term which indicated expressions or experiences that were not approved.³³⁹ However, the heterology of language and the heterology of cultural space outside of established institutions must be held together in Certeau’s understanding of *la mystique*. The complexities of mysticism essentially entail an *otherness* of language, meaning that mysticism is always something else than what the mystics language dictates. Mysticism also entails an *otherness* of religion, meaning that modern opinions of mysticism began in the sixteenth and seventeenth century as something separate from what was accepted within prevailing institutions. This

³³⁸ Julia A. Lamm, “A Guide to Christian Mysticism,” *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Christian Mysticism*, ed. Julia A. Lamm (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), p. 3. Lamm is referencing, in part, to Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroads, 1991), xviii.

³³⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable: Volume I*, pp. 3-39, 79-112.

emphasis, in Certeau, on the nuance of language in mysticism led to a detailed account of the development of the term since the 16th century, *la mystique*.³⁴⁰

The term “mystic” is a particular case that specifically designates a lexical proliferation in a religious field. The word appears abundantly at the close of the Middle Ages. It designates an operation to be carried out upon the terms to which it is applied . . . It has both a pragmatic and a metalinguistic scope: it designates a way of using and a way of understanding the expressions it overdetermines. At first it is an adjective: it is added, as if to designate a specific usage, to noun units already constituted by language. It designates “ways of doing” or “ways of saying,” ways of using the language. Little by little, these adjectival usages, becoming more complex and more explicit, were grouped within a domain of their own, their specific designation identified, toward the end of the sixteenth century, by noun form: “la mystique.”³⁴¹

Here, in *The Mystic Fable, Volume I*, Certeau alluded to the social practices of language essential to mysticism [see section 3.2]. At the heart of study of mysticism is the challenge of identifying adjectives and nouns for “ways of doing” and “ways of saying.” What may seem like an obvious and rudimentary details of semiotics was a fundamental process of Certeau’s historiographic and linguistic analysis of mysticism, seen in his translation and archival work on Favre and Surin and motivated by his religiosity.

³⁴⁰ Central to this thesis is the nuance of the word *mystique*. Each scholar translating Certeau’s work relating to his account of mysticism provides sections explicitly addressing how they have translated *mystique* and French words with the similar root. For an example of one translator’s note on *mystique*, see Michael B. Smith’s note on p. 233 in Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) and in Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume I: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), ix-x. Another example is Marsanne Brammer’s translator note and acknowledgement section at the beginning of Michel de Certeau, “Mysticism,” trans. Marsanna Brammer, *Diacritics* 22:2 (Summer 1992): 11-25. She clarifies: “The masculine gendering of the word mystic (*le mystique*) and its accompanying pronouns in this article is primarily due to French usage. The word *mystique* without any article functions in French as the adjective *mystical*; with a feminine article (*la mystique*) the word means “mysticism,” and with a masculine article (*le mystique*) it means “the mystic,” irrespective of that mystic’s gender. Certeau traced the transitions and usages of the adjective and noun forms of *mystique* in Chapter 3, “The New Science” of *The Mystic Fable, Vol. I*, pp. 79-112.

³⁴¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume I: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 76.

This linguistic operation, acknowledging the distance between what is said and what is, was evident in the cultural ways in which *mystiques* were once marginalised and then accepted within a new type of discipline. In *The Mystic Fable: Volume I*, Certeau adds, “*Mystical* came to designate what had become separate from the institution.”³⁴² Commenting on this chapter in *The Mystic Fable: Volume I*, Julie A. Lamm notes how Certeau narrated the negative usage of the adjective and noun form of *la mystique* from the 16th century to the mid-18th century as a designation of marginal and fanatical divergent religious movements.³⁴³ The positive inferences surrounding the language of *mystique* began as a result of what was perceived in the European church as a capitulation to rationalistic dogma. Continuing to draw from Certeau, Julia A. Lamm notes the type of transitions in mysticism, transitions which were influential to Certeau, himself, throughout the 20th century:

Usages and attitudes began to shift around the turn of the twentieth century, in large part due to the works of William James (1842-1910) and Evelyn Underhill (1875-1910). Protestant scholars of religion began to view ‘mysticism’ as a useful, and more positive, too to define certain ‘types’ of religious experience. Some also saw ‘mysticism’ as a way of getting at something they took to be universal in the human spirit and common to many religions. In Catholic thought, due in part to a reaction within Catholicism against rationalism, ‘mysticism’ was at once a way to name the movement to reintegrate academic theology and prayer and a way to canonise academically those authorities already canonised as saints.³⁴⁴

Certeau, though not explicitly referencing author like James and Underhill, expressed these transitions in the study of mysticism. As a Jesuit, he analysed mysticism and mystics as a way to substantiate the impact on cultural and philosophy of various Christian saints. He demonstrated

³⁴² Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable: Volume I*, p. 86.

³⁴³ Julia A. Lamm, “A Guide to Christian Mysticism,” *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Christian Mysticism*, ed. Julia A. Lamm (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), p. 2-3.

³⁴⁴ Julia A. Lamm, “A Guide to Christian Mysticism,” p. 29.

this process in both volumes of *The Mystic Fable*, providing analyses of Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Meister Eckhart, Augustine, Surin, and more. “How Christianity is Thinkable Today?” argued against the rational schema of dogma and the objective certainty of theological ideologies over faith. Certeau was also a key voice in the positive scope of mysticism as described by Lamm as opposed to certitudes and stale expressions of religion. However, Certeau’s linguistic history of the word, “mysticism” is more complicated than Lamm summarises. While movements of rationalism (i.e. modern science) did evoke a more positive account of mysticism, seen in the likes of James and Underhill, Certeau understood these types of accounts of mysticism to reflect these movements of rationalism. The third chapter of the first volume of *The Mystic Fable: Volume I* delves into this nuance under the title of “The New Science,” where mysticism, itself, evolves into a type of science, a “mystical science.” He argues that movements of scholarship exploring the history and psychology of mysticism reflect a sense of rationalism in how language is used to demarcate what is studied and accepted. Similarly, the distance between the past and present, between the current studies and the events *The Possession of Loudun*, created a sense of professional distance from supernatural or fanatical experiences. It was this type of distance and separation, assumed in a type of hermeneutic of some scholars, that Certeau was critiquing in his conclusion of his work on the Loudun.³⁴⁵ As Kathryn Crim argues, “De Certeau's own decidedly spiritual, if not theological, practice aims to bridge historical difference by giving up the ghost of scientific distance. He writes not to make claims but to relate, to think with.”³⁴⁶

5.4 Certeau, Mysticism, and the Disagreement with Henri de Lubac

³⁴⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun*, pp. 277-278.

³⁴⁶ Kathryn Crim. "The Ghostly Gait of Michel De Certeau," *Qui Parle* 25.1-2 (2016): 229.

However, it was not strictly his critique of the discipline of historiography that put him at odds with his contemporaries, particularly his fellow Catholic scholars. It was his historiographic understanding of mystical and spiritual texts that separated him from the likes of Henri de Lubac and raised questions around Certeau's theology of mysticism. The breakdown of the relationship between Henri de Lubac and Michel de Certeau began in the mid 1960s.³⁴⁷ In an article outlining the relationship and disagreements between Certeau and Lubac, Brenna Moore writes, "To read the split between Lubac and Certeau closely also helps us to see why Certeau, like so many other French thinkers in this context, maps uneasily onto the modern binary, the secular versus the theological."³⁴⁸ She identifies part of the disagreement between them: "Lubac and Certeau laid claim to two distinct, irreconcilable models of how the Christian past can be integrated with the present, and their competing understanding of the relationship between the secular and theological underwrote their ideas of how to best read Christian history as scholars."³⁴⁹ Certeau studied under Henri de Lubac at seminary in Lyon. François Dosse details the early relationship between Certeau and his mentor in the chapter of Certeau's biography entitled, "Un disciple indiscipliné du père de Lubac" (The Insubordinate Disciple of Father de Lubac). Certeau was not insubordinate. Indeed, Dosse quotes letters from Certeau in the early 1950s during his time in seminary as well as letters in the 1980s just before his death where he speaks very tenderly and with great admiration and gratitude for Henri de Lubac.³⁵⁰ Certeau was loyal during Lubac's "dark years." During this time, Lubac was removed from his post in Lyon, his books (*De La Connaissance de Dieu*, *Corpus mysticum*, and *Surnaturel*) were banned from Jesuit libraries, and

³⁴⁷ For consistency, I will refer to Henri de Lubac as Lubac, just as I refer to Michel de Certeau as Certeau.

³⁴⁸ Brenna Moore, "How to Awaken the Dead: Michel de Certeau, Henri de Lubac, and the Instabilities between the Past and the Present," *Spiritus*, Volume 12, Number 2 (Fall 2012): 173.

³⁴⁹ Brenna Moore, "How to Awaken the Dead: Michel de Certeau, Henri de Lubac," p. 173.

³⁵⁰ See François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002), pp. 47-58.

Pope Pius XII publicly repudiated Lubac in his letters.³⁵¹ Later, Certeau served with Lubac as an editor when in 1960, Pope John XXII selected Lubac as a theological consultant (*peritus*) for the Second Vatican Council.³⁵² However, as Lubac grew closer to Rome and Certeau grew in his activities with the psychoanalysis movement in Paris [see section 4.1], Lubac grew concerned.

De Lubac considéré alors que son disciple se disperse, se perd, et en nourrira une solide, rancœur. Il est de plus en plus agacé par les écrits de son « Cher Michel » qui s'éloigne des rivages de la patristique. Des malentendus et des désaccords croissants s'élèvent entre eux, au point que Certeau, fidèle dans son sentiment d'amitié filiale, lui écrit en 1965: « Si vous étiez moins discret avec moi, je ferais moins d'erreurs en parlant de vous! Dites-moi, s'il vous plaît, les points sur lesquels je me suis trompé ou sur lesquels vous feriez des réserves! »³⁵³

Though Certeau seemed, by Dosse's account, to be eager for reconciliation throughout his life (including on Certeau's deathbed in 1986), the irreconcilable break occurred with the revolt in May 1968. The two authors experienced these events in radically different ways. For Lubac, the revolt was a reminder of what he already had been writing since the 1940s, that current philosophical and cultural movements are naive, opposed to Catholic tradition, rootless in their philosophy, and what was needed was a robust return to the theological weight of early Catholicism and not to overreact to the student movement. Lubac excoriated Certeau, three years after the revolt, in a publications. "Lubac attacked de Certeau's claims that a thoroughly new

³⁵¹ See Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, pp. 82-112. Certeau quotes Henri de Lubac on his understanding of the body in relation to the incarnation and the Eucharist. His use of de Lubac is charitable, even respectful given that de Lubac had been publicly critical of Certeau for more than ten years at this point.

³⁵² François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, pp. 52-55.

³⁵³ Ibid., p. 55. [De Lubac considered his disciple as now scattered, as lost, and he nourished a strong resentment. He is more and more annoyed by the writings of his "Dear Michel," which strayed away from the shores of the patristics. Misunderstandings and growing disagreements arise between them, to the point that Certeau, faithful in his filial friendship, wrote to de Lubac in 1965: "If you were less discreet with me, I would make fewer mistakes in talking about you! Tell me, please, the points on which I was wrong or on which you would have reservations!" *Trans.*]

Christian experience would be required in modernity for it to be believable.”³⁵⁴ In a sense, both authors reactions to May 1968 were related to historiography and theology. Fundamentally, they disagreed on the question of whether the writings of the past help regain something that was lost or is the past irretrievable and any exercise in the study of mysticism or in religious history only telling of the present.

For Certeau, the events of May 1968 were clear in their exhibiting of the reality of a symbolic break with “traditional” or religious values of the past. Not only was Certeau sympathetic to the cause of May 1968, but he was a key cultural translator of the movement [see section 0.1].³⁵⁵ The divide between Certeau and Lubac on the issue of theology and mystical texts only increased following the revolt. In an article on mysticism published in 1969, Certeau wrote:

A ‘treasure was formed in three centuries that constituted a ‘mystical tradition’ and obeyed less and less the criteria of any particular Church membership. Catholic, Protestant, Hindu, ancient, and finally nonreligious testimonies were assembled under the same singular noun: *la mystique*. The identity of ‘mysticism,’ once posited, created relevant criteria, imposed a reclassification history, and permitted the establishment of facts and texts that served from then on as a foundation of any study of mystics. Reflection and experience itself are both determined today by this work of collating such a diversity of information and references into one circumscribed place itself defined by a sociocultural conjuncture.³⁵⁶

The historiographic lens of Certeau’s writing, a hermeneutic of meeting the text as is and not through the filter of orthodoxy or Catholic tradition, was evident in 1969. The symbolic order, the act of writing, the act of speaking, and the voice of the *Other* were crucial concerns for

³⁵⁴ Brenna Moore, “How to Awaken the Dead: Michel de Certeau, Henri de Lubac,” p. 177.

³⁵⁵ See Michel de Certeau, *La prise de parole. Pour une nouvelle culture* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1968).

³⁵⁶ Michel de Certeau, “Mysticism,” trans. Marsanna Brammer, *Diacritics* 22:2 (Summer 1992), pp. 14-15.

Certeau in a way, as will be shown, that was quite distinct from Lubac. Equally as evident was the social and culture and linguistic analysis in his study of mysticism. However, by the end of his life, even while still seeking reconciliation with Lubac, Certeau was critical of the discipline of theology for its symbolic and theological censor to variant spiritual movements. As Brenna Moore argues, it was in these movements that Certeau felt there was hope of an innovative future for Christianity.³⁵⁷ Yet the “new science,” a type of study of mysticism that rationalised the distance between the past and present, “conquered” the creative social space fostered by mystics. Certeau argued this in the first volume of *The Mystic Fable*.

Any theology eliminates that irreducibility of differences by the production of a “tradition,” that is, by defining an “essential” that clerical knowledge singles out, claimed as its own, and regards as the common denominator of an oceanic plurality. Thanks to the work of theologians who, beginning in the seventeenth century, conquered the space created by spirituals, *mystics*, too, craftier its own tradition, weaving out of the texts of the past a homogenous corpus with criteria taken from the new “science of the saints.” Thus its present, held in words, fades away as its past is constituted.³⁵⁸

This contrast between Certeau and Lubac reveals the sympathy Certeau felt for the student revolt in 1968 and the movements of mystics in the past and present. “For the mystic, to prepare a place of the *Other* is to prepare a place for others.”³⁵⁹ Certeau saw this movement of hospitality, opening space for the *Other*, as distinct and often opposed to the modes of reading from scholars like Lubac, treating mystical texts by isolating the mystics that are devotional from those that are heretics. Certeau’s account of *The Possession of Loudun*, published on two years after May 1968, spoke to the difficulty of determining who is a mystic and who is possessed, but not only the

³⁵⁷ Brenna Moore, “How to Awaken the Dead: Michel de Certeau, Henri de Lubac,” p. 177.

³⁵⁸ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume I: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 111-112.

³⁵⁹ Michel de Certeau, “Mysticism,” trans. Marsanna Brammer, p. 20.

historiographic problem of reading mysticism but also the symbolic and moral problem of isolating the oppressor or the victim.

These registers, relative to formally distinct inscriptions, should lead from what history has done with the mystics to what they have done with history. To attempt to carry out this reversal (by the mediation of what every science claims to do with history) is to transition from the traces left by a mysticism in our histories to the ways it expresses and fashions itself—to its own historicity. This amounts to asking what “occurs” in these (mystic) documents, that is, how to read them in such a way as to recognize what they “produce,” and what, as such, they are capable of inaugurating in the epistemological space of our disciplines of work.³⁶⁰

The study of mysticism allows for space to question the practice of history. For Certeau, it was an opportunity to expose authorities, whether science or religion, that work to contain alternative spiritual voices and language in a place that is *Other* while at the same time asking if the writing of history itself is participating as this censoring type of authority.

5.5 Texts, Language, and Further Contrasts to Henri de Lubac

Combined with Certeau’s historiography of May 1968, Certeau’s contrast with Lubac brings into focus the issue of textual analysis. As this chapter has spoken to Certeau’s emphasis on language within the study of mysticism, it is now worth demonstrating further the distinctive nature of Certeau’s use of texts. Lubac’s emphasis on patristics and a return to Catholic orthodoxy was a different vision altogether in scope from Certeau. It is not that Certeau was overly unorthodox in his theology, but rather that his combination of textual analysis, historiography, and social semiotics brought a level of focus onto what was being said or silenced and how academic disciplines, including theology, can silence the voice of the *Other* rather than make room for it. Again, this is dissimilar to Lubac not only in terms of the purpose

³⁶⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume Two: The Sixteenth And Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Luce Giard and trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 3-4.

of Certeau's projects in mysticism, like both volumes of *The Mystic Fable*, but also in terms of Certeau's practice of giving voice to the *Other* can be felt in his use of texts and evaluation of voices in the text. What is being said? What is not being heard? The policing of speech within the symbolic order, as discussed in the chapter on social semiotics [see section 3.3], was largely what concerned Certeau after May 1968, and this similar concern for the policing of voices was evident in his treatment of mysticism.³⁶¹ Before highlighting specific examples, it is important not to overstate the contrast between Lubac and Certeau. Guy Mansini and Certeau, himself, noted the brilliance of de Lubac's historical theology.³⁶² Lubac's remains one of the most influential theologians of the last century, but when seen together, Certeau and Lubac's use of historical texts further illustrates Certeau's distinctiveness with his unique combination of religiosity, theological concerns, and cultural analysis.

It was discussed in the previous chapter how Wlad Godzich noted in the forward to *Heterologies* that Certeau's heterological project was put on hold and never officially completed when he began to work on mysticism [see section 4.1]. Commenting on the heterology project, Claire E. Wolfteich writes, "Certeau's 'sciences of the other' raised important questions about the reading of history, the elusive nature of religious speech, mystic poetics, and the wandering of 'perpetual departure.'"³⁶³ In an article entitled, "L'Énonciation mystique," originally written in 1976, Certeau wrote the following:

For mysticism, unlike theology, is not a matter of constructing a particular, coherent set of statements organised according to "truth" criteria; and, unlike theosophy, there is no interest in letting the violent order of the world reveal itself

³⁶¹ Michel de Certeau, "Mysticism," trans. Marsanna Brammer, 21-24.

³⁶² See Guy Mansini, "The Abiding Theological Significance of Henri De Lubac's Surnaturel," *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, Volume 73, Number 4 (October 2009): 593-619; Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume I*, pp. 82-94.

³⁶³ Claire E. Wolfteich, "Practices of 'Unsayings': Michel de Certeau, Spirituality Studies, and Practical Theology," *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, Volume 12, Number 2, (Fall 2012): 163.

in the form of a general account (which makes personal experience irrelevant), but it is a matter of dealing with ordinary language (not the technical sectors) from an inquiry that questions the possibility of transforming language into a network of allocutions and present alliances, a double cleavage. The initial division separates the *said* (what has been or is stated) from the *saying* (the act of saying [*l'acte de se parler*]). The second, produced by “spiritual labor,” cuts into the density of the world to make of it a dialogical discourse: *I* and *thou* seeking one another in the thickness of the same language.³⁶⁴

The first cleavage evokes what was discussed above; the *otherness* of language within mystical discourse, that language itself is *Other*. The second cleavage in Certeau’s focus on language within mysticism was the dialogical discourse, where meaning and definition occur within the exchange of semiotics, within the exchange of language itself. What is being said, what is being heard, and what is being silenced in this “thickness” was a type of political and spiritual rhetoric for Certeau. He continues in “L’Énonciation mystique:”

Mystics are engaged in a politics of utterance— they are comparable to lawyers who make the most complete list possible of the situations and addresses apt to lead a preceding to a “felicitous” conclusion. This kind of politics, like contemporary rhetoric, sets forth operational rules determining the relational usage of a language that has become uncertain of the real. It reconstructs, where the ontological relation between words and things has come undone, *loci* of social communication. Of course, this is not dictated by a political “will to persuade,” but has to do instead with a spiritual “will to hear” (a distinction which is not all that clear). In any case, a multiplication of “methods” process and guarantees certain kinds of exchange. . . *Other* practices construct places of utterance.³⁶⁵

Though written several years before *The Mystic Fable: Volume I*, Certeau’s political concerns following May 1968 are felt in his analysis of mysticism. The dialogical nature of mystic speech is dependent on utterance, while not being overly dependent on the ontological relation between words and things (i.e. *glossolalia*) [see section 3.4]. The “will to hear” motivates Certeau’s

³⁶⁴ Michel de Certeau, “Mystic Speech,” seen in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1986), p. 90.

³⁶⁵ Michel de Certeau, “Mystic Speech,” p. 91.

exploration of mystical texts where the operational rules of determining the usage of language have become uncertain of the real. What is the real in this case? Alluding to previous sections on social semiotics and Lacan, the real is made aware to us by the voice of the *Other* [see sections 3.2 and 4.2.3]. The calling of the *Other* is the real. The rupturing which occurred was crucial for Certeau, rather than Lubac, for the impression it provided of the real. Here, the attention to utterance was connected to the psychoanalytic understanding of the real and the historiographic concern for the voice of the *Other*.

This attention to the details of voice, speech, language, and utterance can be felt in Certeau's analysis of texts. Rather than delimiting texts within a field, separating voices based on "a coherent set of statements organised according to 'truth' criteria," Certeau focused on words and what was spoken by those that are *Other*. To illustrate this, I will provide a section from Diego de Jesús (1570-1621), a quote Certeau used in his analysis in "Manners of Speaking," from *The Mystic Fable: Volume I*.³⁶⁶ This quote is from Diego de Jesús' *Apuntamientos*, which Certeau saw as "a defence and illustration of mystic language."³⁶⁷ This quote is set within a wider analysis of language, where Certeau incorporated his knowledge of French, Spanish, Italian, and Latin "manners of speaking" in his understanding of mystic texts.

Let us listen to one who has had the experience: either we enter into the excess of the spirit near God or we are level headed with you, that is to say, things happen one way with God as only witness, another way with you. It has been given to me to experience such things, not to speak of them. Oh, you who are curious to know what is is like to enjoy the word, do no lend it your ear but your spirit. It is grace that teaches it, not language. . . Terms that are imperfect and, if one must, it is thus, vicious by excess, declare much better, like saying "furor" and "pride." For we see plainly that the pettiness, the evil they represent when applied to ourselves, is very far from God: And thus to take these terms that mean excess and disorder,

³⁶⁶ Diego de Jesús (1570-1621) was a Spanish Discalced Carmelite who is primarily known for editing some of the writings of Juan de la Cruz. See Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable: Volume I: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p. 130.

³⁶⁷ Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable: Volume I: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p. 133

unrelated and unreasonable things, is to admit that the good to which we apply them is pure, very perfect good, such that it surpasses all order, all means and natural agreement, and everything reason can attain. . . ³⁶⁸

Writing in the early seventeenth century, Diego de Jesús anticipated a number of key themes debated in 20th century Catholic theology, debates which Henri de Lubac was a key figure such as the psychology of mystical experience, divine grace, ontology, nominalism, original sin, etc. However, Certeau's analysis, though theological, was not doctrinal, but rather linguistic and historical. Writing on Diego de Jesús, Certeau focused on the nature of "mystic dialect."³⁶⁹ More than creating a new language, mystic speech created space for the *Other* in its use of expressions and "procedures" of language, as Diego de Jesús focused on the words expressed in relation to God. Certeau explained:

More specific is the fact that, of all existent usages, including the 'theological phrases,' the 'mystic phrases; were distinguished less by their structures than by the procedure which they were constructed. What was important was a process of fabrication. Diego insisted on the transformation carried out by the author of the text, to which the operation it brought about in the reader would correspond. On both parts, a movement was essential. It was characterised both by a shift of the subject within the meaning space circumscribed with words and by a technical manipulation for these words in order to make the new way in which they were being used.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ as quoted in Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume I: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, pp. 138-140.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 140.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 140.

What follows in this chapter of *The Mystic Fable, Volume I*, is a an elaboration on mannerisms, expressions, irony, antonyms, idioms, tropes, adjective, nouns, and verbs all within the context of mystic speech.³⁷¹

On the contrary, let us briefly explore a section from Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel* (1946) to compare how Lubac used historical mystic texts. Though the differences in tone and purpose between *Surnaturel* and Certeau's *The Mystic Fable* are considerable, it is worth noting that just as Certeau traced the meaning of the word *mystique* in various centuries, Lubac similarly traced the usage and meaning of the word *surnaturel* (supernatural). It is hard to image that this did not influence Certeau's project on mysticism from the sixteenth and seventeenth century in *The Mystic Fable*. I used the quote from Diego de Jesús because it is similar in theme to the following quote by Augustine used by Lubac. According to Certeau, Diego was responding to scholastic theologians and moral philosophers, so there is some additional over lap between the quote above and the following since Lubac was responding to neo-scholastic theologians and moral philosophers.³⁷²

A quoi, tout en cherchant et en trouvant sans peine des arguments pour justifier la Providence, Augustin répondait qu'en effet un tel monde eût été meilleur, et que Dieu pouvait le réaliser:

. . . Quaeritur cur Deus tentari permiserit hominem, quem tentatori consenurum esse praesciebat. . . Posset, inquiunt, etiam ipsorum (malorum hominum) voluntatem in bonum convertere, quoniam omnipotens est. — Posset plane. — cur ergo non fecit? — Quia voluit. Cur noluit, penes Ipsum est. . . Non mini videtur magnat laudis futurum fuisse hominem si propterea posset bene vivere, qui nemo male vivere suadente; cum et in natura posse, et in potestate

³⁷¹ For further exploration of Certeau's analysis of language, though of Hadewijch of Anvers not Diego de Jesús, see Hollywood, Amy. "Love Speaks Here: Michel de Certeau's *Mystic Fable*." *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 12, no. 2 (2012): 198-206. It is fair to say that Certeau's treatment of Hedewijch of Anvers texts is similar to his treatment of Diego de Jesús as both occur in the same manuscript and are given similar space within the text.

³⁷² Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume I: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p. 333.

haberet velle non consentire suadenti. . . Est palma glorioso non
consentisse tantalum, qual non potuisse tentari.³⁷³

The point, however, is not the similarities or lack of similarities between the quotes from Augustine and Diego of Jesús, nor the obvious differences in scope from Lubac's moral philosophy and onto-theology with Certeau's religious history. The point is to illustrate the distinctiveness of Certeau's analysis of mysticism seen here in his use of text and the emphasis in his analysis of mystical texts on language. By contrast to Certeau's linguistic use of Diego de Jesús, Lubac's analysis of Augustine was not Augustine's line of questioning or use of phrasing, but of the doctrinal concerns on the limits of the divine will and the capacity of human person. "Augustin semble accorder que dieu aurait pu créer un homme impeccable : mais il faut, croyons-nous, comprendre ce texte comme tant d'autres textes traditionnels depuis Saint Irée, attribuant les impossibilités non à une limitation de la puissance divine mais à une déficience de la créature. . ."³⁷⁴ One can see the concern for doctrine, the concern for accuracy and orthodoxy in how de Lubac handles these texts. While Certeau might have shared these concerns, his use of texts and his analysis of mystical language displayed a greater concern for the voice of the *Other*.

³⁷³ Henri de Lubac, *Surnaturel: Etudes historiques* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1946), pp. 202-203. [To which, while seeking and easily finding arguments to justify Providence, Augustine replied that indeed such a world would have been better, and that God could make it happen: ". . . The question is asked, 'Why did God permit a man to be tempted, whom he foresaw would be old enough for the tempter?' . . . He could, they say, turn even their will (of evil men) into good, since he is Almighty. - it could be clearly. - why then did he not do it? Because he wanted. Why he would not, it is in the hands of Him. . . It does not seem to me that he would have been a man of great praise if he could live well on that account, since no one persuaded him to live a bad life; since he had both in nature and in his power to will, not to consent to his persuading. . . It is a glorious palm, not to have consented to such a thing, as it could not have been tempted. *Trans.*]

³⁷⁴ Henri de Lubac, *Surnaturel: Etudes historiques*, p. 203. [Augustine seems to grant that god could have created an impeccable man: but this text must, we believe, be understood like so many other traditional texts since Saint Irene, attributing whatever is impossible not to a limitation of divine power but to a deficiency of the creature. . . *Trans.*]

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Certeau's account of mysticism was rooted in his analysis of language and historiography, the subjects of chapters three and chapters one, respectively. It also stems from his nuanced account of alterity, noting how language and history are also *Other*, even to the professional academic [see section 4.2.2]. The student revolt in 1968 solidified, for Certeau, the awareness that authorised voices like those of the academic are included in the symbolic silencing of voicing from social spaces on the fringe [see section 3.3]. For Certeau, this was most evident in the theological and historical treatment of mystics. In this chapter, I have demonstrated the linguistic and historiographic lens in relation to mysticism through Certeau's work on Pierre Favre and Jean Joseph Surin. While both studies were influential for Certeau, the case of Surin proved to be significant in providing a vivid example in cultural and spiritual history of the problem he saw, namely, that it not easy, impossible even, to be sure of who is the mystic and who is demonic. This infamous story, analysed during the time of the student revolt in 1968, illustrated the need for historians and theologians to read with these texts and not be quick silence or marginalise seemingly errant voices. To do so would reveal more about the academics context than the position of the mystic. This position put Certeau at odds with his mentor Henri de Lubac. Certeau account of mysticism, which took into account the challenges of the historiographic processes, the linguistic and symbolic contexts, and the limitations of individual experiences, continues to influence the growing field of mysticism.

In arguing for the distinctiveness of Certeau's account of mysticism within his cultural analysis I have brought together another discipline of Certeau's multidisciplinary approach and connected it with his religiosity. Certeau's implicit theological underpinning for his unique combination of mysticism and cultural analysis can be seen in his concern for the voice of the *Other* and in the contrast I have provided with his mentor, Henri de Lubac. While this chapter and the previous chapters have uncovered layers of Certeau's implicit theology in his

historiography, social geography, social semiotics, psychoanalysis, and mysticism, there is more to discuss in regard to his most well-known field, the study of everyday life, which will now be discussed in the sixth chapter.

Chapter 6: Everyday Life and Michel de Certeau's Belief and Subversive Spirituality

Following an account of Certeau's historiography, social geography, social semiotics, psychoanalysis, and mysticism, this chapter will demonstrate how all the writings of Certeau are underpinned by his theology by investigating his analysis of everyday life, the last discipline in his interdisciplinary cultural analysis. I will explore the significance and distinctiveness of his relationship between theology and everyday life. In chapter one covering historiography, the theme of everyday life was briefly introduced, not as a study in popular culture or consumer habits, but as a multifaceted, complex array of logics and systems which shape the flow of people's ordinary lives and practices [see sections 1.1 and 1.2]. Certeau's interdisciplinary approach reflected the multifaceted nature of everyday life, incorporating psychoanalysis, semiotics, historiography, geography, philosophy, and theology. *L'invention du quotidien* was published in 1980 as the result of a commission from the French Ministry of Culture. Following the events of the student revolt in May 1968, Certeau was selected to employ a team of cultural theorists, assigned with the collective task of discerning the recent changes to the cultural landscape and to speculate what lasting influence the student revolt would have on French life. Comprising of two volumes, *The Practice of Everyday Life, Vol. 1* was written by Certeau, and the second volume, while containing sections and interviews with Certeau, was written and edited by his other collaborators, Luce Giard and Pierre Mayol. This chapter will focus on the *The Practice of Everyday Life* and argue for the particular nature of its subject matter as set within the corpus of Certeau's career. The central question being asked is: how is the theme of everyday life distinctive and/or unifying in relation to his later works on mysticism or his previous works on alterity, language, and historiography? In what manner does his theology and

religiosity inform his social science of everyday life? How is his account distinctive within the growing field of scholarship exploring the ordinary and mundane aspects of life?

The theme of everyday life, as Luce Giard announced in the second volume of *The Practice of Everyday Life*, was the site of much concern and debate within 20th century French scholarship. In the first section of this chapter, I provide a detailed history of the study of everyday life from Karl Marx to the contemporary debates of Certeau. While Certeau proved to be fluent in these debates, I argue that Certeau's concern with everyday life originated with his formation as a Jesuit and the Ignatian spirituality which he received from mentors like Henri de Lubac. From his early research on Pierre Favre and Jean-Joseph Surin, and from his writings in journals of Catholic and Jesuit theology, such as *Christus, Ecclesia, Concilium*, and *Etudes*, Certeau developed multifaceted analyses of everyday life, taking into account theology, mysticism, historiography, politics, and linguistics. After arguing for the presence of the theme of everyday life within his early Jesuit writings, I will show how the development of this theme in his political writings in the late 1960s which engage the issues at stake in May 1968. I will continue examining this theme in his later works explored in the previous chapter, *The Mystic Fable*, drawing a clear connection between everyday life and Certeau's account of spirituality and mysticism. In showing the continuity of the theme of everyday life across the span of Certeau's corpus, I will argue for key distinctive theological movements on this theme of everyday life that Certeau develops at the different stages of his career but are clearly evident in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. A close reading of *The Practice* in the final section will argue for the distinct connection between theology and social sciences seen through the themes of immanence, secularity, and belief. This chapter will further develop the ideas of human subjectivity and the symbolic order within the context of everyday life and resistance. Why does Certeau value resistance, what is worth resisting, and what hope or good can belief in resistance to hegemony bring? In answering these questions, this final chapter will provide unique insights

into the relationship between Certeau's Jesuit origins, his reaction to May 1968, and his later work on mysticism and further bridge the gap in scholarship between Certeau's cultural analysis and his religiosity.

6.1 Historiography, the Study of Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Theoretical Disciplines

In order to provide greater clarity to Certeau's unique perspective on cultural analysis and everyday life, I will now trace the development of the study of everyday life from Marx to Certeau and Foucault. By providing a critical analysis of the development of everyday life in cultural theory, I will further argue that Certeau's critical inquiry into the study of everyday life was underpinned by his religiosity and his account of belief [see section 1.2.1]. Secondly, the chronology of *la vie quotidienne* and the related question of history reveal the legacy from which Certeau is writing as well as the unique contributions Certeau provides when compared with other seminal figures in the fields. I will argue these two points by beginning with an analysis of the development of everyday life as a subject of a variety of disciplines, starting with Marx.

La vie quotidienne grew into a topic of critical inquiry as the site of structures of authority and the interplay of cultural forces. While one could argue that the movement reaches its peak in the 1960s and 1970s, the origins of the modalities of analysis of *la vie quotidienne* can be traced back to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who felt that the inherent flaws in capitalism and the political apparatus of the modern nation impacted culture most severely upon the everyday and the ordinary, and as such, it is in the mundane and the everyday experiences of life that revolution begins. From Marx and Engels, there are multiple schools of thought and disciplines that influenced writers like Simmel, Henri Lefebvre, and Georges Heller, which would result in series of texts engaging everyday life through richly layered and densely nuanced

analysis, comprised of “a heterogenous mix of divergent interests and different positions.”³⁷⁵

According to Michael Sheringham, the concept of everyday life shifts in the 1980s from a period of active engagement and invention to one of dissemination.³⁷⁶ This period of dissemination occasioned the growth of figures like Michel de Certeau and Michael Foucault and their poststructuralist critiques.³⁷⁷ Michel de Certeau’s *L’invention du quotidien. Vol. 1, Arts de faire* was originally published in 1980 and is regarded as the seminal text to come from the era of which Sheringham is speaking, not least of all because of Certeau’s connection to the English-speaking world.³⁷⁸ In a similar note of historical reflection, though writing in the early 1970s, Bruce Brown says the following:

What the cultural revolutionaries of the 1920s and the New Left of the 1960s both perceived was that in comparison with laissez-faire capitalism - the capitalism of Marx’s time, where the problematic of the human situation was expressed mainly in terms of economic exploitation and the political oppression - the new type of capitalism contains an almost irresistible tendency toward the universalisation of

³⁷⁵ Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), p. 18.

³⁷⁶ Michael Sheringham, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 3. Sheringham writes that “if we look back . . . we can see that the quarter-century or so leading up to the 1980s saw the elaboration of a cluster of closely-knit ways of thinking about and exploring everyday life that planted the question of the everyday at the heart of French culture in the last two decades of the twentieth century and into the new millennium.”

³⁷⁷ I am following Gail Reeke in calling Certeau and Foucault poststructuralist voices, yet I share her concern that Certeau (or Roland Barthes, Dominick LaCapra, Hayden White, Michel Serres, etc.) potentially lose their specificity and uniqueness when placed under the umbrella of poststructuralism. See Gail Reeke, “Michel de Certeau and the poststructuralist critique of history,” *Social Semiotics*, 6:1 (1996), pp. 45-46. In general, poststructuralism is considered to be a philosophical critique rooted in the reinterpreting of key Continental figures such as Hegel, Kant, Nietzsche, and Freud. With renewed methodologies from psychoanalysis, literary criticism, historiography, and social theory, a movement of predominantly French authors, at least at the beginning of what is considered poststructuralism, called into question foundational concepts and structures of the current *milieu* such as consciousness, transcendence, mind, subjectivity, teleology, language, and reason. See Réda Bensmaïa, “Poststructuralism,” in Lawrence Kritzman(ed.), *The Columbia History of Twentieth-Century French Thought*. (New York: Columbia University Press 2005), pp. 92-95.

³⁷⁸ Through his publications and professorship with the University of California San Diego as well as the distribution of his manuscripts in English by the University of Minnesota and the University of Michigan, Certeau grew in popularity as a cultural theorist in the 1980s amongst English speaking universities. Michael Sheringham, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 8; Michael Gardiner, *Critiques of Everyday Life* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 157-158.

alienation. In other words, it tends to convert the totality of social life and existence into an object of domination with the intention of transforming all subjectivity and activity into reified objectivity.³⁷⁹

Standing at two different points in history both Sheringham and Brown are able to look back and see various pathways which have led to concerns from cultural analysts on the bearings that capitalism was having and would have on the most basic and human levels of social interaction, subjectivity, and essential human relationship and activities - *la vie quotidienne*. I am asking with Brown and Sheringham, and others how did this critique of everyday life rise to the prominence in French culture and beyond by 1980, as Sheringham suggests, and how does Certeau compare to the rest of this movement of scholarship?³⁸⁰ Because in answering this question, the uniqueness of Certeau's approach shall become evident as well as the revolutionary potential of belief in everyday life. In asking what is the nature of the relationship between Certeau and figures like Marx, the Annales school, and the Dadaist, I am seeking to present clarity to Certeau position as well as the field of cultural studies around everyday life.

6.1.1 The Study of Everyday Life: Marxism

Beginning with *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* in 1848, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were disturbed by the considerable bearing that class conflict and industrial capitalism

³⁷⁹ Bruce Brown, *Marx, Freud, and the Critique of Everyday Life: Toward a Permanent Cultural Revolution* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1973), p. 13.

³⁸⁰ In addition to the texts by Sheringham and Brown further sources outlining developments in critical theory on everyday life include Tony Bennett and Diane Watson (eds.), *Understanding Everyday: Sociology and Society* (Oxford: Blackwells, 2002); J. D. Douglas, "Understanding Everyday Life," in J. D. Douglas (ed.), *Understanding Everyday Life* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1970). Mark Gottdiener, "Alienation, Everyday Life, and Postmodernism as Critical Theory," in F. Geyer (ed.), *Alienation, Ethnicity, and Postmodernism* (Westport, CT: Greenword Press, 1996); Karl Klare, "The Critique of Everyday Life, Marxism, and the New Left," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, vol. 16 (1971-1972): 68-86; Laurie Langbauer, "Cultural Studies and the Politics of the Everyday," *Diacritics*, 22.1 (1993): 47-65; Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Susan Willis, *A Primer for Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 1991).

was having on society, particularly everyday life.³⁸¹ The coercive nature of materialism and the struggle between economic factions was felt most in the ordinary. “In political practice, therefore, they join in all coercive measures against the working class; and in ordinary life, despite their highfalutin phrases, they stoop to pick up the golden apples dropped from the tree of industry, and to barter truth, love, and honour, for traffic in wool, beetroot-sugar, and potato spirit.”³⁸² The potency of economic oppression could be seen in the eyes of Marx and Engels at the everyday level of bartering and trading, in work and leisure. Ben Highmore in his *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* says, “By connecting technology and social change with changes in everyday experience, the *Communist Manifesto* becomes one of the first texts to posit modernity as a revolutionary experience to be located at the level of everyday life.”³⁸³ Yet the concern for everyday life continues to be a pressing theme in Marx and Engels as their respective careers moved on. In 1859 in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx reflected on the unique ways in which everyday life both escapes the common person while constraining them under modernisation.

Only the conventions of our everyday life make it appear commonplace and ordinary that social relations of production should assume the shape of things, so that the relations into which people enter in the course of their work appear as the relation of things to one another and of things to people. This mystification is still a very simple one in the case of a commodity. Everybody understands more or less clearly that the relations of commodities as exchange-values are really the

³⁸¹ Brown is helpful in delineating ways in which Engels and Marx had various viewpoints that aided each others’ analytical shortcomings. While I agree with Brown that Engels and Marx do not share a cultural vision unilaterally, for the sake of this chapter, I will hold them together. See Bruce Brown, *Marx, Freud, and the Critique of Everyday Life*, pp. 38-58.

³⁸² Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* [1848] (Stockholm: Chiron Academic Press, 2016), pp. 30.

³⁸³ Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory*, p. 22.

relations of people to the productive activities of one another. The semblance of simplicity disappears in more advanced relations of production.³⁸⁴

Here, Marx anticipates Certeau, Lefebvre, Georg Simmel, and others who remarked on the diaphanous character of everyday life, meaning that everyday life is so close and personal that it becomes unknown and delicate. Ordinary experiences are so commonplace, at times unconscious, that their nature and the “ontological and existential” essence of the day to day is translucent and hard to critique.

What then is the lens of analysis that Marx and Engels felt gave them a vision of the pressing concerns for everyday life that seem to avoid the common person’s consciousness while having a detrimental effect on them? I argue that it was their ability to reengage the discipline of history and offer what Roger Chartier calls “a historiography orientated towards problems.”³⁸⁵ Engels says in his letter to J. Bloch in Königsberg in 1890, “According to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimate* determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life.”³⁸⁶ In other words, rather than writing history from the standpoint of narrating the development of ideas, Marx and Engels’ historiography “shows different counter-histories and the dark side of ‘progress’ whose focus was ‘a vast, Herod-like slaughter of the innocents.’”³⁸⁷ Or less polemically, Marxist historiography seeks both in method and end to account for the drastic transitions in history observed in the 19th century and the bearing of these transitions on the common human experience, which for Marx and Engels was the working

³⁸⁴ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* [1859] (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1993), p. 10.

³⁸⁵ Roger Chartier, “Entretien avec Roger Chartier,” in *Magazine littéraire*, no. 242 (May 1987): 93.

³⁸⁶ Friedrich Engels to J. Bloch, September 21-22, 1890, in *Marx-Engels-Werke*, vol. 37 (Berlin: GDR, 1978), p. 463.

³⁸⁷ Massimiliano Tomba, “Accumulation and Time: Marx’s Historiography from the *Grundrisse* to *Capital*,” *Capital & Class*, Vol. 37.3 (2013), p. 366. Tomba is quoting Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume I*, in *Marx and Engels Collected Works, Volume 35* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1996), p. 745.

masses.³⁸⁸ Ultimately for Marx and Engels, history had arrived at a place of self-alienation, which was exacerbated by the ways in which industrial capitalism had reduced people and relationships to commodities.³⁸⁹ This self-alienation was felt most, even if unconsciously, in the experiences of everyday life.

While the case could be made that the above version of Marx is only a particular reading of Marx mostly found in the French academy, this appears to be the interpretation of Marx with whom Michel de Certeau is interacting. Certeau, similar to Marx and Engels, criticised the discipline of history in terms of everyday life and subversiveness, though opting for the term resistance rather than revolution. Translated into English after Certeau's death, *The Writing of History* discussed Marx in its introduction in terms of the production of history and this production's ability to alienate certain classes in the way that history is represented - i.e. what fiction is remembered.³⁹⁰ Furthermore, Certeau was also critical of the ways in which history as a discipline appears to neglect the everyday experiences, which the writing of history originates from, meaning that history is not a series of facts in the past but a set of practices and orientations which occurs in the present of everyday life experiences. In *The Writing of History*, Certeau recounted in his introduction the motif in Marx of making sure the reality that is discussed in social and cultural theory is nothing more or less than human practices. "We must recall what Marx noted . . . that 'the thing, reality, sensuousness must be grasped as a human

³⁸⁸ I will not pretend to provide an exhaustive account of Marxist historiography, which is a complex and widely interpreted philosophy and methodology of history. However, for the sake of this project, I have focused on the lesser known emphasis on everyday life which is apparent in Marx and Engels economic critique as well as their critique of modern historiography. For a more detailed account of various developments and interpretations of Marx's philosophy of history see Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). This series of essays consists of German social theorists who reflect on the historical developments of Marx's historiography as it progress and was reinterpreted through various decades of German history from the time of Marx to the 1980s. *Alltagsgeschichte* is the German word used for the "history of everyday life."

³⁸⁹ Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory*, p. 14.

³⁹⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, Translated by Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 10-20.

sensuous activity,' and as a 'practice.'"³⁹¹ Then quoting Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*, Certeau clarified the fundamentals of historical discourse, "Life involves, before everything else, eating and drinking, habitation, and many other things. The first historical fact is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the ruction of material life itself. And this is a historical fact, a fundamental condition of all history, which today, as thousands of years ago, must daily and hourly be fulfilled."³⁹² Not only was Certeau compelled to highlight via Marx the essential character of everyday life within history as a practice, but he also drew from Marx the ways in which disciplines such as history can be swayed in the perspective of modalities of production and power. "I emphasize and underscore these classical texts [from Marx] because they specify the interrogation that I have encountered by beginning from a so-called history of ideas of mentalities. . . . Discourse is doubtless a form of capital, invested in symbols; it can be transmitted, displaced, accrued, or lost."³⁹³ Here, Certeau held together Marx's critiques of everyday life, the discipline of history, and a critique of academic disciplines which can often be abstracted from normal life, or suppress the forgotten, *Other* voices of history [see section 1.2.2]. The discourse of history is a form of production and capital that can oppress as much as industrialisation; this power contributes to shifting structures and modalities of authority [see section 1.1].

Thus, in light of the legacy of Marx, Certeau presents an account of history that embraced a type of materialism, though different from Marx in the following ways. Rather than avoiding the abstraction of history, which can happen when focusing on dates and events, Certeau relished the ordinary and unseen everyday circumstances which shaped the events of history as well as

³⁹¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, p. 13.

³⁹² Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, p. 14. This quote and the previous quote are from Karl Marx, *Thesis on Feuerbach*, "Theses I," in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. L. S. Feuer (New York: Double Day, 1959).

³⁹³ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, pp. 15.

the present context in which the historian writes. Rather than an overt critique of and revolution against the economical and political systems which can capture the discipline of history, Certeau offered a more subtle and nuanced critique that moves towards resistance. While Marx's atheism fuels an angle of this materialism, Certeau's understanding of belief and spirituality went beyond Marx, as will be discussed later in this chapter when covering more thoroughly Certeau's account of belief and resistance.³⁹⁴

6.1.2 The Study of Everyday Life: The Annales School

Certeau's nuancing and use of Marx can be seen in many ways through the influence of the Annales school. While the Situationists and Dadaists (soon to be discussed further in section 6.1.4) in Paris were taking Marxism to the reaches of experience and public subversiveness, the Annales School, at least at its inception, was a more temperate movement of scholars that similarly sought to reevaluate history and everyday life but through the lens of long, methodical developments in social history, valuing the less obvious elements of the mundane and every day over the systems and major events of historical inquiry. Peter Burke would call this shift in the discipline of history "the French historical revolution." Citing François Simiand, the well-known disciple of Emile Durkheim, Peter Burke describes the origins of the Annales School as a response to three themes that had blinded the work of historians.

According to Simiand, there were three idols which must be toppled. There was the idol of 'political idol,' - perpetual preoccupation with political history, political events, wars, etc., which gives these events an exaggerated importance.'

³⁹⁴ Ian Buchanan summarises that Certeau "transposes Marx's economic history onto the discipline of history itself," while at the same time holding that Certeau's historiography leaves Marx behind in most respects. Frank Trentmann similarly notes that Certeau's conceptualisation seems to "do without Marx altogether." While Marx, or perhaps the French academy's, such as Braudel and Lefebvre, reading of Marx, is not the focus of this study nor Certeau's works on historiography and everyday life, what I have offered here is both an account of Marx's influence on the study on everyday life and a connected through Marx for Certeau's account of historiography and everyday life. I have focused this connection around a type of materialism which highlights everyday life. See Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, pp. 27, 39. See also Frank Trentmann, "The Politics of Everyday Life," in *The Oxford Handbook on the History of Consumption*, ed. by Frank Trentmann (London: Oxford University Press), p. 529.

There was the ‘individual idol’ - in other words, the overemphasis on so-called great men, so that even studies of institutions were presented in the form ‘Pontchartrain and the Parliament of Paris,’ and so on. Finally, there was the ‘chronological idol,’ that is, ‘the habit of losing oneself in studies of origins.’³⁹⁵

These three blindspots would provide a background of practices and frameworks in the discipline in history which would lead the founders of the *Annales* School, Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, to engage history from an interdisciplinary level of analysis. They developed a level of analysis around the psychological, social, and cultural while still connecting their cultural commentary with the scientific and religious. Febvre and Bloch began a journal in 1929, *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, which originated as a review of key contemporary manuscripts, including books, essays, articles, and works of art. This journal became a sounding board where they could develop their own ideas on social history and cultural studies in conversation with key texts.³⁹⁶ André Burguière describes the early period of the Annales School, 1929-1939, as devoid of the “advantages of any new theory specific to them.”³⁹⁷ Later in 1945, the school would take a more pronounced turn towards historiography under the direction of Fernand Braudel, who encouraged a focus on social groups, mentalities, and cultural transmission rather than events and figures, as can be seen in his influential work *Le Monde actuel, histoire et civilisations* (1963). He would also publish a manuscript on everyday life, *Les Structures du Quotidien*, one year before Certeau’s well-known work, *L'invention du quotidien. Vol. 1, Arts de faire*.

The Annales School and Certeau shared similar affinities in relation to everyday life and historiography, which in turn shaped Certeau and Lucien Febvre’s understanding of belief. First, Certeau and the early Annales writers were influenced by Marx while not being completely

³⁹⁵ Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: Annales School 1929 - 1989* (London: Polity Press, 2015), p. 11.

³⁹⁶ André Burguière, *The Annales School: An Intellectual History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 14.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

Marxist. The Annales was not a conservative movement, however, it did prefer long, slow processes of social change within social institutions rather than short, abrupt, violent revolutions.³⁹⁸ The Annales were not trying to preserve institutions of academic thought, but rather, they sought to reform the disciplines by critical reflection on their methodologies and presuppositions. Certeau would incorporate the Annales language of resistance over against revolutions, engaging history's subversive character while not using history as a tool of revolution. In this context, Lucien Febvre and Certeau both explored the depths of the issue of belief. Originally written in 1942, *Le Problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle La religion de Rabelais* explored the issues of unbelief in the 16th century and the *mentalite*, or the psychological and emotional state of the age. Similarly, in *L'écriture de l'histoire* (1975), Certeau engaged the theme of belief and the shifting structures of authority which shape the conditions of possibility for believing. While Febvre explored the *mentalite* of the age over against his contemporary paradigm of political and religious history which he argued focused on historical events, the revolution of May 1968 in Paris provided the influence for Certeau to incorporate events into his analysis of history and everyday life while not overestimating them, in part, because events and history are never sure [see section 1.2 and section 3.2]. For example, in *The Possession of Loudon*, Certeau began with an introduction entitled, "History is Never Sure," where he elucidates on the "irregularities of history," even in the case of certain events which reveal the shifting structures of authority and belief, such as the possession of Loudon or the trial of Rabelais for Febvre.³⁹⁹

Furthermore, the nuances of Michel de Certeau can also be seen when compared with another French cultural theorist who was also influenced by the Annales School. Michel Foucault

³⁹⁸ Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution*, pp. 13-15.

³⁹⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 1-10.

also drew deeply from the legacy of French historiography, perhaps even more than Certeau.⁴⁰⁰ Foucault as well as Febvre and Bloch saw history as more than static facts separated by time and space, but rather as history is written and practiced it involves a coming together of a variety of disciplines which always occur with their own bias and shortcomings. This understanding led Foucault and many of the Annales School to avoid narrative constructs within the writing of history and focus to a greater degree on analysis.⁴⁰¹ While both Certeau and Foucault were concerned with the separation of high and low culture, academic and everyday knowledge, Certeau felt that narrative had the ability within historiography to encourage belief and resistance to the hegemony of knowledge [see section 1.2.3].⁴⁰² Foucault argued that narratives of power corrupt the entire enterprise of archival research and selecting historical documents, however, as Michael Gardiner reveals, Certeau was critical of Foucault's ubiquitous hegemony of power.⁴⁰³ Certeau felt that resistance and agency (i.e. belief) was possible in narrative and the writing of history. In many ways, everyday life was Certeau's proof of this claim. Everyday life was shaped by narratives and history, and though indeed, it is negatively shaped by capitalism and politics of modernization, it also affords the conditions of possibility of being motivated by different narratives, even if they are the seemingly mundane habits of eating and cooking.

One further connection should be made between Certeau and the *Annales* school in relation to Fernand Braudel due to Braudel's similarities with Certeau's account of historiography and everyday life. Though Certeau makes no mention of Braudel in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, they published manuscripts on similar themes within a few years of each other.

⁴⁰⁰ Andrew Scull, "Foucault's Folie Et Dérailleur: Its Influence and Its Contemporary Relevance." *History Of Psychiatry* 31.3 (2020): 351-358.

⁴⁰¹ Keith Windschuttle. "Foucault as historian." *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 1.2 (1998), pp. 2, 28-31.

⁴⁰² Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage, 2000), p. 37.

⁴⁰³ Michael Gardiner, *Critiques of Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 165-166. See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. xi-xxiv.

Braudel was also present at the École pratique des hautes études in Paris. Braudel's influence on Certeau can be seen most in his historiography, as in *The Writing of History*. Certeau writes, "Thus, Braudel has shown how studies on 'cultural areas' benefit when being situated in places of transit, where 'borderline,' 'borrowed,' or 'rejected' phenomena can be perceived."⁴⁰⁴ In Braudel, Certeau saw the capacity of historians and cultural theorists to resist the alienating effects of modern systems of economics and history by focusing on the rejected space of the *Other*, the space on the margins where resistance takes place.⁴⁰⁵

6.1.3 The Study of Everyday Life: the Frankfurt School

There were also theorists of the Frankfurt School who were sympathetic to the concern for the alienation in everyday life, though they felt that Marx and Engels historical materialism and critique of politics and economics could not adequately address the experience of alienation in everyday life that they had illuminated. In many respect, the Frankfurt School was a movement that engaged cultural studies around everyday life that Certeau would react against.⁴⁰⁶ Ben Highmore notes that the cultural studies of Certeau, particularly his cultural psychoanalysis, should be viewed as obviously distinct from the Frankfurt School. However, as the Frankfurt

⁴⁰⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, p. 79.

⁴⁰⁵ It should be noted that two of Fernand Braudel's most well known pupils, Robert Mandrou and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, were both leaders in many respects of the *Annales* schools at various periods and were both critical of Certeau's perspective on history - namely, that his critique of history was proved to "navel-gazing" and excessive analysis rather than actually history.

⁴⁰⁶ Michael E. Gardiner in his study on everyday life summarizes the Frankfurt School: "Unarguably, the original members of the Frankfurt School, especially Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse, were keenly interested in rescuing and preserving the concrete and the particular from the homogenizing effects of the commodity-form and capitalist social relations. Adorno, for one, was intensely concerned about what he called the 'withering away of experience' in his masterful work *Minima Moralia* (1974), which he believed to be a consequence of 'identity-thinking,' the tendency under modernity to conflate the real with a totalizing, abstract system of static concepts. However, the Frankfurt School pursued this line of thinking only in a speculative and philosophical rather than pragmatic, sociopolitical sense; the result . . . is that they viewed the everyday as irredeemably pedestrian and commodified." See Michael Gardiner, *Critiques of Everyday Life*, p. 14.

School was concerned with similar themes of historiography, everyday life, and belief, a critical inquiry into this movement will help clarify the uniqueness of Certeau's position.⁴⁰⁷

The Frankfurt School was a collection of thinkers originally connected with the University of Frankfurt and its Institute for Social Research, and it was the collection of thinkers who were influenced by Marxism (and Leninism) but felt that certain aspects of Marx historical, economic, and political vision were ill-equipped to address the sheer weight of capitalism on everyday life.⁴⁰⁸ One could argue that rather than focusing on the revolutionary aspect of everyday life, members of the Frankfurt School turned to more theoretic means of analysis, such as psychoanalysis, in order to name the internal, oppressive nature of capitalism. While Gardiner is not wrong in his understanding of the Frankfurt School as a turn towards the "speculative and philosophical," the lens of psychoanalysis in the Frankfurt School, as well as the influence of German Idealism, should not be overlooked when considering critical theory into everyday life, for it is a turn that Certeau would employ across his interdisciplinary career [see section 4.1].

Though it was founded in 1923, the Institute of Social Research at the University of Frankfurt began to grow in influence, taking on its unique blend of Marxism, psychoanalysis, and German Idealism. Max Horkheimer believed that history progressed in a way that was inescapably connected with the psychological.⁴⁰⁹ He appointed Erich Fromm to a key position in the institute's psychoanalysis wing, and there, for four years, Fromm developed much of what is now considered the basics of the Frankfurt School's vision for social research.⁴¹⁰ Essentially, Fromm held together the "historiography of problems" of Marx (his dialectical materialism) and

⁴⁰⁷ Ben Highmore, *Michel de Certeau: Analysing Culture*, p. 58.

⁴⁰⁸ Mark Gottdiener, "Alienation, Everyday Life, and Postmodernism as Critical Theory," in F. Geyer (ed.), *Alienation, Ethnicity, and Postmodernism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood press, 1996).

⁴⁰⁹ Randall Halle, "Between Marxism and Psychoanalysis," *Journal of Homosexuality*, 29:4 (1995): 298.

⁴¹⁰ Neil McLaughlin, "How to Become a Forgotten Intellectual: Intellectual Movements and the Rise and Fall of Erich Fromm," *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 13. No. 2 (June 1998), pp. 225-227.

the unconscious roots of the ideologies and ontologies of class conflict.⁴¹¹ In a letter written to Russian philosopher Vladimir Dobrenkov, Fromm writes, “I follow completely Marx’s evolutionary scheme in which he assumes that history is a sequence of development made possible by the development of the productive forces and of labor which leads through contradictions to ever higher forms of social structures, until by the activity of man, when certain socio-economic conditions are given, man can reach a level of history in which history begins to be truly human history.”⁴¹²

Certeau’s relationship with the Frankfurt School is not as clear. His own historiography and writings of everyday life shared a similar vision to the Frankfurt School’s historiography of problems. However, the influence of the Frankfurt School on the academy in Paris is not strong.⁴¹³ At the very least, Certeau was connected to the Frankfurt School through proximity, as Herbert Marcuse and Michel de Certeau were both professors at the University of California San Diego in the 1970s.⁴¹⁴ Certeau’s reading of Marx and Freud was a close reading in the original German with comments on the semantic nuances they employ. But while the influence of the writers of the Frankfurt School upon Certeau is minimal at best, the combination of psychoanalysis and cultural studies are similar [see sections 4.1 and 4.2], though with at least one key distinction - Certeau was deeply averse to the specialization of knowledge, meaning that Certeau did not see popular culture and academic scholarship as ‘lower’ or ‘higher’ forms of knowledge. He was a defender of everyday language, and as in the introduction to *The Practice*

⁴¹¹ Randall Halle, “Between Marxism and Psychoanalysis,” pp. 297-299.

⁴¹² Erich Fromm quoted in Vladimir Dobrenkov, *Neo-Freudians in Search of Truth* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), p. 9.

⁴¹³ For example, Michel Foucault says in an interview, “The understanding that might have been established between the Frankfurt School and French philosophical thought . . . - never occurred. And when I was a student, I can assure you that I never once heard the name of the Frankfurt School mentioned by any of my professors.” Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interview and Other Writings, 1977-1984*, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman (London, Routledge, 2013), p. 26.

⁴¹⁴ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, p. 441.

of *Everyday Life*, he sought to hold a light to the formative influence on scholarship that everyday practices had. He felt that culture-making and history writing bore no distinction in method or influence across class or profession.

To explain this further, both the Frankfurt School and Certeau were influenced by social theorist, Max Weber, as explained in Tony Bennett and Diane Watson's work, *Understanding Everyday: Sociology and Society*. While Bennett and Watson begin their chronology of everyday life with Max Weber's dictum of modernity - "the disenchantment of the world," which for these writers emphasises the formal break of everyday experiences with "higher-order systems of belief," Certeau's understanding of everyday life seems to be in direct resistance of this sentiment.⁴¹⁵ It is not that Certeau did not agree with Weber's conclusion nor would Certeau disagree with Bennett and Watson's understanding of the removal of traditional structures of authority from ordinary life. However, if Bennett and Watson's understanding of Weber's dictum of modernity is that there is a higher, formalised space of knowledge and production of belief and historiography, which has been distanced in some way from the ordinary experiences of the "common" person, Certeau would offer a corrective in that he saw no distinction or distance between the ordinary, everyday believing and a higher-order system of belief. Quite the contrary, much of Certeau's impetus for writing on historiography was a critique of what some had observed in the Frankfurt School and indeed with the Situationists that there had developed an emphasis on professional writing, formalized knowledge, and higher culture to the extent that the praxis of history and everyday life in the common space was not equated with the praxis of history and everyday life by people like Weber and Foucault. History and everyday life for Certeau were created and sustained in the same manner in all spaces.

⁴¹⁵ Tony Bennett and Diane Watson, "Understanding Everyday Life: Introduction," in Tony Bennett and Diane Watson (eds.), *Understanding Everyday: Sociology and Society* (Oxford: Blackwells, 2002), p. x.

6.1.4 The Study of Everyday Life: Dada and Surrealists

As the influence of the Frankfurt School's blend of Marx, Hegel, and Freud spread across Europe, the New Left in Paris seen in figures like the Dada and Surrealists, Situationist International, and Henri Lefebvre resembled in its own way the work and impulse of the Frankfurt School. The Dada and Surrealists are generally considered to be two of the most influential *avant-garde* movements as it pertains to cultural theory. The Dadaist vision was rooted in a critique of art as inherently ideological, or in the Marxist sense, it was not a safe space from class conflict and political capital. This critique of art would translate into a wider revolt against bourgeois culture and sought to react against any constraints or limiting forces including religion, politics, economics, language, etc. Drawing upon Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, Dadaist not only called into question the language of absolutes (or inherited cultural myths like 'reason' as Adorno and Horkheimer call in question), but they essentially challenge the experience of reality in everyday life. As Tristan Tzara wrote in the "Dada Manifesto" of 1919, "Freedom: Dada Dada Dada, a roaring of tense colors, and interlacing of opposites and of all contradictions, grotesques, inconsistencies: LIFE."⁴¹⁶ German Dadaist, Richard Huelsenbeck similarly writes, "The highest art will be that which in its conscious content presents the thousandfold problems of the day."⁴¹⁷ Here, the Dadaists sought to subvert the traditional norms of language and art, envisioning a deeper, more human experience of true reality to be found in embracing the spontaneity and unpredictability of everyday life.

Surrealism developed out of the Dada movement, mostly through the influence of André Breton. Though he was very much involved with early Dadaists in Paris, Breton felt that the Dadaist aversion to politics was misinformed. Rather, he and later Surrealists from the New Left

⁴¹⁶ quoted in Michael E. Gardiner, *Critiques of Everyday Life*, pp. 31. Taken from Tristan Tzara, "Dada Manifesto 1919," in L. R. Lippard (ed.), *Dadas on Art* (Englewood Cliffs, CA: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1971).

⁴¹⁷ Richard Huelsenbeck, "Dada Manifesto of 1918," in Kenneth Coutts-Smith (ed.), *Dada* (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 76.

sought to combine a renewed vision of artistic expression (including literature) with political input as well as meditative and psychoanalytical practices that sought to unleash the subconscious.⁴¹⁸ “The very word ‘leftist nevertheless urged me on because of the way it designates, in politics on the one hand and art on the other, two approaches which until further notice may appear very different.’”⁴¹⁹ The possible differences between these approaches which were arresting to the Dadaists were navigated by writers like Breton and Max Ernst who saw the psychoanalysis of Freud as a type of guide through art and politics.

What is the relationship between Dada and Surrealism and Michel de Certeau’s research into religious history and everyday life? The combination of Marx and Freud would prove to be deeply influential for subsequent cultural theorists, such as Henri Lefebvre and Jaques Lacan [see sections 2.2 and 4.2]. Both Lefebvre and Lacan interacted with the Surrealists in Paris.

6.2 The Scope of Certeau’s ‘Everyday Life’

With the history of the rise of historiography in French cultural studies having now been outlined, what still needs to be addressed is the political implications for everyday life and, conversely, how Certeau’s project differs from other voices on the subject. In providing greater specificity to the political concerns and his heterological project within his study of everyday life, I will be able to present how Certeau’s insights into everyday life are distinctive and connected to his theology. First, I will make the case in this section for how Certeau’s use of historiography, politics, and heterology make both his tone and content distinctive in his approach to everyday life.

While the first sections offered a history of ideas with regard to historiography and everyday life, this section will focus on the theme of everyday life as a site of several political

⁴¹⁸ Michael Sheringham, *Everyday Life*, pp. 59-60.

⁴¹⁹ André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1969), pp. 213.

and cultural concerns. These concerns within French society, identified by Michael Sheringham amongst authors such as Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991), Roland Barthes (1916-80), Certeau (1925-1986), and Georges Perec (1936-1982), were: “rapid modernisation, May ’68, urbanism, Structuralism and its decline, cultural policy, and a shift towards collective memory.”⁴²⁰ These concerns will be further discussed in this section in order to demonstrate the urgency felt by cultural theorists (and the extent to which Certeau felt this urgency and why), but in this context, everyday life, *la vie quotidienne*, grew into a field that sought to negotiate several polarities within critical theory itself. It was a multi-directional bridge between the disciplines influenced by the material philosophy of Neo-Marxism and the psychoanalytical abstractions of Freud and Lacan. Though certainly not all theorist of the quotidian were Marxists or psychoanalysts, the suspicion that the material processes of the 20th century were influenced by historical flows of power and that the understanding that our daily habits should not be taken for granted or obviously understood would permeate the study of everyday life. Benjamin Highmore calls these tensions, inspired by Marx and Engels, “the actuality behind the actuality.” He summarises the interplay between various theoretical lenses and how they were held together along various tendencies within this field seeking in some way to disclose these actualities. Across disciplines and a variety of intellectuals, he explains that everyday life balanced between the particular and general, agency and structure, experience and institutions, resistance and power, and micro-analysis and macro-analysis.⁴²¹ Within the push-and-pull of these different tendencies was the desire to provide theory that interacted with, as Michael Gardiner writes, “a number of interlocking phenomena that have generally been sidelined within mainstream 20th century social theory, such as human affect and emotions, bodily experience and practical knowledges,

⁴²⁰ Michael Sheringham, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 5-7.

⁴²¹ Ben Highmore (ed.), *The Everyday Life Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 5-6.

the role played by ‘lived’ time and space in the constitution of social experience, language and intersubjectivity, and interpersonal ethics.”⁴²²

While Gardiner, Highmore, and Sheringham offer insights into the field of everyday life, I will now investigate Certeau and his collaborators in the 1970s on everyday life to understand how they interpreted the philosophical movements around everyday life and these political concerns mentioned above. In the second volume of *The Practice of Everyday Life*, published years after Certeau’s death, Luce Giard reflected on their research:

I would hypothesise that we did not belong to any school constituted within the market of ideas and methods, so we had no institutional identity; moreover, we exerted no power in the official administration of a discipline and this authorised the borrowings and minute conceptual pilfering. We had taken a certain pleasure in ‘crossing the borders’ of fields of knowledge, methods, and literary genres; would it not be normal that we had to pay for it? In fact, in 1980, it was ‘transgressive,’ as it had been, in another form, back in May 1968, to believe in imagination, in the internal freedom of the ‘man without qualities.’ Our descriptive and interpretive hypotheses ‘disturbed’ the established order, the hierarchy of abilities and knowledge. People sometimes treated us as ‘optimists’ (as if that were an intellectual insult), and sometimes as ‘gullible fool’s’ or as ‘dreams,’ and people reproached us for not having revered God Marx the way his faithful understood that it should be done. Rereading our two volumes at present, I cannot stop thinking that on certain points, we had been correct in advance — may we be forgiven for it.⁴²³

This optimistic tone, found in Certeau and his collaborators’ research, provided a distinctive voice, a counter to the developing stream of ideas around everyday life. For example, Luce Giard wrote in the previous section of volume two of *The Practice of Everyday Life* how Certeau saw Michel Foucault’s *Surveiller et punir* as a masterpiece, a work with a distinctive and influential

⁴²² Michael E. Gardiner, *Critiques of Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 3.

⁴²³ Luce Giard, “Times and Places,” in Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol, *The Practice of Everyday Life: Living and Cooking. Volume II* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. xli. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (Paris: Éditions De Minuit, 1984). It is worth briefly mentioning Bourdieu’s influential work that critique academic culture and the symbolic power of academic language. In many respects, Certeau anticipates Bourdieu’s influential critique, though Certeau is not mentioned in this text.

urgency on the nature of power.⁴²⁴ However, Certeau begins volume one with a point of departure away from Foucault's ubiquitous and oppressive nature of power. If power and discipline were everywhere and oppressive, then why does so many of the habits and patters of daily life "evade them." Certeau wrote in the introduction, "If it is true that the grid of 'discipline' is everywhere become clearer and more extensive, it is all the more urgent to discover how an entire society *resists being reduced to it* [emphasis added], what popular procedures (also 'miniscule' and quotidian) manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and corner them only in order to evade them, and finally, what 'ways of operating' form the counterpart, on the consumer's (or dominee's?) side, of the mute processes that organise the establishment of socioeconomic order."⁴²⁵ It is helpful that Giard and Certeau mention Foucault's influence with reference to the *Surveiller et punir*, as it was published in 1975. It shows that Certeau, Giard, and Mayol took into account Foucault's understanding of power into their writings on resistance as their research commission began in 1974. Kanishka Goonewardena notes that this capacity to adapt the starker criticism of the likes of Foucault and Henri Lefebvre while nuancing their "totalising" language (such as Foucault's implication that discipline is everywhere and extensive), is what made Certeau distinctive and helpful for a more complete understanding of human subjectivity in the second half of the 20th century.⁴²⁶ If avoiding totalising language meant that Certeau was not trying to provide a comprehensive, cynical theorisation of the struggles of modern life, his lack of totalising language did not preclude a lack of penetrating, urgent critiques. Luce Giard described Certeau's tone again in *Volume II*:

⁴²⁴ Luce Giard, "History of a Research Project," in Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol, *The Practice of Everyday Life: Living and Cooking. Volume II*, p. xx.

⁴²⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. xiv.

⁴²⁶ Kanishka Goonewardena, "Marxism and Everyday Life: On Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord, and some others," in *Space, Difference, and Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, ed. by Kanishka Goonewardena, Stevan Kipfer, Richard Milgram, and Christian Schmid (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2008), pp. 129-131.

Although it was with great amiability, Michel de Certeau did not spare you or himself anything. Nuanced and subtle, his criticism was scathing because it went straight to the essential, with neither condescension nor pettiness. Because it did not grant itself more as the “authorised one,” it deprived you of false theatrical exits and obliged you to really argue about the issue. Disarming, this criticism disarmed you, and in an instant you would lose your conceptual equipment and would realise that you had to start all over again from top to bottom.⁴²⁷

This distinctive nature of the tone of Certeau’s critique can be further understood when combining this tone with the content. Rather than focusing on the urgency of everyday life and the ordinary via culture (Pierre Bourdieu), or power (Michel Foucault), or materiality/space (Henri Lefebvre), Certeau focused on the context of ordinary, everyday practices. The study of practices, as noted by Claire Colebrook, is by nature heterological. The endless number of such practices that make up everyday life, multiplied by the endless number of individual experiences with these practices contextualised Certeau’s inquiry into everyday life as essentially “a way of thinking about otherness without knowing the other in advance. . . [Thus] Certeau’s theory of practices is an attempt to think the other of theory.”⁴²⁸ As Michael Gardiner explains, “Certeau’s attempt to develop a ‘heterology,’ a plurality of meaning-constitutive practices, as against the official practice of historiography and sociological analysis, is intended to highlight and preserve the irreducible multiplicity of human social and cultural forms.”⁴²⁹ In Certeau’s own words on his inquiry into everyday life, “The point is not so much to discuss this elusive yet fundamental subject as to make such discussion possible; that is by means of inquiries and hypothesis, to indicate pathways for further research. This goal will be achieved if everyday practices, ‘ways of

⁴²⁷ Luce Giard, “Times and Places,” in Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol, *The Practice of Everyday Life: Living and Cooking: Volume II* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. xviii.

⁴²⁸ Claire Colebrook, *New Literary Histories: New Historicism and Contemporary Criticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 135.

⁴²⁹ Michael E. Gardiner, *Critiques of Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 162. See also Ben Highmore (ed.), *The Everyday Life Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 13. “For Certeau the social individual is far too waywardly heterogenous (too networked) to form the basis of an analysis of the everyday as practical life. After all, any one individual lives across a vast range of forces and relationship that, if taken as the basis for viewing the everyday, would obscure the singularity of any single action.”

operating' or doing things, no longer appear as merely the obscure background of social activity, and if a body of theoretical questions, method, categories, and perspectives, by penetrating this obscurity, make it possible to articulate them."⁴³⁰ While the nature of the body of theories and methods around everyday life was often difficult to formulate, Certeau's subject matter was ordinary and concrete - writing, walking, cooking, reading, working, etc.⁴³¹ Balancing what Highmore described as the experiential with the institutional, and the microanalysis with the macroanalysis, Certeau used the banality of everyday activities to illustrate what theoretical discussions of culture often miss, that is the *otherness* of cultural theory.

A sort of 'knowledge' remains there, though deprived of its technical apparatus (out of which machines have been made); the remaining ways of operating are those that have no legitimacy with respect to productivist rationality (e.g. the everyday arts of cooking, cleaning, sewing, etc.). On the other hand, what is left behind by ethnological colonisation acquires the status of a 'private' activity, is charged with symbolic investments concerning everyday activity, and functions under the sign of collective or individual particulars; it becomes in short the legendary and at the same time active memory of what remains at the margins or in the interstices of scientific or cultural orthopraxis.⁴³²

This quote reveals another distinctive quality of Certeau's study of everyday life, this being his critique of the academic sneer towards popular culture. Throughout *The Practice of Everyday Life*, there is a commentary on any academic hierarchy that avoided the influence or proliferation of spheres of culture-making that lacked their "technical apparatus" or orthopraxis. In this sense, Certeau attempted to develop an account of everyday life based on what was left behind in social theory, a type of *otherness* of theory as Colebrook suggested. In the first volume of *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Certeau used the example of Ludwig Wittgenstein's comparison of philosophical language and "ordinary language." In summary, Wittgenstein

⁴³⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xi.

⁴³¹ Ibid., p. xix.

⁴³² Ibid., pp. 69-70.

accused the philosopher of seeking to inhabit a place of mastery, a disciplined distance from the “ordinary man,” in an inevitably failed attempt to gain objectivity. The philosopher is “caught,” Wittgenstein’s phrase, within ordinary language, and “any position of mystery is denied him.”⁴³³ Calling this phenomena, “a philosophical politics of culture,” Certeau explained, “the critical return of the ordinary, as Wittgenstein understands it, must destroy all the varieties of rhetorical brilliance associated with powers that hierarchies and with nonsense that enjoys authority.”⁴³⁴ To press the point of nuance and distinctiveness further, Ben Highmore alludes to both Certeau’s politics and heterology of everyday language. “To invoke an ordinary culture from below is to make the invisible visible, and as such has clear social and political resonances. To summon-up a specific everyday, or to call a group of people together is to recognise that a shared everyday life has been an important step in bringing to visibility the lives of those who have been sidelined by dominant accounts of social life.” Highmore continues, “. . . to approach everyday life as a realm of generality tends to privilege social structures, institutions, and discourses, and to see these as a domain of power of determining the everyday.”⁴³⁵ In many respects, Certeau illustrated Highmore’s observation by following the chapter on Wittgenstein with a section on the language and mysticism of the peasants in cities in South America, noting how their language and heroes were seen as mendacious by the rich and powerful.⁴³⁶ A philosophical politics of culture and everyday life, then, begs the question, who’s everyday life is being studied, the peasant or the rich and powerful? Based on Certeau’s reading of Foucault and Wittgenstein, perhaps his answer would be, “the person whose everyday life was forgotten or ignored.”

Speculation aside, Certeau’s tone and content of the study of everyday life, heterological and political, still leaves the question: what is wrong with everyday life? In his analysis of Certeau’s *oeuvre*, Ian Buchanan summarises what he saw as the crux of the everyday life study

⁴³³ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., p. 13.

⁴³⁵ Ben Highmore (ed.), *The Everyday Life Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 1-2, 5.

⁴³⁶ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 15-17.

as two fold. “First, Certeau is clearly suspicious of anything that smacks at all of utopian thinking (medicine, fully as much as urban renewal); and, second, he is quite desperate in his plea-making that a certain ineffable something of everyday life be consciously conserved by architects and city-planners alike (that person that lingers on in spite of being treated as a patient).”⁴³⁷ To connect Buchanan’s observation with what has already been said about the political scope of Certeau’s account of everyday life, Buchanan went on to critique utopian thinking as a type of “totalising language,” a type of language which Certeau avoids. The city-planning and urbanism aspect of Certeau’s everyday life spoke to the nature of space and human subjectivity, but as a point of clarification if not correction, Certeau’s critique was not against utopian ideologies, necessarily, but utopian language, meaning that Certeau’s political, heterological, and historiographical response to other critiques of everyday life were significantly projects of socio-linguistics. Buchanan concludes that Certeau resisted the tendency towards totalising critiques, utopian language, as well as meta-narratives, though Certeau did not explicitly connect these ideas. The point in drawing on Buchanan’s observation is to highlight a distinctive nuance in Certeau’s approach to everyday life. As Luce Giard showed, Certeau was deeply hopeful in his vision of everyday life but not utopian; he was “scathing” but not totalising. Similarly, Certeau was nuanced on power but not conservative. As a matter of socio-linguistics (Buchanan calls this “semanticisation”), Certeau’s critique of everyday life centred around communication and language. “Even in a situation as utopian-charged as May 1968 must have been, at least at a libidinal level, a time when in Certeau’s own perception, it seemed as if a radical change had in fact occurred, that somehow the old had been exposed in a new light that destroyed its credibility, opening the space for new way of thinking about society to briefly blossom, Certeau still did not take an avowedly utopian position. What he saw instead was the ineffable something he’d long had faith in was suddenly being released in the wind — people were ‘starting to speak’ — and that was what was truly marvelous about the ‘event.’”⁴³⁸

⁴³⁷ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publication, 2000), p. 22.

⁴³⁸ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, p. 23.

The relationship between May '68 and *The Practice of Everyday Life* will be made clear in the next section on the theme of everyday life across the development of Certeau's career and thinking, but the issue of May '68 accentuates the distinctiveness of Certeau's account of communication and language. Everyday life as a growing discourse within critical theology concerned Certeau with how it was articulated by professionals but at the same time, this articulation did not take into account the voices that were so ordinary they did not seem to influence how everyday life was articulated by philosophers and cultural theorists. Certeau explained in the introduction to *The Practice of Everyday Life*:

In current discussions, one can discern the surreptitious return of a rhetoric that metaphorises the fields 'proper' to scientific analysis, while, in research laboratories, one finds an increasing distance between actual everyday practices (practices of the same order as the art of cooking) and the 'scenarios' that punctuate with utopian images the hum of operations in every laboratory: on the one hand, mixtures of science and fiction; on the other, a disparity between the spectacle of overall strategies and the opaque reality of local tactics. We are thus led to inquire in the 'underside' of scientific activity and to ask whether it does not function as a collage — juxtaposing, but linking less and less effectively, the theoretical ambitions of the discourse with the stubborn persistence of ancient tricks in the everyday work of agencies and laboratories. In any event, this split structure, observable in so many administrations and companies, requires us to rethink all the tactics which have so far been neglected by the epistemology of science.⁴³⁹

Buchanan is quick to clarify that Certeau is not romanticising or valorising language from the "underside" or "from down below," which he is right to note since Certeau would then be guilty of exchanging one false utopian vision for another.⁴⁴⁰ But with the issue of communication, Certeau made the case that the practices, tactics, and strategies of everyday life were inescapable from any agency, laboratory, administration, or company that would assume a distance from everyday language; the everyday language that laboratory scientists used was not taken into account in scientific epistemology. Even Certeau's language of tactics and strategies (which I

⁴³⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xxiii.

⁴⁴⁰ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, p. 48.

will make clear in the final section of this chapter), while it may seem like new “scientific” categories, in actuality they pertained to things like “ruses,” procrastination, waisting time, and day dreaming.⁴⁴¹ The point I am emphasising is that one of Certeau’s central aim in his analysis of everyday life, seen through his political and heterological scope, was to negate the ways in which social sciences had unhelpfully outlined what everyday life was, and by contrast, Certeau desired to describe everyday life in a manner that took into account the language and logic of the practices of everyday life.⁴⁴²

6.3 The Roots and Religiosity of Certeau’s Approach to Everyday Life

In this section I will argue two different emphases round Certeau’s inquiry into everyday life that have yet to be drawn out in studies of Certeau. I will demonstrate that Certeau’s Jesuit formation and spirituality, which he maintained throughout his life [see section 0.1], helped shape his approach to everyday life prior to May ’68 [see section 2.1], along with his being commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture [see section 0.1]. While demonstrating Certeau’s influences and formation around everyday life will prove to be beneficial, there is a deeper theme that will be articulated, this being the relationship in Certeau’s thought between everyday life and his religiosity. If an essential part of the Ignatian exercises is to acknowledge the “presence” of God in daily life, can we expect to see this understanding of immanence to be expressed in a type of theology of everyday life? After I show how everyday life was a theme in Certeau’s early writings on Favre and Surin as well as his work in Catholic journals in the 1960s,

⁴⁴¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. xix, 39-42. For this chapter, I have chosen to focus on the wider theme of resistance, rather than the specifics of “tactics” and “strategies.” My reason for this is two fold: first, in exploring the intersection between Certeau’s theology and his approach to everyday life, I agree with Ian Buchanan that Certeau’s emphasis on resistance has a deep theological resonance. See Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, p. 23. Second, there are those like Antonio Eduardo Alonso who have critiqued an “accent” within scholarship surrounding Certeau on the link between tactics, strategies, and resistance. Alonso argues that tactics, in line with Certeau’s heterological project, are more of sign of what is absent than resistance. In light of Alonso’s critique of scholarship on tactics, I am focusing on resistance, spirituality, and the symbolic order in this chapter.

⁴⁴² Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist*, p. 49-51. See also Michael Sheringham, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present*, pp. 216-219.

I will make the case that May '68 occasioned both a continuation of this theme of everyday life as well as a pointing to a departure from other prevailing theologies of immanence, a theology of language for one example. As Luce Giard notes, May '68 was a turning point, a type of conversion which led to *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

With Certeau's writing on Favre and Surin as well as his articles in the late 1950s and early 1960s in Jesuit journals, the theme of the quotidian was not a later development for Certeau.⁴⁴³ "In Ignatian mysticism, one learns through encounters with everyday "otherness" to seek the God who is always 'more.'"⁴⁴⁴ Why is it then that between the two volumes of *The Practice of Everyday Life*, there is only one mention of Jesuit spirituality? The one time it is mentioned is in a section written by Pierre Mayol, not Certeau.⁴⁴⁵ The answer is not as simple as an assumed invisible presence of God in human life. Rather, from his early work on Favre, Surin, and Jesuit theology, Certeau presented a nuanced and sophisticated account of God's absence, the *Other*, and God's silence which influence modern languages, while still accounting for the presence of God in history and daily experiences. Take for example the following quote, originally published in 1957.

Dans son expérience quotidienne, le chrétien est toujours renvoyé à l'au-delà de lui-même; et pourtant dans cet « ailleurs » du temps, du langage et des autres,

⁴⁴³ Certeau's contributions in *Christus* and *Etudes* have been noted in previous sections of the thesis such as the Introduction and chapter five covering mysticism. For articles including the theme of the quotidian, the ordinary, or everyday life, see Michel de Certeau, "L'Ascension," *Christus*, t. 6, No. 22 (1959): 8-12; Certeau, "La conversion du missionnaire," *Christus*, t. 10, No. 40 (1963): 514-533; Certeau, "Situations culturelles, vocation spirituelle," *Christus*, t. 11, No. 43, (1964): 294-313; Certeau, "Comme un voleur," *Christus*, t. 12, No. 45 (1965): 25-41; Certeau, "Expérience chrétienne et langages de la foi," *Christus*, t. 12, No. 46 (1965): 147-163; Certeau, "La langage figuratif," *Etudes*, t. 328, (April 1968): 587-589.

⁴⁴⁴ Philip Sheldrake, "Michel de Certeau: Spirituality and The Practice of Everyday Life," *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, Volume 12, Number 2 (Fall 2012): 211.

⁴⁴⁵ I am utilising an observation made by Philip Sheldrake found here: Philip Sheldrake, "Michel de Certeau: Spirituality and The Practice of Everyday Life," *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, Volume 12, Number 2 (Fall 2012): 211. Sheldake makes the case, though in passing, that this singular reference is not coincidental but a deliberate connection to the role the Spiritual Exercises play in inhabiting place and space.

il rencontre le Dieu qui se manifeste à lui sans qu'il le possède. Il n'est pas « un » mais « unifié » en même temps qu'unificateur; il comprend en lui une altérité qu'il n'a jamais fini d'assimiler et qui lui donne ce qu'il ne pourrait obtenir en lui-même; il a toujours ce qu'il est dans ce qu'il n'est pas. Situation étrange! Toujours en deçà de soi-même et toujours donné à lui-même; toujours perdu et toujours retrouvé. Rien d'étonnant qu'il éprouve le vertige de ne rien tenir et que cet élan captateur, toujours déçu, se tourne en accusation contre son Dieu ou contre lui-même. Toujours sûr de Dieu, jamais sûr de soi, le croyant n'« a » Dieu en rein de ce qu'il possède car Dieu est transcendant au don qu'il accorde de lui-même, mais non pas extérieur à ce don.⁴⁴⁶

Note the constant use of *toujours* (*always*), showing a more pronounced and forthright form of writing rarely exhibited by Certeau in his later writings. Certeau's theological foundations were pronouncedly rooted in the experiencing of God in space, language, and *otherness*, though not in a way that can be possessed - it must be believed. The daily experiences of life entail an "ailleurs," an elsewhere in which God manifests but not in a way that the believer can control. God is experienced in the *otherness* of time (and space), language, and other people. One can trace the elusiveness of the experience of God to Certeau's emphasis on the elusiveness of everyday life itself in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, where everyday life is "practiced" though not necessarily known. In the introduction to the second volume of *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Luce Giard comments on the elusive nature of the experience of God in the contemporary life, with "the death of God" and "the death of belief" and how Certeau translated this phenomena into the dubious nature of everyday life by focusing on the nature of everyday in

⁴⁴⁶ Michel de Certeau, "L'expérience religieuse, « connaissance vécue » dans l'église," in *Le voyage mystique*, Michel de Certeau, ed. Luce Giard (Paris: Recherches de Science Religieuse, 1988), p. 47. Originally published as Michel de Certeau, "L'expérience religieuse, « connaissance vécue » dans l'Eglise," in *Pax* (Lyon), t. 19, n° 13, 1957, pp 1-17. [In his daily experience, the Christian is always referred to beyond himself; and yet in this "elsewhere" of time, language and others, he encounters the God who manifests himself to him without his possessing him. He is not 'one' but 'unified' at the same time as a unifier; he understands in himself an otherness which he has never finished assimilating and which gives him what he could not obtain in himself; he always has what he is in what he is not. Strange situation! Always below itself and always given to itself; always lost and always found. It is not surprising that he experiences the dizziness of holding nothing and that this captivating impulse, always disappointed, turns in accusation against his God or against himself. Always sure of God, never sure of himself, the believer has a God in nothing of what he possesses because God is transcendent to the gift he bestows on himself, but not exterior to this gift. *Trans.*]

terms of what could be “grasped” or “possessed.”⁴⁴⁷ Rather than focusing on the individual phenomenology of experiences of God in everyday life, Certeau focused on the interworking of language and belief [see section 5.3], such as how stories and “tactics” shape which have the potential to disrupt hegemonic power for everyday life and the symbolic order. Some of these stories and tactics are as simple as day to day work. Consider the introduction to Pierre Favre’s *Mémorial*. This introduction, nearly one hundred pages, represents Certeau’s first major published work, a translated manuscript. François Dosse observed that in this introduction, Certeau’s aim was to connect Favre’s personal journal and theological accounts of his life with a Jesuit theology of the Exercises.⁴⁴⁸ Certeau wrote on Favre in this introduction:

Son journal est planté sur ce sol, comme l’attestent tant de termes ruraux: l’arbre, la racine, les rameaux, les fruits, la moisson, etc., et ces « mains » du travailleur, mains de Dieu qui créent et répandent le bien, mains de l’Esprit qui modèlent, mains de l’homme, laborieuse, infatigables, mains qui rassemblent la récolte et progressent dans le travail. Toute une symbolique illustre l’expérience paysanne qui a été, telle le champ où Favre fit à douze ans le vœu de rester toujours chaste, le lieu des premières expériences religieuses. C’est là que le petit pastoureau a connu Dieu. *Il ne peut l’oublier.*⁴⁴⁹

Speaking of the life of Pierre Favre, Certeau related the field of the everyday working, everyday symbols and realities, to “une symbolique” of religious experiences, like vows of chastity. The symbolism of experience found in this introduction predates his later work on the symbolic order

⁴⁴⁷ Luce Giard, “History of a Research Project” in Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol, *The Practice of Everyday Life: Living and Cooking: Volume II* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. xxx - xxxiii. See also Luce Giard, “Cherchant Dieu,” in Michel de Certeau, *La Faiblesse de Croire* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987), pp. iv-xii.

⁴⁴⁸ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002), p. 102.

⁴⁴⁹ Michel de Certeau, “Introduction,” in Pierre Favre, *Mémorial*, trans. Michel de Certeau (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1959), pp. 14-15. [His diary is planted on this soil, as attested by so many rural terms: the tree, the root, the branches, the fruits, the harvest, etc., and these “hands” of the worker, hands of God who creates and spreads good, moulding hands of the Spirit, hands of man, industrious, indefatigable, hands that gather the harvest and progress in the work. A whole symbolism illustrates the peasant experience which was, like the field where Favre at the age of twelve made the vow to always remain chaste, the place of the first religious experiences. It was there that the little shepherd boy knew God. He can’t forget it. *Trans.*]

in *La Prise de Parole*. This is significant for understanding Certeau's theological foundation of theology and cultural theory. There is, of course, the key Ignatian thread of God's activity in daily life: this should not be underestimated. However, there is a simultaneous layer of mystery and revelation of God even in institutions and spaces related to everyday life such as psychology, language, bodies, economies, etc. We find these layers early on in Certeau in the late 1950s, accentuated in Favre with the ending of Certeau's introduction to his Favre's *Mémorial* with this:

La multiplicité des événements où se renouvelle le sentiment de l'action divine, les formes variées sous lesquelles l'impulsion, la réalité et l'attrait de Dieu apparaissent dans l'activité dispersée de Favre, montrent assez que cette unité n'est pas le fait de l'homme, mais un don sans cesse mieux reconnu. Ici, le Mystère de Dieu n'est perçu qu'à travers son Action, et cette Action même que dans le mouvement de l'activité personnelle, dans un agir qui est tout à la fois une participation à l'activité divine et une révélation de Dieu en ce qu'il fait. Mystique d'action si l'on veut (si toutefois cette expression, a un sens); mystique d'actif plutôt, dans la mesure où la vie de Favre lui est devenue l'expérience quotidienne du Dieu vivant, Un et trine.⁴⁵⁰

Certeau's early writings revealed the theological foundation of daily life and the relationship between God and human experience which continued into his later writings. It is possible, for Certeau, for human subjectivity to participate in the life of Triune God, sharing in the events of divine action, the mystery of divine activity, the gift of God's revelation. "La réalité et l'attrait" (the reality and attraction) of God, found in the life of Favre for Certeau was seen in Activity, as in the divine action mentioned in the previous quote. This activity included the mystery, the elusiveness, and "Mystique d'action" of God in human affairs, such as the institutions, spaces, and structures of daily life. Certeau's spoke of the nature of activity and

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 95. [The multiplicity of events in which the feeling of divine action is renewed, the varied forms under which the impulse, the reality and the attraction of God appear in the dispersed activity of Favre, show enough that this unity is not the fact of man, but a gift increasingly recognised. Here, the Mystery of God is perceived only through his Action, and this Action itself only in the movement of personal activity, in an action which is both a participation in divine activity and a revelation of God in what he does. Mystique of action if you will (if this expression has any meaning); mystique of active, and so Favre's life has become for him the daily experience of the living God, One and Triune. *Trans.*]

experience in a later text “How is Christianity Thinkable Today?” originally a lecture given at the University of St. Louis in 1971. “Within the Christian experience, the boundary or limit is a place of action which ensures the step from a particular situation onto a progress (opening a future and creating a new past), from a being “there” to a being “elsewhere,” from one stage to another. . . . When it comes to an objective, readable, communicable, and understandable Christianity, action articulates the immense silence of Christian experiences, works, and departures with regard to those things that limit and specify such experiences.”⁴⁵¹ This lecture was given before *The Practice of Everyday Life* was researched so, in turn, his key text on everyday life further develops this theme of actions, experience, and the opening of space.

Continuing with Certeau’s earlier texts, which include the theme of everyday life and the nature and mystery of divine activity, Certeau’s writings in the 1960s prior to May ’68 revealed a combination of everyday spirituality with cultural theory. This combination was an aspect of his writing that made Certeau distinct from other theologians and cultural theorists in this period. In an article written in 1966, “Culture et expérience spirituelle,” revealed, in some respects, that he was writer of his time.⁴⁵² Frederick Bauerschmidt, in his analysis of this article, notes how Certeau drew from Jesuits of the mid-twentieth century. “When Certeau speaks ‘the God who always reveals his truth as a truth about man’ one can hear the ‘anthropological turn,’ . . . be represented by the German Jesuit Karl Rahner. . . . Likewise, in stressing the historical conditioning of religious language and experience, Certeau builds on the works of the French Jesuit, Henri de Lubac.”⁴⁵³ Bauerschmidt continues on, however, to argue for Certeau’s distinctiveness when compared with his contemporaries: “Thus, while much Catholic theology in

⁴⁵¹ This lecture is now reprinted as Michel de Certeau, “How is Christianity Thinkable Today?” in *The Postmodern God*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwells Publishers, 2000), pp. 151-153.

⁴⁵² Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, “Introduction: Michel de Certeau, Theologian,” in *The Certeau Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwells, 2000), p. 210.

⁴⁵³ Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, “Introduction: Michel de Certeau, Theologian,” p. 210.

the 1960s was caught up in trying to inhale the dying grass of existentialism, Certeau's historicism led him to focus attention on the ways in which cultures and traditions shape and authorise belief."⁴⁵⁴ Again, the ways in which cultures and traditions shape belief are no less than the practices, language, and spaces of everyday life. François Dosse said similarly of Certeau in this period, "À propos du contenu, Certeau constant la difficile adéquation entre l'intérêt que portent les chrétiens aux diverses expériences culturelles contemporaines et leur volonté d'y retrouver ce qui inspire leur foi."⁴⁵⁵ While Rahner's anthropological turn encouraged devotional and apologetic writings and de Lubac influenced developments in historical doctrine, Certeau's analysis of the elusive nature of human experience and experiences of God influenced his crucial theme of belief, particularly as it relates to the symbolic order and social semiotics in the *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

Before moving to Certeau's volumes on everyday life, I will discuss the events of May '68 once more, this time pertaining to how this student revolt influenced Certeau's account of theology and daily life [see section 2.1]. Previously in this section, we have been discussing articles and introductions for Jesuit texts. It worth noting again that Certeau was employed as an editor for a journal during the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Certeau also liaised heavily with Henri de Lubac, particularly as Lubac was scrutinised during the council. It could be argued though that the events of the Second Vatican Council did not influence Certeau's theology of everyday life, neither to the extent of his early Jesuit formation nor to the extent of the influence of May '68. Bauerschmidt is right to note a marked contrast in Certeau from his contemporary theologians while at the same time utilising the influence of the likes of Rahner and Lubac (though Bauerschmidt also notes that his emphasis on Rahner's influence on Certeau is in part

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 211.

⁴⁵⁵ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, p. 139. [Regarding the content, Certeau maintains the difficult balance between the interest of Christians in various contemporary cultural experiences and their desire to find there what inspires their faith. *Trans.*]

conjectural). If, from Favre, Certeau valued an understanding of divine experiences that cannot be grasped or possessed while still situated in the elsewhere of daily experience and from Surin Certeau valued the divergent and *otherness* of mystical spirituality, then the Second Vatican Council would prove to have a less constructive influence on Certeau's theological development. Speaking of the tension between conservatives and progressives and their respective understanding of *aggiornamento* (updating), Certeau felt, even before May '68, that a return to dogma would push the church further towards irrelevance. The council did encourage theology to see the church as *within* the world, creating the impetus for Catholic minds, theologians especially, to immerse themselves in the "logic of culture," including the social sciences. However, Certeau was concerned that the Christian use of the social sciences was less about "updating" and more about recovering authority.⁴⁵⁶ Dosse addressed Certeau's tension over the Second Vatican Council:

Certeau souligne le fossé progressif qui s'instaure entre l'expérience chrétienne de ses contemporains et le mode d'expression qui est à leur disposition pour pouvoir la communiquer. Le langage de la foi semble relégué dans une extériorité qui exprime un passé désaffecté. C'est tout un système culturel qui s'effondre et provoque une crise de l'Église semblable à celle qu'elle a connue au début de l'époque moderne. La manière dont Certeau entrevoit une réponse à la crise générale de la croyance ne consiste pas à adopter un programme nouveau, mais à trouver une parole qui puisse exprimer et communiquer le mystère de la foi.⁴⁵⁷

The utilisation of the social sciences, for Certeau, was not for the purpose of adopting a new program to express a disaffected past, but rather it was to participate in a new language of communication to discern the nature of belief in human experience.

⁴⁵⁶ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, p. 127.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 125 [Certeau underlines the progressive gap which established itself between the Christian experience of his contemporaries and the mode of expression which is at their disposal by which they communicate it. The language of faith seems relegated to an exteriority that expresses a disaffected past. It is a whole cultural system that is collapsing and causing a crisis in the Church similar to that which it experienced at the beginning of the modern era. The way in which Certeau foresees an answer to the general crisis of belief does not consist in adopting a new program, but in finding a word that can express and communicate the mystery of faith. *Trans.*]

While the Second Vatican Council occasioned a movement towards the social sciences and an analysis of culture, Certeau was already interacting with psychoanalysis, social semiotics, and cultural theory. However, it would be a few years later with the events of May '68 that would vividly demonstrate for Certeau the breakdown of the human faculty of belief as well as the hegemony of the symbolic order on everyday life. Written months after the student revolt, *La Prise de Parole* addressed the symbolic violence and silencing of communication that occurred through this event.

In the complex function of communication, not in what is deemed most valuable in cultural representations or in political economy, but rather, in what sustains and organises it, three priorities are key: whatever is oral, operative, and ordinary. All three return to us by way of the detour from a supposedly foreign stage, popular culture, that has been the subject of a growing number of studies on oral traditions, practical creativity, and the acts of daily life. One more step is needed to read the fictive barrier and to recognise that in truth our very culture is also at stake, even unbeknownst to us. For the social sciences have analysed in terms of popular culture the functionings that are fundamental to our urban and modern culture, but that are held to be illegitimate or negligible in the official discourses of modernity.⁴⁵⁸

May '68 brought into focus the silencing of voices from the ordinary, including things he considered as popular culture like magazines, film, and everyday language. Consistent with his critique in other disciplines, Certeau felt that the day to day operations of language that were fundamental to social sciences (everyday language for example) were being ignored, if not discarded, during the official discourses of modernity. What do the oral, the operative, and the ordinary have to do with theology then? In the least, these three facets constitute the space in which people are made to believe. The oral, the operative, and the ordinary influence the shifting authorities of what becomes believable or what is “disproven” away from belief and censored

⁴⁵⁸ Michel de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech & Other Political Writings*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 101.

within the symbolic order.⁴⁵⁹ The oral, the operative (tactics, strategies, and stories), and the ordinary will be further addressed through Certeau's volumes on *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

This section has shown the presence of the quotidian in works previous to *The Practice of Everyday Life* and how this theme grew alongside his unique account of human experiences of God. However, before moving into a discussion of *The Practice of Everyday Life*, there is another theme that is crucial to this text that Certeau expressed towards the end of the Second Vatican Council and in conversation with the events of May '68. This theme is *revolution*. If *La Prise de Parole* was the text where Certeau expressed in specific terms what he was most concerned about in regard to May '68, then it is worth asking why Certeau was sympathetic with revolutions, especially since his mentor, Henri de Lubac, was so critical of May '68? In order to understand *The Practice of Everyday Life* and Certeau's relationship between theology and everyday life, it is necessary to make clear what need Certeau found in revolution/resistance. Why the language of *crisis*?

To answer this question, one must investigate Certeau's own life beyond his texts, what Luce Giard called his "conjunction of personal circumstances."⁴⁶⁰ During the Second Vatican Council, Certeau was a writer and editor for a Jesuit journal, *Christus*. Indeed, much of his theological writings in relation to the Second Vatican Council are found in his articles with this journal.⁴⁶¹ However, in 1966, due to internal politics, Certeau would leave his position at

⁴⁵⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech & Other Political Writings*, pp. 107, 172.

⁴⁶⁰ Luce Giard, "Introduction: How Tomorrow is Being Born," in Michel de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech & Other Political Writings*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. xi.

⁴⁶¹ See Michel de Certeau, "Des enfants avisés," *Christus*, t. 10, n° 38 (1963): 165-177; "La conversion du missionnaire," *Christus*, t. 10, n° 40 (1963): 514-533; "Le temps des conflits," *Christus*, t. 11, n° 41 (1964): 77-90; "Situations culturelles, vocation spirituelle," *Christus*, t. 11, n° 43 (1964): 294-313; "Donner la parole," *Christus*, t. 11, n° 44 (1964): 438-456; "Comme un voleur," *Christus*, t. 12, n° 45 (1965): 25-41; "Expérience chrétienne et langages de la foi," *Christus*, t. 12, n° 46 (1965): 147-163; "Unité et divisions des catholiques," *Christus*, t. 12, n° 47 (1965): 365-383; "Ouverture sociale et renouveau missionnaires de l'école chrétienne," *Christus*, t. 12, n° 48 (1965): 554-571; "La rénovation de la vie religieuse," *Christus*, t. 13, n° 49 (1966): 109-119; "L'universalisme ignatius; mystique et mission," *Christus*, t. 13, n° 50 (1966): 173-183; "L'épreuve de temps," *Christus*, t. 13, n° 51 (1966): 311-331; "De la participation au discernment, tâche chrétienne après Vatican II," *Christus* t. 13, n° 53 (1966): 518-537.

Christus, with his last publication during his employment published in 1966, “De la participation au discernment, tâche chrétienne après Vatican II” (From participation to discernment: a Christian task after Vatican II).⁴⁶² The end of Certeau’s time with *Christus* marked the shift in many senses of his research direction, leaving him, in the words of Luce Giard, “uncertain of over the future of his research. He hesitated at the threshold of a new direction, he dreamed of unknown connections to be made between history and theology, and psychoanalysis increasingly attracted him as a means of personal elucidation and as a critical theory of society.”⁴⁶³

During this transition from *Christus*, Certeau also faced the unfortunate tragedies of his younger sister’s death in 1966, then his mother’s death in 1967 in an automobile accident, in which Certeau was also injured, losing sight in one eye and was fortunate to survive. Later that year in 1967, Certeau would participate in an academic discussion with cultural theorists and artists on the effects of automobile deaths on French life and the crisis of the mass production of faster cars with few safety regulations.⁴⁶⁴ The sense of crisis and revolution, for Certeau, was furthered developed during this period with his trips to South America.⁴⁶⁵ In 1966, Certeau traveled to Brazil for the Confederation of Latin American Religious (CLAR) in Rio de Janeiro. “Il fait de la situation religieuse de l’ensemble des pays d’Amérique latine l’objet d’une réflexion de à la fois sociologique et théologique. . . Tous les débats tournent autour de la notion de développement, sur la nécessité d’un changement radicale d’orientation, d’une mobilisation effective contre la pauvreté.”⁴⁶⁶ Moved by the experience of the religious priests and nuns,

⁴⁶² François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, p. 126.

⁴⁶³ Luce Giard, “Introduction: How Tomorrow is Being Born,” p. xi.

⁴⁶⁴ François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau: Le marcheur blessé*, p. 468.

⁴⁶⁵ Peter Burke, “The Art of Reinterpretation,” *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, No. 100 (December 2002): 31-32.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 173. [It makes the religious situation of all Latin America countries the subject of both sociological and theological reflection. . . All the debates revolve around the notion of development, on the need for a radical change of direction, and effective mobilisation against poverty. *Trans.*]

Certeau returned to South America in 1967, visiting Venezuela, Chile, Argentina, and returning to Brazil. After leaving *Christus*, he published one more article in 1967 on his “notes de voyages” from this second trip to South America. Later that year, Che Guevara and Régis Debray, the French academic and journalist who was a professor in Cuba and associate of Guevara in the 1960s, were captured in October and April respectively. For his new employer, *Etudes*, Certeau published an article, in December, on Guevara’s October execution and “sa légende et sa vérité” of his revolution.⁴⁶⁷ Certeau’s concluded this article with a poignant lens towards the crisis at hand and the need for theology to speak into it.

Nous parlons beaucoup, et à juste titre, de la révolution, et donc d’une théologie de la révolution. De fait, la question nous est posée à chacun. . . Si le christianisme ne pouvait instaurer aujourd’hui autre chose qu’une récupération de notions anciennes pour couvrir le champ d’expériences nouvelles, il avouerait ainsi qu’il est incapable d’indiquer le sens chrétien des conditions mêmes dans lesquelles s’opère et s’exprime la révolution. Ce ne serait qu’une légende. Mais nous sommes portés à penser que le lien entre le militant pour le combat et le théoricien qui s’en déclare solidaire nous renvoie à quelque chose d’essentiel (et de distinct) dans la révélation chrétienne: il y est question de « faire la vérité » et d’apprendre de l’histoire ce qu’elle révèle à celui qui y participe à ses risques et périls.⁴⁶⁸

Certeau wrote of the need to not have “la mauvaise conscience,” (a bad conscience) that would seek to address these issues in torment and guilt, yet he felt a sense of urgency, consistent with his historiographical work on mysticism, for the truth of history and human experience to be

⁴⁶⁷ Michel de Certeau, “Che Guevara et Régis Debray, la révolution entre sa légende et sa vérité,” *Etudes* (December 1967): 624-629.

⁴⁶⁸ Michel de Certeau, “Che Guevara et Régis Debray, la révolution entre sa légende et sa vérité,” p. 629 [We talk a lot, and rightly so, about revolution, and therefore about a theology of revolution. In fact, the question is posed to each of us. . . If Christianity could not establish anything today other than a recovery of old notions to cover the field of new experiences, it would thus admit that it is incapable of indicating the Christian meaning of the very conditions in which revolution operates and expresses itself. It would just be a legend. But we are led to think that the link between the militant for the fight and the theoretician who declares himself in solidarity with it refers us to something essential (and distinct) in Christian revelation: it is a question of “making the truth » and to learn from history what it reveals to those who participate in it at their own risk and peril. *Trans.*]

communicated in ways that do not simply retell Christian dogma. The oral, the operative, and the ordinary were themes present in this text on Guevara in the sense that the telling of the stories of the daily lives of those who were suffering was a crucial theological task. “. . . These meetings in South America clearly played a determining role in the way that Certeau experienced the crisis of May 1968,” and would prove to shape how May ’68 influenced Certeau’s understanding of everyday life.⁴⁶⁹

6.4 Ordinary, Subversive Spirituality: Belief and Theology in *The Practice of Everyday Life*

If we continue with May ’68, and the way a sense of crisis and revolution influenced Certeau’s account of revolution, then we also take into account the hope that Luce Giard suggests is prevalent in Certeau’s vision of ordinary life. Now it is necessary to further argue for the distinctive nature of Certeau’s theology of everyday life by taking into account his desire to provide new language to the issues of power and the symbolic order’s effect on everyday life. Again, Certeau’s reframing of Foucault in the introduction to *The Practice of Everyday Life* is insightful, particularly now set alongside his reading of Guevara and Debray. Certeau does not allow himself to become overwhelmed by guilt of “la mauvaise conscience,” or a romanticised ideal of revolution (as Lubac accused the students of May ’68). Neither does Certeau fall into a pessimism of an all encompassing, totalising ethic of power like Foucault. Using Certeau’s outline of the crisis in *La Prise de Parole*, I will demonstrate Certeau’s implicit theology of subversiveness in everyday life in terms of the oral, the operative, and the ordinary.

For Certeau, the oral communicative aspects of everyday life reflected secularity [see sections 0.1 and 4.2.2]. Narratives and the act of saying are crucial operations of the human experience [see section 2.2]. Certeau was concerned about the silencing of speech under the police state of Charles de Gaul, and he was also concerned with the silencing of the *Other* by

⁴⁶⁹ Luce Giard, “Introduction: How Tomorrow is Being Born,” p. xii.

academic disciplines, such as history and theology. This concern led to an emphasis on *saying* and the nature of speech on everyday life. The oral act of communication has transformative power in a culture that has been dominated by the censoring done by a “scriptural economy,” meaning that the “currency” or value of language has its weight in the written, authorised forms of communication. Authoritative language is written, i.e. academic writing, legal codes [see sections 3.3]. Crucially, for Certeau utterance disrupts the symbolic order from becoming merely a regurgitation of the authorised status quo. It is worth noting that Certeau made a distinction between hegemonic authority, which is exploitive, and a type of cultural authority of meaning. A simple reading of the *The Practice of Everyday Life* will miss Certeau’s theological critique of both a type of scholarship that devalues belief and a certain type way of viewing God’s revelation through scripture that also devalues belief.⁴⁷⁰ In the chaptering entitled, “Believing and Making People Believe,” the shifting of cultural meaning and authority from religion to political and scientific authority. The issue occurs for Certeau when the fragmenting of society takes place due to the suppression of meaning and communication under the ideologies at work in political structures or authoritarian forms of knowledge. Describing the transition of belief in the last three hundred years, Certeau wrote,

The following centuries show the deterioration of that order to the advantage of secular sovereigns. In the seventeenth century, the Churches receive their models and their rights from the monarchies, even if they still represent a “religiousness” that legitimises the temporal powers and that temporal powers gradually transfer to their own account. With the breakdown of ecclesiastical power over the past three centuries, beliefs have flowed back toward the political, but without bringing with them the divine or celestial values that the Churches had set aside, regulated, and taken up.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁷⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 181-188. See also Jeremy Ahearne, “The Shattering of Christianity,” *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 77, No. 99 (November 1996): 496-497; Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, “The Otherness of God,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100:2 (Spring 2001): 360-361.

⁴⁷¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 182.

Certeau's point in this section was that though the Church often reflects or empowers the hegemonies at work in society, there were values in place within the ecclesiastical structures for the control of the symbolic order to be disrupted, for the supernatural and mysterious to disrupt from the margins. The Church played a vital role in society by allowing space for the symbolic order to be disrupted and encouraged, to an extent, a plurality of belief and communication. Certeau was concerned, however, that an overemphasis on the authority of Scripture within Christianity was less invested in the belief of the authority of God and more in the type of authority mentioned above that places value on the authorised, legal written communication [see section 3.4].⁴⁷² The authority of Scripture was not on a God who speaks but on the languages and ideologies at work in the symbolic order, the legal and religious systems which sanctioned the oral and possibly divergent forms of communication. "The turning point that inaugurates the modern age is marked first, in the seventeenth century, by a devaluation of the statement (*l'énoncé*) and a connection on the act of enunciating it (*l'enunciation*). When the speaker's identity was certain ("God speaks in the world"), attention was directed toward the deciphering of his statements, the "mysteries" of the world."⁴⁷³ The emphasis on the oral forms of communication, story-telling for instance, opens up space for the plurality of interpretations and communicative engagements, thereby disrupting the symbolic order and resisting a hegemony of knowledge, both within Christian spirituality and secular accounts of knowledge.

The space opened up by *saying* in the symbolic order is paralleled in Certeau's thought by the operative practices of everyday. The nature of operative practices is quite varied, but the crucial component is the subversive and formational character of these practices. Where, in *The Capture of Speech*, Certeau's understanding of operative practices was focused primarily on social semiotics, in *The Practice of Everyday Life* Certeau widened this understanding into the

⁴⁷² Ibid., "The Scriptural Economy," pp. 131-153.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., p. 138.

categories of tactics and strategies. Strategies are the operative practices which power and authority use to control speech and limit belief. They constitute a more meta-structure of domineering presence in society, reaffirming institutional governance and objectives. Certeau explained, “I call a ‘strategy’ the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an ‘environment.’ A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as a proper (*propre*) and thus serve as a basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it (competitors, adversaries, ‘clienteles,’ ‘targets,’ or ‘objects of research.’)”⁴⁷⁴ Tactics, on the other hand, are not set within proper places or space of culture. They are from the place of the *other*. They disrupt and disorganise the force-relationships and will of power. “I call a ‘tactic,’ on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a ‘proper’ (a spatial or institutional localisation), nor thus on a border-line distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other.”⁴⁷⁵ Certeau would further described everyday practices as tactical in nature, everything from walking, reading, cooking, shopping, and watching television. He used the language of consumer and consumerism, though not in a diminutive or disparaging way. While Foucault and Bourdieu spoke of consumerism as the proliferation of power and the ubiquity of the *habitus* [see section 2.4], the near powerless of the human subject in the face of modern capitalistic consumption and the formation of the individual within the *habitus*, Certeau argued that consumption was tactical and operative in its capacity to subvert power and rearrange the *habitus*.⁴⁷⁶ He saw the potential of consumption to disturbed the imposed order, even through simple everyday activities such as grocery shopping.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., p. xix.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., p. xix.

⁴⁷⁶ For the comparison between Certeau's account of culture and Bourdieu's account of *habitus*, See the previous sections in 1.1, 1.3, and 2.3.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., “Foucault and Bourdieu,” pp. 45-60.

The inconspicuous nature of these more mundane everyday practices does not preclude the subversive character of more intense situations of daily life, such as death and suffering. Drawing from Lacan [see section 4.2.2], death for Certeau was the ultimate *Other*, the greatest disrupter of the symbolic order. It is a non-place in which everyday life evades the subjectivity of the established order. In the same way, everyday suffering, though not explicitly mentioned in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, has the same tactical effect of disrupting the order of the institutions, including the individuals at stake. I highlight the nature of death, discussed at length in the last chapter of *The Practice of Everyday Life* entitled, “The Unnamable,” to draw further light on the implicit theological inferences for his understanding of revolution. The notion of death and suffering play into the themes of mysticism in the previous chapter. They function in the same tactical space of everyday life as the more mundane examples of walking and reading. The point is to disrupt the hegemonies at work in the symbolic order and the strategies of the institutions which bear up the consumers.

Birth and death — the two poles of the mystics’ evangelical meditations. They do not reject the ruin around them. They remain in them; they go to them. In a symbolic gesture, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Saint Teresa of Ávila and many others wished to enter a “corrupt” order, not out of any taste for decadence, but because those disorganised places represented in their minds the state of contemporary Christianity and, like the cave of rejection at Bethlehem, were where they were to see a repetition of a founding surprise. More generally, their solidarity with the collective, historically based suffering — which was demanded by circumstances but also desired and sought after as a test of truth — indicates the place of mystic “agony,” a “wound” inseparable from the social ill.⁴⁷⁸

Even in the depths of suffering or the banality of the ordinary, there is the hope for solidarity and subversive tactics to resist the strategies of the symbolic order. This is the hopeful but realistic tone Luce Giard noted. Standing with suffering in the non-place, moving through the

⁴⁷⁸ Michel de Certeau, “Mystic Speech,” in *Heterology: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 86. This text was originally published as “L’énunciation mystique,” in *Recherches de science religieuse*, 64. no. 2 (1976): 183-215.

ordinary, revolutions can work against the structures of power which merely replicate and repeat the order of the status quo. Belief, religious and resistant, provides space to grow into creative and subversive practice in reaction to the hegemony of the symbolic order. Tactics can transform new spaces of meaning and representation for those for whom the established order wills to silence. “A way of speaking this received language transforms it into a song of resistance, but this internal metamorphosis does not in any way compromise the sincerity with which it may be believed nor the lucidity with which, from another point of view, the struggles and inequalities hidden under the established order may be perceived. . . . Innumerable ways of playing and foiling the other’s game (*jouer / déjouer le jeu de l’autre*), that is, the space instituted by other, characterise the subtle, stubborn, resistant activity of groups which, since they lack their own space, have to get along in a network of already established forces and representations.”⁴⁷⁹ This language of *saying* and subverting in playing the other’s game gives voice to the experience of May ’68 and Che Guevara, the crisis to which Certeau calls theology to respond.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter has argued for the implicit religiosity of Certeau’s account of everyday life as originating from his Jesuit formation, incited by his trips to South America and the events of May ’68, and then with his key work, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Certeau developed a unique voice within what is now a field of critical theory surrounding the ordinary experience of daily life. He was neither alarmist nor conservative. He was hopeful but not utopian. He was influenced by Foucault’s account of power while still offering the hope of creative, even ordinary forms of resistance to power. The weight he placed on speaking and semiosis allowed for unique insights into both the role of power in censoring language but also the revolutionary capacity of language. In regard to the student revolt in Paris and the political revolutions in South America,

⁴⁷⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 18.

Certeau felt that theology must be situated right in midst of the space of revolution, the place of death, a non-place. There, in the place of the *Other*; theological language can communicate the distance between the place of the established, symbolic order and the fighter or student “on the ground.” These forms of resistance and speaking are illusive. They do not operate within the established orders. They are not known within the established forms of knowledge and authority. They entail belief. Certeau argued for the central role of belief within the ordinary human experience and the disrupting capacity of belief to reimagine the symbolic order away from social hegemony and into creative social solidarity. This account of belief, making space for the *Other*; and resistance shows another layer of Certeau’s theological underpinnings. With this chapter on everyday life, I have covered the various disciplines within Certeau’s multidisciplinary cultural analysis in order to respond to the legacy of the “first generation” of Certeau scholars or anyone else that would suggest his academic career developed away from his theology. As Brenna Moore summarises, “Gone are the days of thinking about an early Certeau, the young Christian seminarian, and the later, secular-social critic. He was far more interesting than that.”⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁸⁰ Brenna Moore, “Spiritual Spaces: History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau,” ed. by Inigo Bocken. Reviewed in *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, 2.4 (2014): 738-739

Conclusion: Belief and Everyday Life

Having examined the historiography, social geography, social semiotics, psychoanalysis, mysticism, and cultural theory of everyday life with respect to the theology of Michel de Certeau, I will now conclude with the completion of my argument, showing the uniqueness of my project and the contributions of my research. Following a concise summary of my research arguments and the originality of my project, I will present several pathways which my research opens up and questions it proposes within the fields of religious studies, theology, and critical theory.

The Cultural Theory and the Implicit Theology of Certeau

I have argued for the theological motivations at work in Certeau's cultural theory and across the wide range of his intellectual career. In focusing, chapter by chapter on the historiography, social geography, social semiotics, psychoanalysis, mysticism, and studies in everyday life, I have demonstrated the consistency of Certeau's theological concerns which permeate his *oeuvre*. Luce Giard has been referenced in each chapter since she was Certeau's collaborator before he died and the editor of his manuscripts after his death. She claims more than once, along with later scholars, that the questions of God and belief permeated Certeau's writings and thought processes [see section 0.1]. Whereas other authors, such as Jeremy Ahearne, knowingly avoid the theological substrates of Certeau's philosophy, authors like Philip Sheldrake and Frederick Bauerschmidt are among the few that treat Certeau theologically [see section 0.3]. My project has argued for the centrality and consistency of Certeau's theological motivations

across the range of his interdisciplinary career. Throughout this thesis I have alluded to various phases of Certeau's career in order to demonstrate a consistency of themes and theological concerns within his *oeuvre*. These phases are first, his work on Jesuit figures and in Catholic journals (stage one), then his interactions with revolutionary ideologies and the student revolt of May '68 which led to the *The Practice of Everyday Life* (stage two), and the final stage of his career with his positions held with universities in the United States and his writings on mysticism and psychoanalysis (stage three). I also argued for the prevalence of several theological themes that were relevant to Certeau's cultural theory. Then I demonstrated through the chapters how these themes were central to purpose and motivating concerns of Certeau's writings, themes such as narrative, embodiment, space, theological language, desire, immanence, and contextual theology. I demonstrated how Certeau was influenced by his Jesuit mentors and theological schools but also innovated through these themes in conversation with non-Catholic philosophers and contemporaries, such Jacques Derrida, Henri Lefebvre, Jacques Lacan, and Michel Foucault.

I began in chapter one by showing how Certeau was influenced both by the renewal of historical theology within Jesuit spirituality as well as his own studies into Jean-Joseph Surin and Pierre Favre. I argued that Certeau presented history as a praxis of narrative and belief in the present, introducing the importance of everyday life within his theology and cultural analysis [see section 1.2.1]. For Certeau, the work of historiography was indicative of the misunderstanding between academic knowledge and everyday life, between history as discipline and the history written at large in popular culture [see section 1.2.3]. This chapter framed the issue of hegemony and bourgeois knowledge as opposed to the everyday knowledge of the

ordinary. Certeau was critical of how theology as a discipline and the Church as an institution participated in this hierarchisation of knowledge.

The capacity of narrative to shape the praxis of writing history in the present contributes to another central theme within Certeau's cultural analysis, social geography. In the second chapter, I argued for the uniqueness of Certeau's account of embodiment and space, showing that when compared with his contemporaries, the theological perspective of Certeau constituted a more dynamic account of human subjectivity in the face of hegemonic power [see section 2.2]. Certeau's understanding of embodiment and the capacity of narratives and belief to reshape social space from the margins introduced a new perspective to the cultural philosophy on space. The body of Christ serves as the site of a cultural theology at work within the philosophy of Certeau as symbolic power and oppressive strategies are writ on the body [see section 2.5]. Certeau argued that the Christian vision of the Cross with the crucified and missing (risen) body of Christ subverts the power structures which seek to control social space. The praxis of retelling history in the present, retelling the Christ event, is a praxis which embodies a socio-political narrative. But from the space of death and the grave, it is the power of the "non place" or the social space which does not have hegemonic power, the margins of society which demonstrates the capacity to transform social space.

The subversive power of story telling, narrative, and writing history raises the issue of language. In the third chapter I argued for the connection between theology and social semiotics in Certeau's cultural analysis. The relationship between modern language and modern doubt engenders the dominance of modern semiotics over against previous forms of meaning shaped by faith, revelation, and mystical experiences [see section 3.1]. Similar to the hegemonic

dominance of social space, the social symbolic order is controlled by the prescribed, verified language - the language of authority. *Patios* and *glossolalia* are examples Certeau used to demonstrate the capacity of language to disrupt the social symbolic order [see section 3.4]. These alternative modes of communication break the connection between meaning and intelligibility and between words and meaning (*signum* and *res*). The instinctual interpretive nature of *patios* and the mystical nature of *glossolalia* break the boundaries of the “scriptural economy” and the need for intelligibility. For Certeau, the space beyond written language and intelligible language is where God lies, or at least, he argued that what was needed within cultural theory was space for these modes of communication to disrupt academic language, including theology.

The mystical and affective capacity of language raised questions about how Certeau utilised psychoanalysis and theology in his cultural analysis. In chapter four, I demonstrated the unique insights of Certeau’s combination of theology and psychoanalysis within his cultural theory through the key themes of (1) a deemphasis of the *Ego*, (2) the *Other*, (3) the absence of God, and (4) *rupture*. These terms are taken in many ways from teachings of Jacques Lacan, the influential psychoanalyst, but the groundwork for bringing together Ignatian spirituality and psychoanalysis had been begun by Louis Beirnaert, who Certeau lived with in a Jesuit house in Paris in the 1950s and 60s [see section 4.2]. Beirnaert and Certeau would join Lacan in founding L’École Freudienne de Paris in 1964. Inspired by Lacan, Certeau’s connection between psychoanalysis and theology shared in a move away from *Ego* psychology and towards a wider cultural analysis of language, desire, and the *Other* [see section 4.2.1]. Part of the appeal of *patios* and *glossolalia* was their embodied nature steeped in desire. For Certeau, this opened up the social symbolic order to the space of the *Other*. Influenced by dense Lacanian theory as well

as Immanuel Levinas' metaphysics, Certeau use of the *Other* entailed a theoretic opening, a horizon which was always present in discourse but beyond the definition of language. Lacanian understandings of desire are rooted in the absence of the *Other*, regardless of its identity. I argued that Certeau's use of the *Other* with respect to his theology could be best seen in his frequent use of the empty tomb [see section 4.2.2]. Certeau drew upon the image of the empty tomb as the ground of possibility for Christian faith and theological language, encouraging a type of modesty and humility that made room for a plurality of voices to speak of heterology. The empty tomb was a symbol for Certeau of the absence of God, but this was not meant cynically, rather the absence of God was the space of possibility for belief and mystery. For Certeau, certitudes and dogma quenched the mission of the church and the spirit of hospitality essential to Christianity [see section 4.2.3].

Certeau's heterology project was never finished due his developing research on mysticism. In chapter five, I argued for the uniqueness of Certeau's account of spirituality and mysticism, particularly when set within the growing interdisciplinary field of mysticism. As opposed to other writers in mysticism, such as William James, Certeau framed the movement of mysticism away from the individual's psychology or a phenomenological approach [see section 5.2]. Certeau's account of mysticism was also distinct in his resistance towards certitudes and dogmas. Rather, he focused on the shared cultural encounter or exclusion of mystics. What was once a term segregating errant variations of orthodox religion, mysticism grew into a field study which explored the inherent desire for the *Other*. I argued that Certeau's experience of the student revolt of May '68 shaped his view of mysticism directing him towards a political reading of historic theological texts, showing how the power structures marginalise or refute movements

understood as “mystique.” For Certeau, this combined his political analysis of social semiotics (particularly around May ’68) with his historiography. The transitions in meaning of words like “mystique” illustrated the transitions of what the Church authorised or sanctioned while the account of mystical texts was disputed within historical theology, raising questions around Certeau’s relationship with his mentor, Henri de Lubac. I used the relationship between Certeau and Lubac to draw out the uniqueness of Certeau’s position. As opposed to Lubac, Certeau was sympathetic with the causes and purposes of the student revolt where Lubac found them to be aimless and petulant. At a deeper level, Certeau saw the student revolt as a powerful “rupture,” revealing to him that the Church was not going to survive if it was resistant to *Other* expressions of mystical experience [see section 5.3]. For Certeau, May ’68 demonstrated the impotence of the Church’s prevailing expressions of certitudes and dogma. Lubac felt that historical theology and the recovery of the wisdom and character of patristic and medieval texts was paramount. On the other hand, Certeau used marginal preachers and mystics, such as Jean-Joseph Surin and Diego de Jesús, to illustrate the subversive power and influence of mysticism as a movement from the frontiers of spiritual experience and edges of social space [see section 5.5]. He also used these more obscure figures to illustrate the ways in which theology as a discipline censored certain voices within history and shared in the hegemony of the symbolic order. Certeau was adamant that the Church veers towards irrelevancy in its witness in society when it does not incorporate movements and expressions oriented towards the *Other* that originate from the places of the margins. This explains, to some extent, Certeau’s style in writing in that he rarely engages in what would be considered theological writing. He desired to explore this urgent task of

incorporating mystical texts and allowing for the language and historiography of mysticism to help reshape the nature of Christian thought.

My last chapter argued for the theology at work in Certeau's cultural theory surrounding everyday life. I outlined the developments in the study of everyday life from Karl Marx to the time of Certeau. I demonstrated that everyday life and the presence of God in the language and activities of the ordinary was a theme at work in his early writings on Jean-Joseph Surin and Pierre Favre [see section 6.2]. From Surin and Favre, as well as the central texts of Ignatian spirituality such as *The Spiritual Exercises*, Certeau explored the influence of the *Other* on the regular, mundane aspects of the human experience. I showed how Certeau's critique of academic writing, including theology as a discipline, paralleled his work on everyday life by showing his emphasis on the everyday person. Like in his introduction to *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Certeau developed the theme of everyday life in response to the student revolt of May '68 through his research for the French Ministry of Culture, who commissioned Certeau to speculate on the cultural transitions at work since the student revolt. While Certeau saw the hegemonic nature of the social symbolic order and the purpose of revolutions like May '68, he was neither skeptical about everyday life nor a brazen revolutionary. He was hopeful about the creative resistance that was possible through the tactics of everyday life. The Neo-Marxist roots of "everyday life" and the Annales School indeed influenced Certeau's framing of the *habitus* with respect to hierarchy and power, though Certeau's perspective was distinct in his nuancing of resistance to power in the forms of resistance and belief.

Original Contributions of this Project

I stated from the outset of this project that it would be successful if it accomplished at least four original research tasks with respect to Michel de Certeau. This conclusion will demonstrate in summary how I have been successful in these tasks. First, I have both argued for the prevalence of a gap and bridged the gap in research between Certeau's cultural theory and his religious studies, providing connections thematically and conceptually between his work on resistance, hegemony, everyday life, history, heterology, and psychoanalysis with his account of belief and spirituality. Second, I have demonstrated continuity in Certeau's work between his early writings on Jesuit figures and Jesuit spirituality to his writings in the late 1960s and mid 1970s on cultural resistance and social semiotics to his later writings in the late 1970s and 1980s on mysticism and psychoanalysis. Where a surface level reading would split these sections in Certeau's career or overstate certain points of departure in his writings, I have demonstrated a consistency, though with key transitions, over the course of his life. As Certeau described the events of May '68 as a transformational moment, I have traced the influence of these events across the scope of his cultural analysis and theology. Third, in bridging the gap in scholarship between Certeau's theology and cultural analysis and by demonstrating the consistency of his *oeuvre*, I have provided a robust account of the theological contributions of Certeau, particularly with respect to historiography, social semiotics, and psychoanalysis. Fourth, as detailed in the introduction, I have argued for a movement within critical theory on the theme of everyday life and introduced belief as a unique and important relationship developed within Certeau's *oeuvre*.

Now to be more precise about my four unique research claims, I have demonstrated the gap in research between Certeau's cultural theory and his religiosity [see section 0.3]. Since

Certeau's death in 1984, the variety of scholarship on Certeau has demonstrated the difficulty of striking the right balance between these two issues in reading Certeau. I have shown how key scholars in the study of Michel de Certeau have acknowledged their own limitations in their research in not including or discussing the religious or theological influences or implications of Certeau's cultural analysis. I cited Ian Buchanan, Jeremy Ahearne, and Claire Colebrook as deeply helpful for my research but counted among those who acknowledge this gap in their own research. Furthermore, scholars such as Philip Sheldrake, Frederick Bauerschmidt and Fergus Kerr have pointed out that often Jesuit journals or the few theologians that have considered Certeau's spirituality have not seriously considered his wider cultural theory or investigated his spirituality with his less overtly theological texts [see section 0.3].

Thus, I have argued that there is a gap between scholars who have treated Certeau as a nonreligious philosopher and undervalued his theology and scholars who have sought to take seriously Certeau as a theologian but have perhaps overvalued his theological texts over against his cultural analysis. My project has bridged this gap in scholarship, connecting the studies in Certeau's cultural analysis with scholarship into his implicit theology, in at least three ways. First, responding to the caution of Sheldrake, Bauerschmidt, and Kerr, I have tried my best to incorporate the fullness of Certeau's writings, both his texts which are obviously theological and his texts which are less obviously theological. Second, though arguing for the theological framework and implications of Certeau's cultural analysis, I have critically and fully engaged and incorporated the nonreligious accounts of Certeau's writing, like Ahearne and Buchanan, as any serious reading of Certeau has to utilise their multi-layered analyses. Third, I have taken

seriously the fact that Certeau remained a Jesuit all his life, incorporating in my analysis Certeau's Jesuit influences, his work with Jesuit publications, and his final project on mysticism.

Second, with the prevalence of Certeau's theology throughout his cultural theory demonstrated in my project and the connections made between his religiosity and his cultural analysis, my project has offered a unique argument for the consistency of Certeau's work across his various disciplines and occupations across his career. A simple reading of Certeau would suggest that Certeau moved away from his Jesuit origins and more theological writings. While the case has been made that Certeau experienced a key turning point with the student revolt of May '68, I have shown that this turning point was not a step away from his theology or the Jesuit order but a deepening of his critical analysis of theological methods and writings that shared in the reification of the hegemony of the symbolic order. In other words, Certeau's critique of theology as a discipline was, in itself, a theological critique, informed by the interplay between historiography, social geography, social semiotics, and psychoanalysis which I demonstrated through the chapters for this thesis. In arguing for the consistency of Certeau, both thematically and theologically, my project is unique in how I have sought to incorporate the fullness of Certeau's corpus and shown the consistency across the various phases of Certeau's career. In my chapters (covering historiography, social geography, social semiotics, psychoanalysis, mysticism, and everyday life), I have shown the development and consistent themes at work in the interplay between Certeau's theology and cultural analysis. The theological roots of themes such as immanence, embodiment, God's absence, the *Other*, and narrative begin with Certeau's formation in the Jesuit order and continue throughout the various positions and transitions of his career.

Since the connection between Certeau's theology and cultural analysis has been underdeveloped in the secondary literature on Certeau, the third unique contribution of my project is the development of key theological considerations within Certeau's cultural analysis, particularly with respect to his historiography, social semiotics, and use of psychoanalysis. My project is unique in connecting the implicit theology of Certeau with a number of his keen insights into cultural theory. I have shown the connection in Certeau between his historiography and writing on everyday life, noting the theological concern for the *Other*. Often silenced in both the writing of history and the engagement of everyday life, the *Other* designates a frontier of discourse which is always present with subversive potential. The subversive potential of the *Other*, for Certeau, is attributed to its disruption of the reproduction of the at status quo of the symbolic order. Narratives and praxes of history which originate from the margins, from *Otherness*, break up the hegemonies at work in what is considered authoritative or verified history. Certeau consistently referred back to mystics and the historiography of unusual spiritualities as examples of the dubious nature of historiography and what is considered true history. I showed that Certeau's account of belief is indispensable from his understanding of the praxis of history and narrative and his analysis of the transitions in the structures and authorities of the *habitus* [see section 2.4]. Similarly, my project made original connections and insights into Certeau's account of social semiotics and theology. I connected Certeau's analysis of *glossolalia* with his use of *patois* as modes of semiosis which disrupt the symbolic order since these forms of communication are not dependent upon the literal relationships between words and what words represent. Avoiding the abstract nature of some structuralist and post structuralist tendencies, Certeau valued the embodied (even guttural) nature of *patois* and *glossolalia*,

situating the site of semiosis within the body rather than in the hegemony of the symbolic order. The combination of these two modes of communication highlights the theological alignment of mysticism and subversiveness in Certeau's cultural analysis as in how Certeau saw the mystical communication of *glossolalia* as subverting the symbolic order [see section 3.4]. This project also provided unique insights into how Certeau utilised psychoanalytic theory within his own cultural theory and theological assertions. My project brought together Jacques Lacan's influence with Certeau's relationship with his Jesuit contemporary, Louis Beirnaert, as Certeau's utilisation of psychoanalysis was extensive. My project is unique in synthesising his influences and developments within psychoanalysis and theology, particularly with respect to God's absence and human desire for the *Other* [see sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3].

My fourth unique contribution has been the way I have framed Certeau's understanding of belief and everyday life within the wider movement of scholarship around everyday life in the 20th century. Ben Highmore and Michael Sheringham have provided immensely helpful volumes on the theme of everyday life within cultural theory and critical theory.⁴⁸¹ I have added to this research with what I see as a unique lens from Certeau - belief [see section 6.2]. I traced Certeau's inquiry into everyday life into his early Jesuit writings which mentioned the presence of God in everyday work and leisure. More than a type of spirituality of God's immanence, Certeau's early writings showed a philosophical reading of how the day to day practices of life influence how one encounters God as well as the unseen powers of society that serve as the arbiters of knowledge, language, and belief. The events of May '68 were a power sign to Certeau that the previous ways Christian theology had viewed belief had to be abandoned for innovated

⁴⁸¹ Michael E. Gardiner, *Critiques of Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2000); Ben Highmore (ed.), *The Everyday Life Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002); Michael Sheringham, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

and *Other* forms of social praxis of belief that reimagine social space and subvert any censoring of voices within the symbolic order [see section 6.4]. Certeau argued that beliefs and believing were central to the subversive potential of everyday life. The everyday practices and mundane, unconscious rhythms of daily life were hopeful, even playful, disruptions of the hegemony of the symbolic order. Belief provides space for change, spontaneous and uncertain tactics that diminish the effects of power structures in society. For Certeau, the symbolic order seeks to authoritatively censor and limit what is spoken, practiced, and believed in daily life. However, creative resistance is possible through the daily narratives which expand the limits of social space and belief.

New Research Opportunities

The originality of my project opens up several new research possibilities for studies pertaining to Certeau, for studies in cultural theory, and for theological analysis of everyday life and belief. I will briefly sketch three research possibilities. First, my research alludes to two movements within philosophy over the last century: one movement focusing on everyday life and the other movement focusing on the human faculty of belief. As Michael Sheringham and Lois Gillman have outlined the development of everyday life as a multidisciplinary movement of scholarship and culture, so too have scholars such as Graham Ward, Conor Cunningham, Nicholas Lash, and David Burrell observed a multidisciplinary movement of scholarship

exploring the wide-ranging implications of the human faculty of belief.⁴⁸² If Sheringham and Ward are both correct, then these movements occurred simultaneously and within similar disciplinary structures. Further research should explore the question as to what degree these movements were commensurate in their influence of one another. The movement of scholarship around everyday life was at least a matrix of interdisciplinary analyses of the repetitive, performative, and disruptive components of the plurality of constitutions of social experience, language, and intersubjectivity. By arguing for the place of belief and religion through this theoretical landscape, new research could contribute unique insights into the relationship between the philosophy of religion, phenomenology, and the burgeoning field of the study of everyday life. Additionally, Lois McNay has offered insights into feminist concerns for the reevaluation of women's experience through the category of everyday life.⁴⁸³ This feminist reevaluation of women's experiences in light of everyday life could be furthered by the relationship between belief and everyday life, not dissimilar to the work of Deborah Orr on belief and embodiment, though situated within everyday life.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸² David B. Burrell, *Faith and Freedom: An Interfaith Perspective* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Conor Cunningham and Peter M. Candler (ed.), *Belief and Metaphysics* (London: SCM, 2007); Nicholas Lash, *Holiness, Speech and Silence: Reflections on the Question of God* (London: Ashgate Press, 2004); and Graham Ward, *Unbelievable: Why We Believe and Why We Don't*. (London: I. B. Taurus, 2014). In response to the polemic between secular and post-secular narratives, Ward describes the resurgence of belief as a part of "the new visibility of religion," a phrase he uses to capture the growth of expressions Islam and its Occidental influence as well as expressions of Pentecostalism in places like Brazil and India. What these authors have observed is that with the decline of secularization theses (or a deliberate nuancing of the secular to include the pluralism of belief systems), scholars have witnessed the opposite of what Wilfred Cantwell Smith predicted in his influential text, *Faith and Belief: The Difference Between Them* (Oxford: One World Pub., 1979). Cantwell argued that in the wake of secularization, belief as an epistemological modality would lose traction within both academic and popular discourse. See also Fergus Kerr, *Immortal Longings: versions of transcending humanity* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997); Gianni Vattimo, *Christianity, Truth, and Weak Faith* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); and Slavoj Žižek, *On Belief: Thinking in Action* (London: Routledge, 2001).

⁴⁸³ Lois McNay, "Michel de Certeau and the Ambivalent Everyday," *Social Semiotics: A Transdisciplinary Journal in Functional Linguistics, Semiotics, and Critical Theory*. Vol. 6.1 (1996), pp. 61-81.

⁴⁸⁴ Deborah Orr, *Belief, Bodies, and Being: Feminist Reflections on Embodiment* (Washington, D.C.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).

Second, what can theology and religious studies gain from Certeau's transdisciplinary approach to belief through the lens of historiography, psychoanalysis, and cultural theory? How can competing visions of salvation shared by other faiths be mutually constructive through social semiotics and space? This thesis has argued for the centrality of belief for Certeau's theology and culturally theory, raising questions of how Certeau's account of belief might aid in the understanding and practice of the Christian doctrine of salvation. It is my hope that my work can contribute to inter-religious and nonreligious conversations around healing, reconciliation, and mutual flourishing.

Finally, my project would be useful for studies combining the philosophical study of everyday life with the theological study of the spirituality of everyday life. Theologians and philosophers from a variety of traditions, such as Jesuits, Pentecostals, Latinx (*lo cotidiano*), *Dharmaguptaka*, and *Tasawwuf*, are invested in the integration of God or spirituality into the day-to-day experiences of reality. For example, Nimi Wariboko, a Nigerian Pentecostal theologian and philosopher of religion, and John Caputo both end key texts in their respective fields on the theme of everyday life.⁴⁸⁵ I frame various inferences and arguments from Certeau in between fields of critical theory, religious studies, and theology. Part of what I believe Certeau is suggesting with his critique of theology and academic disciplines is for greater interplay between academic philosophy and everyday mysticism, spirituality, and encounters of *Otherness*.

⁴⁸⁵ See John Caputo, *The Weakness of God* (Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 2006); Nimi Wariboko, *The Split God: Pentecostalism and Critical Theory* (New York: SUNY Press, 2018). Caputo's book develops through chapter 7, "Quotidianism," which draws heavily from Heidegger's *Phenomenology of Religious Life*. While Wariboko's equally groundbreaking text concludes with the chapter, "Everyday Form of Theology," which features Jean-Luc Nancy and Giorgio Agamben.

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