Epilogue: Conceptual Tactics

This book does not presume to explain what the world really is made of or how the world really works, or what it really means to be human. It does not "argue" but gives a sense of how one might regard the world with a certain as-if. Inspired by the tactics of a Zhuangzi against the logicians and Confucian order, a de Certeau or the situationists vis-à-vis their city, and Grotowski's nonperforming performance laboratory, I've collected a few conceptual tactics over the years, a set of orienting tropisms, what Stengers and Whitehead have called lures for feeling and thinking. They are particularly elaborate lures, informed by political, artistic, and technological practices, but they are not recipes or methodologies. (Parenthetically speaking, methodology comes after the practice becomes a process that no longer generates knowledge.) These tactics seem to recur with enough salience to be worth recording. Just as the final chapter of Deleuze and Guattari's *Milles plateaux* constituted anything but the answers-at-the-end-of-the-book for their reader, let me offer these tactics as a measure against the development of any methodology or school of practice or theory.

We have seen enough leadening in the wake of inspired work (of Marx, Grotowski, Freud, Heraclitus, Christopher Alexander, Deleuze, Guattari) to make me feel more than a little concerned about how readers may "apply" this book in their own work. You have been advised.

(1) Dynamical thinking, topological dynamics, is not so much a metaphysics (which would again be making truth claims) but a style, a way of thinking and making that is sensitive to ethico-aesthetic poiesis.

(2) Use any formal structure, any form, any theory, any representation, but as a *trellis*, not a carapace for thinking.

(3) Turn nouns into verbs.

(4) Instead of making a theory that makes propositions of the form "X is Y," try making a theory that turns presumed identities into disequalities, "X > Y" or "X ⊊ Y." This is not merely a distinction but a local gradient. Recognize that the vectoriality of the gradient is itself part of your construction, so there you are not making a totalizing claim.

(5) Avoid monocausality, reductionism, looking for the primitive, the ur-explanation, the originary cause or event. A category or predicate P so universal that everything is P is useless. If you define a category S or a predicate P, see if as many things of interest are not in S as are, or do not have predicate P as do.

(6) Aim for richness and multiplicity, which is not complexity.

(7) In art, use the concepts to transform not just the appearance but the making as well. Be dissatisfied with allegory.

(8) Instead of making identities, use a modified form of implication, meaning not "necessarily-leads-to" but "enables." My suggestion that we use implication in the sense of *enabling* removes the necessity and the imperative, and replaces those with permitting, scaffolding, trellising, and sustaining as *partial actions* (analogous to partial objects) to be defined fully only in the event.