

constrained, yet less and less concerned with these vast frameworks, the individual detaches himself from them without being able to escape them and can henceforth only try to outwit them, to pull tricks on them, to rediscover, within an electronic and computerized megalopolis, the "art" of the hunters and rural folk of earlier days. The fragmentation of the social fabric today lends a *political* dimension to the problem of the subject. In support of this claim can be adduced the symptoms represented by individual conflicts and local operations, and even by ecological organizations, though these are preoccupied primarily with the effort to control relations with the environment collectively. These ways of reappropriating the product-system, ways created by consumers, have as their goal a *therapeutics for deteriorating social relations* and make use of techniques of re-employment in which we can recognize the procedures of everyday practices. A politics of such ploys should be developed. In the perspective opened up by Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*, such a politics should also inquire into the public ("democratic") image of the microscopic, multiform, and innumerable connections between *manipulating* and *enjoying*, the fleeting and massive reality of a social activity at play with the order that contains it.

Witold Gombrowicz, an acute visionary, gave this politics its hero—the anti-hero who haunts our research—when he gave a voice to the small-time official (Musil's "man without qualities" or that ordinary man to whom Freud dedicated *Civilization and Its Discontents*) whose refrain is "When one does not have what one wants, one must wait what one has": "I have had, you see, to resort more and more to very small, almost invisible pleasures, little extras. . . . You've no idea how great one becomes with these little details, it's incredible how one grows."³⁵

Part I

A Very Ordinary Culture

Chapter I A Common Place: Ordinary Language

THE EROSION AND DENIGRATION of the singular or the extraordinary was announced by *The Man Without Qualities*: "Perhaps it is precisely the petit-bourgeois who has the presentiment of the dawn of a new heroism, a heroism both enormous and collective, on the model of ants."¹ And indeed, the advent of this anthill society began with the masses, who were the first to be subjected to the framework of levelling rationalities. The tide rose. Next it reached the managers who were in charge of the apparatus, managers and technicians absorbed into the system they administered; and finally it invaded the liberal professions that thought themselves protected against it, including even men of letters and artists. The tide tumbles and disperses in its waters works formerly isolated but today transformed into drops of water in the sea, or into metaphors of a linguistic dissemination which no longer has an author but becomes the discourse or indefinite citation of the other.

"Everyman" and "nobody"

There are, of course, antecedents, but they are organized by a community in "common" madness and death, and not yet by the levelling of a technical rationality. Thus at the dawn of the modern age, in the sixteenth century, the ordinary man appears with the insignia of a general misfortune of which he makes sport. As he appears in an ironical literature proper to the northern countries and already democratic in inspiration, he has "embarked" in the crowded human ship of fools and mortals,

a sort of inverse Noah's Ark, since it leads to madness and loss. In this vessel he is trapped in the *common* fate. Called *Everyman* (a name that betrays the absence of a name), this anti-hero is thus also *Nobody*, *Nemo*, just as the French *Chacun* becomes *Personne*, or the German *Jedermann Niemand*.² He is always the other, without his own responsibilities ("It's not my fault, it's the other: destiny") or particular properties which limit a home (death effaces all differences). Nevertheless, on this humanist stage, he still laughs. In this respect he is wise and mad, lucid and ridiculous, in the destiny which all must undergo and which reduces to *nothing* the exemption which *every man* claims.

In fact, by producing a certain kind of anonymous laughter a literature defines its own status: because it is only a simulacrum, it is the truth of a world of honors and glamor destined to die. The "anyone" or "everyone" is a common place, a philosophical *topos*. The role of this general character (everyman and nobody) is to formulate a universal connection between illusory and frivolous scriptural productions and death, the law of the other. He plays out on the stage the very definition of literature as a world and of the world as literature. Rather than being merely represented in it, the ordinary man acts out the text itself, in and by the text, and in addition he makes plausible the universal character of the particular place in which the mad discourse of a knowing wisdom is pronounced. He is both the nightmare or philosophical dream of humanist irony and an apparent referentiality (a common history) that make credible a writing that turns "everyone" into the teller of his ridiculous misfortune. But when elitist writing uses the "vulgar" speaker as a disguise for a metalanguage about itself, it also allows us to see what dislodges it from its privilege and draws it outside of itself: an Other who is no longer God or the Muse, but the anonymous. The straying of writing outside of its own place is traced by this ordinary man, the metaphor and drift of the doubt which haunts writing, the phantom of its "vanity," the enigmatic figure of the relation that writing entertains with all people, with the loss of its exemption, and with its death.

Freud and the ordinary man

Our contemporary references offer examples of this "philosophical" character that are no doubt even more pregnant. When Freud takes *der gemeine Mann* (the ordinary man) as the starting point and subject of his analyses of civilization (in *Civilization and Its Discontents*) and

religion (in *The Future of an Illusion*),³ those two forms of culture, he remains faithful to the Enlightenment and does not limit himself to opposing the illumination of psychoanalysis ("a method of investigation, an impartial instrument, that one could consider similar to the [infinitesimal] calculus"⁴) to the obscurantism of "the large majority" and to articulating common beliefs in a new knowledge. He not only adopts the old schema that inevitably combines the "illusion" of the mind and social misfortune with "the common man" (such is the theme of *Civilization and Its Discontents*, but in Freud, contrary to the tradition, the ordinary man no longer laughs); he wants to link his pioneering "elucidation" (*Aufklärung*) with this "infantile" majority.⁵ Leaving aside the "small number" of "thinkers" and "artists" capable of transforming work into pleasure through sublimation, thus excluding that "rare elect" who nevertheless designate the place in which his text is elaborated, he signs a contract with "the ordinary man" and weds his discourse to the masses whose *common* destiny is to be duped, frustrated, forced to labor, and who are thus subject to the law of deceit and to the pain of death. It seems that this contract, analogous to the contract linking Michelet's history to "the People"—who, however, never speak in it—⁶ ought to allow the theory to be universalized and to be based on the reality of history. It provides the theory with a secure place.

It is true that the ordinary man is accused of yielding—thanks to the God of religion—to the illusion of being able to "solve all the riddles of this world" and of being "assured that a Providence watches over his life."⁷ In this way, he confers on himself at small expense a knowledge of the totality and a guarantee of his status (by guaranteeing his future). But is it not also true that Freudian theory derives an analogous advantage from the general experience it invokes? As the representative of an abstract universal, the ordinary man in Freudian theory still plays the role of a god who is recognizable in his effects, even if he has humbled himself and merged with superstitious common people: he furnishes Freud's discourse with the means of *generalizing* a particular knowledge and of *guaranteeing* its validity by the whole of history. He authorizes it to transcend its limits—those of a psychoanalytic competence circumscribed within a few cures, and also those of language itself as a whole, deprived of the reality which, as referential, it posits. He assures it of both its difference ("enlightened" discourse remains distinct from "common" discourse) and of its universality (enlightened discourse expresses and explains common experience). Despite Freud's personal opinion of

Freud.
3 ordinary Man
Psychoanalysis
calculus

"the mob"⁸ (the opposite opinion is to be found in Michelet's optimistic views about the People), the ordinary man renders a service to Freud's discourse, that of figuring in it as a principle of totalization and as a principle of plausibility. This principle permits Freud to say, "It is true of *all*" and "It is the *reality* of history." The ordinary man functions here in the same way as the God of former times.

But Freud himself suspected as much in his old age. He ironically describes *Civilization and Its Discontents* and *The Future of an Illusion* as the result of "a completely superfluous" leisure activity ("One can't smoke and play cards all day long"), a "pastime" concerned with "elevated subjects" which cause him "to rediscover the most commonplace truths."⁹ He distinguishes it from his "earlier works," which were organized in accord with the rules of a method and constructed on the basis of particular cases. Here we are no longer concerned with Little Hans, Dora, or Schreber. The ordinary man represents first of all Freud's temptation to be a moralist, the return of ethical generalizations into the professional field, an excess or a falling-short with respect to psycho-analytic procedures. In that way, he makes explicit an overturning of knowledge. In fact, if Freud mocks this introduction to a future "pa-thology of civilized societies," it is because he is *himself* the ordinary man of whom he speaks, with a few "commonplace" and bitter truths in his hands. He ends his reflections with a pirouette. "The complaint that I offer no consolation is justified,"¹⁰ he writes, for he has none. He is in the same boat as everyone else and begins to laugh. An ironic and wise madness is linked to the fact that he has lost the singularity of a competence and found himself, anyone or no one, in the common history. In the philosophical tale that is *Civilization and Its Discontents*, the ordinary man is the speaker. He is the point in the discourse where the scientist and the common man come together—the return of the other (everyone and no one) into the place which had been so carefully set apart from him. Freud once again traces the way in which banality overflows speciality and brings knowledge back to its general presupposition: I don't have solid knowledge of anything. I'm like everyone else.

"Privation," "repression," "Eros," "Thanatos," etc.: these tools of technical work mark the stages of the movement in *Civilization and Its Discontents* from a triumphant "Aufklärung" to commonplaces, but the Freudian analysis of culture is characterized first of all by the trajectory of this overturning movement. An apparently minor and yet fundamental

difference distinguishes its result from the trivialities retailed by cultural specialists, for their trivialities no longer designate the *object* of discourse, but rather its *place*. In Freud the trivial is no longer the other (which is supposed to ground the exemption of the one who dramatizes it); it is the productive experience of the text. The approach to culture begins when the ordinary man *becomes* the narrator, when it is he who defines the (common) place of discourse and the (anonymous) space of its development.

This place is no more given to the speaker of the discourse than to anyone else. It is the endpoint of a trajectory. It is not a state, an initial flaw or grace, but something which *comes into being*, the product of a process of deviation from rule-governed and falsifiable practices, an overflowing (*débordement*) of the common in a particular position. Such is the case for Freud, when at the end of the investigation he finishes off (as one "finishes off" a condemned man) with his last stories concerning the ordinary man: he performs a work of mourning by putting knowledge into the realm of fiction.¹¹

The important thing here is the fact that the *work* of overflowing operates by the insinuation of the ordinary into established scientific fields. Far from arbitrarily assuming the privilege of speaking in the name of the ordinary (it cannot be spoken), or claiming to be in that general place (that would be a false "mysticism"), or, worse, offering up a hagiographic everydayness for its edifying value, it is a matter of restoring historicity to the movement which leads analytical procedures back to their frontiers, to the point where they are changed, indeed disturbed, by the ironic and mad banality that speaks in "Everyman" in the sixteenth century and that has returned in the final stages of Freud's knowledge. I shall try to describe the erosion that lays bare the ordinary in a body of analytical techniques, to reveal the openings that mark its trace on the borders where a science is mobilized, to indicate the displacements that lead toward the *common place* where "anyone" is finally silent, except for repeating (but in a different way) banalities. Even if it is drawn into the oceanic rumble of the ordinary, the task consists not in substituting a representation for the ordinary or covering it up with mere words, but in showing how it introduces itself into our techniques—in the way in which the sea flows back into pockets and crevices in beaches—and how it can reorganize the place from which discourse is produced.

Science

ordinary

as

last

Freud

everyday

complexity

Auer

Hans

The expert and the philosopher

The technical path to be followed consists, in a first approximation, in bringing scientific practices and languages back toward their native land, everyday life. This return, which is today more and more insistent, has the paradoxical character of also being a going into exile with respect to the disciplines whose rigor is measured by the strict definition of its own limits. Ever since scientific work (*scientifiqué*) has given itself its own proper and appropriate places through rational projects capable of determining their procedures, with formal objects and specified conditions under which they are falsifiable, ever since it was founded as a plurality of limited and distinct fields, in short ever since it stopped being theological, it has constituted the *whole* as its *remainder*; this remainder has become what we call culture.

This cleavage organizes modernity. It cuts it up into scientific and dominant islands set off against the background of practical "resistances" and symbolizations that cannot be reduced to thought. Even if the ambition of "Science" is to conquer this remainder by starting out from the areas where the powers of our knowledge can be exercised, even if, in order to prepare the full realization of this empire, reconnaissance missions are already exploring the frontier regions and linking the light to the darkness (there are the gray discourses of mixed sciences called "human," accounts of expeditions that tend to make assimilable—if not thinkable—and determine the frontiers of the dark regions of violence, superstition, and otherness: history, anthropology, pathology, etc.), the gap scientific institutions have opened between the artificial languages of a regulated operativity and the modes of speech of social groups has always been the scene of battles and compromises. This line of demarcation, which is, moreover, unstable and changing, remains strategic in the struggles to increase or contest the influence of artificial techniques on social practices. It separates artificial languages, articulating the procedures of a specific kind of knowledge, from natural languages, organizing common signifying activity.

A few of these debates (which concern precisely the relation of each science to culture) can be made more explicit, and their possible outcomes indicated, by examining two figures, curiously similar and contrasting, who are facing them: the Expert and the Philosopher. Both have the task of mediating between society and a body of knowledge, the first insofar as he introduces his speciality into the wider and more complex

arena of socio-political decisions, the second insofar as he re-establishes the relevance of general questions to a particular technique (mathematics, logic, psychiatry, history, etc.). In the Expert, competence is transmuted into social authority; in the Philosopher, ordinary questions become a skeptical principle in a technical field. The Philosopher's ambiguous relation to the Expert (sometimes one of fascination, sometimes one of rejection) often seems to subtend his procedures: sometimes philosophical enterprises aim enviously at the Expert's realization of their ancient utopia (to maintain access to general problems in the name of a specific kind of scientific knowledge); sometimes, defeated by history but still rebellious, these enterprises turn their backs on what has been taken away from them by science in order to accompany the Subject, the king of yesteryear, today driven out of a technocratic society into its exile (O memories! O symbolic transgressions! O unconscious kingdoms!).

It is true that the Expert is growing more common in this society, to the point of becoming its generalized figure, distended between the exigency of a growing specialization and that of a communication that has become all the more necessary. He blots out (and in a certain way replaces) the Philosopher, formerly the specialist of the universal. But his success is not so terribly spectacular. In him, the productivity law that requires a specific assignment (the condition of efficiency) and the social law that requires circulation (the form of exchange) enter into contradiction. To be sure, a specialist is more and more often driven to also be an Expert, that is, an interpreter and translator of his competence for other fields. That is obvious even within the laboratories themselves: as soon as decisions regarding objectives, promotions, or financing are to be made, the Experts intervene "in the name of"—but outside of—their particular experience. How do they succeed in moving from their technique—a language they have mastered and which regulates their discourse—to the more common language of another situation? They do it through a curious operation which "converts" competence into authority. Competence is exchanged for authority. Ultimately, the more authority the Expert has, the less competence he has, up to the point where his fund of competence is exhausted, like the energy necessary to put a mobile into movement. During the process of conversion, he is not without some competence (he either has to have some or make people think he has), but he abandons the competence he possesses as his authority is extended further and further, drawn out of its orbit by social demands and/or political responsibilities. That is the

expert vs phil.
what is phil.
specialist
design?

(general?) paradox of authority: a knowledge is ascribed to it and this knowledge is precisely what it lacks where it is exercised. Authority is indissociable from an "abuse of knowledge"¹²—and in this fact we ought perhaps to recognize the effect of the social law that divests the individual of his competence in order to establish (or re-establish) the capital of a collective competence, that is, of a common verisimilitude.

Since he cannot limit himself to talking about what he knows, the Expert pronounces on the basis of the *place* that his specialty has won for him. In that way he inscribes himself and is inscribed in a *common* order where specialization, as the *rule* and hierarchically ordering *practice* of the productivist economy, has the value of *initiation*. Because he has successfully submitted himself to this initiatory practice, he can, on questions foreign to his technical competence but not to the power he has acquired through it, pronounce with authority a discourse which is no longer a function of knowledge, but rather a function of the socioeconomic order. He speaks as an ordinary man, who can receive authority in exchange for knowledge just as one receives a paycheck in exchange for work. He inscribes himself in the common language of practices, where an overproduction of authority leads to the devaluation of authority, since one always gets more in exchange for an equal or inferior amount of competence. But when he continues to believe, or make others believe, that he is acting as a scientist, he confuses social *place* with technical *discourse*. He takes one for the other: it is a simple case of mistaken identity. He misunderstands the order which he represents. He no longer knows *what* he is saying. A few individuals, after having long considered themselves experts speaking a scientific language, have finally awoken from their slumbers and suddenly realized that for the last few moments they have been walking on air, like Felix the Cat in the old cartoons, far from the scientific ground. Though legitimized by scientific knowledge, their discourse is seen to have been no more than the ordinary language of tactical games between economic powers and symbolic authorities.

The Wittgensteinian model of ordinary language

For all that, the "universal" discourse of earlier philosophy does not recover its rights. Insofar as it concerns language, the philosophical question in our technical societies has to do with the distinction between discursivities regulating specialization (they maintain a social *reason* by

means of an operative partitioning) and the narratives of exchange on a massive scale (they multiply the ruses permitting or restraining a *circulation* within a power network). Independently of the analyses that have brought both of these under the common rubric of linguistic *practices*¹³, or of research which reveals *either* the insinuation of beliefs, of the verisimilar, of metaphors, that is, of the "common," into scientific discourse, *or* the complex logics implied by ordinary language¹⁴—efforts to rejoin pieces of language which were disconnected and abusively hierarchized—it is also possible to turn to a philosophy which furnishes a "model" and which undertakes to carry out a rigorous examination of ordinary language: that of Wittgenstein. From the perspective in which I place myself, it can be considered as a radical critique of the Expert. The corollary: it is also a critique of the Philosopher as Expert.

If Wittgenstein intends "to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use,"¹⁵ a project which he developed especially during his later period, he does not allow himself, or any philosopher, a metaphysical overflow beyond what speech *can* say. This is his constant program: "To say nothing except what can be said . . . and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions."¹⁶ Wittgenstein set himself the task of being the scientist of the activity of signifying in the common language. Anything else can be considered as language only by analogy or comparison with "the apparatus of our ordinary language."¹⁷ But the problem is to treat it in such a way as not to state anything that exceeds the competence of this language and thus never to become an expert, or an interpreter, in another linguistic field (for example, metaphysics or ethics), never to speak *elsewhere* "in its name." In that way the conversion of competence into authority is to be rendered impossible.

What is fascinating in the enterprise of this Hercules who set out to clean the Augean stables of contemporary intellectual life is not so much his restrictive procedures, which are the effects of the passion for exactitude that he puts at the service of a certain reserve in the analysis of "everyday" language (this "everyday" replaces, in the linguistic approach, the *Everyman* of Renaissance ethics, but bears the same question); but rather, more fundamentally, the way in which Wittgenstein draws "from the inside" of *this language* (to use his expression) the limits of that which, whether ethical or mystical, exceeds it.¹⁸ It is exclusively from the inside that he recognizes an outside which itself remains

22 "lifeworld"

ineffable. His work thus operates a double erosion: one which, from the interior of ordinary language, makes these limits appear; another which reveals the unacceptable character (the nonsense) of any proposition that attempts to escape toward "that which cannot be said." The analysis locates the empty places that sap language, and it destroys the statements that claim to fill them in. It works with what language shows without being able to say it. Wittgenstein examines a play of regional and combined syntaxes whose foundations, coherence, and overall significance depend on questions that are pertinent, and even essential, but cannot be treated in their "proper" place because language cannot become the object of a discourse. "We do not *command* a clear view of the use of our words."¹⁹ Rarely has the reality of language—that is, the fact that it defines our historicity, that it dominates and envelops us in the mode of the ordinary, that no discourse can therefore "escape from it," put itself at the distance from it in order to observe it and tell us its meaning—been taken seriously with so much rigor.

In this way, Wittgenstein maintains himself in the present of his historicity without having recourse to the "past" of the historian. He would reject even historiography because, by separating a past from the present, it privileges in effect a *proper* and productive place from which it claims to "command a clear view" of linguistic facts (or "documents") and to distinguish itself from the *given*, a *product* which is alone supposed to be subject to common rules. Wittgenstein recognizes that he is "caught" in common linguistic historicity. Accordingly, he will not allow this dependence to be *localized* in the object (designated as "past") whose historiographic operation is fictively detached (through a fiction that is moreover the very space where the scientific challenge of mastering history is produced).²⁰ In reality, his position is not risked there, but rather in a double combat whose articulation furnishes us with a formal landmark for the study of culture. On the one hand, he combats the professionalization of philosophy, that is, its reduction to the technical (i.e., positivist) discourse of a specialty. More generally, he rejects the purifying process that, by eliminating the ordinary use of language (everyday language), makes it possible for science to produce and master an artificial language. On the other hand, he combats the rashness of metaphysics and the impatience of ethics, which are always led to subsume the rules of correct use and to pay with the meaninglessness of some statements for the authority of their discourse on the language of common experiences. He attacks the presumption that leads philosophy to

proceed "as if" it gave meaning to ordinary use, and to suppose that it has its own place from which it can reflect on the everyday.

We are subject to, but not identified with, ordinary language. As in the ship of fools, we are embarked, without the possibility of an aerial view or any sort of totalization. That is the "prose of the world" Merleau-Ponty spoke of. It encompasses every discourse, even if human experiences 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 authorize themselves to deal with it. In this respect, neither touches the philosophical question, endlessly reopened by that "urge" that "pushes man to run up against the limits of language" ("*an die Grenze der Sprache anzurennen*").²¹ Wittgenstein reintroduces this language *both* into philosophy, which has indeed taken it for a formal object while according itself a fictional mastery over it, *and* into the sciences, which have excluded it in order to accord themselves an actual mastery.

He thus changes the *place* of analysis, henceforth defined by a *universality* identical with *submission* to ordinary use. This change of place modifies the status of the discourse. By being "caught" within ordinary language, the philosopher no longer has his own (*propre*) appropriate place. Any position of mastery is denied him. The analyzing discourse and the analyzed "object" are in the same situation: both are organized by the practical activity with which they are concerned, both are determined by rules they neither establish nor see clearly, equally scattered in differentiated ways of working (Wittgenstein wanted his work itself to be composed only of fragments), inscribed in a texture in which each can by turns "appeal" to the other, cite it and refer to it. There is a continual exchange of distinct places. Philosophical or scientific privilege disappears into the ordinary. This disappearance has as its corollary the invalidation of truths. From what privileged place could they be signified? There will thus be *facts* that are no longer *truths*. The inflation of the latter is controlled, if not shut off, by criticism of the places of authority in which facts are converted into truths. Detecting them by their mixture of meaninglessness and power, Wittgenstein attempts to reduce these truths to linguistic facts and to that which, in these facts, refers to an ineffable or "mystical" exteriority of language.

This position can be connected to the increasing importance in Wittgenstein's work of linguistic behaviors and uses. To discuss language "within" ordinary language, without being able "to command a clear

view" of it, without being able to see it from a distance, is to grasp it as an ensemble of practices in which one is implicated and through which the prose of the world is at work. The analysis will therefore be a "looking into the workings of our language" (*eine Einsicht in das Arbeiten unserer Sprache*).²² It thus cannot avoid reproducing the dissemination which fragments every system. But by trying to "determine the morphology of use" of expressions, that is, to examine their "domains of use" and to "describe the forms,"²³ it can "recognize" different modes of everyday functioning, governed by "pragmatic rules," themselves dependent on "forms of life" (*Lebensformen*).²⁴

A contemporary historicity

Wittgenstein's elaboration of this analysis, to whose sociolinguistic or "ethnomethodological" developments we shall return later, owes a great deal to the philosophical tradition he came to know at Cambridge. From Cook Wilson to G. E. Moore and J. L. Austin, it had concentrated on the "ways of speaking" of ordinary or everyday language, to the point that Austin's program was "to track the minutiae of ordinary language" and his reputation that of being "the evangelist of ordinary language" (TLS, 16 November 1973). Several reasons were advanced in support of this approach, and they concern us as well: 1. the usual ways of speaking do not have *any equivalent* in philosophical discourse and they cannot be translated into it because they are richer and more varied than it is; 2. they constitute a *reserve* of "distinctions" and "connections" accumulated by historical experience and stored up in everyday speech;²⁵ 3. as linguistic *practices*, they manifest *logical complexities* unnoticed by scientific formalizations.²⁶

But these more or less professional exchanges cannot erase the primary historical context of Wittgenstein's thought. Three aspects of this context are particularly indicative of its importance. First, parallel to the reaction that inspired the architect Adolf Loos to write *Ornament and Crime*, a book defending a functionalist austerity against the decorative degeneracy of Vienna,²⁷ or that which elicits the clinical irony of Musil's observations in *Cacania*,²⁸ there is in Wittgenstein's work an almost puritanical "execration" of the "fallacious" charm and the "journalistic" brilliance of a "rotting culture" and of the "drivel" that resembles them.²⁹ "Purity"³⁰ and reserve mark the style of an engagement in contemporary

history, a philosophical politics of culture. The critical return of the ordinary, as Wittgenstein understands it, must destroy all the varieties of rhetorical brilliance associated with powers that hierarchize and with nonsense that enjoys authority.

Another, equally striking, analogy: through his experience as a superior technician, then as a mathematician, Wittgenstein had, like Musil's Ulrich, the man without qualities, a "second try" and a third try, "the most important." He, too, possessed "fragments of a new way of thinking and feeling" and saw "the spectacle of novelty, at first so intense," dissolve "into the multiplication of details." For him, too, "there remained only philosophy to which he could dedicate himself."³¹ But, like Ulrich, in the area of the "good use of his [linguistic] abilities" he retained the "marvelous clarity"³² which the scientific method had sharpened—thus combining technical rigor with respect for its "object." Unlike the Expert's discourse, Wittgenstein's does not profit from knowledge by exchanging it against the right to speak in its name; he retains its exactingness but not its mastery.

Finally, this science of the ordinary is defined by a threefold foreignness: the foreignness of the specialist (and of the wealthy bourgeois) to common life, of the scientist to philosophy, and, until the very end, of the German to the everyday English language (in which he never settled down). This situation is comparable to those of the ethnologist and the historian, but more radical. In the accidental ways of being a foreigner *away from home* (like any traveler or keeper of records) Wittgenstein sees the metaphors of *foreign* analytical procedures *inside* the very language that circumscribes them. "When we do philosophy [that is, when we are working in the place which is the only "philosophical" one, the prose of the world] we are like savages, primitive people, who hear the expressions of civilized men, put a false interpretation on them, and then draw the queerest conclusions from it."³³ This is no longer the position of professionals, supposed to be civilized men among savages; it is rather the position which consists in being a foreigner *at home*, a "savage" in the midst of ordinary culture, lost in the complexity of the common agreement and what goes without saying. And since one does not "leave" this language, since one cannot find another place from which to interpret it, since there are therefore no separate groups of false interpretations and true interpretations, but only illusory interpretations, since in short there is no *way out*, the fact remains that we are *foreigners* on the

fig. 1.
phil.
a
savage
away from home
civilized
at home
lost in the complexity of the common agreement and what goes without saying

no outside: Matruan & Vach

inside—but there is no outside. Thus we must constantly “run up against the limits” of ordinary language—a situation close to the Freudian position except that Wittgenstein does not allow himself an unconscious referent to name this foreignness-at-home.

By these characteristics, Wittgenstein’s fragmented and rigorous body of work seems to provide a philosophical blueprint for a contemporary science of the ordinary. Without going into the details of its theses, we must compare this model, taken as a theoretical hypothesis, with positive contributions of the “human sciences” (sociology, ethnology, history, etc.) to the knowledge of ordinary culture.

Chapter II Popular Cultures: Ordinary Language

TO LEAVE VIENNA or Cambridge, to leave theoretical texts, is not to leave Wittgenstein behind (he was a teacher in a village elementary school between 1920 and 1926) but rather to set out toward the open sea of common experience that surrounds, penetrates, and finally carries away every discourse—if one is not satisfied with substituting a political mastery for scientific appropriation. Memories come back to me, the places of these mute silences of memory. For instance, as an introduction to a seminar on the popular culture of Northeast Brazil, a walk through the night, alive with sound, in the town of Salvador towards the Igreja do Passo. Contrasting with the subtle theatricality of the Misericórdia, the church’s dark facade lifts up into its dignity all the dust and sweat of the city. Standing above the old parts of town full of vague murmurings and human voices, it presents their monumental, silent secret. It dominates the narrow Ladeira do Passo. It does not yield itself to researches who nevertheless have it there before them, just as popular language escapes them, when they approach it, for it comes from too far away and too high. Very different from the Church do Rosário, which is all blue and openness, this dark stone raises the nocturnal face of Bahian irony. An unconquerable rock even though (or because) it is familiar, totally without solemnity, similar to the songs of the Brazilian *saudade*. Returning from this pilgrimage, the passing faces in the streets seem, in spite of their vivacious mobility, to multiply the indecipherable and nearby secret of the monument.

A Brazilian “art”

Our investigation moves on, groping its way, as we did, in interdisciplinary local teams, in Rio, in Salvador, and in Recife (Brazil), or again in Santiago and Concepción (Chile), in Posadas (Argentina), etc. For example, one of these analyses concerned the language used by the

peasants of the Pernambuco (in Crato, Juazeiro, Itapetim, etc.) in talking about their situation in 1974 and about the great deeds of Frei Damião, the charismatic hero of the region.¹ The discourse parted space in such a way as to stratify it on two levels. On the one hand, a socio-economic space, organized by an immemorial struggle between "the powerful" and "the poor," presented itself as the field of constant victories by the rich and the police, but also as the reign of mendacity (there no truth is said, except in whispers and among peasants: "*Agora a gente sabe, mas não pode dizer alto*"). In this space, the strong always win and words always deceive—an experience in accord with that of a Maghrebian syndicalist in Billancourt: "They always fuck us over." On the other hand, distinct from this *polemological* space which perspicacious country people saw as a network of innumerable conflicts covered up with words, there was also a *utopian* space in which a possibility, by definition miraculous in nature, was affirmed by religious stories. Frei Damião was the almost immobile center of this space, constantly qualified by the successive accounts of the celestial punishments visited upon his enemies.

As far as the actual power relationships were concerned, we can say that a lucid discourse cunningly turned up fake words and prohibitions on speaking in order to reveal an ubiquitous injustice—not simply the injustice of the established powers, but, more profoundly, that of history. It recognized in that injustice an order of things that seemed immutable: it is always so; people see it every day. But no legitimacy whatever was accorded this state of affairs. On the contrary, just because it was a constantly repeated fact, this relationship of forces did not become any more acceptable. The *fact* was not accepted as a *law*, even if it remained inescapably a fact. Trapped in dependency, forced to submit to the facts, this conviction is nevertheless opposed to the *statutory* fact of an order presenting itself as natural, a goal of non-acceptance, and to its fatality, an *ethical* protest (if science can permit itself different options concerning the relation between facts and laws, it is above all because it can escape from that dependence). But in order to affirm the non-coincidence of fact and meaning, another scene was required, the religious scene that reintroduces, in the mode of supernatural events, the historical contingency of this "nature" and, by means of celestial landmarks, creates a place for this protest. The unacceptability of an order which is nevertheless established was articulated, appropriately enough, as a miracle.

* The Renault automobile factory in Billancourt (on the outskirts of Paris) employs many immigrants from North Africa. (Tr.)

There, in a language necessarily foreign to the analysis of socioeconomic relationships, the hope could be *maintained* that the vanquished of history—the body on which the victories of the rich or their allies are continually inscribed—might, in the "person" of the humiliated "saint" Damião, rise again as a result of the blows rained on its adversaries from on high.

Without diminishing in any way what one sees every day, the stories of miracles respond to it "from aside" with irrelevance and impertinence in a different discourse, a discourse one can only *believe*—just as an ethical reaction must believe that life cannot be reduced to what one sees of it. In the same way, in J.-L. Comolli's film *La Cecilia*, the anarchist songs form the counterpoint to the events that gradually destroy, as it develops, the socialist commune founded in Brazil by Tito Rossi: the songs remain intact and, in the end, from the very ruins of a history restored to order, these songs rise again, escaping from the battlefield of defeat, lifting up a voice that will bring to life, elsewhere, other movements:

Un'idea l'amante mia An idea is my darling,
A cui detti braccio e cuor . . .² I gave it grip and heart

Deh t'affretta a sorgere Ah, hurry to rise
O sol dell'avvenir You sun of the future
Vivere vogliam liberi It's free we would live
Non vogliam più servir.³ We would serve no more.

In the same way as the voodoo *Loas*, the "spirits" and voices from another realm,⁴ 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 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.

The rural "believers" thus subvert the fatality of the established order. And they do it by using a frame of reference which also proceeds from an external power (the religion imposed by Christian missions). They re-employ a system that, far from being their own, has been constructed and spread by others, and they mark this re-employment by "superstitions," excrescences of this belief in miracles which civil and religious

authorities have always correctly suspected of putting in question the "reason" behind power and knowledge hierarchies. A ("popular") use of religion modifies its functioning. 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.

More generally, a way of using imposed systems constitutes the resistance to the historical law of a state of affairs and its dogmatic legitimations. A practice of the order constructed by others redistributes its space; it creates at least a certain play in that order, a space for maneuvers of unequal forces and for utopian points of reference. That is where the opacity of a "popular" culture could be said to manifest itself—a dark rock that resists all assimilation. What is there called "wisdom" (*sabedoria*) may be defined as a stratagem (*trampolinagem*, which a play on words associates with the acrobatics of the mountebank and his art of jumping on the trampoline, *trampolim*) and as "trickery" (*trapaçaria*, ruse, deception, in the way one uses or cheats with the terms of social contracts).⁵ Innumerable ways of playing and foiling the other's game (*jouer/déjouer le jeu de l'autre*), that is, the space instituted by others, characterize 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. People have to make do with what they have. In these combatants' stratagems, there is a certain art of placing one's blows, a pleasure in getting around the rules of a constraining space. We see the tactical and joyful dexterity of the mastery of a technique. Scapin and Figaro are only literary echoes of this art. Like the skill of a driver in the streets of Rome or Naples, there is a skill that has its connoisseurs and its esthetics exercised in any labyrinth of powers, a skill ceaselessly recreating opacities and ambiguities—spaces of darkness and trickery—in the universe of technocratic transparency, a skill that disappears into them and reappears again, taking no responsibility for the administration of a totality. Even the field of misfortune is refashioned by this combination of manipulation and enjoyment.

The proverbial enunciation

Is this too hasty a generalization? It is a hypothesis for research, to be sure, but it is based on the examinations of other terrains⁶ and situated,

naturally, in an ensemble of precedents and neighboring inquiries, for example, the recent research on the "practical intelligence" (*mētis*) of the Greeks⁷ or on the "practical sense" and the "strategies" of the peoples of Béarn (in Southern France) and Kabylia (in North Africa).⁸

This approach to popular culture takes its inspiration from a problematics of enunciation, in the triple sense due to Austin's analysis of performative utterances, to A. J. Greimas' semiotics of manipulation, and to the semiology of the Prague School. Although it was initially concerned with the *speech act* through which a speaker actualizes and appropriates his mother tongue in a particular situation of exchange or "contract,"⁹ this problematics can be extended to culture as a whole on the basis of the resemblance between the ("enunciative") *procedures* which articulate actions in both the field of language and the network of social practices. It differs from more traditional studies concerned with legendary, proverbial (etc.) statements, or, more generally, with the objective form of rites or behaviors in that it constitutes a corpus *peculiar* to popular culture and analyzes the variable terms of invariable functions within finite systems. The postulates and methods of the two perspectives are divergent: whereas the one seeks to discern the types of *operations* for which historical conjunctures provide the space, the other prefers to identify the *structural* equilibria whose constancy each society manifests in differing ways.

The differences are of course neither so simple nor so antithetical. Thus Pierre Bourdieu combines both in a "theory of practice" to which we shall have to return. But one can clarify what is at stake in these alternatives by reference to a particular case, that of the *proverb*.

One method consists in first isolating proverbs and then collecting them, as Aarne or Propp did for folktales. Once the material has been collected, one can treat either the content, divided by labels or semantic units (actions, themes, agents), whose relationships are analyzable in terms of structures and whose aggregates indicate the mental geography peculiar to a given group;¹⁰ or one can study the modes of production, for example the way in which proverbs (generally distichs: "Out of sight, out of mind," "When the cat's away, the mice will play," "Red sky in morning, sailor take warning," etc.) reinforce the impact of the meaning by diminishing differences in sound (through rhyme, alliteration, etc.).¹¹ On the one hand, one is concerned with systems of signification, on the other, with systems of fabrication. Through a twofold control of the corpus they circumscribe and of the operations they carry out on it, these methods succeed in defining their object themselves (what is a

proverb?), in rationalizing its collection, in classifying the types and transforming the "given" into something reproducible (for example, if one knows the rules of the production of proverbs, one can fabricate a series of them). These techniques thus provide, by explaining them, the ability to *construct* social phenomena, just as biology synthesizes insulin.

Because the analysis of myths has been further developed than that of proverbs, such analysis, from Aarne to Lévi-Strauss, has shown how a science of these discourses, by isolating and sifting them, by refining and formalizing the minimum units it treats,¹² can classify a literature that is supposed to be heterogeneous, can reveal a "savage mind" (*pensée sauvage*) and a logic in bodies of material constituted as "foreign," and, in this way, can renew the interpretation and production of our own discourse.

The drawback of this method, which is at the same time the condition of its success, is that it extracts the documents from their *historical* context and eliminates the *operations* of speakers in particular situations of time, place, and competition. Everyday linguistic practices (as well as the space of their tactics) have to be ignored in order for the scientific practices to be able to operate in their own field. The innumerable tricks of bringing in a proverb at just the right moment and with a particular interlocutor are thus not taken into account. This art and its practitioners are excluded from the laboratory, not only because the scientific method requires a delimitation and simplification of its objects, but also because there corresponds to the constitution of a scientific space, as the precondition of any analysis, the necessity of being able to *transfer* the objects of study into it. Only what can be transported can be treated. What cannot be uprooted remains by definition outside the field of research. Hence the privilege that these studies accord to *discourses*, the data that can most easily be grasped, recorded, transported, and examined in secure places; in contrast, the speech *act* cannot be parted from its circumstances. Of the practices themselves, science will retain only movable elements (tools and products to be put in display cases) or descriptive schemas (quantifiable behaviors, stereotypes of the staging of social intercourse, ritual structures), leaving aside the aspects of a society that cannot be so uprooted and transferred to another space: ways of using things or words according to circumstances. Something essential is at work in this everyday *historicity*, which cannot be dissociated from the *existence* of the subjects who are the agents and authors of conjunctural operations. Indeed, like Schreber's God, who "communicates only with

cadavers,"¹³ our knowledge seems to consider and tolerate in a social body only inert objects.

Was it fate? I remember the marvelous Shelburne Museum in Vermont where, in thirty-five houses of a reconstructed village, all the signs, tools, and products of nineteenth-century everyday life teem; everything, from cooking utensils and pharmaceutical goods to weaving instruments, toilet articles, and children's toys can be found in profusion. The display includes innumerable familiar objects, polished, deformed, or made more beautiful by long use; everywhere there are as well the marks of the active hands and laboring or patient bodies for which these things composed the daily circuits, the fascinating presence of absences whose traces were everywhere. At least this village full of abandoned and salvaged objects drew one's attention, through them, to the ordered murmurs of a hundred past or possible villages, and by means of these imbricated traces one began to dream of countless combinations of existences. Like tools, proverbs (and other discourses) are *marked by* uses; they offer to analysis the *imprints of acts* or of processes of enunciation;¹⁴ they signify the *operations* whose object they have been, operations which are relative to situations and which can be thought of as the conjunctural *modalizations* of statements or of practices;¹⁵ more generally, they thus indicate a social *historicity* in which systems of representations or processes of fabrication no longer appear only as normative frameworks but also as *tools manipulated by users*.

Logics: games, tales, and the arts of speaking

From these imprints on language, we are already returning toward operators' ways of operating. But it is not enough to describe individual uses and devices. In order to think them, one must suppose that these ways of operating correspond a finite number of procedures (invention is not unlimited and, like improvisations on the piano or on the guitar, it presupposes the knowledge and application of codes), and that they imply a *logic of the operation of actions relative to types of situations*. This logic, which turns on *circumstances*, has as its precondition, contrary to the procedures of Western science, the non-autonomy of its field of action. A rich elucidation of this logic can be found in Chinese thought, in the canonical *I Ching* (or *Book of Changes*) or in Sun Tzu's *Art of War*,¹⁶ or in the Arab tradition of the *Book of Tricks*.¹⁷ But need we seek our models so far abroad? Every society always

manifests somewhere the formal rules which its practices obey. But where should we look for them in the West, since our scientific method, by substituting its "own" places for the complex geography of social rules and its "artificial" languages for ordinary language,¹⁸ has allowed and even required reason to adopt a logic of mastery and transparency? Like Poe's "purloined letter," the inscriptions of these various logics are written in places so obvious that one does not see them. Without referring again to ordinary language, we can already suggest three places in which, hidden only by their very evidence, the formal rules of these circumstantial ways of making are already visible.

First of all, in the specific *games* of each society: games, which as operations are disjunctive, because they produce differentiating events,¹⁹ give rise to spaces where *moves* are proportional to *situations*. From the game of chess, an aristocratic form of the "art of war" which came from China and was brought by the Arabs into medieval Western culture where it constituted a very important part of manorial culture, to pinochle, Lotto, and Scrabble, games formulate (and already formalize) rules organizing moves and constitute as well a *memory* (a storage and a classification) of schemas of actions articulating replies with respect to circumstances. They exercise that function precisely because they are detached from those everyday combats which forbid one to "show his hand" and whose stakes, rules, and moves are too complex. The explicitness of the rules is always inversely proportional to the practical engagement involved. If we observe a formalization of tactics in these games (as has been done with respect to the game of *go*),²⁰ or compare to games the technique of divination, whose formal framework has the purpose of adjusting a decision to concrete situations,²¹ we gain a preliminary body of material concerning the kinds of rationality proper to the practice of spaces—spaces that are closed and "historicized" by the variability of the events to be treated.

To these games correspond *accounts* of particular games: people tell each other about the hand they had to play the night before, or the slam they made the previous week. These stories represent a succession of combinations among all those that the synchronic organization of a space, of rules, of deals, etc., make possible. They are paradigmatic projections of a choice among these possibilities—a choice corresponding to a particular actualization (or enunciation). Like the bridge or chess articles in *The New York Times*, the stories could be formulated in a special code, thus making it clear that every event is a particular

application of the formal framework. But in replaying the games, in telling about them, these accounts record the rules and the moves simultaneously. To be memorized as well as memorable, they are *repertoires of schemas of action* between partners. With the attraction that the element of surprise introduces, these mementos teach the tactics possible within a given (social) system.

Tales and legends seem to have the same role.²² They are deployed, like games, in a space outside of and isolated from daily competition, that of the past, the marvelous, the original. In that space can thus be revealed, dressed as gods or heroes, the models of good or bad ruses that can be used every day. Moves, not truths, are recounted. One can already find an example of these panoplies of strategies in the work of Propp, a pioneer whose work became a rigidified model for "formalist" research on folktales.²³ The four hundred fabulous tales he had examined were reduced to a "fundamental series"²⁴ of *functions*, the "function" being "the action of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance in the development of the plot."²⁵ It is not certain, as A. Régnier noted, that the homologizing of these functions is coherent, nor, as both Lévi-Strauss and Greimas have shown, that the units Propp delimited are stable; but the novelty of Propp's work, which remains important today, lies in the analysis of the tactics for which the tales offer both an inventory and a repertoire of combinations, on the basis of elementary units which are not significations or beings, but actions relative to conflictual situations. With others that have since appeared, Propp's reading would allow us to recognize in the tales the strategic discourses of the people. Hence the privilege that these tales accord to simulation/dissimulation.²⁶ The formality of everyday practices is indicated in these tales, which frequently reverse the relationships of power and, like the stories of miracles, ensure the victory of the unfortunate in a fabulous, utopian space. This space protects the weapons of the weak against the reality of the established order. It also hides them from the social categories which "make history" because they dominate it. And whereas historiography recounts in the past tense the strategies of instituted powers, these "fabulous" stories offer their audience a repertoire of tactics for future use.

Finally, in these tales themselves, the stylistic effects—devices and "figures," alliterations, inversions and plays on words—also participate in the collation of these tactics. They are also, more discreetly, living museums of these tactics, the benchmarks of an apprenticeship. Both

rhetoric and everyday practices can be defined as internal manipulations of a system—that of language or that of an established order. “Turns” (or “tropes”) inscribe in ordinary language the ruses, displacements, ellipses, etc., that scientific reason has eliminated from operational discourses in order to constitute “proper” meanings. But the practice of these ruses, the memory of a culture, remains in these “literary” zones into which they have been repressed (as in dreams, where Freud re-discovered them). These tricks characterize a popular *art of speaking*. So quick, so perspicacious in recognizing them in the discourse of the raconteur and the peddler, the ear of the peasant or worker can discern in a way of speaking a way of treating the received language. His amused or artistic appreciation also concerns an art of living in the other’s field. It distinguishes in these linguistic turns a style of thought and action—that is, models of practice.²⁷

A diversionary practice: “la perruque”

With these examples of terrains on which one can locate the specific modalities of “enunciative” practices (manipulations of imposed spaces, tactics relative to particular situations), the possibility is opened up of analyzing the immense field of an “art of practice” differing from the models that (in theory) reign from top to bottom in a culture certified by education (from the universities to the elementary schools), models that all postulate the constitution of a space of their own (a scientific space or a blank page to be written on), independent of speakers and circumstances, in which they can construct a system based on rules ensuring the system’s production, repetition, and verification. Two questions burden this inquiry. They concern, moreover, the two sides of a single political problem. First, on what grounds can we call this “art” *different*? Second, *from what position* (from what distinct place) can we set out to analyze it? Perhaps by resorting to the very procedures of this art, we can revise our views on both its definition as “popular” and our position as observers.

To be sure, there remain social, economic, historical differences between the practitioners (peasants, workers, etc.) of these ruses and ourselves as analysts. It is no accident that their culture is elaborated in terms of the conflictual or competitive relations between the stronger and the weaker, leaving no room for a legendary or ritual space that would be merely neutral. This difference can moreover be seen within the study itself, in the gap that separates the time of solidarity (marked by docility

and gratitude toward one’s hosts) from the time of writing; the latter reveals the institutional affiliations (scientific, social) and the profit (intellectual, professional, financial, etc.) for which this hospitality is objectively the means. The Bororos of Brazil sink slowly into their collective death, and Lévi-Strauss takes his seat in the French Academy. Even if this injustice disturbs him, the facts remain unchanged. This story is ours as much as his. In this one respect (which is an index of others that are more important), the intellectuals are still borne on the backs of the common people.

We need not stress here either the socioeconomic implications or the *locus* of ethnological or historical research,²⁸ or the political situation that, from the very beginning of contemporary research, has inscribed the concept *popular* in a problematic of repression.²⁹ But one pressing question must be confronted here: if one does not expect a revolution to transform the laws of history, how is it possible to foil here and now the social hierarchization which organizes scientific work on popular cultures and repeats itself in that work? The resurgence of “popular” practices within industrial and scientific modernity indicates the paths that might be taken by a transformation of the object of our study and the place from which we study it.

The operational models of popular culture cannot be confined to the past, the countryside, or primitive peoples. They exist in the heart of the strongholds of the contemporary economy. Take, for example, what in France is called *la perruque*, “the wig.” *La perruque* is the worker’s own work disguised as work for his employer. It differs from pilfering in that nothing of material value is stolen. It differs from absenteeism in that the worker is officially on the job. *La perruque* may be as simple a matter as a secretary’s writing a love letter on “company time” or as complex as a cabinetmaker’s “borrowing” a lathe to make a piece of furniture for his living room. Under different names in different countries this phenomenon is becoming more and more general, even if managers penalize it or “turn a blind eye” on it in order not to know about it.³⁰

Accused of stealing or turning material to his own ends and using the machines for his own profit, the worker who indulges in *la perruque* actually diverts time (not goods, since he uses only scraps) from the factory for work that is free, creative, and precisely not directed toward profit. In the very place where the machine he must serve reigns supreme, he cunningly takes pleasure in finding a way to create gratuitous products whose sole purpose is to signify his own capabilities through his *work* and to confirm his solidarity with other workers or his family

through *spending* his time in this way. With the complicity of other workers (who thus defeat the competition the factory tries to instill among them), he succeeds in "putting one over" on the established order on its home ground. Far from being a regression toward a mode of production organized around artisans or individuals, *la perruque* re-introduces "popular" techniques of other times and other places into the industrial space (that is, into the Present order).

Many other examples would show the constant presence of these practices in the most ordered spheres of modern life. With variations, practices analogous to *la perruque* are proliferating in governmental and commercial offices as well as in factories. No doubt they are just as widespread as formerly (though they ought still to be studied), just as widely suspected, repressed, or ignored. Not only workshops and offices, but also museums and learned journals penalize such practices or ignore them. The authority of ethnological or folklore studies permits some of the material or linguistic objects of these practices to be collected, labelled according to place of origin and theme, put in display cases, offered for inspection and interpretation, and thus that authority conceals, as rural "treasures" serving to edify or satisfy the curiosity of city folk, the legitimization of an order supposed by its conservators to be immemorial and "natural." Or else they use the tools and products taken from a language of social operations to set off a display of technical gadgets and thus arrange them, inert, on the margins of a system that itself remains intact.

The actual order of things is precisely what "popular" tactics turn to their own ends, without any illusion that it will change any time soon. Though elsewhere it is exploited by a dominant power or simply denied by an ideological discourse, here order is *tricked* by an art. Into the institution to be served are thus insinuated styles of social exchange, technical invention, and moral resistance, that is, an economy of the "gift" (generosities for which one expects a return), an esthetics of "tricks" (artists' operations) and an ethics of *tenacity* (countless ways of refusing to accord the established order the status of a law, a meaning, or a fatality). "Popular" culture is precisely that; it is not a corpus considered as foreign, fragmented in order to be displayed, studied and "quoted" by a system which does to objects what it does to living beings.

The progressive partitioning of times and places, the disjunctive logic of specialization through and for work, no longer has an adequate counterpart in the conjunctive rituals of mass communications. This *fact* cannot become our *law*. It can be gotten around through departments

that, "competing" with the gifts of our benefactors, offer them products at the expense of the institution that divides and pays the workers. This practice of economic *diversion* is in reality the return of a sociopolitical ethics into an economic system. It is no doubt related to the *potlatch* described by Mauss, an interplay of voluntary allowances that counts on reciprocity and organizes a social network articulated by the "obligation to give."³¹ In our societies, the market economy is no longer determined by such an "emulation": taking the abstract individual as a basic unit, it regulates all exchanges among these units according to the code of generalized equivalence constituted by money. This individualistic axiom is, of course, now surfacing as the question that disturbs the free market system as a whole. The a priori assumption of an historical Western option is becoming its point of implosion. However that may be, the *potlatch* seems to persist within it as the mark of another type of economy. It survives in our economy, though on its margins or in its interstices. It is even developing, although held to be illegitimate, within modern market economy. Because of this, the politics of the "gift" also becomes a diversionary tactic. In the same way, the loss that was voluntary in a gift economy is transformed into a transgression in a profit economy: it appears as an excess (a waste), a challenge (a rejection of profit), or a crime (an attack on property).

This path, relative to our economy, derives from another; it compensates for the first even though it is illegal and (from this point of view) marginal. The same pathway allows investigations to take up a position that is no longer defined only by an acquired power and an observational knowledge, with the addition of a pinch of nostalgia. Melancholy is not enough. Certainly, with respect to the sort of writing that separates domains in the name of the division of labor and reveals class affiliations, it would be "fabulous" if, as in the stories of miracles, the groups that formerly gave us our masters and that are currently lodged in our corpus were to rise up and themselves mark their comings and goings in the texts that honor and bury them at the same time. This hope has disappeared, along with the beliefs which have long since vanished from our cities. There are no longer any ghosts who can remind the living of reciprocity. But in the order organized by the power of knowledge (ours), as in the order of the countryside or the factories, a diversionary practice remains possible.

Let us try to make a *perruque* in the economic system whose rules and hierarchies are repeated, as always, in scientific institutions. In the area of scientific research (which defines the current order of knowledge),

working with its machines and making use of its scraps, we can divert the time owed to the institution; we can make textual objects that signify an art and solidarities; we can play the game of free exchange, even if it is penalized by bosses and colleagues when they are not willing to "turn a blind eye" on it; we can create networks of connivances and sleights of hand; we can exchange gifts; and in these ways we can subvert the law that, in the scientific factory, puts work at the service of the machine and, by a similar logic, progressively destroys the requirement of creation and the "obligation to give." I know of investigators experienced in this art of diversion, which is a return of the ethical, of pleasure and of invention within the scientific institution. Realizing no profit (profit is produced by work done for the factory), and often at a loss, they take something from the order of knowledge in order to inscribe "artistic achievements" on it and to carve on it the graffiti of their debts of honor. To deal with everyday tactics in this way would be to practice an "ordinary" art, to find oneself in the common situation, and to make a kind of *perruque* of writing itself.

Chapter III "Making Do": Uses and Tactics

IN SPITE OF MEASURES taken to repress or conceal it, *la perruque* (or its equivalent) is infiltrating itself everywhere and becoming more and more common. It is only one case among all the practices which introduce *artistic* tricks and competitions of *accomplices* into a system that reproduces and partitions through work or leisure. Sly as a fox and twice as quick: there are countless ways of "making do."

From this point of view, the dividing line no longer falls between work and leisure. These two areas of activity flow together. They repeat and reinforce each other. Cultural techniques that camouflage economic reproduction with fictions of surprise ("the event"), of truth ("information") or communication ("promotion") spread through the workplace. Reciprocally, cultural production offers an area of expansion for rational operations that permit work to be managed by dividing it (analysis), tabulating it (synthesis) and aggregating it (generalization). A distinction is required other than the one that distributes behaviors according to their *place* (of work or leisure) and qualifies them thus by the fact that they are located on one or another square of the social checkerboard—in the office, in the workshop, or at the movies. There are differences of another type. They refer to the *modalities* of action, to the *formalities* of practices. They traverse the frontiers dividing time, place, and type of action into one part assigned for work and another for leisure. For example, *la perruque* grafts itself onto the system of the industrial assembly line (its counterpoint, in the same place), as a variant of the activity which, outside the factory (in another place), takes the form of *bricolage*.

Although they remain dependent upon the possibilities offered by circumstances, these transverse *tactics* do not obey the law of the place, for they are not defined or identified by it. In this respect, they are not any more localizable than the technocratic (and scriptural) *strategies* that seek to create places in conformity with abstract models. But what