



Are “Other Spaces” Necessary? Associative Power at the Dumpster

Nicholas Jon Crane¹

Department of Geography
The Ohio State University
crane.61@osu.edu

Abstract

Much geographic research on resistance lamentably continues to position its subject outside and against dominant groups that appear to hold power. In the wake of Foucault’s influential but problematic 1966 essay on heterotopia, this subject animates not only geographic research but also critical theory and anti-capitalist propaganda. This article interrogates its appearance in de Certeau’s work on tactics and in certain texts distributed by a contemporary anarchist collective, CrimethInc. The first half of the article argues that, although these writings continue to inspire much activism and scholarship, geographers must be critical of their structuralist-heterotopological treatment of power and spatial differentiation. The second half of offers a corrective through reexamination of a practice celebrated by CrimethInc – dumpster diving (gleaning food from supermarket trash bins). My analysis throws doubt on accounts of such practices as oppositional or separatist resistance. I show that dumpster divers are not and cannot be isolated from even those arrangements they expressly reject, and I recast dumpster diving as an expression of *associative power*. The article suggests that precisely because dumpster divers are entangled in power relations, and because their practices of freedom are immanent to practices of maintaining order, they may come to effect change, not simply evade or oppose domination.



Introduction: “it was an extreme explosion of options and possibility...”²

One decade ago, Rose (2002) argued that, although resistance studies aims to challenge and destabilize hegemonic space, it tends to represent domination as if it has an original stability to which the subject of resistance “responds.” Rose (2002, 384) argued that, by treating resistance as a response, analysts posited domination as “a preestablished force” – “self-present and operative” – that they are, in a sense, *outside*. Ten years ago, then, resistance studies was seen to rely on a *structuralist* understanding of power, an embrace of what Foucault (1976/1980, 89) once identified as power “modeled upon the commodity,” possessed by some and therefore out of others’ reach (Allen, 2004). More recently, Saldanha (2008, 2093) wrote that this structuralism also informs interdisciplinary literature on spatial differentiation, which posits “an underlying binary structure to change.” And indeed, work on “spaces of resistance” (Townsend et al., 2004; Wainwright, 2007), and so-called “heterotopic spaces” (Andriotis, 2010; Tabar, 2007), reflects or draws attention to this tendency’s persistence. Despite years of critical scholarship, little has changed; much of the geographic research on resistance lamentably continues to position its subject outside and against dominant groups that purportedly hold power.

In this regard, Foucault’s theorization of power offers an attractive corrective for radical and particularly anarchist geographers. His take-home point, that the power with which one might engage “comes from everywhere” (1976/1990, 93), appears to make thinkable and practicable *direct action*, the “disavowal of external authority, of elected ‘leaders’ and of state-sanctioned legal systems, in favor of grounded, autonomous agitation” (Ferrell, 2001, 27). For good reason then, and despite criticism from his interlocutor Michel de Certeau, who argued that Foucault conceives of society only in terms of dominant procedures, Foucault has been a key reference point in the formulation of post-/anarchist praxis. May (1994), for instance, identifies contemporary anarchism with Foucault’s “tactical” thought because of their shared conception of de-centered power. But Foucault and his contemporaries must be taken up cautiously; there is more than one Foucault, and – despite his claims – de Certeau offers something quite different from an antidote to the power-enamored Foucault. Even as de Certeau (1980/1984; 1986) points to how ordinary people creatively “make do” within an apparently durable system, he falls short of revealing the articulation of countervailing practices from which that system emerges. In this article, cautious engagement with de Certeau and Foucault challenges a persisting tendency to grasp resistance only in oppositional terms, as that which is mounted from outside and against those who hold power.

Research inspired by de Certeau (1980/1984), on the everyday *tactics* by which “common man” (sic) subverts the domination of space by *strategies*, is disappointing in this regard. Secor (2004, 360), for instance, cautions that de

² See CrimethInc (2001a, 227).

Certeau’s distinction between tactics and strategies is perhaps too clear-cut – that strategies “may also be used by ‘the weak’” – but she finally maintains the binary and reconvenes messy negotiations of power relations into geographies of domination and subversion (see also Hubbard and Sanders, 2003; Kamete, 2008). If this is meant to undermine the domination installed by a “panoptic discourse” on disciplinary society, it also imputes “a certain heroicism” to the tactician presumed capable of eluding or evading a total system structured in advance (Spinney, 2010). I will argue that the notions of power and spatial differentiation that underpin this treatment of resistance are *not only structuralist but also heterotopological*. By treating tacticians as a resistant counterpart to dominant codings of space, analysts inherit a tradition of doing what, in an early essay, Foucault called *heterotopology* – a systematic description of spaces “outside of all places” (Foucault, 1986).

Foucault introduced the concept *heterotopia* in 1966 on French public radio. In 1986, notes from his radio appearance were translated to English and published in the journal *diacritics* as “Of other spaces.” There, he suggests that in every culture there are “other spaces,” tangible sites “outside of all places,” which exert a “counteraction” on “Society” (1986, 24). Later wary of the concept, Foucault authorized the lecture’s publication only just before his death. Belated circulation has not discouraged its uptake in recent Anglophone scholarship (Andriotis, 2010; Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002; North, 1999; Samuels, 2010; Steyaert, 2010; Topinka, 2010). Ettlinger (2009, 94) suggests Foucault’s unease about his lecture arose from its “totalizing presumption of society in which spatial difference is counterposed in a spatialized binary.” Contributors to the recent literature on heterotopic spaces have been less hesitant. “Other spaces” are defined as counter-sites, drawn away from the multiplicity of minute mechanisms, emerging from a plurality of causes, through which Foucault would later claim “events” come to be.

Consistent with a conventional understanding of heterotopic spaces as “sites of resistance” (Topinka, 2010), recent scholarship has identified heterotopias with a “breaking out” of power relations (see North, 1999; Steyaert, 2010). Again, as in the literature on tactics, resistance is imputed to an oppositional subject whose response to a dominating system is the attempt for an absolute break. The mode of analysis Foucault named *heterotopology* is effective here in the presumption of an outside that appeals to the desire for unmitigated freedom from domination. In this article, I argue that, in the wake of Foucault’s influential but highly problematic 1966 essay, the understanding of resistance enabled by this mode of analysis is shared by both critical academicians and non-academic anti-capitalists, including the contemporary anarchist collective *CrimethInc* (or *the CrimethInc Ex-Workers*). The shared vision of resistance (as outside and against dominant groups that hold power), and the concomitant totalizing treatment of society in which some sites can be “readily recognized as completely and inherently different,” is not only structuralist but also heterotopological (Saldanha, 2008, 2084). Today, “heterotopic spaces” find expression not only in scholarship on everyday resistance to normative

patterns installed by hegemonic institutions but also in CrimethInc's (2001b, 117; 2008, 20) "secret world" operating "against the clocks".

This article is organized in two parts. The first half is a critical reading of de Certeau's writing on "tactics" and CrimethInc's postulation of a "secret world." I provide historical-geographical and intellectual context, and draw from literature that sometimes agrees with but typically throws into question the visions of resistance found in their texts. I argue that these accounts of resistance impede attempts to think power relations because they conflate power with domination, position "the weak" apart from and against power, and conceal how and to what effect apparent adversaries are drawn into constitutive relationships with even those arrangements they expressly reject. I argue for a geographic account of apparent resistance that takes power to be "actualized rather than given" (Allen, 2003), and I point to a need for further work on how ordinary people exercise power precisely *because* they are entangled in power relations (Sharp et al., 2000), or because, as Foucault (1977/1980, 142) claimed in a later interview, "there are no spaces of primal liberty between the meshes of [power's] network." Against a structuralist-heterotopological move to reduce subjects of resistance to those who responds to domination through practices of "evasion" or opposition to those who hold power, I propose to recast so-called "tactics" or "games" of everyday resistance in non-oppositional terms.

The article's second half pursues this proposed recasting. I draw from Foucault's work in the two decades after his heterotopia essay to reexamine a practice celebrated by CrimethInc – *dumpster diving*, the practice of gleaning food from supermarket trash bins. Recent research on dumpster diving comes to a conclusion broadly consistent with that offered by CrimethInc, that dumpster diving is a practice of evasion (Clark, 2004; Edwards and Mercer, 2007). It is argued that, by avoiding the need to purchase food, dumpster divers do not participate in the maintenance of capitalist production, and are therefore a "counter-community" or "against the status quo." Dumpster diving is posed *in opposition* to the "mainstream capitalist economy" or "mainstream food geographies." My analysis of fieldnotes and primary sources suggests that this is problematic. Where dumpster diving has been understood in terms of practitioners' often anti-capitalist intent, an appreciation of what Foucault (1976/1990) calls the "intentional and nonsubjective" character of power relations allows one to see sites like dumpsters as "contact points," where practical freedom is defined *in articulation* with practices of maintaining order (Foucault, 1980/2007).

My reading of the later Foucault agrees with Cadman's (2010, 549) recent call to examine "transactional realities" that "subsist at the interface of governors and governed." Just as Rose (2002) warned not to assume a subject of oppositional resistance and define his or her practices against a system of domination, Cadman (2010, 540) argues against understanding so-called *counter-conducts* as "additional or reactive mechanisms" and instead advocates treating them as "wholly immanent and necessary" to governance. Contra an account of oppositional resistance by the

“dominated element of society” (de Certeau, 1980/1984, xii), one finds in this article and in Foucault’s later work that ordinary people may come to effect change not in spite but because of entanglement in power relations. There is no original freedom to reclaim through an absolute break; indeed, to position oneself “outside” relations of power would be to retreat from defining practices of freedom (cf. Foucault, 1984/1997). Where structuralist-heterotopological accounts of resistance would imagine space as a surface across which power reaches from distinct centers, and would establish those centers as privileged sites in a system against which resistance derives its meaning, my analysis has ordinary people fully inside power relations, acting in ways that may transform the exercise of power. Their practices do not “break” from but inter-articulate with and act upon the actions of “the powerful.” The dumpster into which one dives is a confluence of countervailing practices that express the *associative power* of apparently “weak” and “powerful” people alike.

Michel de Certeau: beyond “panoptic discourse,” *tactics*

Many geographers know Foucault as an analyst of domination who offers no escape from “ubiquitous control” (cf. Huxley, 2007). For scholars interested in resistance, Foucault therefore “has a lot to answer for” (Thrift, 2000, 269). This is a perspective shared with Foucault’s contemporary de Certeau, whose well-known writing on the dispersed everyday creativity of tacticians appears at first to correct Foucault’s assumption of total control. In discussion of Foucault’s contemporaries, McNay (1994, 6-7) explains that, in de Certeau’s *Heterologies* and *The Practice of Everyday Life*, one finds a Foucault whose “attack on the subject is so total that it forecloses any alternative theoretical space in which to conceive non-hegemonic forms of subjectivity.” Foucault is understood to conceal any possible resistance by reducing society to “a dominant type of procedure” (*strategies*). Involved in Foucault’s researches, and particularly his analysis of the penal system, is, for de Certeau, a “dissective-cohesive mode of analysis” that isolates certain strategies and then constitutes them as “a *coherent whole*” (Reynolds and Fitzpatrick, 1999, 66-67). According to de Certeau (1980/1984, xix), this mode of analysis prevents Foucault from doing any investigation of culture that includes traces of alternatives contained in *tactics* of “the weak.” Foucault’s “top down” approach excludes and marginalizes tactics, and introduces a dichotomy between procedures and ideology, the latter of which “babbles on,” ignorant of the “long poem of walking” (de Certeau, 1980/1984, 94-101). His researches are therefore a “Panoptical Fiction,” a collection of stories about operations that “perfect” space and make it an instrument of domination (de Certeau, 1986, 189). This denial of agency leads him to see only “perfect machinery” that ensures docile behavior appropriate to a given context (de Certeau, 1986, 186).

Within the City thus perfected by strategies, de Certeau argues that the tactics of “ordinary man” (sic) lack space that is distinctly their own. This does not mean tactics do not exist; far from it: against the strong, the weak play on “a terrain imposed on [them] and organized by the law of a foreign power” (de Certeau,

1980/1984, 37). There is, perhaps, a similar vision of play on an imposed terrain in recent geographic research on alternative uses of urban space (e.g. Mould, 2009; Spinney, 2010). De Certeau's influence is clearly evident, for instance, in work on alternative tourism that recalls marginalized histories of the city (Obrador and Carter, 2010), or on forms of "urban exploration" that contest "'proper' orderings of space to allow something 'other' to emerge" (Pinder, 2005, 387). But where researchers have sought to avoid a dualism of dominant/proper orderings of space and the appropriative practices of the weak, they are nonetheless constrained by de Certeau's bald separation of mobile tactics from the space of strategies. Resistance takes on meaning *only in opposition* to the dominant coding of space established by strategies (Bleiker, 2003; Obrador and Carter, 2010). Pinder (2005, 401) reads de Certeau to say that, when tacticians pursue resistance, they are "within spatial organizations," but "do not conform to them." But an assertion of nonconformity is insufficient to invest tactics with potential to transform the planned City. De Certeau's account of everyday resistance asymmetrically empowers "the weak" but gives them the heroic task of evading a "cellular grid" presumed stable/fixed in advance (Reynolds and Fitzpatrick, 1999, 66-67; Spinney, 2010).

Ironically, in a project meant to fundamentally undermine dominant codings of the City, fixity is retained and attributed to the spatial. The stabilization of order is characterized as a spatialization of "isolatable, interconnected properties" across which tactics must cut (de Certeau, 1980/1984, 97). Against the planned City, tacticians propose a "mobile city" – a space not unlike the "heterotopia" offered in Foucault's 1966 essay (de Certeau, 1980/1984). Saldanha's (2008, 2083) recent critique of heterotopology and its influence on subsequent interdisciplinary literature presents the "heterotopia" as circumscribed space that, "by virtue of its special qualities, its 'absolute otherness,' either keeps a social formation stable (garden), or, more often, forces it to evolve (ship)." If the relationship of "other spaces" to a society's mainstream is sometimes ambivalent, it is "mostly oppositional" (Saldanha, 2008, 2081). Even the garden has been said to function in this way, as a "space of resistance" (Steyaert, 2008). And certainly, although a garden and a ship will function differently in different societies, it should be clarified that Foucault (1986, 27) advanced the latter – the ship – as the heterotopia *par excellence*, because, in his words, it is "a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea." Like the ship, the "mobile city" of de Certeau's tacticians is "other" because it is not only distinct but discrete, "readily recognized as completely and inherently different" (Saldanha, 2008, 2084). De Certeau's heterotopological analysis pitches resistance outside of society, as an operation without a proper location – "floating," after Foucault, or cutting across the spatialization of order.

Pinder (2005, 401) points out that, for de Certeau, tactics of everyday resistance are "paradoxically aspatial." Others suggest that his opposition between strategies of power and tactical subversion leads him to an insufficiently dynamic

conception of space, which is regarded as a “slice of time” (Murdoch, 2006), or a stable synchronic system that is completed and “spatialized” – the City (Massey, 2005). Within space conceived in this way, spatial differences find expression as mere effects of “a quasi-transcendent totality” (Saldanha, 2008, 2081). The *other* spaces (of tactics) are thereby robbed of political potential because space allows “only one history, one voice, one speaking position,” that of the strategist (Massey, 2005, 41-42). But this structuralist conception of space is entirely consistent with de Certeau’s analysis; it does not disturb his presumption that spatial difference is contained within the binary system of an original unity (cf. Ettlinger, 2009). Accordingly, the “other spaces” of tactics are placeless, floating pieces of space to which tacticians may fleetingly escape from the order imposed by relatively “strong” strategists (de Certeau, 1980/1984, 34; see also Hubbard and Sanders, 2003).

The structuralist-heterotopological understanding of spatial differentiation evident in de Certeau’s work therefore clearly corresponds with a particular conception of power as that which is of the center (Ross, 1996, 71). Massey (2005, 45) argues, “it involves a conception of power in society as a monolithic order on the one hand and the tactics of the weak on the other.” Somewhat differently, in 1976, Foucault (1976/1980, 89) would surely have identified de Certeau’s treatment of resistance with a notion of “power modeled upon the commodity,” possessed by some and necessarily out of others’ reach. Missing in de Certeau’s writing on the everyday is any analysis of the “strategic” practices upon which the maintenance of domination purportedly depends. The dissective-cohesive analysis attributed to a Foucault that offered no escape from “ubiquitous control” is retained and is simply complemented by attention to tactical “pinprick operations” (Huxley, 2007, 191; Ross, 1996, 71). Strategies are assumed in advance to be the origin of a regulated and normalized spatial organization against which the specificity of “the weak” can be defined (Reynolds and Fitzpatrick, 1999, 66). Below, I will argue that de Certeau’s tactician reappears as the vagabond subject of resistance in texts published by the contemporary anarchist collective CrimethInc. Even if “only in order to evade them,” CrimethInc’s vagabond, like de Certeau’s tactician, must conform to mechanisms of discipline because s/he has no choice (de Certeau, 1980/1984, xiv).

The Ex-Workers: evading the working day

Before proceeding, CrimethInc no doubt needs some general introduction. Without being too unfair, it can be said that CrimethInc primarily addresses young, white, middle-class-born anarcho-punk participants in Do It Yourself (DIY) punk in the United States.³ Historically, to “do it yourself” has been to repudiate external

³ For this vision of social composition, see O’Connor (2008) who notes that participants in DIY punk are often middle-class dropouts, and Ramirez (2007, 197-199) who adds that, in the United States, they tend to be white. Race and class privilege condition anarcho-punk subjectivities. While anarcho-punk has arguably long invested

authority and work “with the means of production held in common.”⁴ Although anarcho-punks have never fully achieved this vision, they have, since the late-70s, tried to shift production into the hands of small independent collectives like CrimethInc. UK DIY punk band Crass and its label are the best-known institutions to emerge from the early years of experimentation. By the mid-80s and 90s, Crass’ conviction, that, “there is no authority but yourself,” came to be the belief that distinguished anarcho-punks on both sides of the Atlantic from their “mainstream” counterparts (Rimbaud, 1998). The distinction notably softened in 1997, when DIY band Chumbawamba signed with major label EMI and used its money to support anarchist causes (Smith, 2007), but distance from “mainstream punk” persists, and anarcho-punks today continue to be anxious over their relationship with commodity production and exchange (Culton and Holtzman, 2010).

CrimethInc’s publishing efforts reflect this anxiety. Ever more widely distributed, the collective’s texts are now found not only in DIY punk networks but also in bookstores. This led well-known anarchist anthropologist David Graeber to dub CrimethInc “the greatest propagandists of contemporary American anarchism” (2004), but CrimethInc also has its share of detractors. Some have characterized the collective as “propaganda-cheerleaders” who speak for a “cadre of disillusioned, angry suburban youth” (Smith, 2009). Others criticize CrimethInc’s “lifestylist” advocacy of a politics focused exclusively on personal behavior to the neglect of class struggle (Ryan, 2004). The former criticism may be a bit of a caricature, but the latter must be taken seriously. Although CrimethInc emerged from a subculture that has long aimed to redistribute or assume the means of production, its texts are indeed striking for their emphasis on individual abstention from consumption and work or “evasion.” The cover of a book by that title, for instance, advocates dumpster diving, squatting, and shoplifting one’s life back.⁵ Careful reading of the Ex-Workers’ texts confirms what critics of their “lifestylist” would suspect – that practices of individual autonomy are amplified over a class-based politics of the working day. Perhaps more relevant to this article is that practices of individual abstention are presented as a *response* to a dominant system from which readers must seek to break out.

Attention to CrimethInc’s relationship with class-based politics is warranted. Conspicuously, in their argument for an absolute break, the Ex-Workers not only avoid but strongly reject class-based politics, which they apparently perceive to be essentially Marxist. Barring an anarchist tradition of struggle for workplace democracy (Heynen, 2008), if Marxist politics is found in struggles for a normal workday then it has lost its relevance. In a revealing passage, the Ex-Workers

in self-marginalization, Ramirez claims CrimethInc epitomizes self-marginalization in the extreme by equating abjection with freedom.

⁴ This quote follows Thompson’s (2004, 78) invocation of Marx’s “association of free men” as the “endpoint” towards which anarcho-punks apparently aim.

⁵ The book cover for *Evasion* (CrimethInc, 2001a) reads, “we dumpstered, squatted, and shoplifted our lives back. Everything fell into place when we decided our lives were to be lived.”

(2001b, 189) mimic the malaise of a Marxist theoretician: “Why haven’t [the proletarians] sat down and learned all the terminology necessary for a genuine understanding of the complexities of Marxist economic theory?” Why, that is, if “a genuine understanding” is necessary for their participation in revolutionary politics? And the Ex-Workers (2001b, 138-139) respond: theory does not speak to us; it transforms our feelings and experiences into objects, and separates politics from our everyday lives.

In an early book, the Ex-Workers (2001b, 211) write, “Our present maps describe a world no human being has ever set foot in: a world of carefully measured distances and standardized symbols, frozen in time, empty of emotional ambiances – an *objective* world, when today we all know that there is no world but the *subjective*.” In a tradition of individualist anarchism challenged long ago by Marx (see Marx and Engels, 1846/1970, 104), the Ex-Workers distance themselves from “the working day” because it appears to them an objectivist fiction of capitalists and workers disposed to behave in ways that reflect the tendencies of their corresponding social classes (Marx, 1867/1977, 340-416). But, if the Ex-Workers would characterize that theorization as objectivist, their political writings could be characterized as *subjectivist*. Against the supposedly illusory “objective world” upon which is projected a struggle over the working day, CrimethInc (2001a, 69) calls on its readers to voluntarily abstain and “break free from all that [holds] us back: our jobs.” In this call to “break free,” the figure of resistance is the champion of subcultural marginality celebrated in recent anarchist-individualist fanzines (e.g. Anonymous, 2008). At issue is achieving an absolute break from “the conquered spaces of the modern world” in which a “secret world” of free play is concealed (CrimethInc, 2001b, 205; 2008, 18-20). It is appropriate, then, that – in the last pages of their recent book, *Expect Resistance* – the Ex-Workers pile into Foucault’s heterotopic space *par excellence*, “the rudderless ships of the movement movement [sic], coded in the paths of those who trade bondage for vagabondage” (CrimethInc, 2008, 334).

A game of dumpster diving in heterotopic space

For CrimethInc, to “break free” from work would be to embrace the freedom to play on a terrain that the vagabond is excluded from organizing. Just as tactics were, for de Certeau, the subversive counterpart of strategies, for CrimethInc (2008, 59-60), “play” is simply the obverse of “work.” The latter is imposed by a spatial organization that confronts us as an external coercive force and presents work as necessary: “in the modern world, control is exerted over us automatically by the spaces we live and move in” (CrimethInc, 2001b, 205). Against work, and the control automatically exerted over us in the modern world’s conquered spaces, the Ex-Workers offer “games.” Among these, shoplifting, scamming, squatting, and dumpster diving appear particularly useful because, even if one negates work and “trades bondage for vagabondage,” one must nonetheless satisfy requirements of shelter, food, clothing, etc., that make possible the corporal-material foundation for politics – one’s living human body (cf. Heynen, 2008). These “games” are the

emphasis of the Ex-Worker memoir *Evasion*. Initially self-published in serial form by an anonymous anarcho-punk traveler, *Evasion* describes the “extreme explosion of options and possibility” I referenced in the title of this article’s introduction, the author’s realization of a capacity to make do without capitulating to “bourgeois” habits. An excerpt on tactics from an “Evasion Communiqué” (released before the book) is revealing. Addressing other would-be vagabonds, the author (CrimethInc, 2000, 24) writes: “SCAM, STEAL – Paying for things on the road is kind of uncalled for. I look at theft like those [call and response] raps of the 80’s... it’s a response (theft) to an insult (‘work or suffer’).”

The provocation is interesting for many reasons. It is interesting, for instance, that reflection on race and class privileges that enable predominantly white and often middle-class-born anarcho-punks to exceed the boundaries of legality is absent. (In this sense, the aforementioned critique of CrimethInc as “propaganda-cheerleaders” for a “cadre of disillusioned, angry suburban youth” is on the mark.) But perhaps more relevant to this article’s argument is the author’s representation of theft *in opposition to* the compulsion to work: “it’s a response (theft) to an insult (‘work or suffer’).” As a “response,” this game of theft is defined – like de Certeau’s “tactics”, and the “making do” celebrated in so much geographic work of resistance – *against* a purportedly pre-established demand that ordinary people choose only either to “work or suffer.” As one who responds to this insult, the subject of resistance is therefore preconceived as one who does not hold power. In *Evasion* too, forms of play are represented as reactions to work:

Preaching salvation through trash, I was up against a lifetime of upper-middle-class conditioning. “You’ll get sick from eating that food,” they said. The living-dead of the “work force” giving health advice. By what logic was food deadly the moment it entered a trash bag or passed through the back door? ... Well, I couldn’t be sure where they learned their garbage superstition, but they paid for it each day from 9 - 5 (CrimethInc, 2001a, 65).

Positioned against “superstitious” workers, the practices of the vagabond spreading the good word of dumpster diving are made broadly compatible with the joyous games that CrimethInc offers in place of the class-based politics they eschew. But by defining the vagabond in this way, *Evasion* reduces dumpster diving to the trickery of domination’s subjugated counterpart. Apparently at stake for the Ex-Worker/dumpster diver is not the social freedom of the supposedly deluded worker (paying for it “each day from 9 – 5”) but the individual autonomy of those who have found a place on the ship and been saved: “liberation stained with coffee grounds” (CrimethInc, 2001a, 69).

Piled into a rudderless ship “that is closed in on itself and at the same time given over to the infinity of the sea” (or simultaneously apart from and subsumed-by-because-defined-against domination), the Ex-Workers trace their subjective experiences as they traverse a “totalitarian order” (CrimethInc, 2001b, 211; 2008,

50; Foucault, 1986, 27). In a recent book, CrimethInc (2008, 50-70) provides a “map” to the discovery of sites like dumpsters in which are found the possibility for games through which one evades the call to work. It offers six oppositions as “a selection of diagnostic tools for the individual engaged in her own analysis and resistance”: life and survival, play and work, giving and exchange, love and force, faith and fear, abundance and scarcity. Each of the former terms (affirmed by CrimethInc) is presumed to invert and undermine the term it negates. By recognizing opportunities, taking hold of life, taking pleasure in practices, sharing with others, loving, and trusting, one can presumably achieve a “clean break” from the total control imposed by the modern world (CrimethInc, 2008, 49-52).

But the Ex-Workers’ diagnostic tools yield only geographies of domination and subversion. The oppositions around which they organize their map clearly do not capture the mess of attempts to evade a “totalitarian order,” and in fact obscure how and to what effect the vagabond often materially depends on the arrangements s/he is “up against.” This dependence on capitalist excess may be an obstacle to a “clean break.” Harvey (2005, 181) would remind us of exigencies that persist in spite of one’s refusal of work, and might suggest that the evasive dumpster diver is, in effect, simply a beggar content to “live off the crumbs from the rich man’s table.” But CrimethInc’s celebration of evasive games must be scrutinized not only because it insufficiently acknowledges or ignores material dependence but also because of a concomitant distinction between *their* and *our* practices, which Harvey himself maintains in his vision of a ruling class reasserting its power over beggars who fail to mount any true resistance. This sharp distinction excludes the “untidiness” of how people comes to think, feel, and act towards objects bound in circuits of production-consumption and, just as importantly, reduces power to something possessed (Ettlinger 2004).

Perhaps, as Allen (2003, 113) speculates, “it is because we are so used to thinking about where power ‘lies’ ... that it is easy to conceive of power as a centralized force from which all manner of rules, regulations, and constraints ultimately stem.” But *their* strategies of power do not self-evidently maintain domination that demands *our* tactics or games of evasion, nor is power necessarily held in the strategic centers that *they* occupy. It is also dispersed, working through individuals by whom it is exercised (Allen, 2004), especially, I will argue, in the situations CrimethInc addresses. To ignore that power is sometimes exercised this way, through the bodies of both “they” and “we,” is to obscure the role of ordinary people in the production of space, and also to problematically identify any and all anti-social reluctance, foot dragging, or thumbing of noses at “master planners” as resistance (cf. Jackson, 2002; Ross, 1996). Less obviously resistant practices, even those which draw people into association with arrangements of power they expressly reject, *must* be examined. And this is urgent because the capacity of the apparently “weak” to effect change will be clarified through attention to precisely their too-often-overlooked intimacy with governance.

Associative power at the Dumpster

In the two decades after his introduction of the *heterotopia* concept, Foucault thought with more nuance about power and resistance than his critics suggest (e.g. Foucault, 1976/1980; 1977/1980; 1976/1990; 1980/2007; 1984/1997; 2006). Not only in his later work, even in Foucault's writings and lectures from the years in which de Certeau wrote his critique, careful readers will easily find de Certeau's sought-after agency of "ordinary man," and precisely because Foucault does *not* theorize power on the "model of the commodity."

Indeed, when de Certeau criticizes Foucault for dissociating ideology from practices, and for presuming the former must reflect the latter, one wonders what he read! Ideology does not "babble on" in Foucault's researches, and does not find its imprint in strategies. Indeed, Foucault (1977/1980) developed his theorization of power precisely *against* theories of ideology and repression that present it as possessed by "the powerful" and exerted strategically on "the weak." Far from the "top-down" analyst de Certeau critiques, Foucault provides a model for examining how minute mechanisms, each with "their own techniques and tactics," come to be invested by more general mechanisms confronted by "urgent needs" to govern differently (Foucault, 1976/1980, 98-99). To be sure, the operation of governance is not the same in all instances, and different modalities of power appear in different contexts. There would be something lost in the conflation of power in general with any one particular mode, or in the equation of power's exercise with some particular process of governing (Sharp et al., 2000, 4). Although both liberal and radical accounts of governance (particularly of the state's role in governance) tend to present power in terms of domination, I would suggest that it is useful to consider how tacticians may come to exercise power with others (cf. Allen, 2003, 123-127).

For all of the reasons Foucault withstands de Certeau's critique, his work can inform a corrective to structuralist-heterotopological accounts of resistance; with Foucault, one can depart from the dialectic of difference and sameness which prevailed in his 1966 essay to recast "evasive" practices like dumpster diving in non-oppositional terms. In his February 6, 1974 lecture at the Collège de France, for instance, Foucault explicitly recognized the actions of the apparently weak in the exercise of power (Foucault, 2006, 310-311). At issue was the emergence of the modern psychiatric institution. Foucault showed that, by presenting madness to the doctors, hysterics actively modified the exercise of power. By providing symptoms and giving "a positive response" to the doctor's demand "'Are you mad? Show me your madness!'" the hysterics *allowed* doctors to make their diagnoses. One should note that certain elements of the encounter's heterogeneous space-time facilitated this exercise of power; that because hysterics then and there acquired "the right to be ill and not mad thanks to the constancy and regularity of [their] symptoms," the ostensibly powerful individual found himself *dependent* on the hysteric. In 1974, Foucault showed that in part because of this dependence on the presentation of hysterical behavior, doctors urgently needed to "renew [their] power over all this

phenomena and take it back under [their] control,” that, although, in a manner of speaking, hysterics did not “hold power,” they nonetheless exercised power *with* the doctors (see Foucault, 2006, 316-317). Drawn into association with practices of medical professionals, hysterics’ practices of self-presentation created a need for a “new framework,” and, in that way, effected change in an institutional arrangement by which they were ostensibly dominated.

If we accept Foucault’s analysis, it becomes clear that the nineteenth century psychiatric institution was, indeed, only ostensibly a state of domination. Foucault was insistent on this point in his later work: domination is a very specific modality of power; it cannot be conflated with power in general, and must be understood to emerge upon the condition of infinitesimal mechanisms in their proper dispersion, not an inevitable unfolding inaugurated by an origin (cf. Foucault, 1971/1977). Domination exists only where “an individual or social group succeeds in blocking a field of power relations, immobilizing them” (Foucault, 1984/1997, 283), and this “success” is *contingent*, not at all assured by the exercise of power.

In contexts described by CrimethInc and de Certeau, Foucault (1982/2000, 341) would see power being exercised between “partners” – not friends but players of the same game, recreating on a “field of possibilities in which the behavior of active subjects is able to inscribe itself.” The exercise of power between these adversaries is conditioned by their interventions in this “field.” Power is not a pre-established operation against which resistance is defined; not “a naked fact, an institutionalized given,” nor “a structure that holds out or is smashed” (Foucault, 1982/2000, 345). In situations like those negotiated by dumpster divers, there is not a “binary structure with ‘dominators’ on one side and ‘dominated’ on the other” (Foucault, 1977/1980, 142), but what Cadman (2010) identifies as a “transactional reality” at the interface of practices of freedom and of governance. The apparently weak tactician/vagabond is fully inside power relations and acts in ways that elaborate and may transform the exercise of power. His or her practices of freedom do not break out from but inter-articulate with and act upon the actions of “the powerful.”

Dumpster divers, drawn into association

Although its descriptions of dumpster diving and shoplifting are usually steeped in rhetoric of totalitarian domination and revolutionary opposition, even the CrimethInc memoir *Evasion* can be read in the service of recasting resistance in non-oppositional terms. Consider the following, on the writer’s tactics at a grocery store:

It was a common annoyance ... – I’d have my 50¢ bagel, the exact change ready, my food to steal snugly in left hand, a big smile, then arrive at the Odwalla fresh-squeezed juice case to find the Odwalla delivery man restocking, blocking my path to the Mango Tangos. ... Behind me was the restroom where – in the old days, richer with struggle – I would lock myself inside with an armload of food and have

lunch. To my left, the microwave where I heated my bagels – six each morning. No kidding. Directly ahead, the manager’s booth. He never seemed to recognize me, though he’d kicked me out of the massive dumpster in back at least once. Most employees bought the “looking for rabbit food” line, but not him! (CrimethInc, 2001a, 201)

Even if elsewhere he proclaims himself in opposition to “barbarians” (CrimethInc, 2001a, 74), it is clear here that the Ex-Worker acts on a field of possibilities shared with his adversaries. The passage evokes Cadman’s (2010) “transactional reality” in which one may intervene to modify the exercise of power (at the register, for instance: “exact change ready, my food to steal snugly in left hand”). Through so-called “counter-conduct,” the Ex-Worker acts on the actions of others. By lying, for example, that he is “looking for rabbit food” in the dumpster, he enables some “partners” in the game to look the other way and achieves a practical form of freedom (cf. Foucault, 1982/2000, 341). But the Ex-Worker is simultaneously drawn into association with practices of maintaining order. Freedom is defined at the same time order is maintained.

Recent structuralist-heterotopological accounts of dumpster diving presume that dumpster divers respond to a dominant order through practices that express the opposition of a counter-community to which they belong (Clark, 2004; Edwards and Mercer, 2007). Analysis informed by fieldwork, however, reveals an exercise of power through counter-conduct like that to which I pointed in my critical re-reading of *Evasion* above. Consider these fieldnotes from dumpster diving with two residents of a “punk house” in Columbus, Ohio:

Most food in the 46 House is from a dumpster, and dumpster diving is a shared responsibility. A chart on the west wall of the kitchen indicates the weeks during which pairs of residents are to drive to the dumpster behind a suburban natural foods store. Tonight I was permitted to accompany a pair on their trip. We left at midnight. I was told that employees do not lock the dumpster, but have been known to threaten calling the police, and that, by arriving after closing, we would avoid this encounter. Upon arrival, we parked in a nearby lot. The driver asked that we not use flashlights until behind the fence around the dumpster. We three approached with boxes in hand. My other companion climbed into the dumpster with a flashlight. After less than one minute, he passed us bags that he thought were promising. We pulled open the bags and sorted the contents by hand. In less than one half hour, we had as much as my companions had intended to collect. Before leaving, we placed the bags back into the dumpster and tidied milk crates we had used to sort the food. (December 2008)

These notes complicate structuralist-heterotopological presumptions. The dumpster divers appear not evasive but actively engaged with a “working day” expressed through practices that maintain a particular form of order behind the grocery. Their

practice is conditioned by certain constraints (like the store’s hours of operation and policy against dumpster diving), but clearly some elements of the transactional reality were enabling. PLU (Price Look Up) stickers on produce retrieved from the dumpster indicated that they achieved access to food by virtue of a position within global circuits of production, consumption, and distribution. Milk crates used for deliveries to the grocery store conveniently allowed dumpster divers to sort food. In these and other ways, the dumpster appears as a contact point of heterogeneous practices.

After Foucault (1980/2007, 147-167), one might say that dumpster divers act within a space of freedom conditioned by more than one set of governmental techniques – conduct and counter-conduct. Here, counter-conduct should not be understood as “additional or reactive” lest we misunderstand the situation, posit a subject of oppositional resistance, and define his/her practices against a system of domination (Cadman, 2010; Rose, 2002). There is no state of domination at the dumpster. Certainly, for employees who enforce policies which prohibit dumpster diving and who threaten to call the police, the maintenance of order at the site entails acting on the dumpster as a privately owned container for food no longer appropriate for commercial circulation, and entails acting on divers as criminal trespassers who compromise the store’s integrity. But the so-called trespassers are drawn into the management of space as well and might be said to act within a gap “between scripted invocations of what embodied selves should be like and the particular performances of self that individuals fabricate in their everyday lives” (Sharp et al., 2000, 19). As participants in a DIY punk scene, and residents of a punk house adorned with CrimethInc posters (i.e., “the 46 House” from the fieldnotes), the dumpster divers I accompanied were clearly within the orbit of heterotopological discourse. Not at all inconsistent with CrimethInc’s call to evade work, they collaborated to stock their kitchen with “dumpstered” food and minimize their need for a wage. They even systematized their collaboration with a chart on the kitchen wall. But, far from being as the Ex-Workers would have them – either outside of or unilaterally dominated by the spaces of the modern world, these would-be vagabonds actively gave shape to an expression of associative power.

Consider the following list of rules about what to do “once there” at the dumpster, from a Columbus-based fanzine *One Dive to Freedom* (Anonymous, 2003):

1. Be quiet.
2. Do not vandalize dumpster or store (includes graffiti)...
3. Do not steal from store – you can get everything you need for free! This mostly applies to taking baskets or crates. They [the retailer] can use your no harm theft against you [sic]. There are usually cardboard boxes around.

4. Leave the dumpster cleaner than you found it.
5. Spend as little time as possible there – limit sorting on site. If you know a garbage bag has potential, take the whole thing with you. You can always sort through it in the safety of your own home.

More than simply offering practical tips to fellow dumpster divers, this list shows that, at what I have called a “contact point,” dumpster divers are messily imbricated with employees and others who are charged to supervise such sites. By following the set of rules advocated by the fanzine writer, dumpster divers “act upon the actions” of their apparent adversaries. By avoiding noise, abstaining from theft and vandalism, cleaning the site, and making efficient use of time, dumpster divers inscribe their behavior on a field of possibilities that has heretofore facilitated their efforts to glean edible food from waste. This form of practical freedom apparently involves organizing space in association with others (employees, managers, police officers, etc.) for whom dumpster divers must avoid becoming a nuisance.

Just as hysterics’ practices of self-presentation were drawn into association with the practices of medical professionals to the effect of creating an urgent need for a new framework in modern psychiatry, contemporary dumpster divers act on the actions of others to create (or not) a need for the reformulation of governance at the dumpster. Power relations at the dumpster may someday come to be less pliable or mobile, but the precautions of practiced dumpster divers actively discourage this establishment of a state of domination (cf. Foucault, 1984/1997). The dumpster divers I accompanied in Columbus were not aware of the list of rules in *One Dive to Freedom*, but their practices that night clearly reflected considerations that went into its composition. By arriving after store hours, bringing their own boxes, minimizing their use of flashlights, and tidying the dumpster before departure, the dumpster divers ensured that the site would be available for another trip. Strikingly, by doing so, they actively created conditions for a form of practical freedom that is “wholly immanent and necessary” to the maintenance of order at the site (Cadman, 2010, 540).

Conclusion

Radical geographers have elsewhere examined associations with constituents that share or may come to share common objectives (e.g. Mudu, 2004; Routledge, 2008). This article, somewhat differently, focuses on situations in which apparent adversaries are drawn into association, and where forms of practical freedom are defined in articulation with apparently countervailing practices of maintaining order. My analysis of dumpster diving indicates that its purportedly “evasive” practitioners necessarily become intimate with governance. Even if intending a “micropolitical break out” (North, 1999) or escape from power relations, these often anti-capitalist practitioners of dumpster diving *in effect* only intervene in a field of possibilities for future action. This is not to foreclose the possibility of volitional action but to suggest that such action carries within itself unintentional consequences, and that, if one fixates too emphatically on the most obvious

affinities inscribed in a situation or, worse, reconvenes a practice of freedom into separatist resistance, one risks mistakenly judging practitioners for their *intended* rather their *actual* effects (Allen, 2003, 157).

Geographers interested in resistance must not assume domination in advance. It may be that practices of apparent resistance will not break from but will inter-articulate with and act upon the actions of social groups they are ostensibly defined against. Structuralist-heterotopological analyses would obscure this action upon action by treating purportedly evasive practices as if they cut across continuous space organized and managed from centers occupied by individuals and social groups that “hold” power, or by presuming in advance the existence and operation of a pre-established structure against which oppositional resistance can be pitched. For a corrective, one must examine less obviously resistant practices that draw people into association with even arrangements of power they expressly reject (cf. Fraser and Ettliger, 2008). It is through attention to such practices that one can clarify the capacity of the apparently weak to effect change. This article suggests that practices of people who seemingly hold power do not self-evidently maintain a state of domination that demands disempowered peoples’ tactics or games of evasion in response. Rather, at sites like dumpsters, one finds a confluence of countervailing practices that express the *associative power* of apparently “weak” and “powerful” people alike.

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