

:: Notes for Strategy (BUS 204) Seminar:: Session 1:: Stephen Shukaitis

What is strategy? Where is strategy? Where are strategic decisions made?

- “overall emphasis in our research and teaching across all our programmes is on developing the ability to make *relevant critical analyses and evaluations*” (emphasis added)
- Talking about the development of capitalism
- Forms of socialization, patterns of decision making and organization

Class composition, the reversal of perspective

- Assumption of the passive subject; narrative of victimization
- Forms of resistance as the determining factors in the history of capitalist development
- Technical composition / political composition

Opening up the Everyday

—Considering the everyday borrowing from Michel de Certeau's book (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Day*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- The everyday not as a background, but as locus of activity and focus, where methods, categories, perspectives, and understandings emerge from
- “the goal is to perceive and analyze the microbe-like operations proliferating within technocratic structures and deflecting their functioning by means of a multitude of ‘tactics’ articulated in the details of everyday life... to bring light to the clandestine forms taken by dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of ‘discipline.’” (xiv-xv)
- “multiform, resistance, tricky and stubborn practices that elude discipline without being outside the field in which it is exercised, and which should lead us to a theory of everyday practices, of lived space” (96)
- To consider: “the relations between a certain kind of *rationality* and an imagination... [and] the difference between, on the one hand, the tentative moves, pragmatic ruses, and successive *tactics* that mark the stages of practical investigation and, on the other hand, the *strategic* representations to the public as the product of these operations.” (xxii)

Strategies

- Defined as “the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an “environment.” A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as *proper* (*proper*) and thus serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it (competitors, adversaries, “clienteles,” “targets”, or “objects” of research”). Political, economic, and scientific rationality has been constructed on this strategic model.” (xix)
- Strategy “postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats... As in management, every “strategic” rationalization seeks first of all to distinguish its “own” place, that is, the place of its own power and will, from an “environment.”” (36)

Tactics

- Defined as “a calculus which cannot count on a “proper” (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a

distance. It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances.” (xixi)

— “a *tactic* is / a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the conditions necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to *keep to itself*, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection.” (36-37)

— “a tactic is determined by the *absence of power* just as a strategy is organized by the postulation of power.” (38)

Tactics Versus Strategy?

—Does de Certeau give too much power to the role of strategy?

—The relation between tactical interventions and practices and the on-going formation of strategy

Overview of the Seminars

—Week 2: Workers’ Inquiry and Research

—Week 3: Post-Fordism, Media Flows, and Network Cultures

—Week 4: Precarious Conditions, Affective Labor

—Week 5: Biocapital / Conclusion-Summary

Assessments

—Seminar Journals

—Essay

“The weak must continually turn to their own ends forces alien to them.” (xix)