Technology Resistance and de Certeau: Deceptive texting as a Tactic of Everyday Life

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Previous research has identified the "butler lie"—a lie told through text message to explain why someone is, was, or will be unavailable for interaction (Hancock et al., 2009). The concept of butler lying was established by Hancock et al. (2009, p. 519) who coined the term in allusion "to the social buffering function that butlers provided for their employers" when lying to visitors about whether family members were home. Several studies indicate that butler lies are a common means of managing social availability (Birnholtz et al., 2010; Birnholtz et al., 2013; Reynolds et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2014). Drawing on an interview based study into the experiences of telling and receiving butler lies via text message, this article argues that butler lies can be understood as a form of technology resistance as they represent an effort to evade the perpetual connectivity afforded by mobile communication technologies. However, as a quotidian and often habitual practice, one enacted through the technology it also resists, butler lies fall outside current conceptualisations of technology resistance which have tended to focus on self-reflexive acts of limiting or rejecting particular technologies. To aid in framing butler lies as a resistant practice, I turn to de Certeau's (1984) concept of "tactics" as a means of theorising mundane, habitual modes of technology resistance. In doing so, I seek not only to introduce butler lying as a concept of technology resistance, but to demonstrate the significance of developing the largely latent connections between de Certeau and research on technology resistance.

Introduction: Butler Lies

A "butler lie" is a lie told through text message to explain why someone is, was, or will be unavailable for interaction. The interactions being avoided could be face-to-face interactions, such as meeting up for coffee, or digitally mediated interactions, such as texting. The concept of butler lying was established by Hancock et al. (2009, p. 519) who coined the term in allusion "to the social buffering function that butlers provided for their employers" when lying to visitors about whether family members were home. Subsequent research suggests that butler lying is a commonplace means of negotiating social availability (Birnholtz et al., 2010; Birnholtz et al., 2013; Reynolds et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2014).

This article argues that butler lies can be understood as a form of technology resistance that is enacted by leveraging the affordances of the technology being resisted. Presently, scholarship on technology resistance is primarily interested in forms of resistance enacted self-reflexively by people concerned about the role of technology within their lives. Often this involves stopping or limiting the use of a technology. In contrast, butler lies are a widespread practice (Smith et al., 2014) that are

performed through the technology being resisted and often enacted habitually, with little self-reflection. Viewing butler lies as technology resistance therefore requires an expansion of our understanding of technology resistance.

Michel de Certeau's (1984) theorisation of everyday "tactics" of resistance provides a basis for expanding our understanding of resistance to include widespread, quotidian, habitual acts like the butler lie. Much of de Certeau's understanding of the tactical is already aligned with much of the scholarship on resistance. However, this article argues that the links between de Certeau and technology resistance literature can be further developed, and that doing so encourages and justifies looking at practices like the butler lie.

The article is divided into three sections. In the first, I give an overview of literature on technology resistance in order to argue that while butler lies presently fall outside the scope of resistance literature, they are aligned with its growing interest in people who resist technologies in partial and fragmented ways. The second section discusses the links between technology resistance literature and de Certeau, demonstrating that while this literature draws on and embodies many of the characteristics of "tactics", these links centre around a particular understanding of tactics as self-reflexive actions taken by small groups of people. I argue that these links between de Certeau and resistance literature can be extended to include other ways that de Certeau describes tactics. In the third section, I draw these two arguments together via an empirical study of butler lying. The purpose of introducing this empirical case study is not solely to argue for the significance of butler lying as a practice, but also to illustrate the theoretical argument being made; that a closer reading of de Certeau encourages us to acknowledge more varied modes of resistance, particularly by attending to the ways that resistant acts can be habitual, evasive, embodied, and enacted through consumption of the technologies they resist.

Resistance to and non-use of digital communication technologies

While most scholarship on digital communication focuses on who uses it and how, there is also a growing body of work that investigates who does not use it and why. Broadly speaking, this interest emerged from two distinct but related contexts. In sociology, media studies, and policy research, scholars studied non-users as part of the effort to map the "digital divide" and, increasingly, to challenge the prevailing assumption that digital communication technology was an inherent social good such that anyone who did not use it either lacked access or failed to understand its benefits (Selwyn, 2003; Wyatt et al., 2002). Similarly, in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), early interest in non-users was framed as an important corrective to the field's long standing focus on users and usability, and the relatively unchallenged definitions of these terms (Satchell and Dourish, 2009).

From these beginnings, research on non-use and resistance has grown into a considerable body of literature. Scholars have looked at resistance to, or non-use of, specific communication technologies including Myspace (Tufekci, 2008), Grindr (Brubaker et al., 2016), Twitter (Schoenebeck, 2014), Smartphones (Ribak and Rosenthal, 2015) and, most commonly, Facebook (Baumer, 2015; Karppi, 2011; Portwood-Stacer, 2013; Rainie et al., 2013; Tufekci, 2008). A key objective within this literature has been identifying the factors that motivate non-use and resistance. These have included

privacy concerns (Baumer et al., 2013; Tufekci, 2008), a desire to curb perceived technology addictions (Baumer et al., 2013), disenchantment with a technology (Morrison and Gomez, 2014; Satchell and Dourish, 2009), a desire to avoid distraction and/or create more productive time (Baumer et al., 2013; Sleeper et al., 2015; Schoenebeck, 2014) and concerns about, or disinterest in, a form of socialisation that is deemed inauthentic (Sleeper, 2015; Tufekci, 2008; Woodstock, 2014).

Another key focus has been developing typologies of non-users and media resisters. One early, influential typology proposed by Wyatt et al. (2002) outlined four types of internet non-users: "resisters", who had, by choice, never used the internet; "rejecters", who had voluntarily stopped using it; the "excluded", who had never used it because they lacked access; and the "expelled", who had stopped using it involuntarily. From this initial typology, with its clear distinction between use and non-use, more recent typologies have sought to account for greater varieties, and more complex types of resistant non-use. For example, Satchell and Dourish (2009) propose a typology that aims to acknowledge how use and non-use of technologies are "systematically related to each other as part of a broader [cultural] framework." They outline six forms of non-use: "lagging adoption", to describe people who delay adoption; "active resistance", to describe "diehard lagging adopters who never adopt"; "disenchantment", to describe people who resist on account of nostalgia or a view of computer mediated communication as inauthentic; "disenfranchisement", to describe people who lack access; "displacement", to describe people who don't use a particular technology but still benefit from it (such as a person who doesn't use Facebook, but whose friends inform them about things happening on it); and "disinterest", to describe people who feel a technology is irrelevant.

As research on the categories of, and motivations behind, technology resistance has developed, many scholars have begun questioning the assumption that use and resistance are mutually exclusive. For instance, several scholars have investigated resistant practices that are episodic or temporary rather than permanent. This is the focus of a study by Schoenebeck (2014) that describes the cyclic patterns of over-use and hiatus among people who give up Twitter for Lent. Similarly, Rainie et al. (2013) found that 61 percent of the Facebook users they surveyed had taken voluntary breaks—or "Facebook vacations"—lasting several weeks or more. Where these two studies look at breaks of significant duration, Lee et al. (2014) explore more momentary and haphazard acts of resistance. They surveyed people about their dissatisfaction with smartphones and found that 59 percent of their sample employed forms of temporary non-use in an attempt to combat issues like distraction and fatigue. Popular methods included altering phone settings (such as using aeroplane modes), physical separation (such as leaving a phone at home), mental efforts (such as setting personal non-use goals), employing intervention software (that is, software to restrict phone usage), and downgrading to a simpler phone or provider plan.

As the field has moved towards models that reflect a greater interweaving of use and resistance, there has also been increased interest in forms of resistance motivated by peoples' impressions that particular technologies generate unrealistic expectations to stay continually connected to people, information, and devices. Morrison and Gomez (2014), for instance, identify the development of "pushback" which they describe as "a growing phenomenon among frequent technology users seeking to regain control, establish boundaries, resist information overload, and establish greater personal life balance." "Pushback" actions include making collective agreements to restrict use, employing technological tools, or self-regulating use. Similarly, Woodstock (2014, p. 1983) argues

that "media resistance" is "a significant set of behavioural responses to living in a media-saturated world" whereby people "intentionally and significantly limit their media use." This limiting of media use is minimal, however, as Woodstock's participants are largely working professionals who need to stay informed and connected in their working lives. In their study of "downsizing", Ribak and Rosenthal (2015) report results from interviews with people who voluntarily use a "feature phone" (a phone with only basic, cumbersome internet capability) or "basic phone" (a phone that only allows for calling and texting) as opposed to a smartphone. These people are termed "smartphone resisters" but rather than being a clear-cut critique of communication technologies, their device choices are instead an expression of ambivalence towards the ubiquity of smartphones and the media saturated environment smartphones exemplify.

This body of literature offers important insights into how people actively resist the connective affordances of digital communication technologies. It demonstrates that, along with rejecting particular technologies, resistance is also enacted in ways that are temporary, cyclical, and embedded in daily practices of use. However, while these studies challenge prior distinctions between use and resistance, they tend to focus on the resistant practices of specialist groups of users. For scholars like Morrison and Gomez (2014), Woodstock (2014), and Ribak and Rosenthal (2015), resistant actions are the atypical practices of a particularly reflexive minority. Such reflexive minorities provide a rich and important site of study, but understandings of digital communication resistance could also be expanded to include more widespread and quotidian practices. In what follows, I suggest that this expansion is supported by de Certeau and illustrated by butler lies.

De Certeau's Tactics

Writing in the 1980s, and more particularly in the wake of May 1968 and the associated developments in French thought, de Certeau shared with his contemporaries Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu an interest in the power structures of everyday life. However, while Foucault (e.g. 1977) and Bourdieu (e.g. 1984) attended to the processes through which structural powers are reproduced, de Certeau was interested in how people operate within and in spite of such powers. For de Certeau, tactics are the everyday resistant practices of the weak. Lacking power, those who are "already caught in the nets of 'discipline'" (1984, p. xiv) must use *metis*—creative acts of cunning —to enact resistance. These tactics stand in contrast to "strategy." For de Certeau (1984, p. 36), a strategy has the power to postulate "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...can be managed" [emphasis in original]. So where strategy draws on a circumscribed place of authority that gives it foresight and longevity, a tactic lacks "a proper locus"—a defined place from which it can view "the adversary as a whole" (1984, p. 37). To compensate, a tactic "must accept the chance offerings of the moment" and "make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of proprietary powers" (1984, p. 37).

Tactics and technology resistance research

While the weak lack power, they retain a degree of agency, allowing them to execute fragmented and opportunistic acts of resistance. This acknowledgement of agency was the reason Selwyn (2003) included "tactics" in his seminal work on the non-use of digital communication. As mentioned,

early conceptualisations of non-users tended to pathologise non-use or presume non-users simply lacked access. In contesting this understanding of non-use, Selwyn (2003, p. 111) suggests that non-use "could be seen as a "tactic of resistance", described by de Certeau as an ordinary practice that enables disenfranchised and oppressed people to realise their variety of voices, maintain communities, and achieve practical kinds of power." Selwyn thus reimagines non-use not as abnormal or forced exclusion but as active resistance against unwanted technologies.

Further reinforcing the agency of the weak, much of the way de Certeau describes tactics is either suggestive of, or explicitly draws on, the notion of warfare. He speaks of tactics as the "polemology [study of war] of the weak" (1984, p. 39) and as "poetic as well as warlike" (1984, p. xix), and draws repeatedly on guerrilla combat as a metaphor for how tactics operate in secretive and opportunistic ways. This metaphor is evoked, for instance, in his description of a tactic as a "blow by blow" action that must "take advantage of opportunities" as it lacks "any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its own position, and plan raids" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 37).

De Certeau's guerrilla combat analogy maps closely onto many of the current understandings of technology resistance. Resistant practices are often seen as isolated actions intended to wrest back small measures of control from the sociotechnical imperative to connect. They are the actions of a tenacious minority who employ creative tactics to exploit moments and spaces where the connective imperative is weakest. For instance, Morrison and Gomez (2014) discuss how during events like weddings and shared meals the imperative to digitally connect holds less sway and, through the weight of collective agreements, can thereby be temporarily resisted by likeminded people. Similarly, using intervention software to limit the use of a particular device, platform, or website is not a direct affront to the technology in question but rather disables it in small, isolated instances for short periods of time (Lee et al., 2014; Morrison and Gomez, 2014).

The warfare metaphor is similarly evoked in Woodstock's (2014, p. 1986) aforementioned study of "media resisters" who "intentionally and significantly limit their media use" on account of "their sense that media constitute an oppressive onslaught to be held in abeyance." Woodstock (2014, pp. 1988-1989) draws directly on de Certeau, equating "media resistance" to a demonstration of tactics and strategies by arguing that "[t]he pervasive, dominant media environment against which media resisters position themselves constitutes a strategy, while the resisters employ tactics to avoid media, but are structurally limited in their ability to do so." According to this formulation, media resisters are a distinct type of user whose particular attributes—namely their "social and cultural capital" (2014, p. 1988) and "purposeful, considered stance" (2014, p. 1986)—enable them to inflict a barrage of small, isolated acts of resistance upon the broader digital communications environment.

The concept of tactics-as-warfare provides a useful means of conceptualising the efforts of people who take small but determined actions to fight against the pressures of digital communication. However, tactics—and technology resistance—are not always analogous to combat. As Ben Highmore notes, de Certeau's warfare analogy, while constructive, sets up an unhelpful expectation that tactics always involve a high degree of purposeful opposition and direct conflict. This expectation is not borne out in many of de Certeau's other descriptions of tactics, nor in many of the specific examples he gives: "talking, reading, moving about, shopping, cooking" (1984, p. xix).

Tactics as an extension of technology resistance research

While a full survey of the complexity of de Certeau's formulation of tactics is beyond the scope and aims of this article, some aspects are especially pertinent for extending our understanding of digital communication resistance.

One description of tactics that departs from the tactic-as-warfare motif is the idea of consumption as a tactic. Arguing against the then prevailing view of consumption as passive acquiescence, de Certeau characterises it as a "kind of production" (1984, p. 31) that is manifest "through its ways of using the products imposed by a dominant economic order" (1984, p. xiii). For de Certeau, consumption is an active process of constructing personal meanings out of standardised commodities and texts. When reading, for example, a reader is selective, "poaching" elements that allow them to interpret the text in ways that are meaningful to them (de Certeau, 1984, p.xxi). This understanding of consumption as a form of production enacted within a text illustrates a further characteristic of tactics; they work through and within the same system they resist. Rather than being in opposition to disciplinary power, in the sense of being external to it, tactics can only resist such power by making use of the opportunities and resources it permits; they "elude discipline without being outside the field in which it is exercised" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 96).

Further departing from tactics-as-warfare, many of de Certeau's descriptions of tactics evoke moments of buffering or evading. This case is made by Ben Highmore (2002, pp. 151-122) who argues that the resistance Certeau sees within the tactics of everyday life "is not synonymous with opposition" but rather "...is closer to the use of the term in electronics and psychoanalysis: it is what hinders and dissipates the energy flow of domination." As an example, Highmore draws on de Certeau's discussion of the tactic of *la perruque*—the practice of a worker doing personal tasks on company time. This practice demonstrates how "rather than confronting and opposing" a dominant power, tactics "take place in its blindspots", leaving the power "relatively unscathed" (Highmore, 2002, p. 160). By wasting company time, de Certeau's worker illustrates how tactics can be a withholding of action, an inertia that does not impact dominant structures but rather momentarily evades them, enabling invisible acts of defiance rather than small but direct attacks.

This tactical defiance can also be less a cognitive process—as suggested by the sly actions of guerrilla combat—and more a bodily one. Highmore (2002, p. 160) again makes this case when he uses the body of a production line worker as an example of a non-warlike tactic; its tiredness is a form of bodily resistance to the machinic movements and efficiency logics of production line labour. De Certeau himself pays particular attention to the bodily enactment of resistance in his extended discussion of walking in the city. Characterising walking as an enunciative act, de Certeau (1984, p. 97) claims that "[t]he act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language." Just as speaking can involve playing on, or diverging from, the proper use of language, so too can walking play on the proper use of a city as determined by city planners and administrators. Rather than following the paths and processes intended by corporate and governmental powers, a walker "writes" their own trajectories and desire lines as they wander, window shop, take shortcuts, pause, or double back (1984, p. 93). This idea of movement as tactic privileges bodily process over mental

calculation; it is improvised and "blind" (1984, p. 94), a form of "tactile apprehension and kinaesthetic appropriation" (1984, p. 97).

As these examples suggest, tactics can be considered less a carefully planned, deliberate action, and more an expression of instinct, habit, and other less conscious thought processes. The walker, for instance, acts below the "thresholds of visibility" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 93) as they lack the totalising view of the "panoptic administration" (1984, p. 96). Without a complete perspective of the city, or their place within it, walkers' "bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read" (1984, p. 93). Many of the other tactics de Certeau describes are similarly mindless actions; speaking, cooking, and reading are practices that are routine, habitual and instinctive. They observe a logic, but this logic is not one crafted consciously in the moment by the person who is being tactical—it seems to surmount "the very institution of consciousness" (1984, p. 40). As Highmore (2003, p. 171) observes, "the tactical activities that de Certeau sees as so essential to everyday life are a mix of creative moments of getting by (making the best of things) and a host of stubborn insistences (the past, the body, the unconscious)."

Butler Lying: A Practice of Tactical Resistance

Methods

As a widely practiced behaviour, butler lying via text message takes many forms. Some of these forms reinforce the existing links between technology resistance literature and de Certeau in that they are self-reflexive acts that seek to wrest back a measure of control from the technological imperative to connect. Other forms, however, illustrate the value of expanding the links between de Certeau and resistance research. These forms of butler lying are habitual, deeply quotidian, and ultimately focused more on coping than on gaining ground against the technology they resist. In what follows, I outline the methods used in my study of butler lying. I then draw on this study, along with the prior literature on butler lying, to demonstrate how this deception can be seen as a tactic of resistance.

The concept of butler lying via text message emerges from the field of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI)—a multidisciplinary field focused on improving the usability of computing technologies. Accordingly, prior studies are primarily interested in how better understanding butler lying can inform the design of messaging technologies (Hancock et al., 2009; Birnholtz et al., 2010; Reynolds et al., 2013; Birnholtz et al., 2013). To explore how the concept of butler lying might be extended beyond this instrumental focus, I conducted a qualitative research project in order to explore the personal, relational, and emotional implications of butler lying. The project involved an interview study conducted in 2014 that explored the experiences of butler lying among young people living in Melbourne.

Purposive sampling was used to recruit a cohort most relevant to my research interests (Bryman, 2008 p. 416-418). Participants were recruited from local universities using online advertising. As much of the existing research focuses primarily on university students, targeting a similar demographic made my work more immediately comparable (Hancock et al., 2009; Birnholtz et al., 2010; Reynolds et al., 2013; Birnholtz et al., 2013). Furthermore, recruiting through universities

meant respondents were likely to be within the preferred age range (18-25 years). This age was chosen partly to align with the prior research, and partly because young people provide a rich content for studying this practice given their typically frequent use of texting (Nielsen Research, 2010; Smith, 2011) and fluid, dynamic social lives. Sampling stopped when theoretical saturation was reached, meaning no significant new insights were being generated (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Participants were aged 18-30 years, lived in Melbourne at the time of the interview, and had used texting for five years or more. The majority identified as Australian and were either presently studying or had recently completed studies. Five participants were men and seventeen were women. While the aim of this study was not to be representative of a particular population, it is worth noting that this gender bias may have influenced the findings. It is unlikely, however, that the influence of gender is significant in terms of the frequency of butler lying among my participants as prior research has produced contradictory findings about the correlation between gender and rates of butler lying. Hancock et al. (2009 p. 522) found higher rates of lying among male participants while French et al. (2015 p. 4082) found higher rates among females.

Interviews lasted approximately one hour and were conducted face-to-face using a semi-structured approach. Participants were asked to record examples of butler lies that they sent or received in the time leading up to their interview. These examples were used during the interviews to prompt recollections. Interviews were digitally recorded with participants' permission, partially transcribed, and coded to identify key themes. All names are pseudonyms.

Butler Lies as Resistant Tactic

While the act of telling a butler lie is, on the one hand, resistance to particular, individual requests for contact, taken as a practice butler lying can also be seen as resistance to particular technological conditions. While butler lies do not involve the complete rejection of a technology, and in fact use the technology to reject the use of the technology, they are akin to other resistant practices like "pushback" and "media resistance" in that they are a momentary rejection of mobile technology's connective affordances. This rejection can occur in two ways. Firstly, lies that are used to avoid replying to a text message are resistant in that they perform a buffering function, momentarily holding at bay a request to connect. Secondly, butler lies that are used to avoid or deny requests to meet up in person resist the connective affordance of mobile media by running counter to one of its primary instrumental functions—coordinating physical meet ups (Battestini et al., 2010).

This broader view of butler lies as a cunning act of resistance against the demands of networked sociality is suggested by prior work on the butler lie. Within this literature, butler lies are framed as a coping mechanism for dealing with the constant connectivity of digitally networked sociality (Birnholtz et al., 2010, p. 1; Hancock et al., 2009, p. 517). While these assertions are repeated across the literature, they are not directly linked to empirical material. This causality hypothesis was, however, raised by many of my participants who felt that the pressures of digital, mobile communication meant they had greater cause to be deceptive than previous generations. Frederick (male, 22, Australian), for example, suggested butler lies are more prevalent today because "[w]e just don't find personal space with all these forms of communication." This lack of personal space makes it "necessary" to use butler lies, because "we want to find space for ourselves… whereas [for]

previous generations I think there was heaps of personal space." A similar view was echoed by Lauren (female, 20, Australian Aboriginal) who felt that butler lying was more prevalent because of the way digital technology facilitated an uncomfortable degree of ubiquitous interpersonal awareness:

> [I]t's like people know what you're doing all the time, whereas [in the past] you had a home phone, so it's like you're either at home or you're not at home and they don't know where you are.

For some, this increased availability justified being deceptive. Imogen (female, 18, Australian), for example, stated:

> I guess in a way they're [butler lies] unethical… but, it needs to happen, cause you're literally available 24/7 and you can't be.

As a form of resistance to the connective imperatives of mobile communication, butler lies align, in part, with the notion of tactics-as-warfare—reinforcing the current nexus between de Certeau and technology resistance literature. In particular, butler lies echo the idea of resistance as akin to guerrilla combat as both the prior butler lying literature and the accounts of my participants describe butler lying as a practice requiring careful consideration and wily execution in order to exploit opportunities presented by both social and technological conditions. In terms of technological conditions, butler lying draws on the ambiguities of texting which, with its limited meta-textual information, means that generally interlocutors are unaware of each other's geographical location, the activities they are undertaking, and when they receive or read messages. Many participants noted however that the introduction of read receipts or message read notifications complicated this ambiguity by providing additional, albeit vague, information. In terms of social conditions, Birnholtz et al. (2013, p. 2) note the careful calculations enacted by their respondents who "carefully design their butler lies to be perceived positively" by weighing up "the potential relational consequences of a possible lie, as well as the relationship's resilience to a possibly blunt telling of the truth."

Participants in my own research similarly recalled complex processes of careful consideration and execution. Often these processes involved deliberation about the ratio of truth to fiction required for a lie to be sufficiently deceptive, but still plausible and justifiable as not a "proper lie." Frederick describes this as "manoeuvring":

> I guess the way I communicate is I manoeuvre, I say things in such a way that I don't com-plete outright lie to a person; I make it in such a way that it is, in some degree, a truth.

For many participants, manoeuvring was important not just for making the lie believable, but also for rationalising the use of the lie as a legitimate and ethical social practice. Another key consideration was finding a lie that would sufficiently explain why a person wasn't available while also dissuading the lie recipient from asking for further details. This led to "study" and "family issues" emerging as highly favoured excuses. Crafting a successful lie also involved thinking about the follow-through actions it required. For Samantha (female, 21, Italian Australian), who is not much of a "night owl", this was particularly important when friends messaged her late at night. She would

delay replying until the morning and then claim that she had been asleep when they messaged, but in order to keep her story consistent she would stay off social media after receiving the message so there was no evidence of her having been awake.

In these accounts, butler lies reinforce the idea that resistance to digital communication can be tactical in the sense of being direct, calculated, and opportunistic. As evidenced in these accounts, butler lies often required planning, thoughtful execution, and careful follow through in order to ensure that they were believable and effective. This self-reflexive process directly sought to wrest back small degrees of personal space from an unfair expectation of constant availability.

Butler Lies as Alternative Tactics: Embodied, Automatic, Invisible

In addition to reinforcing the existing parallels between de Certeau's tactics and literature on resistance to digital communication, butler lies also illustrate how further understandings of tactics might provide models for considering alternate forms of digital communication resistance. Firstly, butler lies suggest that, in addition to being a carefully crafted act of "guerrilla combat", resistance can also be habitual. For many participants, butler lies were often instinctive, automatic reactions conducted with little conscious deliberation. The language used to describe these kinds of experiences included descriptions of butler lying as "coming quite naturally", "instantly" or being "pretty quick and, like, thoughtless." There were also references to butler lies being "generally pretty automatic", "second nature", or happening "subconsciously."

This automatic, thoughtless mode of butler lying was also apparent in the surprising tendency for participants to have limited awareness of their own butler lying. Several participants expressed having been largely unaware of telling butler lies until prompted by their participation in the research. Emma (female, 20, Hong Kong Australian), for instance, explained that she only became aware that she told butler lies after I had explained the idea of butler lying in the lead up to our interview. Prior to my detailed descriptions of the behaviour, she "probably would have been like 'oh I don't do that'." Similarly, Charlotte (female, 20, Australian) described butler lies as:

> ...along the basis of like just a white lie, but more ones that are specifically, you know, that you send without really realising you were lying. Like I went through my phone and I found examples as well, and they're a lot more prevalent than you realise.

For some participants, this lack of self-awareness meant they later came to regret the deception. For Lauren, the fact her butler lying "comes quite naturally" meant this happened often.

> It's like instantly you can think of one, like any excuse that you can use. So because you don't have that long thought process about it, it gives you less time to feel guilty about it... and like, you convince yourself that it's true, after [text] messaging them about this lie.

Later, she would reflect on the deceptive nature of her statement, leading to feelings of regret: "A lot of the time, if it's to a close friend, I'll call an hour later and be like "I'm really sorry, I actually wasn't doing that.""

These experiences of butler lying demonstrate how resistance isn't always necessarily a carefully calculated action, but can also be an automatic or habitual practice. As with de Certeau's walker, who resists an efficient use of the city in ways that are blind and habitual, many of my participants engaged in deception with little forethought or calculation. Suggesting that butler lying is often instinctive or automatic is not to say, however, that butler lying is thoughtless and therefore not resistant. Rather, automatic butler lying could be seen as a necessary habituation of perception and response required for coping with the participants' technological milieu. As Highmore (2011, pp. 114-138) observes, relegating responses to bodily routine and subconscious processes—processes guided by the consolidation of prior experience into a field of apperception—enables people to maintain a state of "distracted attention." Common experiences can then be processed quickly, leaving cognitive functions free for processing the new and unexpected and, ultimately, for better managing the influx of information facilitated by media and communication technologies.

These instinctive, habitual experiences run counter to the way butler lies are described in the original literature, and the way technology resistance is largely understood. Another characteristic of butler lying that departs from prior descriptions of butler lying and technology resistance, but that is aligned with de Certeau's tactics, is the significance of butler lying as an embodied act. Participants described bodies being implicated in butler lying in two distinct ways. In the first, participants reflected on how texting as a communicative medium facilitated a process of deception that was physically easier because it removed the need to control their voice or body language. For many this meant they were more likely to lie in situations where texting was available to them as a means of communication as they were less likely to be inadvertently given away by bodily cues of nervousness. This was the case for Emily (female, 24, Australian), who explained:

> I think it's easier to lie via text, because there's no kind of emotional tone in your voice...and there's no telling signs that you are lying...and I know that obviously lying is not good but every now and again, when you do do it, you still don't want to be caught out.

In these instances the impetus to lie stemmed from, or was enhanced by, the physical ease of lying through the protective barrier of texting.

In addition to this protective barrier, the embodied act of texting was important in another way: for some, their dislike of the physical action of writing a text partly motivated their deception. These participants felt that explaining and justifying the truthful reason for their unavailability was possible, but that it would require long and/or multiple messages that would be physically tedious to type out. This was also the case for Emily who expressed a strong dislike of texting; "[i]t just takes too long, and I hate, I actually hate like writing messages." This frustration with the physical act of messaging was compounded by her writing style: "I don't abbreviate a lot so I end up writing proper full words and it's just exhausting." When communicating with acquaintances about her availability, this dislike of texting became an issue as, unlike her close friends or family, they required a lot of background information to understand her reasons for being unavailable. Communicating this background information meant she needed to send more and longer messages. Accordingly, she would rather send a short false message, like "Hey I'm sort of not feeling it today,

I'm a bit under the weather", than explain the truth because "it just feels like it's too exhausting to explain what I'm doing."

Where prior research on technology resistance has focused on the mental efforts and processes involved in resisting the allure of technology, these accounts point to the materiality of messaging, and the embodied experience of using it, as key drivers of deception. They suggest that while many acts of technology resistance are mental tactics—making bargains, agreements, commitments, and plans—it is important to consider how the physical and material experiences of digital communication might contribute to, or shape, the ways we resist them and their affordances. The significance of embodied experience is reinforced by de Certeau's (1984) descriptions of tactics as physical experiences—walking in particular—where the body resists using its surroundings in the ways designers had intended. Highmore's illustration of a factory worker as tactical also provides a helpful comparison; just as the psychical lethargy of the factory worker constituted a form of resistance to the efficiency drives of the production lines, the physical experiences of malaise and security drove my participants' resistance to the sociotechnical imperative to connect and engage.

Lastly, butler lies illustrate how digital technology resistance can also be enacted through consumption, mirroring the way that the weak, within de Certeau's formation of tactics, make use of the dominant system within which they act (de Certeau, 1984). Rather than rejecting or limiting the use of mobile technology, butler lies are enacted through its consumption—leveraging the ambiguities it affords about a person's location, emotional state, and current activity. Butler lies are thus enacted with and through the technology of texting, but the technology's affordances are momentarily exploited to function as a buffer for the conditions of perpetual contact they also create.

Some of the acts identified in prior research on resistance to mobile communication can similarly be seen as acts of consumption. In particular, using the features within mobile phones, such as do-not-disturb or aeroplane mode, to stop messages being received is also an example of "consuming" the features of a device in order to disable its connective affordances. However, these acts of resistance prevent further consumption of the technology, disabling its primary affordance—communication—for an indefinite period of time. In contrast, butler lies engage with and exploit this communicative affordance, demonstrating resistant consumption of the technology that is all the more tactical for its invisibility. Butler lies, like tactics, are invisible in that they don't mount a direct attack on mobile technology by resisting or limiting its use. Rather, they leverage the opportunities it affords for easy deception, exploiting its own materiality to momentarily hold at bay the interaction and availability it encourages. As tactics of resistance, butler lies "remain within the framework of prescribed syntaxes" of digital communication, while still being "heterogeneous" to its prevailing logics (De Certeau, 1984, p. 34).

Conclusion

While studies have begun to look at the resistant practices of people who use, rather than entirely reject, communication technologies, they have tended to concentrate on particularly reflexive minorities whose resistant acts have value as they "generate alternatives" and "teach us about different ways of living" (Woodstock, 2014, p. 1984). A fuller engagement with de Certeau, however, encourages us to pay greater attention to more quotidian and widespread practices. For de Certeau (1984),

attending to the resistant tactics of the everyday is critical not because it demonstrates how we can resist, but how we do resist; it brings to attention not only how the disempowered evade dominant power structures, but how the disempowered function in spite of, and even thrive within, them.

It is this mode of resistance that butler lying exemplifies. The initial HCI literature establishes that butler lies are a common practice among a considerable population. Furthermore, the participants in my study, all of whom employed some form of butler lying, expressed widely varying attitudes towards the role of communication technologies in their everyday lives—some were highly critical and deeply reflective while others were unconcerned and disinterested. Butler lies then are not a tactic employed by a select few, but rather a mundane, quotidian act practiced by a large proportion of people. As a practice enacted by everyday users of a commonplace technology, driven by malaise and habit as much as creative, self-reflexive intention, butler lies do not demonstrate a potential mode of resistance but rather a mode of resistance already widely used. This resistance does not function through small direct attacks but instead creates a momentary buffer that holds at bay the imperative to be present and available. It leaves the over-riding system intact, but provides a means for people to operate within it. The resistant practices of everyday technology users are, therefore, important because while the resistance of minorities shows us how we might get by, the resistant practices of everyday people—such as the butler lie—shows how we are already "making do" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 29).

It is, however, important to note two ways in which the nexus between butler lying, technology resistance, and tactics complicates each of these concepts. Firstly, while demonstrating that resistance can be enacted through habitual practices, the accounts of automatic, instinctive butler lies also show how habituation is "both poison and cure" (Highmore, 2011, p.124) in that it privileges the already known at the expense of developing the new. For Lauren, who frequently came to regret her butler lying, this privileging of the known was leading her to engage in practices that, with hindsight, did not align with her ethics. As de Certeau explains, deception and trickery are the arts of the weak because while the weak lack power, they can be mobile and invisible (1984, p. 37). But if such tactics are enacted on the basis of the "stubborn insistences" of apperception, rather than a self-aware drive to creatively resist (Highmore, 2003, p. 171), are the weak then further disadvantaged in having to resort to deceptive cunning when that cunning is later regretted? While a philosophical investigation is not my aim here, it is worth noting that moral philosophers suggest even the most benign acts of deception, such as white lies, can have cumulative harms for the person enacting them (Bok, 1989; Isenberg, 1968). These issues of ethics, regret, and habituation raise questions about whether tactics are always to be celebrated and technology resistance is always empowering.

A second complication arises around the question of coping. The function of tactics is to "make do"—they are a means of coping more than a means of attacking. De Certeau sees this coping as resistance, and in many instances butler lies function in this manner: the breathing room they create enables people to function within the context of digital communication. However, as Light and Cassidy (2014, p. 1180) suggest in their analysis of disconnective practices on Facebook, some forms of resistance to communication technologies could perhaps be seen as "sanctioned" rejections that ultimately serve to keep a user engaged with a technology. They argue that "Despite Facebook's desire and need for connection and global sharing, the site cannot operate solely on those terms.

Facebook therefore is inscribed with disconnective levers and release valves that allow users to remain with it" (2014, p. 1170). While different in that mobile communication is not a single platform controlled by a single company, we could perhaps ask similar questions of butler lying as a tactic. In providing a means of coping within a social and communicative system, small acts of resistance function as a release valve which, ultimately, makes it tenable for people to stay within the broader system.

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