De Certeau’s discussion of strategy and tactics appears initially as a way by which he differentiates the behavior of dominant producer institutions and the consumers live within the confines outlined by said institutions. Of note is not the distinction between the two modes of thought, but rather that both are described in terms of actions; the producer imposes its structure upon the consumer, be it through colonization or words printed on a page, and the consumer, wittingly or otherwise, asserts itself within those boundaries by acting in ways unforeseen by the structure’s creator. At one point, however, de Certeau turns from social constructs and uses the “tricks and imitations of plants and fishes” as an example of tactics in practice. Barring perhaps belief in intelligent design, many such organisms’ characteristics are not considered learned or even behavioral, particularly in the case of plants—the Cyprus bee orchid cannot choose to resemble a bee any more than a male clownfish can choose to become female. If the definition of tactics includes responses the consumer cannot control, is there a substantive difference between de Certeau’s definition of consumption and tactics?

What I enjoyed most about Highmore’s discussion of the everyday was the number of perspectives he brought forth. In particular, his references to Brecht and Bataille were entertaining and informative. Together, their stances on the everyday present a twist on the oft-used and much abused saying about smelling the roses: Bataille remarks on how no one smells the roses because they appear too commonplace, and Brecht suggests calling them safe-for-work genitalia or some equally bizarre name to make them seem more exotic and noticeable. Though perhaps not as cheeky as the above, they nonetheless address the matter of people becoming complacent with things they see every day, a topic that bears significance for fields ranging from humanitarian aid to advertising.

On the matter of the experience of the everyday, Highmore’s argument that the everyday is too (for want of a better word) complex to be completely captured by the likes of information mining is interesting in that it unequivocally denies the efforts of many in fields involving computational science and machine learning. It makes me question Highmore’s stance on such subjects, and in particular it raises the issue of whether research in either can produce something as profound as the human experience of the everyday, or if they are simply too calculating and coldly logical.