

# Mustard, Monuments & Media: A pastiche

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Some years ago I took a coach tour in northern provinces of India. The fields of green mustard leaves behind the trees sparsely lining the road between Agra and Jaipur were radiant against the pale blue mountains in the distance.

“Look at the women in the fields,” prompted one of my fellow tourists, “aren’t their colours beautiful.” And indeed they were. Though quite a distance away and mainly bending down, working in the leaves, the women dazzled in purples and blues and reds, each one different, jewels in Rajasthan’s own vast emerald silk sari. The other passengers on the coach agreed and cooed and photographed and felt happy in the warm sun and the mild intoxication of beer at lunchtime. As a sociologist I felt obliged to speak.

“What about the men?” I asked.

“What do you mean, there aren’t any men, we haven’t seen any men?”

“Yes you have, you saw them in the villages that we’ve driven through. What colours were they wearing?”

“Well, mainly drab khakis and greys.”

“So you probably wouldn’t notice them even if they were in the fields.”

“No.”

“Tell me, in an agricultural environment in which people work spread out over a large area that is pretty much monochrome, what do you think is the best way to ensure that you can keep control of your women and still be free to get up to whatever takes your fancy?” My colleagues were aghast.

“You’ve ruined our afternoon.” And so I had, and perhaps mine as well. Jeremy Bentham could not have designed a more efficient rural panopticon; the vivid markings of this particular beast now merely warned of the sting in its tail;

idyllic culture had been stripped of its lustrous garment to reveal the hard core of the social structure that wears it as a veil: sari-technology.

I recount the story not simply to point to yet another hiding place of patriarchy—that’s commonplace—but to illustrate the potential in the establishing of dualisms, here by dehiscing the sociocultural. In forcing its traversal, the dehiscence—on one side, a structure of social relations and, on the other, a set of cultural practices—warns us against undue celebration of culture. By allowing a carefully regulated suturing, it will also, potentially, allow us to escape the determinism—social or technological—that my example might suggest. In the context of a pastiche of diverse texts and practices, this is what I hope to illustrate in my paper. Here, the dehiscence will be afforded by an analytic framework that I have been developing for some time, part of which I will introduce in order to organise my pastiche—if that’s not a contradiction in terms.

I want to begin with a simple statement of my general field of interest which is, firstly, with patterns of *relations* between *positions*. These patterns comprise (exclusively) *alliances* and *oppositions*; this is the social. Secondly, alliances and oppositions are to be construed as established, maintained, and destabilised only in social *action*, the visible forms of which are cultural *practices*. I shall postulate that alliances may be formed between similars or between disimilars and that interactive social action may be concerned with closure or with openness at the level of discourse. This postulate provides me with two variables each a binary nominal scale. I can never resist a cross-product, so here it is in Figure 1.

	Target of Discursive Action	
	Closure	Openness
Similars	<i>Equilibration</i>	<i>Exchange of Narratives</i>
Disimilars	<i>Hegemony</i>	<i>Pastiche</i>

Figure 1

*Modes of Interactive Social Action*

Now, beginning with the lower left cell, hegemony might describe what we expect to see within the traditional pedagogic encounter. Teacher and students confront each other as dissimilars. Insofar as the game is one of acquisition, then success is a measure of the extent to which the teacher's discourse prevails over that of the student. Equilibration—shall we say, debate lifted clear of the authority entailed in hegemony—is the rhetoric of the academic community. But this is a community which is itself transacted by lines of alliance and opposition. My own experience of conferences etc has often resembled more closely the telling of anecdotes—the exchange of narratives—over drinks in the bar. On another holiday—in Mombassa, this time—I remember indeed sitting in the bar and engaging in a lively conversation exchanging tales of previous vacations with new friends. At one point I made an analytic intervention concerning the ways in which we were all using our hands to make plays for and keep and yield the floor. The ensuing silence was, as they say, deafening—not hostility, anomie—until a brave soul pitched in with the next story making absolutely no reference whatsoever to my analysis. Closure entails a degree of risk; analysis, if we allow it to touch us, burns. So we listen politely to each other's papers and give encouraging plaudits ensuring that questions are confined to matters of chronicle and contextual detail and never encroach on the heart of the matter. The alliance of similars is sustained by the recontextualising of all contributions as narratives; insofar as they relate to localised experiences, narratives cannot be gainsaid.

The final cell involves discursive openness in the context of an alliance of dissimilars. The young Japanese girls photographing each other in front of the memorial to Sasaki Sadako in Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park. They all make 'victory V' signs that they'll refer to, if asked, as signifying peace. But the sign is the automatic response of young Japanese girls to a camera lens whatever the circumstances—cool, not hot. A little farther up the delta, in front of the

scaffolded ruin of the A-bomb dome a young Japanese father is taking a photograph of his family—the obligatory tourist shot. The mother is holding her baby in her arms.

“*Chotto matte*”—“wait”—yells her other child, a boy of maybe five or six. He crouches slightly with one foot thrust forward and the other back and carefully aims the toy rifle that he is holding directly at his father.

“Shoot.”

Here, the ironic pastiche of an earnest plea for world peace (or is it the construction of the Hiroshima corporate image—either way) and its ludic or negating recruitment into the tourist snapshot is held open by a lack of interactivity in the Museum site. There is only me to object—and I don’t and, anyway, my Japanese probably isn’t up to it. This recruitment of a silent partner in pastiche is perhaps a little timid, but it does enable us to see its workings. Jerome McGann (2001) picks up Emily Dickinson’s suggestion of reading poems backwards and Galano dela Volpe’s approach to interpretation in his proposal for critical work as ‘deformance’:

Interpretation is the application of scientia to poiesis, or the effort to elucidate one discourse form in terms of another. Furthermore, the effort is not directed toward establishing general rules of laws but toward explaining a unitary, indeed a unique, phenomenon. A doubled gap thus emerges through the interpretive process itself, and it is the necessary presence of this gap that shapes della Volpe’s critical thought. We may usefully recall here that when poets and artists use imaginative forms to interpret other such forms, they pay homage to this gap by throwing it into relief.’ (McGann, 2001; 127)

McGann prosecutes his practice in a technologically supported game—‘The Ivanhoe Game’—in which players adopt explicit schemas to make moves in the space opened up by a novel or a corpus or an archive and responding to each others moves according to their respective schemas which are archived but, until the game’s conclusion, private. Alternatively, random distortions of a digitised Rossetti painting—*The Blessed Damsel*—in Photoshop reveal a structural

resonance between the figure of the damozel and the background of heavenly embracing lovers thus revealing her radiant spiritual meaning (McGann, n.d., 2001). By textualising his interpretation—Rossetti's painting as consistent with his/John Ruskin's pre-Raphaelite philosophy—McGann points at the 'doubled gap' which I interpret as that between scientia (digital technologies) and analysis and between analysis and poiesis (the painting as text). N. Katherine Hayles (1999a) constructs a different kind of pastiche in her articulation of a scholarly account of the development of cybernetics with literary analysis of science fiction, maintained as pastiche and evading hegemony largely via the device of chapter boundaries and to a large extent allowing radiance of her third element to remain unspoken, pending the authorship of her audience. The productivity of the pastiche is to open up the possibility of something else without the negation of that which is initially juxtaposed.

I want to construct another mode of pastiche that resonates gently with both McGann's and Hayles' strategies. I want to begin with a second analytic frame that might be recognised as a form of deformation of the first. The juxtaposition of this with its objects of analysis will be constituted as one dimension of my pastiche. The assembling of a diverse array of objects will be the second. My intention is to provide an organising of texts and practices that will cast a light on the dynamic of current transformations in media technologies that will exhibit just a little more delicacy than the well-rehearsed modern/postmodern opposition.

Before I begin I shall make a brief diversion to make a few comments on the nature of analysis. Clearly, analysis entails the establishing of divisions. A great deal of epistemological thinking has been concerned with the subject/object division. Crotty (1998) draws attention to three dominant lines, objectivism, which proposes that knowledge arises from the nature of objects, constructionism, holding that knowledge is constructed via a subject-object transaction of some form, and subjectivism which, regards knowledge as the independent construction of a mind—the subject. I am not, however, concerned with epistemology, but with poiesis—construction or making. Nevertheless, I find it

helpful to make a distinction—an analytic distinction—between what I bring to analysis (and which, I hope, develops in the engagement) and what I take to be the object(s) of my analysis (my understanding of which will, I hope, also develop). I have used different terms to catch at this distinction. In Brown & Dowling (1998) we referred to a dehiscence in the cultural that establishes a theoretical and an empirical field. We used this initial division as the first organising principle in developing our mode of interrogation for educational research. Here, I shall refer to an *organisational language*—part of the theoretical field in the former convention—and a *text* or texts—part of the empirical field. More generally, though, any empirical analysis (any analysis that establishes some kind of distinction between its own subjectivity and its objects) might be considered to comprise: i) a theoretical framework and/or a method; ii) one or more objects of its gaze; iii) a commentary on and/or arising out of a consideration of these objects. I want to propose that this suggests two questions that we might put to any analysis that may be offered to us:

1. what limits or boundaries are placed on the object;
2. what is the relationship between the constructions of the method/theory and those of the commentary?

I do not propose to answer these questions here in any detail in respect of analysis produced by other authors. However, it does seem to me that a very common approach in the area of text analysis entails, firstly, a silence on the precise limits of the data that constitute the text in question. For example, it is sometimes not entirely clear whether or to what extent aspects of the empirical author to be included in the data or whether these to be related to the details of the context in which the text was produced as a work, etc. By this I mean that the implication of authorship in this sense often varies without any clear rationale. This kind of openness, of course, provides a handy escape route in the face of critical reinterpretation of what is presented on any given occasion. Secondly, analysis frequently seems to involve the effective dissociation of theory/method,

on the one hand, from the objects that are constructed in the commentary that is produced as the principal outcome of the analysis.

It seems to me that, in particular, these characteristics are often found in work that proceeds on the basis of a linguistic theoretical apparatus to pass comment on the social and political which is generally entirely untheorised. Fairclough (1995, see also Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999) achieves this fragmentation of his theoretical field—a break between the theorised and the untheorised—via the detachment of the categories of *genre* and *discourse* from his otherwise highly systematic theory. Effectively, what counts as a genre or a discourse is whatever Fairclough claims as such, thus:

There are no definitive lists of genres, discourses, or any of the other categories I have distinguished for analysts to refer to, and no automatic procedures for deciding what genres etc. are operative in a given text. Intertextual analysis is an interpretive art which depends upon the analyst's judgement and experience. (Fairclough, 1995: 77)

As far as it goes, this seems reasonable. However, insofar as the generic and discursive organisation of cultural texts and practices is taken to be the principal purpose of the analysis, we might want to ask precisely what is the highly elaborate linguistic apparatus for—to stand as an alibi for untheorised motives, perhaps. We might refer to such approaches as theoretical dualism. They divide the theoretical into two regions that are effectively dislocated whether or not they are equally theoretically developed. As a result, they can present the appearance of X-ray vision: one region of theory (generally the more theorised one) is presented as penetrating the empirical text so as to reveal the other theoretical region (generally undertheorised) lying behind it, a marvellous ventriloquy indeed!

My approach here is as openly 'interpretive' as is Fairclough's. However, my aim is not to reveal, for example, power relations. On the contrary, this being a sociology, power—here, the constitution of subjectivity—is implicated in my theoretical constructions themselves and, indeed, is implied in the rhetorical form

of this presentation; there is, as I hope my analysis below will demonstrate as well as exhibit, no getting away from it. Rather, my analysis consists, firstly, of an initial partitioning of my field of vision into, on the one hand my organisational language and, secondly, my object text or texts. The ensuing dialogue generates a second partitioning via the production of my commentary—the textualising of the object text, as it were. Thereafter, my autopoietic work proceeds as a productive dialogue between these three constructions; a dialogue that develops all three in respect of, at least, their internal coherence and correspondence of form. As is commonly the case, the final product—this paper, for example—elides the dialogic and developmental nature of its production.

I shall begin the introduction of the next aspect of my developmental language with two keynote (object) texts that bear a superficial similarity to each other, but which must be read as radically different. The texts are Piero Manzoni's *Socle du Monde* (1961, Herning Museum) and Rachel Whiteread's *Monument* (2001, originally in Trafalgar Square). A caveat: my treatment of both pieces as conceptual arguably is a greater deformance of the Whiteread than it is of the Manzoni. As I have indicated, however, deformance or recontextualisation is what I am setting out to achieve in this pastiche and I will offer no apologies, though interested readers may refer, for example, to the review by Searle (2001) for a contrasting (though not necessarily contradictory) approach.

Manzoni's piece consists of an upturned plinth which establishes the world as the work. As with Marcel Duchamp's 'readymades' (though somewhat more flamboyant, perhaps), we can interpret the *Socle du Monde* as identifying the essential quality of art as the act of selection of the artist who thereby lays claim to authorship and originality. This is the case even with a mass-produced bottle rack or urinal because the artist establishes their choice as a singular event which is simply recorded iconically and symbolically (in the catalogue and gallery notes) in the museum. The act of artistic production, then, constitutes an authored singularity—a *charismatic* singularity—in an entirely open field of practice; anything, even the world, even a mass-produced bottle rack, may be



transformed into something unique and, of course, potentially saleable. The authority invoked here is a Nietzschean form, divested of traditional imperatives. Elsewhere we glimpse it in the architecture of Le Corbusier (return to the (unique) plan) and in the literature of Philip K. Dick who can work seriously with the concept of a small-scale organ manufacturer setting out to reproduce the American Civil War by building perfect simulacra of every participating individual from Abraham Lincoln on down (Dick, 1972). If we go to the movies we might watch Spike Jonze's *Being John Malkovich* (1999), but we will certainly want to pay attention to the titles and credits; similarly, we might be drawn to check the byline of a newspaper report—certainly, the name of the newspaper—before putting too much faith in it.

The mode of authority strategy that I am marking out here is close, but not identical, to Max Weber's (1964) 'charismatic' form. Here I am defining it as a closing down of authorship in the context of a potentially open field of practice. If I buy into this mode then, whilst I won't be able to hang Manzoni's *Socle du Monde* on my wall, I will certainly be looking for something singular, a unique piece by a very particular artist.

Whiteread's sculpture is a clear resin cast of the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square, London which it occupied between June 2001 and May 2002. This plinth has until recently been unoccupied, the others celebrating famous generals and King George IV on a horse (a statue commissioned by the king himself). Whiteread's cast was placed inverted on top of the plinth recalling, perhaps, Manzoni's inverted plinth. Forty years on from Manzoni and with the benefit of Baudrillard's insight, it is now possible to read this work as a questioning of the artist. It inverts Manzoni's plinth (technically I suppose it is not Manzoni's plinth that is upsidedown, but the viewers) as the mirror image of the plinth on which it stands and which precedes it as the condition of existence of Whiteread's work qua art. The transparency of the work also reveals the physical condition of

existence of the plinth itself which is the space that it consumes<sup>1</sup>. Whiteread's work signals a system of monumentalising practices that always precedes the monument and that simulates it as production rather than as merely reproductive of the practice of monumentalising. The now again empty plinth (or the sign in the gallery informing us that the painting normally occupying this space has been taken away temporarily for cleaning) does the same, but with rather less force. Monumentalising as a practice is established as a system of differences (following Saussure) that enables certain constructions and locations to be recognised as for, which is to simulating, art.

Anything can now be placed on the plinth (hung in the gallery) and anyone can put it there (although it may be 'legitimately' removed by officials) so that production and exchange-value, in Marx's terms, is revealed as 'ideological', which is to say, as constituting an alibi for the 'real' activity of reproduction (of the system of monumentalising and the broader sociocultural system of which it is a context). Whereas we might see Manzoni as establishing exchange-value within a 'commodity law of value' (Baudrillard, 1993), value now takes a symbolic form within the 'structural law.' Baudrillard challenges Marx's fixating on the use-value/exchange-value nexus and interprets the base-superstructure model as the mirror-image of society: the superstructure now constitutes the base as its alibi. My deformance of Whiteread's work reveals the 'base' of artistic production—her inverted, transparent plinth—as the alibi for the superstructural (in Marx's terms) plinth (the concrete one) which is where symbolic value is to be recognised. In

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<sup>1</sup> And so marks out this mode of monumentalising from the other that is prevalent in Trafalgar Square (and elsewhere in Westminster) that is eloquently spoken to by Mark Wallinger's piece, *Ecce Homo*, that was the first work to appear on 'the empty plinth.'

other words, it is the system of monumentalising that simulates artistic production.<sup>2</sup>

The postmodern challenge to modernist charismatic authority approximates to Weber's bureaucratic form. In my configuration the specificity of authorship is now open. Practice is now closed because authority itself resides in or is claimed on behalf of a prior system which defines the practice. Schlock art, schlock literature are established as art and literature not in and of themselves, but through their installation as such in locations that establish and are established for art and literature. My personal response to *Monument* was dominated by its aesthetic appeal—that's OK too, as long as it's on the plinth which points to the established system of practice. What makes a film is not the specificity of director or cast, but the systems of narrative and generic structure. Some films of, course, draw our attention to this; one thinks of *Pulp Fiction* (Tarantino, 1994), *The Usual Suspects* (Singer, 1995) and the archetypal, Robert Altman's *Short Cuts* (1993). At a different level of analysis, the system of film production, marketing and distribution will also draw out attention as will the system of news production that establishes the mundane as extraordinary.

In my constructions, here, Whiteread, Tarantino, Singer, Altman are all charismatic authors producing charismatic singularities. But these singularities index the bureaucratic form of authority; correspondingly, The work of Manzoni

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<sup>2</sup> Strolling through Shin Yokohama Station recently I passed a young woman wearing a tee bearing the legend, 'The seed comes before the harvest.' Wrong: this is not just a replay of the chicken and egg paradox (itself easily sidestepped via a simple model of evolution). The seed and the harvest are not of the same nature (unless the latter is serving as no more than a plural of the former). It is of course the cultural practices of harvesting that motivate the seed *qua* seed. The harvest clearly comes before the seed.

may well be regarded as schlock. Specific texts may also be read in different ways. *Forrest Gump* (Zemeckis, 1994) may with some justification be interpreted as a schmaltzy celebration of the American Dream of a land in which anyone—even a poor boy with learning difficulties—might achieve anything. A charismatic dream, perhaps: *you* are the author of your own destiny. Yet the opening scene behind the titles suggests an alternative.<sup>3</sup> A feather, drifting down from the heavens touches the shoulder of a hurrying businessman who brushes it away irritably. It lands at the feet of Gump, sitting erect and immaculate—shirt buttoned all the way up to the neck (there's nothing to distinguish one button from another)—who picks it up and places it carefully between the covers of a book inside his orderly attaché case. Gump's only ambition is to be 'normal.' But he's anything but that. His route to normality is to take everything at face value, to attend scrupulously to the minute detail of what is immediately to hand. His achievements come to him undreamt and far outstretch the wildest dreams of the other characters in the film. Their lives are tragic or mundane. President Kennedy shakes hands with and puts the same dumb question to a group of athletes—'How does it feel to be an All American'. Gump provides the relief, 'I gotta pee.' The dreams of other characters are only ever realised through Gump's agency and never through their own endeavours. But we must identify with them and not with Gump who's naivety provides the humour of the film; we laugh at him, we are not him, the American Dream is a myth, what we see is all there is and that's as good as it's going to get because no matter what we do we can only reproduce the system.

If we buy into bureaucratic authority then the value attributed to the pictures on our walls might attributed not to their unique qualities or those of the artist, but to their position in a collection. For collectors, the drive towards completeness is

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<sup>3</sup> See also Durães (2001) for further discussion of *Forrest Gump* along these lines.

paramount. This cool, obsessive, bureaucratic approach to art contrasts with the hot, hysteria of the charismatic mode. Their definition, however, has opened up further possibilities, which is, of course, a crucial function of theory. The charismatic and bureaucratic modes of authority strategy have been defined as, respectively, closed and open authorship and open and closed field of practice. As with the schema presented in Figure 1, we have two variables each a binary nominal scale. The cross product now gives rise to the frame in Figure 2.

Category of author	Field of Practice	
	Open	Closed
Closed	<i>Charismatic</i>	<i>Traditional</i>
Open	<i>Liberal</i>	Bureaucratic

Table 5  
Modes of Authority Action

The schema presents the charismatic and bureaucratic modes as opposites, but also reveals another pair of opposites that differ from each of the first pair on only one variable. For the mode exhibiting closure of authorship and practice I have recruited Weber's third term, traditional authority; my definition again resonating but not coinciding with his category. The closure of authorship and practice are achieved together in alliances and oppositions that both define membership and regulate the rules of the discourse. Art and literature here are canonical. If, as William Morris claimed, 'You can't have art without resistance in the materials' (quoted by McGann, 2001; 54) then not only Morris himself, but Carl André's *Equivalent 17* and much of the work of Barbara Hepworth amongst many others are there to reveal some of this resistant quality to us. Picasso exemplifies (and charismatically inaugurated, amongst other categories) cubism, Magritte surrealism and so forth. Our focus shifts from charismatic originality and bureaucratic structure to cultural content. In evaluating film I am concerned with

verisimilitude in relation to the setting or perhaps, in the case of an adaptation, with the canonical novel that is constituted as the source of the screenplay; in reviewing *Emma* (McGrath, 1996) I am drawn to compare it with Austen's novel, but I am also, perhaps, paying attention to the American Gwyneth Paltrow's English accent; I am concerned about the introduction of an American actor in the lead of *Possession* (LaBute, 2002) and at the exclusion of most of Byatt's poetry that was integral to her novel (1990).

When I open the newspaper I am now at last focusing on the news content and may be puzzled as to why an earthquake in Hokkaido should get more coverage in the British press than in Korea and why the death of Hugo Young at least as much attention in *The Guardian* as does that of Edward Said; the structures of news production may speak, but they pass unheard here. Indeed, the 'serious' newspaper must construct its reportage as disinterested so that the front page photograph of a U.S. soldier pinning a Haitian—who may or may not have been a rioter and who may or may not have been justified—to the ground with his foot whilst gazing vigilantly out of the frame may mythologise the American saviour of a country in ruins or the American imperialist primarily responsible for the ruins in the first place; no commentary, just the caption, 'Gun Law'—the reader will decide on the basis of the facts brought to them by the newspaper (see Brown & Dowling, 1998).

My walls and bookcases are dressed with representation of the canon—whether 'high' or 'low' culture. Here is the domain of the rule of discourse, the rule of subject as subject to. The pathology of traditional authority is depression.

Finally, the liberal mode is constituted as the opposite of tradition: open authorship and an open field of practice. In this strategy authority is relinquished by the author, handed over to the audience. Art as such is difficult here precisely because the author can have no voice; interactive art, perhaps, the art of the

kaleidoscope. Forrest Gump would serve well here as a role model: attend to what is at hand. But *Babette's Gæstebud* (Axel, 1987) works perfectly:

Here, the elders of the dour Protestant community can share with the gourmet general a table prepared by the finest chef de cuisine ever to delight Paris and all can depart sated by the certain knowledge that their principles have been upheld, that they have righteously abstemiously or rightfully indulgently or right creatively possessed the feast and, in doing so, denied no one. The feast, of course, was—at least subsequent to its preparation—inanimate and so indifferent to possession. There was, furthermore, quite enough to go around. (Chung, Dowling & Whiteman, 2004)

This is the field of the scrapbook or, nowadays, the blog. If I'm displaying artwork then it's the children's drawings magnetically pinned to the fridge. This is the field *par excellence* of self-authoring, self-making, the autopoiesis of second order cybernetics in which the observer (at any level of analysis) is an informationally closed system immune to pedagogic authority (Hayles, 1999). But the absence of feedback proposes anxiety as the pathology of this mode.

To consolidate the picture generated by my authority schema I will take two fields and run them round the cells of Figure 2. The first field is that of religion. We might begin with *The Bible* in the Christian tradition and, in particular, the New Testament. I will take a story from St Matthew's Gospel (see Dowling, 1998). A young man had approached Jesus and asked what he must do in order to achieve salvation. Jesus recited the commandments to him, whereupon:

- 20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I observed: what lack I yet?
- 21 Jesus said unto him, if thou wouldest be perfect, go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.
- 22 But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.
- 23 And Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, it is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

- 24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.  
25 And when the disciples heard it, they were astonished exceedingly, saying, Who then can be saved?  
26 And Jesus looking upon *them* said to them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.  
(*The Holy Bible, the revised version*, Oxford: OUP; Matthew, 20, 16-26)

The young man had approached Jesus in an attempt to look behind the simulacrum of goodness constructed by the Commandments. But he was not offered an option in verse 21. To be perfect is to be God: 'One there is who is good' (ibid; verse 17; my emphasis). The rich man cannot become that which he is not, but this neither gives nor denies him access to heaven. What he lacked was not poverty, but faith and no strategy is offered for the achievement of either. God, here, seems to be in the place of Forrest Gump is a wholly exteriorised other which may nevertheless impact upon our lives. But the imperative is not simply to pay attention to matters at hand, rather it is to attend to the commandments—a very specific set of practices. These practices are privileged by the Christian church, an alliance that also establishes the legitimacy of authors.

*The Koran* by contrast elaborates the Old Testament, very strongly inserting God as author and The Prophet as his legitimate relay.<sup>4</sup> There is also a degree of arbitrariness introduced into the practices in the sense that they might have been otherwise and changes have been made (for example between the respective dietary rules for Judaism and Islam) but that the command is nevertheless absolute under the unique and total authority of God. In this analysis, *The Koran* moves the field of religion from the traditional to the charismatic mode.

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<sup>4</sup> I have access only to the English translation of *The Koran*, N.J. Dawood (trans.). 2003. London: Penguin.



The bureaucratic mode establishes a position for religion in the sociocultural field. However, that which is practiced is determined solely by that which occupies this position. To this extent, then, all religions are commensurable and it becomes possible for *Star Trek's* (TV, 1987-1994) Captain Jean-Luc Picard to announce that he respects the beliefs of all religions: it doesn't matter what's on the plinth, its art. Insofar as religion must establish pedagogic authority either in terms of authorship or practice or both, it is anathema to the liberal mode.

The second field that I will illustrate, briefly, is Education and here making particular reference to the situation in England and Wales, though with some relevance to other systems. The traditional school curriculum centres on subject disciplines taught by specialist teachers. In terms of educational theory, traditional authority is established by the approach of situated cognition (Lave & Wenger, 1991) which constitutes apprentice as a career from legitimate but peripheral participation in a practice to central participation. In this scheme the practice itself seems not under negotiation, but this shifts somewhat with Wenger's (1998) later reconfiguration. The concept of scaffolding, commonly associated with Vygotskian approaches (1978, 1986) is also consistent with the traditional mode. Here the focus of pedagogic action is placed in advance of that which the learner can achieve unaided at a level at which they can demonstrate success with support. The regulating discourse establishes the basis upon which the necessary directionality might be established under this approach. In Higher Education the closed door of the traditional doctoral tutorial and the comparatively open choice of examiners in many fields and institutions suggests scope for charismatic authority as the voice of the supervisor potentially at least is able to dominate the field. This certainly describes my own experience as a doctoral student.

In England and Wales, official education at all levels has been coming under bureaucratising pressures. In the school this has taken the form of standardised curricula and tests (see Dowling & Noss, 1990; Flude & Hammer, 1990),

standardised school inspections, the publication of school test and examination results and so forth. In Higher Education it has taken the form of the modularisation of courses, the vetting of some programmes by state agencies, quality assurance inspections and so forth. In my institution as well as in many others a currency has been devised rendering comparable all academic work from teaching to research to administrative responsibilities. In fact, all curricula are to some degree bureaucratising strategies insofar as they institutionalise principles of selection, sequencing, pacing and so forth, they reduce the authority of the discourse in favour of the system. We might speculate that bureaucratising can happen only in the context of the relative weakening of traditional alliances; perhaps this is visible in the shifts in the structure of the clubs that we call the learned journals, now far more *ad hoc* than associated with traditionally institutionalised practices.

Liberal education is, essentially, the educational theory of Jean Piaget (1990) and the student-centred curriculum. For Piaget, the introduction of pedagogic authority of any form is inhibitive of the processes of equilibration whereby the individual constructs their own knowledge. Equilibration is associated with homeostasis and feedback.<sup>5</sup> In this sense, Piaget does not constitute the learner as a closed system and predates the second order cybernetics that I have linked to this mode of authority. But appropriate feedback is always non-authoritative and authority is a socially constituted pathology so that Piaget's ideal pedagogy is also consistent with the liberal mode.

I have summarised my analysis schematically in Figure 3 and also pointed forward to the next phase of my discussion in Figure 4. Here I shall be concerned with the use the framework in organising the dynamics of authority strategies.

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<sup>5</sup> Piaget's original field of study was zoology.

<p><b>Charismatic</b></p> <p>Authorship: closed</p> <p>Practice: open</p> <p>Texts</p> <p><i>Socle du Monde</i> (Manzoni)</p> <p><i>Being John Malkovich</i> (Jonze)</p> <p><i>We Can Build You</i> (Dick)</p> <p>Film</p> <p>Titles &amp; Credits</p> <p>Journalism</p> <p>Bylines</p> <p>Religion</p> <p><i>The Koran</i></p> <p>Education</p> <p>'Traditional' PhD</p>	<p><b>Traditional</b></p> <p>Authorship: closed</p> <p>Practice: closed</p> <p>Texts</p> <p><i>Equivalent 17</i> (Carl André)</p> <p><i>Emma</i> (McGrath)</p> <p><i>Possession</i> (LaBute)</p> <p>Film</p> <p>Verisimillitude</p> <p>Journalism</p> <p>News content</p> <p>Religion</p> <p><i>The Bible</i></p> <p>Education</p> <p>Traditional subject-based</p>
<p><b>Liberal</b></p> <p>Authorship: open</p> <p>Practice: open</p> <p>Texts</p> <p>Interactive art</p> <p>Kaleidoscope</p> <p>Film</p> <p><i>Babette's Gæstebud</i> (Axel)</p> <p><i>Forrest Gump</i>* (Zemeckis)</p> <p>Journalism</p> <p>Scrapbooks &amp; blogs</p> <p>Religion</p> <p><i>Atheism</i></p> <p>Education</p> <p>Piaget</p> <p>Student-centred curriculum</p>	<p><b>Bureaucratic</b></p> <p>Authorship: open</p> <p>Practice: open</p> <p>Texts</p> <p><i>Monument</i> (Whiteread)</p> <p><i>Pulp Fiction</i> (Tarantino)</p> <p><i>Short Cuts</i> (Altman)</p> <p><i>Usual Suspects</i> (Singer)</p> <p><i>Forrest Gump</i>* (Zemeckis)</p> <p>Film</p> <p>Narrative &amp; genre structure</p> <p>Production &amp; Distribution</p> <p>Journalism</p> <p>The simulation of news</p> <p>Religion</p> <p>All religions comparable</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Standardised curricula</p> <p>Modularisation</p> <p>Quality assurance</p>

\* See discussion below.

Figure 3  
Modes of Authority & some Signalling Texts and Practices

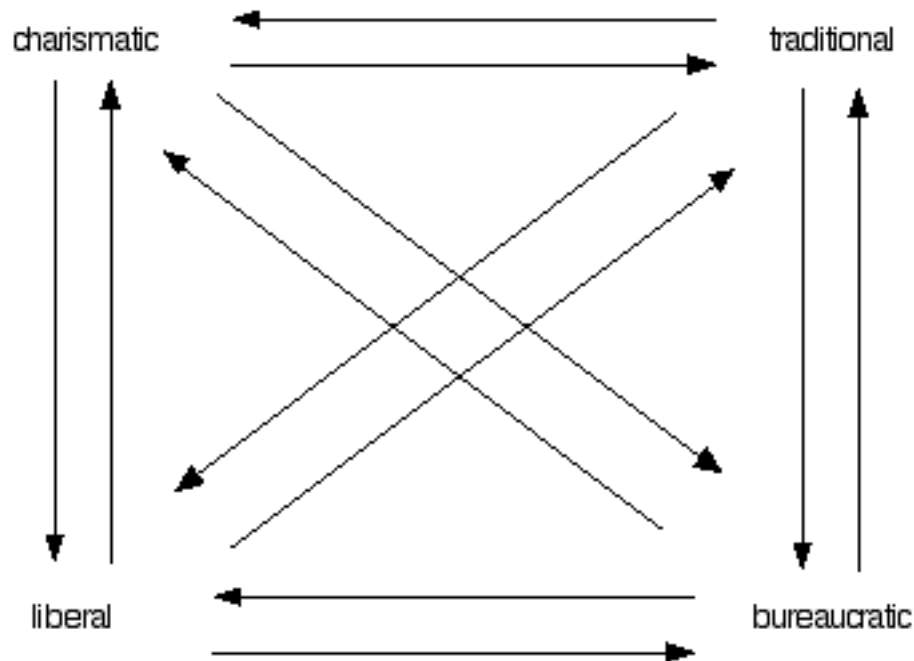


Figure 4  
The Dynamics of Authority Strategies

The schemas that I have introduced in Figures 1 & 2 construct ideal-typical spaces. By this I mean that the categories that they constitute are ideal-types rather than empirical realities. Any empirical instance is to be described in terms of the ways in which it may be construed as illustrating or incorporating or dominated by one or more of the strategies. As we shift our attention between levels of analysis—between an individual work of art and the museum that displays it and so forth—or move within a text of practice the pattern of authority strategies that we use to describe it is likely to shift as well. To this extent, Figure 3 maybe somewhat misleading. This is illustrated by the appearance of *Forrest Gump* in two of the cells. Indeed, the character Gump is clearly constructed by other characters as a charismatic authority in at least the part of the film in which he decides to run across America (a decision not taken all in one go, of course). We could therefore legitimately place the film in the charismatic cell as well. I have borrowed Jerome McGann's term (though not, perhaps, precisely his use of it) to describe the action of my schema which does not seek to capture a text or

practice or even to represent it, but rather to re-present it, to recontextualise the text or practice in an action of principled *deformance*. The theoretical scheme becomes a description machine, what Basil Bernstein (1996) has called a language of description. Its use-value is measured by the extent to which it allows us to establish a degree of organisation on our observations that show the objects of our analysis in a new but consistent light. If pushed, I would argue that all analysis that deploys explicit schemas is of the same form, though sometimes rather more grandiose claims are made for it.

The diagram in Figure 4 constructs a logical space by which we might map moves or transformations in the field of authority strategies. It does not entail that all moves will be observed; this is another facility of theory, it has the potential to make silences speak. I have already mentioned one of the moves, that is, the bureaucratising of the traditional school and university curriculum. The move from traditional to charismatic authority describes attempts of members of an alliance to establish a unique position within the field. If they succeed, then sooner or later their work is likely to become canonised and recruited to traditional strategies. To conclude this essay I want to consider in the terms of this dynamic developments that might be described as the formation of new alliances between technological and traditional practices.

Firstly, digital technologies have long had a foothold in the field of academic production. I suspect that for some time now few manuscripts have been produced with the aid of a pen or a typewriter. Furthermore, the academic network has been in place for nearly two decades now so that many academics in most fields will have been using electronic mail for a significant proportion of their careers; I have used it as my main medium of communication since 1987. These technologies have far wider applications than this, of course, but their exploitation entails considerable investment in terms of time and often finance. In the context of an academic environment dominated by traditional authority strategies there is no clear return on this investment. However, this does open up

a potential space for charismatic strategies. We see this in the hybrid work of Jerome McGann, whom I have mentioned and also in the work of Janet Murray (1997) and N. Katherine Hayles (1999, 2002) both of whom have dual backgrounds in literature and science or technology. The hybrid is clearly a potentially effective charismatic strategy, the more so to the extent that the fields that are thus brought together are, in the context of the traditional field, strongly classified (Bernstein, 1996). As I have suggested, the presence of digital technologies as everyday tools within literary studies and other non-technological fields is particularly helpful to these hybrid forms.

Another hybrid charismatic move has perhaps greater significance. This is the alliance of literature and technology in the form of hypertext. Here, the work of Aarseth (1994, 1997, 1999), Bolter (2001), Douglas (1998, 2001), Joyce (1992, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2001) Kaplan (2000), Landlow (1997), McGann (2001), Miles (2001) and Moulthrop (1995, 1999) are outstanding examples. Much of the hybridising work concentrates on the technical limitations of print technology. This approach resides predominantly in the liberal mode and operates to reduce some of the purely technical limitations to autopoiesis, to eliminate friction. Bolter, for example, suggests that:

What all media and media forms have in common for our culture is that promise of immediacy. Transparent media promise to disappear and leave us in contact with the unmediated world, although it is a promise that they can never entirely fulfill. Hypermediated media give up the attempt to present a world beyond themselves; instead they offer themselves as immediate experiences. When one medium sets out to remediate another, it does so by claiming to do a better job. It can claim to be better at transparency. For example, virtual reality promises to be the ultimate transparent medium, better than painting or photography, because the viewer in virtual reality can actually step into the world viewed. Or the medium can promise a more elaborate hypermediacy, as World Wide Web sites do in combining painting, photography, graphic design, film, audio, and video into a sort of popular *Gesamtkunstwerk*. In either case the new medium is trying to convince us that it offers greater immediacy than its predecessors. Because our culture today is saturated with media, claims of greater immediacy are constantly being made, as new and older media vie for our attention. (Bolter, 2001; 25-6)

Jerome McGann argues that his 'Rossetti Archive'<sup>6</sup> provides a far more usable resource than the traditional critical edition. In particular, it can handle multimedia or, to use Gunther Kress's (2003) term, multimodal texts, which is particularly crucial in the case of an artist whose corpus includes both written text and images. Indeed, McGann stresses that all texts are modally complex:

For the truth is that all textualizations—but pre-eminently imaginative textualities—are organised through concurrent structures. Texts have bibliographical and linguistic structures, and those are given by other concurrencies: rhetorical structures, grammatical, metric, sonic, referential. The more complex the structure the more concurrencies are set in play. (McGann, 2001; 90)

For McGann, the fact that digital technology can handle the presentation of multimodal texts rather more effectively than print (which can't handle sound at all) is part of the gain. But, crucially, sophisticated markup protocols can potentially at least enable far more complex search and retrieve strategies in the context of texts organised through multiple and overlapping concurrent structures. Perhaps even more fundamental is the fact that a digital archive located in active memory is never definitively complete nor necessarily under a restricted authorship. This last feature is in part the basis for McGann's 'Ivanhoe Game' that I have referred to above.

McGann underplays authority and postulates a technological advance within the context of what is effectively an idealised liberal environment. Other hybridising work focuses attention on the shifting game of authority. Marie-Laure Ryan points towards the shift proposed by these hybridisers:

We used to think of texts as being made out of words and sentences; now under the conjoined influences of postmodern theory and electronic writing technologies, we think of texts as being made out of text. The loom is still needed

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<sup>6</sup> Accessible at <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu:2020/> (last accessed 1<sup>st</sup> October 2003).

to weave the individual elements (unless they are "found objects," lifted from other texts), but organization and linearization is now a two-stage process, the virtual text produced by the first stage serving as input to the second. While the writer remains responsible for the microlevel operations, she may bypass the macrolevel stage, thus offering *du texte* as a freely usable resource to the reader, rather than *un text* structured as a logical argument aiming at persuasion. (Ryan, 1999; 100)

'Postmodern theory and electronic writing technologies' seems to capture the specificity of the hybrid. The point to note, however, is the construction of the electronic hypertext as attenuating, in my terms, the charismatic or traditional or bureaucratic authority of the text. They are no longer imposing a unique or conventional argument, rather they are offering a 'resource' to the reader in a shift towards liberal strategies. J. Yellowlees Douglas (1998) also describes the move in terms of a 'problem' with conventional text technology:

The cruel irony of reflexivity is that the conventional linearity of print rhetoric drives even the most rigorous reflexive relativist-constructivists through the exact same gyrations as the sociologists they are busily attempting to discredit. One of the chief problems with linearity is that it generally leads to something singular. (Douglas, 1998; 151)

Douglas is locating the disingenuousness of the sociologists in their linear text technology. As is the case with much of the hybridising work, Douglas is, presumably self-consciously, ironically deploying precisely the same technology in her own discrediting. She might have attended to Bourdieu (1991) for whom it is clear that the power of language lies outside it, symbolically in the skeptron that grants authority to speak. In my schema, the skeptron may be in the gift of the discourses of relatively stable alliances that characterise traditional authority. Alternatively, it may be in the non-discursive system of oppositions and alliances characterising bureaucratic authority. Or it may be grasped by a charismatic seeking to capitalise on an instability in discourse or system. The solution offered by Douglas and other hybridisers lies in hypertext technology which may be applied both to academic writing and literature. In general, the claim proposes a liberalising of authority.



Jay David Bolter describes hypertext reading as 'performance', Adrian Miles describes the hypertext link as risky both for author and reader. Michael Joyce describes his interpretation thus:

The reader of a hypertext not only chooses the way she [sic] reads but her choices in fact become what it is. The text continually rewrites itself and becomes what I term the constructive hypertext: a version of what it is becoming, a structure for what does not yet exist. (Joyce, 1998; 179-80)

What is being offered here is quite clearly a liberal image of reader authority. This is an environment that seems to suit Geoffrey Sirc (1999) admirably. Following Duchamp, Sirc wants to dissolve rather than entrench, to choose rather than make. The problem for his readers is that his choosing hardly lends itself to further selection. It is too context dependent, tied too tightly to its illustrations and sources. This signals a fatal flaw in the liberalising work of the hybridisers. One may claim authority for oneself, but only as a reader. To claim authority as a writer—even as a writer on behalf of someone else—is to shift right back into one or more of the authoritative strategies, the traditional, charismatic or bureaucratic modes. We always did have authority as readers, although Bolter, McGann and others may very well be correct in claiming that this authority is more efficiently elaborated within hypertextual technologies than in conventional print. The real test comes when the reader attempts to go public. Whiteread's art, despite its apparent simplicity, involves highly technical craft skills, maybe I can't compete there. I certainly can (and regularly do) produce an unmade bed, though, but no one's going to nominate *me* for the Turner Prize for it.<sup>7</sup>

J. Yellowlees Douglas (2001) must sense this problem in her performance of Michael Joyce's hypernovel, *Afternoon: a story*. 'Just tell me when to stop' is the title of her chapter. Her performance involves four readings of the novel after

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<sup>7</sup> The reference is to Tracy Emin's work, *My Bed*, that was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1999 and subsequently sold for £15 000.

which she feels that she has solved the puzzle posed by the novel at its start. But this is not enough, there is a real sense in which she is looking for a hypertextual equivalent of a final page. She locates it in two lexias that she claims occupy key positions in the novel's topography. It is the location of these lexia combined with her grasp of narrative denouement that stimulate her sense of completion. It seems, though, that

... fundamentally, what she has done in this auto-ethnography is to find a way of returning to the author of the novel—in this case, Michael Joyce—an authorial voice that may otherwise be lost in the celebration of open readings. (Chung, Dowling & Whiteman, 2004)

Joyce has, it would seem, written a mystery and hidden the keys to its solution inside the complex structure of his novel; this would seem to be pretty much in line with traditional authorial authority.

Johndan Johnson-Eilola provides a glimpse of something nearer to a liberal reading in his observation of children playing computer games (which also deploy hypertextual technology):

This emphasis on taking action and representing knowledge across broad, flat surfaces is a repudiation of historical distinctions between appearance and true content, a hallmark of postmodernism. Children learn here to deal tactically with contingency, multiplicity, and uncertainty. Where modernists are compelled to understand the rules before playing a game—or at best, must be able to discern simple, clear rules by trial and error—postmodernists are capable of working such chaotic environments from within, moment by moment. Their domain is space rather than time. They exist with time, dancing across it, rather than being subordinated to it. (Johnson-Eilola, 1998; 195-6)

Of course, we don't know the nature of the alliance that the children under observation here were establishing, maintaining or dismantling, but it seems likely that they were doing something rather different from Douglas' practice in

performing *Afternoon*. Computer games such as *Tomb Raider II*<sup>8</sup>, for example, are not stand-alone texts. Indeed, playing the game to its conclusion (by which I mean making all the pickups, getting to the end sequence and so forth) would be difficult in the extreme were this to be the case. It's not clear, for example, that a player would spontaneously come up with the notion that there might be an invisible bridge across a long drop unless: i) they make the connection with one of the Indiana Jones movies (I forget which one); ii) they read about it in a relevant game player magazine; iii) they visit a walkthrough site on the internet; iv) they are part of a formal or informal community of players that reproduces such knowledge; v) in frustration, they dive the avatar into the abyss at precisely the right place and discover it by accident.

Essentially, the game is associated with a diverse network of texts and practices, including other games which borrow and recontextualise from each other facilitating the accumulation of a repertoire of tactics by the avid game player. Also built into this game and many others are 'cheats' which, for example, enable the player to gain access to all of the weapons that are potentially available if you can find them. Another cheat enables the avatar, Lara Croft, to do a handstand and another will blow her up and, of course, the internet has plenty of saved games that you can download if you want to start somewhere other than at the beginning. We are, then, dealing with a central text that is made available to multiple modes of use—performances. When I played the game I started off with the intention of 'playing by the rules'. However, I failed to get past the very first hurdle which involved getting out of the first setting. So I searched the internet for a walkthrough.<sup>9</sup> I then proceeded by trying things out for myself first

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<sup>8</sup> *Tomb Raider II: The dagger of Xian*. 1997. Core Design. Eidos. See Sunnen (2000) for an analysis of this game which deploys other elements of the theoretical framework that is introduced in this paper.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.tombraiders.net/stella/>

and checking with the walkthrough if I got stuck. I also checked the walkthrough before making an irreversible move to ensure that I hadn't missed anything vital. Doubtless my strategy would not win me many plaudits from games enthusiasts. I have, though, also watched children playing the game. What I saw was repeated acts of avataricide as Lara was made to jump from high buildings, drowned, blown up, shot and so forth with no attempts to advance the game at all in the way that I had been playing it.

What facilitates liberalisation here is the move from authorship to readership. We may speculate that if the companies producing computer games wish to maximise their sales, they will want to facilitate the widest possible range of modes of use. Games players will doubtless invent further modes. Provided they remain in the position of readers, their authority is paramount. Any move towards authorship must entail the reintroduction of an alternative authority strategy. Of course, I am doing precisely this in recruiting my own game playing into academic writing. Hypertext technology does facilitate, even suggest alternative forms of reading and writing to those commonly (not exclusively) deployed in print technology. It may generate more efficient reading and writing in many different ways. As technology in and of itself, however it cannot be answerable for the authority strategies that are deployed through it. These strategies are always directed towards the establishing, maintenance or destabilising of sociocultural alliances and oppositions. The liberal mode is viable only where social action ends.

*Yokohama, October 2003-April 2004*

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*Being John Malkovich* (1999, Spike Jonze, dir.)

*Emma* (1996, Douglas McGrath, dir.)

*Forrest Gump* (1994, Robert Zemeckis, dir.)

*Possession* (2002, Neil LaBute, dir.)

*Pulp Fiction* (1994, Quentin Tarantino, dir.)

*The Usual Suspects* (1995, Bryan Singer, dir.)

*Short Cuts* (1993, Robert Altman, dir.)

*Star Trek: The next generation* (TV, 1987-1994, various directors)

### *Others*

*Tomb Raider II: The dagger of Xian*. 1997. Core Design. Eidos.