

Evaluative semantics and ideological positioning in journalistic discourse – a new framework for analysis

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Introduction

I take as my starting point for this paper the view that, contrary to any claims to ‘objectivity’ on the part of the media industry, news reporting is a mode of rhetoric in the broadest sense of the word – a value laden, ideologically determined discourse with a clear potential to influence the media audience’s assumptions and beliefs about the way the world is and the way it ought to be. This rhetorical and ultimately ideological potential has now been so widely demonstrated in the literature that it hardly needs to be argued for. (See, for example, Trew 1979, Hartley 1982, Fairclough 1988, Bird & Dardenne 1988, Herman & Chomsky 1988, Fisk 1989, Fowler 1991, Ericson & Baranek 1991, Parenti 1993, Eldridge 1993, Iedema, Feez & White 1994, Fairclough 1995, White 1997, White 2000).

It is not the case, however, that all instances of news reporting are created equal, so to speak, in this ideological functionality of endorsing, perpetuating and making seem natural particular systems of value and belief. Close observation of individual news items reveals substantial variation in rhetorical functionality not only according to differences in intended audience (for example between tabloids and broadsheets), but also according to differences in medium (print versus broadcast) and even differences in subject matter (for example, politics, versus court reporting versus police rounds.). A key aspect of this rhetorical and ultimately ideological functionality is evaluation – the text’s positioning of its audience to take either negative or positive views of the participants, actions, happenings and state-of-affairs therein depicted. It is via such evaluative positionings, of course, that the media constructs a particular model of the social and moral order – a model of what is normal and aberrant, beneficial and harmful, praiseworthy and blameworthy, and so on.

My purpose in this paper is to offer a new framework by which fuller, more theoretically principled accounts can be provided of this evaluative aspect of news reporting and how it is that individual news items may vary in the evaluative mechanisms they employ and hence in their ultimate ideological effects. In outlining this framework I will be relying to a substantial extent on the work over the past decade or so by a group of researchers working within what is known as appraisal theory. This network of researchers operates largely within the paradigm of Systemic Functional Linguistics (see for example, Halliday 1994, Martin 1992 or Matthiessen 1995) and is working to extend the systemic functional analysis of interpersonal meanings in order to provide a fuller account of the resources evaluation and stance. (See for example, Iedema et al. 1994, Christie & Martin 1997, Martin 2000, White 2002a/b, Macken-Horarik & Martin. J.R. 2003, Martin & White, in press). This appraisal framework proposes three broad sub-domains of evaluative meaning: values by which positive and negative view points are activated (termed ‘attitude’ within the appraisal framework), values by which the intensity or force of propositions is raised

or lowered (termed ‘graduation’) and values by which the speaker/writer engages with the other voices and alternative value positions in play in the current communicative context (termed ‘engagement’). (For a full account see Martin & White in press.)

More specifically, the framework which I propose for the analysis of evaluation in news reporting texts observes the following options and possibilities for variation in the mechanisms by which attitudinal positions can be conveyed and by which the reader can be positioned to favour or disfavour a particular viewpoint.

1. Affect, Judgement and Appreciation – types of Attitude.

Positive and negative evaluations can be divided into those which involve (a) emotional reactions (what the appraisal framework terms ‘affect’), (b) assessments of human behaviour and character by reference to some system of conventionalised or institutionalised norms (what the appraisal framework terms ‘judgement’) and (c) assessments of artefacts, texts, natural objects, states of affairs and processes in terms of how they are assigned value socially, for example in terms of their aesthetic qualities, their potential for harm or benefit, their social significance, and so on. For example (relevant items are underlined):

(affect – emotional reaction) *It was, then, with fury, that I returned home on Saturday to find my own country rumbling with the mumbles of the peaceniks.*

(judgement – normative assessment of human behaviour) *To see police brutally manhandling demonstrators was not only shocking but representative of more repressive regimes, such as China.*

(appreciation – assigning a social value to objects, artefacts, texts, states of affairs) *The new president's speech was elegant and well-woven, sounding a panoply of themes without seeming scattered.*

2. Attitudinal inscription versus attitudinal tokens.

This distinction attends to the possibility that attitudinal evaluations may be more or less explicitly articulated. The label ‘attitudinal inscription’ applies to the use of locutions which carry an attitudinal value (positive or negative assessment) which is largely fixed and stable across a wide range of contexts. For example, via lexical items such as *corrupt, virtuously, skilfully, tyrant, coward, beautiful, abused, brutalised*. The contrastive term ‘attitudinal token’ is applied to formulations where there is no single item which, of itself and independently of its current co-text, carries a specific positive or negative value. Rather, the positive/negative viewpoint is activated via various mechanisms of association and implication. In such cases the evaluative position is ‘triggered’ or ‘betokened’ rather than being explicitly ‘inscribed’.

3. Attitudinal tokens: evoking versus provoking.

Within formulations which articulate the attitudinal position less explicitly (tokens), it is possible to distinguish between those which contain no evaluative lexis of any type and those which contain evaluative material but not of an explicitly positive/negative type. In the first instance, the positive or negative assessment is ‘evoked’ via purely experiential (‘factual’) material

which, as a result of being selected and brought into focus within the text, has the potential to trigger a positive or negative reaction in the reader via processes of attitudinal inference. In the second instance, the positive or negative assessment is ‘provoked’ via material which, while evaluative, is not of itself positive or negative – for example, via intensification, comparison, metaphor or counter-expectation. For example,

(evocation – triggering positive/negative responses by means of a focus on purely informational content) *George W. Bush delivered his inaugural speech as the United States President who collected 537,000 fewer votes than his opponent.*

(provocation – triggering positive/negative responses by means of formulations which are in other ways evaluative) *Telstra has withdrawn sponsorship of a suicide prevention phone service - just days after announcing a \$2.34 billion half-yearly profit.* (Here *just days after* construes surprise on the part of the journalist author – the action by Telstra, Australia’s, primary, government-controlled telecommunications provider, is assessed as unexpected, or at least as coming sooner than would be expected. The formulation thus has the potential to ‘provokes’ in the reader a negative assessment of Telstra’s actions.)

4. Agency and Affectedness.

As has already been widely demonstrated in the literature, in certain types of news report, choices with respect to which participants are represented as agentive and which as affected/acted-upon often have a potential to influence who is to be seen as more to blame and who as less to blame. Here we are dealing with grammatical choices as to which participants in the reported event are typically assigned an active or agentive role in the clause (for example as the Subject of active voice clauses, especially where the verbal process is a material one) and which participants are typically assigned to an acted-upon or affected role in the clause (for example, as the Object of an active material process clause, or the Subject of a passive voice clause.). A number of influential analyses (i.e. Trew 1979, Clark 1992) have demonstrated that the degree of blameworthiness which is likely to attach to a given participant can be conditioned by the degree to which they are represented as playing an active, agentive role. Thus Trew in his highly influential analysis of newspaper coverage of a disturbance in London’s Notting Hill in the 1970s showed that coverage of the event by one newspaper indirectly positioned the reader to blame the so-called ‘rioters’ by presenting them as ‘agent’ in a high proportion of the clauses, while, in contrast, another newspaper positioned the reader to view the police as more to blame by presenting them as the primary agents and the members of the crowd as acted-upon. (Trew 1979).

5. Attribution.

It is an obvious feature of journalistic discourse, especially news reporting, that journalistic authors typically disassociated themselves from evaluative meanings, especially the more explicit ones, by attributing them to external sources. Nevertheless, there is a range of mechanisms by which the journalistic author can indirectly indicate alignment with or disalignment

from the 'externalised' value position and by which the reader may be positioned to regard that position as more or as less warrantable.

In what follows, my primary focus will be upon headings 2 through 5 above - evaluative positioning which is achieved via mechanisms which are in some way less than fully explicit or in other ways indirect. These mechanisms are of particular importance for the analysis of those texts which operate with what can be termed a strategy of partial impersonalisation – those 'hard news' items where the use of evaluative meanings is to some degree constrained, especially the use of overtly positive and negative assessments on the part of the journalist author. (For a fuller account of this 'hard news' register, see Iedema, Feez and White 1994, White 1998 and Martin & White, in press, chapter 4). These are texts which perhaps most frequently occur in the news coverage (as opposed to the commentaries, columns and editorials) of the so-called 'broadsheet' or 'highbrow' media (titles such as *The Times*, *The New York Times* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*) and which are most typically associated with the notions of 'neutrality' and 'objectivity' mentioned above.

Although in what follows I confine myself to a consideration of evaluative orientation in English language print and online media texts, I believe that the principles I outline have equal application to the journalisms of other languages and to the language of radio and television news reporting.

Mechanisms of evaluative positioning

Journalistic commentary and inscribed attitude

Evaluative stance is perhaps most obviously conveyed by meanings which have a largely stable attitudinal meaning across of wide range of contexts. Such meanings are exemplified by the terms *disgraceful*, *brutally*, *manhandling*, *repressive* and *sham* in the following extract taken from a newspaper editorial.

Birmingham Post – leader, October 30, 1999

The behaviour of the Government and the police during the visit of Chinese President Jiang Zemin was nothing short of disgraceful.

To see police brutally manhandling demonstrators was not only shocking but representative of more repressive regimes, such as China.

As for Labour's "ethical foreign policy" the visit exposed that as nothing more than a sham.

Such overt 'inscribing' of authorial attitudinal viewpoint is a common feature of journalistic commentary and editorials which, of course, intentionally and avowedly present the subjective, individual viewpoints and arguments of the journalist author and are expected to do so by readers. In contrast, in the attitudinally constrained news reporting which is our current concern, such overt inscription of attitudinal orientation occurs only infrequently and is otherwise typically confined to material attributed to external sources via such formulations as, *X says/states/insists; according to X*, and so on. For example,

Billy Hayes, general secretary of the Communication Workers Union (CWU), said that this was a disgraceful way to label people who seek

remedies for blatantly unfair behaviour by employers. [*The Times*, Bank of English sub-corpus]

I will return in a later section to such attribution and to exploring how the reader may be positioned by the text to take a favourable or unfavourable view of the reported value position. For the moment, however, my focus is upon evaluative material for which the journalist takes direct responsibility, and especially upon those formulations which do not employ such overtly and fixedly attitudinal locutions but which, to greater or lesser degrees, rely on more indirect evaluative mechanisms such as those of attitudinal association and inference.

'Hard news' and explicit attitudinal inscription

The following two news report extracts demonstrate a number of the key mechanisms of attitudinal positioning – both the more explicit and the less explicit – as these often operate in 'broadsheet' hard news reporting. Both extracts are taken from reports of a demonstration protesting against British involvement in the air raids which were being mounted against Iraq at that time by the US and British air forces. This was in 1999, several years before the all out assault on Iraq by the US and its allies in 2003.

Text 1. (*The Times*)

Bullets wreck Blair Visit

FOUR people were wounded in a gunfight between Muslim extremists and police about 100 yards from Tony Blair in Cape Town yesterday after officers spotted men handing out guns to demonstrators baying for the Prime Minister's blood.

Mr Blair's convoy of cars had been held up by the demonstration organised by a group calling itself Muslims Against Global Oppression, and he was smuggled in through a side entrance of the Castle moments before shooting broke out.

The police said that they had seen two men distributing arms to protesters who held up placards condemning the British and American airstrikes against Iraq and saying "Death to Blair", "One Blair, one bullet", and "Long live Hamas".

The officers said that they gave the crowd five minutes to disperse before firing teargas and throwing stun grenades at the demonstrators. They then opened fire after being shot at themselves.

<continues...> [*The Times*, 9/1/99]

Text 2. (*The Guardian*)

South African police open fire on anti-Blair protesters

The crack of shotguns was heard in the streets of South Africa's parliamentary capital yesterday as police opened fire on Muslims demonstrating against a visit by Tony Blair.

At least three people were injured with rounds of birdshot, including a local journalist, as police resorted to strong-arm tactics to break up the protest outside Cape Town's castle. The British prime minister, accompanied by his wife Cherie, was attending an awards ceremony involving British military advisors in the 17th Century fort.

Police also used rubber bullets, stun-grenades and tear-gas to disperse about 150 demonstrators, many of them women. They were brandishing

threatening placards - "one bullet, one Blair", "death to Tony Blair" - protesting against Britain's role in the recent air strikes against Iraq. Officers at the scene said police had come under fire, but there was no confirmation of this.

Security was tight for the visit, coming as it does after last week's pipe bomb explosion at the Victoria and Albert Waterfront shopping centre, Cape Town's premier tourist attraction.

Police used apartheid-era security laws to control access to the city's airport for the prime minister's arrival in Cape Town on the third and last day of his first official visit to South Africa. <continues...> [*Guardian Unlimited* 8/1/99]

The two texts are strikingly dissimilar in the evaluative position they advance with respect to the police and the protestors, with Text 1 (*The Times*) strongly positioning the reader to take a negative view of the protestors and to sympathise with the police, and Text 2 (*The Guardian*), in contrast, advancing a somewhat negative view of the police and a significantly less negative view of the protestors.

These evaluative effects are partly the result of the use of attitudinal inscriptions - locutions which have a consistent attitudinal value across a wide-range of contexts. Thus the *Times* report negatively evaluates the demonstrators as *extremists*, a term by which the behaviour of individuals and groups is explicitly characterised as beyond the bounds of the socially acceptable. This negative meaning was shown to be highly stable across the 4320 instances of the term in the Bank of English 450 million word corpus. All the 432 instances which I selected at random for close attention carried this assessment. This study of the Bank of English material also showed that the term is frequently associated with allegations that groups or individuals have been involved in non-state sanctioned acts of political violence. The *Guardian* is similarly explicitly evaluative in its use of the term *strong-arm tactics* to negatively characterise the conduct of the police. This is a term which, again, has a largely fixed evaluative meaning across contexts, indicating that conduct has been assessed as involving excessive force or aggression, or some other abuse of power. All but five of the 95 instances of the phrase in the Bank of English carried this negative evaluation. The only exceptions were where the term was used literally to describe a particular way of casting with a fishing rod or in texts relating to sporting activities. For example,

Strong-arm tactics and some fine goalkeeping prevailed last night as a muscular Bury side brushed aside the more subtle approach of Colin Todd's Premiership aspirants.

Crucially, both text extracts contain just the one instance of an explicitly attitudinal inscription, with a significant part of the evaluative load being carried by other more indirect mechanisms.

Attitudinal tokens 1 – evoking positive/negative assessments via 'informational' content

In both text extracts, there is content of an apparently purely informational or experiential nature which has a clear potential to trigger attitudinal assessments. In text 1, for example, the violence is said to have occurred as police *opened fire after being shot at themselves*. This is 'factual' content which can form the basis for a justification of the police actions and condemnation of those they are presented as

defending themselves against. This evaluative effect depends, of course, on the reader holding to a system of values by which (a) it is wrong to fire at police and (b) it is acceptable for police to retaliate in this way if fired upon. In the event that such conditions obtain, then this proposition has the potential to 'evoke' in the reader a positive view of the police and a negative view of the demonstrators.

Somewhat similar is the earlier characterisation of the incident as a *gunfight* which took place between the demonstrators and the police *about 100 yards from Tony Blair*. By the use of this term *gunfight*, the writer suggests some extended and concerted action on the part of the demonstrators in 'fighting' with the police, even while the writer refrains from overtly describing the action in these terms. Once again this is informational content with a potential to evoke a negative response from readers. This potential is enhanced by the writer raising the possibility that the reader's own Prime Minister (since the text was directed towards a British readership) was put at risk due to his close proximity to the 'gunfight'.

These specific depictions are supported by a more generalised representational tendency under which, across the text as a whole, it is the demonstrators rather than the police who are more often placed in the active, agent role. Thus they are construed as initiators of action and hence as participants who, at least potentially, are responsible for the events which transpired. The extract cited above displays the same tendency as the text as a whole in this regard. There we observe that the demonstrators or those associated with them are presented as the initiators of material actions on six occasions,

men [were] handing out guns to demonstrators

demonstrators [were] baying for the Prime Minister's blood.

Mr Blair's convoy of cars had been held up by the demonstration

the demonstration [was] organised by a group calling itself Muslims Against Global Oppression,

two men [were] distributing arms to protesters

protestors who held up placards condemning the British and American airstrikes against Iraq

while the police are agents in material actions on only three occasions

[police] firing teargas and [police] throwing stun grenades at the demonstrators

They then opened fire after being shot at themselves

This text-wide tendency provides support for the other meanings in the text which more specifically position the reader to see the demonstrators as the active transgressors and the police as the more passive participant who are compelled to take action in order to defend themselves and to maintain order.

The representational disposition of the *Guardian* text works towards the opposite evaluative effect. There the police are presented as having *opened fire on Muslims demonstrating against a visit by Tony Blair* in order to break up the protest. As an attitudinal token, this is more open than the assertion by the *Times* journalist that there were protestors engaged in a gunfight with police. It is certainly available to the reader to interpret this as indicating wrong doing on the part of the police – another instance of police brutality in a place with a history of police brutality (though

admittedly that brutality was under the former Apartheid regime.). But it is also available to the reader to reserve judgement until, presumably, the remainder of the report provides further information which may justify such actions. Tellingly, it is at this point that the writer makes his one overtly attitudinal intervention into the text to negatively characterise the police conduct as *strong arm tactics*, thereby substantially limiting the scope of any attitudinal ambiguity. The positioning of the reader to take a negative view of the police is further developed when the writer intervenes again to observe that there has been no confirmation of the police assertion that they came under fire themselves. In terms of usual journalistic practice, this is highly marked in that it is unusual for journalistic authors to suggest that statements by police are in any way requiring of validation or to report on any such efforts, successful or not, at validation. Thus the 'fact' that there has been no confirmation of the police claim has the potential to evoke an assessment under which the police are viewed as unreliable and the assertion as likely to be untrue.

The anti-police line is further supported by the characterisation of the regulations under which they have been acting as *apartheid-era security laws*. While this is, strictly speaking, only 'factual information' and hence only a 'token' of attitude (these indeed are the same statutes which applied under the former government), this is nevertheless content which has the potential to evoke negativity towards the police as their conduct is connected with that of the notoriously oppressive former regime.

Once again, there are text-wide tendencies in transitivity choices which support the evaluative disposition established by these more specifically evaluative representations and assessments. Almost exactly reversing the arrangement in the *Times* report, here it is the police, rather than the protestors, who are construed as agentive and hence as the primary initiators of this violence. Thus the police are agents of material actions on 8 occasions,

South African police open fire on anti-Blair protesters
... as police opened fire on Muslims
police resorted to strong-arm tactics
[police] to break up the protest outside Cape Town's castle.
Police also used rubber bullets, stun-grenades and tear-gas
[police] to disperse about 150 demonstrators, many of them women.
Police used apartheid-era security laws
[police] to control access to the city's airport

while the demonstrators are agents of material process clauses on only two occasions

Muslims demonstrating against a visit by Tony Blair.
They were brandishing threatening placards

By this discussion, then, we have seen that it is not only individual informational propositions which have the potential to dispose the reader towards a particular attitudinal assessment but also text-wide tendencies with respect to agency and affectedness. The discussion has also demonstrated how it is that such essentially 'factual' attitudinal tokens may interact with, and have their attitudinal values stabilised by, any explicitly attitudinal inscriptions which may be present. It is noteworthy that, while there was only the one explicitly attitudinal inscription in the

Guardian extract, it played a crucial role in establishing the terms by which the potentially more open attitudinal tokens were to be interpreted.

Attitudinal tokens 2 – evaluative positioning via association and provocation

To this point, then, I covered evaluative mechanisms which fall at the opposite extremes of attitudinal explicitness/implicitness. At the explicit extreme are inscriptions (i.e. *extremist* and *strong-arm tactics*) which are recognisable as overt announcements of the author's own value position. At the opposite implicit extreme are factual tokens (i.e. *Officers at the scene said police had come under fire, but there was no confirmation of this.*) where the writer presents informational content which, of itself and if considered out of context, is typically open as to the evaluative conclusions it gives rise to. Greater or lesser degrees of involvement are required of the reader as, according to the values and beliefs they bring to the text, they respond evaluatively to that content, one way or another.

However, as indicated in the introductory section, there are additional options available for evaluative positioning which fall between these two extremes. Here I am concerned, firstly, with locutions which, though frequently associated with approval or disapproval on the part of the speaker/writer, are less stable across contexts in the attitudinal value they carry than more stable terms such as *extremist*, *disgraceful*, *sham*, and *strong-arm tactics*. And, secondly, I am concerned with what I previously termed attitudinal 'provocations' - formulations where the author's subjective presence is clearly made salient in some way, with this subjectivity capable of being seen as directing the reader towards a particular attitudinal assessment, but where, nevertheless, there are no terms which, of themselves, carry a positive or negative value. I will consider each of these possibilities in turn, and in order to do so it is necessary to introduce an additional text extract. This is the opening few sentences of a report on the protest associated with an official visit to the United Kingdom by the Chinese head of state, Jiang Zemin, in October 1999.

Extract 3 - *The Daily Telegraph*

Anti-China protests brushed aside

The first Chinese state visit in British history began yesterday with a lone, Tiananmen Square-style attempt to disrupt the royal procession in the Mall and muted protests elsewhere.

As the Queen and President Jiang Zemin travelled to Buckingham Palace, a 34 year-old-man jumped over the barriers and attempted to unfurl the Tibetan flag in front of their coach

I have chosen this extract on account of the fact that, while it employs no explicit attitudinal inscriptions, it does position the reader attitudinally through (a) the 'provocation' of *lone, Tiananmen Square-style* and through (b) the negative associations of *brush aside* and *disrupt*.

Attitudinal provocation

In *lone, Tiananmen Square-style* we observe an instance of attitudinal provocation via analogy or metaphor. The author's subjective presence is made more salient as they intervene in the text to assert this likeness or similarity. Although they refrain from overtly characterising the protestor as 'courageous' or 'determined', they nevertheless

indicate a positive disposition towards the protestor, at least for those readers with a knowledge of the Tiananmen Square protest and the way in which the Western media so consistently presented this as a heroic struggle by ordinary freedom-loving people against the totalitarian might of the Chinese government. The addition of *lone* here is particularly instrumental in this respect, recalling as it does the memorable image of the solitary demonstrator blocking the progress of a tank which was so widely reproduced in Western news coverage of the event. As a 'token' rather than an 'inscription' of attitude, the term, of course, still leaves the attitudinal positioning somewhat open. As a token, it relies on socially and culturally conditioned connections and inferences on the part of the reader, and where readers are not subject to that conditioning or consciously reject it, then these inferences will not be activated and an alternative reading may ensue. I note with interest that, when I use this text with my under-graduate media studies and linguistics students, there is a significant minority who do not read the extract as sympathetic towards the protestor. These are usually students who were under the age of five at the time of the Tiananmen Square protests and who report little or no knowledge of the incident. But even though, as a token, this formulation is open with respect to the attitudinal orientation being cultivated, as 'provoked' rather than 'evoked' attitude, it still reveals the hand of the author, so to speak, indirectly manoeuvring the reader towards a particular value position.

Work on the mechanisms of indirect attitudinal invocation is in its early days within the appraisal framework. But already it does appear that metaphor and other modes of analogy are an important source of meanings both in the language generally and within journalistic discourse. We have already observed another instance of such in extract 1 above. There the anti-Blair protestors were said to be *baying for the Prime Minister's blood*. This metaphor is obviously a highly salient subjective intervention in the text by the journalist author and yet he has still stopped just short of using explicit inscription to overtly condemn the protestors as, for example, 'menacing', 'vicious' or 'evil'.

The characterisation of events and states-of-affairs as contrary to expectation is another important mechanism of attitudinal provocation which I briefly now demonstrate. Consider the following two extracts. ('Edexcel' is a UK organisation which administers higher secondary school examinations.)

extract 4A.

So incompetent and disorganised is Edexcel that two weeks ago it bungled and sent history and English papers to a maths tutor who was obviously not equipped or competent to mark them. Disturbingly, the board had still failed to retrieve the unmarked papers yesterday despite repeated efforts by the tutor to notify them of their mistake.

extract 4B.

Two weeks ago, Elaine Davies, a mathematics tutor in Bedford, received two batches of history papers and a further batch of English papers from Edexcel, one of the three English examination boards, even though she has never worked as a marker. By yesterday morning, after repeated calls to the board, she still had the 149 unmarked scripts. [original version of extract, from Cobuild Bank of English – UKNews sub-corpus: *The Times*]

The first extracted (concocted by me on the basis of extract 4B) makes extensive use of inscribed attitude – for example, *incompetent, disorganised, bungle*.. The original published version (4B) does not. It contains no such explicitly positive or negative terms. Nevertheless, it is attitudinal in that it positions the reader to view the examinations board in a negative light. It does this by (1) presenting facts which are likely, given a particular set of cultural assumptions and expectations, to be seen as evidence of incompetence or disorganisation (sending English and history papers to a maths tutor with no experience of marking), and (2) by including locutions which characterise the examination board's actions as unexpected, surprising or in some way untoward (for example, '*even though...*', '*she still had...*'). Thus an evaluative position is activated via a combination of experiential and interpersonal content, even while that interpersonal content does not of itself explicitly involve a negative or positive judgement.

Intensification is another important resource for attitudinal provocation. Consider the following news report opening sentence.

Thirty-one millionaire families in Australia receive the government payment designed to give extra help to single-income families.

While it is obviously highly likely that rhetorical intent will be read into the fact that this particular piece of information has been singled out for special attention and given prominence as the lead to a page 3 report in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the author has still confined himself to 'informational' content. It is up to the reader to see something amiss in single-income millionaire families receiving funding from this programme. This, then, is an example of informational, experiential content which evokes rather than provokes an attitudinal position. Consider, in contrast, the effect when we view the sentence in its original context, and especially when we consider the evaluative potential of the headline which originally preceded it.

Mega-rich reap child benefit

Thirty-one millionaire families in Australia receive the government payment designed to give extra help to single-income families.

The headline substantially increases the volume, with the intensification of *mega-rich* and *reap* signalling a high degree of authorial involvement in the proposition. While the headline is no more overtly positive or negative than the lead sentence it precedes, the heightened volume nonetheless clearly has the potential to signal that something attitudinal is at stake. Once again an authorial intervention — this time to increase the force or impact of the utterance — acts to indicate a particular attitudinal orientation.

Attitudinal associations

I turn now to terms which, while operating with certain attitudinal associations, are less fixed in the evaluative meanings they convey than the fully explicit inscriptions discussed above. The current anti-Chinese protest extract contains a couple of such terms – *brush aside* and *disrupt*. We need to be able to determine the degree *Anti-Chinese protests brushed aside* and *attempted to disrupt the Queen's procession* might be read as conveying approval/disapproval on the part of the author and accordingly, the potential they have to position the reader to take a negative or positive view of the protestor and the authorities who 'brushed him aside'.

Such terms are problematic for several reasons. Firstly they clearly carry some experiential (informational content). Thus *to brush aside* and *to disrupt* do both depict, with greater or less degrees of precision, acts in the material world. Accordingly, as is quite often the case with attitudinal terms, especially attitudinal verbs, such terms simultaneously have an experiential and an interpersonal function. There are at least some attitudinal terms which do not have this multi-functionality. For example, *disgraceful* in *The government's behaviour is disgraceful* makes no reference to a condition or a quality of the experiential world. Its function is a purely interpersonal one of conveying authorial disapproval. What this means is that, with terms such as *brush aside* and *disrupt*, it is not possible to draw a clear line between experiential and attitudinal content, or that we have to acknowledge that these are experiential meanings which come with relatively stable attitudinal associations. In observing this phenomenon I am in somewhat similar territory to those corpus linguists who have been working on what is termed 'semantic prosody' or 'discourse prosody' (See for example, Sinclair 1991, Louw 1993 and Stubbs 1996). This work has demonstrated, for example, that even such apparently 'neutral' terms as *to cause* and *to undergo* have strong attitudinal associations and accordingly may activate positive or negative overtones.

With this in mind, I return to the case of *to disrupt*.

The first Chinese state visit in British history began yesterday with a[n] ... attempt to *disrupt* the royal procession in the Mall...

Above I mentioned the use of this text extract in my university teaching. As part of this teaching, I survey students on their responses to this and other text extracts, asking them to rank the extracts in terms of their 'subjectivity/objectivity' and to comment on any evaluative uses of language they can detect. Over the past five years in which I have been conducting the survey, there has always been a certain number of students who regard this use of *disrupt* as conveying a negative view of the protestor. These are almost always those students who have minimal or no knowledge of the Tiananmen Square protests and who, accordingly, do not read this depiction as indicating support for the protest on the part of the author. Obviously, reading position is one factor influencing these readers' interpretation. For those who are generally opposed to interruptions of royal processions we can presume that it won't matter whether the protestors are described as 'disrupting' the procession or whether more obviously 'factual' formulations are used – for example, 'the protestors attempted to put themselves in the way of the royal procession' or 'the protestors attempted to interrupt the progress of the royal procession'. In this we see the experiential content of the proposition at work. But the question remains as to whether by using the term 'disrupt' the writer adds an additional attitudinal element.

Certainly the Bank of English provides evidence of a strong association between *disrupt* and the passing of negative judgements. The majority of instances of *disrupt* in the Bank of English operate in such settings. For example,

We want to preserve grammar schools, which are renowned for academic results, sporting prowess and cultural achievements. Scrapping them would bring huge council tax rises and disrupt the lives of hundreds of thousands of children.

Coincidentally the warning was made public at a time when security chiefs have ordered a maximum alert after intelligence reports that the Real IRA intends to try to disrupt polling day in the general election.

And certainly this association can be seen as fixed definitively in the explicitly evaluative adjective, 'disruptive', typically found in such collocations as 'disruptive influence' and 'disruptive element'. For example (from the Bank of English),

...trained the Afghan Mujaheddin and recruited tens of thousands of youths from all over the Islamic world to fight alongside them. Indoctrinated in Islamic seminaries, they later became violently disruptive elements in their own countries.

Imagine you are an employer who for years has struggled with a lazy, inefficient and disruptive employee who has suddenly been offered a job elsewhere on the strength of a good reference from you.

And yet the Bank of English also reveals that, in a minority of cases, *to disrupt* does not carry this negative sense – or at least in this minority of cases it does not encode censure on the part of the speaker/writer. Authorial disapproval is not indicated when the disruption is seen as merited, when, for example, the disruption is of some negatively evaluated activity or state of affairs. For example, (from the Bank of English)

As MPs return to Westminster, David Blunkett, the Home Secretary, and Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, will outline how the Government plans to change the law to 'deter and disrupt' the work of terrorists in Britain.

Several scouts may have been disappointed to learn that Jermaine Jenas, their promising young midfield player, was out injured, but there was sufficient resilience and ability in their ranks to disrupt a sluggish Bolton, who rested most of the squad that has guided them to fifth place in the FA Barclaycard Premiership.

Crucially in these cases, the text explicitly adopts a negative view of those being disrupted – those disrupted are *terrorists* and *a sluggish Bolton*.

This potential for the deactivation of a default negativity (or at least its limitation to the perspective of the affected party) is a property which *disrupt* shares with a set of verbs which includes terms such as *damage*, *destroy*, *wreck* and *harm*. The Bank of English reveals that such terms are like *disrupt* in that they are associated with writer/speaker disapproval and censure in a large majority of instances. However an internet search reveals that, like *disrupt*, such terms are still subject to the deactivation (or the limitation) of their negative association. They need not encode authorial disapproval. For example,

1. **SECRETARY POWELL:** There has been a lot of Al Qaida activity, whether the overall threat is rising or if we are seeing a peak right now and then it will recede again, I don't know. We have damaged Al Qaida quite a bit by what we did in Afghanistan.
[www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2003/20909.htm]

2. In the wake of the Iraq campaign, a new terrorist war is under way, and Britain is in danger. Nick Fielding reports on our suburban bombers ...

3. The fact that another “kindly” young man from Britain’s Asian community was with him, strapped up in an explosive suicide pack, is even more chilling. Has a generation of Islamic killers grown up in our midst, made doubly effective by their British passports? There is a paradox here. The war in Iraq has not triggered the predicted terrorist revenge attacks in Britain and America, and, according to Washington, the CIA and US special forces have effectively wrecked Al-Qaeda. Yet the danger from fanatical Islamic terrorism seems never to have been so great. [*The Times*, 5/5/2003]

4. The debit side begins with the question of Defensive Shield's central goal: Have we succeeded in harming the terror infrastructure to an extent that will ensure a complete cessation, or at least a serious reduction in the scope of murderous attacks? [*The Jerusalem Post*, 16/4/2002]

What this suggests is that a default operates in the language by which to construe an action as *disrupting*, *damaging* or *wrecking* is to indicate disapproval except in those cases where the default setting is deactivated, either by the text explicitly indicating that the disruption is justified or required (as above), or by the reader/listener holding this view of their own accord. This possibility leads to several conclusions about the evaluative mechanisms which operate with such terms. To describe some object, state or process as *disrupted*, *damaged* or *wrecked* is obviously to pass negative judgement on that phenomenon in terms of its usual composition or condition. However, crucially, what we have here are instances of what, within appraisal theory, is an ‘appreciation’. As indicated earlier, the appraisal framework regards as significant the distinction which separates normative assessments of human behaviour (judgements) from assessments of the form, presentation or appearance of objects and processes (appreciations). As ‘appreciations’, then, assessments that some object or process is *disrupted* or *damaged* are not value judgements which are directly targeted at human subjects. There is no direct normative assessment of human behaviour or character. However, when some human agent is depicted as having caused that *disrupted*, *damaged* or *wrecked* state, then it is usual for an inference to follow by which this agent is negatively assessed. It is usually ‘wrong’ to disrupt or to damage. The fact that it is, however, possible for this not to apply and for some ‘disruptions’ and ‘damagings’ to be regarded positively shows us that this attitudinal connection is not a necessary one. It shows us that negative assessment of the ‘disrupter/damager’ is not a fixed attitudinal value carried by ‘disrupt’ or ‘damage’. Rather it is an effect which is only typically rather than universally associated with uses of such terms.

This case also points us to the need to allow that attitudinal effects may be carried, not by individual words (as is the case with terms such as *disgraceful*, *sham*, *man-handled*, *tyrant* etc), but by phrases and syntagms. Thus with a term such as *to disrupt*, the evaluative effect can only be determined when the verb and its grammatical Object are considered together as a combination. When the Object of *to disrupt* has a positive attitudinal value or is unspecified attitudinally, then the combination will convey a negative assessment of the ‘disrupter’, (*John disrupted the class again.*) while this negative assessment will not apply when the Object carries negative value (*They disrupted the flow of drugs into the country.*)

What this all means for our analysis of the anti-Chinese protest extract is that we recognise that the formulation *a[n] attempt to disrupt the royal procession* must be seen as attitudinally open or ambiguous, given the attitudinal variability which we

have shown to be a feature of the term *disrupt*. And for our more general concern with the evaluative mechanisms available to the journalist author, it means that we must acknowledge that such terms rely on reader inference for at least part of their attitudinal effect and hence should not be seen as operating with the same degree of attitudinal explicitness as attitudinally stable terms such as *disgraceful*, *betray*, *swindle*, *brutalise* or *tyrant*.

It should perhaps be noted that it is not only verbs which are typically associated with authorial disapproval/censure which demonstrate this property. We also find a similar process of default-attitude deactivation/limitation with some verbs which are typically positive in orientation. Consider by way of example, verbs such as ‘to help’, ‘to assist’, verb which, of course, are typically positive. However, just as in the case of ‘disrupt’ or ‘damage’, this attitudinal default can be deactivated. For example,

U.S. intelligence officials believe that al-Zarqawi helped the terrorists who killed Mr. Foley, a U.S. diplomat, in Amman, Jordan, in October.
[Washington Post, 10/6/2003 - www.washtimes.com/national/20030610-125659-6237r.htm]

The term *brush aside* is a somewhat similar case to *disrupt*. Interestingly however, while the term does seem to operate with some definite attitudinal associations, there is a much more even balance between possible positivity and possible negativity. Evidence from the Bank of English indicates that *brush aside* is frequently used in contexts where some action is being negatively construed and where there is the implication that the action is overly dismissive, negligent or authoritarian. For example,

However, in the long run, the child whose needs are met makes fewer demands than the child whose needs are suppressed or punished. Parents, even well-meaning, loving parents, often ignore or brush aside their child's needs because the parents are busy. [Bank of English – brbooks/UK corpus]

This is certainly the sense I draw from *brushed aside* in the headline to this extract (*Anti-Chinese protest brushed aside*). I infer from this that the authorities responsible for the *brushing aside* have been heavy-handed and have shown scant regard for the protestor’s right to free speech. Of course, I must acknowledge the influence of my own particular reading position – one which is generally supportive of anti-government protests and one which is specifically supportive of protests against the Chinese government’s actions in Tibet. Against this, it is necessary to note that an opposite reading may be available to those working from a different reading position. In this regard I note that the Bank of English provides numerous instances where *brushing aside* operates with positive associations, with the ‘brusher aside’ presented as potent or resilient and the ‘brushed aside’ as weak or ineffective and/or in some other way unworthy. For example,

The only reason she hadn't connected them before was that Richard and Jeremy were poles apart as people. Compared to his son, Jeremy was nothing, just a small-time ex-pat, easy to brush aside and forget about completely.

Earlier, Todd must have been alarmed at the way his defence parted, allowing Fabian defreitas to brush aside a half-hearted challenge from Robbie Elliott and put West Brom ahead.

Accordingly, it may be possible, given a particular reading position, to read this opening headline as indicating a negative view of the protestors as weak, ineffective or poorly organised and perhaps even of the authorities as powerful and in control. This is, in fact the view taken by a minority of respondents to the reader response survey mentioned previously, typically those for whom *lone Tiananmen Square style* had no positive associations, and who read *attempt to disrupt* as condemnatory of the protestor.

Once again we see evaluative positioning via association and inference rather than by explicit authorial announcement. In this extract as a whole we also observe how an ultimate evaluative effect may depend on interactions between a series of these associative and inferential meanings. Thus, when *lone Tiananmen Square-style* is read as indicating approval for the protestor, then the other attitudinal tokens line up, so to speak, and also point in the direction of positive regard for his act of protest. However, should the potential positivity of *lone Tiananmen Square-style* not be taken up, then the remaining tokens may point in the opposite attitudinal direction.

Attribution and evaluative positioning

It turn now to another of the issues foreshadowed in the opening – rhetorical effects associated with explicitly evaluative material which is attributed to external sources. I am specifically concerned with the means by which authorial alignment with, or disalignment from, the reported value position may be signalled. Such mechanisms are, of course, a key evaluative mechanism in their own right, but also of interest is the way in which they interact with the types of meanings just discussed.

It is an obvious feature of news report that they make frequent use of quotation to introduce into the text all manner of accusations, criticisms, demands and contentious claims on the part of experts, politicians, community leaders, interested parties, eye-witnesses, victims and so on. The media's own view of such an evaluative mechanism is that it is entirely compatible with authorial neutrality and objectivity. Thus, for example, the 'Journalism 101' web site of the *Dayton Daily News* states,

Quotes and their attributions present opinions of others objectively. Since it is difficult to know what people believe or feel, journalists report what people say they believe or feel. Such things are not to be assumed by the journalist... Attribution is needed when the facts presented are considered controversial or not common knowledge. If the basketball team wins its fourth game in a row, such a fact is common knowledge. But if the win was because the center played the best game of his career, the journalist needs to attribute that information to someone, perhaps the coach or a fan. If the reporter injects such information in a story without attribution, it is not objective. But if the reporter asks the coach if this is the center's best game ever, the reply is fact (whatever is said) because it was given by the coach.'
[from <http://www.activedayton.com/ddn/nie/journalism/> accessed Oct 27, 2002]

Such an account offers a simplistic formula by which the journalist author is absolved of any responsibility for evaluative material as long as that material has been

attributed in some way to an external source. Many analysts, as a counter to such a characterisation, have noted that the very act of selecting a source and a particular sub-selection of their words for inclusion in the report carries with it evaluative and ultimately ideological consequences (see for example Herman & Chomsky 2002, or Fairclough 1995). The act, by implication, construes the selected point of view as in some way significant, relevant or otherwise worthy of the mass media audience's attention. It take this as a given but seek to develop the discussion further by attending more narrowly to the mechanisms by which the reader can be positioned to regard some attributed material as more credible, reliable or plausible and other attributed material as less so. This is, in fact, a quite diverse topic which obviously cannot be comprehensively handled in the current context. Here I focus on just a few of the mechanisms available to the writer in order to demonstrate the potential evaluative functionality of attribution more generally. Specifically I consider the following:

authorial endorsement – where the reported value position is framed or projected by formulations which simultaneously align the authorial voice with that value position and, by implication, construe it as true or otherwise warrantable,

authorial distancing – where the reported value position is framed or projected by formulations which overtly distance the authorial voice from the attributed material and provide a signal that alternative or contrary viewpoints may be valid,

evidential standing - where the social standing or authority of the source is such that it can act as a sign (a token) that the associated value position is well-founded, reasonable or otherwise credible.

Authorial endorsement

In attitudinally unconstrained registers, it is always available to the writer to overtly declare their support from some reported proposition or point of view by declaring it to be true or false, credible or non credible, or by passing positive judgement on the reliability, honesty or wisdom of the source itself. For example,

The Archbishop of Canterbury rightly describes the mass killing of children as 'the most evil kind of action we can imagine' [*The New Statesman*, editorial, 13/09/04: 6]

Banerji, of course, was not among those recession deniers. Rather, he has compellingly argued that those so-called New Economists were a major contributor to the excesses of the bubble, as detailed here last week. [www.thestreet.com, accessed 07/31/2002]

This option is usually not taken up in the more interpersonally constrained news reporting which is our current concern. It would have the obvious effect of foregrounding the subjective role of the journalistic author. Rather, more indirect mechanisms are preferred by which authorial alignment/disalignment may be indicated. Consider the following news report excerpt by way of illustration.

Dossier reveals Saddam is ready to launch chemical war strikes

SADDAM HUSSEIN'S armoury of chemical weapons is on standby for use within 45 minutes, the Government's dossier on Iraq revealed today.

He is developing missiles that could reach British military bases in Cyprus, as well as Israel and Nato members Greece and Turkey.

The Iraqi leader has also been secretly trying to buy uranium from Africa for use in nuclear weapons. [The Evening Standard (London) 24/9/2002]

Notice the use here of the verb *reveal* to report the assertion contained in the dossier. that Iraq has an armoury of chemical weapons is on standby for use within 45 minutes. By his use of the term, the author presents this contentious and highly charged attitudinal token as something which only needed to be exposed. Before it was hidden but now it has been revealed, and hence can no longer be doubted. By this he implies that the proposition is true. *Reveal* is one of a group of reporting verbs and related words and phrases by which support by the author for the reported value position is implied and by which the reported proposition is held to be true, valid, reliable or plausible. Other formulations which are ‘endorsing’ in this way include verbs such as , *demonstrate*, *show* and *indicate* and related formulations (for example nouns derived from these verbs such as *demonstration*.) For example,

He punctures the romantic myth that the mafia started as Robin Hood-style groups of men protecting the poor. He shows that the mafia began in the 19th century as armed bands protecting the interests of the absentee landlords who owned most of Sicily. He also demonstrates that the mafia has forged links with Italy's ruling Christian Democrat party since the war.... [Cobuild Bank of English]

Here, by the use of the word *demonstrates*, the author represents as true the proposition that the mafia has forged links with Italy's ruling Christian Democrat party and is thereby implicated in this assertion. Such verbs have previously been discussed in the linguistics literature in terms of notions of ‘factivity’ (see for example Kiparsky & Kiparsky 1977). Within the appraisal framework they are classified as instances of authorial ‘endorsement’ – a sub-type of attribution within the ‘engagement’ system by which the speaker/writer is aligned vis-à-vis other voices, other value positions and the putative addressee. (See, for example, White 2002b or Martin & White in press chapter 3.)

The option of ‘endorsement’ is one which is taken up with some regularity in broadsheet news reporting. Consider the following extract from a report in the Sydney Morning Herald by way of a further example,

Health experts want the promotion of giveaway toys in food advertisements aimed at children to be restricted, after evidence the industry is flouting existing regulations supposed to control the practice.

The standards let companies offer giveaways to promote their products, but the free offers, or ‘premiums’, must be ‘incidental’ to the main product, not a central feature of the ad.

But a survey has found that 84 of 111 television food ads containing a free offer breached that rule, with Kellogg, KFC and McDonald's the worst offenders. [*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 24/03/05]

Here the writer does not report that a study has *asserted*, *stated*, *reported* or *claimed* that advertisers are *flouting existing regulations*. Rather, she writes of *evidence* that this *flouting* has occurred and reports that the study has *found* that Kellogg, KFC and McDonald's are *the worst offenders*. While this use of the term *evidence* is still epistemically open (evidence may or may not be definitive), it nevertheless still acts to lend credence to the assertions here being reported by presenting them as well-

founded. The term *found* goes one step further towards ‘factivity’, as the authors of the study are presented, not as asserting this negative proposition, but as having *found* it to be true. Readers of such a text are therefore more strongly conditioned to regard the allegations against the food companies as ‘proven’ than if the allegations had simply been reported.

Authorial distancing

It is equally available to the writer, at least in interpersonally unconstrained registers, to indicate their rejection or disapproval of attributed material via explicitly attitudinal meanings. For example,

1. TODAY we expose how the *Daily Mail* printed a pack of lies about the Duke and Duchess of York on their Spanish holiday...The paper wrongly claims the royals had rowed about carrying the luggage and said the relationship between the "disunited" Duke and Duchess is "borne along on an undercurrent of bitterness and recrimination". [*The Mirror* 6/9/2002]
2. You were making the outlandishly stupid assertion that the women's team couldn't beat a good high school club team...

Once again, this option is not typically taken up in the attitudinal constrained news reporting which is our current concern, with journalistic authors preferring more indirect mechanisms. Consider by way of illustration the following.

Tickner said regardless of the result, the royal commission was a waste of money and he would proceed with a separate inquiry into the issue headed by Justice Jane Matthews. His attack came as the Aboriginal women involved in the case demanded a female minister examine the religious beliefs they claim are inherent in their fight against a bridge to the island near Goolwa in South Australia. [Bank of English – OzNews sub-corpus]

Notice that the views of Tickner (who at the time was the minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Australian government) are reported via the verb *said*, while the views of the Aboriginal woman are reported via the verb *claim*. Consider the effect if this arrangement had been reversed.

(rewritten)

Tickner has claimed that regardless of the result, the royal commission was a waste of money and he would proceed with a separate inquiry into the issue headed by Justice Jane Matthews. His attack came as the Aboriginal women involved in the case demanded a female minister examine the religious beliefs which they say are inherent in their fight against a bridge to the island near Goolwa in South Australia.

I believe that this contrast demonstrates that there is a systematic difference between *to claim* and more ‘neutral’ reporting verbs such as *to say* in terms of authorial support for the attributed proposition. Both formulations ground the proposition in the contingent subjectivity of some external source, thus shifting responsibility for the proposition away from the speaker/writer and construing the value position as but one position among a range of possible points of view. However, they are different in that *to claim* actively distances the writer from the attributed material, presenting them as withholding support for the proposition, while *to say* and related locutions are ‘neutral’ in that, of themselves, they present the writer neither as supportive of, or

unsupportive of, the proposition. The neutral *to say* formulations are labelled instances of ‘acknowledgement’ in the appraisal framework and *to claim* and related formulations as instance of ‘distancing’.

It is frequently the case that distancing locutions such as *to claim* will be used when the writer/speaker is elsewhere in the co-text indicating an outright rejection of the attributed material, characterising it, for example, as untrue, deceitful, unreliable or ill-informed. For example,

Don't forget that 8mb of RAM in your PC is a practical minimum – 2mb is recommended and the 4mb Microsoft **claims** is usable is just ridiculous.
[Bank of English, New Scientist sub-corpus]

However, I note that the locution *to claim*, does not, of itself, necessary act to characterise the attributed material it frames as false or doubtful, but rather does this as the result of interactions with other nearby meanings. This is demonstrated in the following extract.

- (1) Apartheid city: Former CRE [Commission for Racial Equality] boss condemns both sides of the divide;
- (2) The damning verdict on a community torn apart by segregation - and warnings that were spurned
- (3) ALL sides of the racial divide must take the blame for turning Bradford into a terrifying hotbed of fear and ignorance, an inquiry has found.
- (4) Days after rioting left 200 police officers injured and caused GBP 25million damage, a team led by race equality campaigner Lord Herman Ouseley delivered a verdict that damned almost every section of its society.
- (5) The rot runs deep, with Asians, whites, schools, the police and the local authority all told to take responsibility for the crisis.
- (6) The report depicted Bradford as a city in which 'weak' political leaders 'kowtow' to community leaders to keep the peace in a 'doing deals' culture.
- (7) Schools are places of 'virtual apartheid' where racial conflict, harassment and 'Islamaphobia' thrive.
- (8) Racism is fuelled by inadequate education about different cultures and 'parental prejudices'.
- (9) Communities have little, if anything, to do with people outside their own race or religion, it is claimed. ... [Daily Mail, 13/09/01]

Here, the writer initially indicates strong support for the assertions outlined in the report by the CRE. For example, these are said to constitute a damning verdict and hence are construed as carrying significant rhetorical weight, since *verdict* evokes notions of due judicial deliberation and *damning* implies the power to condemn. Similarly the writer chooses to declare that the inquiry has *found* that these conditions apply in Bradford rather than choosing to simply report what the report states or asserts. These initial formulations have an endorsing functionality, presenting the writer as generally supportive of a credible and compelling report. Accordingly, it would incoherent, or at least inconsistent, for the writer to reverse this stance, and a few sentences later (in 9) to suggest that the report's assertions are in some way dubious or wrong. Certainly I don't read the *it is claimed* in 9 as indicating that the reported propositions are doubtful. Rather I read it as a rhetorical gesture on the part

of the writer by which, for a brief textual moment, he signals his distance from the attributed material, thereby putting on a show of journalistic neutrality and impartiality.

Nevertheless, it is often the case the *to claim* is used in news reports of the type we are currently considering to undermine a given source and to indirectly signal lack of support for their value position. Here contrast is often a crucial ingredient with the value position of a more favoured source typically being framed by means of neutral 'acknowledgement' such as *say, reported, declare, believe*, with the distancing effects of *to claim* only being applied to the propositions of less favoured sources.

Evidential standing

I turn finally to one remaining mechanism by which readers can be positioned to regard attributed material as true, credible or otherwise warrantable. This mechanism operates even when a 'neutral' acknowledging locution is employed. Consider by way of example, the following.

Most scientists now believe that the apparent fossils inside a Martian rock that landed in Antarctica were chemical artefacts, not evidence of biological activity as reported in August 1996.

Here the reader is positioned to view as highly warrantable the proposition that *the apparent fossils inside a Martian rock that landed in Antarctica were chemical artefacts*. This positioning follows from the nature of the source with whom the proposition is associated. In this case that source is presented as being a large grouping, specifically the majority of experts in the relevant field who presumably can be relied upon in this instance.. I propose the term 'evidential standing' as a label for this effect. The elevated evidential standing associated with *most scientists* acts, at least potentially, to heighten the warrantability of the proposition. Of course, it must be noted that such formulations can only act as attitudinal 'token' of reliability or credibility. They do not constitute explicit assessments and accordingly still leave it up to the reader, depending on their reader position, to apply or not to apply this inference.

A related effect can be observed in the following.,

Nelson Mandela has stated that "Palestinians are not struggling for a "state" but for freedom, liberation and equality, just like we were struggling for freedom in South Africa."

Here the evidential standing is a matter of the social status of the source (Nelson Mandela). Mandela's standing in the community has the potential to act as an attitudinal token by which the proposition attributed to Mandela will be regarded as highly warrantable, depending, of course, on the values and beliefs the reader brings to their reading of the text.

Intriguingly, a similar effect can often be achieved when the speaker/writer indicates that a viewpoint is that of some external source but does not state specifically who that source is. For example,

Domestic problems such as child abuse and neglect, broken homes, and runaway youth jeopardize the health of children. In 1992, 2.9 million

children in the United States were reportedly abused, neglected, or both.
[Bank of English, US academic sub-corpus]

But the fynbos is not just beautiful. Like tropical rainforest, it is believed to be a rich repository of natural medicines [Bank of English – New Scientist sub-corpus]

Here, *reportedly* and *it is believed* potentially give rise to the inference that the source for these proposition is so diverse and widely spread that it does not need to be more narrowly specified. These and similar formulations thus construe the proposition they frame as highly warrantable, even while nevertheless removing direct responsibility for the proposition from the writer.

Concluding remarks

The framework I am proposing, then, is designed to identify the mechanism by which the attitudinally constrained, largely attitudinally inexplicit news reporting of the broadsheet media acquire the potential to position the reader to favour a particular value position. Key devices here involve the use of meanings which, as attitudinal tokens, invoke rather than inscribe attitudinal assessments and the use of forms of attribution to indirectly indicate authorial alignment with, or disalignment from, externally sourced value positions. These invocations involve mechanisms of inference and attitudinal association, and vary in the degree to which the writer can be seen to be subjectively intervening in the text. I propose the label evocation where no subjective intervention on the part of the author is immediately apparent and the label provocation where the subjective intervention is apparent in the form of, for example, analogy, intensification or counter-expectation. These attitudinal tokens frequently interact with each other, with any explicit attitudinal inscriptions which may be present and with externally sourced evaluations as a particular attitudinal orientation is established for the text as a whole. I believe that this framework takes us beyond analytical methodologies which have hitherto been available in that it provides for an explicit and principled account of both explicitly and implicitly evaluative meanings and the ways in which they interact in text. The more implicitly evaluative mechanisms are of particular interest to those concerned with ideology in that they provide means by which particular points of view and value orientations can be made to seem to arise naturally from apparently ‘factual’ informational content.

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