realisations are aligned as implicit or explicit in order to present a rough picture of the flow of modalised reader positioning as the text unfolds.

As far as modulation is concerned, note that up to the last two sentences of the text realisations of obligation dominate. Three out of five of these are explicitly subjective (I cannot believe..., I must emphasise the desperate need to..., I appeal...), alongside two explicitly objective realisations of obligation which construe as ideationalised facts Chang's view that the killings in question shouldn't have happened (needless killings) and that Greiner's gun laws weren't capable of stopping them (not stringent enough). And up to this point in the text, there is no modalisation (i.e. no doubt). Chang, in otherwords, is very up front in individuating herself as the source of the demands she makes and objectifying the relationship between Greiner's policies and the killings, and codes her demands as propositions whose probability is beyond question. This pattern clearly establishes Chang's authority with respect to what she has to say.

The last two sentences of the text involve a more complex set of manoeuvres. Modalisation is brought in, subjectively, to acknowledge what cannot be done (explicit subjective modalisation: I know that criminals cannot be stopped), then objectively to suggest what can be done (implicit objective modalisation: surely we can limit or stop their easy access to lethal weapons) and finally subjectively again, mediating her invocation of ethics with the middle valued modalisation would (implicit subjective modalisation: it would be irresponsible to ignore Australia's plea to reform antiquated gun law policies). The first two modalisations modalise modulations of ability (I know...cannot; surely...can); Chang subjectively grants what cannot be done (I know...cannot), then objectively invites the reader to agree with what can be done (surely...can). Chang's subjective confidence in the truth of what she is asserting then decreases as she moves to her most strident modulation - an explicitly objective obligation, invoking ethical considerations (would...irresponsible). In a sense, then, the truth of what Chang is arguing becomes more negotiable, by way of rendering more plausible the irresponsibility of Greiner's reactionary position on gun law reform.

We should also note here that alongside dynamically naturalising a complex reading position for Greiner and the Sydney Morning Herald readers in general, the metaphorical nature of the text allows for considerable discretion along the lines of the alternative readings reviewed in section 2 above. Chang's modality in other words is not bluntly oppositional, but subversive; it is designed to engage Greiner in a silent dialectic of repartee, which his own coding orientation and that of fellow broadsheet newspaper readers will probably find difficult to refuse.

To further assess the impact of this modal rhetoric, we need to look briefly at the related interpersonal, ideational and textual meaning it positions the reader to believe and act upon since it is the dialogue among the various

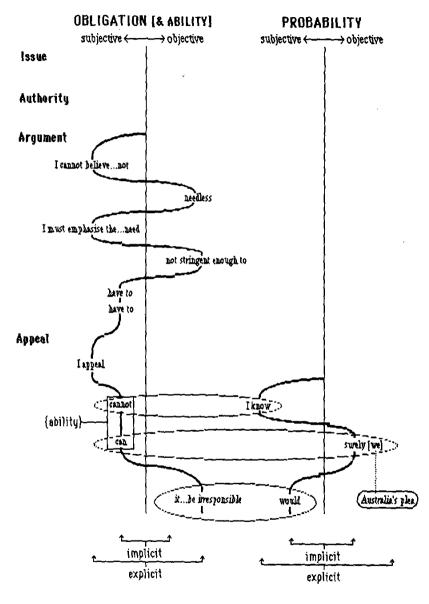


FIGURE 4
An overview of the dynamics of Chang's deployment of modality

modes of meaning in a text that fashions meaning above and beyond the sum of its semiotic parts (Martin forthcoming).

One striking feature that deserves comment is the construction of Chang's father, Victor Chang, as a martyred saint<sup>15</sup> (a construction in which a broad spectrum of the Australian media participated following the murder). This prosody of unnecessary sacrifice is coded into value laden nominalisations (ideational metaphors for Halliday 1985), which like mood and modality have the speaker/writer as their source, and position the reader to assess the murder in a specific way:

Chang = martyred saint

The shocking and senseless killing of my own father, Victor Chang.

the needless killing of over a dozen people the slaughter of innocents.

How many more tragedies

the anguish of not only the death of their loved one,

more lives are sacrificed.

Another remarkable feature of the text is its pattern of Theme selection (analysis here following Fries 1981/1983, Halliday 1985, Martin 1992a). Interpersonal and topical (i.e. experiential) Themes are outlined below, in order to display the angle on reader positioning and topic deployed by Chang. Note that most clauses have both interpersonal and topical points of departure - with interpersonal Themes foregrounding wh interrogatives (actually rhetorical questions functioning as mood metaphors for commands) and explicit subjective modalities alongside the invitational modal adjunct surely. The topical Themes foreground a number of the value laden nominalisations just reviewed and also have the effect of associating Greiner with killing, murder, tragedy and the criminals responsible for these crimes. Although not explicitly grammaticalised. Greiner is the implicit subject of two key nonfinite clauses; if we strip away the relevant modality metaphors, Greiner emerges clearly as Theme (You should realise past mistakes...; You shouldn't ignore Australia's plea...). Gently then, under elision, Chang uses textual meaning to charge Greiner with her father's murder (and that of a number of other unfortunate victims, including those of a mass murderer run amok in a suburban shopping centre).

#### INTERPERSONAL MEANING, PERSUASION AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE

Greiner = Herod/Pontius Pilate

interpersonal Theme topical Theme

(including metaphorical)

[for some reason]16 Why

The shocking and senseless

killing of...

I cannot believe {= you

should }

his death and the murder of ...

How many more tragedies

After the needless killing...

How many families

[many more tragedies]

[many families]

I appeal to you, {= you must ], Mr Greiner

(Mr Greiner - elided)17

criminals

I know {= obviously} but surely

It would be irresponsible {=

(Mr Greiner - elided)

you must)

As a final step, consider the negotiation of person and Subject selection across the last three sentences of the text. In the sentence beginning I appeal to you, Mr Greiner, Chang uses an explicitly subjective modality followed by a vocative to establish herself in relation to Greiner, who is mentioned the first time following the letter's Salutation; as noted above, Greiner is the implicit Subject of the projected non-finite clause. Following another explicitly subjective modality (I know), the I/you writer/reader interrelationship is reconstructed as an inclusive we (but surely we can...), invoking joint responsibility for change (readable as Chang and Greiner, or perhaps as Chang, Greiner and other Australians - in transition to Australia's plea). Finally, the source of Chang's directive in reconstrued as the whole of the nation (Australia's plea...)18, in the same sentence in which Chang construes Greiner's obligation as an objective ideational fact (it would be irresponsible).

<sup>15</sup> 'Saint' in the sense of a publicly unblemished miracle worker; 'martyred' to the cause of multiculturalism, since the public celebration of his work was based in part on his ethnicity, and this fame played its part no doubt in attracting his assailants.

<sup>16</sup> In Halliday's (1985) analysis, the wh phrase in wh interrogatives is treated both as an interpersonal and as a topical Theme.

<sup>1.7</sup> Greiner is the elided Subject of the perfective non-finite clauses to realise past mistakes...and to ignore Australia's plea...; he has been included in the analysis as an implicit topical Theme.

Note that the dislocated grammatical Subject of this sentence includes Australia's plea cf. [[To ignore Australia's plea to reform antiquated gun law policies]] would be irresponsible, wouldn't it?

plaintiff = Australia

I I appeal

you to you, Mr Greiner, to realise past mistakes...

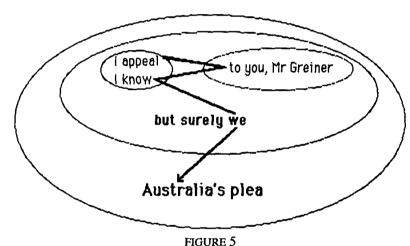
I I know that criminals cannot be stopped we but surely we can stop their easy access to

lethal weapons

Australia it would be irresponsible to ignore Australia's

plea to reform...

There is a drift in modal responsibility – with respect to who is asking for change (the evolving source of the directive) and with respect to who is responsible for change (who the onus is on, i.e. Greiner). (See Figure 5.)



Reconstrual of responsibility in the culmination of Chang's text

In summary then, analysis of interpersonal and related meaning in Chang's text shows in part the way in which she was able to take advantage of the speaking position granted her as the Australian born daughter of a murdered heart surgeon, who had himself been nationally celebrated as one symbol of a brave, new multi-cultural Australia that had embraced ethnic diversity and was moving optimistically towards a prosperous Australasian future. Significantly, granted this opportunity<sup>19</sup>, Chang had at her disposal the discursive resources to take advantage of her position – not as an end in itself (e.g. not to have people feel sorry for her) but as a springboard for moving

In contrast, Lucy Wang, de facto wife of the NSW Labor MP Mr John Newman, appeared only as the source of quotations in news stories following Newman's murder in September 1994; Ms Wang was a migrant to Australia, and native speaker of Mandarin.

from the private into the public sphere; from personal authority to moral authority; from the 'I', to 'we' (Australians), to personified democracy (Australia's plea). In this process, Greiner is positioned either to join the commonweal or remain with the crims – a position Chang constructs not by charging him ideationally with murder (which would have been slanderous) but by constructing him interpersonally as modally responsible and positioning him textually in some bad company he would be loathe to keep.

Chang's intervention demonstrates one respect in which diverse subjectivity in a culture can be generative of resistance and social change. In several respects Chang's subject position is a non-mainstream one: ethnicity (Chinese, not Anglo), gender (female, not male), generation (adolescent, not mature). Her social class on the other hand (middle, not working), and her father's professional renown and symbolic ethnic status meant that under the circumstances, a powerful speaking position was made available. And Chang had the meaning potential to take up the speaking position and make her intervention a memorable one.

### 5. IMPLICATIONS FOR CRITICAL SOCIAL LITERACY

Is it the case, on the other hand, that significant speaking positions arise, but cannot be taken advantage of - because the relevant meaning potential is not available? Around the time of Victor Chang's murder, two working class Australian men, both unarmed, were woken in the night by commando style police raids. One innocent Aboriginal man, who was mistakenly thought to be harbouring a suspect wanted by the police, was shot to death; in a separate incident, one innocent Irish Australian man, living in a house under surveillance for suspected drug offences, was shot in the face and required extensive of plastic surgery and rehabilitation. Neither the family of the dead Aboriginal man, nor of the badly injured Irish Australian in question took advantage of the speaking positions these tragedies afforded in the way Chang has done<sup>20</sup>. In spite of the concerted efforts of relevant sympathisers, the position of those directly or indirectly responsible for the unwarranted attacks does not appear to have been significantly damaged in the public sphere. Those responsible, on the other hand, were more than able to manipulate the relevant meaning potential to defend themselves. As Superintendent Harding explained with reference to the killing of the Aboriginal man:

Of course, Chang had her mainstream social class positioning to work with; but this simply means, from the perspective of critical discourse analysis, that she had control over a range of powerful discourses, which she mobilised to compromise Greiner.

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(17) "A struggle took place and the officer was reacting to keep the peace and stop himself or others being hurt. The gun then discharged." (Sonya Zadel 1989:1 & 7)

There is no need to belabour here the ways in which agency (Medium: a struggle took place...the officer was reacting...the gun discharged; Agent: the officer... keep the peace and stop himself or others getting hurt) and modal responsibility (Subject: a struggle...the officer...the gun) have been aligned in this text (cf. Fowler et al. 1979, Kress & Hodge 1979, Fowler 1987, Kress 1991, 1993, van Dijk 1993). And in the event, it turned out that this kind of construal of events won the day; none of the police involved in these attacks were held criminally or morally responsible. And few citizens could have any confidence that the system has been renovated to prevent similar outrages from happening again.

This raises the question of whether or not the meaning potential at stake here and its mobilisation for particular ends can in fact be differentiated according to social class? Suggestive empirical work is found in Cloran (1989) and Hasan (1989), reporting on studies of mothers interaction with pre-school children. Cloran (1989:141) notes that an imperative style of control is associated with a range of variables that include not expressing a point of view via projections (which would include not taking up subjectively explicit modality options). This style of control is more typical of working class than middle class mothers and of mothers of boys rather than mothers of girls. Hasan (1989:250-251) notes that middle class mothers' questions to children tend to be prefaced (e.g. Did you know that they're going to leave) significantly more often than working class mothers' questions; these prefaced questions again include a significant number of subjectively explicit modalities. And Williams (1994) confirms that prefaces involving subjective explicit modality (e.g. I think, do you think) are used more by middle class mothers and children than by working class mothers and children when mothers are reading to children. Results of this kind suggest that Chang's modality repertoire is a middle class one and has roots stretching back into her pre-school socialisation.

The movie Educating Rita, based on Willie Russell's play (1985) of the same name, dramatises the kind of tensions that arise when these divergent coding orientations contest. The first encounter between Rita (a working class student entering the Open University program) and Frank (her middle class tutor) includes several exchanges in which Rita attempts to share personal evaluative meanings with Frank. Frank tends to parry these exchanges, making use of interpersonal metaphors (e.g. I suppose, I don't think, I suppose) below. The following exchange is illustrative, with Rita getting so fed up with Frank's manoeuvring that she makes use of an explicitly objective modalisation (no suppose) to challenge his explicitly subjective prevaricating:

(18) [exchange from Educating Rita]

RITA: Okay, Frank. That's a nice picture, isn't it Frank?

FRANK: Uh yes, I suppose it is.

RITA: It's very erotic.

FRANK: Actually I don't think I've looked at that picture in 10

years, but, uh, yes, it is, I suppose so.

RITA: Well, there's no suppose about it. ...

When Frank asks Rita to evaluate her own hairdressing, the contrast is striking, with Rita coming straight to the point – there's no suppose about it (for further discussion see Cranny-Francis and Martin 1994):

(19) [exchange from Educating Rita)

FRANK: Are you a good ladies hairdresser Rita?

RITA: Yeah, I am.

Divergent coding orientations and contestations of this kind raise the question of whether divergent orientations of this kind hold true in the Australian context and whether in the absence of evidence to the contrary the middle class meaning potential at issue here should be explicitly taught, where for reasons of ethnicity, gender and/or social class social subjects have not been interpellated as agents of symbolic control. To begin, it must be clarified that this is not an issue of appropriateness (Fairclough 1992b, c). The way in which Chang positions Greiner is not a matter of social conventions (i.e. etiquette) but rather one of social power. The reason for this is that the relationship between the meanings mobilised and the intervention they achieve is not arbitrary. Chang's interpersonal repertoire, as reviewed above, does not simply correlate with power; rather, it is generative of it. The orientation, manifestation, type and value systems of modality Chang deploys enable her to fine tune her propositions and proposals according to how explicit she wants to be about where her assessments are coming from, how subjective or objective she wants them to appear, how definite they are, how metaphorical and so on - they enable Chang to negotiate her case on her own terms. This is not just a matter of face; Chang is not just being polite. Rather she is taking charge of Greiner in precisely the way her middle class meaning potential affords (for the deployment of this potential in bureaucratic discourse see Iedema in press).

It might therefore be argued that where this meaning potential is not automatically available, it needs to be taught. It might also be argued that it needs to be taught explicitly (so that students are given conscious control over the resources in question) and critically (since it is a resource that appears potentially generative of domination, and therefore potentially generative of resistance to domination). In Australia, the task of redistributing meaning

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potential of this kind has been a central concern of literacy programs informed by functional linguistics and critical theory (Christie 1993, Christie et al. 1991, Cope and Kalantzis 1993, Martin 1993a, b, in press, Rothery 1994), a project closely related to British work on critical language awareness (Fairclough 1992b). By way of exemplifying some of the curriculum issues surrounding this concern, consider the following two texts<sup>21</sup> from a Year 11 senior secondary English classroom in New South Wales. The students involved are in their second last year of high school and have been set the task of writing a letter to the editor on the issue of violence on television. At this stage of their work, they had not been provided with critical or functional perspectives on the genre engaging them. Text (20) received 18 out of 20 marks, and text (21) received 9 out of 20, from the students' English teacher<sup>22</sup>. Realisations of modality are highlighted in bold face.

## (20) Dear Sir,

It is essential for the well-being of the Youth of Australia that we adopt a less tolerant attitude to violence in television. It has been known for some time that young children can be disturbed by the violent scenes presented by the television scene. No apparent effort, however has been made by either the producers of children's programmes or the programmers of children's programmes to take this into account one only has to look at the extraordinary popular cartoon "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles". At some schools it was necessary to ban the accessaries associated with the programme because children were engaging in fights in the playground, emulating their cartoon heroes, this sort of situation is deplorable, this incident also highlights how impressionable young children are.

There is a definite danger that children, after years of exposure to violence on television come to accept that violence is an acceptable solution to conflict. It is of vital importance for the future of Australia that young people realise that violence is not to be condoned, nor applauded. It is also essential that young people do not associate violence with bravery and heroism which is an inevitable outcome if we persist in allowing our children to be influenced by the garbage that fills our screens every afternoon and evening, and succeeds in passing for entertainment. It is possible that children come to accept violence as an inevitable, but vaguely unpleasant part of the world we live in. If this unfortunate scenario becomes true, we will never combat violence.

It is of utmost importance then, that the television industry assumes a sense of responsibility by carefully regulating the materials that appear in children's programmes.

I am indebted to Bill Crowley for these materials and for his insights into their significance in his English classroom.

## (21) To whom it may concern

Television, which now consumes so much of our daily lives, contains too much physical violence. There is almost always a scene in every program where violence is used. Even in the afternoon cartoon show for children, 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.' In this show the good prevails over the bad by using violence to fight them. How does this effect children's way of dealing with their problems? It tells them that violence is ok and that by using it, it can solve their problems.

The movies that are shown also contain a lot of violence. Movies such as the Rambo series, Karate Kid, and horrors are examples of this. They show the world as a frightening place where at any moment your next door neighbour can go mad and kill everyone. This does not help children in any way. Soon their games become more violent and will one day really happen. Not pretend shooting and killing each other but real shooting and killing each other.

Our job as adults is to protect our children, make them feel safe and secure in their own homes and lives. Let them discover life as it really is, not as a violent and bloody world as depicted on the television set.

One of the most striking differences between the texts is the amount of modality involved. The writer of text (21) modalises just three clauses:

almost always [usuality; implicit objective] can [ability; implicit subjective] can [probability; implicit subjective]

This means that a entire semantic region through which writer and reader might negotiate consensus is set aside. None of the three modalities deployed are metaphorical; so the writer neither explicitly individuates himself as an authority, nor construes modalisation and modulation as ideational facts, nor allows the reader any discretion about how to respond (to the literal meaning, the figurative or some combination of the two; cf. section 2 above). And modulations of obligation and inclination are not negotiated at all; the writer simply asserts how things should be, take it or leave it – that's his point of view. In this respect the text positions itself as bluntly oppositional, which runs the risk of naturalising a reading position that can only be occupied by the already converted to one's cause (cf. Cranny-Francis & Martin 1991).

Text (20) on the other hand is heavily modalised, with explicitly objective modalities dominating. The relevant selections are outlined in Table 4. Almost half of the explicitly objective realisations involve theme predication (it is x, there is x), a structure which foregrounds the modality in question as both Theme and New (Halliday 1985). This writer, then, construes the context as one in which readers can be most effectively positioned by construing obligation (and probability, inclination and ability) as ideational

The students involved in this exercise had not had the genre in question, nor the modality resources in question, modelled explicitly for them prior to writing.

facts for which he is not the apparent source (there is no explicitly subjective modality in the text), and textually foregrounding half of these as point of departure for the clause and as news. This means that compared with Chang's text, text (20) is relatively faceless; the student in question does not individuate himself as an authority. And the text is much less polyphonic than Chang's; it speaks with one voice, that of explicitly objective capacities, obligations and intentions, possibilities and certainties. The reader of (20) is not manoeuvred into position, but simply set up as someone who ought to know what the rules are — and pummelled with them. In Bakhtin's terms the text is monologic, not dialogic, reflecting perhaps the student's alienation from the agents of symbolic control with whom he might otherwise have tried to engage.

TABLE 4: MODAL REALISATIONS IN TEXT (20)

implicit subjective	implicit objective	explicit objective
can [ability]	never [usuality]	it is essential [obligation]
has to [obligation]		- less tolerant [obligation]
isto [obligation]		it has been known for some time [probability]
		– no apparent [ability]
		it was necessary [obligation]
		- deplorable [obligation]
		there is a definite danger [obligation]
		- acceptable [inclination]
		it is of vital importance [obligation]
		it is also essential [obligation]
		- inevitable [obligation]
		- allowing [obligation]
		it is possible [probability]
		– inevitable [probability]
		it is of utmost importance [obligation]
		- responsibility [obligation]
		- regulating [obligation]

For the marker of these students' texts, foregrounding explicitly objective metaphorical modalities is apparently considered far more appropriate than using a very few non-metaphorical modalities. Given the lack of critical language awareness in Australian secondary school English classrooms, it would be hard to argue that text (20) is actually considered more effective than text (21). In all probability, the assessment is based on the learned status of objective modality – a status it has accrued over the centuries through its association with elaborated modality repertoires such as Chang's, regularly deployed in contexts of domination by agents of symbolic control.<sup>23</sup> In passing, it should perhaps be noted that learning the high status of these objective modalities in a traditional classroom may be more empowering for students of many backgrounds than having their subjective modalities (their voice) celebrated year after year in a progressive one.

But what really matters here is not appropriateness, voice or ownership, but critical language awareness – of the reading positions constructed by modal selections of these kinds. If Chang had been limited to non-metaphorical modalities, along the lines of text (20), could Greiner have been manoeuvred into the same uncomfortable position of ir/responsibility?

(22) Ms Chang's letter to Mr Greiner, stripped of modality metaphor Dear Mr Greiner,

Why haven't gun laws been changed?

The shocking and senseless killing of my own father, Victor Chang, forces me to write this letter.

His death and the murder of so many others in the last terrible weeks ought to have prompted an immediate response from the government. Now that over a dozen people were killed who shouldn't have been in the last two months you really must review and reform existing policies on the possession of arms in this state. Policies which, at present, cannot prevent the slaughter of innocents.

How many more tragedies will have to occur? How many families will have to live with the anguish of not only the death of their loved one, but the thought that it could have been prevented?

Mr Greiner, you must realise past mistakes and help rectify the existing situation now, before more lives are sacrificed. Certainly criminals cannot be stopped but surely we can limit or stop their easy access to lethal weapons!

lt might be argued that the assessment is in part functionally motivated, since the writer of text (20) demonsrates that he can access more of the meaning potential at stake than the writer of text (21) (including metaphorical realisations); from a linguistic perspective, as opposed to a critical one, it may be that students of this kind are a step closer to critical language awareness than those who don't control the relevant meaning potential or recognise where agents of symbolic control put it at risk. ESL students are particularly vulnerable in these respects.

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You must reform antiquated gun law policies. Sincerely,

## Vanessa Chang

If Chang had foregrounded objective modalities how much of her authority to speak and the empathy it generated would have been lost?

(23) Chang's text, reformulated with explicitly objective modality

Dear Mr Greiner.

Why haven't gun laws been changed?

In light of the shocking and senseless killing of my own father, Victor Chang, it is essential that I write this letter.

It is necessary that his death and the murder of so many others in the last terrible weeks should have prompted an immediate response from the government! After the needless killing of over a dozen people in the last two months it is of vital importance to review and reform existing policies on the possession of arms in this state. Policies which, at present, are not stringent enough to prevent the slaughter of innocents.

It is essential to ask how many more tragedies will have to occur? It is also important to consider how many families will have to live with the anguish of not only the death of their loved one, but the thought that it could have been prevented?

It is of utmost importance Mr Greiner, to realise past mistakes and help rectify the existing situation now, before more lives are sacrificed. It has been known for some time that criminals cannot be stopped but it is more than possible to limit or stop their easy access to lethal weapons!

It would be irresponsible to ignore Australia's plea to reform antiquated gun law policies!

Sincerely,

# Vanessa Chang

Perhaps critical social literacy, as Christie et al. (1991) refer to critical language awareness, has a responsibility to guide students towards an appreciation of the constructive power of modality as far as positioning the reader/listener is concerned. Because of the ineffability of interpersonal resources involved, this would involve language awareness based on an explicit functional grammar; and because of the discursive power involved, it would draw on contextual theory that orients students to the kinds of social relations, institutions, space/time distanciations, genres, and hegemonic systems modality and inter-related linguistic resources engender (Martin 1992a, Matthiessen 1993). As Bernstein (e.g. 1990) has often pointed out,

the coding orientations evolved by agents of symbolic control are dangerous, because of their reflexivity – the same resources that are used to engender controlling discourse are also those to which the controlling discourse is most vulnerable. Thus the children of these agents of symbolic control have to be well insulated against reflexive deployment of these resources, and well rewarded for not doing so. What if, on the other hand, these resources are redistributed across familiar boundaries of insulation – to non-mainstream subjectivities? What kind of cultural renovation might these transgressive resources afford?

This redistribution of resources is a significant project to which critical discourse analysis can and is making an integral contribution. To end this paper on a hortatory note, I think it would be useful for the analysts involved to orient more positively to questions of resistance, subversion and social change than has been customary in the past (Cranny-Francis & Martin 1991). We know a lot about dominance and the co-option of projects intent on social change. We know much less of what we need to know about how domination can be and is continually being subverted – by feminists (e.g. Cranny-Francis 1990), by Irish Catholic Australians, by AIDS action groups, by Aboriginal land rights organisations and so on. Things do change, and we need to know more about how – so we can get more involved. Linguists are relative newcomers to the field. Will we avoid slipping into the complacent cynicism of the tired social theorists who are so fond of telling us how hard it is for things to change and how naive we are to try?

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