

Mourning: how we get aligned



Discourse & Society
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 SAGE Publications
 (London, Thousand Oaks,
 CA and New Delhi)
 www.sagepublications.com
 Vol 15(2-3): 321-344
 10.1177/
 0957926504041022

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ABSTRACT. This article takes up an interpersonal perspective on discourse, which focuses on what we might think of as the rhetorical power of language. In particular, it emphasizes the role of evaluation, and the constructive role it plays in organizing sociality – how we share feelings in order to belong. It considers in some detail the texture of an editorial from a Hong Kong lifestyle magazine published 10 days after 11 September 2001 (9/11), outlining the ways in which the editor negotiates solidarity with his expat readership, naturalizing a range of reading positions both within and between those readers.

KEY WORDS: *appraisal theory, evaluation, solidarity, systemic functional linguistics, tenor*

1. Pathos

Stories tell us what happened. They also make us feel. Here are four short stories¹ from Hong Kong, about events that took place in the week following 11 September 2001 (hereafter 9/11):

[a] A man was sitting peacefully at the Hotel Lisboa bar when he was spotted by undercover cops and arrested as a 'suspected Pakistani terrorist'. Under questioning, he explained to police that he was in fact a tourist, a Hindu chef from Hong Kong.

[b] Two Indian nationals on a flight from Singapore to Hong Kong were chatting at Changi Airport. Before departure, they were detained by security, who had been informed by an American passenger that he had heard one of the men calling himself a 'Bosnian terrorist'. The man was eventually able to assure security that he had in fact said he was a 'bass guitarist' and been misheard by the American.

[c] A dark-skinned person tried to hail a cab, but it put up an 'out of service' sign.

[d] A dark-skinned person got on a bus, and people changed their seats to move away from him.

Each story recounts an instance of discrimination against dark-skinned people in Macau [a], Singapore [b] and Hong Kong [c, d]. And at the same time, the stories invite sympathy with these victims of paranoid prejudice. We learn what happened to the victims, and we are positioned to feel for them.

For many readers this reaction contrasts with their response to another rendering of the same events, this time one which foregrounds the perpetrators of discrimination rather than its victims:

[a'] The Macau police arrested and detained seven 'suspected Pakistani terrorists.' The scare was enough to close the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong for a day, though the men turned out to be tourists, a word which is spelled somewhat like terrorists, and we suppose to some people, just as frightening. Undercover cops cleverly tracked down one of the arrested people sitting peacefully at the Hotel Lisboa bar; he was in fact a Hindu, a chef from Hong Kong.

[b'] Meanwhile (and we're not making this up), security officials at Changi airport detained two Indian nationals on a flight from Singapore to Hong Kong after an American passenger said he heard one of the men calling himself a 'Bosnian terrorist'. (The man in fact said he was a 'bass guitarist'.)

[c', d'] Similarly, there have already been reports of taxis putting up 'out of service' signs and people changing seats on buses when confronted by dark-skinned people – as if changing your seat would save you if a bomb went off, anyway.

This time round the same things happen, but we are positioned to focus on the perpetrators and to disapprove of their behaviour. Sympathy for the victims shifts to antipathy for the perpetrators, a shift that is made quite clear² if we take another step towards the actual rendering of these events in an editorial entitled 'Mourning' in *HK Magazine*, p. 5 on Friday 21 September 2001:

[abcd''] The Macau police found themselves in a *Keystone Cops episode*, arresting and detaining seven 'suspected Pakistani terrorists'. The scare was enough to close the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong for a day, though the men turned out to be tourists, a word which is spelled somewhat like terrorists, and we suppose to some people, just as frightening. One of the arrested people in fact was a Hindu, a chef from Hong Kong, who had been cleverly tracked down by undercover cops sitting peacefully at the Hotel Lisboa bar.

Meanwhile (and we're not making this up), two Indian nationals on a flight from Singapore to Hong Kong were detained at Changi Airport after an American passenger said he heard one of the men calling himself a 'Bosnian terrorist'. (The man in fact said he was a 'bass guitarist'.)

Similarly, there have already been reports of taxis putting up 'out of service' signs and people changing seats on buses when confronted by dark-skinned people – as if changing your seat would save you if a bomb went off, anyway. But such is the *logic of xenophobia*.

This time round, we're told explicitly what to feel. The Macau police are judged as bumbling fools (*Keystone Cops*); and certain taxi drivers and bus commuters in Hong Kong are branded racist (*xenophobia*). We're positioned, through shared feeling, to belong to a group of people (the editor and readers) who disapprove of

TABLE 1. Halliday's mapping of metafunction and context variables

<i>Metafunction</i> 'intrinsic functionality'		<i>Social context</i> 'extrinsic functionality'
ideational	scaffolding action	field [naturalized reality]
interpersonal	scaffolding affiliation	tenor [social reality]
textual	distributing information	mode [semiotic reality]

behaviour of this kind and who are powerful enough to mock it. How does language negotiate feelings in order to make us belong?

2. Language and social life

The relationship between language and community is a central concern of what Gee (1990) calls social linguistics, which sees language as both a tool for action and a scaffolding for 'human affiliation within cultures and social groups and institutions' (Gee, 1999: 1). Halliday (1994; Halliday and Matthiessen, 1999) has pursued these concerns by developing a model of language in which resources for scaffolding action and affiliation are organized as metafunctions – as generalized kinds of meaning he refers to as ideational and interpersonal. In his model these two modes of meaning are enabled by a third, textual meaning, whose job it is to package ideational and interpersonal meaning as waves of information, in one rhythm or another depending on context.

This intrinsic model of language function is projected outwards in Halliday's theory to design a model of how language is used. In this mapping, ideational meaning scaffolds domestic and institutional activity, interpersonal meaning enacts social relations and textual meaning organizes the distribution of information (Table 1). Informed by a model of this kind, discourse analysis involves shunting back and forth between linguistic and social categories, exploring how one realizes the other. Realization entails consideration of how language materializes, is activated by, and over time reworks, the social. Because the focus of this article is interpersonal meaning (Eggins, 2000; Lemke, 1998; Poynton, 1996; Unsworth, 2000), I will be concerned with how these meanings negotiate social relations in one highly charged response to 9/11 (text [abcdef]). More specifically, I will be concentrating on feelings, and the ways they are deployed to align readers into overlapping communities of attitudinal rapport (cf. Clark et al., 2003).

3. Interpersonal rhetoric

The dimension of interpersonal meaning in focus here is referred to in systemic functional linguistics (hereafter SFL) as appraisal. Martin (2000a) presents a brief introduction (see also Coffin, 1997; Eggins and Slade, 1997; Martin and White,

in press; Rothery and Stenglin, 2000); Macken-Horarik and Martin (2003) include articles deploying appraisal analysis across registers.

Appraisal is regionalized as three interacting domains – ATTITUDE, ENGAGEMENT and GRADUATION. ATTITUDE focused on gradable resources for construing evaluation, comprising three regions of its own – AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION (emotion, ethics and aesthetics if you will). AFFECT deals with resources for construing emotional reactions, for example, the mental process of affection and attitudinal adjective underlined in the following extract:

Mrs Sullivan taught me how to love and what was right and what was wrong, I'm glad she taught me values because I now know what was wrong . . . (*Bringing Them Home*, 1997: 8)

JUDGEMENT is concerned with resources for assessing behaviour according to various normative principles:

. . . It was wrong the way my natural mother was treated. Mrs Sullivan told my mother she should lock herself away. The Sullivan family told people my mother was crazy and the court gave us to the Sullivan family. My mother was not crazy she was only nineteen. She was the right one and she shouldn't have killed herself but she knew no better and there was no-one to help her keep the children. (*Bringing Them Home*, 1997: 8)

APPRECIATION looks at resources for construing the value of things, including natural phenomena and semiosis (as either product or process):

Muecke's book provides more proof that the most interesting work in cultural studies is being done in Australia. Operating in the space between discourse theory and textual analysis, Muecke examines an extraordinarily wide range of material with unequalled sympathy and sophistication. (Muecke, 1992)

Alongside these attitudinal resources, APPRAISAL includes systems for adjusting a speaker's commitment to what they are saying – referred to as ENGAGEMENT systems. ENGAGEMENT includes options for both eliding and referencing dialogism in discourse (Fuller, 1998, 2000; Fuller and Lee, 1997; White, 1997). The option monogloss construes a proposition or proposal baldly, with no referencing to sources or alternative positions:

monogloss (elide dialogism) – The Lord Mayor handed Aunty Iris the key to the city and a Sorry Book signed by the Melbourne town councillors. (Sitka, 1998)

Heteroglossing opens things up in various ways – via modalization (*I bet, would*), projection and negation (*Aunty Iris never thought, Jeff Kennet has said*), counter-expectation (*ever, even*) and restricted provenance (*so-called, technically*):

heterogloss (reference dialogism) – I bet Aunty Iris never thought, when she was living on the mission listening to the wailing of mothers mourning their stolen children, that she would ever be guest of honour at the Melbourne Town Hall. (Sitka, 1998)

Even the Thatcherite premier of Victoria, Jeff Kennet, has said, 'We're sorry for what happened and we're sorry for the hurt and pain.' (Sitka, 1998)

It is probably only where there is so-called vacant Crown Land, and in remote areas where traditional Aboriginal life has not been disrupted, that native title exists. (Sitka, 1998)

A national inquiry last year found that the government policy of forced removal was a gross violation of human rights and technically an act of genocide because it has the intention of destroying Australia's indigenous culture by forced assimilation. (Sitka, 1998)

APPRAISAL also includes systems for grading evaluations – referred to as GRADUATION systems. These work to adjusting the 'volume' of gradable meanings, amplifying it or toning it down (FORCE):

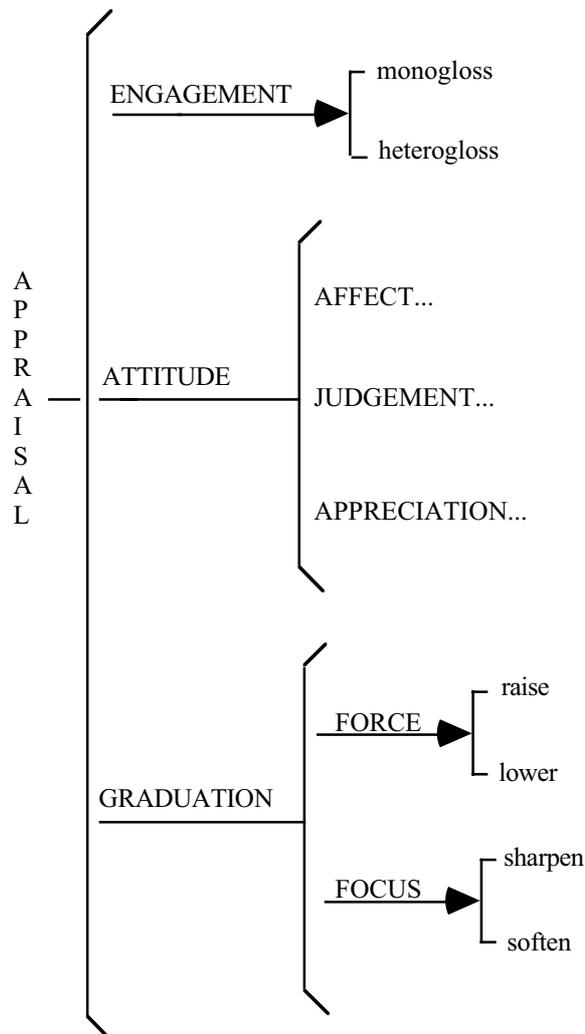


FIGURE 1. APPRAISAL systems: ENGAGEMENT, ATTITUDE and GRADUATION

high – The hall reverberated with sorry business as we felt the anguish of people such as Margaret Harrison, once confined to Ebenezer Mission in Victoria, who pleaded with the Board of protection: ‘Please would you kindly allow me to have my two girls here as [another] one of them died and I have not seen her before she died and I should like the other two to be with me to comfort me.’ (Sitka, 1998)

low – We could just catch its amplified strains above the racket of construction work and the rattle of trams. (Sitka, 1998)

Even if the charge of genocide remains contentious between people of good will, as I suspect it might . . . (Manne, 1998)

GRADUATION also encompasses resources for fine-tuning the *valeur* of experiential meanings – either to strengthen or weaken categorizations (FOCUS):

sharpen – Unexpected evidence of the rapport between Aborigines and Irish can also be found in the history of that quintessential Irish-Australian-rapparee-bushranger, Ned Kelly.

. . . true reconciliation between the Australian nation and its indigenous people is not achievable in the absence of acknowledgement of the wrongfulness . . . (Manne, 1998)

soften – . . . and, just for a minute . . . I could feel something of the spirit of Wurundjei land before the concrete and trams took over. (Sitka, 1998)

Until the last year or so most non-Aboriginal Australians either did not know or were at best dimly aware that for some seventy years Australian governments had been involved in a more or less routine practice of part-Aboriginal child removal. (Manne, 1998)

A typological overview of APPRAISAL resources is presented in Figure 1. For a discussion of the relation of APPRAISAL to turn-taking and exchange structure in conversation see Martin (2000b).

3.1 FEELINGS

From an interpersonal perspective then, appraisal positions us to feel – and through shared feelings to belong. In this respect appraisal is a resource for negotiating solidarity. The ‘Mourning’ editorial I examine begins, in fact, with a splash of affect dealing with emotional reactions to the events of 9/11 and then with reactions to those reactions.

[e: highlighting affect] The terrible events of the past week have left us with feelings – in order of occurrence – of **horror**, **worry**, **anger**, and now, just a **general gloom**. The people of America are **grieving** both over the tragedy itself and over the loss – perhaps permanently – of a trouble-free way of life.

While that **grief** is deeply understood, the problem with tragedies like this one is that they become a heyday for the overly-sincere, maudlin, righteous-indignation crowd. We’ve been **appalled**,³ perplexed and **repulsed** by some of the things we’ve heard said in the media this week. The jingoistic, flag-waving, ‘my way or the high-way’ rhetoric is enough to make thinking people **retch**. That said, the polls aren’t going our way. 89 percent of Americans surveyed are **thrilled** and **delighted** by all the tub-thumping. We suppose that every episode of ‘Letterman’ from now until doomsday is going to open with another **weepy** rendition of ‘God Bless America’.

Initially we're positioned to sympathize with Americans for their loss; but this communion soon gives way to criticism as a splash of negative judgement overwhelms emotional bonds.

[e: highlighting judgement] The terrible events of the past week have left us with feelings – in order of occurrence – of horror, worry, anger, and now, just a general gloom. The people of America are grieving both over the tragedy itself and over the loss – perhaps permanently – of a trouble-free way of life.

While that grief is deeply understood, the problem with tragedies like this one is that they become a heyday for the **overly-sincere**, **maudlin**, **righteous-indignation** crowd. We've been **appalled**, perplexed⁴ and **repulsed** by some of the things we've heard said in the media this week. The **jingoistic** flag-waving, **my way or the highway** rhetoric is enough to make **thinking** people **retch**. That said, the polls aren't going our way. 89 percent of Americans surveyed are thrilled and delighted by all the **tub-thumping**. We suppose that every episode of 'Letterman' from now until doomsday is going to open with another weepy rendition of 'God Bless America'.

Our sympathy wanes as disapproval swells, a shift in stance explicitly scaffolded by the concessive clause *while that grief is deeply understood*.

What these examples show us is that negotiating solidarity is a complex process that may involve feelings of different kinds and thus communities with different membership (e.g. affect inviting sympathy on the one hand, versus judgement prescribing disapproval on the other hand). In addition, they show that appraisal may reposition us as a text unfolds – for example, from a rather universal communality invoking our humanity (sorrow for another's loss) to a much more specific alignment playing on our moral and political response to American rhetoric (castigation of their overreaction). In Bakhtin's terms, any text is both ideological and axiological;⁵ sense bonds dynamically with sensibility, as outlined in Figure 2. In these terms, ideologically speaking a text unfolds as rationality – a quest for 'truth'; axiologically it unfolds rhetorically – an invitation to community (Martin, 2004).

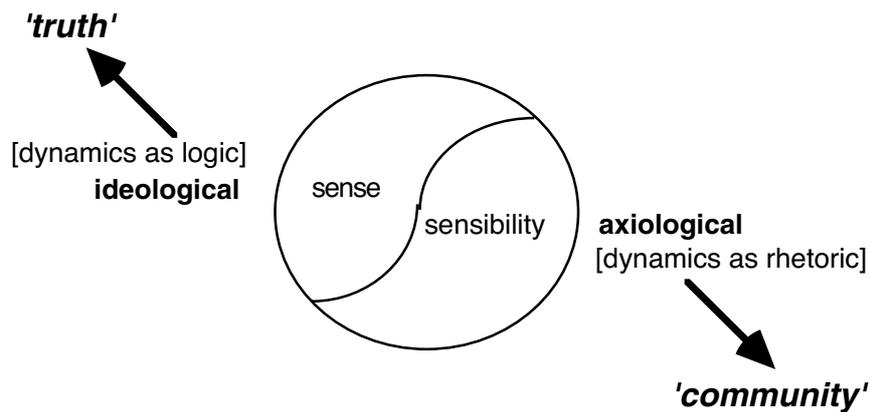


FIGURE 2. *Bonding – the infusion of value in activity*

Unlike affect and judgement, appreciation is not a dominant motif in the editorial, which is after all about people and their behaviour, not the value of things. But there is some reaction to events as a whole, which are nominally packaged as a ‘terrible tragedy’.

[e: highlighting appreciation] The **terrible** events of the past week have left us with feelings – in order of occurrence – of horror, worry, anger, and now, just a general gloom. The people of America are grieving both over the **tragedy** itself and over the loss – perhaps permanently – of a **trouble-free** way of life.

While that grief is deeply understood, the problem with **tragedies** like this one is that they become a heyday for the overly-sincere, maudlin, righteous-indignation crowd. We’ve been appalled, perplexed and repulsed by some of the things we’ve heard said in the media this week. The jingoistic, flag-waving, ‘my way or the highway’ rhetoric is enough to make thinking people retch. That said, the polls aren’t going our way. 89 percent of Americans surveyed are thrilled and delighted by all the tub-thumping. We suppose that every episode of ‘Letterman’ from now until doomsday is going to open with another weepy rendition of ‘God Bless America’.

Packaging events as things and appreciating them can have a distancing effect, forming more of a community of commenting observers than reactive participants (a more contemplative evaluation from afar). This is, in fact, the strategy used in the editorial to introduce the local responses to 9/11 reviewed earlier, which is appreciated in their preface as *some unfortunate cases* of backlash. Rhetorically speaking, the closer we get to home, the more distant our overall stance becomes. What happened, the emotional reactions of participants and criticisms of discrimination are pre-contextualized as *unfortunate* – as ‘inappropriate, embarrassing, awkward or undesirable’ incidents. For further discussion of appreciation as a resource for contextualizing affect and judgement see Martin (2002).

[abcd''] On a smaller and closer scale, we have already begun to see **some unfortunate cases** locally of backlash against members of the Muslim community (or even just people who look like they *might* be Muslim).

The Macau police found themselves in a *Keystone Cops* episode, arresting and detaining seven ‘suspected Pakistani terrorists’. The scare was enough to close the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong for a day, though the men turned out to be tourists, a word which is spelled somewhat like terrorists, and we suppose to some people, just as frightening. One of the arrested people in fact was a Hindu, a chef from Hong Kong, who had been cleverly tracked down by undercover cops sitting peacefully at the Hotel Lisboa bar.

Meanwhile (and we’re not making this up), two Indian nationals on a flight from Singapore to Hong Kong were detained at Changi Airport after an American passenger said he heard one of the men calling himself a ‘Bosnian terrorist’. (The man in fact said he was a ‘bass guitarist’.

Similarly, there have already been reports of taxis putting up ‘out of service’ signs and people changing seats on buses when confronted by dark-skinned people – as if changing your seat would save you if a bomb went off, anyway. But such is the logic of xenophobia.

Generalizing these different types of communality, we might say that affect negotiates empathy (sharing emotions), judgement negotiates character (sharing principles) and appreciation negotiates taste (sharing preferences). And we can align with one or more of these communities at the same time. This means it's not a contradiction for our editorial to sympathize with Americans (affectually) and at the same time criticize them (judgementally), even if this means alienating readers who want to share both their emotions and their principles. One testimony to the power of this insistent 'all American' readership has been the necessity of prefacing all discourse about 9/11 with an empathizing move, as if judgement, especially negative judgement, casts doubt on the fundamental humanity of commentators⁶ (cf. the horrified responses to celebrations of the 9/11 attack by certain communities around the world, and even to Stockhausen's reported appreciation of its awesome beauty).

3.2 INTENSIFYING FEELINGS

Invitations to share feelings can be more and less involving, depending in part on the volume of the feelings expressed. The first half of the 'Mourning' editorial ([e']) is much louder than the second ([abcd'''] cited earlier) in this respect, drawing as it does on a range of amplifying resources to intensify affect and to an even greater degree judgement – as highlighted here.

[Key to force analysis] inherently intense lexis – bold, sand font; intensifiers – bold, underlined; intensifying triplets – boxed.

[e' – highlighting force] The **terrible** events of the past week have left us with feelings – in order of occurrence – of **horror, worry, anger**, and now, just a general **gloom**. The people of America are grieving both over the tragedy itself and over the loss – perhaps permanently – of a trouble-free way of life.

While that grief is **deeply** understood, the problem with tragedies like this one is that they become a heyday for the **overly-sincere, maudlin, righteous-indignation** crowd. We've been **appalled, perplexed and repulsed** by some of the things we've heard said in the media this week. The **tingoistic, flag-waving, 'my way or the highway'** rhetoric is **enough** to make thinking people retch. That said, the polls aren't going our way. 89 percent of Americans surveyed are **thrilled** and **delighted** by all the **tub-thumping**. We suppose that every episode of 'Letterman' from now until doomsday is going to open with another weepy rendition of 'God Bless America'.

Those who have the good fortune to live in the international world – that is, the world outside the U.S. – know that we are not all of **one religion, one language or one political system**. We live in a big world where people have diverse, and often, **diametrically** opposed views. And while it is commendable to want to **stamp out** terrorism, it might also be a good idea to pause and reflect on some of the grievances that people in the rest of the world have towards the U.S. Of course, there's **precious** little chance of that happening in America any time soon.

Intensifying submodification is the canonical grammatical resource deployed:

deeply understood,
overly-sincere,

enough (to make . . .),
diametrically opposed,
precious little.

To this I have added the following lexical items, which arguably incorporate intensification (e.g. *terrible* meaning ‘very serious’ or ‘very unpleasant’):

terrible, horror, gloom, righteous-indignation, appalled, jingoistic, thrilled, delighted, tub-thumping, stamp out . . .

A number of rhetorical triplets are also deployed to further strengthen feeling by accumulating meaning at group or word rank:

horror, worry, anger;
 overly-sincere, maudlin, righteous-indignation;
 appalled, perplexed and repulsed;
 jingoistic, flag-waving, ‘my way or the highway’;
 one religion, one language or one political system.

Grading of measure adds further weight to this intensification, with [e’] featuring extremes of amount, size and distance in time:

both, some, 89 percent, all, every, all, one, one, one, some;
 little;
 permanently, from now until doomsday, any time soon.

The effect of these amplification processes is to add mass to the repeated inscriptions of affect and judgement, and thus to saturate the first half of the editorial (dealing with the global scene) with strong feelings. The volume is turned up very loud to involve readers in the communities of empathy and alignment being construed. The second half of the editorial (dealing with the local scene) is much quieter in this respect. Rather than being saturated with attitude, the key judgements and appreciation are placed in textually dominant positions (Martin, 2003) where they preview and review the incidents of discrimination in the region (*some unfortunate cases, a Keystone Cops episode and such is the logic of xenophobia* as reviewed earlier). Otherwise the events described are left to more or less speak for themselves. Prosodically speaking, the editorial seems to be suggesting that, whereas events in America have been both deeply moving and utterly appalling, the regional response has simply been humorously remiss.

3.3 ATTRIBUTING FEELINGS

Whereas attitude and graduation shift gears in consort as the editorial moves from global to regional concerns, engagement systems operate continuously throughout the text. As we would expect from an editorial, the text is very dialogic, with a range of resources used to expand and contract the voices at play (the heteroglossing option in Figure 1).

As far as modality is concerned, there is a full spectrum of objective and subjective selections (Halliday, 1994), alongside modalized causality (*if*):

explicit subjective	<i>we suppose</i>
implicit subjective	<i>might, would</i>
implicit objective	<i>perhaps, often</i>
explicit objective	<i>little chance, no hope</i>
modalized cause	<i>if</i>

Fuller (1998) and White (2000) have argued that modality functions to open up a discourse by implicitly acknowledging alternative voices and can thus be interpreted as expanding the dialogism of a text. In their view, writers modalize not because they are unsure of what they are saying (a truth functional perspective), but because they are attending to additional points of view⁷ (a social semiotic perspective).

A comparable expanding strategy is the use of projection resources (Halliday, 1994) to implicitly or explicitly attribute discourse to speaker/writers other than the author. The editorial projects discourse in various ways:

[graphology]

The Macau police found themselves in a *Keystone Cops* episode, arresting and detaining seven '**suspected Pakistani terrorists**'.

[circumstance of angle]

though the men turned out to be tourists, a word which is spelled somewhat like terrorists, and we suppose **to some people**, just as frightening.

[semiotic nouns]

Similarly, there have already been **reports** of taxis putting up 'out of service' signs

[projecting mental process]

an American passenger said **he heard** one of the men

[projecting verbal process]

an American passenger said he heard . . .

[agentive relational process]

one of the men calling himself a 'Bosnian terrorist'.

And several sources are explicitly acknowledged, including the editor, people frightened by tourists, pundits, the American passenger and his accused, the media and the polls:

the things **we**'ve heard said in the media this week.

let's at least hope that sanity does.

and we suppose **to some people**, just as frightening.

If, as **all the pundits** are saying, there is no hope . . .

an American passenger said **he** heard one of the men

one of the men calling himself a 'Bosnian terrorist'.

(The man) in fact said he was a ‘bass guitarist’.)
 the things we’ve heard said in (the media) this week.
 That said, (the polls) aren’t going our way.

For some sources the attribution is implicit, but recoverable (the editor, Americans, the Macau police and the media):

that said (by the editor)
 it might also be a good idea (for Americans) to pause and reflect on some of the grievances
 The Macau police found themselves in a *Keystone Cops* episode, arresting and detaining seven (people they described as) ‘suspected Pakistani terrorists’.
 The jingoistic, flag-waving, ‘my way or the highway’ rhetoric (said in the media)

The great majority of these ‘projections’ acknowledge alternative sources, thereby expanding the range of voices in the text. Some, however, contract, by committing us to a particular point of view – as something we *know*, something *all the pundits* are saying or something that is *in fact* the case:

Those who have the good fortune to live in the international world – that is, the world outside the U.S. – know that we are not all of one religion, one language or one political system.

If, as all the pundits are saying, there is no hope of normalcy returning soon

The man in fact said he was a ‘bass guitarist’.

To these contracting resources we need to add polarity resources, which deny alternative positions:

the polls aren’t going our way
 we are **no†** all of one religion, one language or one political system
 we’re **no†** making this up
 there is **no** hope of normalcy returning soon

And finally the text uses conjunctions (*while, though, in fact, as if, anyway, but, at least*) and continuatives (*just, already, even*) to adjust reader expectations. These concessive resources can be said to contract the range of voices at play by countering predictions readers might be making about the way in which the discourse will unfold.

This extensive array of engagement resources is typical of discourse that is negotiating solidarity with a complex readership. The text I am considering was published in Hong Kong on Friday 21 September 2001 – 10 days after the events of 9/11. Entitled ‘Mourning’, it is the editorial from *HK Magazine*, a weekly lifestyle magazine designed for British and Australian expats working in Hong Kong on short and longer term contracts, and for returning Chinese, including ABCs (‘American born Chinese’) and some of the Chinese who have studied and worked in western institutions overseas.⁸ Dislocated in these ways, they can appreciate the irreverent tone of the magazine’s editorials – a useful stimulus for

dinner party, bar and coffee shop conversation perhaps. But dislocation also makes readers' identity a complex issue: are they from Hong Kong or somewhere else, eastern or western, Chinese or gweilo ('white ghosts' as the Cantonese call Europeans), permanent residents or residents, employees or guest-workers, educators or business people, workers or visitors, home owners or tenants, etc? What holds this community together is its taste for leisure activities, as reflected in the lifestyles offered for consumption in *HK Magazine*. That said, hybrid subjectivities of this order generate a range of voices for the editor to deal with, more so perhaps for international than regional politics. And being irreverent means flying in the face of others, who need to be drawn into the fray.

So instead of baldly stating that Americans have permanently lost their trouble-free way of life or that every episode of Letterman will end with 'God Bless America', the editor modalizes, entertaining other possibilities:

The people of America are grieving both over the tragedy itself and over the loss – perhaps permanently – of a trouble-free way of life.

We suppose that every episode of 'Letterman' from now until doomsday is going to open with another weepy rendition of 'God Bless America'.

Instead of stating directly that the Pakistani tourists were suspected of terrorism or taxis were putting up 'out of service' signs, he attributes these claims to others:

The Macau police found themselves in a *Keystone Cops* episode, arresting and detaining seven suspected Pakistani terrorists

there have already been reports of taxis putting up 'out of service' signs and people changing seats on buses when confronted by dark-skinned people.

These expansions are complemented by contractions which pronounce on the identity of suspects (discarding the opinions of Macau's *Keystone Cops*):

the men turned out to be tourists

One of the arrested people in fact was a Hindu

And what otherwise might be taken as contentious positions are confirmed and endorsed (challenging potential dissenters to disagree):

Of course, there's precious little chance of that happening in America any time soon.

If, as all the pundits are saying, there is no hope of normalcy returning soon,

In order to interpret the overall effect of this dialectic, let's return to the global interpersonal organization of the editorial and consider its rhetoric. One of the first things to deal with here is who's who, including the less than determinate issue of who 'we' identifies as the text unfolds. As noted earlier, the first paragraph of the editorial aligns 'us' with the people of America, whereas the second and third paragraphs oppose 'us' to them. The ideational construction of 'us' and 'them' is outlined for this part of the text here:

- align 'us' with Americans as human; affect (empathizing)
[us & the people of America]

The terrible events of the past week have left *us* with feelings – in order of occurrence – of horror, worry, anger, and now, just a general gloom. The people of America are grieving both over the tragedy itself and over the loss – perhaps permanently – of a trouble-free way of life.

- oppose ‘us’ thinking people to jingoistic Americans; judgement (castigating) [we; thinking people; our way; we; those who have the good fortune to live in the international world – that is, the world outside the U.S.; we; we; people; people in the rest of the world]

vs

[the overly-sincere, maudlin, righteous-indignation crowd; 89 percent of Americans; the U.S.; America]

While that grief is deeply understood, the problem with tragedies like this one is that they become a heyday for the overly-sincere, maudlin, righteous-indignation crowd. *We’ve* been appalled, perplexed and repulsed by some of the things *we’ve* heard said in the media this week. The jingoistic, flag-waving, ‘my way or the highway’ rhetoric is enough to make *thinking people* retch. That said, the polls aren’t going *our* way. 89 percent of Americans surveyed are thrilled and delighted by all the tub-thumping. *We* suppose that every episode of ‘Letterman’ from now until doomsday is going to open with another weepy rendition of ‘God Bless America’.

Those who have the good fortune to live in the international world – that is, the world outside the U.S. – know that we are not all of one religion, one language or one political system. We live in a big world where people have diverse, and often, diametrically opposed views. And while it is commendable to want to stamp out terrorism, it might also be a good idea to pause and reflect on some of the grievances that people in the rest of the world have towards the U.S. Of course, there’s precious little chance of that happening in America any time soon.

The main opposition here seems to be between thinking people who live in the rest of the world and self-righteous jingoistic Americans. It’s pretty clear which community readers are being positioned to belong to here. Turning to the local scene, a further distinction has to be made between victims of discrimination and the perpetrators (overzealous security forces and racist residents).

- oppose ‘us’ to backlash perpetrators; judgement (mocking) [we & members of the Muslim community; people who look like they *might* be Muslim; seven ‘suspected Pakistani terrorists’; the men; tourists; the arrested people; a Hindu; a chef from Hong Kong; two Indian nationals; one of the men-himself; a Bosnian terrorist; the man-he; a bass guitarist; dark-skinned people]

vs

[the Macau police; some people; undercover cops; an American passenger-he; taxis (drivers); people (on buses)]

On a smaller and closer scale, *we* have already begun to see some unfortunate cases locally of backlash against *members of the Muslim community* (or even just *people who look like they might be Muslim*).

The Macau police found themselves in a Keystone Cops episode, arresting and detaining seven 'suspected Pakistani terrorists'. The scare was enough to close the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong for a day, though *the men* turned out to be *tourists*, a word which is spelled somewhat like terrorists, and *we* suppose to some people, just as frightening. *One of the arrested people* in fact was a Hindu, a chef from Hong Kong, who had been cleverly tracked down by undercover cops sitting peacefully at the Hotel Lisboa bar.

Meanwhile (and *we're* not making this up), *two Indian nationals* on a flight from Singapore to Hong Kong were detained at Changi Airport after an American passenger said he heard *one of the men* calling *himself* a 'Bosnian terrorist'. (*The man in fact said he was a 'bass guitarist'.*)

Similarly, there have already been reports of taxis putting up 'out of service' signs and people changing seats on buses when confronted by *dark-skinned people* – as if changing your seat would save you if a bomb went off, anyway. But such is the logic of xenophobia.

This section of the text repositions 'thinking internationals' as anti-racists, certainly a compatible communality for the expat and returning Chinese community. As a final step the editorial endorses the pundits, and enters a plea for rationality – presumably on behalf of the thinking people readers were positioned to align with.

- align us with the pundits; affect (hoping)
[all the pundits & 's]

If, as *all the pundits* are saying, there is no hope of normalcy returning soon, *let's* at least hope that sanity does. (*HK Magazine* Friday 21 September 2001: 5)

Alongside this ideational re/construction of us and them, the text plays out an important dialectic of concession. To begin, this has to do with the American response to 9/11. Readers are positioned to understand American's grief, but be appalled by their jingoism – **although** the polls aren't going 'our' way. Similarly readers are commended to stamp out terrorism, but to reflect on grievances as well – **although** there's little chance of Americans taking a critical look at themselves. Thinking people in other words know the right way to feel, but that's not going to affect unthinking Americans.

While that grief is deeply understood, // the problem with tragedies like this one is that they become a heyday for the overly-sincere, maudlin, righteous-indignation crowd. *We've* been appalled, perplexed and repulsed by some of the things *we've* heard said in the media this week. The jingoistic, flag-waving, 'my way or the highway' rhetoric is enough to make *thinking people* retch. // That said, the polls aren't going *our* way. 89 percent of Americans surveyed are thrilled and delighted by all the tub-thumping. *We* suppose that every episode of 'Letterman' from now until doomsday is going to open with another weepy rendition of 'God Bless America'.

Those who have the good fortune to live in the international world – that is, the world outside the U.S. – know that we are not all of one religion, one language or one political system. We live in a big world where people have diverse, and often, diametrically opposed views. And while it is commendable to want to stamp out terrorism, // it

might also be a good idea to pause and reflect on some of the grievances that people in the rest of the world have towards the U.S. // *Of course*, there's precious little chance of that happening in America any time soon.

Turning to the local scene, this concessive dialectic plays out as fact countering suspicion. There's backlash against Muslims, including people who *just* look like Muslims; against 'Pakistani' terrorists who *turn out* to be tourists; against Bosnian terrorists, who are *in fact* Indian; against dark-skinned people, when changing seats won't *actually* save you from a bomb.

On a smaller and closer scale, we have already begun to see some unfortunate cases locally of backlash against members of the Muslim community // (or *even just* people who look like they *might* be Muslim).

The Macau police found themselves in a Keystone Cops episode, arresting and detaining seven 'suspected Pakistani terrorists'. The scare was enough to close the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong for a day, // *though* the men turned out to be tourists, a word which is spelled somewhat like terrorists, and we suppose to some people, just as frightening. One of the arrested people in fact was a Hindu, a chef from Hong Kong, who had been cleverly tracked down by undercover cops sitting peacefully at the Hotel Lisboa bar.

Meanwhile (and *we're not making this up*), two Indian nationals on a flight from Singapore to Hong Kong were detained at Changi Airport after an American passenger said he heard one of the men calling himself a 'Bosnian terrorist'. // (The man *in fact* said he was a 'bass guitarist'.)

Similarly, there have already been reports of taxis putting up 'out of service' signs and people changing seats on buses when confronted by dark-skinned people – // *as if* changing your seat would save you if a bomb went off, *anyway*. But such is the logic of xenophobia.

This kind of rhetoric has the effect of putting readers in the know – letting them in on things they might not otherwise have picked up from the mainstream print and electronic media.⁹ Reinforcing this is the use of asides, however, which the writer steps out of his editorial role for a moment to confide in readers, *ex pat* to *ex pat* as it were:

(or even just people who look like they *might* be Muslim)
(and *we're not making this up*)
(The man *in fact* said he was a 'bass guitarist'.)

As a final concessive move, the editor endorses the idea that hope for a return to normalcy is forlorn, settling instead upon a plea for sanity:

If, as all the pundits are saying, there is no hope of normalcy returning soon, *let's at least* hope that sanity does.

At this point in the discourse we can return to the title of the editorial, 'Mourning', and ask what it is exactly that readers are being positioned to mourn? What began as communion with Americans over their loss of life and way of life now looks more like mourning for the loss of normalcy and sanity

which has the potential to affect *HK Magazine* readers' way of life. The main reaction in Hong Kong to 9/11, after all, was concern over the effect it would have on business – and by extension on the huge salaries, low taxes, heavily subsidized accommodation and schooling, and cheap cleaning, cooking and nanny services enjoyed by expat professionals, returning Chinese and their families. Were the events of 9/11 an economic hiccup? Or was the gravy train at risk? In the face of uncertainty of this order readers could be counted on to hope for a return to business as usual. Thus the 'Mourning' discourse comes to rest, consolidating its heartland, however contentious the opinions it has proffered along the way.

This concern with equilibrium sits nicely with the play of attitude and graduation discussed earlier: first, loudly chastise Americans (who are at a safe distance), then softly mock the local discrimination (without stirring up too much fuss) – as a backdrop to what really matters, namely a return to an order in which 'thinking' people can get on with their jobs.

4. *Managing feelings*

The focus of this article has been on feeling and the negotiation of communities of readers. But we need to keep in mind that feelings are always about something – they are always interpersonal attitudes to ideational experience. And the investment of attitude in experience has to be stage-managed – by textual resources – because negotiating community is a dynamic process, played out as texts unfold in the myriad of discourses materializing the communion of everyday and institutional life.

This interplay between ideology and axiology (or ideational and interpersonal meaning in Halliday's terms) is textured through various discourse semantic systems (Martin and Rose, 2003). I briefly review a number of these here in order to contextualize the interpersonal analyses undertaken earlier and pull the editorial back together into its original form. In [abcd'''], for example, conjunction is used to organize the incidents in Macau, Singapore and Hong Kong in relation to one another – as overlapping in time (*meanwhile*) and comparable (*similarly*); and these incidents spell out the 'cases' presaged in the sentence preceding them (implicit i.e.).

[abcd''' highlighting conjunction] On a smaller and closer scale, we have already begun to see some unfortunate cases locally of backlash against members of the Muslim community (or even just people who look like they *might* be Muslim).

[i.e.]

The Macau police found themselves in a *Keystone Cops* episode, arresting and detaining seven 'suspected Pakistani terrorists'. The scare was enough to close the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong for a day, though the men turned out to be tourists, a word which is spelled somewhat like terrorists, and we suppose to some people, just as frightening. One of the arrested people in fact was a Hindu, a chef from Hong Kong, who had been cleverly tracked down by undercover cops sitting peacefully at the Hotel Lisboa bar.

Meanwhile

(and we're not making this up), two Indian nationals on a flight from Singapore to Hong Kong were detained at Changi Airport after an American passenger said he heard one of the men calling himself a 'Bosnian terrorist'. (The man in fact said he was a 'bass guitarist'.)

Similarly,

there have already been reports of taxis putting up 'out of service' signs and people changing seats on buses when confronted by dark-skinned people – as if changing your seat would save you if a bomb went off, anyway. But such is the logic of xenophobia.

This logic depends on two other discourse semantic systems, which are used to manage the text. One is the use of abstract lexis (the semiotic abstractions¹⁰ *case* and *episode*, and the nominalizations *backlash* and *scare*) to name events – prospectively for *cases*, *backlash* and *episode*, retrospectively for *scare*:

[abcd''' highlighting metadiscourse] On a smaller and closer scale, we have already begun to see some unfortunate **cases** locally of **backlash** against members of the Muslim community (or even just people who look like they *might* be Muslim).

The Macau police found themselves in a *Keystone Cops* **episode**, arresting and detaining seven 'suspected Pakistani terrorists'. The **scare** was enough to close the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong for a day, though the men turned out to be tourists, a word which is spelled somewhat like terrorists, and we suppose to some people, just as frightening. One of the arrested people in fact was a Hindu, a chef from Hong Kong, who had been cleverly tracked down by undercover cops sitting peacefully at the Hotel Lisboa bar . . .

Another is the use of text reference to compare and identify passage of discourse (the comparative *smaller and closer scale* and *such*, and the identifying *the scare* and *this*) – with *smaller and closer*, *the* and *such* pointing back, and *this* pointing forward:

[abcd''' highlighting text reference] ← **On a smaller and closer scale**, we have already begun to see some unfortunate cases locally of backlash against members of the Muslim community (or even just people who look like they *might* be Muslim).

The Macau police found themselves in a *Keystone Cops* episode, arresting and detaining seven 'suspected Pakistani terrorists'. ← **The scare** was enough to close the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong for a day, though the men turned out to be tourists, a word which is spelled somewhat like terrorists, and we suppose to some people, just as frightening. One of the arrested people in fact was a Hindu, a chef from Hong Kong, who had been cleverly tracked down by undercover cops sitting peacefully at the Hotel Lisboa bar.

Meanwhile (and we're not making **this** → up), two Indian nationals on a flight from Singapore to Hong Kong were detained at Changi Airport after an American passenger said he heard one of the men calling himself a 'Bosnian terrorist'. (The man in fact said he was a 'bass guitarist'.)

Similarly, there have already been reports of taxis putting up 'out of service' signs and

[people changing seats on buses when confronted by dark-skinned people – as if changing your seat would save you if a bomb went off, anyway.] But ← *such* is the logic of xenophobia.

The interaction of these conjunction, ideation and identification resources sets up the periodic structure of [abcd''']. The passage begins with a Macro-Theme, appreciating the discrimination as unfortunate:

On a smaller and closer scale, we have already begun to see some unfortunate cases locally of backlash against members of the Muslim community (or even just people who look like they *might* be Muslim).

The events in Macau have their own Hyper-Theme, judging the police as Keystone Cops:

The Macau police found themselves in a *Keystone Cops* episode, arresting and detaining seven 'suspected Pakistani terrorists'.

And at least the Hong Kong incidents have a Hyper-New, judging the taxi drivers and bus passengers involved as xenophobic:

But such is the logic of xenophobia.

This minimalist reading of the domain of *such* has been influenced by the paragraph structure of the editorial, which includes it in the paragraph about Hong Kong.

The overall effect of these interacting systems on information flow is outlined later using indentation. As far as appraisal is concerned, the critical pattern has to do with the foregrounding of inscribed appreciation and judgement as higher level Themes and New. This prominence puts them in position to prosodically colour the evaluation of the events in their domain.

[abcd''' highlighting information flow] On a smaller and closer scale, we have already begun to see some unfortunate cases locally of backlash against members of the Muslim community (or even just people who look like they *might* be Muslim).

The Macau police found themselves in a *Keystone Cops* episode, arresting and detaining seven 'suspected Pakistani terrorists'.

The scare was enough to close the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong for a day, though the men turned out to be tourists, a word which is spelled somewhat like terrorists, and we suppose to some people, just as frightening. One of the arrested people in fact was a Hindu, a chef from Hong Kong, who had been cleverly tracked down by undercover cops sitting peacefully at the Hotel Lisboa bar.

Meanwhile (and we're not making this up), two Indian nationals on a flight from Singapore to Hong Kong were detained at Changi Airport after an American passenger said he heard one of the men calling himself a 'Bosnian terrorist'. (The man in fact said he was a 'bass guitarist'.)

Similarly, there have already been reports of taxis putting up 'out of service' signs and people changing seats on buses when confronted by dark-skinned people – as if changing your seat would save you if a bomb went off, anyway.

But such is the logic of xenophobia.

As the comparative text reference *smaller and closer scale* noted earlier indicates, there is more to this editorial than the stories of regional discrimination we have been exploring. The global events being referred to are aligned later with local events, along with the editorial's title and its final comment. This rendering establishes the wording as it appeared on page 5 of *HK Magazine* on Friday 21 September 2001 (including the formatting for the title and first four words).

Mourning [abcdef]

[e'] **The terrible events of** the past week have left us with feelings – in order of occurrence – of horror, worry, anger, and now, just a general gloom. The people of America are grieving both over the tragedy itself and over the loss – perhaps permanently – of a trouble-free way of life.

While that grief is deeply understood, the problem with tragedies like this one is that they become a heyday for the overly-sincere, maudlin, righteous-indignation crowd. We've been appalled, perplexed and repulsed by some of the things we've heard said in the media this week. The jingoistic, flag-waving, 'my way or the highway' rhetoric is enough to make thinking people retch. That said, the polls aren't going our way. 89 percent of Americans surveyed are thrilled and delighted by all the tub-thumping. We suppose that every episode of 'Letterman' from now until doomsday is going to open with another weepy rendition of 'God Bless America'.

Those who have the good fortune to live in the international world – that is, the world outside the U.S. – know that we are not all of one religion, one language or one political system. We live in a big world where people have diverse, and often, diametrically opposed views. And while it is commendable to want to stamp out terrorism, it might also be a good idea to pause and reflect on some of the grievances that people in the rest of the world have towards the U.S. Of course, there's precious little chance of that happening in America any time soon.

[abcd''] On a smaller and closer scale, we have already begun to see some unfortunate cases locally of backlash against members of the Muslim community (or even just people who look like they *might* be Muslim).

The Macau police found themselves in a *Keystone Cops* episode, arresting and detaining seven 'suspected Pakistani terrorists'. The scare was enough to close the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong for a day, though the men turned out to be tourists, a word which is spelled somewhat like terrorists, and we suppose to some people, just as frightening. One of the arrested people in fact was a Hindu, a chef from Hong Kong, who had been cleverly tracked down by undercover cops sitting peacefully at the Hotel Lisboa bar.

Meanwhile (and we're not making this up), two Indian nationals on a flight from Singapore to Hong Kong were detained at Changi Airport after an American passenger said he heard one of the men calling himself a 'Bosnian terrorist'. (The man in fact said he was a 'bass guitarist'.)

Similarly, there have already been reports of taxis putting up 'out of service' signs and people changing seats on buses when confronted by dark-skinned people – as if changing your seat would save you if a bomb went off, anyway. But such is the logic of xenophobia.

[f] If, as all the pundits are saying, there is no hope of normalcy returning soon, let's at least hope that sanity does. [*HK Magazine* Friday 21 Sept 2001: 5]

As outlined in section 3, the editorial naturalizes a complex reading position – shifting from affect to judgement and back again, from loud to soft, from one kind of ‘we’ to another, expanding and contracting the play of voices as it goes. But as section 4 shows, it does this seamlessly, as if the complex subjectivity this dynamism affords was a perfectly natural one. As it is, of course, for readers who belong – who commune in ways that *HK Magazine* prescribes. That is, after all, what a lifestyle magazine is for.

5. *Intersubjectivity*

In this article I have tried to foreground an interpersonal perspective on discourse, which focuses on what we might think of as the rhetorical power of language. In particular, I have emphasized the role of evaluation, and the constructive role it plays in organizing sociality – how we share feelings in order to belong. By looking in some detail at the ‘Mourning’ editorial I hope to have demonstrated some of the complexity of negotiating solidarity in public discourse, working beyond consideration of just one kind of meaning or another towards an appreciation of the syndrome of interpersonal resources at risk as we align ourselves into communing sympathies in relation to events and abstractions of various orders.

I need to stress in saying this that I am not trying to privilege axiology over ideology, but ultimately to promote the complementarity of these perspectives – and to interface them with texture, since both axiology and ideology are materialized in discourse and discourse has to unfold, through space and time, in waves of information that we can understand. Texts have texture. They map logic onto rhetoric. In so doing they challenge discourse analysts to understand ideational meaning in relation to interpersonal meaning in relation to textual meaning. And if we are social linguists to understand this triangulation in relation to the social system it enacts (Martin, 2000c).

The unfolding rhetorical communion of the ‘Mourning’ editorial reflects and engenders the complex relations of solidarity in social networks like Hong Kong. We see from the play of different voices in the text that several overlapping networks are involved – different kinds of expat and returning Chinese, and those outside these groups. And we see from the integration of these voices in the texture that individual subjectivities are themselves complex – we’re positioned to sympathize as people, and castigate as thinking internationals, and mock as outsiders and hope as insiders. Diversified networks form communities, just as differentiated subjectivities form individuals. A close reading of evaluation in discourse shows us something of the multidimensionality of what it means to belong.

Significantly, a great deal of this social complexity reveals itself in the study of a single text, and contingency of the texture through which it unfolds.¹¹ At times in the history of linguistics one ideology of empiricism or another has tended to privilege generalizations across groups of texts over close readings of single ones.

It may be that the rise of corpus linguistics heralds a new phase of generalizing privilege of this order. If so, as social discourse analysts we need to guard against studies that submerge unfolding texture in processes of counting and averaging that look for trends across texts rather than contingencies within them. Beyond this, we need to encourage the analysis of individual texts whose social poignancy invites close reading. 9/11 was a singular event, and many of the responses to it have a comparable discursive singularity, and potency, of their own.

Common sense tells us one text can change the world. Theoretically speaking, every text does. We need to ask how and why.

NOTES

1. Examples a–e have been adapted from the editorial 'Mourning' which appeared in *HK Magazine* on Friday 21 September 2001.
2. This point was drawn to my attention in a seminar at City University Hong Kong by Angel Lim, who was struck by the way in which the editorial proper backgrounded a concern with the victims of the racial discrimination generated by 9/11.
3. For this analysis, I have taken *appalled*, *repulsed* and *retch* as inscribing affect as well as judgement (as emotional reactions to disgusting behaviour).
4. For these analyses I am highlighting evaluative lexis that clearly inscribes attitude; the selection of ideational meaning accompanying these inscriptions certainly reinforces the evaluations, especially in rhetorical triplets such as *appalled*, *perplexed* and *repulsed* (see the discussion of graduation in 3.3).
5. This is of course Halliday's complementarity of ideational and interpersonal meaning; Bakhtin's terms have the advantage of denaturalizing the ideational as political (ideology), and foregrounding intersubjective evaluation over interaction (axiology).
6. I expect I am not alone in having been physically threatened by a fellow academic (in my case at an international conference in Europe following a presentation on the 'Mourning' editorial) for apparently not protesting my empathy loudly enough.
7. Compare with Myers (1989) on politeness in scientific articles, and Hyland (1998) on hedging.
8. Free copies are made available at 'fashionable' video stores, bars, coffee shops and comparable retail outlets serving this community. Its editorials represent one of the last sites in the Hong Kong print media where voices critical of the Hong Kong or Beijing governments can be heard. In this case, however, it is the regional repercussions of the events of 9/11 which are in focus.
9. I was living as an expat in Hong Kong at the time and carefully following events in the daily English broadsheet, *The South China Morning Post*, and watching evening news on TV; from these I certainly learned about the arrests in Macau and attendant closure of the American Consulate in Hong Kong, but not about the actual identity of the suspects.
10. A further example of metadiscourse in this passage is the word *word*, which enables the editor to comment on his own discourse, by way of mocking hysterical fear of the 'other'.
11. Clark et al. (2003) also foreground logogenetic contingency in their study of rapport in sales encounters, emphasizing that the ways in which appraisals are taken up is critical.

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