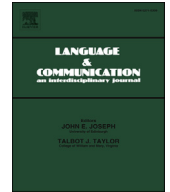


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Appraisal theory and the analysis of point of view in news and views journalism – unpacking journalistic “persuasiveness”

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a demonstration of Appraisal Theory as an analytical framework for dealing with point of view in journalistic discourse. It takes journalistic “persuasiveness” as its central theme and thereby offers novel insights into a key, much scrutinised property of news journalism – its potential for influencing public understandings and expectations of the way the world is and ought to be. In operating with this notion of “persuasiveness”, the paper outlines lines of inquiry for dealing with news journalism texts which are often treated as distinct, both with respect to their stylistic properties and their communicative effects. Specifically, the concern is with the communicative functionality of both news “reporting” and journalistic “commentary”, or with what are here termed “news journalism” and “views journalism”. Appraisal Theory offers an account of the resources for conveying evaluative meanings and the framework is demonstrated through a comparison of a news report and a commentary piece concerned with the same subject matter – a decision by an education scholarship provider to include in its application form optional questions about candidates’ sexuality. Specifically the paper demonstrates how similarities and differences in the two pieces’ “persuasiveness” can be discovered through an analysis which attends to four points of interest: (1) tendencies in the different types of attitudinal assessment by which the reader is positioned to adopt negative or positive views, (2) whether attitudinal assessments are conveyed explicitly or implicitly, (3) whether the attitudes being conveyed are authorial or are attributed to external sources and (4) the nature of the entities or phenomena which the reader is being positioned to view positively or negatively.

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1. Introduction

This paper explores the insights into journalistic point of view which are made available by the account of evaluative language provided in the “Appraisal Theory/the Appraisal Framework” literature (White 2000, 2002; Martin and White 2005). This framework provides a systematic taxonomy of the semantic systems by which speakers/authors convey positive and negative assessments, strengthen or soften these assessments and by which both attitudinal assessments and versions of events are managed dialogically.

In offering this exploration of the Appraisal Theory as analytical framework, the paper takes what will be termed “journalistic persuasiveness” as a central theme. It thereby offers novel insights into a key, much scrutinised property of news

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journalism – its potential for influencing public understandings and expectations of the way the world is and ought to be. In operating with this notion of “persuasiveness”, the paper outlines lines of inquiry for dealing with news journalism texts which are often treated as distinct, both with respect to their stylistic properties and their communicative effects. Specifically, the concern is with the communicative functionality of both news “reporting” and journalistic “commentary”, or with what here will be termed “news journalism” and “views journalism”. While these two modes of journalism are often dealt with separately, under the approach demonstrated here, they are treated together as mechanisms by which news journalism performs this “rhetorical” role of influencing public understandings, expectations, beliefs, and attitudes. It will be demonstrated that significant benefits for analysts can arise when news reporting and news commentating are looked at from the same vantage point – i.e., in terms of how they may potentially “persuade” or at least “influence” readers to accept or adopt a particular point of view vis-a-vis a public event, trend, conflict or controversy. (It should be noted that the assumption is not that such texts do indeed persuade but rather that, under certain conditions, they have the potential to be persuasive and to influence public attitudes and beliefs.) This orientation can provide a way past the obstacles presented by naively ontological and naively epistemological notions of journalistic “objectivity”, “factuality” and “truth”.

This paper demonstrates an appraisal-theory based analysis of the underlying point of view and potential persuasiveness of two related journalistic pieces: a news report and a commentary piece (specifically an editorial) covering the same subject matter. This is the news that an Australian charitable education scholarship provider was asking applicants to provide information about their sexuality. The two pieces were published in 2016 in Australia’s only national daily newspaper, News Corp’s *The Australian*. At the time of writing, this masthead was controlled by Rupert Murdoch and members of his family, who also had controlling interests in media outlets such as *The Times* and *The Sun* in the UK and Fox news and the *New York Post* in the US. While the subject matter is of interest, they were chosen for close attention for other reasons. They are of word lengths which are manageable for our current purposes and because they enable a side-by-side, comparative analysis of point-of-view and “persuasiveness” in news and a views piece which deal with the same subject matter. It should be noted that there is no assumption that the two pieces are necessarily typical of their respective sub-types – news reporting versus commentary. Interesting similarities and differences in terms of how the two pieces convey authorial point of view are identified and discussed but there is no suggestion that these are similarities/differences which will typically be observed when news pieces are being compared with views pieces.

The two items are presented below. (Numbering of sentences/paragraphs has been added for ease of reference during the discussion).

[1. News Journalism: news report – *The Australian*]

(1) Students asked about their sexuality for scholarships

REBECCA URBAN

- (2) A leading education scholarship provider backed by some of Australia’s biggest businesses has begun quizzing high school students on their sexuality as part of its application process, sparking fresh concerns about the creeping influence of LGBTI rights activism on schools.
- (3) The Australian Business and Community Network Scholarship Foundation is inviting applications for its 2016 grants program and, for the first time, is offering a grant targeted at Year 10 students who “identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and/or intersex”.
- (4) As a result, the application form inquires as to whether the candidate is male, female or transgender and whether they are gay, lesbian or bisexual. In past years, candidates were simply asked whether they were male or female.
- (5) The move means the program, chaired by prominent businessman Michael Hawker and financially backed by corporate heavyweights Microsoft, Optus and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), strays from its original purpose of helping students from disadvantaged backgrounds with education-related costs.
- (7) The scholarships, each valued at \$7000 over three years, are open to Year 10 students, who are typically 15 or 16.
- (8) The shift comes as the LGBTI lobby has become increasingly influential, including within schools, where programs such as the government-funded Safe Schools Coalition has sparked fears about young people being exposed to politically motivated ideologies around gender and sexuality.
- (9) Many of the ABCN’s board and council members head up organisations that have publicly backed the marriage equality push, such as Paul O’Sullivan of Optus, Microsoft boss Pip Marlow and Luke Sayers, who runs PwC in Australia.
- (10) PwC, which proudly declares itself as “one of the first private-sector organisations to sign a letter of support for marriage equality in Australia”, courted controversy earlier this year when it released a report claiming that the cost of the planned plebiscite on same-sex marriage would exceed \$500 million.
- (11) Damian Wyld, national policy officer for Family Voice Australia, criticised the awarding of education scholarships based on sexuality as another example of ideological activism making its way into schools.
- (12) “Why should children, especially in a school setting, be asked to declare their sexuality or gender identity?” Mr Wyld said yesterday.
 “Many 15-year-olds are still working through issues around sexuality. Offering a financial incentive to identify as ‘lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and/or intersex’ is completely inappropriate.”

- (13) According to the latest National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health, released in 2014 and billed as the most comprehensive insight into the sexual behaviour and attitudes of young people, 23 per cent of Year 10 students reported engaging in sexual intercourse. “Surely merit or financial disadvantage are more appropriate criteria for scholarships,” Mr Wyld said.
 - (14) According to the ABCN’s latest annual report, 15 scholarships were awarded last year, with \$52,000 paid out to students. The foundation received more than \$300,000 in donations last year, and more than \$330,000 in 2014.
 - (15) Launched in 2013, scholarships have traditionally been targeted at high-potential students from disadvantaged schools who were experiencing “significant economic, family or social challenges” that could impact on their education, particularly their ability to complete secondary school and graduate on to tertiary education. Grants must be spent on items that assist the student complete Years 11 and 12, such as books, stationary, computer equipment, tuition costs, uniform and transport.
 - (16) For the first time, this year all applications are required to be submitted by school principals on behalf of applicants. The scholarship foundation’s application guide says the group is offering a “targeted scholarship” for a student identifying as LGBTI “in addition” to its regular scholarships. It stresses that the grant recipient would not be identified without their consent.
 - (17) The foundation, Microsoft, Optus and PwC did not respond to requests for comment.
- [2. Views Journalism: editorial, *The Australian*]
- (1) It is little wonder many Australians are becoming wary of what can appear to be social engineering carried out by governments, activist groups and even well-intentioned individuals and businesses. There have been too many examples of late where social issues once aimed at overcoming prejudice have become progressive causes aimed at promoting alternative lifestyles or even enforcing a new political correctness. We have seen this unfold through the Safe Schools initiative in which admirable efforts to combat bullying of children on any grounds, including sexuality, were hijacked by those with a radical political agenda to “normalise” a wide range of sexual preferences, choices and behaviours. Parents were right to object and demand more information. In the same-sex marriage debate we have seen people daring to defend the traditional view of marriage stridently attacked as homophobic even though this was a view held by all sides of politics, all major religions and even most gay activists until recent years.
 - (2) So the story revealed exclusively by Rebecca Urban in *The Australian* yesterday about a major high school scholarship scheme seeking out lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex candidates tended to fall into a familiar pattern. To fill its quota of LGBTI places the scholarship application form — which previously asked whether applicants were male or female — now asks if they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or “prefer not to say” and under gender includes the options of “transgender” and “prefer not to say”.
 - (3) Some of the firms involved in the Australian Business and Community Network Scholarship Foundation have been active in campaigns supporting same-sex marriage and clearly believe they are promoting a positive social cause. By funding scholarships for needy and worthy teenagers they are engaging in good corporate citizenship. But allocating LGBTI places seems to be overreach. It smacks of identity politics and is bound to be gamed at some stage if ambivalence about sexuality may add certainty to an application. All applicants should be equal and be judged on merit alone.

I begin with a preliminary discussion of the news piece, provide an overview of the Appraisal framework and then turn to comparing the attitudinal workings of the two texts.

Firstly, it is necessary to address my reasons for classifying the first piece as news journalism – as opposed to views journalism. Briefly it is to be noted that it was published in the news section of the newspaper’s print edition (not its commentary or opinion section), it “reports” on a currently newsworthy turn of events, is structured in a manner typical of news reporting (e.g. with a news-item style headline and lead), relies heavily on quotes from an external source and gestures towards “impartiality” or “balance” in reporting an attempt by the author (apparently unsuccessful) to afford the scholarship organisation the right of reply.

While we can say that the piece has been presented and structured as a “news report”, this is not to conclude that it can be viewed as “neutral”. (As indicated above, I am proposing that descriptors such as “objective”, “factual”, “impartial” are too problematic to be useful in the analysis of news reporting.) There are some quite salient indicators of authorial subjectivity, of authorial point of view. Most clearly foregrounded is the view that the scholarship provider has acted improperly and that the prominent firms which provide it with funding are somehow implicated in the wrongdoing. Even though it’s structured as a “report”, the text can still be viewed as directed towards “persuasion”, towards positioning the reader to take a negative view of the scholarship provider and its actions.

When I suggest that there are “salient indicators” of authorial point of view, I am supported in this by the ChatGPT “artificial intelligence” computer program. I presented the software with the text of this story and prompted it with the following:

Advise where, in the following news report, the author’s own subjective point of view is revealed. Can you also summarise what this point of view might be. [prompt submitted to <https://chat.openai.com/>, March 1, 2024]

Here are a couple of the software's responses.

ChatGPT

The author's subjective point of view is revealed through the choice of language and the framing of certain aspects of the scholarship program's inclusion of LGBTI students. Here's where and how this subjectivity is most apparent:

1. "Creeping influence of LGBTI rights activism on schools" (2): The use of "creeping influence" implies a negative, surreptitious advancement of LGBTI rights that could be seen as undesirable or harmful, revealing a bias against the inclusion of LGBTI topics in education.
2. "Strays from its original purpose" (5): This suggests that including LGBTI students in the scholarship criteria is a deviation from the foundation's goal to help disadvantaged students, insinuating that LGBTI students might not fall into this category or that their inclusion is irrelevant or misguided.

Presumably, then, that the piece is slanted along these lines would be apparent to even a casual observer. Is there any value in bringing to bear the complexities of Appraisal Theory to further unpack its potential "persuasiveness"? In what follows I hope to demonstrate that there is, indeed, value in this, that additional insights, or at least additional analytical clarity, become available when we consider understandings of the nature of attitudinal meaning-making made available via the appraisal literature. In order to do this, I must first provide a brief overview of key relevant aspects of Appraisal Theory. I will then return my attention to the specifics of attitudinal positioning in the news story already discussed and its companion views journalism piece.

2. Overview of appraisal

As already noted, Appraisal Theory holds that "Attitude" is involved in those expressions in texts which position the addressee to take a negative or positive view of some entity, action, artefact, process, event or situation. The category of Attitude is further divided into three broad sub-types, as follows:

Attitude/Affect: indication of positive/negative attitudes via descriptions of emotional reactions and states (e.g. "I am **wary** [*negative Affect*] of what increasingly seems to be social engineering carried out by governments.")

Attitude/Judgement: positive/negative assessments of the behaviour and character of human entities (individuals, groupings, companies, institutions, governments etc.) by reference to social norms, ethics and other codes of behaviour – notions of what is right/wrong, laudable/illaudable (e.g. "Efforts to combat bullying were **hijacked** [*negative Judgement*] by those with a radical political agenda.")

Attitude/Appreciation: positive/negative assessments of entities, happenings, processes, states-of-affairs, ideas/concepts/philosophies/policies by reference to aesthetics and social value – for example, attractiveness, appeal, impact, harm/benefit, danger/safety, efficiency, soundness, healthiness, appropriateness, workability, prominence etc. (e.g. "Many of the students live in **disadvantageous** circumstances"/"Jameson's assumption is that "identity" is **bourgeois** and **distracting, inimical** to social progress"/ [sketchengine.eu corpus]

Attitudinal assessments are conveyed by a diversity of grammatical classes. For example, instances of Affect typically involve verbs of emotion, related nominalisations or adjectives/adverbs of emotion: e.g. "Social engineering by governments **worries** many Australians" (verb of emotion); "Social engineering by governments is **worrying**" (derived adjective of emotion); "This social engineering is a **worry** for me." (nominalised verb of emotion).

Assessments of Judgement and Appreciation are also frequently conveyed via verbs, though, unlike instances of Affect, these verbs are "external" rather than "internal" – that is to say, they describe some material action which is coloured attitudinally. We can say that these verbs fuse experiential meanings with interpersonal meanings. For example, "hijacked" in: "efforts to combat bullying of children on any grounds, including sexuality, were **hijacked** by those with a radical political agenda". They may also be conveyed by nouns, adjectives and adverbs which entail the positive or negative characterisation of some action or behaviour. For example: "Caesar ruled **tyrannically**" (adverb); "Caesar's **tyrannical** rule lasted for five years." (adjective); "Caesar was a **tyrant**" (noun).

The appraisal literature proposes further more delicate sub-categories for each of the three higher level types of Attitude. These will be discussed in more detail below when appropriate (For full details see [White 1998, 2002](#); [Martin and White 2005](#)). For now, it is necessary to note a distinction between what the appraisal literature terms "observed Affect" and "authorial" (or "1st-person") Affect. In cases of observed Affect, the author makes claims as to the emotional responses or emotional states of others – e.g. "Many Australians are becoming **wary** [*observed negative Affect*] of what can appear to be social engineering carried out by governments". Obviously, in cases of 1st-person/authorial Affect, authors describe their own emotional responses – e.g. "We are **deeply disturbed** [*authorial negative Affect*] that social issues once aimed at overcoming prejudice have become progressive causes aimed at promoting alternative lifestyles."

Crucially for journalistic discourse analyses, Appraisal Theory notes that addressees can be positioned to take negative/positive views of news entities and events either by material which is explicitly attitudinal or, alternatively, material which is implicitly or indirectly attitudinal (i.e. relying on interpretation and inferences drawn by the addressee). These are termed “inscribed” (overt) Attitude and “invoked” (implicit, entailed) Attitude.

Inscribed (explicit) Attitude/Judgement: “The secret service agent **bravely** [*positive Judgement*] took a bullet for the President.”

Invoked (implied) Attitude/Judgement: “The secret service agent was shot when he leapt between the gunman and the President.” [*positive Judgement potentially activated by the totality of the utterance*]

The potential for attitudinal invocations to position addressees to positively/negatively view phenomena is both a function of the wider textual context (how the current proposition relates to other attitudinal material in the text), the cultural frames being referenced and also the addressee’s own reading/value position. It may be that these factors will determine whether an expression is in fact interpreted as attitudinal at all (evaluative or not) or whether it is evaluatively positive or negative. Consider the example of invocation just provided. The following are two possible (invented) textual contexts.

[positive] “The secret service agent was shot when he leapt between the gunman and the President. **What a wonderful display of courage and sense of duty.**”

[negative] “The secret service agent was shot when he leapt between the gunman and the President. **What a fool! Who in their right mind would risk their life for a politician?**”

In the second case (secret service agent evaluated negatively), the cultural frame is one of disrespect or contempt for politicians generally.

In conjunction with classifying attitudinal assessments by reference to the above taxonomies, an appraisal-based analyses will track the “source” of the attitudinal assessment – either the author/speaker or some external source. For example, in the news journalism item under discussion, the author asserts, in her own voice, that the scholarship organisation has “strayed” [*source=author: negative Judgement*] from its original purpose. In contrast, it attributes to an external source (Damian Wyld, national policy officer for Family Voice Australia) a negative assessment of the scholarship organisation: “Offering a financial incentive to identify as ‘lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and/or intersex’ is completely **inappropriate.**” [*source=external: negative Judgement*].

It is, of course, a longstanding tenet of journalistic practice that the “objectivity” of a news report is undamaged by the quoting of attitudinal assertions by external sources. The notion is that the reporter maintains their impartiality in “factually” conveying to the reader/listener what some community leader, expert, eyewitness, victim etc. has had to say on the topic currently being reported. Prior appraisal-based studies have predictably determined that, at least in highbrow news reporting, instances of externally-sourced attitude of all sub-types occur regularly and instances of authorial Affect and authorially-sourced inscribed Judgement occur rarely or not at all - in keeping with the doctrine of the “objectivity” of news journalism as opposed to views journalism. (Martin and White 2005: chapter 4). Against this, Martin & White observed that instances of observed Affect and authorially-sourced inscribed Appreciation occurred in their dataset of “highbrow” news reports. White (2002, 2004) has proposed that this can be associated with a “regime of strategic impersonalisation”, on the following grounds. The salient subjectivity of authorial Affect is excluded, and explicit, direct assessments of human behaviour and character (Judgements) are “quarantined” in externally sourced material. At the same time, journalistic stylistic conventions “allow” presumably less interpersonally charged instances of observed Affect and explicit appreciations of entities, happenings, situations, states-of-affairs, ideas/philosophies/policies to occur in the author’s own voice.

In addition to tracking the source of attitudinal assessments, appraisal-theory based analyses also track the “targets” or “triggers” of these assessments. The target of a Judgement or an Appreciation is the entity, action, state-of-affairs, concept/philosophy/policy which the addressee is being positioned to view positively or negatively – for example “the scholarship program chaired by businessman Michael Hawker” is the target of the negative judgement “**strays** from its original purpose”.

Appraisal-based analyses may fruitfully attend to patterns in the nature of these targets – for example: is the same individual or group repeatedly targeted; are the targets high or low status individuals/organisations; are they named individuals or generic groupings (e.g. “environmental activists”, “Trump supporters”, “all Australians”); are they generic behaviours (e.g. “Bushwalking through these pristine forests is selfish and a form of vandalism.”)? (For an extended discussion of patterns of targeting in social media discourse see Don 2007.)

In cases of Affect, the trigger is the entity or phenomenon which has resulted in the emotional reaction. For example, in “It is little wonder many Australians are becoming wary of what can appear to be social engineering carried out by governments”, it is the “social engineering carried out by governments” which is the “trigger” of the “wariness” reportedly being experienced by “many Australians”.

With respect to the “persuasive” workings of instances of Affect and specifically cases of observed (non-authorial) affect, it needs to be noted that the addressee may or may not be positioned attitudinally vis-à-vis the trigger. This will depend on how the addressee is otherwise positioned attitudinally, both with respect to the type of Affect involved and the status of the person or persons presented as experiencing the emotion (the “emoter”). In the just-cited case of “wariness”, the emoter is “many Australians” and the Affect is an instance of what the appraisal framework labels “insecurity”. Obviously “many Australians” are being presented as having a negative view of the scholarship program. For this to be potentially “persuasive” attitudinally, the reader needs to regard the wariness of “many Australians” as something to be taken seriously, as valid grounds for taking a

negative view of the trigger (the scholarship provider.) This device is often to be observed in news reports, where anxiety, outrage, antipathy or frustration is said to be being experienced by some generic “emoter” with high evidential standing (e.g. experts, community/business leaders, the general public). The text typically operates on the assumption that the reader will be influenced to regard the negativity as valid and hence to share the viewpoint attributed to the external “emoter”.

A similar communicative effect is associated with instances of attributed Judgement and Appreciation, that is to say externally sourced expressions of these attitudes. Obviously here the quoted source is conveying his/her own personal viewpoint, as reported. The question then arises as to whether the text can plausibly be interpreted as simultaneously positioning the reader to share the quoted source’s point of view. The proposition underlying journalism’s claim to “objectivity” is that the reader is not thereby positioned, at least not by the author. The point of view expressed in a quote is supposedly not in any sense the viewpoint of the journalistic author. There is an extensive body of journalism-studies literature on attribution/quoting (see, for example [Sundar 1998](#); [Kim 2015](#)). Broadly speaking it has been noted that in some cases some level of authorial “impartiality” re quoted viewpoints may be achieved when “both sides” of an argument are given equal space or, alternatively, may be “lost” when one point of view is preferred or given greater prominence. As well, the way in which the attributed material is framed has consequences for whether the author presents him/herself as (1) neutral towards any point of view being expressed there, (2) aligned with or (3) distanced from it. For example, frames such as “X said that/X holds that” can indicate authorial neutrality, frames such as “X demonstrated/proved that” can indicate authorial alignment with attributed view points while “X claims that/it’s rumoured that” can indicate authorial distancing. (These alternatives are treated by Appraisal Theory as options for dialogistic positioning, taxonomized as the Engagement sub-system. See [White 2000, 2006](#); [Martin and White 2005](#), chapter 3.)

As well, the appraisal literature notes that readers may be positioned to align or disalign with some externally sourced Judgement or Appreciation via either explicit or implicit evaluation of the source itself. Thus the reader may be positioned to share a sourced viewpoint when the source is described positively as, for example, “highly respected” or “a leading expert” and likewise the reader may be positioned to question or reject a sourced viewpoint when that source is described negatively as, for example, a “former bankrupt” or “convicted drug dealer”. The reader may also be positioned to share a sourced viewpoint when the source is a known figure (an “icon”) with a well-established reputation for expertise or laudable conduct. For example: “Nelson Mandela said, ‘Our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of Palestinians.’” [<https://www.tiktok.com/@mehreenfaruqi/video/7332391836549516562>]. In such cases the dialogistic framing may be one of “impartiality” (e.g. via a “neutral” reporting verb such as “to state/say/announce”) but the cultural framing around the source (one of esteem, respect and reliability) functions to “invoke” a positive positioning vis-à-vis the attitudes s/he has reportedly expressed. Thus, the author indirectly “favours” the attributed positive/negative assessment and thereby positions the reader to adopt they attributed source’s viewpoint. Alternatively, of course, the author may rely on a cultural framing of negativity around the source (e.g. Hitler, Stalin) so as to “disfavour” any assessments attributed to them and thereby position the reader to reject or discredit such viewpoints. For example: “Hitler held that Jews by nature had little real artistic sensibility of their own.” [[https://mis.kp.ac.rw/admin/admin_panel/kp_lms/files/digital/Core20Books/History/Hitler's20study20of20a20Revolution20by20Martyr,20Housden\(BookFi\).pdf](https://mis.kp.ac.rw/admin/admin_panel/kp_lms/files/digital/Core20Books/History/Hitler's20study20of20a20Revolution20by20Martyr,20Housden(BookFi).pdf)].

These then are some of the lines of inquiry which Appraisal Theory makes available for scholars interested in how journalistic discourse conveys point of view. (It is not possible to deal with additional possible lines of inquiry here). In summary these involve attending to:

1. Tendencies in the different types of attitudinal assessment by which the reader is positioned to take a negative or positive view of persons, entities, actions, processes, situations, ideas/philosophies/policies.
2. Whether attitudes are inscribed (explicit) or invoked (implied or indirectly activated).
3. The sourcing of the attitudes being expressed or conveyed (authorially or externally sourced) and whether the author indicates neutrality re externally sourced points of view, “favours” this material or “disfavours” it.
4. The nature of the entities or phenomena which the reader is being positioned to view positively or negatively (who or what is being “targeted”).

3. Unpacking attitude and point of view in the two example texts

I’m now able to return the question I raised earlier: What additional clarity as to the communication of point of view in the two news items mentioned above is made available by an appraisal-based analysis?

3.1. Inscribed attitude

I begin with considering points in the two texts where authorial point of view is most obviously evident - where the author’s attitudes are overtly conveyed through the deployment of inscribed (explicit) Judgement and/or Appreciation. There are just three, points in the news report where the author, in her own voice, explicitly deploys instances of negative Appreciation or Judgement. These are the assertions that (1) LGBTI activism in schools is provoking “concerns” about its “creeping influence”, that (2) the scholarship organisation has “strayed” from its original purpose and that (3) people are

fearful that young people are being exposed to “politically motivated ideologies”. The relevant sections of the report have been extracted below, with relevant evaluative language in bold.

(2) A leading education scholarship provider backed by some of Australia’s biggest businesses has begun quizzing high school students on their sexuality as part of its application process, sparking **fresh concerns** about the **creeping** influence of LGBTI rights activism on schools

(5) The move means the program, chaired by prominent businessman Michael Hawker and financially backed by corporate heavyweights Microsoft, Optus and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), **strays** from its original purpose of helping students from disadvantaged backgrounds with education-related costs.

(8) The shift comes as the LGBTI lobby has become increasingly influential, including within schools, where programs such as the government-funded Safe Schools Coalition has **sparked fears** about young people being exposed to **politically motivated ideologies** around gender and sexuality.

Recall that the ChatGPT software identified the first two of these as instances of authorial “subjective point of view”. I’ll begin with dealing with the sentence (5) because it is possibly the most straightforward in terms of an appraisal-based analysis.

The author reports that in changing its application process, the scholarship provider has “strayed” from its original purpose. Here, obviously “stray” positions the reader to sanction the scholarship program on the basis that it acted improperly in asking scholarship applications to supply details of their sexuality. Appraisal Theory broadly groups judgements of human behaviour and character into two categories: those which involve assessments of right and wrong or good and bad by reference to ethical, moral, religious and legal norms (termed “Social Sanction”) and those which are less fraught interpersonally, and in terms of reputation (termed “Social Esteem”). This latter category involves assessments which don’t characterize behaviour as right or wrong but as laudable or illaudable – as, for example, competent/incompetent, psychologically appropriate/inappropriate or normal/abnormal. Clearly the assessment indicated by “strayed from its original purpose” is one of the more highly charged “Social Sanction”. The reader is positioned to view the provider’s behaviour as wrongful.

It is to be noted, however, that the lexeme *to stray*, is variable, according to context, as to the specific negative Judgement it conveys. In other contexts, “straying from a path” may be inadvertent, suggestive of some lack of knowledge or mental acuity, but not associated with any sense of wrongdoing.

In Port Lavaca, a patrol boat assigned to the nearby Matagorda Island Air Force base and used to keep curious boaters from **straying** too close to the base’s bombing range. [SketchEngine online corpus]

This, of course, would be classified as an assessment of “Social Esteem” – specifically an instance of negative “capacity”. In our text, however, the context – that of an organisation straying from “its original purpose” – is such as to position the reader to socially sanction the organisation’s behaviour as an instance of negative “propriety”. Thus, in applying Appraisal Theory we are alerted to the role of the co-text in the positioning of the reader attitudinally and to understand the social significance of the sub-type of attitudinal assessment being conveyed – an instance of the more socially consequential “Social Sanction”.

The next instance (sentence 2 in the news report) is somewhat more complicated in terms of how it works attitudinally. We note that this involves what can be termed “embedded” attitude. The attitudinal assessment conveyed by “creeping influence” is embedded in the attitudinally charged assertion that the scholarship provider’s new application process has “sparked fresh concerns”. This embedding is as follows. At the heart of this evaluative move is a negative assessment of “the influence of LGBTI rights activism on schools”. The author overtly assesses that LGBTI influence as “creeping”, a metaphor which connotes that this influence is insidious, harmful or in some other way unwelcome. But this is wrapped, so to speak, in an outer layer of attitudinal positioning involving an instance of observed Affect, the report of what is apparently community “concern”. Interestingly, this instance of Affect has both a “trigger” and “target”. The reported trigger of this negative affectual response is the scholarship provider asking applicants about their sexuality (it has “sparked” concern) and the target of this “concern” is “the creeping influence of LGBTI activism in schools”. Through this layered attitudinal formulation, the author “externalises” to some degree this negative view of LGBTI activism as something which has been observed in the community. The author presents as not alone in this point of view, as sharing this attitude with some substantive sector of society and hence as not solely responsible for this assessment. It is also noteworthy that the actual source of this affectual response (the “emoter”) is not named or referenced. We are not informed as to who actually is “concerned”. There is a potential paradox here. Might not failing to name or specify the experiencer (“emoter”) of the claimed affectual response in some way undermine the evidential bona fides of the report? The assumption seems to be to the contrary – that the claim is so well founded and presumably obvious to the reader that it is unnecessary to supply the source of the emotional reaction.

Also of significance is the nature of the attitude involved in the term “creeping”. Tellingly, the formulation “creeping influence of LGBTI rights activism” does not directly target a human actor. Rather than directly condemning LGBTI activists, the author here chooses to negatively evaluate an abstraction, “LGBTI rights activism” and its “influence” on schools. Under Appraisal Theory, this would thus be treated as an instance of Appreciation rather than Judgement since this is not directly an attitudinal assessment of human behaviour or character, but rather of an abstract entity. The appraisal literature proposes that instances of Judgement are, in general, more highly charged interpersonally than instances of Appreciation. Thus, for example, to characterize a politician as dishonest, heartless or corrupt (instances of Judgement) puts more at stake socially (and probably legally) than to characterize their policies as damaging, dangerous or ill-formed (instances of Appreciation). It

is noteworthy in this regard that Martin and White's analysis (Martin and White 2005) of a dataset of news reports from "highbrow" newspapers such as *The Times* and *The Guardian* found that instances of authorial inscribed Appreciation occurred at significantly higher rates than instances of authorial inscribed Judgement. Overt authorial Appreciation thus would seem to be more in keeping with traditional regimes of "objectivity" than overt authorial Judgement – i.e. somewhat less saliently foregrounding the subjective involvement of the author.

Of course, the "ultimate" target in the case under consideration may be LGBTI rights activists, but it is communicatively significant that the author chooses not to be so direct in her targeting. She declares that the influence of LGBTI rights activism is "creeping" rather than, for example, declaring that LGBTI Rights activists are improperly, malignly, or insidiously having an influence in schools. She chooses to target an abstract entity (activism) rather than the behaviour of a concrete human actor (activists). And she certainly refrains from having as target here some individual, named activist organisation.

In this way, an appraisal-based analysis enables us to unpack the "persuasiveness" of this material in positioning the reader to align with the author's point of view. Rather than deploying a maximally confrontational explicit negative Judgement of a human actor, the author chooses the attitudinally less direct option of negatively appreciating an abstract entity while also making use of the device in which a negative affectual response is attributed to some unnamed source.

We observe a similar strategy in the 3rd extract above (sentence 8 in the news report).

(8) The shift comes as the LGBTI lobby has become increasingly influential, including within schools, where programs such as the government-funded Safe Schools Coalition has sparked **fears** about young people being exposed to **politically motivated ideologies** around gender and sexuality.

Again, there is a negative assessment – "you people are being exposed to politically motivated ideologies around gender and sexuality" – which is not directly asserted by the author. Rather it is presented as framed by an instance of observed Affect, as phenomenon which some unspecified sector in society "fears". There are also grounds for classifying this as an instance of Appreciation, rather than Judgement which will be dealt with at an appropriate point later.

Let's now consider the use of inscribed authorial Judgement and Appreciation in our comparison piece, the editorial. The text is supplied again below for ease of reference, this time with some key occurrences of attitudinal meanings identified. Words/phrases which can unproblematically be classified as instances of inscribed authorial Judgement or Appreciation have been formatted in **bold** and those which are more problematic in terms of such classifications (some of which are to be discussed later) are formatted in *italics*. [Note that instances of Affect have not been identified. Some of these will be discussed later.]

- (1) It is little wonder many Australians are becoming wary of what can appear to be *social engineering* carried out by governments, activist groups and even *well-intentioned* individuals and businesses. There have been too many examples of late where social issues once aimed at overcoming **prejudice** have become *progressive causes* aimed at promoting *alternative lifestyles* or even enforcing a new *political correctness*. We have seen this unfold through the Safe Schools initiative in which **admirable efforts** to combat **bullying** of children on any grounds, including sexuality, were **hijacked** by those with a *radical political agenda* to "normalise" a wide range of sexual preferences, choices and behaviours. Parents were **right** to object and demand more information. In the same-sex marriage debate we have seen people *daring* to defend the traditional view of marriage **stridently attacked** as homophobic even though this was a view held by all sides of politics, all major religions and even most gay activists until recent years.
- (2) So the story revealed exclusively by Rebecca Urban in *The Australian* yesterday about a major high school scholarship scheme *seeking out* lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex candidates tended to fall into a familiar pattern. To fill its quota of LGBTI places the scholarship application form — which previously asked whether applicants were male or female — now asks if they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or "prefer not to say" and under gender includes the options of "transgender" and "prefer not to say".
- (3) Some of the firms involved in the Australian Business and Community Network Scholarship Foundation have been active in campaigns supporting same-sex marriage and clearly believe they are promoting a *positive social cause*. By funding scholarships for needy and **worthy** teenagers they are engaging in **good corporate citizenship**. But allocating LGBTI places seems **to be overreach**. It *smacks of identity politics* and is bound to be **gamed** at some stage if ambivalence about sexuality may add certainty to an application. All applicants should be equal and **be judged on merit** alone.

Perhaps the most obvious observation arising from the comparison is that the views journalism piece (the editorial) has a substantially higher rate of inscribed authorial Judgement and Appreciation. A number of these assessments are via wordings which have a largely stable attitudinal value. For example, the assertion that efforts to combat the bullying of children are being "hijacked" (an attitudinally stable lexical metaphor), that parents are "right" to object and that those with a traditional view of marriage have been "stridently attacked".

Also to be noted here is the nature of some of the instances of authorial Judgement or Appreciation in this views journalism piece. As already mentioned, it is common for expressions which inscribe attitudinal values to be stable attitudinally across many contexts of use – for example, "to hijack", "bullying", "stridently attack", "to overreach", and so on. But it is also the case that there are lexical items and phrases which are more circumscribed attitudinally, only associated with some degree of attitudinal stability in a specific domain of discourse. For example, consider the following items from the views journalism piece.

social engineering; progressive cause; alternative lifestyles; political correctness; identity politics

These are “specialised” terms closely associated with discourses of politics and sociological analysis. They have the potential to convey negative or positive attitudes when operating in these domains. And their actual attitudinal value may well vary, according to other attitudinal values advanced elsewhere in the text in which they occur and according to the ideological position the reader brings to the text. Arguably the terms “political correctness” and “identity politics” have achieved some degree of attitudinal stability, given their frequent use by those on the right-wing of political debate as derogatory labels for what they see as perverse “left wing” viewpoints. This is, however, a qualified attitudinal stability. From a left-wing perspective these are contested terms, associated with right wing “bias” and not terms which reference established, community-wide norms of what is right and wrong or harmful and beneficial. The “stability” of terms such as “progressive cause”, “alternative lifestyles” is even less clear. In many settings to be described as “progressive” would be laudable and equally to be described as living an “alternative” lifestyle.

When we consider how such terms are used in the views journalism piece, we observe that they signal an authorial assumption that all these terms necessarily convey negativity and that the reader will not contest this assumption. Consider for example the following extract.

There have been too many examples of late where social issues once aimed at overcoming prejudice have become **progressive causes** aimed at **promoting alternative lifestyles** ...

Through “too many examples of late”, the author(s) indicates they are about to cite phenomena which are to be viewed negatively. When these “examples” are then identified in what follows in the sentence, they are said to be “progressive causes” and, in particular, progressive causes which “promote alternative lifestyles”. Crucial here is the way in which the text signals the assumption that “alternative lifestyles” are necessarily to be viewed negatively, suggesting that, at least for this author, terms such as “alternative lifestyle” and “progressive cause” have a stable, negative value and the “imagined” or “putative” reader (see [White 2020, 2021a, 2021b](#)) is assumed to share this viewpoint. These are cases of attitudinal expression which hover between inscription of Attitude and invocation of Attitude. These involve entities, events or ideas which, through repeated reference in given discourse domains (for example, particular academic disciplines, right-wing or left-wing political discourse, environmental activist discourse, the language of Donald Trump’s “Make America Great Again” movement), become “axiologically charged” (see, for example, [Maton 2014; Don 2018; Doran 2020](#)). That is to say, when used in such discursive contexts, these phenomena are typically treated as if they have a stable attitudinal value – either positive or negative. In referencing these terms in this way, the author, of course, signals their membership of a particular community of shared values.

The opening sentence of the views piece contains something similar.

It is little wonder many Australians are becoming wary of what can appear to be **social engineering** carried out by governments ...

Here the author expresses the view that it is entirely natural (“little wonder”) that Australians should have had negative affectual reactions to phenomena labelled “social engineering”. What might be entailed by “social engineering” is not specified nor why Australians should be “wary” of such phenomena. The assumption is that the reader will know what is being referred to and that to label something as “social engineering” is to overtly condemn it. Thus “social engineering” is treated here by the author as having a stable attitudinal value, as a phenomenon which is universally viewed negatively.

This formulation is, of course, similar to the case dealt with above in connection with the news piece – another instance of observed affect (“Australians becoming wary”) being used to frame an authorial assessment. Again, the author shares responsibility for the negative assessment by reporting an instance of “observed” affect (“wary of”), but interestingly this time does provide the source (emoter) of this negative response, “many Australians”.

Similarly, later in the views piece, the author asserts that, “allocating LGBTI places ... smacks of **identity politics**”. The collocational frame “X smacks of Y” always associates X with some negative quality – for example “this all smacks of a dire conspiracy”; “this smacks of racial hygiene and fascism”; “this smacks of male testosterone running amok” [from sketch-engine online corpus]. Thus, the term “identity politics” is treated as necessarily a negative phenomenon.

These then are cases of the author referencing phenomena which, in this discourse domain of right-wing, reactionary ideology, are highly charged axiologically – charged to the point that they are treated by the author(s) as having a stable (negative) attitudinal value. The question remains as to whether they are to be classified as instances of Judgement (positive/negative assessments of human behaviour and character by reference to social norms) or instances of Appreciation (assessments of the social value or aesthetic qualities of entities, happenings, processes, states-of-affair or concepts/philosophies/policies). While all the examples just listed do potentially convey a Judgement of human behaviour, in the first instance they are to be treated as instances of Appreciation. Consider again, for example, the following extract from the views journalism piece.

There have been too many examples of late where social issues once aimed at overcoming prejudice have become **progressive causes** aimed at **promoting alternative lifestyles** ...

To be noted is that no human actor (person(s), grouping, institution) is being directly targeted here. The targets are all abstract phenomena: (1) “social issues” which are to be viewed negatively on the basis that they “have become progressive causes”, (2) “causes” to be negatively viewed on the basis that they are “progressive” and “promote alternative lifestyles” and

(3) “lifestyles” to be evaluated negatively on the basis that they are “alternative”. Of course, there are human actors which a reader may view as the “ultimate” targets of these negative appreciations – for example those persons who have presumably sought to overcome prejudice but are now “progressives” who are “promoting alternative lifestyles”. But the author has chosen not to name or reference such human actors nor to directly condemn them for breaching ethical norms. The author chooses, instead, to more indirectly position the reader to take a negative view of such persons, to condemn, instead, abstract phenomena and processes. Such formulations, then, are to be treated as Appreciations which act to “invoke” Judgements of human targets (ultimate targets) who may actually not be directly referenced, at least not in the sentence in which the inscribed Appreciation is located.

The news piece does include one instance of an evaluative expression which works in this way – specifically an Appreciation which indirectly invokes a Judgement of an “ultimate” target. It was briefly discussed earlier.

... programs such as the government-funded Safe Schools Coalition has sparked fears about young people being exposed to **politically motivated ideologies** around gender and sexuality.

As already discussed above, this is another case whereby an instance of observed affect (“fears about”) is used to frame another negative attitudinal assessment. The framing is such as to signal the assumption that is natural and expected that “politically motivated ideologies about gender and sexuality” should “spark fear” – that they are in some way untoward or illegitimate. The text operates on the assumption that to characterize a value system as a “politically motivated ideology” is to necessarily convey a negative assessment of that system. And again, of course, this is an Appreciation rather than a direct Judgement, since there is no human actor who is being targeted here. Rather it is an abstract concept or philosophy, an “ideology”, which is negatively assessed on the basis that it is “politically motivated around gender and sexuality”. Semantically it is an instance of Appreciation, even while it may ultimately position the reader to negatively judge those who are held to operate under such “ideologies”.

To this point, then, I have been demonstrating an analysis which attends to any use a text makes of inscribed Attitude. I also attended to cases where the author deploys terms which are so highly charged axiologically in this discourse domain that the author has chosen to treat them as having a stable attitudinal value. In terms of their communicative workings and rhetorical potential, they are closely aligned with attitudinal inscriptions. Particular attention was paid to which sub-types of Attitude are deployed and whether they occur consistently or less consistently across the text. This provided the following findings. Both texts employ instances of observed Affect to present the point of view being advanced as not solely that of the author, but rather a negative emotional reaction (“concern”, “fear” “wariness”) being felt widely in the community. While both texts deployed instances of both inscribed authorial Judgement and Appreciation this is much more a feature of the views piece. There is just one instance of an inscribed authorial Judgement and just two instances of inscribed authorial Appreciation in the news piece. Both sub-types are woven into the fabric of the views piece, occurring frequently throughout the text. The views piece also makes more regular use of references to phenomena which, on account of their high axiological charge, the author treats as attitudinally stable. Interpretations of these finding will be provided later. But before that, it is necessary to attend to the use the two pieces make of the other way of realising positive/negative attitudinal assessment – more indirectly conveying authorial attitude through invocation.

3.2. *Invoked attitude*

It is necessary to return to a point made earlier - to note that analyses of instances of invoked Attitude typically involve the analyst positing what are possible inferences a reader may draw from material which may, in isolation, seem un-attitudinal or “neutral”, i.e. just a reporting of the “facts”. In proposing that such inferences are likely to be drawn the analyst needs to consider both the potential evaluative influence of other parts of the text and also the knowledge, values and expectations both they and the imagined reader may bring to an interpretation of the text. Thus, analyses of instances of invoked Attitude often require the analyst to argue in support of the plausibility of their claims as to what attitudinal inferences are likely to arise from this material. They must make a compelling case that this material does, indeed, have the potential to position the reader to form a negative or positive view of some person(s) entity, action, event, situation or concept/philosophy. Some may see this as introducing an undesirable element of subjectivity into the analysis. And it certainly raises issues for conventional approaches to inter-rater reliability, since two analysts may bring different knowledges and reading positions to their interpretation of a text and hence reach different conclusions as to what is being conveyed attitudinally. But this can be managed if analysts (1) declare and take into account their own reading position and (2) systematically articulate the basis on which a proposed invocation has its potential to position readers attitudinally. To exclude such material from the analysis on account of the “subjectivity” involved in the analysis is to exclude from the analysis this material’s demonstrable potential to engender attitudinal responses.

The headline to the news piece provides an excellent illustration of the need to consider textual context and the knowledge the analyst may bring to the text when dealing with potential invocations.

Students asked about their sexuality for scholarships.

On the face of it, this may seem a straightforward statement of “fact”. The ChatGPT AI software did not point to this as an indicator of “slant” or “subjectivity” in the report. Nevertheless, a case can be made that it potentially invokes Attitude. It does have the potential (depending on reading position) to convey a negative view of whoever (to be specified later in the text) has

been doing this “asking”. The argument in support of this proposition can be along the following lines. Readers familiar with the typical properties of news reports are likely to be aware that news headlines, with their orientation to maximising “newsworthiness” aim for high impact. They consistently point to the most socially significant aspect of the event or issue under consideration. (See for example, White 1997, 1998, 2008). This is usually some point of material, psychic or moral risk or damage (given the orientation of news journalism to negativity), but occasionally (in the much rarer case of “good news” stories) may be a point of maximal material or psychic benefit. Such readers, therefore, may well assume that the headline is pointing to some point of significant material, psychic, or ethical risk, that there is something untoward about students applying for scholarships being asked about their sexuality. The text here certainly projects this viewpoint on to the imagined or “putative reader”, the reader the text constructs via assumptions made as to this putative reader’s (White 2020, 2021a, 2021b) beliefs, values and expectations. The headline is only in conformity with the conventions of news headline writing if it references some point of high material, cultural or ethical significance – i.e. that this “asking” about sexuality is of high social significance. Of course, under an alternative reading/value position, scholarship applicants being asked about their sexuality might not be viewed negatively – perhaps as pointing to a welcome diversifying of definitions of socially-situated adversity. But there is nothing else in the text which sustains this positive reading. The most plausible reading of the headline is that it identifies and highlights a point of potential or actual social and ethical harm. The actual “target” of this negative judgement is not provided in the headline – i.e. those who are wrongfully “asking” students this question. That will be provided in the story’s lead. We can thus analyse this as an instance of an invoked Judgement which reveals the author’s point of view and positions the reader as sharing this viewpoint. Of course, this “persuasiveness” is only a potential. Readers with different views of gender, sexuality and the role of scholarship organisations may resist and find themselves at odds with the attitudinal directionality so signalled by the headline. (Such insights appear not to be available to ChatGPT’s algorithms – though perhaps it’s only a matter of time.)

This report’s lead, as is customary for news stories, repeats and elaborates on the headline.

A leading education scholarship provider backed by some of Australia’s biggest businesses has begun quizzing high school students on their sexuality as part of its application process ...

Again, we have attitudinal invocation rather than inscription – with a similar potential for attitudinal positioning as the headline. Here, of course, the target of this assessment of impropriety has been provided – the leading educational scholarship provider supported by some of Australia’s biggest businesses. A notable difference is that rather than reporting that the students have been “asked” about their sexuality, the story reports they have been “quizzed”. What is at stake here communicatively? The verb *to quiz* does not, of itself, carry either positive or negative connotations (e.g. “Thank you again for politely **quizzing** what I have written in my essay” [SketchEngine online corpus tool]). Under Appraisal Theory, “to quiz someone” would be classified as having a higher intensity than “to ask someone about” – an upscaled correlate of “to ask”. Thus, the Merriam Webster dictionary offers “to interrogate” and “to grill” as synonyms of “to quiz”. Upscaling, of course, involves an authorial evaluation – a subjective determination of degree. And this upscaling is frequently associated with attitudinal invocation, with the intensity being a pointer that some attitudinal assessment is at stake. Accordingly underlying authorial point of view is signalled by this lexical choice.

There are further attitudinal invocations in the news report. Space limitations permit me to deal with only one of these. This invocation arises when the author provides background information on one of the businesses which has been funding the scholarship program – PricewaterhouseCoopers

PwC, which proudly declares itself as “one of the first private-sector organisations to sign a letter of support for marriage equality in Australia”, courted controversy earlier this year when it released a report claiming that the cost of the planned plebiscite on same-sex marriage would exceed \$500 million.

The firm is said to have “courted controversy”. Of itself, this may be inert attitudinally. “Courting controversy” might or might not be seen as problematic behaviour, although there is a reading position which might regard the active seeking out of controversy (“courting”) as untoward, as wrongfully promoting conflict. But there are two additional elements here which are potentially more highly charged attitudinally. First is the assertion by the author that the firm had declared itself to be “proud” of its support for marriage equality (another instance of observed Affect). This has the potential to cast the firm as in some way vainglorious and as involved in unjustified promotion of its own image. Secondly, there is the author’s choice of the reporting verb “claim” in “it released a report **claiming** that the cost of the planned plebiscite on same-sex marriage would exceed \$500 million”. As already discussed, this is an option within Appraisal Theory’s Engagement system by which authors can distance themselves from attributed material, present it as open to question or even dubious and thereby potentially undermining or “tarnishing” (Hao and Humphrey, 2012) the source’s evidential bona fides.

Invoked attitude does not have the same role to play in the views piece. This is because, as is to be expected of views journalism, it is almost entirely devoted to overtly presenting the author’s opinions. It consistently opines and only offers a few moments of reporting of the kind of “facts” which might invoke an attitudinal assessment.

3.3. Attributed attitude

By way of concluding this discussion, it is perhaps necessary to say something briefly about the non-authorial (attributed) expression of Attitude in the news journalism piece. Obviously, the negative Judgements and Appreciations of the scholarship

program attributed to the quoted source (Damian Wyld, national policy officer for Family Voice Australia) may contribute to the report's "persuasiveness". To be noted is that he is said to be performing a professional role – "policy officer" – and to be the spokesperson for what appears to be a national organization – "Family Voice Australia". This designation has at least the potential to indicate expertise and reliability. Thus, his views, which closely align with the views expressed elsewhere in the text, may carry weight for readers, at least with those readers for whom these "credentials" function to enhance his evidential standing (reliability) as a source. It is to be noted that, in keeping with common journalistic practice, no information is provided as to the nature of "Family Voice Australia", its size, its membership, its funding, its objectives, and so on. Again, we encounter the type of paradox discussed earlier. Wouldn't the failure to provide such information about this organisation potentially undermine the authoritativeness of its spokesperson? Apparently not. Presumably the assumption relied on by the author is that the reader will believe the organisation must have standing and expertise in this area – otherwise its spokesperson would not be relied on by the author in this way.

4. Conclusion

In this paper I've demonstrated an appraisal-theory informed analysis of authorial point of view in news journalism. I've demonstrated the kind of in-depth and nuanced insights such an analysis can provide – more nuanced and theoretically principled insights than are likely to arise from a commonsense assessment of its "slant" or "bias", or even from a "reading" by an AI application such as ChatGPT. The demonstration was conducted by reference to a news journalism and a views journalism piece concerned with essentially the same subject matter. I have demonstrated what types of similarities in terms of the communication of point of view such an analysis might discover, and just what differences. I will briefly review these and add some further observations.

The two pieces were similar in that they both deployed a device in which some strongly negative attitudinal assessment was introduced into the text via the reporting of some community disquiet or alarm. Tellingly, in all cases, in both texts, the extent of this "concern", "wariness" or "fear" was not revealed nor any evidence provided that this was, indeed, how some sector of society had been reacting. This points to what may more generally be a feature of journalistic epistemology – that both news and views journalists are understood to have the "authority" to report inner mental process (emotions) in the same manner as they report observable "external" processes – i.e. categorically and without any need for substantiation. This device also has the effect of "sharing out", so to speak, responsibility for the negative assessment. It is perhaps not surprising that such a device should be employed in a news report. The author thus foregrounds the reporting of some societal development and potentially backgrounds that they are simultaneously advancing a personal opinion. But it is perhaps curious that the comment piece also deploys this device.

It's possible to see in the same light the views piece's propensity for using Appreciation when it could have chosen to use Judgement, and thereby to be less direct, forthright and possibly inflammatory. Further, along similar lines, at a couple of points, the piece allows for the possibility that there may be legitimate alternatives to the views it is advancing, by means of what Appraisal classifies as instances of "Entertain" in its Engagement system (options for dialogistic positioning). Specifically it refrains from categorically asserting a couple of its attitudinal assessments, and "entertains" (allows for) alternatives positions by its use of modals of probability and evidentials: "Australians are becoming wary of what **can appear to be social engineering** carried out by governments ..."; " But allocating LGBTI places **seems to be overreach**".

No firm conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the analysis of just one such text but it does point to the possibility that the typically anonymous authors of editorials, writing at the direction of senior editors or masthead owners, may have a motive to be more indirect, measured or "softly spoken" attitudinally than the high-profile authors of columns and opinion pieces. This is in contrast with the motivations of by-lined opinion columnists who, with a view to being noticed and attracting a following, have an interest in being attitudinally direct and forthright – to castigate, condemn and bemoan at full volume. It must, however, remain an open question as to whether this is a quality to be more widely observed in editorials, in editorials on more "sensitive" topics, in the editorials of this masthead or in editorials when the actions of "corporate heavyweights" are being condemned.

It remains to add some concluding observations re the news item. The analysis has revealed that, at least with respect to its communication of authorial point of view, it is similar in kind but not in degree to the views piece. We observed that, like the views journalism piece, it used observed Affect to "share" responsibility with an unspecified sector of society for some of its author's negative Judgements, did include authorial inscribed Judgement (one instance), and a few instances of authorial Appreciation. It differed, obviously, from the views piece in using these options substantially less frequently.

Perhaps most notably, it differs in terms of its apparent communicative purpose. The views piece is overtly an argument, making a case in support of the proposition that the scholarship provider has acted improperly. The most obvious indicator of this purpose is that it does offer a "thesis" statement by which this central proposition is overtly announced (even if it leaves this until its second-to-last sentence): "But allocating LGBTI places seems to be overreach. It smacks of identity politics and is bound to be gamed at some stage ..." Clearly the news piece includes no such explicit announcement of a "thesis". To the extent that it "makes a case", this is done indirectly, under cover of reporting the newsworthy decision/actions of the scholarship provider. Perhaps this justifies the conclusion that the news piece represents a text-type "hybrid", simultaneously news journalism and views journalism, structured as report, less saliently subjective than the accompanying views piece but nevertheless still overtly positioning the reader to share the author's point of view. It remains an open question whether this

“hybridity” is a feature of coverage of this type of “sensitive” subject matter, more generally a feature of this masthead’s news coverage or is a feature of news reporting more widely.

Declaration of competing interest

This the sole author’s own original work. It has not received prior publication and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

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