

Alignment, persuasiveness and the putative reader in opinion writing

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This paper explores a new line of analysis for comparing opinion writing by reference to differences in the relationships being indicated between author and addressee. It draws on recent work within the APPRAISAL framework literature to offer proposals for linguistics-based analyses of what has variously been termed the ‘intended’, ‘imagined’, ‘ideal’, ‘virtual’, ‘model’ and ‘putative’ reader (the ‘reader written into the text’). A discussion is provided of those means by which beliefs, attitudes and expectations are projected onto this ‘reader in the text’, formulations which signal anticipations that the reader either shares the attitude or belief currently being advanced by the author, potentially finds it novel or otherwise problematic, or may reject it outright. The discussion is conducted with respect to written, persuasive texts, and specifically with respect to news journalism’s commentary pieces. It is proposed that such texts can usefully be characterised and compared by reference to tendencies in such ‘construals’ or ‘positionings’ of the putative reader – tendencies in terms of whether the signalled anticipation is of the reader being aligned or, conversely, potentially unaligned or dis-aligned with the author. The terms ‘flag waving’ and ‘advocacy’ are proposed as characterisations which can be applied to texts, with ‘flag waving’ applicable to texts which construe the reader as largely sharing the author’s beliefs and attitudes, while ‘advocacy’ is applicable to texts where the reader is construed as actually or potentially not sharing the author’s beliefs and attitudes and thereby needing to be won over. This line of analysis is demonstrated through a comparison of two journalistic opinion pieces written in response to visits by Japanese politicians to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, one published in the English-language version of the mainland China newspaper, *China Daily* and one in the English-language version of the Japanese *Asahi Shimbun*. It is shown that one piece can usefully be characterised as oriented towards ‘flag waving’ and the other towards ‘advocacy’.

Keywords: putative reader, imagined reader, Appraisal Framework, persuasion, journalism, opinion, commentary, dialogism, Bakhtin, heteroglossia

1. Introduction

Alongside the supposedly 'objective' news report, the overtly 'subjective' journalistic commentary piece or opinion column is of perennial interest to scholars on account of the potential of such texts to shape public beliefs and attitudes and to influence understandings of what constitutes well-founded, reasonable opinion and argumentation. With a view to enhancing understandings of the nature and communicative workings of this 'subjective' form of journalism, this paper offers suggestions for new lines of linguistic analysis of such texts – specifically lines of analyses which can provide new insights as to the persuasiveness of such articles and new ways of characterising them according to the relationships they construe with their readers.

In developing and outlining this new line of analysis, the paper draws on some recent work within what is known as the APPRAISAL framework. This framework (also termed 'appraisal theory') has been designed to provide a systematised account of the options available for formulating evaluative meanings in English (see Iedema et al. 1994; Christie & Martin 1997; Martin 2000; White 1998, 2002; Macken-Horarik & Martin 2003; Martin & White 2005). This account was developed by scholars working under the influence of Halliday's systemic functional grammar/linguistics (Halliday 1994) and extends prior models of the resources for conveying interpersonal meanings. The paper also references some of the insights into the nature of argumentation developed by British philosopher, Stephen Toulmin (2003). In drawing on insights from these two sources, the paper offers proposals for the analysis in such texts of what has variously been termed the 'intended', 'implied', 'imagined', 'model' or 'virtual' reader – and what will here be termed the 'putative reader'. As a consequence, the analysis demonstrated is one which attends not just to the value positions and observations being advanced by the author – as is often the case in analyses of the workings of argumentative texts – but which also attends to the beliefs, understandings and attitudes being projected onto the reader, projections by which the reader is 'construed' by the text as either likely to find unproblematic the proposition currently being advanced, to question it or to reject it. As is to be outlined in detail below, this 'projecting' of beliefs and values onto the 'putative reader' (the 'construal' of the 'putative' reader) is via formulations which signal anticipations of reader responses. On the basis of such an analysis it becomes possible to locate journalistic opinion pieces along a spectrum according to the saliency with which (i) the text projects a reader who is aligned attitudinally and epistemically with key propositions being advanced the author or, conversely, the saliency with which (ii) the text projects a reader who is potentially questioning of, or resistant to, key authorial propositions and hence is construed as needing to be won over. Texts

where assumptions of writer-reader alignment prevail can be characterised by reference to the common notion of ‘flag waving’ (or ‘preaching to the converted’), while those which foreground the winning over of potentially unconvinced or resistant readers can be characterised by reference to what is here termed ‘advocacy’. Texts can be located at different points along a spectrum between these two end-points, according to the places in the text at which, and the frequency with which, the reader is construed as aligned with the author or, alternatively, potentially unaligned and needing to be persuaded. These, therefore, are not proposed as categories in some formal taxonomy of text types, but rather as potential differences in the orientation of texts, differences in the communicative purposes being primarily served by texts.

For the purpose of outlining and demonstrating such an analysis, a comparison is made between two journalistic opinion pieces written in response to visits by Japanese politicians to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, one published in the English-language version of the mainland China newspaper, *China Daily*, and the other in the English-language version of the Japanese *Asahi Shimbun*. Such visits are perennially sources of friction between Japan and China due to the shrine housing the graves of high-ranking Japanese World War II war criminals.¹ While these two pieces are of considerable interest in their own right – in terms, for example, of insights they potentially provide into possible differences in the journalistic cultures of these two countries, in terms of insights into the English-language journalism of such countries and so on – they have been selected for analysis here because they lend themselves well to a demonstration of how opinion texts may differ with respect to their signalled anticipations of reader responses. While both articles take a negative view of visits by Japanese politicians to the shrine, they differ markedly in how they construe these relations with the putative reader – providing excellent material for exploring the linguistic options by which authors can project a reader with whom they assume alignment or disalignment. The primary concern of the following discussion is not, therefore, so much with the specifics of the attitudes being advanced or the ideological positions being adopted – even while these are obviously of some interest. Rather, the primary concern is with what can be revealed through the comparison of these

1. According to the japan-guide.com (<https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2321.html>), the Yasukuni Shrine (靖国神社, Yasukuni Jinja) is a Shinto shrine in central Tokyo that commemorates Japan's war dead. ‘The shrine was founded in 1869 with the purpose of enshrining those who have died in war for their country and sacrificed their lives to help build the foundation for a peaceful Japan ... A political controversy surrounds Yasukuni Shrine because since 1978, fourteen class A war criminals have been among the 2.5 million people enshrined. The official visits by several Japanese prime ministers and cabinet members to the shrine since 1975 have been causing concerns regarding a violation of the principle of separation of church and state.’

two texts as to the means by which putative reader relations are construed, and thereby how journalistic opinion writing may lean either towards ‘flag waving’ or towards ‘advocacy’.

2. Theoretical orientation

As indicated, the comparative analysis on which this paper reports is centrally concerned with what has variously been termed the ‘implied’, ‘intended’, ‘imagined’ or ‘ideal’ reader – and here termed the ‘putative reader/addressee’. (Other related terms include ‘inside reader’, ‘created reader’ and ‘the mock reader’; see, e.g. Booth 1961; Gibson 1950;. Here we are concerned with ‘the reader in the text’ (Kress 1985; Thompson 2012) – the reader/addressee which a text construes for itself as it directly or indirectly signals authorial assumptions and anticipations as to what are, or what potentially are, this imagined addressee’s circumstances, experiences, beliefs, understandings, attitudes, dispositions and values. Thus Schmid states: ‘[T]he term “implied reader” designates ... the author’s image of the recipient that is fixed and objectified in the text by specific indexical signs’ (Schmid 2014 : 301). Hasan observes that for the ‘virtual addressee’ of ‘monologic texts’, ‘all aspects of the interactant relation – their respective status, their social distance, the specific attributes of the addressee – are logically entirely created by the language of the text, none having a basis in reality for obvious reasons’ (Hasan 1999: 238). In his influential monograph, *The rhetoric of fiction*, Booth similarly observed that: ‘the author creates, in short, an image of himself [sic] and another image of his reader; he makes his reader, as he makes his second self’ (Booth 1961: 138). Similarly, in more recent APPRAISAL framework based work concerned with the discursive construction of identity and persona, Don has drawn attention to the need for analyses to attend to the linguistic choices by which authors ‘co-position addressees in terms of their ideological beliefs and what is regarded as valid means of coming to agreement, through reference to notions of morality, ethics, propriety, and so on’ (Don 2018: 80). Somewhat related in terms of APPRAISAL framework based scholarship is the recent work by Zappavigna on what she terms ‘ambient affiliation’ (see, e.g. Zappavigna 2014, 2019. However, the attention here is on positioning adopted by authors/speakers as they signal either an expectation of attitudinal alignment with addressees or deal with potential risks to attitudinal alignment, and not on the repertoire of specific linguistic resources by which authors can signal a variety of different dialogistic relationships with the addressee.

While this putative addressee has received a degree of attention in literary-fiction scholarship and particularly in narratology studies (e.g. Gibson 1950;

Booth 1961; Prince 1980), it has received somewhat less attention in linguistic-analysis based discourse studies generally. This is perhaps because the putative addressee, as textual effect, can be analytically elusive. Although this putative addressee may be directly addressed and characterised (with the speaker/writer overtly attaching properties, beliefs and attitudes to them), this is less often the case, at least with respect to the types of texts with which this paper will be concerned – mass communicative persuasive texts. Here the construal of the putative addressee is mostly a matter of authorial implication and signalled authorial assumption.

I have chosen, as already indicated, to mostly employ the term ‘putative addressee/reader’, rather than any of the alternatives mentioned above. This is because (i) for my treatment I draw on related work by Martin and White (2005: 95–133), work in which the term ‘putative reader’ is used and (ii) the word ‘putative’ is associated with a sense of provisionality around what is being advocated by some external source. Thus, we capture the sense that the ‘putative’ addressee is a construct being ‘postulated’ or ‘intimated’ by the authorial voice, even while such ‘intimations’ are subject to interpretation by actual readers and are open to question or resistance.

In its concern with how an implied reader is construed by the text, the paper is informed by a notion which is fundamental to systemic functional linguistic theorising. This is the proposal that (i) as a language event occurs in a given social situation, certain key aspects of that situation are likely to be reflected in, or realised by, the linguistic options taken up by speakers enacting that social situation and (ii) equally, the communicative choices made by speakers will simultaneously ‘construe’ key aspects of that social situation. Thus, Halliday states:

The participants in a culture make use of this close relationship between the text and the situation as a basis for their own interaction. ... we can and do (and must) make inferences from the situation to the text, about the kinds of meaning that are likely to be exchanged; *and also inferences from the text to the situation*. In the normal course of life, all day and every day, when we are interacting with others through language, we are making these inferences in both directions. We are making inferences from the situation to the text, *and from the text to the situation*. [emphases mine]

(Halliday & Hasan 1989: 52)

Along similar lines, Hasan, has observed:

...in the production of an utterance, context activates meaning, meaning activates wording. By contrast, in the reception of the utterance, realization is construal of the relevant choice at the higher level: thus in decoding an utterance, the choice in wording construes meaning, *the choice in meaning construes context*. [my emphasis]

(Hasan 2010: 12)

Obviously, the putative reader being 'construed' by a journalistic opinion piece is but one element of the context of situation being 'construed' by the text as a whole. It is necessary to note, therefore, that in focussing in this way on the 'putative reader', the analysis is unavoidably partial, in terms of any exploration of the total socio-semiotic setting being textually projected – a socio-semiotic setting which might equally be termed 'putative'. It should also be noted that both the 'putative' reader and the 'putative' social context are constructs which are projected via signals and implications which are subject to interpretation by actual readers, rather than communicative outcomes produced autonomously by the text. Hence the term 'putative' is used advisedly – for constructs 'postulated' by the text but which may nevertheless not be taken up by actual readers.

This paper thus demonstrates an analysis which can provide descriptions of the 'putative reader' being 'written into the text' and how choices authors make in formulating propositions can be interpreted as signalling anticipations of reader responses – anticipations, for example, that the reader will regard a particular proposition as an unproblematic 'given' or, alternatively as novel, unexpected, counter-indicated, open to question, unfounded or otherwise problematic. To achieve this, I draw, as indicated above, on the account of the language of evaluation developed in the APPRAISAL framework literature (Martin & White 2005). This account identifies three sub-systems of evaluative meaning making: (i) the system which is given the technical label of ATTITUDE, covering meanings by which positively and negative attitudinal assessments are conveyed or activated, (ii) the system given the technical label of GRADUATION, covering formulations by which such attitudinal assessments can be amplified or muted and (iii) the system given the technical label of ENGAGEMENT, those choices as to the formulation of propositions by which the speaker/writer adopts dialogistic positions vis-à-vis what is represented as having been previously asserted on the current topic and/or vis-à-vis anticipated responses to the current utterance. In providing this account of ENGAGEMENT, the APPRAISAL literature draws inspiration from Bakhtinian notions of dialogism and heteroglossia (1981). For the purposes of the analysis on which this paper reports, particular attention is paid to the use of these options for dialogistic positioning (ENGAGEMENT), since these are resources by which the author presents as responding favourably or unfavourably to prior utterances on the current topic, as fending off or recognising the validity of alternative viewpoints, as assuming addressee concurrence, as construing propositions as counter expected and so on. Thereby it is possible to provide conclusions as to whether that putative reader is construed as what I will term 'likeminded', 'unlikeminded' or 'uncommitted' with respect to the current proposition. By 'likeminded' I mean the reader is construed as sharing, agreeing with, taking for granted or finding unproblematic the particular proposition being advanced. By

‘uncommitted’ I mean the reader is construed as unfamiliar with the proposition or as potentially viewing it as open to question. By ‘unlikeminded’ I mean the reader is construed as potentially favouring a different view or as directly rejecting the proposition.

3. The texts – two journalistic opinion pieces

As indicated, I have selected for comparison items from the Japanese and Chinese English-language news media – from *Asahi Shimbun* and *China Daily* respectively – with the objective of demonstrating an analysis which tracks the construal of projected relations between author and the putative reader and, by which it is possible to characterise journalistic opinion writing as leaning towards ‘flag waving’, or, alternatively, ‘advocacy’. As also indicated, these are opinion pieces² (i.e. not news reports) concerned with a controversial visit to the shrine in 2013 by the then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and then visits to the shrine by some of Abe’s ministers in 2019, apparently with Abe’s covert approval. The *China Daily* piece is a reaction to the visit by Abe in 2013 and the *Asahi shimbun* piece is a reaction to the visit by Abe’s ministers in 2019. Both pieces are critical of the politicians for visiting the shrine, but the comparative analysis reveals substantial dissimilarities in the rhetorical strategies by which the reader is positioned to adopt this negative view and with respect to putative reader positionings. The two articles are as follows.

Article 1

[*China Daily*, December 26, 2013]

Abe shows his cloven hoof

Hawkish Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe finally showed his cloven hoof. He celebrated the first anniversary of his second premiership by insulting Japan’s neighbors and the rest of the world.

His visit to Yasukuni Shrine on Thursday betrayed his decision to confront righteousness, conscience and truth.

His Yasukuni pilgrimage was a declaration of deliberate provocation.

He has chosen to place Japan in opposition to China and South Korea when his country has damaged its relations with the two neighbors to a record low point.

He has chosen to throw down the gauntlet on the international documents settling Japan’s war responsibilities during its colonization and World War II.

2. A text type which is also given such labels as ‘column’ and ‘commentary’.

At the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, 28 Japanese leaders were charged with Class A crimes, and more than 5,700 with Classes B and C crimes. Fourteen of the Class A criminals, including the wartime Prime Minister Hideki Tojo, are enshrined at Yasukuni, which makes the shrine a place that sensible politicians should not visit.

But Abe has chosen to salute his country's war criminals. He has pledged to boost patriotism among his countrymen in a way that plays down or denies Japan's war atrocities in WWII.

Abe has chosen to put his country in isolation.

Article 2

[*Asahi Shimbun*, October 19, 2019]

Cabinet members should keep their distance from Yasukuni Shrine

Seiichi Eto, a state minister in charge of Okinawa and Northern Territories affairs, and Sanae Takaichi, the internal affairs and communications minister, visited Yasukuni Shrine during its ongoing autumn festival.

At a news conference, Eto said, "I offered prayers for those who gave their lives to their country." But a Cabinet minister's visit to the shrine is different in its implications from pilgrimages by families of the war dead or ordinary citizens. Yasukuni Shrine, where people who died in Japan's wars during its imperial era are enshrined as deities, was the core facility of the wartime state Shintoism, which formed the spiritual underpinnings of militarism.

After the end of the war, the shrine became a religious corporation like other shrines and temples. But a Japanese political leader's visit to the shrine can be interpreted as a sign that Japan has forgotten its past mistakes and is trying to justify its behavior before and during the war. That is why the governments of China and South Korea called the two ministers' actions "deplorable" and filed protests.

Among those enshrined at Yasukuni are 14 Japanese leaders who were held accountable for the war the nation waged and convicted as Class-A war criminals in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, also known as the Tokyo Trial.

A Cabinet minister's visit to the shrine could lead to a denial of the national creed Japan has upheld since it returned to the international community under the Treaty of San Francisco. Japan accepted the rulings handed down in the Tokyo Trial under the treaty, which re-established its relations with the Allied powers.

Abe has refrained from visiting the facility since [a visit in 2013 soon after his re-election] and has only offered "masakaki," a sacred evergreen ritual implement, to the shrine for its spring and autumn festivals.

Abe should have urged his ministers to follow his example and stay away from the shrine.

Both Eto and Takaichi are known as Abe confidants and have a history of visiting the shrine regularly. Their actions can only be seen as gestures to indicate Abe's real wishes.

Japan's relationship with South Korea is said to be in the worst shape since the end of the war. Politicians of both countries are required to use their collective wisdom to improve the situation. Japan's relationship with China is also in a delicate and sensitive state with Chinese President Xi Jinping scheduled to visit Japan next spring as a state guest.

Any action that could cause tension in Japan's relations with its neighbors only shows a lack of political wisdom. A visit to Yasukuni Shrine by the prime minister or a Cabinet minister also raises questions concerning the constitutional principle of separation of religion and politics.

Both Eto and Takaichi said they visited the shrine "in a private capacity." As long as they hold Cabinet posts, however, the line between their public and private function is not clear.

In 2002, when Koizumi was the prime minister, a private advisory panel to then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda compiled a report calling for the establishment of a state-run, non-religious facility for memorial services for the war dead. But no specific policy action was taken in line with the recommendation. Politicians have a duty to consider a new facility for war memorial services that everyone can visit without feeling hesitation or complicated emotions.

4. Preview of analysis and key findings

The analysis being demonstrated here involves two steps. Firstly, the analysis attends to the value positions being advanced or referenced by the author – for example identifying the particular attitudinal assessments being either asserted or questioned (who or what is being positively or negatively evaluated by either the author or, according to the author, by some external source) and, likewise, identifying any potentially contentious versions of events being advanced, reported or challenged by the author (assertions as to what has happened or is the current state of affairs). Thus, in this first line of analysis, attention is paid to both attitudinal and epistemic positions. Then the analysis attends to the manner in which these assessments and versions of events are dealt with, with the specific objective of establishing whether they are presented as entirely unproblematic, 'known' and agreed upon, whether the author signals recognition of their contentiousness and hence acknowledges possibility of alternative viewpoints, whether they are presented as open to question, or whether they are rejected outright. For this stage of the analysis, the sub-categories of the APPRAISAL framework's ENGAGE-

MENT system are called upon, enabling conclusions to be reached as to whether the current proposition is formulated so as to signal an anticipation of the reader as either 'likeminded', 'uncommitted' or 'unlikeminded' vis-à-vis a given proposition, as just outlined above. It then becomes possible to characterise a comment piece as either leaning towards 'flag waving' or towards 'advocacy', according to findings as to how frequently and with respect to which propositions the putative reader is construed as 'likeminded', 'uncommitted' or 'unlikeminded'.

A discussion of an analysis of the two opinion pieces, along the above lines, is provided below. The following is by way of a preview of key findings.

With respect to the key value positions advanced by the authors of the two articles, the analysis reveals that, while both are broadly critical of the politicians for visiting the shrine, they nevertheless differ significantly with respect to the specifics of the attitudinal assessments being advanced. For *China Daily*, Abe's visit is a grossly immoral act – a breach of the most serious codes of ethical behaviour while for *Asahi Shimbun* the visit by the two ministers is not cast in such strongly negative terms – being characterised as an act of political incompetence. With respect to putative-reader positioning,³ *China Daily* for the most part construes that reader as mostly agreeing with and finding unproblematic the author's propositions and hence as mostly 'likeminded' and thereby having membership in the same community of shared values as the author. This piece, therefore, can be characterised as strongly oriented towards 'flag waving', the primary purpose of which is not to persuade or convince but rather to rehearse and reinforce the beliefs and values which are presumed to be shared by the piece's readership. In contrast, the *Asahi Shimbun* piece more frequently, though not exclusively, presents the positions it advances as in some way contentious or open to question and thereby more often construes the putative reader as 'uncommitted', as therefore as needing to be persuaded. In then taking steps to confront and defuse the putative reader's uncommittedness, in providing evidence and argumentation in support of propositions recognised as novel or contentious, the text is revealed as more strongly oriented towards 'advocacy' and thereby as directed at enlisting previously unaligned or dis-aligned readers into a new community of shared values.

I turn now to a more extended discussion of this analysis, offering a more detailed account of the analytical framework, as required. Obviously, it is not possible in the current context to deal with every instance of putative-reader position-

3. In this paper 'putative reader construal' and 'putative reader positioning' are used interchangeably. In both usages I am referring to the potential for choices as to how propositions are formulated to signal authorial anticipations of reader responses. Thus, in signalling an anticipation that the reader will find a proposition entirely unproblematic, the text 'construes' or 'positions' the reader as 'likeminded' with respect to that particular proposition.

ing across all the attitudinal and/or epistemic positions being advanced in these texts. Rather, instances of attitudinal/epistemic positioning have been chosen for discussion on the basis that they are representative of the different options for positioning which can be observed in the texts.

5. The attitudinal orientation of the two commentaries

5.1 *China Daily* – attitudinal orientation

It is noteworthy that, for the *China Daily* piece, the criticisms of Abe for visiting the shrine are very much a matter of what the Appraisal framework would classify as instances of ‘impropriety’ within the ‘judgement’ system, as behaviour which is in breach of codes of ethics. To outline what is at stake here attitudinally and rhetorically, it is necessary to offer some more detail on relevant parts of the APPRAISAL framework’s account of evaluative meaning making in English.

The JUDGEMENT system is one of the sub-systems by which, in the APPRAISAL framework, positively or negatively attitudinal values are advanced or activated. It involves meanings by which positively or negatively attitudinal assessments are made of human behaviour or character, by reference to social norms. The other two attitudinal sub-systems are (i) AFFECT, which covers meanings by which positive or negative emotional reactions are linguistically represented and (ii) APPRECIATION, which covers meanings by which entities, situations and happenings are assessed aesthetically or in terms of their social value. The JUDGEMENT system, as it operates in English, identifies five sub-types of assessments of human behaviour:

- i. ‘propriety’ (behaviour assessed as ethically wrong or right),
- ii. ‘veracity’ (assessments of honesty/dishonesty),
- iii. ‘tenacity’ (assessments of behaviour as indicative of appropriate or inappropriate psychological disposition – being appropriately/inappropriately engaged, active, committed, attentive etc.),
- iv. ‘capacity’ (assessment of behaviour as being adequate/inadequate re skill, strength, intelligence etc.),
- v. ‘normality’ (behaviour viewed positively or negatively on account of being assessed as usual or unusual – note the reader can be positioned to take either a negative or positive view of behaviour characterised as ‘unusual’).⁴

The system is set out in tabulated form below.

4. For a detailed account of the taxonomic principles underlying this categorisation, see Martin and White (2005: 52–56).

Table 1. The system of JUDGEMENT (based on and extending Iedema et al. 1994 and Martin & White 2005)

JUDGEMENTS: positive/negative assessments of human behaviour and character		
SOCIAL	Positive	Negative
ESTEEM	<i>Laudable – to applaud; to esteem</i>	<i>Illaudable – to deprecate, criticize</i>
Normality	to act normally, outstandingly, in a remarkable manner, etc.	to act peculiarly, oddly, eccentrically, abnormally, weirdly etc.
Capacity	to act competently, skilfully, powerfully, intelligently gracefully, wittily – to be insightful, successful, victorious etc.	to act incompetently, weakly, stupidly, foolishly, unintelligently, clumsily – to be unsuccessful, defeated, etc.
Tenacity	to act pluckily, heroically, courageously, devotedly, resolutely, determinedly, attentively, self-reliantly etc.	to act rashly, apathetically, obstinately, vexatiously, lazily, servilely, complacently, in a cowardly manner etc.
SOCIAL SANCTION	POSITIVE – to be assessed as a ‘good person’ / ‘right’ behaviour INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT	NEGATIVE – to be assessed as a ‘bad person’ – ‘wrong’ behaviour – ‘wrongdoing’ INSTITUTIONAL CONDEMNATION/GUILT
Veracity	to communicate/act honestly, truthfully, openly, genuinely, credibly – to be authentic, etc.	to communicate/act deceitfully, dishonestly, fraudulently, deceptively, bogusly – to dissemble, to lie, etc.
Propriety	to act ethically, morally, generously, loyally, kindly, sensitively, considerately, forgivingly, compassionately, etc.	to act wrongfully, unethically, evilly, sinfully, meanly, cruelly, unkindly, greedily, corruptly, unforgivingly, insensitively, inconsiderately, shamefully, uncompassionately, etc.

As indicated in the table, these different subtypes of JUDGEMENT are further grouped into two broad categories – ‘social sanction’ versus ‘social esteem.’ To characterise behaviour with respect to ‘capacity,’ ‘tenacity’ or ‘normality’ is to construe it as laudable or illaudable, to present it as applaudable or to criticize it. Thus, such assessments relate to the ‘esteem’ with which the assessed human agent is held, or the ‘lack of esteem.’ However, to laud someone for their ‘tenacity,’ ‘capacity’ or ‘normality’ is not to characterise them as a ‘good person.’ That is the domain of the values of ‘social sanction’ – the domain of verdicts with respect to sanctioning of behaviour by reference to secular or religious codes of ethics and legalities (‘veracity’ and ‘propriety’). Accordingly, we might say, ‘[s]he’s a good person – she’s always kind and considerate,’ but not ‘[s]he’s a good person – she’s intelligent and successful in her career.’ Similarly, to criticize someone for a lack of ‘tenacity,’ ‘capacity’ or ‘normality’ is to assess them as lacking esteem, but not to char-

acterise them as a 'bad person.' That again is the domain of the values of 'social sanction.' Thus, we might say, 'She's a bad person – she's cruel and unkind to her children' but not 'She's a bad person – she's stupid and weird.' Assessments of 'social sanction' are therefore rather more charged interpersonally and socially than assessment of 'social esteem', since, unlike assessments of social esteem, they involve behaviour in accordance with, or in breach of, norms of behaviour which are institutionally codified. To negatively assess someone as dishonest (negative 'veracity') or corrupt (negative 'propriety') puts more at stake interpersonally and socially than, for example, to assess them as stubborn (negative 'tenacity'), unintelligent (negative 'capacity') or weird (negative 'normality').

It is noteworthy in this regard, that the *China Daily* piece very forthrightly condemns Abe's behaviour via high stakes assessments of gross impropriety – Abe is a 'bad person' on account of his visit to the shrine. We observe the following instances of values of negative 'social sanction/impropriety'. Abe is said to have 'showed his cloven hoof' which is presumably a reference to 'Satan' or the 'devil' of various religious traditions – thus casting Abe as 'evil' incarnate. He is also said to have 'insulted' Japans neighbours and the rest of the world. To 'insult' is ethically wrong and hence another instance of 'judgement/social sanction/impropriety'. His visit to the shrine is also said to be indicative of his determination 'to confront righteousness, conscience and truth' – again characterising his behaviour as socially sanctioned, as a gross ethical breach.

5.2 *Asahi Shimbun* – attitudinal orientation

Asahi Shimbun piece is more circumspect attitudinally. While it provides considerable grounds for the reader to view negatively the politicians' action in visiting the shrine, this is done largely through implication, through providing opportunities for the reader to reach negatively attitudinal conclusions rather than overtly characterising the politician's behaviour as, for example unethical or incompetent. Thus, in terms of explicit, direct negative judgements of the ministers (or Abe), there is just the one instance, a case of negative 'capacity' – and hence negative 'social esteem' rather than 'social sanction' in this piece.

Any action that could cause tension in Japan's relations with its neighbors only shows a lack of political wisdom.

Tellingly this accusation of 'lack of political wisdom' is not directly targeted at the ministers or Abe. Rather the criticism is of 'any action which causes tension in Japan's relations with its neighbors.' There is also the possible suggestion of a further assessment of negative 'capacity' in

But a Japanese political leader's visit to the shrine can be interpreted as a sign that Japan has forgotten its past mistakes....

Presumably 'forgetting' one's 'past mistakes' might be taken to indicate some form of mental incapacity, but this is still rather more implied (relies on an inference by the reader) than overtly asserted. Tellingly, Japan's actions in World War II are characterised here as 'mistakes' (negative 'judgement/capacity') rather than as acts of 'impropriety' such as, for example, 'war crimes' or 'atrocities' (negative 'judgement/propriety').

Certainly, the piece does rebuke the politicians to some degree, in warning against such shrine visits. But again, it is noteworthy that there are no overtly attitudinal assertions along the lines of 'The ministers were wrong to visit the shrine' or 'Abe was wrong to allow the visits'. Rather, the rebuke to Abe is presented as a matter of obligation, 'Abe should have urged his ministers to follow his example and stay away from the shrine', and the rebuke to his ministers is construed as being a matter of future action, rather than an assessment of their past action: 'Cabinet members should keep their distance from Yasukuni Shrine.'

6. Positioning of the putative addressee and 'flag waving' versus 'advocacy'

6.1 Levels of analysis – text-global and text-local positioning

By way of a first step into the consideration of putative-reader positioning, it needs to be noted that this positioning may operate at both a text-global or macro level and at a text-local or micro level. To deal with text-global/macro level reader positioning we attend to issues associated with a text's genre status – specifically issues with respect to the global communicative objectives or purposes being served by each opinion piece. Here it is to be noted that in journalistic opinion pieces it is typically (though not necessarily) the case that one proposition (or set of closely related propositions) is rhetorically preeminent as the contentious proposition which constitutes the text's 'thesis', the proposition which the text as a whole sets out to motivate and to justify. In thereby presenting this proposition as contentious and needing to be argued for, opinion texts of this type construe a putative reader who is potentially not aligned with the author vis-à-vis this proposition. In mounting such an argument, the text thus signals an anticipation that the reader may, indeed, find the proposition problematic, that they may not view it as an unproblematic, universally-accepted 'given'. Against this, the many additional propositions advanced by the text need to be considered, propositions which in many cases play a subsidiary role in providing the argumentative sup-

port for the text's preeminent proposition, its thesis. These subsidiary propositions may be formulated in different ways so that they variably construe the reader as 'likeminded', as 'uncommitted' to the current proposition or as 'unlikeminded'. In tracking these various putative-reader positionings, we are thus attending to putative reader construals which operate at this 'text-local' or 'micro' level. It is useful, therefore, to say something initially about the global genre status and communicative objectives of these two texts.

It might be anticipated that opinion pieces will typically be instances of, or at least typically be closely related to, one of the persuasive genres identified and described in the Sydney Genre School literature (Martin & Rose 2008) – in particular what this literature terms the 'exposition' genre and the 'challenge' genre. These are texts in which (in the case of the 'exposition') a central contentious proposition (the thesis) is advanced at an early point in the text and then argued for via a sequence of justifications or motivations, or (in the case of the 'challenge') some externally sourced contentious proposition is referenced early in the text so as to be progressively challenged through a sequence of counter arguments, with an alternative, contrary position (the 'counter-thesis') asserted in the latter stages of the text. The objective of both types of text can thus broadly be described as 'prosecuting a case' – as directed at winning over the reader to the author's viewpoint or as reinforcing the reader in a view they might already be favouring. Certainly, Iedema et al. in their monograph *Media literacy* (1994) identify instances of what they term 'media exposition' and 'media challenge'.

As will be discussed further below, *Asahi Shimbun* can unproblematically be classified as an instance of one such genre – a media 'exposition'. Here the thesis ('Cabinet members should keep their distance from Yasukuni Shrine') is advanced in the opening and then progressively argued for. The consequence of this for the text-global positioning of the putative reader will be outlined below. In contrast, as will also be taken up below, the *China Daily* piece is only minimally persuasive, being largely directed at rehearsing a series of negative assessments of Prime Minister Abe rather than justifying any specific thesis or prosecuting a specific case. The consequences of this for putative reader positioning are taken up below.

The analysis I am exploring here, then, is one in which these two levels of positioning are considered – positioning associated with the global communicative objectives served by the text and positioning associated with subsidiary attitudinal and/or epistemic propositions. I am proposing that journalistic commentary pieces can be located along a scale, the end points of which are (i) what I am terming 'flag waving' in which the author frequently assumes putative reader likemindedness (attitudinal and/or epistemic alignment with the author) versus (ii) what I am terming 'advocacy' in which such likemindedness is not so widely

assumed or signalled. Here the reader is frequently construed, at least at rhetorically crucial points in the text, as either potentially ‘uncommitted’ or potentially resistant to propositions being advanced by the author. It seems plausible that actual instances of journalistic commentary will typically be located at some point along this spectrum. Where a piece falls on the spectrum will be determined by the extent to which it treats the attitudinal or epistemic propositions being advanced as taken-for-granted ‘givens’ (flag waving) or, alternatively, as potentially contentious propositions, the validity of which the reader needs to be convinced (advocacy). What is at stake rhetorically in this difference will be explored below in connection with the further discussion of the two opinion pieces under consideration.

6.2 Positioning of the putative reader in the *Asahi Shimbun* piece

6.2.1 Text-global positioning – *Asahi Shimbun*

As already indicated, at the text-global level, the *Asahi Shimbun* piece explicitly and deliberately prosecutes a particular case. It is organised around a central contentious proposition – the thesis that Japanese politicians ‘should keep their distance from Yasukuni Shrine’ – which is supported by various lines of justificatory, argumentative support. These can be summarised thusly.

Japanese politicians should keep their distance from Yasukuni Shrine
[argumentative support]

because

the Yasukuni Shrine was the core facility of the wartime state Shintoism, which formed the spiritual underpinnings of militarism.

because

a Japanese political leader’s visit to the shrine can be interpreted as a sign that Japan has forgotten its past mistakes and is trying to justify its behavior before and during the war.

because

visits to the shrine could lead to a denial of the national creed Japan has upheld since it returned to the international community under the Treaty of San Francisco.

because

Japan’s relationship with South Korea is said to be in the worst shape since the end of the war. Japan’s relationship with China is also in a delicate and sensitive state.

Thus we can say that this text – as would usually be the case with other ‘expositions’ or ‘exposition-like’ texts – construes the putative reader as potentially not sharing the author’s view vis-à-vis politicians visiting the shrine, or perhaps of not yet having a fully-formed view of the issue, or perhaps even having come to the text with a contrary viewpoint. If it were assumed that the reader already held this view, then it would not be necessary to argue the case. The addressee is thus construed by the text as a whole as ‘uncommitted’ or even as potentially ‘unlike-minded’ by dint of the text’s central, overriding purpose – that of ‘persuading’. That is to say, for the author to adopt the communicative role of ‘persuader’ it is necessarily to position the addressee interpersonally as ‘persuadee’ – i.e. to project on to the addressee the possibility that they do not share the attitudinal and/or epistemic position being advanced in the text’s thesis. At the same time, and equally obviously, the addressee is construed as ‘persuadable’, as potentially susceptible to being won over to the merits of the author’s viewpoint on account of the justifications and motivations supplied for the purpose of winning them over. At this text-global level of analysis, therefore, the text can be characterised as an act of ‘advocacy’.

This, however, is only one dimension of the putative-reader positioning associated with argumentative structures of this type – i.e. arrangements in which a justification is supplied in support of some contentious proposition. When we go beyond what is asserted in the text to consider the assumptions being relied on, we discover that very often there is an ultimate, underlying positioning of the putative reader as ‘likeminded’ with respect to some more fundamental belief, attitude or expectation. In this I draw on the Toulminian account (Toulmin 2003) of the logical entailment structures typically operating in everyday arguments.

In order to demonstrate this, consider the logical workings of the following argumentation from the *Asahi Shimbun* piece.

Japanese politicians should keep their distance from Yasukuni Shrine
[because]

Japan’s relationship with South Korea is said to be in the worst shape since the end of the war. ... Japan’s relationship with China is also in a delicate and sensitive state.

In order to appreciate what is at stake here in terms of positioning of the putative reader, we reference the notion of the argumentative ‘warrant’, as formulated by Toulmin. Toulmin notes that argumentation involves not only the contentious proposition being advanced and the justification which is presented in support of this proposition, but also an underlying, typically unstated belief or set of beliefs by which the justification has the power to ‘entail’ or to lead logically to the argued-for proposition it is intended to motivate. Thus, for the argumentation just

presented, it is necessary for the reader to operate with a warrant along the lines of ‘politicians should avoid at all costs actions which might damage relationships with other countries’ or perhaps ‘potential damage to relations with countries such as China and South Korea must be given precedence over a politician’s wish to commemorate the war dead.’ (Since such warrants – the underlying premises of the argument – are frequently not stated, it is not possible to articulate them definitively. We can just make proposals as to the kinds of positions they must entail, along the lines of the suggestions just made.) At this lower level of analysis, the text does thus construe a ‘likeminded’ reader – one who is relied on and is assumed, to share with the author the belief(s) or assessment(s) which supplies the unstated premise on which the argument is founded. That the author projects this underlying premise onto the reader is evidenced by the fact that it is not stated, is not itself argued for. Unless the reader does hold this view (for example, that precedence must be given to maintaining good relations with other countries) then the argumentative logic collapses – the piece is no longer potentially persuasive. Any actual readers who do not share this underlying view will, of course, find the argumentation illogical at this point and be alienated, excluded from the text’s construed readership.

The same point can be made with all the other arguments supplied in support of the author’s thesis (as summarised above). We can say, therefore, that argumentative advocacy of this type construes the reader as ‘uncommitted’ vis-à-vis the text’s thesis but at the same time construes the reader as ‘likeminded’ with respect to the underlying, typically unstated beliefs, attitudes or expectations which by which the propositions presented as justifying the thesis function to logical entail the thesis.

6.2.2 Text-local/micro positionings of the putative reader in the *Asahi Shimbun* piece

These then are the types of insights arising when an analysis of putative-reader positioning is conducted at this text-global/macro level – i.e. with respect to positioning vis-à-vis such a text’s central proposition. I turn now to considering a text-local/micro level analysis of putative-reader positioning in the *Asahi Shimbun* piece – positioning re subsidiary propositions. Again, I note that, due to space limitations, it is possible to only consider the positioning associated with just a selection of these propositions. These have been selected with a view to offering examples of where the reader is variously construed as ‘unlikeminded’, ‘uncommitted’ and ‘likeminded’.

6.2.2.1 *A point of possible reader unlikemindedness*

There is one point in the text where, at this text-local/micro level of analysis, it is possible to interpret the text as construing the reader as ‘unlikeminded’, as potentially holding a divergent view, even if only momentarily. This is entailed in the following excerpt, situated early in the text.

At a news conference, Eto said, “I offered prayers for those who gave their lives to their country.” But a Cabinet minister’s visit to the shrine is different in its implications from pilgrimages by families of the war dead or ordinary citizens. Yasukuni Shrine, where people who died in Japan’s wars during its imperial era are enshrined as deities, was the core facility of the wartime state Shintoism, which formed the spiritual underpinnings of militarism.

To be noted here is the author’s use of the adversative ‘but’ at the beginning of the second sentence of the paragraph (an instance of ‘countering’ in the Appraisal framework’s repertoire of options for dialogistic positioning). Such adversatives function to signal that corollaries or conclusions potentially arising from a prior utterance are being headed off, disclaimed, countered or defused by what follows in the text. Thus, the author is here allowing for the possibility that Eto’s justification for visiting the shrine might, at least momentarily, be seen by the reader as having merit and hence placing the reader at odds with the author. In immediately heading off this potential corollary in this way, by stepping in to dismiss this as a potential justification for a positive view of the visits, the author construes a reader who is potentially susceptible to this counter view and who is hence potentially in need of such a ‘corrective’.

6.2.2.2 *A point of possible reader uncommittedness*

The construing of the reader as potentially dis-aligned with the author, as not yet convinced of the merits of a proposition being advanced by the author, can be observed in connection with the following justification of the text’s thesis. Here, in support of the author’s central proposition that ‘Cabinet members should keep their distance from Yasukuni Shrine’ the following proposition is advanced.

A Cabinet minister’s visit to the shrine could lead to a denial of the national creed Japan has upheld since it returned to the international community under the Treaty of San Francisco.

Of significance here is the fact that the author has chosen not to propose categorically that the visit amounts to, or constitutes, a denial of the national creed upheld by Japan over so many years, but rather that it ‘could’ lead to a denial of the creed. In modalising in this way, the author presents the proposition which addresses the consequence of the visit as grounded in his/her individual, contingent sub-

jectivity and hence as but one of the positions currently in play around this issue in the heteroglossic environment surrounding this debate. In avoiding formulating the proposition categorically, in choosing not to present this as a given, the author thus makes dialogistic space for a reader who may not share this view, who at least regards it as open to question. (For an extended discussion of the dialogistic potential of 'epistemic' modals and related formulations see White, 2000, 2003; White & Sano 2006; Martin & White 2005:104–111.)

6.2.2.3 *Categorical assertion and the putative reader positioned as 'likeminded'*

I turn now to considering several points in the piece where, in different ways, the reader is construed as 'likeminded'.

Consider, for example, the argument that the politicians should not visit the shrine because this 'can be interpreted as a sign that Japan has forgotten its past mistakes and is trying to justify its behavior before and during the war.' The proposition at stake, then, is: 'a Japanese political leader's visit to the shrine can be interpreted as a sign that Japan has forgotten its past mistakes and is trying to justify its behavior before and during the war.' Significant here is the author having chosen to categorically or barely assert that 'the visit can be interpreted as...' rather than, for example, asserting the following:

In my view, a Japanese political leader's visit to the shrine can be interpreted as a sign that Japan has forgotten its past mistakes and is trying to justify its behaviour before and during the war. [*proposition presented as grounded in the author's own contingent subjectivity*]

or

Arguably, a Japanese political leader's visit to the shrine can be interpreted as a sign that ... [*proposition presented as contested in the current heteroglossic environment*]

or

Leading commentators are saying a Japanese political leader's visit to the shrine can be interpreted as a sign ... [*proposition presented as grounded in the contingent subjectivity of external sources*]

or

Of course a Japanese political leader's visit to the shrine can be interpreted as a sign that ... [*proposition presented as a given, a taken-for-granted view shared by author and reader*]

or

The facts of the matter are that a Japanese political leader's visit to the shrine can be interpreted as a sign that ... [*proposition presented as defeating some alternative contrary position*]

In the APPRAISAL framework, categorical assertions are termed ‘monoglossic’ formulations. These are ‘bare assertions’ which, following Bakhtinian notions of heteroglossia and dialogism (Bakhtin 1981), can be understood as involving a choice by the speaker not to recognise or engage with the multiplicity of other voices and associated value positions in which all utterances are located. Such formulations are thus ‘monoglossic’ in the sense that they involve the voice of the speaker in isolation from the heteroglossic environment in which, as Bakhtin has argued, all verbal communication is located. By such ‘monoglossic’ bare assertions, the author construes a ‘likeminded’ putative reader – i.e. they are interpretable as implying that the reader already holds the view in question or will unproblematically accept it as accurate, fair, reasonable and/or well-founded. The argument that such monoglossic assertion construes a ‘likeminded’ addressee is based on consideration of what are the alternatives available to the speaker/writer in advancing such propositions – some of which have just been exemplified. Thus, we note that they are ‘monoglossically bare’ in that, for example, such formulations are not modalised or attributed to external sources, do not involve authorial emphasis directed at challenging alternative positions, do not involve the negation of alternative propositions, and do not involve any efforts by the author to offer a ground or a justification for the attitudes being advanced, and so on. (See Martin & White 2005, Chapter 3 for a full account of the resources which signal recognition of the heteroglossic environment in which all utterances are located.)

6.2.2.4 *Presupposition and putative-reader likemindedness*

Beyond categorically asserting that a Japanese politician’s visit can be interpreted in this way, this sentence also includes a presupposition: that Japan ‘made mistakes’ during the war. In using the nominalisation ‘its past mistakes’ in advancing this proposition, the author thereby presents this as a universally accepted given. (This functionality has widely been dealt with in the philosophy of language, pragmatics and critical discourse analysis literature – see, e.g. Kempson 1975; Carston 1998; Simon-Vandenberg et al. 2007; Delogu 2009). Presupposition is another mode of monoglossing (ignoring possible alternative positions) which, in taking the proposition for granted, construes likemindedness on the part of the addressee. Of course, while it is very widely held that Japan did ‘make mistakes’ – i.e. did commit crimes and atrocities during the war – there is also the counter-view held by what is presumably some sectors in Japan society that its actions in the war were not untoward, that it was acting as the other ‘great powers’ had earlier acted in carving out their own colonial empires.⁵ Any who held this minority view would be excluded from the putative readership being construed for the text.

5. For a discussion of viewpoint see, for example, https://www.cleveland.com/world/2009/01/japanese_justifying_of_wwii_hi.html, accessed April 10, 2020.

6.2.3 Conclusion to the discussion of putative reader construal/positioning in the *Asahi Shimbun* piece

In the above discussion I have made a case for characterising this opinion piece as an act of ‘advocacy’ on the basis that, at the text-global level, it construes the reader as potentially ‘uncommitted’ to the text’s central contentious proposition and hence as needing to be convinced of its merits, or at least as needing to have their support for this viewpoint reinforced. The analysis revealed that such ‘advocacy’ can involve a degree of dialogistic complexity. Thus, for example, while the reader was construed as potentially ‘uncommitted’ to the proposition that ‘Japanese politicians should keep their distance from Yasukuni Shrine’, at the same time the reader was construed as likemindedly finding unproblematic the subsidiary proposition offered by way of argumentative support this – the proposition that the visits are interpretable as a sign Japan is trying to justify its behaviour in World War II. Along similar lines, via one of the assumed and unstated underlying ‘warrants’, the reader is also construed as ‘likeminded’ with respect to the view that politicians should not visit the shrine if this results in a damaging of relations with Japan’s neighbours. This is even while the author allows for the possibility that the reader may, at least initially, be ‘unlikeminded’ in having a favourable view of the visits on the basis that they enable the offering of ‘prayers for those who gave their lives to their country’. Thus, while the reader is broadly construed as ‘uncommitted’ to the piece’s central proposition, they are variably construed as ‘unlikeminded’, ‘uncommitted’ and ‘likeminded’ with respect to the text’s repertoire of subsidiary propositions. This raises the prospect that such texts might be classified as ‘advocatory’ to greater or less degrees, according to whether positioning of the reader as ‘uncommitted’ or ‘unlikeminded’ prevails (i.e. a text more towards the ‘advocacy’ end of the spectrum) or whether positioning of the reader as ‘likeminded’ occurs more frequently or more saliently (i.e., text somewhat closer to the ‘flag waving’ end of the spectrum).

6.3 Positioning of the putative reader in the *China Daily* piece

The *China Daily* piece can unproblematically be located well towards the ‘flag waving’ end of this spectrum. It very largely consists of a series of highly charged attitudinal assertions for which no argumentative support is supplied. For example:

Abe finally showed his cloven hoof.

Abe insulted Japan’s neighbors and the rest of the world.

Abe confronted righteousness, conscience and truth.

Abe’s visit was a deliberate provocation.

Abe has placed Japan in opposition to China and South Korea.

Abe has thrown down the gauntlet on the international documents settling Japan's war responsibilities during its colonization and World War II.

Abe has chosen to place his country in isolation.

These are all presented as self-evident, as not requiring of explanation or justification or evidence. Crucially none of these assertions seem to be being given precedence as a central proposition which might provide a thesis for the text, a proposition which might then be argumentatively justified by what follows after. These are all formulated as 'monoglossic' assertions, as already discussed above – that is to say, bare categorical assertions where there is no recognition of any tension with alternative viewpoints in play in the current heteroglossic environment. As already observed, by such a formulation the author construes a 'likeminded' putative reader with respect to each of these propositions – i.e. this particular dialogistic choice is interpretable as implying that the reader already holds the view in question or will unproblematically accept it as fair, reasonable and/or well-founded.

There is a further dimension to the viewpoints being projected onto the putative reader via the specific wordings of these propositions. Consider, by way of example:

He [Abe] celebrated the first anniversary of his second premiership by insulting Japan's neighbors and the rest of the world.

This is at least potentially interpretable as implying that it was, in fact, Abe's intention to insult Japan's neighbours and the rest of the world, rather than, alternatively, an unintended, unanticipated consequence of his actions. To unintentionally insult one's neighbours might be seen as evidence of incompetence while to intentionally insult is to be guilty of wrongdoing. This, of course, is a substantially stronger negative assessment. By monoglossically advancing this, the author signals the anticipation that the putative reader will find unproblematic the suggestion that Abe not only insulted Japan's neighbours but did so intentionally.

In other assertions, the proposition that Abe was intentionally a miscreant is explicitly asserted. Consider, for example:

His visit to Yasukuni Shrine on Thursday betrayed his decision to confront righteousness, conscience and truth.

Here, Abe is said not only to have 'confronted righteousness, conscience and truth', but also to have made a 'decision' to do so. The gravity of the wrongdoing is thus enhanced. Via the categorical assertion of this the reader is again construed as 'likeminded' with respect to such a serious assessment.

There is perhaps just a hint of argumentation, or deliberate persuasiveness in the provision of the following paragraph.

At the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, 28 Japanese leaders were charged with Class A crimes, and more than 5,700 with Classes B and C crimes. Fourteen of the Class A criminals, including the wartime Prime Minister Hideki Tojo, are enshrined at Yasukuni, which makes the shrine a place that sensible politicians should not visit.

Here we note that, interestingly, the author shifts from assessments of ‘impropriety’ (‘social sanction’) to an assessment of ‘incapacity’ (‘social esteem’) – ‘makes the shrine a place *sensible* politicians should not visit’. Here the author takes pains to point out that the ‘Japanese leaders’ who were charged with the gravest of war crimes are ‘enshrined at Yasukuni’. This can perhaps be treated as offering some justificatory, persuasive support for the proposition that no ‘sensible’ politician should visit the shrine. It might also have acted as argumentative support for the kinds of negative assessment of Abe offered earlier in the piece, but significantly it is not offered until well towards the end of the article. The assumption underlying the first part of the piece is that, presumably, the reader is well aware of this, and will concur with the author in viewing this as solid grounds for Abe being assessed as ‘cloven hooved’, as having breached ‘righteousness, conscience and truth’.

We can say that, then, that the ‘flag waving’ *China Daily* piece is substantially less complex with respect to putative-reader positioning than the ‘advocatory’ *Asahi Shimbun* piece, very largely confining itself to construing reader likemindedness, with just the one moment, late in the text, where the possibility of reader uncommittedness is registered.

7. Conclusion

This paper has offered a brief demonstration of an analytical approach for tracking putative-addressee positioning in texts of this type – a line of analysis which provides the basis for classifying such texts according to the degree to which, and the text-internal points at which, they involve communicative acts of ‘flag waving’ versus acts of ‘advocacy’.

More specifically, the discussion outlined the linguistic basis for characterising the *China Daily* piece as largely an exercise in ‘flag waving’ which construes a very largely ‘likeminded’ reader, a reader who need not be persuaded of the impropriety of Abe’s visit to the shrine. For this reader, this is a viewpoint which is entirely unproblematic. The value of such pieces for actual readers for whom this likemindedness applies is presumably that of confirming their membership

in a legitimated community of shared value and feeling. The reader's identity as someone for whom this view is natural is thus validated. They experience the text as an act of solidarity with others who share this view. Alternatively, this text, of course, excludes any actual readers for whom this viewpoint might in some way be novel, open to question or problematic. They are not addressed by the text and hence are excluded from its putative readership.

Likewise, the discussion outlined the basis for locating the *Asahi Shimbun* piece towards the 'advocacy' end of the proposed spectrum. It was demonstrated that with texts like this, the reader is construed as potentially unfamiliar with, or 'uncommitted' to, the case being made (i.e. that the visits to the shrine were wrong) and hence is subjected to a textual attempt to persuade them of the validity of the position being advanced. It was also shown that, despite this 'global' positioning of the putative reader as 'uncommitted' but persuadable, there were nevertheless numerous ideologically significant points in the texts where the reader was construed as 'likeminded' at a more micro level of analysis. In fact, it was shown that the assumption of reader likemindedness at certain points was fundamental to the argumentative logic of the piece. All this suggests that 'expositions' of this type can involve some degree of complexity in putative-reader positioning. To the extent that this piece is typical, the discussion suggests that it will be customary for such commentary pieces to variously construe the reader as 'uncommitted', 'likeminded' and even, if only momentarily, as 'unlikeminded'.

The exploration of this analytical methodology has, of necessity, been incomplete and partial, with space available for outlining just some of the linguistic mechanisms by which the addressee can variously be construed as 'likeminded', 'uncommitted' or 'unlikeminded'. Coverage of a wider range of these mechanisms can be found in White 2020b, 2020a, 2021. Obviously, if a comprehensive analysis of putative-reader positioning in these texts were to be offered, it would be necessary to extend the analysis to include consideration of a wider range of the propositions being advanced, referenced or challenged by the authors. This would include a tracking of just which propositions were monoglossically formulated (categorical assertions and presuppositions), which unstated 'warrants' were relied on, which propositions were rejected or fended off, which propositions were construed as contentious or open to question, and so on.

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