

# APPRAISAL and the special instructiveness of narrative

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## *Abstract*

*This article considers the role of APPRAISAL systems in narrative discourse from the point of view of writer/reader relations.<sup>1</sup> It aims to uncover some of the mechanisms by which narratives 'go to work' on readers – enabling them to 'feel with' particular characters and to adjudicate their behavior ethically. The data used in this study includes one short written narrative presented to sixteen-year-old Australian students in a formal English examination and two successful written responses to this.*

*The first part of the article focuses on the semantic attributes of the three texts. The narrative, CLICK, and the responses form an intertextual set from which we can learn much about a narrative's addressivity and the kinds of uptake displayed in A-range readings. The successful responses (like others in the A-range corpus) embody a complex of attributes including an ability to read narrative texts relationally, a sensitivity to the hierarchy of voices and values played out in the text and attentiveness to both implicit and explicit forms of APPRAISAL.*

*The second part of the article presents an analytical apparatus developed to linguistically model the development of empathy and discernment in ideal (and in this case, successful) readers as they read and respond to this narrative. Linguistic analysis focuses on how appraisal resources like AFFECT and JUDGMENT, their trends, their co-patterning and their transformation contribute to the creation of a text axiology in ideal readers.*

*The article concludes by outlining some implications for analysis of evaluation in text if we take into account different conditioning environments for development of writer-reader relations.*

*Keywords:* appraisal; narrative analysis; narrative address; reader positioning; evaluation; English; axiology.

## 1. Introduction: Some working assumptions about narrative address

Most of the written narratives young people encounter in school reading programs have a special kind of instructiveness which is injunctive without being overtly moralizing. Unlike the sermon or the moral tale, they teach implicitly. How do they do this? And how is it that readers absorb the ethical values that narratives impart but do not name?

The work of Mikhail Bakhtin (Bakhtin, 1935[1981], 1953[1986]) made literary theorists and ultimately linguists more aware of the profoundly 'addressive' character of so-called monologic texts. In this perspective, written narratives establish by textual means a virtual dialogue with their readers which is embodied in the design of the whole and with which readers engage as they process the text.

The work, like the rejoinder in dialogue, is oriented towards the response of the other (others), towards his [*sic*] active responsive understanding, which can assume different forms: educational influence of the readers, persuasion of theme, critical responses, influence on followers and successors, and so on ([Bakhtin 1953 [1986]: 76).

This article presents a framework for investigating the 'active responsive understanding' of narrative that is demonstrated by 'successful' student readers. It attempts to show how language resources for construing emotion and ethics are deployed in particular ways to co-create high order meaning complexes, or *metarelations*, which position readers to adopt particular attitudes to characters in the course of an unfolding narrative. Linguistically, my study draws on research into evaluative semantics undertaken within systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and referred to as APPRAISAL. It also connects with the attempts of systemic functional linguists, Jay Lemke (1989, 1992, 1998), and Paul Thibault (1989, 1991) to enrich linguistic perspectives on interpersonal meaning.

Lemke has extended Bakhtin's term *axiology* to capture the complex value orientation of texts and textual practices.

Texts construct putative models of their addressees and of the discourse world of competing voices in which they are to be heard. They take some stance toward real and possible interlocutors and toward what they themselves and these others may say. This fundamentally dialogical view of text was introduced by Bakhtin along with the notion of heteroglossia: that all the diverse social voices (classes, genders, movements, epochs, viewpoints) of a community form an intertextual system within which each is necessarily heard. He (i.e., Bakhtin) pointed out that the relations which texts construct, along with these voices are both ideational (representationally semantic) and *axiological* (value-orienting) (Lemke 1989: 39).

In my research, there are two aspects of text axiology relevant to an account of narrative address. Firstly, the reader is invited to a position of

*empathy*—emotional solidarity with or, at least, understanding of the motives of a given character. Secondly, the reader is expected to take up a position of *discernment*—adjudication of the ethical values adopted by a given character. I suggest in this article that narrative teaches through two kinds of subjectivity—intersubjectivity (a capacity to ‘feel with’ a character) and supersubjectivity (a capacity to ‘stand over’ a character and evaluate her or his actions ethically).

For purposes of analysis, I assume that the design of a text suggests an ideal reading, a position from which characters and events become intelligible, values shareable and the narrative itself coherent. Like the ‘implied narrator’ identified by Booth (1961) and the ‘model reader’ described by Eco (1994), the ‘ideal reader’ cannot be identified with any of the individual voices articulated within the text nor with the vagaries of real readers as they interact with the text. As Chatman (1978) reminds us, ‘the ideal reader is a position not a role’. It is an idealized position *projected by the text itself* which sets the terms of the interaction with the reader and makes particular subject positions more or less likely or ‘preferred’ (Morley 1980; Kress 1985; Cranny-Francis 1990). The ideal reader is a useful fiction, ‘guaranteeing the consistency of a specific reading without guaranteeing its validity in any absolute sense’ (Suleiman and Crosman 1980: 11). Furthermore, it is the narrative text that mediates the significance of different evaluative voices contained within and creates an identifiable space from which the reader can appraise these. But, as will be seen, there *are* parallels between the fiction of the ideal reader and the reality of some actual readers’ written responses.

Section two of the article presents a narrative called *CLICK* taken from an English examination and two written responses to this that were judged successful by examiners and awarded a grade of A+. These responses display a relational reading of *CLICK*, a sensitivity to interpersonal hierarchies in its ‘narrative address’ and attentiveness to both implicit and explicit forms of appraisal. This section highlights the implications of these readers’ responses for analysis of narrative. Section three of the article introduces the linguistic systems of ATTITUDE, LOADING and APPRAISAL MODE used in my analysis. It suggests that we need to consider patterns, combinations and ‘harmonies’ of APPRAISAL choices if we are to understand their contribution to reader empathy and discernment. Section four presents the analytical apparatus developed to linguistically model the genesis of empathy and ethical discernment in readers as they process the text. I suggest that narrative axiology can be modeled in terms of *metarelations* and that different configurations of these are activated in creation of empathy and ethical discernment. The final section of the article outlines implications for analysis of appraisal if we take into account the conditioning environments (textual and intertextual) of narrative addressivity.

## 2. The texts and their semantic attributes

The texts in focus in this article were first published by the New South Wales Board of Secondary Education in the late 1980s (Board of Secondary Education 1987). Although both the narrative and the two responses are now more than ten years old, they are typical of examination narratives and also of responses to these by students over the ensuing years. They have generated continuing discussion among educational linguists in Australia about contemporary specialized requirements of school English (see, for example, Rothery 1994; Rothery and Macken 1991; Macken-Horarik 1996; Martin 1996; and Cranny-Francis 1996). I draw on them here to explore the potential of appraisal analysis for understanding more of narrative address and reader positioning.

Year ten is the final year of compulsory schooling in Australia and most states award sixteen-year-olds a school certificate based, in part, on their written responses to narratives. The five narratives I have analyzed are short stories taken from school certificate examinations in English (see Macken-Horarik 1996 for extended discussion of these texts). They are all examples of what I call *psychological narratives*. They focus on subjective experience, typically mediated through the point of view of an adolescent who struggles with the competing demands of adult authority figures like teachers or parents and the possibilities of escape from these into daytime television, romance or nature. At a certain point in these narratives, some event or news of an event intrudes on the habitual world of the young person. She or he is faced with a choice about how to respond to this disruption and the remaining narrative dramatizes the internal and external consequences of the encounter. In most cases, the young person adjusts to reality, accommodating the psycho-cultural demands of the external world. But in a small number of cases (texts) this adjustment is less secure and the character suffers the consequences of ostracism or alienation of one kind or another. The story *CLICK* is like other narratives of my corpus. It embodies an emotional and ethical message (an axiology) which readers need to discern and articulate in particular ways if they are to achieve a successful grade.<sup>2</sup>

Before presenting *CLICK*, I want to explain the principles on which I segment the text into stages and phases. The notion of *stage* has been used extensively in educational applications of SFL to display the generic structure of different text types (see Martin 1998; Macken et al. 1989). In many current curriculum documents based on SFL, we are informed that narratives unfold over time, orient the reader to the situation of one or more characters, present a complication which one or more of the characters have to solve and a resolution of this for better or worse. In the Labovian framework, which has been most influential in Australian adaptations of genre-based literacy, evaluation is the mechanism by which a narrator or

character highlights the point of the narrative. Evaluation is more often interspersed throughout a narrative than limited to one stage. I use the category of *stage* to segment *CLICK* into major event sequences to do with the ‘orientation’, ‘complication’ or ‘resolution’ of the narrative. Stage one of *CLICK* orients the reader to the domestic and psychological situation of the main character, Jenny. Stage two focuses on the intrusion of an accident victim into her habitual world and her confrontation with ‘the real world of death and unhappy endings’. Stage three plays out the psychological crisis this encounter forces on Jenny and her personal resolution of this.

But the category of stage is not enough to capture what Bakhtin called the ‘internal dialogism’ of texts. For this task we need a unit of analysis which is intermediate between the generic stage and the sentence. One that I have found particularly useful is the notion of *phase*. It originates in the attempts of Karen Malcolm and Michael Gregory to ‘characterize stretches of discourse in which there is a significant measure of consistency and congruity in what is being selected semantically’ (Gregory and Malcolm 1981; Gregory 1988). *Phase* is a semantic rather than a formal unit of analysis such as the paragraph. It enables us to ‘chunk’ text according to specifiable criteria. I use it here to describe the environment of distinctive changes in meaning over spans of text. For my purposes, a change of phase occurs whenever the text (and hence the reader) moves from one experiential domain to another, from outside to inside a character’s consciousness, from one voice to another, and from one pattern of appraisal choices to another. A more detailed explanation of these changes occurs later in the article. *Stages* are represented with numbers and *phases* with letters in the following text.

(1) (*CLICK*, by Judith Stamper)

- 1a. *CLICK*. The television dial sounded through the room like snapped fingers. First there was soft static. Then loud voices swelled up.
- 1b. ‘The sheriff will get you for this kid.’ *BANG! BANG!*  
‘You won’t be around to find out Slade.’ *BANG! BANG!*
- 1c. *CLICK, CLICK, CLICK*. Jenny turned the dial to channel 4.
- 1d. ‘Mr and Mrs Williams, if you answer this question correctly, the water bed will be yours!’
- 1e. *CLICK, CLICK*.  
‘I’m Popeye the Sailor Man.’
- 1f. ‘Jenny, what are you doing tonight?’ Her mother’s words floated into Jenny’s mind. But she didn’t answer.
- 1g. ‘Jenny!’ This time her mother’s voice demanded an answer.
- 1h. ‘Uh, I’m not sure, Mum.’
- 1i. Jenny leaned forward to turn the dial to Channel 8.
- 1j. *CLICK, CLICK*. The last part of *Secret Loves* was on.

- 1k. 'Jenny, don't watch television again all night. I hate to leave you alone when your father is gone too. But find something else to do. Promise?'
- 1l. 'Sure Mum.'
- 1m. Jenny stared at the television, trying to hear what the mother on *Secret Loves* would say when she heard that her daughter was pregnant.
- 1n. In the back of her mind Jenny thought she heard her mother say something. Then she heard the hallway door close.
- 1o. 'See you later Mum.' Jenny didn't say it very loudly. Her mother wouldn't have heard it anyway.
- 1p. On the screen the mother was holding her daughter in her arms and crying, 'What will the family think? What will the family think?'
- 1q. Jenny thought about her family.
- 1r. There wasn't much to it. Her father was on the road a lot, driving his truck. Her mother worked at night as a waitress. Jenny didn't have any brothers or sisters. It wasn't a real family. They never did much together.
- 1s. *Secret Loves* ended and a commercial came on. It was for the sex appeal toothpaste. A beautiful girl with white teeth was sitting with her boyfriend in a sports car. She smiled at the guy and ran her hand through his hair. The guy reminded Jenny of somebody in her class.
- 1t. Jenny daydreamed about being in a sports car with him and looking like the girl in the commercial. She thought about it every time she brushed her teeth. She wouldn't brush with anything but *that* toothpaste.
- 1u. The wail of a police siren came into the room.
- 1v. Jenny started to go to the window. But she didn't get up.
- 1w. Doctor Harding had started the girl's heart again. The beautiful nurse wiped his forehead. Someone told the girl's family that the operation had been a success. Doctor Harding took off his surgical mask and the camera zoomed in on his face.
- 1x. A commercial came on.
- 1y. Jenny heard the sound of an ambulance coming down the street. She heard her neighbours' voices in the hallway. They were talking about the accident.
- 1z. Jenny decided to check out the accident during the commercial. She would probably get back in time before the show started again.
- 2a. She went out into the hallway and walked down the stairs until she got to the top of the stairs outside the block of flats.
- 2b. From there she saw the girl.
- 2c. The white body and red blood were like fresh paint splotches against the black footpath. The image froze into Jenny's mind. The girl's face

- was horrible and beautiful at the same time. It seemed more real than anything Jenny had ever seen.
- 2d. Looking at it, Jenny felt as though she was coming out of a long dream.
  - 2e. It seemed to cut through the cloud in her mind like lightning.
  - 2f. Suddenly Jenny was aware of everything around her.
  - 2g. Police cars were pulling up. Ambulance lights were flashing around. People sobbed and covered their faces.
  - 2h. Jenny walked down the stairs to the street where the girl lay.
    - 2i. She was already dead.
    - 2j. No handsome young doctor had come and saved her. No commercial interrupted the stillness of her death.
  - 2k. For a second, Jenny wanted to switch the channel to escape the girl's face. She wanted to turn off its realness.
    - 2l. But the girl wasn't part of her television world. She was part of the real world of death and unhappy endings.
  - 2m. Two ambulance men came from the ambulance and gently put the dead girl on a stretcher. The crowd of people broke into small groups and whispered to each other as they drifted away.
  - 2n. Jenny stayed until the ambulance drove away. She watched its flashing lights and listened to its wailing siren fade into the night air.
  - 3a. Finally, Jenny walked back upstairs to the flat.
  - 3b. As she opened the door, she heard the sound of the television.
  - 3c. The last part of *Doctor's Diary* was still on.
  - 3d. Jenny eased down into her chair in front of the television. It was the chair she always watched television in.
    - 3e. But now she felt uncomfortable.
    - 3f. The television seemed too close.
    - 3g. Jenny tried to get back into the show.
  - 3h. But all the characters' lines sounded phony. And Doctor Harding's face wasn't the same. His smile seemed fake and he looked too handsome, like a plastic doll.
    - 3i. Then the words started running through Jenny's mind.
    - 3j. 'People never die on *Doctor's Diary*.'
  - 3k. At first they were just words that Jenny couldn't stop saying in her head.
    - 3l. 'People never die on *Doctor's Diary*.'
  - 3m. The words made Jenny remember the dead girl's face.
    - 3n. 'People never die on *Doctor's Diary*.'
    - 3o. Then the words started meaning something.
  - 3p. CLICK. The television switch sounded through the room like a padlock snapping open.

The examination question presented students with the following task:

'CLICK. The television switch sounded through the room like a padlock snapping open.' Why do you think the story ends in this way?

All of the five specimen papers judged to be high range (A or A+) responses to *CLICK* tune into the 'why' aspect of the question. They interpret the story in literary terms, attending carefully to the change in Jenny's viewpoint and to the symbolic significance of the final padlock image. As indicated in the introduction, their responses are entirely in keeping with the particular addressivity of this kind of narrative. Because I do not undertake linguistic analysis of the response texts, I present two exemplary responses here—as they were written, without segmenting them into stages and phases. Infelicities of spelling or grammar are unaltered from the original.

(2) Response text one

'Click' by Judith Stamper is a very didactic short story, the moral of which the ending of the story and its title conveys to the reader. Click is about a young girl who has run away from reality and its unhappiness and death that it confronted her with. She was unhappy with her family life; she was lonely because her parents and herself lived their lives apart. They had a very distant relationship. Jenny recognised this, but instead of facing it and making what she could out of it; or trying to rectify it, she chose to hide from it. Her hiding place was the fantasy, make-believe world of television.

Jenny only went outside to investigate the accident because there was a television commercial on. When she arrived, the girl was already dead and Jenny, when she look into the dead girl's face, was shocked back into reality. 'It seemed more real than anything . . .'. It 'cut through the cloud in her mind'.

As it hit her, Jenny's reaction was to 'switch the channel', to escape; to hide from reality. Jenny realised when she went back inside that the world of television no longer gave her protection from reality. Once she had been jolted back into consciousness the make believe world seemed too fake. This whole experience; the dead girl's face; the shock of reality awake Jenny. The conclusion 'Click, the television switch sounded through the room like a padlock snapping open' was symbolic. The padlock was Jenny's mind and its snap was the awakening of reality in that mind; a realisation that it couldn't run away.

Examiner's Comments:

An outstanding response showing that the very best pieces of writing are exceptional. This is not really typical of an A+ but is one of the best responses encountered. Note the capacity to develop the idea of fantasy and reality (awarded A +).



Response text two adopts a somewhat more abstract reading, construing the narrative in psychosocial terms.

(3) Response text two

The last sentence is very symbolic and moralistic. The paragraphs leading to the climax illustrate a girl obsessed by television and distanced from reality. The scene emphasizes her pseudo- sensitivity and partial awareness of life.

It took an accident to snap Jenny back to reality and disillusion her. The ‘Click’ emphasizes the ‘automatic’ approach’ seen previously and the ensuing sentence is written to indicate that Jenny had broken free and was no longer totally obsessed by television—hence the emotive word ‘padlock’ which symbolizes jail, prison, captivity or imprisonment. When the ‘padlock snapped open’, Jenny was freed from her attachment to television. She was a slave no longer.

Examiner’s Comments:

A clear and articulate first draft response. The figurative language is fully understood. Very few responses by year ten students would be better than this (awarded A+).

Although clearly successful from examiners’ points of view, there are also three important features of these responses that we need to take account of in appraisal analysis of psychological narratives.

### 2.1. *Making a relational reading*

A-range responses read the narrative relationally. They make symbolic links between one part of the text and another. Response text one equates the padlock image with Jenny’s mind and its snap with ‘the awakening of reality in that mind’. Response text two sees the opening padlock as a symbol of Jenny’s new psychological freedom. A relational reading is not the same thing as a correct reading. There is a degree of ‘play’ in the response strategy available in a literary reading. Furthermore, the mainstream relational reading which is privileged in an examination will differ from one which we might pursue in a critical reading (see Rothery 1994; Macken-Horarik 1996, for the attributes of a more critical reading of *CLICK*). Of course, a relational (or synoptic) reading of the narrative as a whole has to be built up through a step-by-step processing of the text. A successful interpretation, therefore, depends on two abilities—an ability to process the wordings of the text dynamically and an ability to construe the semantic relation each phase enters into with other phases. In a synoptic, look-back, perspective, readers will recognize that some phases confirm, others oppose and still

others transform the evaluative significance of prior phases. In developing a response to the narrative as a whole, the student must re-construe the evaluative weightings of earlier phases of the text in line with their finalized significance. The A-range responses relate the ending of *CLICK* (its final image) to the preceding event sequence, interpreting the opening padlock in terms of Jenny's movement into new awareness. It is a crucial feature of narrative axiology to teach through the implication of relations between its parts rather than through one part taken in isolation.

## 2.2. *Recognizing interpersonal hierarchies*

A-range responses make a distinction between the writer-reader relation established *by* the text and character-character relations *within* the text. The tissue of voices and evaluations woven into the narrative are all subject to the conditioning environment of the narrative semiosis which animates them. These readers tune in to the value orientation of the text as a whole and use this to evaluate the ethics of Jenny's actions. Response text two, for example, presents a psychological profile of Jenny, as if from 'on high': 'The paragraphs leading to the climax illustrate a girl *obsessed* by television and *distanced from reality*. Response text one takes an even more injunctive stance in its retelling of key events. Note, for example, the patina of 'shoulds' over the description of Jenny's domestic alienation, communicated primarily through the verbs: 'Jenny *recognised* this, but instead of *facing* it and *making* what she could out of it; or *trying to rectify* it, she *chose to hide* from it.' Here, it is not action verbs but thinking verbs that predominate: the 'real story' is less about what happens than how the protagonist responds to it. Jenny does come to the same conclusions about television as the ideal reader of this text. But the values of reader and protagonist need not necessarily converge. Other narratives in my corpus trace different trajectories in which the protagonist fails to adjust to 'reality' and the value paths of ideal reader and character diverge.

Many narrative theorists have drawn attention to the hierarchy of discourses operating in written texts and the need to distinguish at least two orders of narration when analyzing the text. Thus, the act of narration (sometimes called 'enunciation') needs to be distinguished from what is narrated (or 'enounced' (see, for example, Belsey 1980; Genette 1980; Bal 1985; and; Toolan 1988)). This distinction is commonly acknowledged within stylistics but also occasionally in linguistic analyses of simple written narratives (e.g., Halliday 1978). However, recent work by Martin Cortazzi and Lixian Jin foregrounds the importance of attending to various levels and contexts of narrative evaluation (Cortazzi and Jin 2000). Of course, even narratives that seem to ratify the choices of particular characters will

relativize these choices simply by the fact that they are voiced. The author 'speaks to' the reader through a semiotic ventriloquy ensuring that, although many voices may be heard (though only few in this short story), only a select few will be sanctioned. The response texts demonstrate that they are aware of the interpersonal hierarchies at work even in simple texts like this.

### 2.3. *Attending to both implicit and explicit appraisal*

A-range responses attend to both implicit (especially metaphoric) and explicit (more obvious) instantiations of evaluation. Note, for example, how response text one recapitulates the key moment in *CLICK* while simultaneously elaborating its abstract significance: 'As it hit her, Jenny's reaction was to 'switch the channel', to *escape*; to *hide* from reality'. These readers are also alive to syndromes or complexes of attitudinal meaning and to the ways these confirm, oppose or transform other choices for wording elsewhere in the text. These configurations of instantially relevant choices create what Thompson (1998) calls 'resonance'—a harmony of meanings which is an artefact of a *combination* of choices not identifiable with any one choice, taken alone. As will be seen in analysis of *MODE OF APPRAISAL*, implicit and explicit expressions of *ATTITUDE* enter into a kind of dance throughout the text creating a larger semantic space which itself becomes evaluative. Others have noticed this phenomenon in their studies of evaluation. See, for example, Hunston and Thompson (2000) on the complexity of its realization in different discourses and Lemke, (1998) on the 'propagative' quality of evaluation. In this respect, although some parts of the text may be more or less interpersonally salient than others, we need to see the whole of the text as open to and creative of evaluation, whether implicitly or explicitly. Although it is very difficult to develop a metalanguage for what David Butt calls 'latent patterns' of text meaning (Butt 1988, 1991), this is important if we are to develop a text adequate model of reader positioning.

In sum, A-range responses recognize the oppositions embodied in narrative (reality versus fantasy in *CLICK*) and the evaluative stance made available by the text (in *CLICK*, the injunction to 'face up to' reality). They interpret successfully the relationship between event sequences and metaphors (in *CLICK* the relationship between the padlock snapping open and Jenny's new freedom from television). They demonstrate a sensitivity not only to the protagonist's point of view but also to the ethical stance embodied in the narrative itself.

Positing a close relationship between narrative addressivity and reader responsiveness is only one task in investigating the special instructiveness of

narrative. The next task is to account for this linguistically. The remaining sections of the article present a structuralist framework for analysis of reader positioning which builds on readers' responsiveness and the rhetorical structure of narrative itself.<sup>3</sup> I turn now to a description of the linguistic resources on which my analysis of empathy and discernment is based.

### 3. APPRAISAL resources and their deployment in narrative

APPRAISAL is the label within SFL for a collection of semantic resources for negotiating emotions, judgments and valuations. These include gradable resources for evaluating people, places and things in our experience (ATTITUDE), for adjusting our commitment to what we evaluate (ENGAGEMENT) and for turning up or down the volume of these (GRADUATION). It is beyond the scope or interest of this article to survey all these resources, but see, for example, Martin (2000) and White (2002). My interest here is in the ways in which three sets of linguistic resources developed in my own research contribute to reader positioning in narrative. I will deal briefly with two key systems within ATTITUDE, with LOADING and APPRAISAL MODE, providing examples in Table 1.

#### 3.1. *ATTITUDE*

Martin (2000) describes ATTITUDE in terms of three dimensions: AFFECT, JUDGMENT and APPRECIATION.

AFFECT is the resources deployed for construing emotional responses ('happiness, sadness, fear, loathing', etc.); JUDGMENT is deployed for construing moral evaluations of behaviour ('ethical, deceptive, brave', etc.); and APPRECIATION construes the 'aesthetic' quality of semiotic text/processes, and natural phenomena ('remarkable, desirable, harmonious, elegant, innovative', etc) (Martin 2000: 145–146).

For reasons of space in this article, I focus only on choices within AFFECT and JUDGMENT. This is not to suggest that APPRECIATION is irrelevant; only that it is not as central as the other systems to analysis of axiology in psychological narratives. For extended treatment of APPRECIATION in school English, see Rothery and Stenglin (2000).

#### 3.2 *AFFECT*

The Sydney-based work from which my own research evolved classifies AFFECT into three sets:

Table 1. *Text-based examples of ATTITUDE, LOADING and APPRAISAL MODE*

AFFECT	Positive LOADING	Negative LOADING
SECURITY	The mother was holding her daughter in her arms.	She was <u>lonely</u> .
SATISFACTION	Jenny stared at the television trying to hear.	The television seemed <u>too close</u> . Now she felt <u>uncomfortable</u> .
HAPPINESS	She <u>smiled</u> at the guy.	She was <u>unhappy</u> .
JUDGMENT: SOCIAL ESTEEM	Positive LOADING	Negative LOADING
NORMALITY	It was the chair she <u>always</u> watched television in.	It <u>wasn't</u> a <u>real</u> family. They <u>never</u> did much together.
CAPACITY	The operation had been a <u>success</u> .	<u>No</u> handsome young doctor <u>had come and saved her</u>
TENACITY	Jenny was a <u>slave no longer</u> .	Jenny <u>chose to hide</u> from it.
JUDGMENT: SOCIAL SANCTION	Positive LOADING	Negative LOADING
VERACITY	It seemed <u>more real than anything</u> .	All the characters' lines sounded <u>phony</u> .
PROPRIETY	Jenny became a <u>fair and law-abiding person</u> .	She encountered an <u>unfair, unjust world</u> .

- i. IN/SECURITY: emotions to do with well-being (anxiety, fear, confidence and trust, etc.);
- ii. DIS/SATISFACTION: emotions to do with the pursuit of goals (ennui, dis/pleasure, curiosity, respect, dis/comfort, etc.);
- iii. UN/HAPPINESS: emotions to do with what Martin (2000: 150) calls 'affairs of the heart' (sadness, anger, happiness, love, etc.).

Because AFFECT focuses on the feelings and emotional dispositions of individuals, they are especially important in creation of reader empathy. They tend to correspond with characters' internal evaluations of events.

### 3.3. JUDGMENT

JUDGMENT is a parameter to do with norms about how people should/ shouldn't behave. In the media-based research of Iedema et al. (1994), JUDGMENT was divided into two groups: SOCIAL ESTEEM and SOCIAL SANCTION.

JUDGMENTS of SOCIAL ESTEEM have to do with:

- i. NORMALITY: how unusual someone is;
- ii. CAPACITY: how capable they are;
- iii. TENACITY: how resolute they are.

JUDGMENTS of SOCIAL SANCTION have to do with:

- i. VERACITY: how truthful or 'real' someone is;
- ii. PROPRIETY: how ethical someone is.

Because JUDGMENT focuses on ethical evaluations of human behavior, they are crucial to ethical discernment in narrative. As will be seen, they tend to correspond with characters' external evaluations.

### 3.4 *LOADING*

AS AFFECT sub-systems show, APPRAISAL values can be positive or negative, happy or *unhappy*, satisfying or *unsatisfying*, and so on. I construe these contrasts in terms of LOADING. This system enables us to show whether a word or indeed a whole phase carries a positive or negative bias for the appraiser. Although evaluations can be either unmarked or mixed (both positive and negative in different ways), generally a span of text communicates either positive or negative bias. The LOADING over early sections of *CLICK* concerned with the world of television is POSITIVE while the evaluations of Jenny's domestic reality is construed as NEGATIVE. Loading also gives interpersonal coherence to spans of text—conferring a positive or negative gloss to one phase in relation to another. LOADING can be communicated through features such as negation (e.g., 'It *wasn't* a real family' or 'No handsome young doctor had come and saved her') or through the principle of connotation which selects lexis for its positive or negative associations.

### 3.5 *APPRAISAL mode*

There are two basic modes of appraisal which are important to narrative: INSCRIBED and EVOKED APPRAISAL. These can occur separately or can be combined in different ways within one phase of a text. INSCRIBED APPRAISAL makes attitude explicit through evaluative lexis or syntax. It intrudes directly into the text through attitudinal epithets, as in 'a *beautiful* girl' or relational attributes, as in 'his smile seemed *fake*' or comment adjuncts such as '*Sadly*, she walked back upstairs'. It is these overt expressions of ATTITUDE which tend to get picked up in studies of stance in written text (see,

for example, Biber and Finegan (1989), Biber, et al. (1999) and; Precht, [this issue]).

EVOKED APPRAISAL is achieved by lexical enrichment of some kind over one or more spans of text. This can take at least two forms. It may involve a subtle infusion of feeling into an event sequence. Note, for example, the intimations of desolation in this phase: 'The crowd of people broke into small groups and whispered to each other as they drifted away. Jenny stayed until the ambulance drove away. She watched its flashing lights and listened to its wailing siren fade into the night air'. The sadness of this final witness to the accident is achieved through the ideational selectivity underpinning the whole description rather than through any one word. However, EVOKED APPRAISAL can also involve figurative language, as in: 'The image *froze* into Jenny's mind' or 'It seemed to cut through the cloud in her mind *like lightning*'. These are what Martin (2000) calls 'tokens' of ATTITUDE and are harder to 'get at' than inscriptions because their significance is transferred rather than literal. However, EVOKED APPRAISAL is important to analyze because it is a primary mechanism by which a text insinuates itself into reader attitudes.

Naturally EVOKED APPRAISAL makes the whole business of linguistic analysis of narrative more difficult. Once we consider the issue of covert attitudes embodied in narrative semiosis, we leave the (relatively) firm territory of stance studies and move into a discursive equivalent of a swamp.<sup>4</sup> But even overtly attitudinal expressions are voiced by characters and hence relativized by the text.

Table 1 presents options for ATTITUDE, LOADING and MODE, using real examples, wherever possible, from the texts. See Appendix for notation system key.

There are various ways of analyzing appraisal. Analysis can focus on lexical expressions of ATTITUDE, with the analyst building up a sense of the patterns of choice incrementally, 'from below', as it were. Or the analyst can start with the textual environment and explore patterns of choice from the point of view of their higher order semantic function, 'from above'. The analytical challenge of distinguishing between attitudes projected by characters and by the text as a whole requires that we code lexical choices less on the basis of their inherent grammatical properties and more on the basis of their place, their source and their function in the text. In my study I have focused on the axiological function of appraisal choices. In this more narratological perspective, the creation of empathy will predict certain combinations of choices for ATTITUDE and it is these combinations that matter.

ATTITUDE values accumulate significance on the basis of the company they keep and the relations they contract with other wordings in the text. In

early parts of the narrative, these relations tend to be ones of confirmation or contrast. Note, for example, the choice of the word ‘crying’ in phase *10* of *CLICK*. The mother Jenny observes on the soap was ‘holding her daughter and crying, ‘What will the family think?’ Analyzed on its own, this word ‘crying’ suggests negative AFFECT (unhappiness). But in the context of the surrounding phases, it connotes positive AFFECT (intimacy and care). The mother’s crying is part of a physical and emotional connection with her daughter that contrasts with the loneliness of Jenny’s family life.

There are other implications if one pursues the latter approach to analysis. Given that the environment of a text axiology *is* the text, a phase can carry ATTITUDE from elsewhere in the text. For example, at the end of *CLICK*, Jenny undergoes a crisis of attitude communicated primarily through the message, ‘No one ever dies on Doctor’s Diary’. This is not of itself overtly attitudinal but it harks back to the earlier more heavily appraised moment in which Jenny confronts the dead girl and realizes that ‘no handsome young doctor had come and saved her’. The implications for appraisal analysis are important. Spans of text not marked explicitly for attitude can carry evaluative meaning by virtue of their cohesive links to other more attitudinal parts of the text.

In fact, developing a framework for identifying and coding appraisal choices represents only one aspect of an account of reader positioning in narrative. We also need an apparatus for explaining *how* co-occurring choices for ATTITUDE become influential in the formation of empathy and discernment in the ideal reader. It is to this issue that I turn now, focusing explicitly on *CLICK*.

#### 4. APPRAISAL resources and their deployment in narrative

As readers process a narrative like *CLICK*, they move between external and internal experience. Furthermore, this movement appears to be common to both written and spoken narratives. Labov and Waletzky discovered that oral narratives of personal experience tend to shunt between referential and evaluative meanings. While *referential* meanings deal with the linear ordering of events or the action of the story, *evaluative* meanings ‘suspend the action’ and comment on it in some way (Labov and Waletzky 1967: 35). Evaluative commentary is rhythmically interspersed with the more event-focused, referential segments of the unfolding narrative.

In the written narratives of my corpus, referential meanings can be linked to two external domains of experience. The experiences which are represented as part of the protagonist’s familiar world can be allocated to a *habitual domain* whilst those which disrupt this in some way are part of an



*intruding domain*. In stage one of *CLICK*, the habitual domain is dominated by Jenny's experience of television soaps and the intruding domain by her experience of boredom and alienation from her mother. The contrasts between these two external domains are manifested linguistically in particular patterns of participants and processes in the text. Participants are the people, places and things of experience and are realized by the noun (or nominal) group, as in 'Jenny' or 'her mother'. Processes, on the other hand, represent the states and actions of participants and are realized by the verbal group within the clause, as in 'leaned' or 'demanded'. In the external domains of experience, we tend to find participants (human and non-human) combined with material or action processes. For example, in the habitual domain of television watching, the reader encounters wordings such as 'On the screen *the mother was holding . . .*' or '*Secret Loves ended. . .*'. These wordings contrast with choices that construe the intruding world of reality. Here we tend to find combinations such as 'Jenny, *don't watch* television again all night!' or 'This time, *her mother's voice demanded* an answer'.

In psychological narratives, the experiences of these two contending domains of experience are refracted through Jenny's consciousness by means of *internal focalization*. The term 'focalization' was developed by Genette (1980) to capture the highly mediated nature of narrative experience. The technique of internal focalization enables an author to present events from the viewpoint of a particular character, even in a third person narrative such as this one. The importance of a filtering consciousness in the representation of events has been very important in narrative theory (Cohn 1978; Bal 1985; Toolan 1988). Internal focalization is crucial to the creation of empathy in narrative and, beyond this, to the ideological formation of readers (see Stephens 1992 on this issue in reading of children's fiction).

Internal evaluation (focalization) tends to be expressed in different combinations of participants and processes. In the early phases of *CLICK*, for example, participants such as 'Jenny' are combined with mental thinking processes of cognition or perception (e.g., '*Jenny thought* about . . .' or '*Jenny daydreamed* about . . .'). Combinations such as these take us inside the consciousness of the protagonist and, in effect, psychologize experience. Choices for internal evaluation are represented in Figure 1 in a vector of focalization. They are identifiably different from evaluations in outer domains, which are examples of what Genette (1980) has called *external focalization*. In this narrative, external evaluations are verbalized by characters like Jenny's mother.

Of course, phases of internal evaluation also work together with appraisal choices in external domains. This is where evoked APPRAISAL choices become so coercive. In early phases of the narrative, a prosody of positive

connotations infuses the television world with values such as pleasure, desire, intimacy. Furthermore, in external domains we tend to find that EVOCATIONS are rhythmically interwoven with INSCRIPTIONS of ATTITUDE. For example, in a later phase, we read, ‘Doctor Harding had started the girl’s heart again’ (evoking positive capacity) and ‘The *beautiful* nurse (inscribing positive aesthetic valuation) “wiped his forehead” (evoking positive affect and intimacy). Then, as a finale, we read, ‘Someone told the girl’s family that the operation had been *a success*’ (inscribing positive capacity—for me evoking it via positive valuation of event . . .). In this way, we are persuaded that such meanings and the phases in which they occur are evaluatively of a piece.

Of course, within a relational perspective, it is contrasts as much as similarities that create value in each phase. A similar appraisal strategy is adopted in the representation of Jenny’s (intruding) reality. Images of unhappiness (within AFFECT) and negative capacity/normality (within JUDGMENT) are accumulated through evoking and inscribing APPRAISAL. The text doesn’t just inscribe these values using a strategy of negation about the family (e.g., ‘There *wasn’t much* to it’). It evokes them through background details of story line as in ‘Her father was on the road a lot, driving his truck’ and ‘Her mother worked at night as a waitress’. The overall impression is one of loneliness and neglect. If the reader is in any doubt about the import of these choices, phase *Iq* clinches it through inscribing both AFFECT and JUDGMENT: ‘It *wasn’t a real family*’.

This damning judgment of Jenny’s family is rhetorically powerful in part because the source of the attitude is not clear (it is only weakly connected with an earlier mental process verb in the sentence: ‘Jenny *thought* about her family’). Free indirect discourse aligns the reader firmly with both narrator’s and Jenny’s attitude. Passages such as this fudge the distinction between the narrator and character viewpoint. They render external experience in the idiom of the character but leave the source of this evaluation unclear. We wonder ‘Who is speaking here—narrator or character?’

Figure 1 demonstrates the oscillation between internal and external focalization and between different representations of reality for phases *Il–Iq* in each domain of *CLICK*. See Appendix for notation system key.

Imaged in this way, we can see clearly how internal and external evaluation are interwoven. As the ideal reader processes the text, the narrative rhetoric stitches her or him into Jenny’s viewpoint. This occurs as the reader shunts from one domain of experience to another via Jenny’s focalizing consciousness and a rhythm of alternating evocation and inscription of appraisal in contrasting external domains. Jenny’s voice is not the only one projected. The mother’s warning sets up an alternative external evaluation of Jenny’s disposition which comes to have importance later. But, aside

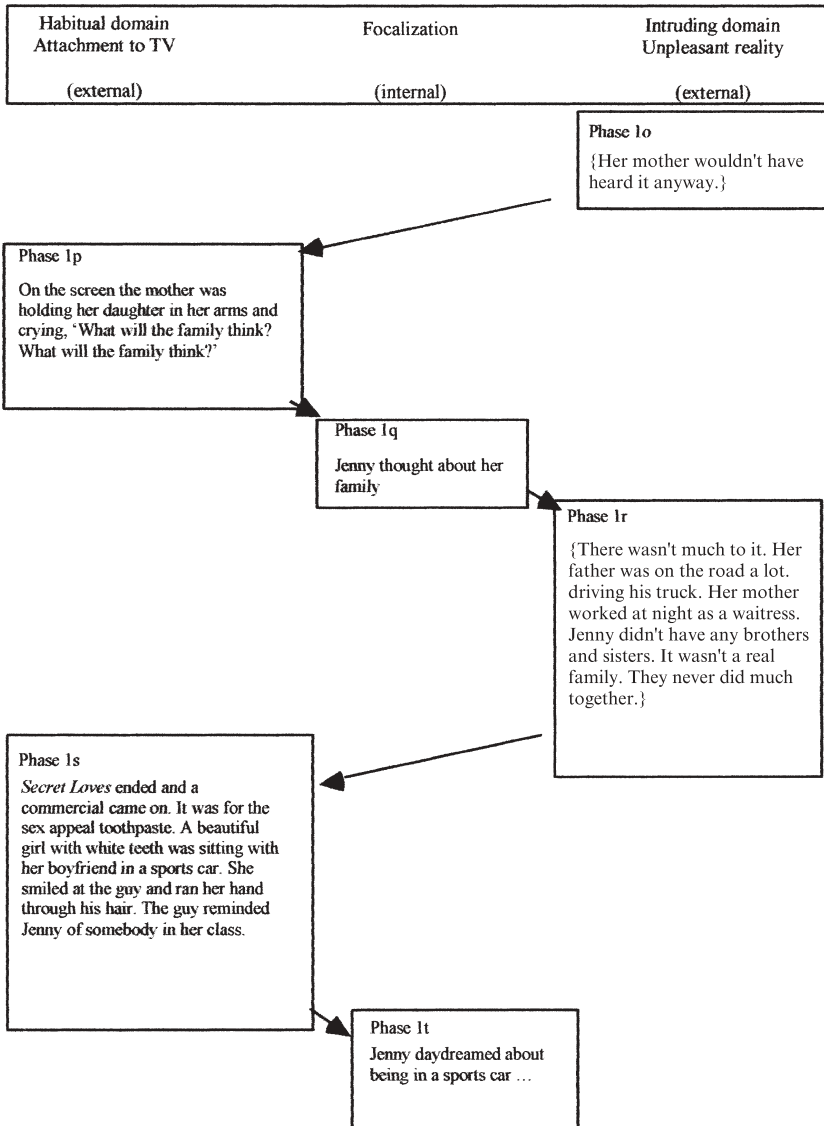


Figure 1. *Interweaving of internal and external domains in CLICK*

from this, the techniques used up to this point are hard to resist. With Jenny as primary carrier of the text axiology, the pedagogic power of the text rests on intersubjective identification with her.

Analysis of ATTITUDE should confirm our intuitions about the rhetoric of empathy in narrative. These relations can be ranged down either the left or the right-hand side of the figure, as in Figures 1 and 2. On the vertical reading path, we find positive appraisals of the television world contrasting with the negative representations of the 'real' world. However, many of these choices for wording oppose one another when read horizontally. Those internal to Jenny's consciousness are part of the vector of focalization down the middle of Figures 1 and 2. Figure 2 displays choices for APPRAISAL in phases *1o-1s*.

How is identification with the focalizer facilitated linguistically? I model the process in terms of a semantic relationship between phases that I call *metarelations*, with the prefix 'meta-' indexing the higher order significance of these relations. There are determinate number of relationships that a phase can enter into with another phase. The creation of empathy depends on a combination of phases which confirm one another, which oppose one another and which filter experience through a character's consciousness. We can construe this relationship as a configuration of metarelations. There is a harmony of appraisal choices in both experiential domains which confirm our impression of their value (*confirmations*). These choices are contrasted with one another across experiential domains (*oppositions*). And all of these choices are filtered through Jenny's consciousness (*internal evaluations*).

But, as I mentioned earlier, empathy is only part of the picture when it comes to narrative axiology. Ethical discernment is also important. The contingent solidarity between reader and protagonist established early in *CLICK*, is disturbed when Jenny confronts the accident victim outside her flat. At this point, Jenny (and reader) come face to face with the reality of death. Phases *2i-2l* of the narrative represent a classic Labovian evaluation, which reaches back over the preceding text and illuminates the significance of the encounter for Jenny's world view.

- 2i. She was already dead.
- 2j. No handsome young doctor had come and saved her. No commercial interrupted the stillness of her death.
- 2k. For a second, Jenny wanted to switch the channel to escape the girl's face. She wanted to turn off its realness.
- 2l. But the girl wasn't part of her television world. She was part of the real world of death and unhappy endings.

The challenge to Jenny's viewpoint (and indeed to the whole of her habitual domain) is carried via changes in appraisal values. Along with the

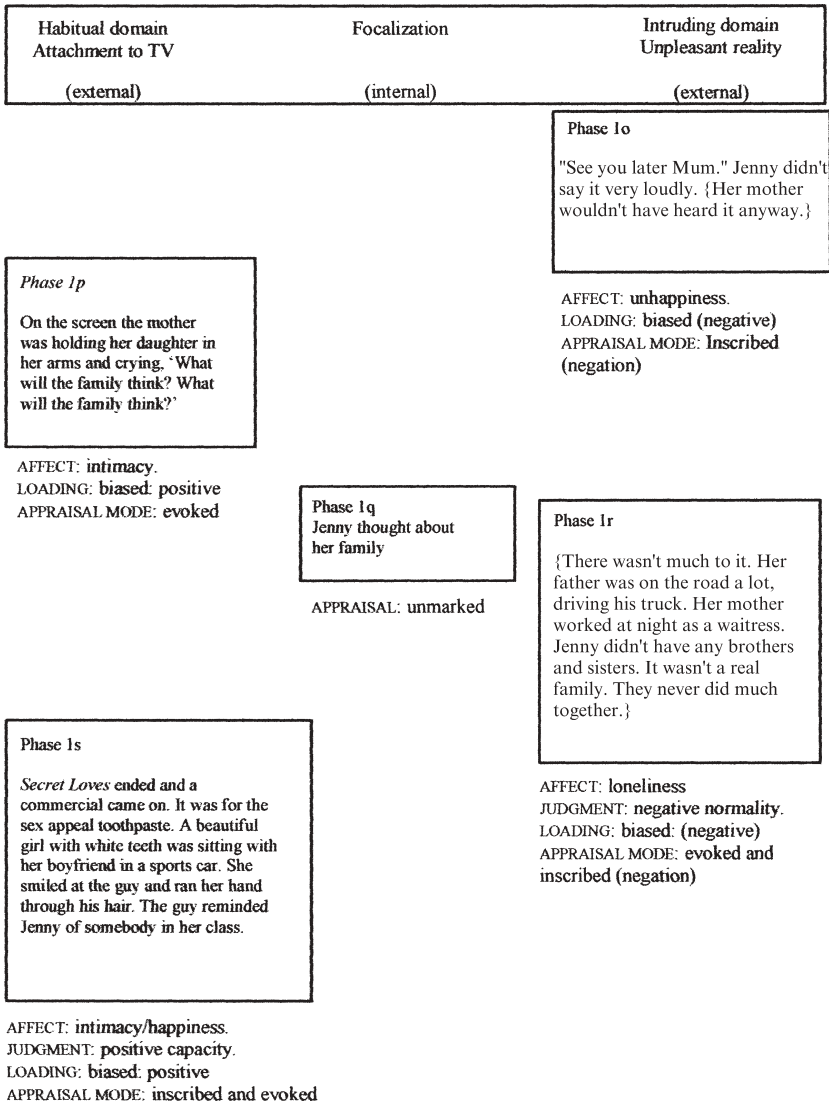


Figure 2. Analysis of APPRAISAL in phases 1o-1s in CLICK

protagonist, we now enter the realm of SOCIAL SANCTION within JUDGMENT. Earlier choices for positive capacity and normality (within SOCIAL ESTEEM) epitomized in the word 'success' give way to negative veracity (within SOCIAL SANCTION) epitomized in the word 'fake'. Within AFFECT, we move from happiness to horror and from positive to negative within LOADING when it comes to the television world. Predictably, given the significance of this challenge of the real for Jenny, choices in both outer domains and in the internal focalization vector all register a change. By phase 3h, when Jenny returns to her television, there is a marked change in appraisal values.

3h. But all the characters' lines sounded phony. And Doctor Harding's face wasn't the same. His smile seemed fake and he looked too handsome, like a plastic doll.

Again, as with the creation of empathy, there is a rhythm of alternating evocations and inscriptions, with a tendency to underscore the change in Jenny's attitude explicitly. For example, we read 'But all the characters' lines sounded *phony*' (inscribing negative veracity within SOCIAL SANCTION). And 'Doctor Harding's face *wasn't the same*' (marking a change from earlier appraisal through negation). 'His smile seemed *fake* (again inscribing negative veracity) 'and he looked too handsome (inscribing negative veracity through the intensifier '*too*'), 'like a plastic doll' (evoking phoniness when applied to a human). All these external domain choices harmonize with Jenny's discomfort in the internal focalization vector ('But now she felt uncomfortable').

Then, picking up on the earlier evaluation of Jenny's viewing habits by Jenny's mum, the final judgment on television is projected as a locution which is external to, but impacts on, Jenny's mind. The message 'People never die on Doctor's Diary' is repeated three times and this brings Jenny back to the dead girl's face. External evaluations appraise through speech rather than thought. These powerful injunctive voices successfully challenge Jenny to 'wake up' and adjust to the 'real world of death and unhappy endings' and thus establish a different evaluative regime. By the final stage of the narrative, there is a new harmony between internal and external evaluations which can be represented as: '*Jenny (now) thinks = Mother says = Jenny sees*'. Jenny has come round to her mother's view of television and both of these evaluations resonate with choices for evoked and inscribed appraisal of experiences in the external domains.

Ethical discernment is an outcome of a different set of semantic relations (or *metarelations*) from those which co-create empathy. When it comes to adjudicating the rightness or wrongness of behavior, we find that *external evaluations* are crucial. External evaluations establish an alternative centre

Table 2. *The semantic attributes of five key metarelations*

Metarelation	Semantic significance
Confirmation	A phase that creates an equivalence with earlier phase(s) through similar appraisal choices
Opposition	A phase that creates a contrast with earlier phase(s) through opposing appraisal choices
Transformation	A phase that creates a change in meanings of earlier phase(s) through a mutation in appraisal choices
Internal evaluation	A phase that projects the interior views and feelings of a character
External evaluation	A phase that verbalizes the views and feelings of a character

of evaluation. They tend to articulate an external world of ‘shoulds’ and project these into the focalizer’s internal world of ‘wants’. Of course, not all externally projected evaluations are global in their reach; not all enter into semantic relations across text. In order to become ‘meta-’ in significance, they need to relate to and redound (or harmonize) with metarelations elsewhere in the text.

Another metarelation important to discernment focuses on change. A *transformation* is a phase which indexes a significant shift in experience. This can be represented as a change in appraisal values in one of the external domains. By the end of *CLICK*, the reader, like Jenny, sees television differently. Not only does Jenny feel increasingly uncomfortable when she reconnects with *Doctor’s Diary*. The characters themselves sound and look different as phase 3*h* exemplifies.

Table 2 presents a summary of metarelations discussed so far which are important to the creation of empathy and discernment in ideal readers.

A category such as *metarelation* is important because it enables us to interpret the co-patterning of appraisal choices in certain phases and to construe the semantic relations contracted between one phase and another. In this way, we can take account not only of explicit forms of evaluation such as inscribed appraisal but also of evoked appraisal choices over longer spans of text. We can see the ways in which combinations of choices conspire, as it were, to create particular attitudes in the ideal reader as she or he processes the text. And we can see how certain configurations of metarelations co-occur in different aspects of reader positioning. While empathy favors the selection of confirmations, oppositions and internal evaluations, ethical discernment favors external evaluations, internal evaluations and transformations. The A-range responses demonstrate a capacity to read metarelations and this is one way to interpret the linguistic underpinning of their success.

## Conclusion

I want now to return briefly to my initial question: 'How does narrative teach?' or, more specifically, 'How does a narrative axiology condition the responses of ideal readers?' Narratives of this kind teach through two mechanisms: empathy and discernment. In the case of empathy, we come to feel (at least some) solidarity with a primary character who focalizes the significance of events for the reader. If we do not 'feel with' this character, then we at least understand why she or he does and says what she or he does. Empathy is a function of harmonized relations between choices for appraisal in experiential domains and internal focalization. We can say that in terms of global patterns of meaning (or metarelations), empathy is created through a configuration of confirmations, internal evaluations and oppositions. As above analysis showed, these configurations of patterns are reflected in choices for ATTITUDE, LOADING and APPRAISAL MODE in stage one of *CLICK*.

However, discernment puts solidarity at risk. Other voices intrude (external evaluations) and choices for appraisal in external domains are transformed (at least temporarily). Where we witness a change of heart in the protagonist, as we do with Jenny in *CLICK*, these transformations are reflected in external domains of experience and in internal evaluations of this experience also. Of course, while Jenny is represented as an apt carrier for readerly values, they are not generated at the same level. Ideal readers will always stand at least slightly apart from and above characters in the narrative, especially when discernment comes into play. The axiology made available by the text is not identical with that of the primary character although in the case of *CLICK*, the value orientations of protagonist and ideal reader converge by the end of the narrative.

In terms of semantic relations activated in discernment, we can say that internal focalization is equated with transformation. By the end of the story, Jenny comes to see television soapies in a new way. This is reinforced as a change in consciousness because Jenny's internal evaluation of the situation comes to accord with her mother's external evaluations and the autonomous voice of wisdom at the end. In terms of metarelations activated by the end of *CLICK*, discernment builds on a consonance between internal evaluation, transformation and external evaluation. These changes mark a new and meta-stable harmony for Jenny of psychosocial adjustment to the adult world of 'shoulds'.

Of course, there are other, more critical, readings which can be made of this text, as of others in this corpus (see, for example, critical readings of similar narratives in Rothery 1994; Cranny-Francis 1996; Martin 1996). The text negatively valorizes popular culture and Jenny's working class



family ('not a real family'). It could be argued that without any way of ameliorating the structures of her life situation, the phoniness Jenny experiences extends to the narrative itself. All of these features of text axiology can and should be deconstructed, if not in this examination context. I found no examples of critical responses in the specimen papers published for this examination or, indeed, for any others I have collected.

In this article I have assumed that readers of narrative are addressed as particular emotional and ethical subjects and that in a mainstream reading appropriate in an examination situation, successful students recognize and respond to this address. Hence, it is important that linguistic analysis take account of the distinctive addressivity of the genre and of the institutionalized reading practices in which the text in that genre is read and evaluated. The work on attitude and on metarelations discussed here goes some way to unpacking the meaning of reader positioning in one text type and developing a metalanguage for teaching students to recognize, identify and to deconstruct these in their own responses to narrative.

## Appendix

Key for notation system used in APPRAISAL analysis.

<i>Italics</i>	Evoked appraisal
<u>Underlining</u>	Inscribed appraisal
S p a c i n g	Manufactured examples
{ . . }	free indirect discourse

## Notes

1. To avoid confusion between technical and non-technical uses of terms, references to APPRAISAL systems and their subtypes are in small caps.
2. *CLICK* is typical of narratives set for the reference test examination in English from the early 1980s until the late 1990s. The New South Wales reference test has recently been replaced by a basic skills test which requires very little extended written work from students and is mostly machine-marked.
3. This focus on a structuralist account of stance in written text emerges from a commitment to unpacking the rhetorical demands of specialized literacy practices in English. The regime of examination English in most Australian states is still overwhelmingly structuralist in orientation.
4. The metaphor of the 'swamp' was used very aptly by Doug Biber in his opening address to a workshop on APPRAISAL held at the University of Sydney in 1998. Biber compared the attempt to develop firm and explicit accounts of stance with the effort to establish a firm footing in a swamp. Of course, it may be that the attempt to find such a footing is the problem in discourse marked by fluidity, gradience, and fuzzy boundaries.

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