

# CHAPTER 5: A FRAMEWORK FOR INVESTIGATING TEXTUAL IDENTITY OR 'PERSONA' IN WRITTEN INTERACTION

## *5.1 Introduction*

### *5.1.1 Overview*

My aim in this chapter is to introduce an extension of the analytic approach outlined in previous chapters. My concern is to be able to suggest ways in which textual identity may be investigated in group interactive contexts such as the one in this study. The motivation for this type of investigation is the observation that several posters on this list and others appeared to acquire a type of "status" in terms of the number and type of responses garnered by their contributions. It was also apparent that certain posters maintained distinctive styles and stances in their contributions. Furthermore, as argued earlier, despite the interaction not being conducted face-to-face—or perhaps because of this factor—it was observed that the maintenance of "face" and the negotiation of identity was of primary concern to many of the contributors. This resulted in discussions whose ostensible topics appeared to form the scaffolding for the positioning of self in relation to social values, and the writer's authority to comment on these topics.

Below, I propose two types of textual identity: 'stylistic', and 'negotiated' respectively. In both these perspectives appraisal analysis provides one means of 'building up' a picture of textual identities. In the case of 'stylistic' identity, comparative ratios of types of appraisal, lexical keywords, and orientation to response (i.e. ratios of preferred text-type style, responsiveness and addressivity features) are the means for building up such pictures. One means of investigating *stylistic identity* relies on cross-comparisons of sets of contributions by specific posterIDs. A small corpus of between 20 and 40 posts (see Table 5.1 below)

written by each textual identity (or *posterID*) was collected for the purpose of investigating *stylistic identity*, and several profiles of posting behaviour indicated that each posterID could be distinguished on these grounds.

With regard to 'negotiated' identity, the focus is on *targets* of evaluation and the ways in which posters/writers act to evaluate sets of ideas, acts and other persons. Through evaluative acts and strategies writers 'engage' with their readers who they may project as aligning or disaligning with them. I argue that these 'positioning' moves act in the negotiation of legitimate behaviour—what Fairclough (2003: 41) describes as "the 'norms' of interaction as a moral order [which] are oriented to and interpreted differently by different social actors, and these differences are negotiated". Identity in groups such as this one may be a function of the ways in which positioning of self and other identities is carried out. The investigation of identity negotiated over time in this way relies on a micro-analysis of *responsivity* and *addressivity* in the texts, and thus turns to sequences of interaction rather than corpora of texts. I refer to this as *negotiated identity*.

### ***5.1.2 Approach to analysis of identity***

Therefore, analysis of poster identity involves two dimensions of text analysis: one involves looking at stylistic patterns which are common to individuals and groups as a function of their social practices; the other involves analysis of individual posterID discourse—focussing on how individuals and groups are positioned though either labelling (ideational means) or addressing (interpersonal means). The appraisal framework<sup>1</sup> provides a useful method of investigating these two dimensions of identity. Both orientation to response/exchange—and the giving, receiving or demanding of information or goods and services—as well as the ways in which co-reference, interpellation and appellation work to identify Participants in texts involve evaluation and stance towards ourselves and our interlocutors. The appraisal framework is concerned with identifying and tracking

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<sup>1</sup> Introduced in detail in Module 2: II.

these types of stance and attitudes, and therefore serves as a tool which can be exploited to investigate textual identity.

Sections 2 and 3 of this chapter describe in more detail the approach to the study of the three selected posterIDs as a means of illustrating the use of the framework for investigating textual identity. Section 4 extends the discussion by describing the two perspectives on textual identity in detail by reference to several examples.

### ***5.1.3 What is this identity***

There are a number of perspectives in the literature on “identity” with a capital ‘I’—some related to the idea of personality in psychology, some to a personal affiliation with certain groups, such as the notion of national or ethnic identity, and some to the persona or ethos of the ‘author’ in literature studies. Although the work done in these areas do overlap with my interests here, especially that related to in-group/out-group identification, or **solidarity** (see section 5.4.2.5 below), this is not specifically what I am concerned with. My concern here is more to do with the representation of self and other in an interactive written context, using appraisal as a means of analysis, and with special emphasis on the means by which solidarity, or what I call *affiliation* may be invoked. This is particularly relevant to email list interaction, and the list studied here, since the issue of ‘sub-grouping’ was a regular topic of discussion among participants interested in email list group dynamics during my membership.

### ***5.1.4 Nature of the texts chosen.***

For convenience, a number of statistics for the 4 main sub-corpora used in the study is re-presented below in *Table 5.1*.

	words	posts	mean words/post	lexical types	lexical tokens	lexical density/words	ranking clauses	lexical density/clause
unedited set	45,623	240	190	--	--	--	--	--
ALL	53,742	163	330	6,943	21,873	40.7%	--	--
SIMON	8,694	25	347	1,889	3,502	40.2%	961	3.64
STAN	10,830	38	285	2,576	4,839	44.6%	1,308	3.69
SALLY	12,895	22	586	2,294	4,766	36.9%	1,561	3.05

*Table 5.1: Comparison of main subcorpora used in the study<sup>1</sup>*

Recall that the corpus *ALL* is comprised of three subcorpora representing the three threads: *sig file thread* (SFT) from January 1996, *wide versus narrow thread* (WVN) from November 1997, and *terry versus stan thread* (TVS) from April to June 1999, plus those posts of the posterID sets that were not duplicated by the threads. In addition, a supplementary set of posts from two unedited strips of 2 days of list activity (February 1996 and February 2002<sup>2</sup>) were used as a control group, and to provide a wider sample of the range of text-type styles. The whole collection is therefore around 99 thousand words in total (compare the similar *Table 3.1*, in which the *unedited set* did not appear, and a different calculating tool was used<sup>3</sup>).

As outlined in Module Two, and Chapter 3 earlier, threads were chosen which involved:

- some form of continued argumentative discussion
- a series of posts on a related topic
- 20 - 30 posts which were no longer than 500 words each
- the appearance in the thread of at least one post by one of 3 poster identities selected

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<sup>1</sup> Calculation of function :: content items was only performed on the texts of the three poster identities, so are not shown for all the texts

<sup>2</sup> Appendices A10 and A11

<sup>3</sup> Another difference relates to the additional *Sally* texts here, only one of which is included in the previous *ALL* corpus

Poster identities were selected for their continued presence for at least one year on the list, as well as a textual style that was felt to show a distinct 'identity' without the use of obviously unconventional formatting or lexis.

In addition, a supplementary corpus of unedited sequences was collected where maintenance of topic was not part of the selection process. This set was collected in order to provide a 'control' corpus for examining response types and gender in this discourse community, and so the texts were chosen in as random a manner as possible. Incoming posts were saved in a separate folder in files defined by day and by month, and at the time I began a sub-study on gender, the month's posts which I had last previously saved in this manner had been February 2002. I decided to use the posts from that month as the representative text sample. To both provide contrast and to render the sets more representative of typical list behaviour I also used texts from the first February of the list, 1996. As list traffic was much heavier then, I limited the contrast text file to a more comparable size, and used only the first 5 days of posts from that month: February 1 until February 5th, 1996<sup>1</sup>.

#### ***5.1.4.1 PosterID sets of texts***

Table 5.1 above shows that the subcorpora *Simon*, *Stan*, and *Sally* is each comprised of between 21 and 38 posts, with an average of 10,600 words. In addition, each poster subcorpus includes several posts that do not appear in the three threads, while the thread subcorpora include posts made by other members of the group who contributed to the discussions. This selection was designed so that the combined corpus *ALL* should show some weighting in the semantic domains around which topics of discussion formed in the three threads, as well as provide a small random sample of a number of other topics and writing styles. The

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<sup>1</sup> Posts in this set were tagged "gen" since the sub-study was concerned with perception of gender online. The set was first introduced in Chapter 4: see 4.22, and was earlier referred to in Chapter 3: 3.2.1.

table above provides an initial means of comparison between posters—for example, that the poster 'Sally' produces texts whose mean word-count is higher than that of the other 2 posters and of other list participants. At the same time, it also shows that *Sally's* texts have a lower lexical density than the other two posterIDs, even when as here, calculations did not take into account lexical repetition. In addition we can see that while the *Stan* corpus has a higher lexical density relative to *Simon* when calculated by means of lexical tokens/ word-count, this changes when lexical density is calculated per clause—indicating perhaps that Simon uses longer clauses.

## ***5.2 Approach to the analysis of poster identity***

### ***5.2.1 Poster identity as a function of group membership and its text-organisation practices***

The approach advocated here involves comparative analysis, so that textual identity only has meaning against a backdrop of local practices, discourse conventions, or norms. Most of the tables and discussion presented below, therefore, rely on a comparison of posterID corpora with some other set of texts. In this case, the conventions have generally been set by the *ALL* corpus, but, as noted further below, despite a claim for the representativeness of the present collection, a much wider set of texts is preferable as a means of comparison. In a later section (5.4.1.1), the conventions pertaining to text-type style are examined, as they provide a means of observing group practices in terms of initial 'orientation to response'.

In terms of the preferred use of text-type styles, some initial observations on the corpora may be made. As *Table 5.2* below reveals and as expected from the method of selection of the texts, the *threads* corpus for example reveals a higher relative proportion of the *interactive* style, and a lower proportion of the *announcement* style (in which no reference to a previous post occurs) (arrowed in

Table 5.2 below). One other interesting observation on the participation rates of the genders has also been incorporated into the table. It shows that the mean number of male: female participants for the unedited set is of the ratio 9: 7.5, while the ratio of number of male: female contributions is 6.7: 3.3. For the threads set the participation ratio is 7.3: 3, while the numbers of posts contributed for each gender is 8.2: 1.8. So that, while females make up an average of 45% of the number of participants for the unedited strips of list activity, they contributed 33% of the posts. In comparison, for the threads female participants make up an average of 41% of the number of posters and contribute 18% of the posts. It appears that females are less likely to be involved in sustained argumentative threads in this group for whatever reason.

<b>Text-type style</b>	<b>unedited set: n=240</b>	<b>threads: n=128</b>
Interactive →	18%	29%
relevance-in	46%	50%
post-appended	8%	6%
non-quoted	10%	7%
Announcement →	18%	8%
<b>Poster gender</b>		
Male	mean n=9 67%	mean n=7.3 82%
female	mean n=7.5 33%	mean n=3.3 18%

*Table 5.2: comparison of 2 sets of list activity for posting behaviour*

### **5.2.2 Poster identity as a function of group membership and its evaluative practices**

As discussed in 1.4.2, this study was concerned with the ways in which one "discourse community" is engendered through interaction over a period of time, representing a small slice of what Matthiessen and Halliday (1999) amongst others have referred to as *phylogenesis* with respect to language practices. This means that in the texts I investigated, meanings are made, in part, via intertextual reference or assumed knowledge within the group. Most of this knowledge is 'relationship knowledge', such that every statement, even or especially those

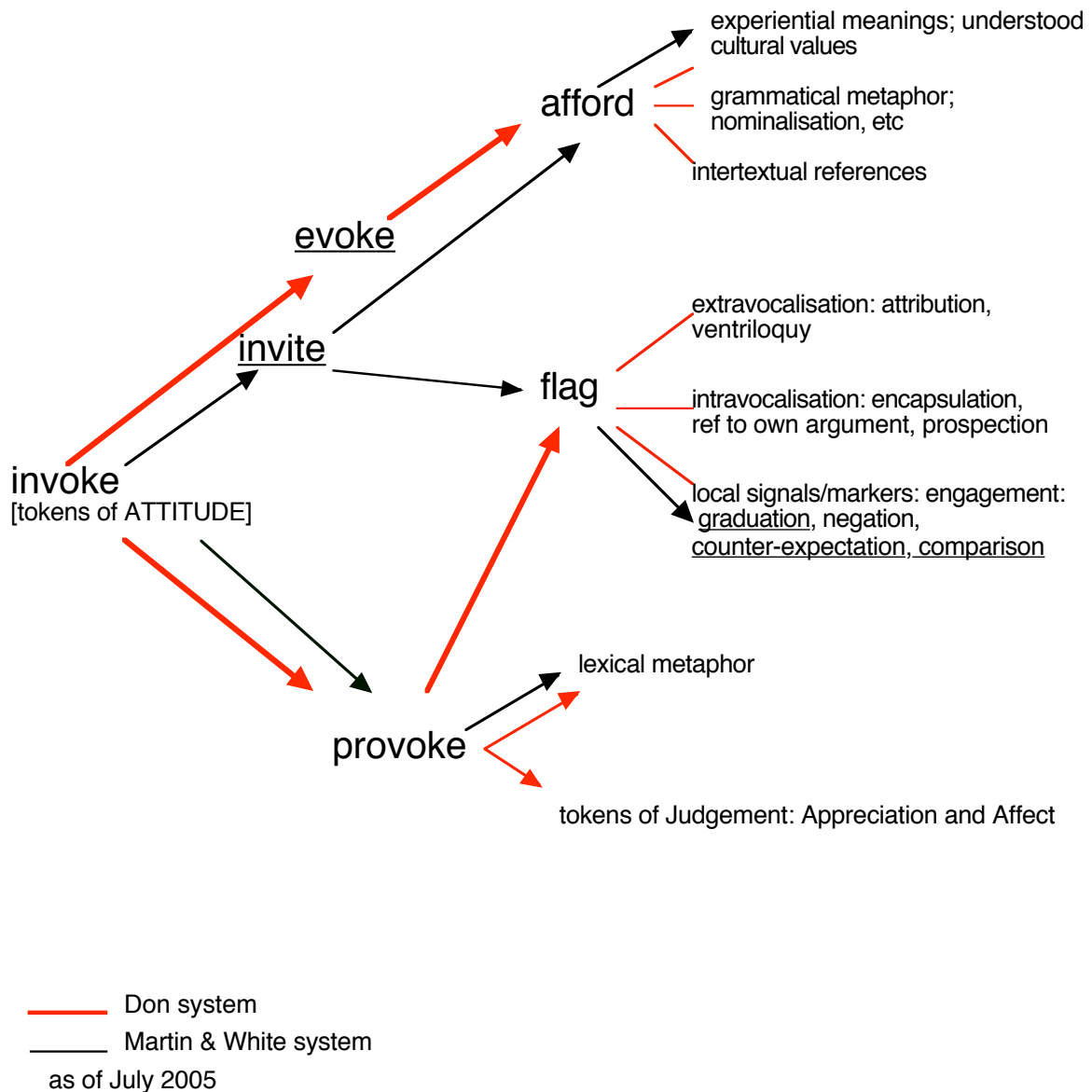
which do not use explicitly evaluative lexis, is evaluative in the sense that it positions addressees in some way. I see this as analogous to what Fairclough (1992: 72) refers to as "members' resources" without which, he points out, interpretation of what meanings are being made in any stretch of discourse may be impossible to retrieve.

### **5.2.2.1 *Invoked attitude and identity practices***

According to the appraisal framework, many evaluative positions and signals of dis/affiliation are not made explicitly in texts, but are rather *invoked* via the use of a variety of discourse semantic strategies—including inter-textual reference whose more precise *evoked* meanings would only be available to those with the necessary *members' resources*. Although Appraisal does not deal specifically with intertextual resources, the framework's classificatory scheme provided a basis for grouping a variety of strategies deemed to invoke attitude in the texts, one of which was assumed intertextual knowledge. In previous chapters it was pointed out that invoked rather than inscribed Attitude was prevalent in the texts in my study, and that the close of *Turn*-units were common sites of invoked attitudes. Such invocation of attitude represents a strategy indicating 'an awareness of the other' on the part of listmembers, and pointed to their apparent desire to expand heteroglossic space. In other words, I interpreted this strategy to mean that posters were concerned not to dis-align themselves with potential respondents through high risk, explicitly evaluative stances. Below I present *A typology of invoked attitude*, setting out some of the means by which writers of the texts in my study were noted to invoke (and analysts interpret) attitudes in their texts (*Fig 5.1*). The strategies identified are presented in a manner slightly different from that of Martin and White (2005), since they were focused on system, while my concern here was to account for instances, and this is reflected in the diagram below. In particular, I decided to maintain the twin categories of 'evoke' and 'provoke' as useful distinctions between those invocations which needed assumed cultural knowledge for interpretation (evoke) and those that might be accounted for using local co-text or lexico-grammatic means (provoke).



# invocations of ATTITUDE



**Figure 5.1 Revised typology of invoked attitude<sup>1</sup>**

This figure shows that, as of writing, Martin and White (2005), do not accommodate intertextual references as part of the resources for invoking (in my typology, *evoking*) attitude, and that their system is much simpler than my own.

<sup>1</sup> In the diagram "tokens of Judgement: Appreciation and Affect" refer to those instances of inscribed or invoked Appreciation and Affect which act to 'provoke' Judgement of some target. See extended discussion in Mod 2: II, especially 3.3.3.

However, I maintain that if attitudes are invoked at all in texts, the linguistic (and other) resources for doing so need to be more specific than the broad abstract categories that they presently identify: experiential meanings, graduation, and lexical metaphor (c.f. *Fig 5.1*).

For example, invoked attitudes also need to be seen in the context of intra-textual strategies for invoking evaluation and attitudes with respect to other participants and events: a *logogenetic* view of the accumulation of attitudes built up in attitudinal prosodies within phases or stages of the whole text. Such prosodies were suggested in Chapter 2 as one of the means by which rhetorical organisation could be ‘activated’ in each text. Martin and White (2005) do propose three types of attitudinal prosody, but do not explicitly include this in their typology of strategies for invoking attitude. By means of identifying such strategies, poster identity may also be investigated under both *stylistic* identity and the positioning of self and others under *negotiated* identity.

In terms of the Layers of post organisation outlined in Chapter 2 therefore, this chapter attends to the resources of Layer 3, although Layer 2 resources concerned with indicators of *responsivity* in the texts is also a means of *negotiating* identity within the community over time, through the stances adopted in response to interlocutors.

### **5.2.3 Summary**

To reiterate, this chapter presents an approach to the study of textual identity from two interrelated perspectives. The first perspective regards the nature of textual identity as a function of the regular stylistic features that a particular posterID uses—such the types and frequency of lexis (particularly that of evaluation), other grammatical resources (again, those specifically related to the deployment of appraisal), and discourse organisation. The second perspective regards textual identity as a function of the positioning of self and others that are

evident in the corpus, and this perspective takes into account ways in which the practices and values of self and others are legitimated or censured—mainly through strategies claiming *alignment* or *affiliation*. Both perspectives rely on appraisal analysis to highlight such patterns and strategies, while the analysis here will focus on the identification of *targets* of appraisal. These two perspectives, *stylistic* and *negotiated* identity, will be outlined in more detail below (section 5.4).

Before turning to describe these two perspectives on textual identity in detail, in the next section, I provide an example of the ways in which intertextual reference functions as a means of invoking attitude in this community through a discussion of the accumulation of evaluations in the “TVS” thread. In terms of the categories in Figure 5.1 above, the focus is on the ways in which the set of [evoke: afford] attitudes may be invoked. In this case, identity becomes a matter of the negotiation of meaning, and how the audience may be positioned to understand the appraisal of the target through recognition of intertextual reference.

## ***5.3 Assumptions of shared intertextual knowledge***

### ***5.3.1 Evaluation and thematic formation***

In Chapter 2 I introduced a post as 'marked' in terms of its use of (non)conventional staging and a recognisable core-genre not otherwise common to this discourse community. In this section, I present the same post again and draw attention to a number of lexical items which make reference to assumed knowledge—a form of *members' resources* (Fairclough 1992)—in what Lemke (1995a) refers to as *thematic formation*:

The repeated pattern, like the common intertextual pattern, can be represented as a **thematic formation** (Lemke, 1983b) [...] Essentially, the thematic formation abstracts from its instances in one or more texts the common lexicogrammatical semantic relations ([such as] lexical taxonomic relations such as synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy) actually shared by the texts. (pp91-92)

I suggest that without having participated in the interaction for some many years, however, many of the referents and the evaluative positioning of the implied targets in the following text might be difficult to retrieve. The text is reproduced below as *Ex 5.1*. Consider the underlined lexical items. Many of them refer to *specific* (and identifiable) list identities—without naming them.

**Example 5.1: [tvs228.56/stan33]**

Date: Mon, 7 Jun 1999 02:00:13 -0800  
From: stan@email  
Subject: There goes rhymin Simon...

1. There once was a list, analytic  
With Simon, Kaylene, and a CritiC  
A couple o' bards  
A trickster (not cards)  
And Ray in his Caddie.. or Buick?

2. To spice up this bozo-filled mix  
Add 12-steppers, pomos, and cliques  
MBTIs  
Gals versus guys  
Aussies and bikers and pricks

3. Small wonder that tempers start flaring  
When feelings find overdue airing  
Content alone  
Is dry as a bone  
But affect's a burden for... sharing

4. Emotion, a curious thing  
To our own we invariably cling  
When instead it's not ours  
It must come from Mars  
Flung by a shit-stirrer king

5. Inflation, projection, denial  
Can all turn discussion to trial  
It's hard to be sanguine  
When yer 'squirrels' they are hangin  
And your humor is soaking in bile

6. The couching of feelings in theory  
Makes some of us itchy and leery  
Straightforward gripe

Trumps prettified snipe  
And leads to clear vision, not bleary

7. My message I'll sum up discreetly  
In verses so softly and sweetly:  
Hiding one's [rage](#)  
On CRT page  
Says the very same thing, but effetely.

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8. [Biker](#) T-shirt: "I AM the man from Nantucket."

9. Stan

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My participation in the list discussion up till the time this post appeared allowed/allows me to retrieve the identities of several list participants referred to by the words underlined, and to account for their inclusion as a means of claiming group solidarity or high contact/familiarity on the part of the poster. In addition, terms [highlighted in blue](#) also make reference to common intertextual themes, or *thematic strands*, which are interwoven in this text. Significantly, this post forms the boundary of this particular thread, after which the main protagonists discontinued their discussion. The post forms what Lemke (1995a: 103) terms a *nexus* in the thematic organisation of a text—which here I believe is extended to form one *nexus* in the thread as a whole:

where a **local maximum of thematic relations** or whole formations are discursively or **metadiscursively connected**. At such points, as at the culmination of our text, **several thematic strands** all come together, several tones interact or are set off against one another, often synthesizing relations among elements previously discussed separately or in pairs. From a nexus one can trace backwards the thematic elements to their earlier occurrences [...] (my emphasis)

The strategies in this text position audience members to recognise the writer as part of the group via his reference to a variety of epithets and generic groups with which listmembers have identified themselves, and at the same time, it makes an explicit evaluation of another member of the list without naming him.

The last stanza in this series of limericks (the whole of which functions as the main stage, or *Turn*, of the post) acts as the 'nexus' of this particular text as well. It is in this final stanza that several thematic strands come together and the target is explicitly negatively appraised with the node words *rage* and *effetely*. The interesting feature of this *explicit* evaluation (in terms of Attitude value) is that the target is nowhere named in the post, yet readers would be in no doubt as to his identity.

The table below (5.3) illustrates the relatively high frequency of some of the terms cited (either underlined or highlighted in blue in *Ex 5.1* above), across a range of corpora, including those in the study. Since the items have been taken from the post contributed by the posterID Stan, that set has also been highlighted in blue below.

/1000 words	ALL	SIMON	STAN	SALLY	BoE top freq subcorpus
bozo	.075	-	.187	-	.001 (npr)
MBTI(s)	.037	-	.093	-	.0001 (brbooks)
biker(s)	.244	.233	.561	-	.077 (usephem)
12-step(pers)	.094	.465	.093	-	.016 (usnews)
pomo/ postmodern~	.225	.585	.561	-	.031 (strathy)
trickster	.037	-	.093	-	.003 (usacad)
Aussie(s)	.037	.116	.093	-	.097 (oznews)
con(tent)	.676	.582	.561	.398	.097 NN (usspok)
feeling(s)	2.104	.349	2.52	2.31	.341 (usbooks)
aff(ect)	.545	-	1.49	.159	.008 NN (usacad)
deny*	.526	.116	1.31	.239	.201 (bbc)
projection*	.526	.465	.654	.079	.035 (usnews): .025 (usacad)

anger/angry	1.202	.582	1.96	-	.147 (usbooks)
Mars	.357	-	.841	-	.087 (newsci) <sup>1</sup>
analytic*	.6387	1.17	.467	.159	.6316 (usnews)

**Table 5.3: Frequency of intertextually dependent items in TVS limerick [tvs228.56/stan33] across sub-corpora**

**\*deny:** deny; denied; denial; denial; denying

**\*analytic:** analyse; analysis; analysed; analytic; analyses; analysand; analyst; analysts; analytical; analyze; analyzes; analyzing

**\*projection:** projecting; projection; projections; projective

Since the selection of the corpus *ALL* is random for the purposes of investigating the relative frequencies of the terms cited in the text above (presumably a corpus representing the whole archive would return a higher frequency for some of the items, and of course, as discussed below, the TVS thread and others were *argumentative* in nature), this comparison demonstrates the convergence of several co-thematic ties in the one text. That is to say, the table demonstrates that the highest frequencies of these lexical items appear in the *Stan* corpus. At the same time, it points to the fact that the poster identity *Sally* was no longer a member of the list when the *TVS* thread occurred, and in which discussion opened with the poster identity *mars* as theme. The *ALL* set also does not incorporate all of the posts contributed by each of the poster identities, such as those of *Sally*—at least one of whose posts uses the term *trickster* to refer to the same recognisable poster identity as was used in *Ex 5.1* above. These shortcomings aside, looking at high frequency items in the selected corpora was a useful means of comparing thematic formations and tracking discourse community specific intertextual identity chains, by using the simple concordance tool employed here (Conc 1.76).

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mars' in the context of the list, refers to the pseudonym used by a former participant whose abrasive style was the focus of discussion earlier in the thread *TVS*. Those examples provided by the Birmingham corpus almost universally referred to the red planet itself.

### 5.3.2 A specific example of intertextual identity chaining

Consider the case of the lexical item *rage* highlighted in blue in the final stanza of Ex 5.1. In terms of the system of attitude outlined in Mod 2: II, this is classed as [affect: satisfaction: negative: high]. The term ‘rage’ may be cross-classified under Graduation as ‘upscaled’—invoking further attitudinal stance on the part of the writer towards the ‘emoter’ or source of the Affect. Within the appraisal framework of invoked attitude outlined in Module 2: II and summarised in Figure 5.1 above, this upscaling (via graduation) of intensity entailed by the term *rage* also allows it to be construed as a token of provoked [judgement: tenacity: negative] dependent on co-textual signals<sup>1</sup>. In fact, the lexical item *rage* appears only this once in the corpus under investigation—giving it a frequency of 0.018 per 1,000 words—and thus its very markedness in context<sup>2</sup> contributes to the reading of an evaluative stance on the part of the writer towards an unnamed target. On the other hand, the semantically related items *anger* and *angry* occur with a frequency of 1.2 per 1,000 words in this corpus (c.f. Table 5.4 below), compared with the subcorpora *usbooks* which has the highest frequency of this term in the Bank of English of only 0.147 items per 1,000. This indicates that *anger* is part of a *thematic formation* (Lemke opcit, or *chain interaction* (Hasan 1984 cited in Lemke 1995; Martin 1992: 428ff; Cloran 1999:189,) or *tracking system* (Martin & Rose 1993: 162))—one which can be usefully combined with other items in a related semantic domain, *aggression-centred*, which again is illustrated by means of frequency in Table 5.4 below.

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<sup>1</sup> See also Hood (2004): Chapter 4, and Martin & White (2005): Chapter 3.19

<sup>2</sup> The lexical item *rage* has a higher frequency in subcorpora of the BoE, e.g. .0306 for <usbooks>. At the same time, it is lower in the spoken corpora, the highest frequency in this set being <npr> with .008—suggesting that the lexical item *rage* is more likely to be used in written, as opposed to spoken discourse.



/1,000 words	ALL	SIMON	STAN	SALLY	BoE top freq sub corpora
fight(s)	.375	.815	.467	.079	.209 (sunnow)
argue*	.789	2.91	.654	.079	.549 (econ)
battle(s)	.263	.582	.654	-	.188 (sunnow)
opponent*	.619	1.39	.561	-	.652 (bbc)
aggressi~	.263	.465	.093	.079	.131 (usacad)
adversari~	.225	.116	.467	-	.014 (usacad)
anger/angry	1.202	.582	1.96	-	.147 (usbooks)
bullshit	.206	.233	.280	-	.011 (brmags)
attack*	.469	.698	.467	-	.680 (bbc)
annoy(s)	.263	.116	.747	-	.034 (brspok)
provoke*	.657	-	1.03	-	.069 (bbc)
hostile*	.657	-	1.03	.079	.075 (econ)

**Table 5.4: Comparison of top frequency items in selected semantic domain across sub-corpora: Aggression - centred**

**\*argue:** argue; argues; argued; arguing; arguers; argument

**\*opponent:** opponent(s); opposition; oppose(s)(d)

**\*attack:** attack; attacks; attacked; attacker; attacking

**\*hostile:** hostility; hostile

**\*provoke:** provoke; provokes; provoking; provocative<sup>1</sup>

Tracking, or tracing backwards to the instances of these co-thematic elements in the thread in which the text [tvs228.56/stan33] functions as *nexus*, provides not only context for the retrieval of the target of the negative attitude regarding the *overdue airing of feelings*, and the 'unsurprising' occurrence of *flared tempers*, but also the subtext which characterises the unnamed target as in some ways 'lacking in virility' by means of two other blue-highlighted items: for example, the reference to '*hanging squirrels*' (c.f. [tvs211-/rob]), as well as the final

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<sup>1</sup> Related lexical items which do not appear in this list (e.g. *provoked*) did not appear in the corpus

positioning of the target as having communicated his feelings *effetely*. This subtext is given a twist when the post as a whole is labelled ironically in the pre-closing move, where the writer alludes not only to himself—who readers know is a *biker* (c.f. distribution of frequency of this lexical item in *Table 5.2* above)—but also to previous allusions in the *TVS* thread to fights in *biker bars* [*tvsv78.16/ter*], as well as to the activity type (Lemke 1995a: 86) 'limerick' itself, in which the archetypal 'man from Nantucket' can find little variety of things to do which rhyme with his place of origin.

This means that the target of the negative evaluation is easily retrieved for anyone who has access to any of the earlier posts in this thread—in particular, an earlier post ([*tvsv172.38/stan27*] see discussion below 5.4.2) in which the target is explicitly evaluated by name. For the same reasons, the post depends entirely for its status as Response to an earlier contribution (or contributions perhaps) by work done at Layer 3 of this text (rather than Layer 2 as is conventional for this discourse community and text-type conventions—c.f. 2.3.3). The *responsivity* of the post depends on inter-textual, co-thematic ties—as well as the attitudinal prosodies built up intra-textually within the text itself. In other words, the only indication readers have that this post is part of a sequence or a specific response to anything that came previously is dependent on their having read previous posts: there are no overt re-contextualising signals or framing devices in the body of the text. As such, it invokes positions of high contact/familiarity with readers as 'insiders' via the high proportion of implicit meanings, a sub-type of *specialised* lexis involved in its meaning-making.

The accumulation of values attached to any reference by the posterID *Stan* to *anger* or *feelings* in the negative mean that in this context, the poster identity *Terry* will be retrieved by listmembers as its target—not only because of the appearance of these terms in the above example, but due to the repeated references to lexical items in the same semantic domain in the thread. *Table 5.4* above clearly shows that in the *ALL* corpus overall, the terms *anger* and *angry*

appear with a relatively higher frequency than in any of the other subcorpora displayed, but if the subcorpus is restricted to that of *TVS* (Table 5.5 below) then the relative frequency of the same terms are much higher at 2.45 per 1,000 items, suggesting that this is a keyword for this particular thread. Similarly, as revealed by both Tables 5.4 and 5.5, other lexical items in related semantic domains, such as *fight*, *adversarial*, *attack*, *provoke*, and *hostile* also appear salient for this thread.

/1,000 words	ALL	TVS
<b>fight(s)</b>	.375	<b>.623</b>
argue*	.789	.415
<b>battle(s)</b>	.263	<b>.332</b>
opponent*	.619	.207
<b>aggressi~</b>	.263	<b>.374</b>
<b>adversari~</b>	.225	<b>.415</b>
<b>anger/angry</b>	1.202	<b>2.45</b>
<b>bullshit</b>	.206	<b>.332</b>
<b>attack*</b>	.469	<b>.831</b>
annoy(s)	.263	.291
<b>provoke*</b>	.657	<b>1.33</b>
<b>rage</b>	.0186	<b>.0394</b>
<b>hostile*</b>	.657	<b>1.24</b>

*Table 5.5: Comparison of items in selected semantic domain: Aggression: across ALL texts and TVS thread*

### 5.3.2.1 Comparisons of key lexical items and attitude frequencies

When attention is focussed on textual identity, the same 'shortcomings' outlined earlier also make it likely that these types of keyword would not be high in frequency in the subcorpus for posterID *Sally* who did not participate in this

thread. Reference to *Table 5.4* demonstrates this to be the case. Comparison with *Table 5.3*, however, will reveal that the poster identity *Sally* does make reference to the noun group *feeling(s)* with relatively high frequency.

At the same time, it is interesting to observe that, in terms of categories of Affect (in appraisal terms), the posterID *Sally* was found to favour not that of [affect: dis/satisfaction] which appears to be a key evaluative domain in the *TVS* thread, but rather, as discussed below (5.4.1.2), that of [affect: in/security]. This pertains to what was suggested in Module 2—that favoured or recurrent attitude types could be used in accounting for textual identity, in this case, what I am calling ‘stylistic identity’.

A selection of keyword lexical items related to the semantic domain associated with Affect in the three posterID subcorpora is compared in *Table 5.6* below. In compiling this set, frequencies above .5 were considered significant for inclusion and the subcorpora *TVS* was used as a comparison. One exception to the inclusion ratio below was made in the case where none of the lexical items *fright~* or *scare~* appeared in any of the corpora but that of posterID *Sally*. The compilation of this type of data was made so that correlations between findings of Attitude analysis were possible, and here, for example, findings that the posts of the *Sally* subcorpus returned a relatively higher frequency of values of [affect: security: negative] (see for example, *Table 5.8* below) are paralleled by the instance of lexical items associated with [insecurity] such as *fear~* and *fright~* in the *Sally* set of *Table 5.6*. On the other hand, Attitude analysis often depends on tokens and ‘accumulated’ values over stretches of text as pointed out above, and thus, carriers of evaluation are not always isolated single or even multiple word items. Thus, corpus studies of this type are only useful for investigating frequencies of *inscribed* attitude, or collocations related to selected node words.

Subcorpora with highest relative frequency of the items are highlighted in *Table 5.6* below.

AFFECT terms	TVS n=24,100	SIMON n=8,600	STAN n=10,700	SALLY n=12,900
fear/s/less/ness /ful/ly/ing	.248	.349	.280	.852
hope/d/less	.581	.232	.748	.467
love/d/s	.249	.116	.187	1.09
frustrat/ed/ion /ing	.249	.582	.841	.389
want/s/ed/ing	1.618	1.862	.935	1.635
wonder	.663	.582	.748	1.168
frighten/ed/ing scared/ing	-	-	-	.311
anger/angry	2.448	.582	1.96	-
hostil/e/ity	1.24	-	1.03	.078

*Table 5.6: Affect-related items: Comparison of frequency per 1,000 tokens in selected corpora*

Again, the relatively high incidence of items *anger* and *hostility* are notable with respect to the thread *TVS*. This would be expected when one of the main protagonists was also the poster identity *Stan*. At the same time, it seemed that the use of the term *hostility* might be related to the registers with which this poster was familiar. The Bank of English subcorpora showing the highest frequencies of these terms however, <econ> and <usacad>, returned a relatively lower ratio of .075 and .069 respectively. It needs to be acknowledged that the corpus as a whole, and the *TVS* and *Stan* corpora in particular have been weighted toward the “aggression-centred” semantic domain due to the selection of threads concerned with argumentative purpose—and in particular, the semantic domain of “anger” which was maintained as being denied by one poster identity (*Terry*) by another (*Stan*) during the *TVS* thread.

## ***5.4 Two perspectives on Textual identity: 'Stylistic' and 'Negotiated'***

### ***5.4.1 Stylistic identity***

I use the term 'stylistic identity' to refer to tendencies of a writer (or set of texts) to use the resources of the lexico-grammar and the email-interface in particular ways. This can be characterised by looking at the frequencies of their use of particular features. One contribution to such an approach was outlined in the previous section. Another approach collects statistics on posting behaviour of sets of texts (and/or identities) in order to compare preferences, and by this means produce profiles on each set of texts. In the following section one such set of profiles is briefly introduced.

#### ***5.4.1.1 Stylistic identity and orientation to response***

The table below (5.7) compares ratios of the use of each of the five different text-type styles by each of the three posterIDs under focus. It also includes similar statistics for the unedited strips of list activity in order to provide a type of "control" group. This latter set—comprised of the 2 strips from February 1996 and 2002<sup>1</sup>—did not feature any posts by *Sally*, but did include several by each of the two posterIDs *Simon* and *Stan*. This type of profile is useful for contrasting features of "stylistic identity" of sets of texts selected for whatever reason. The incorporation of comparative statistics is necessary, since a higher proportion of, say, the *simulated-interactive* style against the other styles, does not say much by itself. When the focus set is contrasted with a control group of texts, however, it may provide evidence for a stylistic syndrome on the part of the focus set.

We note below for example, that *Sally's* use of text-type styles does not differ proportionately from that of the unedited set except in terms of the *non-quoted*

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<sup>1</sup> Already introduced: tagged as [gen#.#/posterID] due to their use in a sub-study related to gender expectations online, these refer to sets reproduced in the CD-ROM Appendix A10 (February 1996) and A11 (February 2002).

and *announcement* styles—where *Sally* evidences proportionately more *non-quoted* text-type style. Her stylistic 'identity' in this sense involves a preference for a certain style of orientation to response, where no overt re-contextualisation takes place, but where few posts are made initiating a new topic.

The table also provides some evidence that the *post-appended* style was, as observed in earlier chapters, not prevalent on this list, whereas the *relevance-in* style was not only popular with each of the posters but that its frequency was also high in the unedited sequences of posts. This provides evidence that list norms have evolved in which the common practice observed in many lists—where whole posts are appended to the bottom of the responding contribution—has been eschewed in this list in favour of a more concise and directed means of re-contextualising and responding to prior contributions.

PosterID *Stan's* preference for the *simulated-interactive* style was noted in the context of analysis of representative posts of that style in the previous chapter (4). The table below shows that this was a preferred style for the *Stan* set, but again, this is also partly a function of their concurrent and overall membership of the *threads* set, chosen specifically for their argumentative purpose. The same comments can be made regarding the low proportion of *announcement* style posts in the posterID corpora of both *Simon* and *Stan*—both sets also contribute a high proportion of posts to the *threads* set which are not likely to feature new off-topic contributions by definition.

Text-type style	Simon n=25	Stan n=38	Sally n=22	unedited set n=240
<b>interactive</b>	24%	50%	18%	18%
<b>relevance-in</b>	68%	24%	55%	46%
<b>post-appended</b>	0%	0%	0%	8%
<b>non-quoted</b>	4%	26%	23%	10%
<b>announcement</b>	4%	0%	5%	18%

*Table 5.7: comparison of text-type style preferences for posterIDs<sup>1</sup>*

The coding of texts according to orientation to response using a wider set of features is also possible. In fact, the texts in the corpora were also tagged for a set of *responsivity* and *addressivity* features (c.f. Chapter 3, Fig 3.2). In this manner, profiles of posting behaviour may be prepared and the stylistic identity of the sets of texts may be proposed. Space prevents any further discussion of this approach here, since the tracking of Attitudes, their invocation, and their targets is the primary focus of the rest of this chapter.

#### **5.4.1.2 Stylistic identity and attitude profiles**

Evaluative practices became the focus of the study reported below, and my tools of choice included the appraisal framework. My findings show that each posterID—represented by a selected sample of texts—can be differentiated from both the other two posterIDs and from that of the threads as well, by means of comparing the frequencies and types of attitude used.

The texts were first analysed using an xml editor teamed with an appraisal dtd ([Appendix A7](#)) as explained in Chapter 3. This entailed that the tagged texts were converted to a database form, from which occurrences of attitudes could be calculated as frequency per 500 words per text<sup>2</sup>. This provides a slightly skewed

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<sup>1</sup> Text-type styles were glossed above in Chapters 2 and 3, and illustrated in detail in Chapter 4. Briefly, the *interactive* style interleaves short excerpts from a respondee-post with short responses, the *relevance-in* style excerpts one section of a previous contribution and responds to it in detail, the *post-appended* style attaches the whole of the responded-to-post to the end of the response, the *non-quoted* style obviously responds to another contribution, but does not overtly frame the response as such, and the *announcement* style makes no reference to any other specific post and thus acts to 'mask' any responsivity.

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Peter White for performing the necessary transformations here.

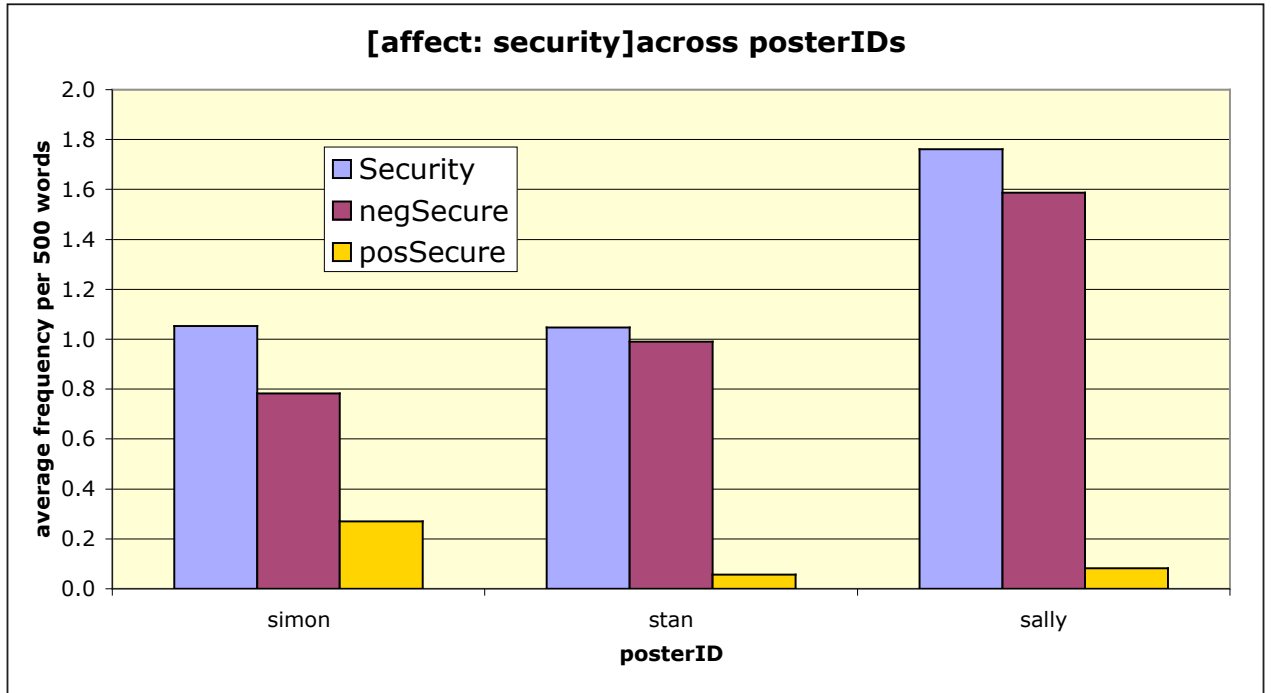


representation since many texts were less than 500 words long, and therefore returned a higher frequency of occurrence for those texts and overall—see for example, *Chart 5.6* below. At the same time, short contributions containing highly evaluative wordings I argue are marked in context, and therefore provide valuable insights into the interactive context. Short texts of less than 20 words were not common in the threads corpus (6.25%), but those of less than 50 words were not uncommon: 30%, or 39 of 128 posts (of the *threads* set) were less than 50 words long. I suggest that short contributions do not allow an argument justifying any evaluative stance, and so provide a context where the attitudes become noteworthy. Comparisons of attitude frequency per 500 words per post therefore has validity if their purpose is to highlight areas of contention or marked behaviour in context. Such a context might be behaviour common to the list in general, the thread in which a post appears, or the behaviour common to a particular poster identity.

*Chart 5.1* and *Table 5.8* below provide an example of the types of results made available. The posterID *Sally* was calculated to use an average of 1.59 negative values of security<sup>1</sup> per 500 words in the collection of her posts ([Appendix A5](#)), which when compared with the averages for the other 2 posterIDs and the threads *tvS* and *wvN*, shows a type of “stylistic syndrome” or “evaluative disposition” on the part of this writer.

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. *become afraid* [sally1]; *I suspect* [sht1/sally3]; *I had been shocked back* [sht1/sally3]



**Chart 5.1: Comparison of relative frequency of [affect: security] values across posterID**

Corpus ID	Neg Security: average frequency per 500 words
Sally	1.59
Stan	0.99
Simon	0.78
wvn	0.83
tvS	0.80

**Table 5.8: Comparison of [affect: security: negative] values across selected corpora**

This type of analysis could be used to investigate whether certain types of attitude become more prevalent the longer the list history (or the posterID is active onlist). The topic or field of the thread may also have consequences for the type of attitude values prevalent in that thread. Consider *Charts 5.2 and 5.3* below which compare frequency of [affect] values as a function of threads.

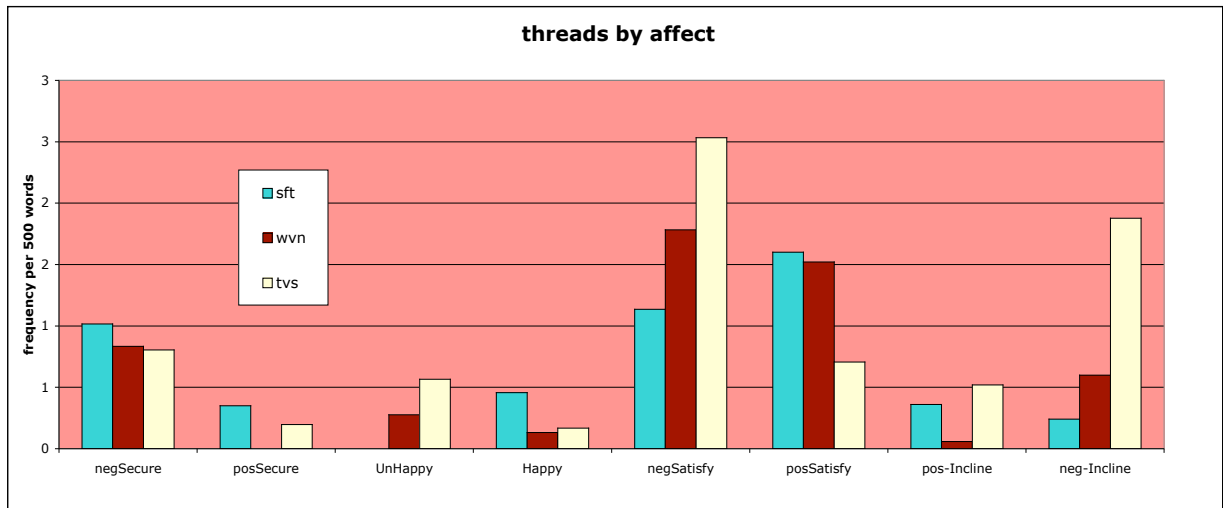


Chart 5.2: Comparison of frequency of [affect] values across threads

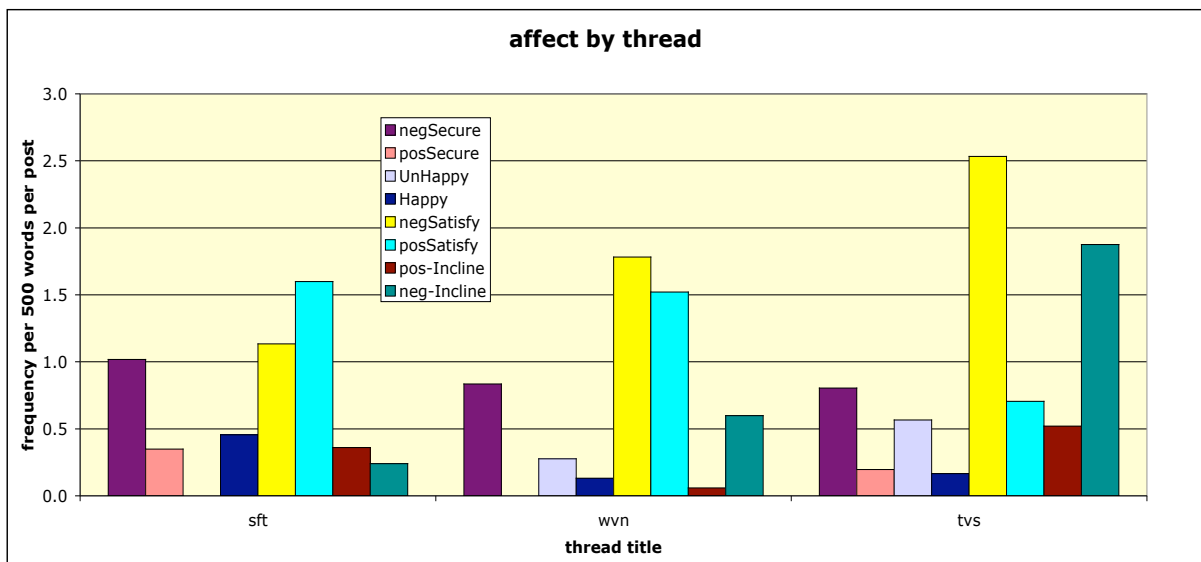


Chart 5.3: Comparison of threads by frequency of [affect] values

The charts show for example, that the *TVS* thread contained a much higher frequency of occurrence of [affect: satisfaction: negative]<sup>1</sup> than the two other threads, together with a complementary drop in frequency of values of positive satisfaction<sup>2</sup>. The *SFT* thread showed no values of [affect: happiness: negative]<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> e.g. *I'm uncomfortable with...* [tvs6.1/stan15]; *harsh feelings (e.g. anger)* [tvs7.2/stan16]; *having been driven to the point of frustration* [tvs16.4/ter]

<sup>2</sup> Some examples of [affect: satisfaction: positive]: *I also enjoyed [\_Godel, Escher, and Bach\_]* [tvs25.6/stan18a]; *a particular pleasure* [tvs38.8/ter]; *something like glee* [tvs110.28/ter]

while these rose in frequency during the other two threads. In addition, [inclination: negative]<sup>2</sup> also became more frequent in each of the sample sets. It would be enticing to draw some conclusions here regarding the dynamics of group formation over time and willingness to use such values, since the *SFT* thread is taken from the first 6 months of the list history, while the *TVS* thread occurred over three years later, with *wvn* occurring between the two, but I feel a wider and more comprehensive sample would need to be used to make any claims of this nature<sup>3</sup>.

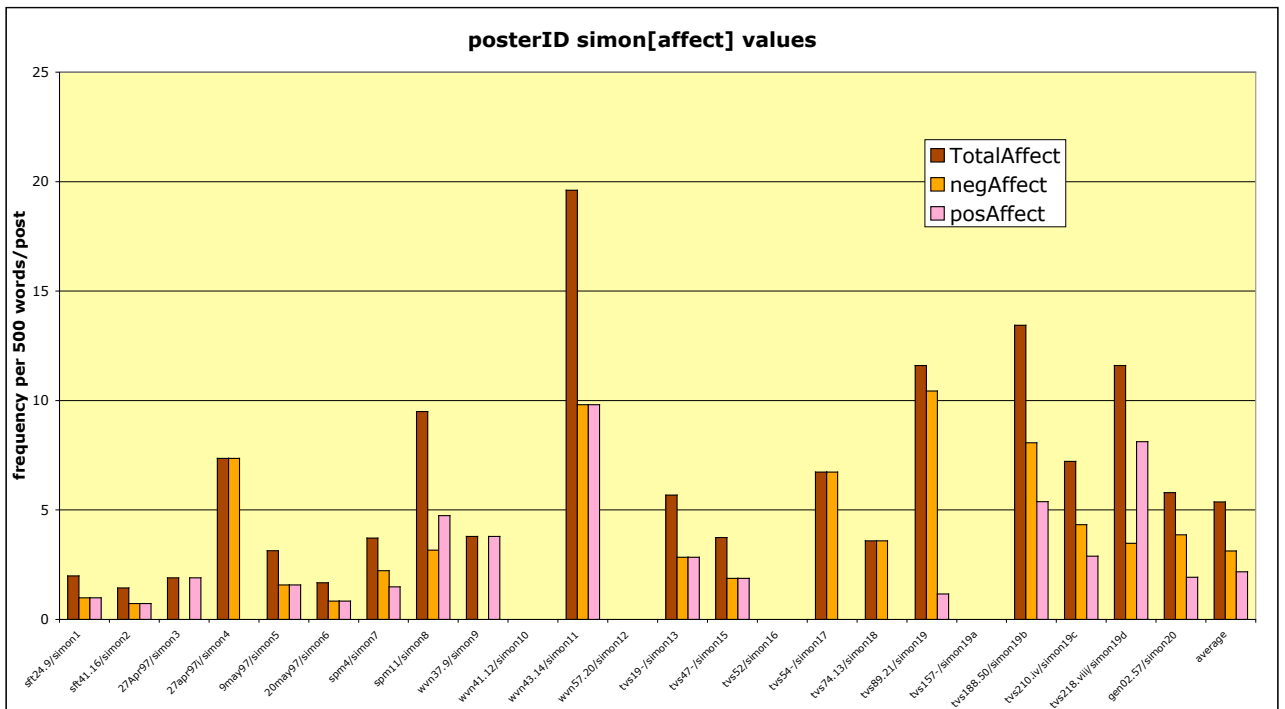
*Chart 5.1* compared the average frequency of [affect: security: negative] across posterIDs, but a breakdown of frequency of different values of affect according to the post (and the context) in which it appears provides for a more detailed comparison of posterID stylistic identity. Consider the following *Charts 5.4* to *5.6* where the average frequency of all affect values of each posterID is shown.

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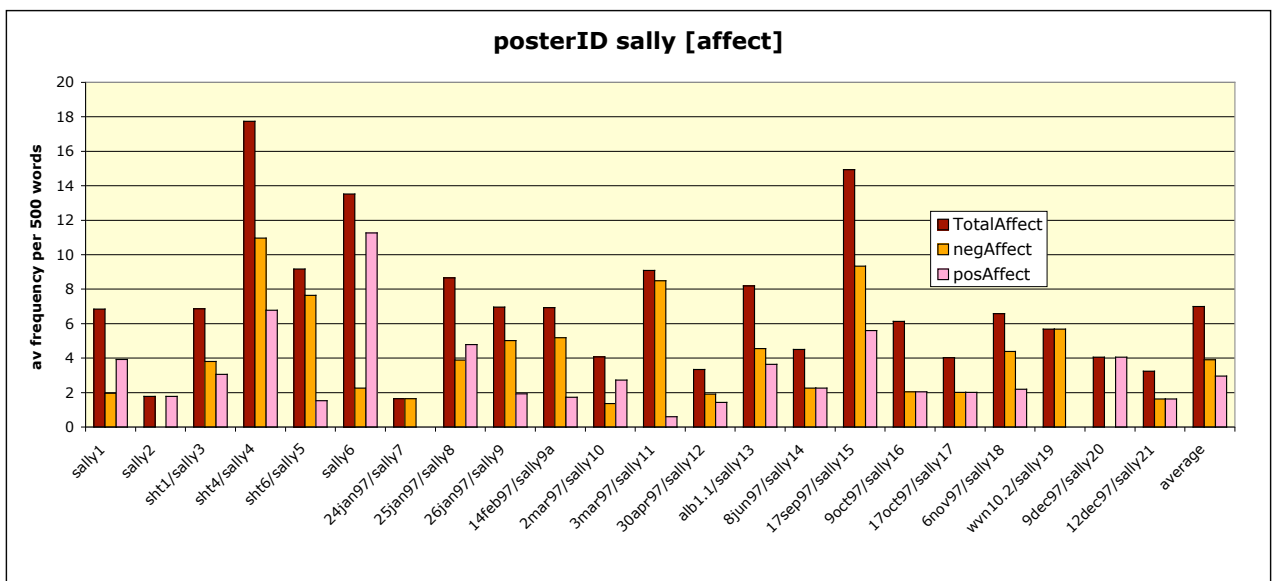
<sup>1</sup> Examples of [affect: happiness: neg] are underlined in the following examples, which also provide examples of other values of Affect: *The feeling on my part is irritated* [satisfaction: neg], *hurt* [happiness: neg], *defensive* [security: neg], *evasive* [security: neg /judge: tenacity: neg], *interested* [inclination: pos], *analytical* [token judge: tenacity: pos], *yes*, *some anger* [satisfaction: neg]. [tvs110.28/ter]; *We both miss [her]* [sht1/sally3]; *My husband laughed* [token: happiness: pos] [sht1/sally3]

<sup>2</sup> e.g. *I do not wish [to change...]* [tvs155.34/ter]; *I don't want [to be...]* [tvs155.34/ter]; *feeling a bit distant about...* [jva178.41/L]

<sup>3</sup> Once more of course, it is worth repeating that these statistics here pertain to tokens only, i.e. they do not distinguish between values which locate the attitude in any specific source or target. As such they are only valuable in highlighting areas where certain evaluative stances are being deployed, and are useful in pointing to posterID attitude preferences – but cannot be used to make claims about the actual stance of the writer unless other factors such as the targets for preferred attitude types are taken into account.



**Chart 5.4: PosterID Simon: frequency [affect] values for each post per 500 words**



**Chart 5.5: PosterID Sally: frequency of [affect] values for each post per 500 words**

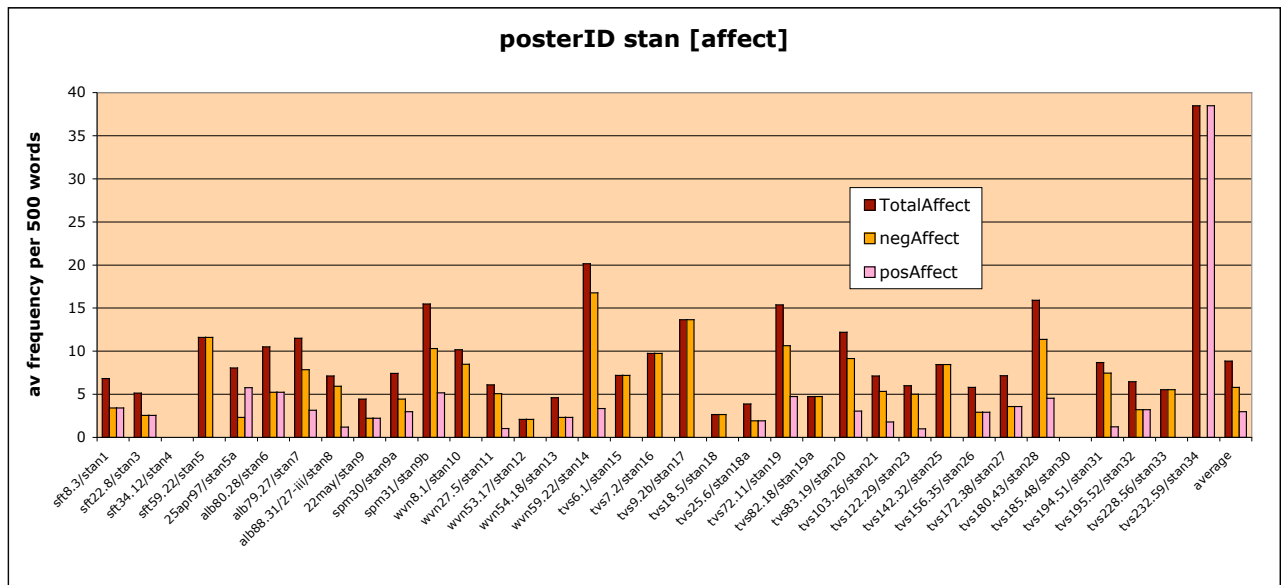


Chart 5.6: PosterID Stan: frequency of [affect] values for each post per 500 words

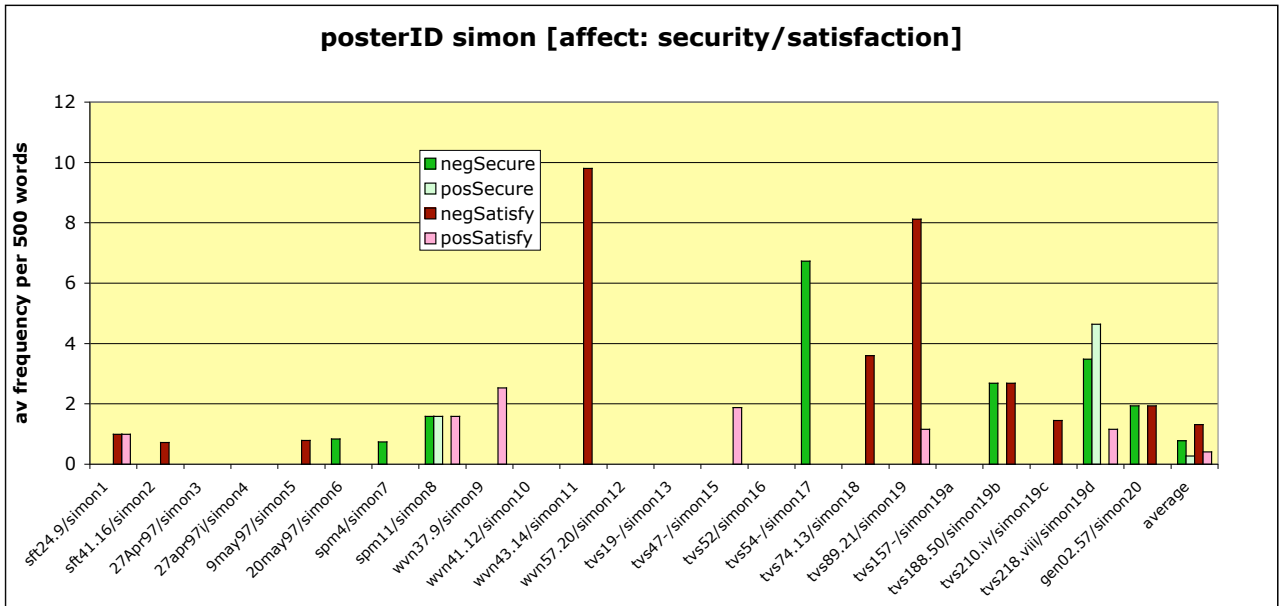
Comparison of the frequencies of [affect] shows that the posterIDs *Simon: Sally: Stan* differ in the ratio of 5: 7: 8. In terms of the corpora used it suggests that posterID *Stan's* denial during the *TVS* discussion that he was avoiding the expression of affect is supported by the analysis.

One of the statistical problems alluded to previously may be illustrated by observing the frequency represented for the posts [*wvn43.14/simon11*] and [*tv232.59/stan34*] in *Charts 5.4* and *5.6* above. Because the word-length of these posts were only 51 and 13 respectively, the chart represents the 2 instances of [affect] in each post as having the highest frequency for each posterID corpus. It also raises the *average* frequency for this value for each posterID, which makes straight comparisons difficult. On the other hand, as argued earlier, the very conventions of the list mean that short, sharp posts are in themselves unconventional since the average word length in the *ALL* corpus is 330 (c.f. *Table 5.1*), and that therefore the occurrence of instances of Attitude in the context of such a short contribution can be considered to have some significance. Although a more fine-grained output may have been gained by calculating a frequency per 50 words, the relative values would still have been

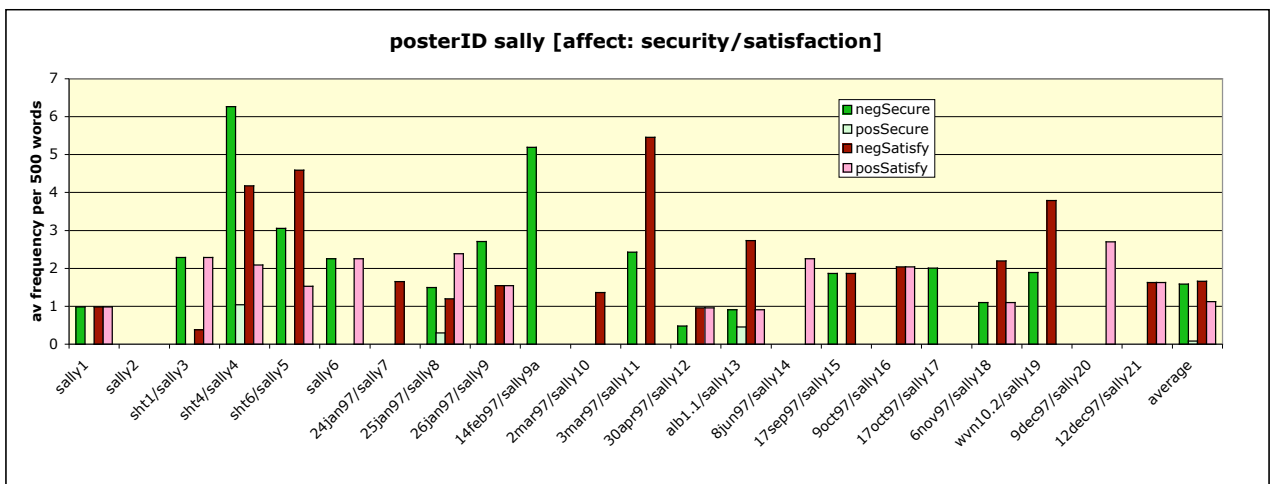
maintained. So that, the attitudinal profile for posterID *Simon* revealed by the Charts shows that he uses the resources of [affect] with a lower average frequency than other listmembers. On the other hand, it is certain types of [affect] that distinguish each posterID's stylistic preferences.

All the charts show that the ratios of average affect, both as total and as broken down into negative and positive, remains similar across all three posterIDs. The actual average frequency varies—due in part to the use of shorter contributions by both *Stan* and *Simon*. One difference that may be observed is that in the posterID *Stan* corpus (*Chart 5.6*) there are a number of posts in which no positive Affect occurs, while in the posterID *Sally* corpus (*Chart 5.5*) there are 2 posts in which no negative Affect has been noted. In the posterID *Simon* corpus (*Chart 5.4*) on the other hand, there are several posts in which no Affect occurs at all.

If values of Attitude, in this case [affect] are more narrowly focussed, further stylistic 'syndromes' (or *evaluative dispositions*) regarding each posterID are suggested. In the following *Charts 5.7* to *5.9*, values of [affect: security] and [affect: satisfaction] have been selected for comparison, since these attitude types appear key in the charts above.

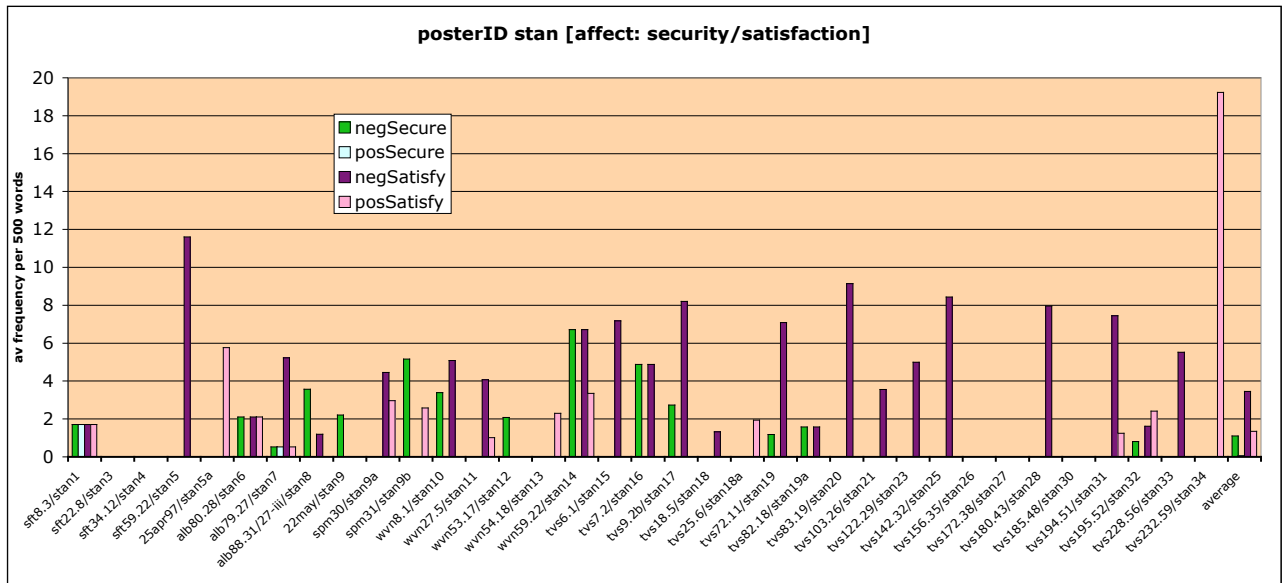


**Chart 5.7: PosterID Simon: Comparison of values of affect: security / satisfaction] across posts**



**Chart 5.8: PosterID Sally: Comparison of values of [affect: security / satisfaction] across posts**





**Chart 5.9: PosterID Stan: Comparison of values of [affect: security / satisfaction] across posts**

More focussed cross-comparisons of this kind allow a view of what specific attitudes were favoured by each posterID over a period of time and in the context of each thread. It also directs attention to the context of specific posts. In *Chart 5.9* for example, it appears that values of [affect: satisfaction: negative] are highest for this posterID in *[sft59.22/stan5]*. Significantly, this post is the final in the thread, and the affect values identified were all attributed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person interlocutor. There are several other posts in which the only Affect of the four possibilities here are similarly that of negative [satisfaction]: *[tv918.5/stan18]*, *[tv9183.19/stan20]*, *[tv9103.26/stan21]*, *[tv9122.29/stan23]*, *[tv9142.32/stan25]*, *[tv9180.43/stan28]*, and *[tv9228.56/stan33]*. By isolating the Affect values of the posts in the TVS thread as below in *Chart 5.10*, accompanying Affect values can be highlighted. Further focussed investigation in terms of the posterID's Attitude values (see next section 5.4.1.3) are also made possible in this way.

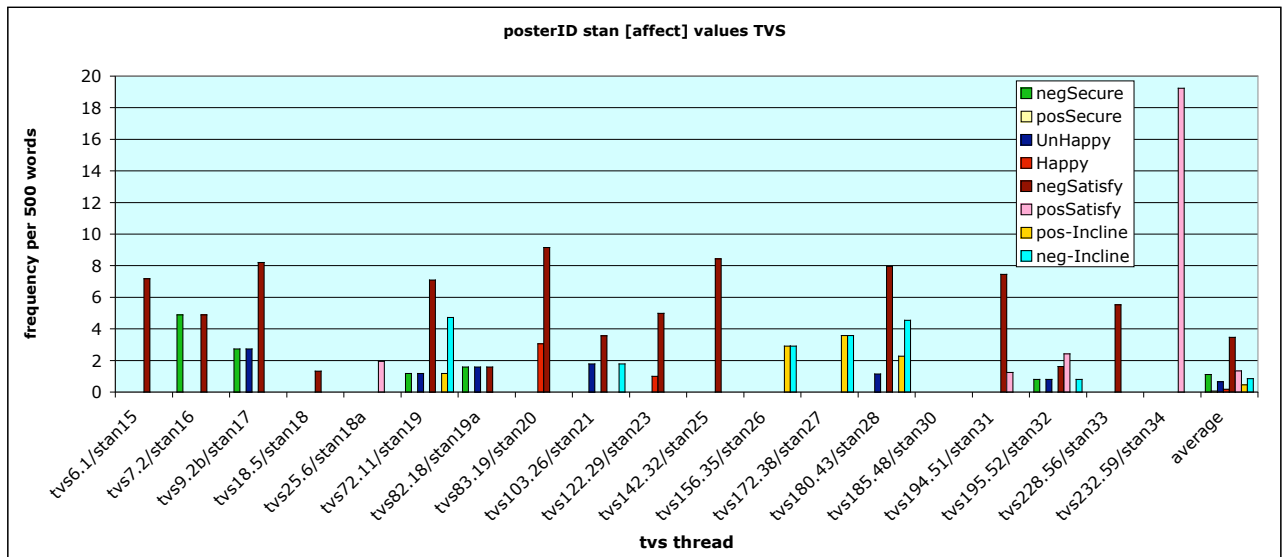


Chart 5.10: posterID Stan [affect] values for TVS thread

For me, two interesting findings are made obvious from the above chart (5.10). Firstly, there are still 4 posts in the TVS Stan corpus in which the only Affect value is that of [satisfaction: negative]: [tvs6.1/stan15], [tvs18.5/stan18], [tvs142.32/stan25], and [tvs228.56/stan33]. This may say more about the thread than the poster, although comparisons with the frequencies of values of [affect: satisfaction: negative] of the 2 other posterIDs show that even though negative Satisfaction values are higher (than other Affect values) for each of them, the ratio of average frequencies is a little different. For example, posterID Simon (Chart 5.7) while clearly using more negative Satisfaction values than negative Security, nevertheless also uses positive values of each type as well. In the case of posterID Sally (Chart 5.8), on the other hand, values of negative Satisfaction and negative Security are almost the same, while instances of positive Security almost fail to be visible on the chart.

Secondly, one TVS Stan post uses no values of Affect at all [tvs185.48/stan30], and the post mentioned earlier as having the highest frequency of Affect due to its short word-length [tvs232.59/stan34] contains only [satisfaction: positive]. This final post in the thread is also the post with the highest frequency of Judgement values (c.f. Chart 4.1) for the same reason: short word-length. At the

same time, since this is the final post in the thread, and one of its two values of Affect is attributed to others, it suggests that evaluative acts are likely to be influenced by the context of the interaction in which they appear as much as the stylistic preferences of the poster<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, each posterID can be shown to sustain a different set of ratios of frequencies of values of Appraisal. These can be seen in the calculations charted for each posterID for other values of Attitude. Such charts I view as mapping posterID stylistic identities in terms of their overall preferences for types of Appraisal<sup>2</sup>, what can be termed their "evaluative disposition".

This short discussion, however, does suggest that Attitude values need to be seen as a function of the context of interaction—the nature of the thread and the development of the topic, and the argument being sustained in the post are some of the contributing factors to the tenor of the texts, and of the relationships being enacted through them. Furthermore, frequencies of use of Attitude values give a very general profile of poster stylistic identity.

One further means of creating a posterID stylistic profile is presented in the next section. During analysis, targets of Attitudes were grouped into categories according to 'target-type' in order to determine what target-types each poster tends to evaluate.

### ***5.4.1.3 Poster identity and attitude target-type***

The chart (5.11) below shows comparisons of preferred target-types for each posterID. In order to group targets for comparative purposes, they were also

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<sup>1</sup> This was the hypothesis with which I began this study: a belief that evaluative acts would correlate with placement in the development of the text as a whole, and that certain evaluative acts (types of appraisal values) would also correlate with types of response and address. This thesis developed from need to set up a viable framework for investigating such observations.

<sup>2</sup> Further Charts showing this type of comparison may be found in CD-ROM Appendix C: C1 – C4 *attitude charts*

further grouped according to a simpler taxonomy. The categorisation operated with the following broad classes:

- human individuals or groups: subdivided in turn according to whether the target referred to the writer/self (e.g. *I*; *me*; *Sally*), a specific other person (e.g. *Simon*, *he*, *elfin one*), or a group/institution (e.g. *ND*; *us*; *they*; *this list*; *you* (pl); *these guys*; *the Australian government*; *local telco*). The latter two categories were also more delicately classified according to whether they referred to the listmembers/audience, or alternatively groups/institutions external to the list. Targets were also co-classified so that categorisation could be split along individual - generic lines. For example, the target *addressee(s)* was co-classified according to whether the target was singular or plural (and thus part of the collective *this-group*).
- targets were further subdivided according to whether they referenced the person/group directly for evaluation, or referred to an action on their part which was then evaluated. For example, text objects (e.g. *his post*; *your story*; *that book*) were co-classified as "~acts" according to what person or group had been made responsible for them. Other reports of action as the targets of evaluation<sup>1</sup> were also classed in this way.
- There was also a large class of what was called "generic behaviour", instances of which were not attributed to any specific person or group.

For each posterID, the table (5.9) below shows that the most common target-type was that categorised as "generic behaviour". The target-type *generic-behaviour* is commonly realised by nominal groups or by "non-finite behave", e.g. *honesty in communication, to be honest, giving my real name* [sht4/sally4]; *to be heavy-handed/ confrontational* [sft8.3/stan1]; *to maintain what signposts of reality do exist* [sft9.4/stan2]; *to say well* [sft22.8/stan3], and so on. Notably, however, posterID *Sally* targets proportionately fewer of this category, with

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. *[I] wasn't more careful* [sht4/sally4]; *[my] landing on top of Kaylene* [sht4/sally4] (self-act); *Ray was assigning roles* [sht4/sally4]; *he was trying to be honest* [sht4/sally4] (3<sup>rd</sup>-person-act); *being targeted [with suspicion by this group]* [sht4/sally4]; *our discussion of task* [simon6] (this group-act).

*Simon* and *Stan* preferring to evaluate this category of target in much greater proportion than they do any of the other types. On the other hand, relative to the other two, *Sally* appears to prefer to evaluate more concrete targets such as herself (including "self-act"), named group members, and addressees.

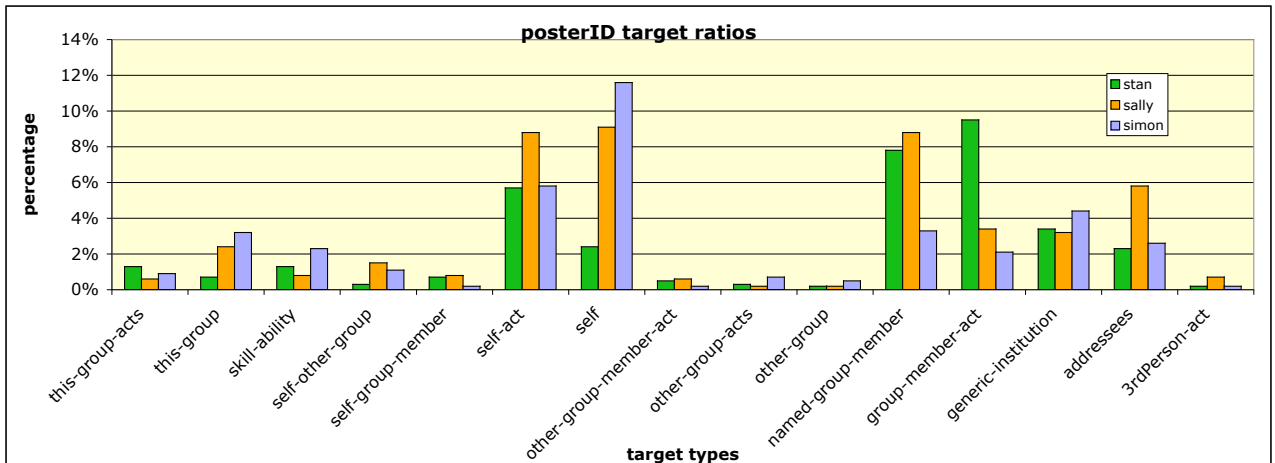


Chart 5.11: Percentage of preferred target-types for each posterID

Chart 5.12 below which is ordered on Sally's target-type preferences makes this break-down slightly more obvious:

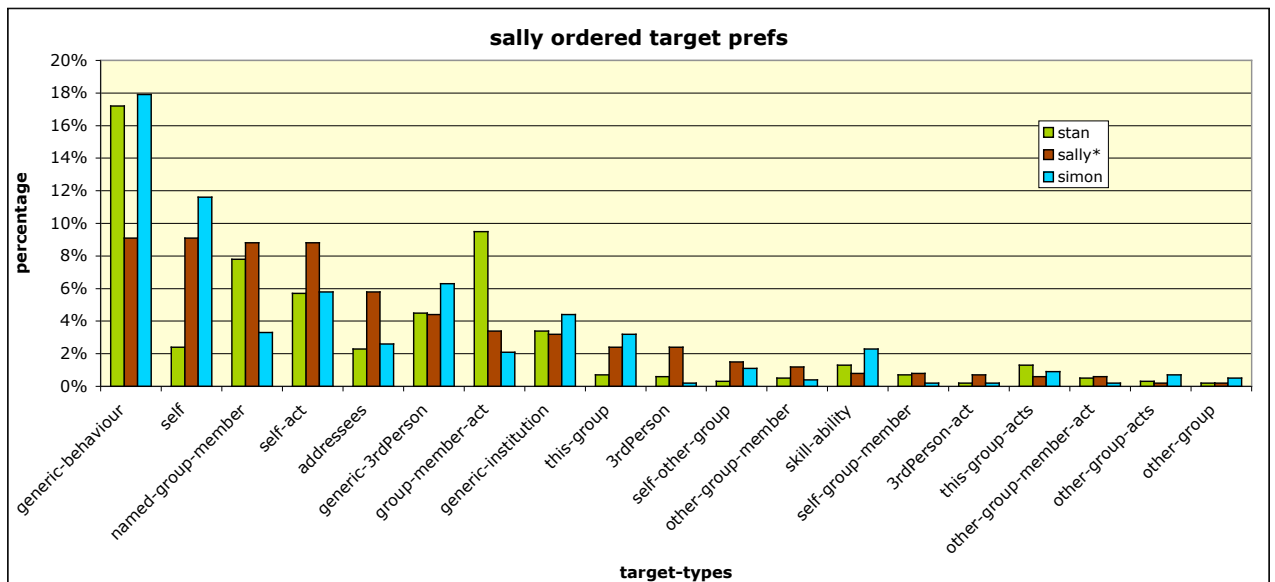


Chart 5.12: Percentage of preferred target-types for each posterID: Sally ordered

This suggests that discussants were likely to evaluate abstractly rather than concretely—and this would also parallel observations regarding the prevalence of invoked Attitude onlist. The ratio of evaluation of this target-type, however, can be shown to differentiate the sets of poster identities. For example, *Chart 5.12* above suggests that target-types to the right of *this-group* are not so frequently evaluated by any of the posterIDs, but at the same time, there are differences in the way these preferences are distributed.

By adding together the percentages for related target types, a number of observations may be made. Firstly, target-types *self* and *self-act* are obviously related. The following percentages for each posterID for this target-type set points to a slight difference in attitudinal orientation and likelihood that the self will be targeted:

-Sally: 17.9%

-Simon: 17.3%

-Stan: 8.1%

In terms of other group members being the target of evaluation, differences turned on whether these group members were evaluated directly, i.e. as *addressees*, or whether they were evaluated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, i.e. as *named-group-member* and *group-member-act*. Further categories were related to group members targeted as members of the audience: *this-group*, and *this-group-acts*. The following table provides a breakdown of these groupings.

	<b>Simon</b>	<b>Stan</b>	<b>Sally</b>
<b>self/self-act</b>	17.34	8.06	17.92
<b>generic behaviour</b>	17.90	17.20	9.10
<b>addressees</b>	2.63	2.26	5.78
<b>named group member/ act</b>	5.43	17.31	12.14

group as collective	4.03	1.97	3.01
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**Table 5.9: Proportion of all targets of Attitude across posterIDs**

The table (5.9) above clearly shows some differences in targeting preferences, so that, relative to *Stan*, PosterIDs *Sally* and *Simon* appear more likely to evaluate themselves. On the other hand, unsurprisingly given the nature of the *TVS* thread from which a large proportion of the *Stan* sample was derived, posterID *Stan* is more likely to target 3<sup>rd</sup> parties in the audience for evaluation. I felt that this distinction was important for the negotiation of identity where, in contrast to a direct evaluation of one's interlocutor, evaluating a 3<sup>rd</sup> person in the audience I considered as having a different meaning. The effect is perhaps not as confrontational, but at the same time, I note it as another strategy which acts to *disconfirm* the status of the named audience member since it positions them as a subject for discussion, as distinct from a participant<sup>1</sup>.

A related observation is that *Sally* is more likely than the other two to target her *addressees*, and this suggests a more direct or confrontational approach than that used by the other two. Finally, *Simon* targets the *group* as a collective in relatively higher proportions than do the others, especially in comparison to *Stan*. Again, this seems to partly reflect his role as listowner and 'leader' of the group. *Simon* has constructed an identity for this role which is able to assess group activities and products, and who can speak for the group on occasions when 'outsiders' threaten to violate perceived norms<sup>2</sup>.

While the targets themselves are categorised by their membership of certain social groupings similar to what was set out in Module 1 under the representation of social actors, they are also sub-categorised by realisation categories concerned

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<sup>1</sup> Of course, the next step in the investigation is to discover whether such features of group interaction do correlate with types of attitude in response.

<sup>2</sup> Two examples of strategies related to this type of 'group' defining on *Simon's* part appear in subsequent sections.

with grammatical classes rather than functions. This type of tracking was used to suggest a number ways in which Attitudes are regularly invoked onlist, and this is reflected in the figure (5.1) "Invocations of Attitude" which appeared at the start of this chapter<sup>1</sup>.

In summary, in order to more closely understand the orientation of evaluative acts in which Attitude is identified, a more complete profile of a writer is gained by focussing on *targets* of attitude, together with the general categories of appraisal favoured in relation to these targets, and preferably teamed with the strategies they use in order to support their evaluative stance toward the targets. The following section extends this perspective by discussing the way in which targets of Attitude can be used to trace what I am calling the 'negotiation' of identity.

### ***5.4.2 Negotiated identity***

Negotiated identity again focuses on targets of evaluation, but needs to extend this to take into account orientation to exchange, and the strategies writers use for constructing alignment with other parties and ideas. It refers to ways in which posters/writers act to evaluate sets of ideas, acts and other persons, and in so doing, engage with their readers who they may project as aligning or disaligning with them. In other words such acts of evaluation position the writer both with respect to their readers and the targets of evaluation. These targets may not explicitly name or refer to a group identity, but readers are primed to associate sets of ostensible targets with groups or individuals with which they are familiar. This was illustrated with the earlier discussion regarding post [*tv228.56/stan33*] (*Ex 5.1*) and the strategies it used to negatively evaluate a specific listmember without naming him.

The positioning of writers with respect to their readers obviously involves the resources of what under Appraisal is termed Engagement. My readings of

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<sup>1</sup> See CD-ROM Appendix C1 *targets posterID* and Appendix B.4 – B.6 *~detailed-targetting.html* for more detailed tables showing output of this type of analysis.



positions taken by writers in these texts has taken into account the use of these resources especially in signalling of invoked attitude. Some of the ways in which attitudinal positioning was effected or implied in the texts is summarised in a the typology of invocations of attitude in *Figure 5.1* above, while the ideological parameters on which I see positioning is based, or 'authorised' is summarised in *Figure 5.3* below.

My approach is to consider these 'positioning moves' as *accumulating* over time in a group, which means that continued readership will provide for each active poster a set of positions acting to occupy a piece of ideological territory so to speak. For this reason, one instance of *disalignment* (such as disagreement on a topic) will not override the overall *affiliation* one member may have with another member due to identity s/he has negotiated with the poster or group as a whole over time. On the other hand, each instance of dis/alignment (or positioning) will contribute to a constellation of positions—a textual identity as a function of accumulated instances—of the targeted posterID. Obviously, it is not possible to gauge any “real” affiliation a posterID may have with other listmembers, but I believe that the approach I present here can provide a general picture of what positions have been either made or occupied by listmembers in written contributions, and thus a more fine-grained means of accounting for textual identity.

It also means that interpretation of alignments *invoked* by instances of appraisal in a representative corpus requires continued and recognised membership of the group. What I am claiming here is that participation in the social practices of a group is a prerequisite for being able to make these kinds of analyses with any delicacy. This means that in effect, I have looked at a motivated sample of interaction from a linguistic vantage point in order to account for writer identity as a function of their (and others') evaluative acts.

By way of summary, I need to point out that the terms I use here speak to a need to distinguish between evaluative acts which involve an attitude towards a target, and the positioning moves they enact. Positioning by definition entails a relationship, and so each act of evaluation construes a relationship of alignment—or not—with presumed interlocutors by reference to other signals in the co-text, such as Engagement values and Graduation, amongst others. Evaluative acts may in turn be classified and tracked by means of the appraisal framework, but the positioning moves they enact require a more dynamic analysis in order to both describe their mechanisms and ultimately to provide a set of categories or a framework which will allow them to be classified and tracked. Such positions are conceived of as construing a persona in a text, and as being *accumulated* over time in repeated instances. This means that in theory, either positioning of one *target* over time by a particular poster, or positioning of a particular poster over time by others would lead to a fuller picture of the textual persona being negotiated. The following section will provide some examples of how these possible avenues of investigation may be conducted.

#### ***5.4.2.1 Two perspectives on negotiated identity***

I distinguish between two ways of looking at *negotiated* identity: “**accumulated positioning**”, and “**positioning ratification**” for want of better terms. The first involves tracking the ways in which a posterID evaluates self, others and their activities as *targets* of appraisal, the second perspective looks at how these acts are responded to and ratified or legitimated by other members of the group within exchanges or responses. This provides the grounds or framework for achieving the original aim in undertaking this study. My original aim was to account for the nature of responses, especially when offence was either caused or interpreted. This perspective was briefly outlined in Module 2: II.5, and illustrated in Appendix E of that module. Invoked appraisal was observed to play a part in the uptake of mis-interpretations or actual offence, and hypothesised to be a function of both post organisation and “accumulated poster identity”. This thesis addresses the means by which such an investigation might be carried out.

In general, posters may use any number of common concepts/tropes/ideas along which to dis/align: family, work, religion, politics, professional standing, gender, nationality, and so on—and so in this sense, we are also speaking of reference to ideology: a system of beliefs and values held as inherently 'true', 'normal', or 'good'. While evaluating their *targets*, writers at the same time act to align or disalign themselves with their *projected readers*. Projected readers may be explicit addressees named or confronted in the post, or other audience members. All posters are in any case aware that their contributions are group reading matter, and this creates the conditions for the type of negotiated identity—and its investigation—that is the focus of this perspective on textual identity. In the following sections I discuss in more detail the two types of negotiated identity I am proposing.

#### **5.4.2.2 *Accumulated positioning***

Over time, a variety of *targets* may be evaluated in a variety of ways. Appraisal can be used to classify and track what I view as strategies of claiming or construing alignment via positioning moves, and with accumulated positioning the focus is on the nature of the targets evaluated and how they are evaluated. In Chapter 4 I made use of target tracking in order to suggest *Turn*-unit boundaries for the example texts.

Such "move complexes" (or *phases*) can also contribute to the construction of the textual identity—or *persona*—via the writer who may call on or imply the presence, experience or value system of an implied author and—to borrow some terms from classical rhetoric (see for example, Cherry 1998)—an ethos to go with it.

Through these evaluative acts and the positioning they effect, writers imply, or make reference to value system, social roles and group affiliation—in other words,

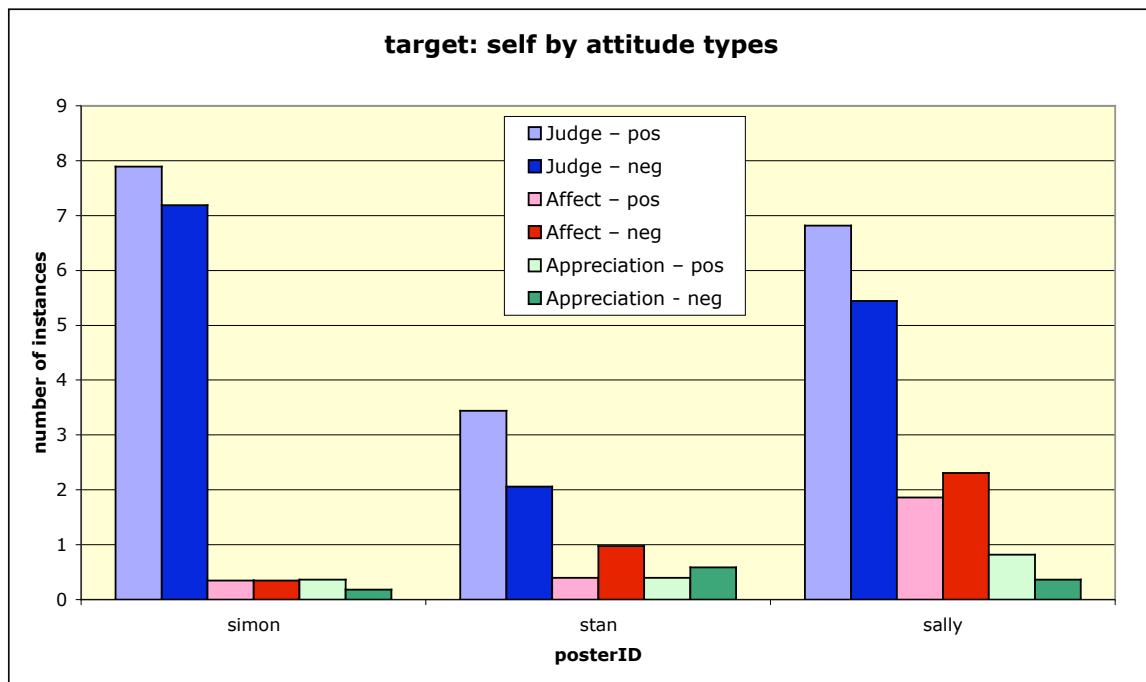
variables of tenor—to shore up their own position, or construe their identity thereby.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, with respect to 'accumulated positioning' I am concerned with the negotiation by 'accumulation' of evaluative orientations towards specific types of targets, including the self, and how the writer/poster positions him/herself with respect to these targets—thus, if you like, implying the author and his/her 'ethos'. By tracking the appraisal values identified, a collection of such positionings so produced gives a partial picture of a particular (textual) *identity* or *persona*, which combines the ideological orientations the poster has activated in their posts via these positioning moves.

*Table 5.9* above presented an outline of comparative targeting profiles. A more delicate analysis using these proportions helps reveal how these posters construct themselves and the group members with whom they are interacting. Comparisons of attitudes towards the targets *self/self-acts* (*Chart 5.13*), *named group members and addressees* (*Chart 5.14*), and *group as collective* (*Chart 5.15*) below, serve as illustrative of this approach.

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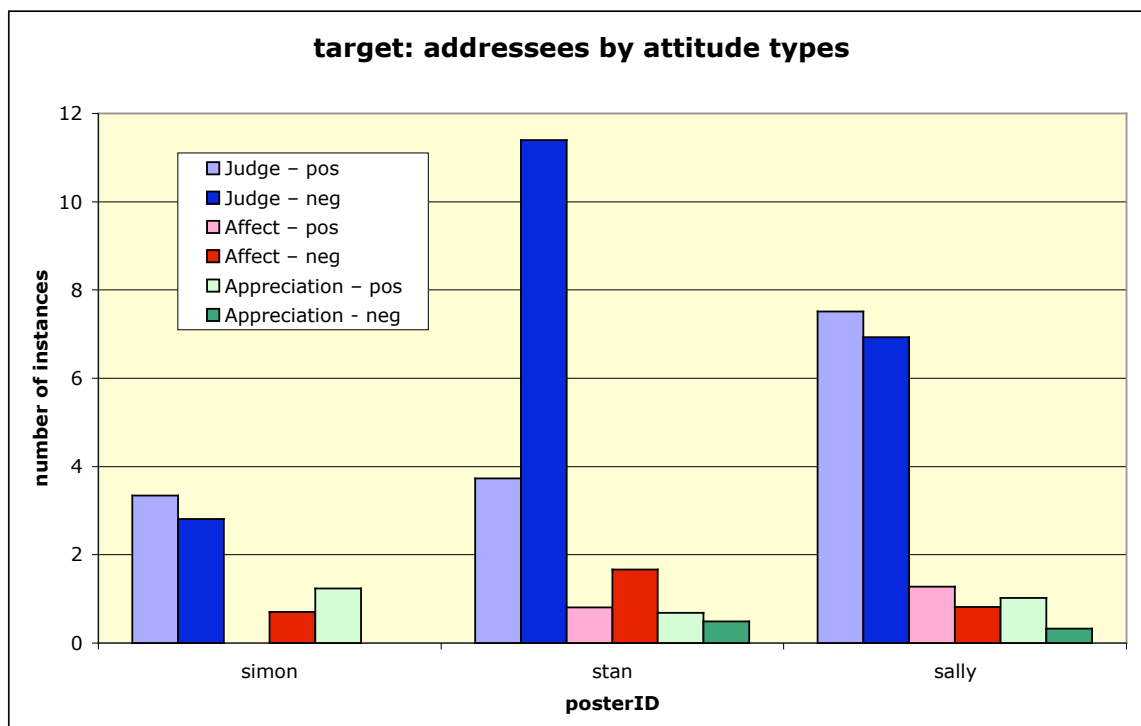
<sup>1</sup> In describing the positioning that is being effected in these texts, I make reference to a set of tenor variables based on Poynton's original dimensions of tenor (1985), introduced below in Fig 5.3.



**Chart 5.13: Comparative summary of ratios of posterID attitudes toward the target 'self'**

Chart 5.13 above provides comparative profiles of the ways in which the three posterIDs have targeted themselves. It is easy to see that while Judgement values both negative and positive have been used to evaluate the *self* by all three posters—using a relatively higher proportion of positive Judgement values—it is posterID *Sally* who has most used the resources of Affect for evaluating herself, and with a higher proportion of negative Affect. This construes an identity who is not happy with her own actions—at least in comparison with the other two in the study.

The following chart (5.14) makes similar comparative profiles available for the target set *named group members/addressees*.

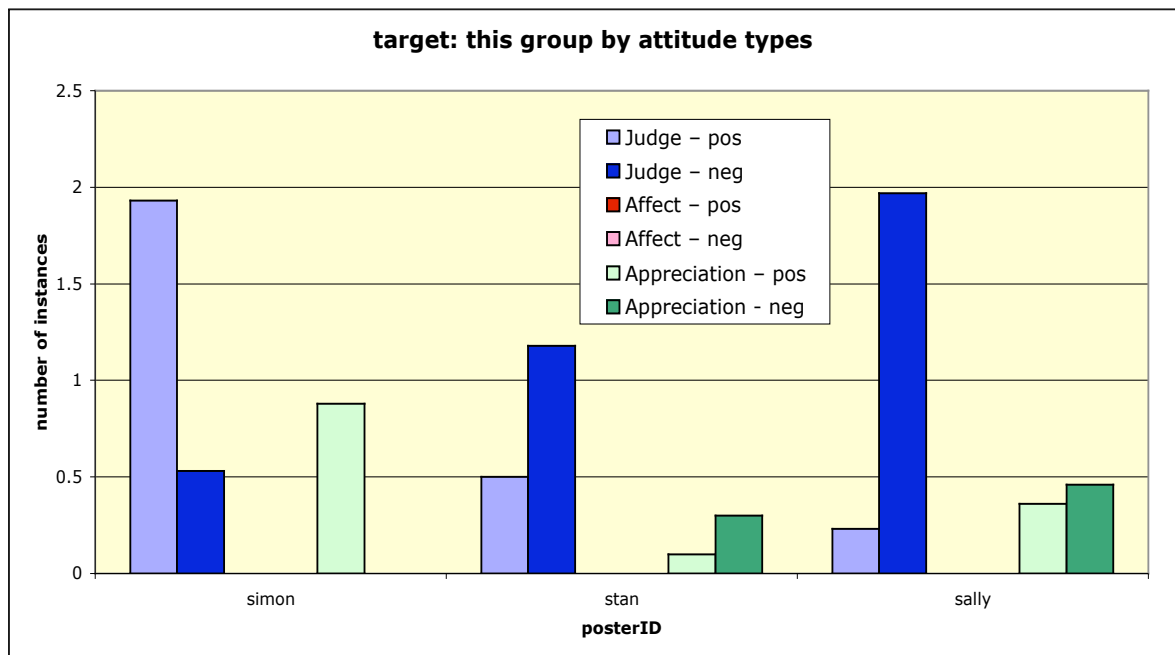


**Chart 5.14: Comparative summary of posterID attitudes toward the target 'named group member/ addressees'**

As might be expected, the set of texts representing posterID *Stan* reveals a higher proportion of negative Judgement values towards *named group member* targets, since a great proportion of this set was taken from the *TVS* thread in which the topic was the argument between posterIDs *Stan* and *Terry*. These charts also confirm the claim that posterID *Stan* does not avoid the resources of Affect when evaluating both himself and others: *I readily admit to infusing rational discussion with affect. I think it's inevitable. [tvs142.32/stan26]*. It also shows that posterID *Simon* is parsimonious with the resources of Affect, and indeed that *named group members* do not form a target in that corpus in the same proportions as found in the other two posterID collections. This construes an identity who (relative to the other two) is careful to present a balanced appraisal of others, while not retreating from self-appraisal.

As distinct from the set *named group member* and *addressees* in which individual listmembers were identified as target, those targets evaluated under the

category *this group*, were identified as a collective—the list and its practices as group behaviour. The target type *group-as-collective* cannot be considered unusual since the name and purpose of the list—the study of group dynamics online—often made the list as group a topic for discussion. The following chart (5.15) shows the attitude profiles of each of the posterIDs towards targets identified as ‘this group’.



**Chart 5.15: Comparative summary of posterID attitudes toward the target 'this group'**

While there are relatively fewer instances of this type of target in the corpus overall, the comparison does reveal some interesting differences. The most obvious is the contrasting use of Judgement values for posterIDs *Simon* and *Sally*. While *Simon* uses a higher proportion of positive Judgement values, *Sally* has used predominantly negative Judgement values. All three have evaluated the group as an 'object' by using Appreciation. Both *Sally* and *Stan* have evaluated the group negatively using these resources<sup>1</sup>, while *Simon* has evaluated the group

<sup>1</sup> e.g. *ND is [not] a dysfunctional family but in many ways it is a closed system [sht4/sally4]; such a heavy place [sally6]; NetDynam is merely another skirmish in a larger ideological battle [stan5a].*

positively<sup>1</sup>. PosterID *Simon* regularly uses strategies of claiming affiliation with the group—by aligning with it/them through agreement for example—but also by appraising it positively as well. All these types of positioning reiterate *Simon's* identification with the list as group, and as noted above, may be occasioned by his social role within the group as listowner and erstwhile leader. A number of posterID *Simon's* strategies of claiming affiliation are highlighted in the next section as part of an illustration of "positioning ratification".

In summary, in contrast to *stylistic* identity which is a function of the number, type and frequency of certain attitude values, as well as the use of other group conventions, *negotiated* identity focuses on the *targets* of certain attitude values. These may be viewed as *accumulating* to provide a variety of profiles of negotiated identity—in this example, from the perspective of the writers themselves and *their* appraisal of targets. Further perspectives in which the one specific party (such as a posterID) becomes target may also be adopted with a larger corpus, as outlined in the following section.

'Accumulated positioning' is extended with positioning *ratification*, in which targets and attitudes are *tracked* for a chronological selection of text(s), and the responses to these moves noted. The sequence in which the targets appear I view as motivated by the development of argument and their function as part of the generic staging of expository discourse as outlined in previous chapters. This is because many positioning strategies rely on argument and invocation rather than direct evaluation. Positioning ratification will be illustrated in section 5.4.2.4 below.

### **5.4.2.3 Four perspectives on accumulated positioning**

Accumulation of positioning via *target-tracking* can also take into account evaluative moves in which a specific posterID is the target for attitudinal acts by

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. *it is a positive learning experience [only for some]* [simon14a]; *[I can contribute to] equilibrium in the group* [simon15]; *a list like this one which is intellectual* [tvs74.13/simon18].



other posters, contributing to a picture of how the group-members construct a list-specific poster identity or group over time.

In *Figure 5.2* below these perspectives are shown broken down into 4 orientations of analysis:

**1. - posterID as Source**

- with PosterID(self) as **Target**
- (self appraisal)
- 

**2. - posterID as Source**

- with Other as **Target**
- (other appraisal)
- 

**3. - Attributed as Source**

[where, as for example in *Table 5.12* below, a writer attributes the evaluations s/he makes to another source]

- with Other(or posterID) as **Target**
- (other appraisal)
- 

**4. - Other as Source**

- with posterID as **Target**

[obtained from looking at a sample of concurrent posts written by other list-members, i.e. *not* those of the PosterIDs under focus]

(other appraisal)

**Figure 5.2: Orientations for investigating [negotiated: accumulated] textual identity**

As an example of **orientation 2** above, the values from *Ex 5.2* below—an extract from *[tvs172.38/stan27]*—are then summarised in *Table 5.10* which follows it. In this extract, the writer positions another listmember, *Ter*. This post

represents another, earlier *nexus* in the *TVS* thread, since it is the one which explicitly names and explicitly negatively evaluates the target—and results in some reactive comments from other listmembers. The commentary engendered by this post is explored further in the remainder of this section.

**Example 5.2: extract from [tvs172.38/stan27]**

There once was a whiner named *Ter*  
 Who claimed to have nary a care  
 At feelings he'd balk  
 Despite "playful" talk  
 None more humorless lived anywhere

Your turn, ol' pal.

<i>Stan as Source:</i> <b>TARGETS</b>	<i>attitude/polarity</i>	<i>realisation</i>
<i>Ter</i>	tenacity: neg	<i>a whiner</i>
<i>Ter</i>	veracity: neg	<i>who <u>claimed</u> to have nary a care</i>
<i>Ter</i>	tenacity: neg	<i>at feelings he'd <u>balk</u></i>
<i>Ter</i>	capacity: neg	<i>none more humorless</i>

**Table 5.10: attitudes and targets in extract 5.2 [tvs172.38/stan27]**

Another example, involving both **orientations 2 and 3** as outlined above in *Figure 5.2*, is provided by *Table 5.11* below which summarises the attitudes and targets in a post by *Simon* [tvs180.50/simon19b]. This post was made in response to [tvs172.38/stan27] (c.f. *Ex 5.2* above). The sources of the Attitudes are separated in this view, so that those which are attributed to others can be easily distinguished. The first part of the post is devoted to the appraisal of *Stan* and acts attributed to him. All but two of these involve negative appraisal, and one of the positive attitudes involves Affect—a type of attitude uncommon in the posterID *Simon* set (c.f. *Chart 5.4* above). *Simon* also attributes

negative attitude toward the target to unnamed others on the list, while attributing some positive attitudes to *Stan* himself.

<i>Simon as Source:</i> <b>TARGETS</b>		<i>attitude/polarity</i>	<i>realisation; comments</i>
1. <b>Stan</b>		Judge: Capacity: pos	[Stan's] 'cold common sense'
2.		Judge: Propriety neg	[Stan's] 'sly arrogance'
3.		Judge: Propriety: pos	[Stan's]'invitation for playfulness' (provoked via Token of Appreciation)
4.		App: Reaction: neg	'likely to cause backlash' (provoked via modality)
5.		App: Value: neg	[Stan's]'rough play' →provokes Judge: Propriety: Neg
6. <b>Ter/Stan interaction</b>		Aff: Happiness: neg	'despair'
7.		App: Value: neg	'unresolvable battle' → provokes Judge: Propriety: Neg
8. <b>Stan's 'invitation' (directive)</b>		Aff: Satisfaction: pos	'jealousy' (negative saturation flipped)
9. <b>My turn</b>		Aff: Inclination: pos	'wanted'
10. <b>limericks</b>		Aff: Happiness: pos	'love' (text-type introduced by Stan)
11. <b>SF-style poetry slam</b>		App: Reaction: pos	'don't much mind' (notion introduced by Stan)
<i>Attributed as Source</i>	<b>TARGETS</b>		
12. 'everyone else'	<b>Stan</b>	Judge: Propriety: neg	'harsh' (provoked by negative Token of Appreciation)
13. 'some'	<b>Stan</b>	Judge: Propriety: neg	'too acidic' (provoked by negative Token of Appreciation)
14. Stan	<b>Stan (self)</b>	Judge: Tenacity: pos	'not here to fill expectations' (provoked)
15. Stan	<b>Biker vacations; object relations</b>	Aff: Satisfaction: pos	'likes'

*Table 5.11: attitudes and targets in extracts 5.5 and 5.6 of post [tvs188.50/simon19b]*

Thus, these tables focus on targets of attitude, while the values attached to them may be tracked and correlated in a variety of ways. Using the table above, it is possible to see how the construction of the identity *Stan* is managed by another writer on the list. This type of *Orientation 2* and *4* isolates all appraisal

whose 'real' target is a specific party—and how Sources for the appraisal are also managed by the writer. Consider targets 9 – 11 in particular. In terms of the actual discourse itself, these are the ostensible targets of the evaluation, however, they each are related to posterID *Stan* and his earlier behaviour or wording, serving to positively construe these actions.

Other perspectives involving *Orientation 2* or *4* isolate instances overall where the target is specifically evaluated by a particular writer. *Table 5.12* below shows an extract of targeting preferences of the three posterIDs for another *named* listmember, *hoon*. This table features an excerpt of the findings represented in *Chart 5.14* above (re 3<sup>rd</sup> person targets), with the posterID *hoon* as target. Recall that the chart showed that posterID *Simon* was not as likely to evaluate addressees or listmembers by name. *Table 5.11* above shows that this does not mean that he fails to evaluate them—it reveals that posterID *Simon* is likely to use other strategies for positioning other parties, such as using a variety of attributions and targets which other listmembers will understand are representative of them. The table below shows that posterID *Simon* did not often directly (even using invoked attitude) evaluate the target in the selected corpus of his posts, while posterID *Sally* was overwhelmingly positive in her direct evaluation of the target posterID *hoon*.

SOURCE: SALLY

target string	attitude	polarity	post
hoon	Judge: capacity	pos	sht1/sally3
to know [whether hoon is male or female]	Affect: inclination	neg	sht1/sally3
[hoon]	App: reaction	pos	sht1/sally3
singing, dancing little feet [hoon]	Judge: propriety	pos	sht1/sally3
simon, you [hoon]	Judge: capacity	pos	sally6
intertext ref: simon's duet with you [hoon]	App: composition	pos	sally6
simon's heart/ your [hoon] lightheartedness	Affect: satisfaction	pos	sally6
you [hoon]	Judge: capacity	pos	sally6

you [hoon]	Judge: capacity	pos	sally6
you, hoon	Judge: capacity	pos	sally6
[intravoc: hoon]	Judge: capacity	pos	sally6
an image [description of hoon?]	App: reaction	pos	sally6
you [hoon]	Judge: capacity	pos	sally6
you [hoon] would [do s.t.]	Judge: veracity	pos	sally6
epithet: elfin ones [intravoc: hoon]	Affect: satisfaction	pos	24jan97/sally7
intertext ref: a corvette racer [hoon?]	Judge: capacity	pos	26jan97/sally9
hoonman [steffan]	App: reaction	pos	17sep97/sally15
[hoon, steffan]	App: reaction	pos	9oct97/sally16
hoon	Judge: tenacity	neg	6nov97/sally18
[hoon, steffan]	Judge: capacity	pos	9dec97/sally20
hoon	Judge: capacity	pos	12dec97/sally21
Hoon	Judge: capacity	pos	12dec97/sally21

#### SOURCE: SIMON

target string	attitude	polarity	post
hoon	App: capacity	neg	sft24.9/simon1
hoon	App: capacity	neg	sft24.9/simon1
[named-group members] comments by Ray and Steffan	App: reaction	pos	sft41.16/simon2
Ray's comments about the place of academic degrees and Steffan's comments below	App: reaction	ambig	sft41.16/simon2

#### SOURCE: STAN

target string	attitude	polarity	post
steffan	App: capacity	pos	tv82.18/stan20
you [steffan]	Judge: veracity	neg	tv82.18/stan20
[intertext ref: [my/ steffan] ability to infer [other's feelings]]	Judge: capacity	neg	tv82.18/stan20
you [steffan][ are making it difficult]	ambiguous	neg	tv104.27/stan23
this new example [intravoc: steffan's]	App: composition	neg	tv122.29/stan24
[intravoc: this new example [of yours [steffan]]]	App: composition	neg	tv122.29/stan24
[intravoc: this new example [of yours [steffan]]]	Judge: capacity	neg	tv122.29/stan24
you [and your [hoon] example]	Judge: normality	neg	tv122.29/stan24
you [hoon]	Judge: propriety	neg	tv122.29/stan24
steffan's [distinctions] and the use of e-prime	App: value	neg	tv142.32/stan26
Steffan's phenomenal vs rational	App: value	ambig	tv142.32/stan26

perceptions, and also the use of "e-prime"... neither of which do I feel I fully understand.			
L, steffan and terry	Judge: propriety	pos	tvsl80.43/stan29

**Table 5.12: Orientations 2 and 4: named group member target: 'hoon' by three posterIDs**

In this sense, posterID *Sally* via her repeated positive evaluations of posterID *hoon*, negotiates the meaning of his contributions and attitudes on the list—in effect "approving" them by overt affiliation. PosterID *Simon*'s strategies for claiming affiliation on the other hand are much more complicated, exemplified in the discussion in the section on positioning ratification to follow, and introduced briefly above regarding his targeting of *Stan* for positive appraisal. In the representative texts, and as revealed by *Table 5.12* above there appear to be few direct or invoked appraisals of the posterID *hoon* by *Simon*. However, tracking of targets in this manner cannot always collect every strategic positioning act. This was briefly demonstrated in *Table 5.11* above, where *targets 9 - 11* are interpreted to invoke further appraisal of fellow list-member *Stan* without actually referring to him.

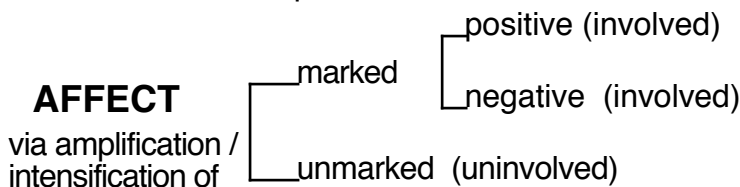
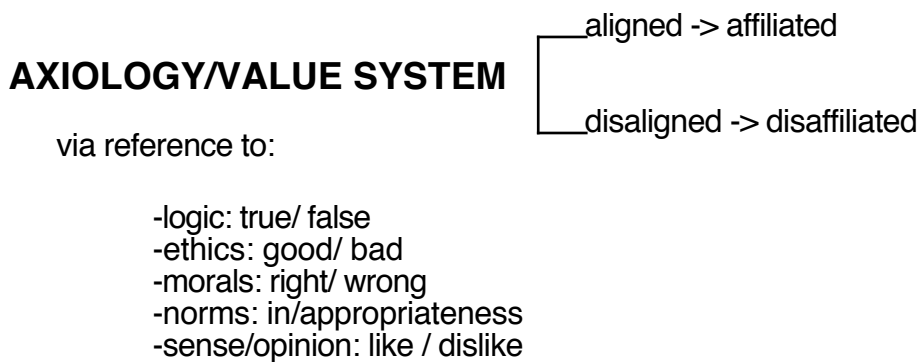
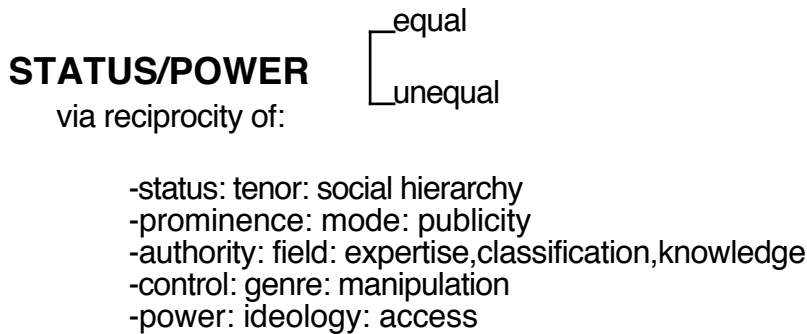
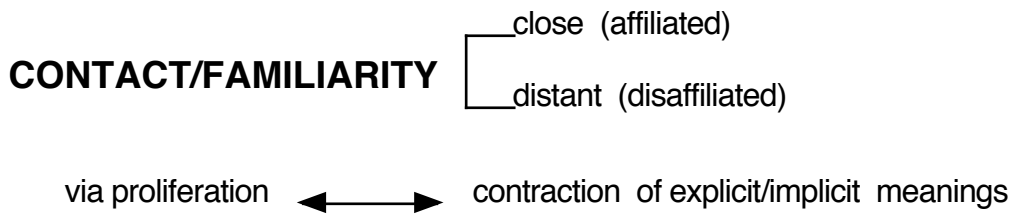
When posts which respond to previous contributions such as the one exemplified in *Table 5.11* above are tracked for evaluative positioning, negotiated positioning may be highlighted by taking note of how previous evaluative positions are ratified/allowed/legitimated/accommodated or condemned, thereby putting affiliation at risk. Responses may also highlight other interpretations of sections of contributions in which strategic ambiguity results in invoked appraisal. This way of tracking attitude is illustrated in more detail in the following sections.

#### ***5.4.2.4 Positioning ratification: Negotiating the constructing of identity and legitimating verbal behaviour***

Group members who make overt responses by posting to the list also contribute to the construction of identity as legitimated practice. Rather than passively consuming the positionings made by other members, active posters can ratify or question any contribution, and in so doing may act to shame or applaud other participants (e.g. Williams 1998). Despite repeated claims onlist that the written post represents the behaviour, not the actual person, it nevertheless appears that the persons behind the posting behaviour do feel shame or hurt in front of other listmembers, even when they have never met face to face. Many responses appear to be inspired by a need to maintain 'face'—of self, other individual members, or the group with whom one affiliates or aligns.

My attempt to provide a means to account for the ways that positions are either legitimated or censured in interaction led to an extension of a set of tenor variables proposed by Poynton (1985). This set of tenor variables is briefly introduced below (*Fig 5.3*). In the following discussion, I refer to these tenor variables as one means of accounting for the ways writers act to position themselves during the unfolding of their discourse. Positioning is enacted by claiming sometimes temporary alignment with other positions and participants. Repeated instances (or versions) of such claims may imply longer term culturally available positions or social roles, and sets of affiliations with other listmembers may be negotiated and maintained thereby.





*Figure 5.3: Tenor variables for construing writer - reader alignment and affiliation*

#### 5.4.2.5 Negotiation of positions for a specific set of listmembers

The discussion which follows uses a set of extracts from the thread *TVS* in order to illustrate how negotiation over identity may be performed and analysed. Consider first the excerpt below, *Ex 5.3: [tvs6.1/stan15]*, taken from the first

post in the thread, where the theme of posterID *Terry's hidden anger* is first raised. This theme then becomes the focus for the rest of this thread, culminating in the text cited above, *Ex 5.1: [tvs228.56/stan33]*:

**Example 5.3: extract from [tvs6.1/stan15]**

Not that it likely mattered in her case, but I have to say again Ter: your "dominant purpose is to analyze and learn" argument doesn't hide your anger very well.

Between this contribution and post [tvs228.56/stan33] in which the lexical item *rage* is both presumed as existing and as being 'hidden' (S7: *Hiding one's rage /On CRT page*), there were an intervening 55 contributions to the thread in the context of 222 intervening posts over 8 weeks of list interaction. However, the actual *inscribed evaluative peak* in this thread appeared earlier than the post [tvs228.56/stan33]—in post 38 of the 56. It was at this point that the writer explicitly negatively evaluates the target (*Ter*) by name, using for the first time the device of a limerick, repeated here as *Ex 5.4* for convenience:

**Example 5.4: extract from [tvs172.38/stan28]**

There once was a whiner named *Ter*  
Who claimed to have nary a care  
At feelings he'd balk  
Despite "playful" talk  
None more humorless lived anywhere  
  
Your turn, ol' pal.

This 38<sup>th</sup> contribution to the thread represents its actual *nexus*—the evaluative peak in the conversation. Until this post in the thread, the two protagonists had been arguing past each other in a rather defensive manner. In this post, posterID *Stan*, 'spits the dummy' so to speak, and explicitly evaluates his interlocutor, using three types of negative judgement: [judgement: tenacity: negative] (*a whiner, at feelings he'd balk*); [judgement: veracity: negative: provoked] (*who claimed to have nary a care, Despite "playful" talk*); and [judgement: capacity: negative] (*none more humorless*)—this was represented earlier in *Table 5.10*.

In terms of tenor relationships realised by these strategies (see *Fig 5.3* above), the post [*tv5172.38/stan28*], by evaluating the target in these terms enacts a negative tenor relationship via disalignment of **values** or **axiology**—by signalling that he dis-aligns with the activities he imputes to the target *Terry*: whining, balking at feelings, claiming not to have a care, the pretense of “play”, and being humourless.

At the same time, the use of a **directive** (*Your turn, ol' pal*) highlights another aspect of the means by which tenor relationships may be construed. Proposals of this type—demands for either information or services, whether congruent in mood or not—either construe unequal status by means of the non-reciprocity of the demands and the expectation of compliance, or they construe involved contact/familiarity: one makes such demands overtly, and without the benefit of so-called 'politeness markers' only with close associates, friends and family members (c.f. discussion Mod 2, Part I). Therefore in terms of tenor relationships, the **status** dimension is activated here, both that of social hierarchy, and of genre manipulation—in this case, by throwing down the gauntlet with respect to limerick-writing prowess. In the context of this interaction, and coming at the close of a post in which the tenor relationship with the addressee has already been set up as unequal and disaligned, such a directive addressed to an *ol' pal*—superficially an epithet of positive familiarity—acts to **amplify** even further the overall negative attitude contained in the post via its incongruence, or irony.

Fairclough (1992: 123) notes that this type of strategy "depends upon interpreters being able to recognise that the meaning of an echoed text is not the text producer's meaning", and in the co-text set up by this passage, ideal readers are primed to make such a recognition. That is to say, ideal readers are aware that the use of the epithet *ol' pal* is ironic and points to intertextual knowledge about the interlocutors and their attitudes towards the construal of friendship online. Also of course, the apostrophe standing for the 'd' in *old* serves as a *Marker* of the type discussed in Chapter 3: 34.2.1 as *Mode-bleed*, where

reference to the spoken in the written mode can have an interpersonal effect. These types of positioning move are the focus of the approach concerned with negotiated identity.

This post engendered the rest of the responses in the thread, as listmembers reacted by either condemning the severity of the attitudes inscribed, or by attempting to legitimise the attitude in some way. For example, the listowner (posterID *Simon*) reacted by sending a limerick of his own, claiming that he had responded to the 'playful' intent of the message. The appraisal targets of the limerick from this post were earlier represented in *Table 5.11*:

**Example 5.5: extract from [tvs188.50/simon19b]**

There once was a psych, analytic,  
A Freudian internet critic,  
His cold common sense,  
And a sly arrogance,  
For some was far too acidic.

Our Stan who likes object relations,  
And long Harley biker vacations,  
Says to us, Netdynam,  
"Yo group, here I am,  
But I'm not here to fill expectations."

You see, I actually did get **the invitation for playfulness** contained in Stan's post. But I only got it after the shock of the rough play had worn off.

Thus, *Simon* uses the same device, limerick, to evaluate the actions of 'aggressor' *Stan* by referring to **the invitation for playfulness** in the previous post. Here, presuming reference has been noted as one of the strategies for positioning, though not strictly a matter of Appraisal. Presuming reference implies that readers know what is being referred to, and in this case it actually labels the previous contribution as uncontentiously an 'invitation for playfulness'. By this means, PosterID *Simon* attempts to integrate the negative evaluation of the earlier contribution by overtly interpreting it as legitimate list activity.

More specifically, in order to absorb the negativity of *Stan's* earlier contribution (c.f. *Ex 5.4*), this response by *Simon* uses repeated instances of positive Affect towards the limerick. Repetition is one device which acts to *amplify* an Attitude, and thus its own positive [affect] in response to the original post is amplified. In addition, the *reciprocity* in the use of the same words (*really wanted it to be my turn*) and by use of the limerick form itself, marks the post as claiming alignment in terms of equal **status** (c.f. *Fig 5.3*).

In this way, the negative evaluation and subordination of the addressee in the final demand of posterID *Stan's* original post, is cast as secondary to the recognised call for 'play' within the bounds of a recognised conventional core-genre.

Staging and the development of the argument is also important for this positioning to be effected. Earlier in this (*Simon's*) same post (c.f. *Ex 5.6* below), he characterises the *anxiety* raised by the discussion by claiming affiliation with others through calling on **contact/** familiarity, and *attributing* the same reaction to audience members. This is effected through the attribute 'harsh', which acts to claim alignment in terms of **value system** regarding the content of *Stan's* post. The identity chaining of the targets in this short extract is highlighted in red showing how the referents are related but the actual lexical items shift slightly from one text-unit to the next—along with the Attitude:

**Example 5.6: extract from [tvs188.50/simon19b]**

My first response was **like everyone elses**: "oh, *that's harsh*." I considered *the post* very much likely to cause a backlash, which *it* did.

Within an hour or so the **sense of despair** I got because a couple old timers seemed locked in **unresolvable battle**, was replaced with a bit of **jealousy**. *Stan*, you see, had ended *his post* with,

>Your turn, ol' pal.

It was an invitation not meant for me. I **love** *limericks* -- don't much mind a San Francisco style poetry slam -- and really **wanted** it to be my turn.

PosterID *Simon's* strategy here is to first claim alignment with *everybody else*, and acknowledge the grounds for the *backlash* caused by the negative evaluation. The reasons for this backlash are then implicitly linked to his own *despair* [affect: happiness: negative: high] regarding the threat to the assumed alignments of the group: *a couple oldtimers locked in unresolvable battle*—thereby activating a claim of **contact/familiarity** with other listmembers (in terms of *Fig 5.3*) through claims of sharing such a lexically amplified affect response. This strategy is related to *Simon's* construction of his role as listowner.

He thus manages to legitimate posterID *Stan's* explicitly negative positioning of another listmember by claiming a different set of affective responses to the *interaction itself* as *target*. Firstly, through use of the term *jealousy* [affect: satisfaction: negative] of the target *invitation*—in which the usual 'saturation' of inscribed negative affect for 'jealousy' (and its tendency to provoke negative Judgement as well) is 'flipped' by context to one of [affect: positive] for the target *invitation*. Secondly, the affective response is characterised by use of the item *love* [affect: happiness: positive] of the target *limericks*, and of *wanted* [affect: inclination: positive] of the target *it to be [his] turn*. In summary, the response by posterID *Simon* in this passage (c.f. *Ex 5.5 and 5.6: [tvs188.50/simon19b]*) can be seen as an attempt to accommodate the earlier negativity by re-casting the content in terms of expression rather than content, with the content as secondary to the claim to 'play'. This content is thereby ratified by its recognition as legitimate and even desirable behaviour.

Recall that, in comparison (c.f. *Table 5.10* above) the original post [*tvs172.38/stan27*] evaluates the target *Ter* in terms of [judgement: tenacity: negative] (*a whiner, at feelings he'd balk*); [judgement: veracity: negative: provoked] (*who claimed to have nary a care*); and [judgement: capacity:

negative] (*none more humorless*). This enacts a negative tenor relationship of disalignment of **values** or **axiology**. Note that the negative veracity in this case does not pertain to *fact*, and so the dis-alignment makes reference to a system of *social values* rather than to *logic* (c.f. *Figure 5.3*).

The legitimating post [*tv188.50/simon19b*] also provides an example of how signals which are not part of the local co-text, can still become significant for the meaning-making of these texts. For example, the lexical items 'love' and 'jealousy' function in this text as explicit/inscribed evaluative items. Both items occur only once in the whole corpus for posterID *Simon* (see for example *Table 5.6* above), and other values of [affect: happiness] are similarly not a common feature in this posterID subcorpus. *Charts 5.4 – 5.6* above for example show a comparison of the frequency of Affect identified in each of the three posterID corpora, with that of *Simon* showing a relatively lower frequency of Affect overall—although for each poster, frequencies of [affect: happiness] were less than 1 in 500 words. Of interest, rather, is to look at those posts in which marked use of [affect: un/happiness] values are present for each posterID.

In contrast to that of the other posterID sets, in the example post [*tv188.50/simon19b*] (c.f. *Ex 5.5* and *5.6*), the frequency of [affect: happiness] values is just over 5/500 words. Moreover, the target, or 'affecter' of the positive [affect: happiness] here is not human or even an object, but a generic textual entity, *limericks*. Thus, this short excerpt provides a means of characterising the poster identity *Simon* as a textual persona who in general eschews the resources of [affect: happiness] negative or positive, and when he does activate this category, the evaluation is not engendered by human targets. This marked use of appraisal resources by this poster here also suggests to me that the post itself marks a site of fissure in the negotiation of group identity/values/legitimacy or norms, since it is marked in its context as part of the thread, and as part of a set of texts/posts produced by this posterID.

To return to the definition of 'positioning ratification' then, it is conceived as operating at a more dynamic level, between exchanges. These are typically carried on within the post itself (by means of quoting the sections or whole posts of previous contributions), where listmembers/other posters may act to accept, reject, refute, deny, contradict or accommodate previous verbal behaviour. Excerpts from two other responses in this thread serve to further illustrate this dynamic.

Firstly, PosterID *Simon* does not speak for 'everybody else' without evidence, as *Examples 5.7* and *5.8* below attest. These posts appeared onlist between the appearance of the original negatively evaluative post, [*tv172.38/stan28*] and the response discussed above, [*tv188.50/simon19b*]. The strategies they each use for commenting on the negative positioning evident in the original post are interesting in themselves—*Ex 5.7* uses the strategy of a short anecdote to report on her own reactions as attributions to herself in the past, and in this way avoids directly addressing the writer of the *incredibly aggressive post*. She also uses three instances of what I call 'surge-descriptors', again *amplifying* the affectual response and thereby signalling high **involvement**, despite identifying the two protagonists—who are in her audience—by means of 3<sup>rd</sup> person epithets: *One is a psychiatrist and one is a sociology lecturer, the psychiatrist one; the other one*; thus acting to distance them in terms of *addressivity* at least.

The surge-descriptors which betoken the [affect: security: negative] are **highlighted** in the passage below: *I laughed out loud ; an amazed, 'whoa' kind of way*; and a type of reported inner speech: *Shit, I wonder what will happen now....*

**Example 5.7: extract from [*tv175.40/san*]**

My brother-out-of-law John is staying with us and was in the room when I read this post. I laughed out loud, not from finding this amusing but in an amazed, 'whoa' kind of way. He asked what had made me have that reaction...how could I explain...I said, "you know that email list I'm in that's about net dynamics, well there are two men who have been in it for years. One is a psychiatrist and one is a sociology



lecturer, one is in San Francisco, I think the other one is too. I don't know if they've ever met in real life. Well, they've been having a conflict on the list for a while now, and the psychiatrist one has just sent **an incredibly aggressive post** to the list about the other one, I can hardly believe how aggressive it is. Shit, I wonder what will happen now....."

In the following extract on the other hand (*Ex 5.8*) the writer addresses *Stan* directly, but again carefully evaluates the post itself (*this post of yours; it*), rather than its writer by describing its content and betokening the [affect: insecurity] of the situation by using (Engagement) values of [deny: negation] and [deny: entertain] (*doesn't seem 'loaded' with good will*). That is to say, with reference to the typology outlined in *Figure 5.1*, by the strategy of [provoke: flag: local markers]:

**Example 5.8: extract from [tvs179.42/nan]**

Stan, This post of yours certainly **doesn't seem 'loaded' with good will.** It uses an awful lot of NEGATIVELY LOADED words. The ones that stand out particularly are: "self-pitying" and "whiner".  
I hadn't noticed anything in Terry's post to warrant **such 'insulting' terms.**

In extracts 5.7 and 5.8 above, writers contest the positioning (of *Terry* by *Stan*) by referring to their own negative personal reaction to these text objects. Their own dis-alignment with posterID *Stan*, in respect to his target, *Terry*, is implied rather than stated. In contrast, in the case of *Simon's* post, [tvs188.50/simon19b] (c.f. *Ex 5.5* and *5.6*), after the affectual responses of other listmembers are ratified by alignment and recognition, the positioning in the original post is ratified as play.

The targets of appraisal in the excerpts above, and in all three examples of response to the positioning and disalignment evident in the original negatively evaluative post (*Ex 5.4*), are actually text objects, not the putative writer of these text objects. The Judgements then, in appraisal terms, are not explicit/inscribed, since their 'real' targets are not part of the local co-text, but

may be considered invoked by tokens of Appreciation (c.f. discussion of category membership in Mod 2, Part II). While it is obvious to readers that the 'real' target of the last two excerpts is the posterID *Stan's* behaviour, and thus the attitude is one of [judgement: propriety: negative], in order to account for patterns of Judgement, I maintain that it is necessary to conduct appraisal analyses using "double-coding", and to attend to the lexico-grammatical resources that are typically employed for invoking attitude. *Figure 5.1* above summarises those resources found to be commonly used in the texts in this study<sup>1</sup>.

These ways of targeting and ratifying other members' verbal behaviour I see as part of the practices that become legitimated as group norms over time, and as under contestation or negotiation in almost every contribution to the list.

#### ***5.4.2.6 In-group / out-group identification***

One of the means by which identity is 'negotiated' is through group affiliation. Within a small group, there often arises a set of sub-groups with whom each member is identified. Participants in a mailing list discussion will sometimes identify or categorise themselves as members of a particular group. Unsurprisingly, when they do so, these groups are usually evaluated positively. Conversely, out-groups may be evaluated negatively as a means for positioning the self as *not* a member of such a group and its negatively evaluated practices. Such means of self-categorisation may also rely on the 'assumed knowledge' of other participants and their understanding that the writer is a member of the group being evaluated—or alternatively, that a positive attitude expressed by a participant towards a particular group identifies that speaker as a member. In studies reported by Wigboldus, Spears and Semin (1999) for example, it was found that when describing the behaviour of **out-group members**, speakers would consistently use what they termed 'low linguistic abstraction', or 'concrete'

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<sup>1</sup> These resources were noted 'on the fly' along with the appraisal analysis. They appear in the *Comments* column of the targetting tables in Appendices B.4 – B.6: ~ *detailed-targetting.html*

realisations for descriptions of desirable behaviour, and 'high linguistic abstraction' for their negatively evaluated behaviour. The reverse was true for the description of '**in-group members**' behaviour: their desirable behaviour was realised by high linguistic abstraction—what the appraisal framework would term 'inscribed attitude'—while their undesirable behaviour was described by means of low linguistic abstraction, or 'tokens' of attitude (c. f. Mod 2, Part II, 3.3.3). The prevalence of tokens of Attitude in the texts in my study suggest that members of the list also followed this pattern—and that they were negatively evaluating their own group members when they invoked attitude.

In monologues, this appears to also provide a useful means of tracking self-positioning by taking into account references to in-groups and out-groups and how they are evaluated. In terms of the context of situation engendered by a mailing list and the nature of its *addressivity*, evaluative strategies and references to certain social groupings may also position addressees depending on whether they are known to identify with such groups, or are labelled as such. This complicates the nature of identity and its linguistic realisations, and highlights the fact that such strategies need to be seen as functions of their discourse contexts (or *logogenetic* context) and knowledge of 'members' resources' (or *phylogenetic* context) rather than discrete evaluative positioning events.

Consider the following excerpts from an overtly-interactive style post in which the writer, posterID *Simon* takes an adversative position with respect to his interlocutor. In the first, *Ex 5.9*, the writer refers to two groups: *St.Johns* and *a bunch of home-based businesses*. Both groups are represented as behaving quite 'concretely' as distinct from being evaluated in abstract terms. Indeed, grammatically speaking, it could be pointed out that while both groups have their material processes down-ranked, *St.Johns* carries out more congruently realised material process activities in a clause functioning as Participant, while in contrast, the *bunch of home-based businesses*' material process is down-ranked to a non-finite clause *to sell their goods* functioning only as qualifier of *a place*:

**Example 5.9 extract from [SPM4/simon7]**

...St.Johns has no interest in buying computers, running expensive software and paying Dr.Z so a bunch of home based businesses can have a place to sell their goods.

However, *St.Johns* is represented as having an explicitly evaluative attitude [affect: inclination: negative] toward their own behaviour in the context of its benefiting the *home based businesses*. At the same time, the use of the numerator *a bunch of* as Head (but not Thing) and Epithet in this nominal group may act to draw attention to its evaluative connotation via the clustering of functions and via comparison with *St.Johns*. Therefore it seems obvious that the writer of this passage identifies with *St.Johns* and casts the *bunch of home based businesses* as an out-group.

In the following excerpt from the same post, *Ex 5.10*, the same writer carefully casts the addressee as a member of an out-group. He does this by referring to his own efforts in 'concrete' real-world material activity terms such as *trying to get homeless alcoholics off the booze*, and subsequently identifying with a second group: *those fighting spam* by means of claiming to support their efforts—and also claiming that they would support his efforts.

In this way, the writer implies his own positive alignment with these two groups, and positively evaluates the behaviour of both groups by association. In making these associations, the writer relies on audience alignment by calling on a shared value system/axiology (c.f. *Fig 5.3* above: tenor variables) in which 'community service' entailed by *trying to get homeless alcoholics off the booze* is regarded as *ethically 'good'*:

**Example 5.10 extract from [SPM4/simon7]**

You might choose not to put much effort into trying to get homeless alcoholics off the booze. So we differ in where we do our community service. Nevertheless, I will encourage those fighting spam just as they would probably support me.

The addressee is thus cast as -

- perhaps *not* putting much effort into trying to get alcoholics off the booze
- *differing* from the writer.

The writer on the other hand, is cast as someone who -

- is member of a group who puts effort into trying to get alcoholics off the booze
- differs from the addressee
- supports a group fighting spam
  - is supported by a group fighting spam.

The implication here is that the addressee is not a member of the 'group fighting spam' due to the interlocutors' *differences*. In this excerpt, the out-group is not even mentioned, and yet the addressee can be assumed to be a member of this out-group. Here again, the attitudes towards both groups is not as simple as the model described by Wigboldus et al (1999) would propose. 'Fighting spam' represents a fairly 'concrete' description of activity, albeit via a metaphorical use of 'to fight'. This leads to a provoked [judgement: tenacity: positive], becoming in turn, a token of [judgement: propriety: positive] via the assumed negative attitude toward *spam*. Given that the two excerpts are taken from the same post, it is not unlikely that the reader would be primed to read the out-group implied by *Ex 5.10* (as *not fighting spam*) and the *bunch of home based businesses* in *Ex 5.9* as one and the same. By association, the addressee is being identified with both—thus his behaviour is being negatively evaluated as well by association rather than direct evaluation. In fact, readers know that the addressee of this post is actually PRO-spam, and the rest of the post makes this clear. At the same time, Wigboldus, et al's (1999) claim that the behaviour of *out-group members* is evaluated using 'high linguistic abstraction' (or inscribed attitude) for their negatively evaluated behaviour is also apparent in the following extracts from the same post.

**Example 5.11: extract from [spm4/simon7]**

>I get the usual feedback to the effect that I am Evil.

You are. But that sort of evil is so common on unmoderated newsgroups that I have been driven from them completely.

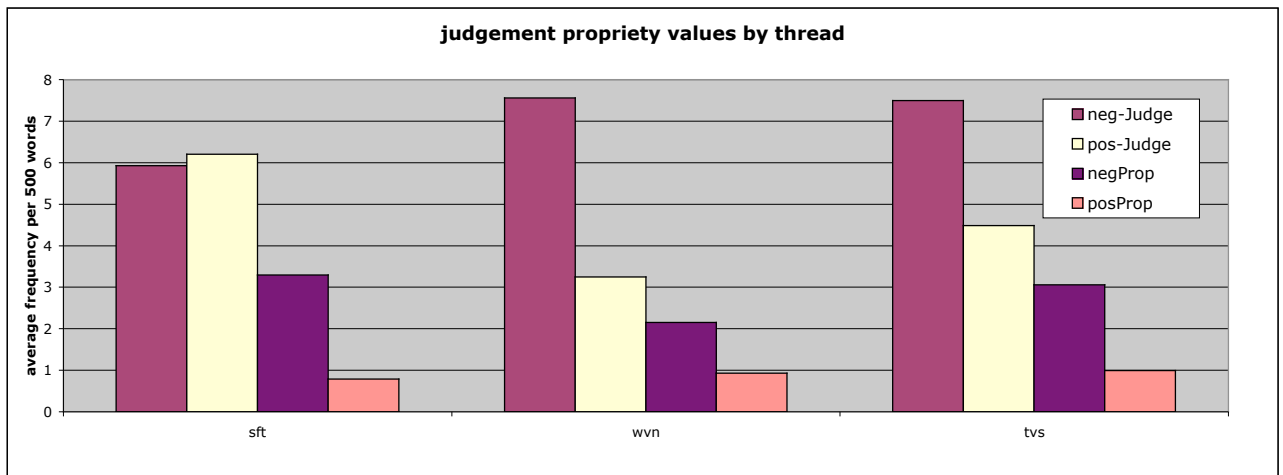
**Example 5.12: extract from [spm4/simon7]**

>As I see it, targeted ads are not "spam."

As I see it they are and I will support legislation to stop it.

These short excerpts also serve to underscore posterID *Simon's* role as list-owner. That he consistently positively identifies with the university who provides the email service to the group is no surprise. Similarly, his defence of the group's attitude towards *spam* is also not surprising, although his assertiveness in speaking *for* group members in this thread ("spm" during which a new listmember rigorously advocating spam was driven off) is of interest in itself since the textual persona he adopts creates an ethos of moral responsibility both with respect to the group and with respect to his real-world actions.

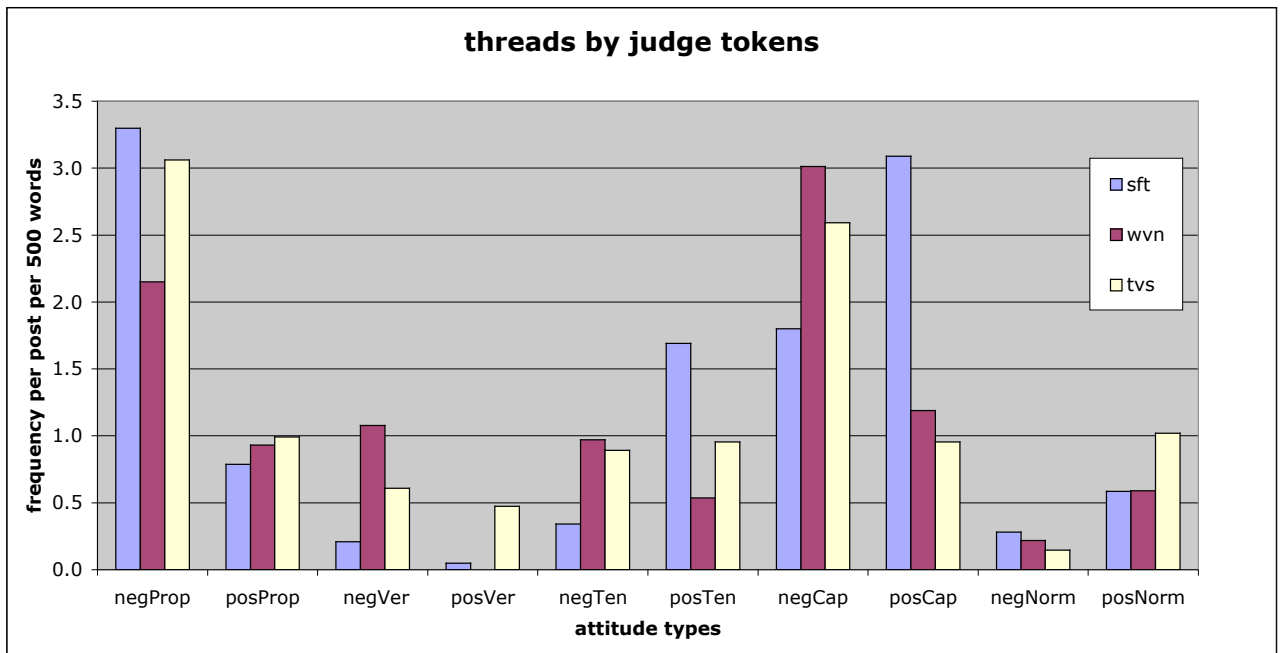
In a similar manner, the development of identity within the group may have some bearing on how members are willing to evaluate themselves and others (positioning). Reference to *Chart 5.3* above showing relative frequency of [types of affect] will demonstrate that early in the group's history there were relatively few instances of [happiness: negative] and [inclination: negative], both of which steadily increased in frequency for each of the threads. However, while [affect] is of interest since the topic of the *TVS* thread was involved with matters of Affect (whether or not posters hide their *anger*), values of Judgement are those directed at the behaviour of persons or groups. In *Chart 5.16* below for example, overall frequencies of Judgement values are compared across the three threads.



**Chart 5.16: Comparison of frequency of judgement values across threads**

It is clear from this chart that in the earlier thread *SFT*, and unlike the subsequent threads, a balance of negative and positive Judgement values were observed. At the same time, positive Judgement values in *SFT* were not comprised of those pertaining to Propriety, and thus although posters may have been willing to positively evaluate themselves and other members during this thread, it was through use of other categories of Attitude.

Chart 5.17 below shows that in this earlier thread (*SFT*), posters were more likely than in other threads to positively identify and evaluate human behaviour by reference to Capacity and Tenacity. The implication for this type of comparative analysis is that familiarity may indeed breed contempt, or that increased contact leads to more willingness to be critical of others' behaviour. On the other hand, it may only indicate that the threads with which the corpora are comprised are concerned with contentious issues and are more likely to evidence higher frequencies of negative Judgement.



*Chart 5.17: Comparison of frequency of types of Judgement by thread*

### ***5.5 Summary: Status in the group and textual identity.***

While poster status can be gauged by the extent to which Replies, and to a lesser extent, Responses are generated by that poster's contributions, textual identity is a function of the types of Responses/Replies a poster both contributes and engenders, and of the orientation they take towards the positions they respond to. Identity is also a function of self-positioning by posters and whether this is reflected, adopted, or mirrored in the contributions of others.

One way of creating a profile of textual identity is by taking note of whether posters adopt or creatively reproduce the norms—either formal or ideological—of the list<sup>1</sup>. This can be done by looking at the text-type style which specific posterIDs adopt, and how they use the resources of staging and formatting in their posts. Similarly a profile of a posterID's use of Appraisal resources can show

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<sup>1</sup> Or of any group.



their preferred use of various Attitude values proportional to a control set of texts, and direct further analysis to areas of contention or likely topics in which awareness of the potential disaffiliation of audience members is expected by that poster.

At a more delicate level a profile may be gained by tracking the orientation of posters to each other and to their identity via affiliation by looking at the specific targets of appraisal which posters nominate and which are common in the context of list interaction in general or the threads in which they appear. Because threads are selected for topic maintenance, targets within threads are likely to be similar, and thus any deviation from the norm in terms of types of target and attitude towards targets are also likely to be a source of group boundary marking. By looking at favoured targets of selected posterIDs across threads, however, general orientations towards common categories of target can also help create a profile for textual identity or persona. This chapter has argued for an approach to the analysis of textual identity using these types of stylistic criteria, and has discussed the ratification or legitimation responses that are possible in the co-creation of textual identity. The analysis of a set of texts produced by poster identities demonstrated how this approach may provide useful profiles of textual identity and the means to account for their negotiation within groups.