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Newspapers as 'community members': Editorial responses to the death of Eugène Terre'Blanche

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Abstract

This article uses the APPRAISAL system to expose covert meanings surrounding white supremacist Eugène Terre'Blanche's murder in editorials from three South African newspapers: *The Citizen*, *Sowetan* and *The Times*. Following Martin and White's (2005) framework, inscribed and evoked Attitudinal meanings are identified to prove an 'us versus them' perspective of Terre'Blanche's death. Graduation and Engagement strategies supplement this, illustrating how meanings are modified or organised to align readers. The analysis reveals surface attempts to present a 'balanced view' of this racially-sensitive event; however, beneath this is clear blame allocation. Additionally, the covert evaluation is explained by Coffin and O'Halloran's (2006) theory of 'dog-whistling', where only aligned readers can detect underlying meanings. This creates the imagined community – 'us' – of which the newspaper is seen as a trusted member. Print media, it could be inferred, is symbolic of other South African community members, who mask their evaluations with a politically correct façade.

Keywords: analysis, appraisal bias, comparative analysis, covert evaluation, editorials, Eugène Terre'Blanche, imagined community, newspapers

Introduction

The murder of 'white supremacist' Eugène Terre'Blanche on 3 April 2010 made international headlines and led to fears of the undoing of South Africa's democracy (*The Times*, Appendix A3). For newspaper editors, the difficulty with taking a stance after an event with racial connotations (such as Terre'Blanche's murder) is that there is little time to gauge the reaction of the newspaper's audience. In instances where sensitivity is needed, the newspaper must be careful not to offend its readers; therefore any judgement it carries needs to be covert, and this is what this article uncovers – the real evaluation of the event in three South African daily newspapers. The following questions formed the basis of the investigation:

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1. *In what context were the editorials written?*
2. *What APPRAISAL patterns are evident in the editorials?*
3. *How do the patterns of Attitude construe the newspapers' opinions of Terre'Blanche's murder?*
4. *How do the patterns of Graduation add to or diminish the opinion?*
5. *How do the Engagement strategies attempt to align the reader?*

To answer the first research question, it is necessary to examine the internal conventions of editorials, as well as how Terre'Blanche affected South Africa in life and in death.

Characteristics of editorials

According to Stonecipher (1979, 40) an editorial is a journalistic essay whose functions are to 'inform or explain; persuade or convince'. Unsigned editorials are the newspaper's 'institutional voice' (Stonecipher 1979, 41), and Waldrop (1967, 5) sees them as a way of showing that 'a newspaper is a citizen of its community'. Bradshaw (cited in Waldrop 1967, 16) states:

'A newspaper, like an individual, only has so many basic ideals and principles. But by applying them to various situations as they arise, a newspaper can *indoctrinate its readers with its own beliefs* and obtain their acceptance in the community' (my italics).

As alignment of the reader cannot be done overtly in these circumstances, the 'indoctrination' must be done in a covert manner, so that the reader has little reason to question the writer's stance. The APPRAISAL system (discussed in more detail later) makes provision for the implicit meaning to be exposed, making the writer's techniques clear, and the attitude of the community construed by the writer's stance.

Writing an obituary-type editorial (such as those in our data, which comment on the circumstances of Terre'Blanche's death and its implications for the country) has its perils, argues Bingham (cited in Waldrop 1967), and the writer is always conscious of the saying 'do not speak evil of the dead'. This is especially relevant in South Africa as Terre'Blanche had many critics, but it could be seen as bad taste to criticise him explicitly in a national publication. When looking at the significance of editorials, Lewis (cited in Waldrop 1967, 53) suggests that 'The editorial page... obviously carries a share of the responsibility in the formation of public opinion...', and Ver Steeg (cited in Waldrop 1967, 22) says, 'As the weeks advance... the people of the community begin to look to the paper and the editorial page for guidance.' This supports the editorial's influential status, which makes the use of APPRAISAL strategies (especially those construing covert meaning) all the more powerful as readers already see the authorial voice as trustworthy, and could thus accept its evaluations passively.

Terre'Blanche and the AWB

Terre'Blanche co-founded the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) during apartheid in 1973, but the organisation was at its most prominence in the early 1980s, when it had a 70 000-strong following (*The Scotsman* 2010). AWB members could wear uniforms and join military-style divisions of the organisation. In Terre'Blanche's opinion, Afrikaners were God's chosen people, and had to take action to prevent the 'destruction of the Afrikaner nation' (BBC News Online 2010), which he foresaw happening as a result of democracy, communism and the takeover of the government of South Africa by black people. Terre'Blanche was a talented orator and kept his audience captivated (*The Scotsman* 2010).

The AWB first made headlines when its members were charged with tarring and feathering a professor of History, who dismissed an Afrikaner public holiday as 'a secular event with hardly any real relevance in history' (*The Scotsman* 2010). Before the 1994 multi-racial elections, AWB members set off bombs around Johannesburg, killing 21 people (*The Scotsman* 2010). The media, however, was not frightened by Terre'Blanche's violent acts and were quick to ridicule him when he fell off his horse during a military parade, an incident which gave him a reputation as clown than someone who posed a racist threat (BBC News Online 2010). In 2001 Terre'Blanche himself was charged with attempted murder and spent three years in prison after assaulting one of his workers, Paul Motshabi, who is now brain damaged. While in prison, Terre'Blanche became a born-again Christian (*The Scotsman* 2010) and was said to have moderated his views. After his release he lived in relative obscurity until 2008, when he re-activated the AWB with more vigour (Groenewald 2009), speaking at rallies in the north of South Africa and making plans to launch the AWB Youth wing.

On 3 April 2010, Terre'Blanche was found murdered on his farm in Ventersdorp, with a panga [machete] on his body and a knobkierie beside him. Two of his farm workers pleaded guilty to his murder, allegedly over unpaid wages (South African Press Association 2010). He was 69 years old. AWB members flocked to his farm in their uniforms to pay their last respects to their leader, draping flags over his gate and sparking fears that the AWB would avenge his murder (*The Scotsman* 2010).

The newspapers' readership

To give the reader an idea of who reads which newspaper, Table 1 shows the Living Standard Measure (LSM®) composition of the readership. The LSM classification system was developed by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) after the abolition of apartheid and does not divide people in terms of race, as had previously been the case, but instead in terms of their living standards. The LSM is calculated based on 'access to services and durables, and geographic indicators as determinants of standard of living' (SAARF 2010). The scale ranges from 1-10, with 10

being the highest standard of living. According to Steenveld and Strelitz (2010), LSM 10's members are the most highly educated in the country, and most have white-collar jobs – unemployment is low in this group. Almost 41 per cent of LSM 1 are however, unemployed, and one in three members in this group are illiterate. Although LSMs do not regard race as a determining factor, the aftereffects of apartheid have contributed to the lower LSMs comprising mostly black people, whereas the higher LSMs consist of mostly white people, state Steenveld and Strelitz (2010). Each newspaper is read by mostly three LSMs, which are shown in Table 1 (first the LSM of the majority of readers, then the LSMs of the next highest numbers of remaining readers). The monthly household income that corresponds to each LSM is shown in Table 2.¹

Table 1. LSM ratings of newspapers' readership

Newspaper	Majority readership LSM	LSMs of remaining readership
The Citizen	7	9; 8
Sowetan	6	5; 7
The Times	10	9; 8

Table 2. LSM divisions of monthly household income

LSM	Monthly household income (in Rands - ZAR)
5	3 627
6	5 990
7	9 137–10 242
8	12 651–13 769
9	15 995–19 667
10	23 529–29 690

An overview of the APPRAISAL system

Martin and Rose (2007) call APPRAISAL a system of interpersonal meanings, which is concerned with evaluation. The system is composed of resources to evaluate the kinds of emotions that are negotiated in a text, the intensity of the feelings involved, as well as how readers are positioned in alignment with the attitudes put forward (Martin 2000). To fulfil these functions, APPRAISAL comprises three subsystems: (1) Attitude, (2) Graduation and (3) Engagement (the names of the subsystems are capitalised to prevent confusion with the non-technical use of the terms). Coffin and O'Halloran (2005) observe that these subsystems of APPRAISAL serve as 'a means of tracing the build-up of evaluative meaning' or prosody. Hood (2006, 38) refers to prosodies as the 'radiation' of interpersonal meaning, as they do not spread in a linear fashion, but instead diffuse throughout the text to imbue seemingly non-evaluative phrases with meaning.

Attitude

Attitude, according to Martin and Rose (2007), explores how gradable resources are used to evaluate feelings, people's behaviour, and things; for example processes, texts and natural phenomena. Attitude consists of three subsystems, namely (1) Affect, (2) Judgement and (3) Appreciation, which Martin (2004, 324) links to 'emotion, ethics and aesthetics' (see Figure 1 below for full diagrammatic representation), each subtype of which can be classified as positive [+] or negative [-].

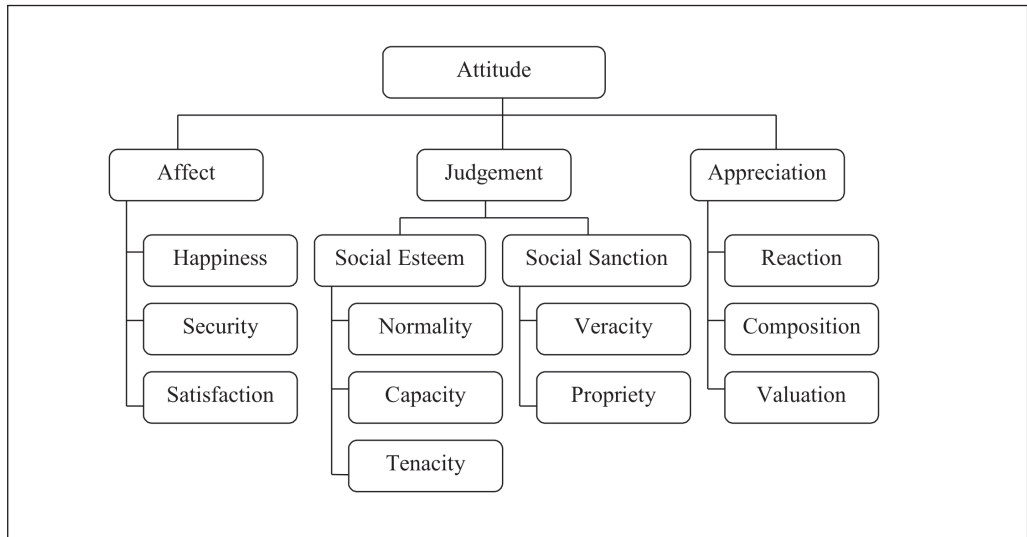


Figure 1: The APPRAISAL system: Attitude

Affect encompasses another three subsystems: (1) Happiness, (2) Security and (3) Satisfaction (Martin and Rose, 2007). Judgement provides resources for evaluating behaviour of others according to both personal-value-based norms (Social Esteem) and legal norms (Social Sanction). Social Esteem consists of three subsystems: (1) Normality, concerned with 'usualness', or how special someone is; (2) Capacity, involving 'capability'; and (3) Tenacity, dealing with 'reliability' and 'resolve' (Martin 2000). Social sanction is composed of two subsystems: Veracity is to do with 'honesty' or 'truthfulness' (Martin 2000), and Propriety is a system of resources drawn on to evaluate a person's ethical stance. The final subsystem of Attitude is Appreciation, which deals with resources that convey the social worth of 'things'. Appreciation consists of three subsystems. Reaction construes how emotionally captivating something is, while Composition evaluates how coherent, logical and balanced something is (Martin and Rose 2007). Valuation determines how useful, worthy or significant something is.

There is also a distinction between 'inscribed' (explicit) Affect and 'evoked' (implicit) Affect. Meanings can therefore be expressed directly and indirectly (Coffin and

O'Halloran 2005). Evoked meaning provokes the reader to interpret seemingly neutral words or clauses in the co-text from a similar position, building up meaning prosodically. Evoked meanings therefore, create conditions for the reader to make a particular evaluation. Whether this is conscious or unconscious, argue Coffin and O'Halloran (2005, 161), the writer's 'use of lexico-grammatical and semantic patterning may act as a groove to direct the reader to interpret the subsequent text in a particular way'.

With so many words in English, it is much to ask from the APPRAISAL system to provide categories into which they will fit without debate. 'Double-coding' fixes this shortfall. Because Affect, Judgement and Appreciation are so closely linked, some words *will* fall into more than one category. This occurs when the word or phrase contains both an inscribed and an evoked Attitudinal meaning, so the words must be double-coded to account for both meanings. This ensures that the full evaluation is exposed – the analyst does not merely rely on the inscribed meaning for fear of losing the 'real', yet covert feelings the appraiser conveys in order to align the reader.

Graduation

Graduation is a system of resources used to raise or lower the intensity of evaluations and encompasses two types of resources (see Figure 2 below for full representation): Force, which upscales or downscales gradable meaning, and Focus, which is graduation 'according to prototypicality... to categories which... are not scalable' (Martin and White 2005, 137).

Force is about the Quantification of meanings – measurements in terms of number, mass, presence and extent; and the Intensification of meanings – upscaling of quality and process. Force can either be isolating, where graduation is achieved using a single lexical item, or infusing, where the graduation is encoded into the lexical item itself. Figurative force is also infusing, where graduation is in terms of metaphors. Focus can be sharpened or softened, depending on how strong or weak the writer wishes the categorisation to be (Martin 2004).

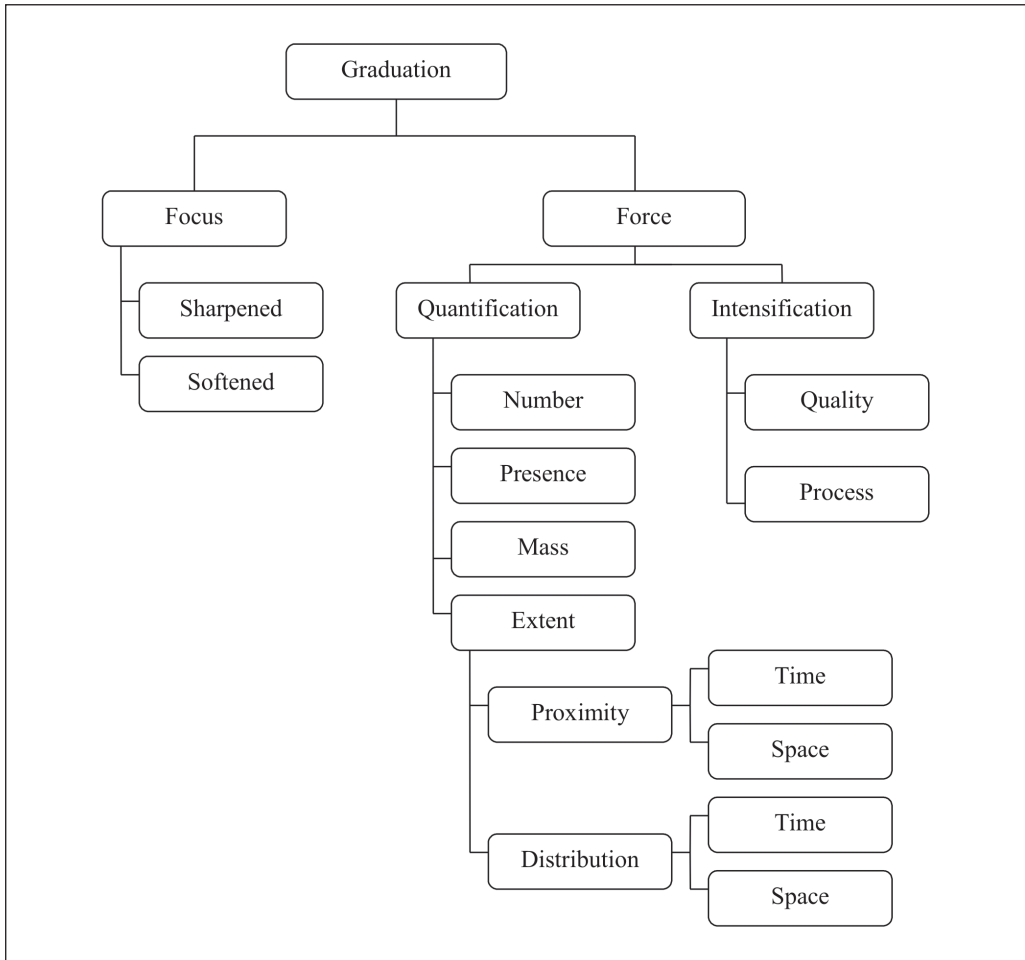


Figure 2: The APPRAISAL system : Graduation

Engagement

Engagement consists of linguistic resources with which authors present a stance while positioning themselves regarding alternative evaluations and other voices in a text, and attempt to position readers as aligning (or disaligning) with their stance. The first distinction drawn in the Engagement system is between the monoglossic and the heteroglossic. Monoglossia allows no space for alternative positions and construes a proposition or proposal explicitly (Martin 2004). Heteroglossia creates dialogic space which can be Expanded to allow for alternative stances or Contracted, which constrains the scope of voices or stances allowed. For a full representation of the Engagement subsystem, see Figure 3 below.

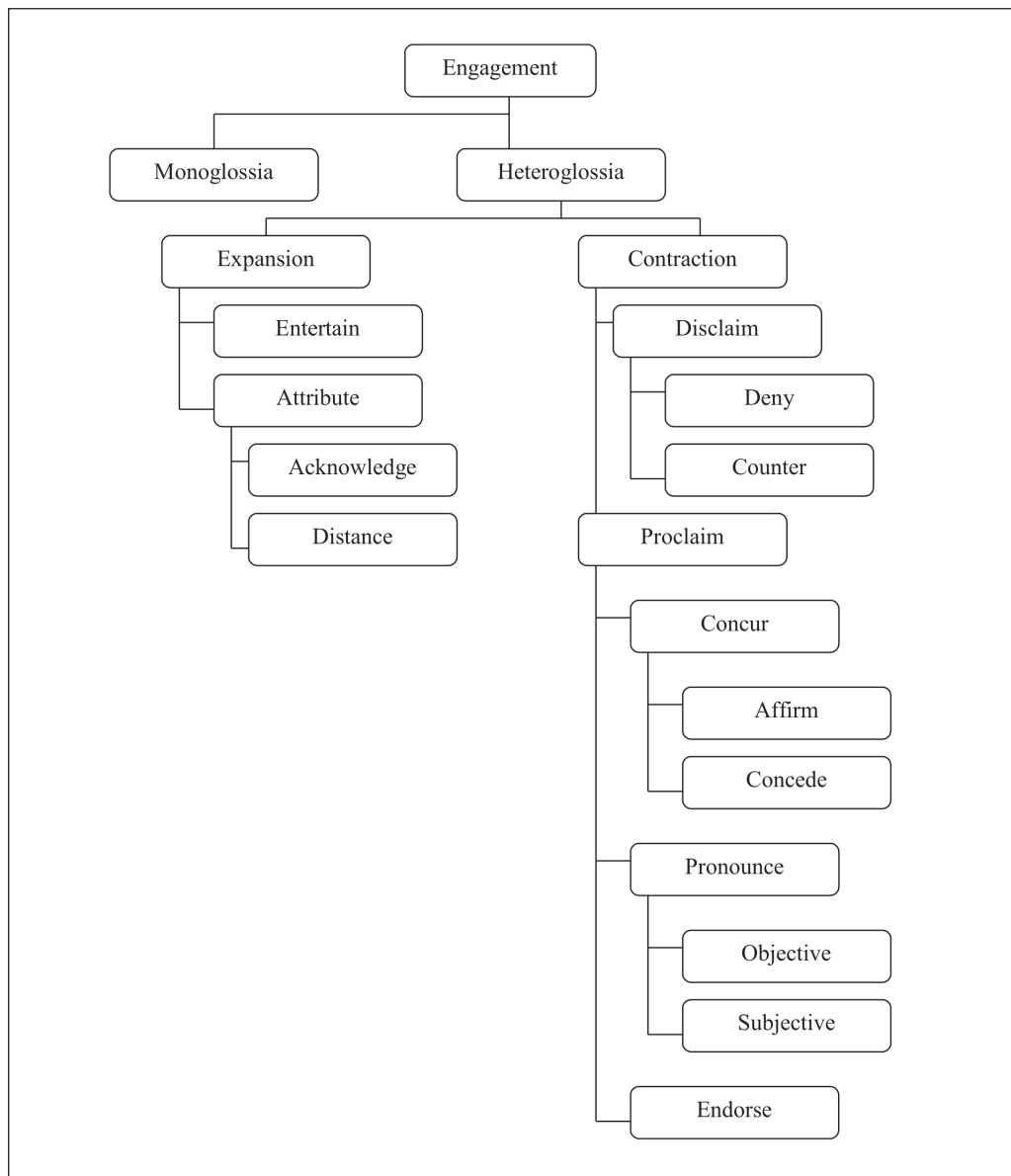


Figure 3: The APPRAISAL system: Engagement

Engagement focuses on heteroglossia to monitor the dialogic space available, but monoglossia is also telling of the writer's aims. Monoglossic utterances commonly take the form of unmodalised declarative clauses, according to White (2006), and therefore provoke the reader's assumptions that the proposition is consensual and unproblematic. Heteroglossia construes dialogic space in two ways: (1) Expansion and (2) Contraction. Expansion contains resources used to invite alternative stances, which in turn construe

an audience of diverse stances that could be in conflict with each other (White 2003). Expansion comprises Entertainment and Attribution. Entertainment construes that the writer's stance is one of a possible range of options, and is most commonly realised by the use of modality. White (2006) argues that earlier literature has treated these as an indication that writers lack commitment to the truth of their stance, but should instead be seen as opening up dialogic space to allow for alternate positions. Attribution is the technique of involving an external voice, which 'takes responsibility' for an evaluation (Martin and White 2005). Strategies of Attribution include Acknowledgement and Distance. Acknowledgement is a seemingly neutral way of hiding the author's stance by introducing an external voice, usually in reported speech. Distancing is where authors distance themselves from the proposition an external voice makes, thereby accepting no responsibility for its reliability (Martin and White 2005).

Contraction encompasses the resources that are used to constrain the dialogic space available for alternative voices and positions. This construes an audience that mostly conforms to the author's stance. Two subsystems make up Contraction: (1) Disclamation and (2) Proclamation. Disclamation occurs when a proposition in the text is overruled (Martin and White 2005). This can be done by Denial, where negating lexis such as 'no' is present. The second option is Countering the utterance – this often occurs in conjunction with Denial – when a position is stated, disclaimed by using 'but' or 'however' and replaced with a position that the author deems preferable. White (2003, 271) states that in Proclamation, the authorial voice displays its 'personal investment' in the stance put forward. There are three types of Proclamation: (1) Concurrence, (2) Pronouncement and (3) Endorsement. Concurrence construes an audience with the same knowledge and stance as the author, and is therefore already aligned (Martin and White 2005). Concurrence further comprises Affirmation and Concession. Affirmation involves writers' assumptions that their viewpoint is already taken for granted by the audience (Marshall 2009). Concession is an acknowledgement of a proposition followed by a Counter to it, using pairs of lexical items on either side.

Pronouncement occurs when the authorial voice explicitly intervenes to 'insist upon the value or warrantability of the proposition' (Martin and White 2005, 128). It can be Objective, where the subjectivity of the writer is concealed as in 'The fact that...'; or Subjective, where an evaluation is shown to be the subjective view of the author, such as 'We should all...'. In Endorsement the authorial voice is again foregrounded, but it is used to construe that the propositions of external sources are valid and worth supporting (White 2003).

APPRAISAL studies of relevance to this article

In the same manner that the murder of Eugène Terre'Blanche came as a shock, not only to South Africa but the whole world, so did the tragedy of the Twin Towers plane

crash on 11 September 2001 (9/11) in the USA. Although the loss of life from the latter was on a greater scale, the event threw the country into confusion. Achugar's (2004) analysis of daily Uruguayan editorials after 9/11 finds that the newspapers constructed an 'us versus them' strategy to create a sense of group identity with readers. The 'them' group is constructed by one newspaper as 'the unknown, the incomprehensible, the primitive and the barbaric' (Achugar 2004, 295). Actors displaying traits that reflect the ideologies of the newspaper are put in the 'us' group. In another newspaper, the 'us' group is 'constituted as a community that shares basic human values' (Achugar 2004, 297). Martin (2004) investigates the event from a different angle, choosing to analyse an editorial from a Hong Kong magazine, aimed mostly at British and Australian expatriates. While the editorial starts with sympathy for the Americans, it later exhibits strategies which construe another 'us' group composed of 'thinking people', who would be affected by the paranoia of Americans (Martin 2004, 337). Both Achugar's and Martin's studies demonstrate a clear 'us versus them'. It is more difficult for South African media to take sides with the country's democracy at risk – apportioning blame (for anything) would be a minefield for newspapers. It is vital that we note any evoked meaning, which could expose the 'true' feelings behind editorials that try to play it safe.

'Dog-whistle politics' (Coffin and O'Halloran 2006, 77) is defined as covert evaluation, which relies on evoked meaning. Politicians and journalists use seemingly neutral meanings when describing certain groups; but their target audiences can infer a negative (evoked) meaning. The practice gets its name from the dog whistle, which has a pitch too high for humans to hear, but is audible to its target audience. 'Dog-whistle politics' is used because journalists and politicians cannot explicitly convey negative judgements on minorities for fear of being accused of racism or bigotry (Coffin and O'Halloran 2006). With this technique, they are able to get their message across to those that are 'listening' for it, while those who are not, are unable to pick it up. Coffin and O'Halloran (2006) explore the use of 'dog-whistle politics' in *The Sun*, a British tabloid. They find that neutral evaluations are conveyed to the tabloid's target audience as negative meanings, owing to the accrual of negative Attitudinal meanings in the 'co-text' – text surrounding the 'neutral' evaluation. The use of 'dog-whistling' in South African editorials could similarly be the only way to get the newspapers' message heard without threatening any segment of their diverse audiences.

Research methods

Daily newspapers were our focus as editorials of daily newspapers would have to be written fairly soon after the event, so there is less time for them to gauge others' reactions. This would, we assumed, lead to a clearer picture of the newspapers' opinions, and this is what this investigation has aimed to capture. Four daily newspapers including *The Times*, *The Citizen* and *Sowetan* published editorials about Eugène Terre'Blanche's death. These three (see Appendix A) were selected due to the fact that they were published on the weekday closest to the event.

To classify instantiations of APPRAISAL in the text, the system proposed by Martin and White (2005) was used, as defined in the previous section of this article. Where words or phrases did not match one option provided by Martin and White (2005), they were double-coded to capture both aspects of the meaning they construe². After tabulating the data, the tables were examined for information according to the research questions; such as how many positive evaluations the editorials used as compared with negative evaluations, to whom or what the evaluations referred and how much of the meaning was evoked, as opposed to inscribed. Throughout the coding process, the writer's evaluations in the co-text were taken into account when determining which subsystems the data realised, thus ensuring that the prosody of meaning was acknowledged.

Findings and discussion³

The Citizen

Attitude and the construal of the newspaper's opinion

This editorial (see Appendix A), while condemning the behaviour of Eugène Terre'Blanche's killers in the first line, does not focus on the killing itself. Instead, it uses the murder to highlight the fact that the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) leader, Julius Malema has been left to his own devices by the government, and particularly President Jacob Zuma. The majority of Attitudinal evaluations are instances of Judgement and Appreciation (see Table 3). Almost 80 per cent are negative. The author berates the government by using [-Valuation] three times to evaluate it as a useless entity.

Table 3. Results of Attitude analysis: *The Citizen*

	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation	+	-	Inscribed	Evoked	Total instantiations
Number of total	6	11	11	6	22	20	8	28
Percentage of total	21.4	39.3	39.3	21	79	71	29	100

[-Capacity] is also used three times to describe the leadership of South Africa's government – this indicates that the newspaper has little faith in the government's ability to lead the country and its citizens, and make important decisions. Malema is also not spared. [-Propriety], both inscribed and evoked, is employed by the writer to evaluate the ANCYL president's ethical position when it comes to money, as well as [-Valuation] to convey that he is not worthy of his position.

The ethics of murder are questioned using [-Propriety] in the first line. This strategy adds to the condemnation of the government, suggesting they are responsible for the murder of Terre'Blanche in that they did not reprimand Malema (in the manner in which former President Nelson Mandela rebuked the late Peter Mokaba). Mandela's government is evaluated positively, so by arguing that Zuma's government *should* have acted likewise further negative evaluation of Zuma's government is implied. The division of the nation mentioned in lines 13 ('divided nation') and 22 ('fractured nation') is exemplified by the different reactions to the murder – those that 'call[ed] for celebrations' in lines 13-14 [+Happiness] and those that were 'shrill and angry' (line 12) [-Satisfaction].

Also noteworthy is that almost half of the negative evaluations discussed above are evoked (for example, Malema's ethics and worthiness, Zuma's strength of opinion and the government's ability to lead). The editorial is exercising mild dog-whistling here, but added to the explicit negative evaluations, Coffin and O'Halloran's (2005) semantic 'groove' (as described in the APPRAISAL overview) is formed to direct the reader's opinion towards disapproval of those in leadership positions.

Graduation and the adjustment of meaning

The upscaling of Extent: Proximity: Time 'current limp-wristed leadership' (line 7) and 'sang the song several times *recently*' (lines 9–10) emphasises the contrast between the 1993 ANC that rebuked Mokaba for the offending song and today's government who (as exemplified in the Attitude analysis) *The Citizen* believes is of no value. Upscaling the significance of the rebuke – public rebuke has more of an effect than a private one – further shows the difference between Mandela's rebuke and the lack of condemnation from the current government. The amplification (upscaling) of Presence in lines 11–12 ('The political temperature *has risen*') and line 21 ('as debate *rages*') indicates how the murder has escalated the emotions in the political debate that already existed as a result of Malema's lack of restraint and Zuma's unwillingness to reprimand him for singing the song.

Engagement and the stance of the authorial voice

This editorial starts with Acknowledgement that 'many South Africans believe' (line 3) in the link between the singing of the 'kill the boer' song and Terre'Blanche's murder. It continues with the way the ANC National Executive Committee condemned the song in lines 5–6 ('saying the slogan undermined their policy of promoting racial reconciliation'). Both these statements are made without taking responsibility for promoting the opinion that there is a link between the song and the murder. Likewise, no responsibility is taken for revealing that in the past someone has been reprimanded for singing the song (in contrast with the 'leadership vacuum' that has done nothing about it, and therefore facilitated conditions leading to the murder, in their opinion).

Subjective Pronouncement is used in lines 7–8 ('*should have* acted with the same speed') to recommend action on the part of Zuma's government, and the writer Counters this to show that because the government did not follow this kind of advice (rebuking Malema's 'kill the boer' song), undesirable consequences (murder of a prominent 'boer') have occurred. The Contraction strategies give readers little space to argue as they present the authorial voice's opinion without hedging or consideration of other views. Expansion (Entertainment in line 19 – 'may') is employed to speculate reasons for Eugène Terre'Blanche's murder. If the newspaper attributed monoglossic blame to Malema, it could face legal consequences, so it is unsurprising that the dialogic space is Expanded. Further worry about taking responsibility for opinions is shown by the Counter ('But' in line 20) of the tentative statement. Acknowledgement is used again in line 17 (stating it was a political commentator that said 'the centre cannot hold') to avoid responsibility for condemning the leadership. Concession in lines 15–16 by the authorial voice acknowledges (in the non-Engagement sense) Zuma's attempts to make amends, but adds more that he could have done something to remedy the situation.

Sowetan

Attitude and the construal of the newspaper's opinion

Sowetan also has a high percentage (78%) of negative evaluations (see Table 4). It tries to balance out the recipients of these evaluations, however, by condemning the murder with [-Propriety] ('slaying'), [-Satisfaction] ('angry') and [-Security] ('distress') before beginning its description of Terre'Blanche and his actions. Every aspect of these is portrayed negatively, including black people's feelings about him [-Satisfaction] ('will not forgive him'), his character [-Propriety] ('blood on his hands'), [-Capacity] ('failed'), and him as an entity [-Valuation] ('laughing stock').

Table 4. Results of Attitude analysis: *Sowetan*

	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation	+	-	Inscribed	Evoked	Total instantiations
Number of total	11	13	12	8	28	20	16	36
Percentage of total	31	36	33	22	78	56	44	100

The editorial also uses the same adjective (*brutal*) to describe Terre'Blanche's attack on Paul Motshabi (the farm worker who was left brain damaged after being assaulted by Terre'Blanche), and then the days of apartheid, leading the reader to equate the two subconsciously. Lines 20–21 state:

‘We hope, however, that the passing of ET will remind us of the brutal days of apartheid, and the miracle salvation of our nation in 1994.’

The statement in lines 20–21 could easily be interpreted in isolation as a positive, patriotic statement, especially containing the [+Reaction] (‘salvation’) and [+Security] (‘nation’) and the positive meanings that follow it (‘dream of 1994’, ‘live and let live’), but the prosody of negative meaning associated with Eugène Terre’Blanche guide the reader to make the connection in their minds that South Africa is better off without this man.

This editorial also has the smallest difference (12 percentage points) between the percentage of inscribed and evoked meaning expressions of all three newspapers. Many evoked instantiations are negative assessments of Terre’Blanche and his beliefs and leadership ability, which demonstrates that the author is attempting to avoid being held accountable for such harsh judgement, while still conveying this message to the reader effectively but covertly.

Graduation and the modification of meaning

Following the Attitudinal trend, the *Sowetan* focuses Graduation first on the murder, upscaling the event to ‘slaying’ before condemning it with the upscaled ‘abhor’. The editorial downscales the presence of Eugène Terre’Blanche (‘no longer an influential figure’) and added to the negative Attitudinal evaluation discussed in the previous paragraph, Terre’Blanche comes off looking impotent. Downscaling the importance of his beliefs (‘archaic’) and his number of followers (‘dwindling’) also has a degrading effect on the reader’s perception of Terre’Blanche. In lines 17 and 19, the actions of Terre’Blanche’s followers and their leader are upscaled to ‘mayhem’ and ‘brutal’, which results in them seeming more violent than the murder of Terre’Blanche itself, which started as an upgraded ‘slaying’ but after the description of his violent acts was downgraded to the euphemism ‘passing’ – removing the fact that his death was unnatural.

Engagement and the stance of the authorial voice

The *Sowetan* editorial contains only four instances of Engagement (heteroglossia), i.e. the writer does not open dialogic space for readers’ alternative viewpoints. This is not unusual for editorials, but this is a sensitive situation (murder of a prominent figure from a certain race group) and it is in the interests of the South African media to maintain a distance (on the surface) and not aggravate any existing tensions. Monoglossia is evident in the frequent use of the copula in unmodalised statements, as in ‘Some *are* angry’, ‘ET *was* no longer...’ and ‘There *is* no fence-sitting...’ to show high expressive modality, so there is no invitation for readers to disagree.

The Times

Attitude and the construal of the newspaper's opinion

The frequency of Judgement dominates this editorial (42% – see Table 5) – most evaluations are used to assess ethics and determination of the 'sides' of the story (conspiracy theorists' and racists' [-Propriety] 'intolerance' in line 12 versus government's [+Tenacity] 'at pains').

Table 5. Results of Attitude analysis: *The Times*

	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation	+	-	Inscribed	Evoked	Total instantiations
Number of total	12	15	9	12	24	26	10	36
Percentage of total	33	42	25	33	67	72	28	100

All the expressions of Attitude surrounding the government are positive – Security ('reassure') and Tenacity ('at pains'), indicating that the writer wants the reader to be confident in government institutions' ability to bring the facts of the matter to light. 'Calm' is mentioned four times – a third of all Affectual evaluations – which reinforces the belief that the 'nation' should also take comfort ([+Security]) from Zuma's call for calm, in *The Times's* opinion. Together with the [-Security] of the lack of calm on the 'racists' part, it also (very indirectly) serves to highlight the contrast between Terre'Blanche (extremist: not calm) and the government (moderate: calm). The contrast is hidden further by the fact that 26 per cent of the evaluations (the highest percentage of all three editorials) are inscribed, making it appear that *The Times* is being straightforward with the reader and not trying to force an opinion on them.

Negative evaluations are of the 'them' group – those not heeding Zuma's call for calm. [-Propriety] ('conspiracy' in lines 11, 16 and 19) describes racists and those who believe in a conspiracy. It is noteworthy that this is evoked, which attaches negative meaning to these people in readers' minds without them realising. The negative assessments are emphasised by *The Times* calling both extreme sides 'wrong'.

Graduation and the modification of meaning

There are no instances of downscaling in this editorial. Upscaling has occurred for two reasons: (1) to praise the government – the number of leaders that went to the murder scene is upscaled to 'numerous', as well as the process of getting there 'at pains', making their move seem more purposeful, that they took time out of their busy schedules to go and condemn the murder *at the crime scene*. Not only did they condemn the murder, but they did so in (upscaled) 'no uncertain terms'. Also, the visits dispelled

conspiracy theories and have been upgraded and ‘has done *much* to set aside... conspiracy theories’, making the leaders’ visits more valuable; and (2) that the Graduation makes views other than the government’s sound absurd. The effects of extremist views are upscaled to ‘fanning the flames’, as is the importance of the conspiracy (‘*grand* political conspiracy’) to the point where it sounds ludicrous. The feeling of calm, being the opposition to the racists, has been upscaled to ‘the enemy’ (of the racists). Using ‘another’ (line 8) implies ‘senseless’ farm attacks happen so often that it is irrational for the racists to turn this one into an occasion.

Engagement and the stance of the authorial voice

Like the others, this editorial is mostly monoglossic. This is illustrated by copula usage in ‘It *is* wrong...’, ‘Both sides *are*...’, which contracts dialogic space for other arguments. After the strong disclaimers ‘But’ and ‘make no mistake’, the writer uses modals for Subjective Pronouncement – despite Contracting the dialogic space, these could be mistaken for heteroglossic Entertainment by the reader as the authorial voice is making bold statements with no facts or statistics to justify them. ‘Make no mistake’ (Denial) in line 16 ‘corrects’ the assumption that the writer expects the reader to have. The Pronouncements ‘would like’ and ‘should be’ are then used to coax the reader into adopting the author’s opinion, providing ‘recommendation’ and ‘guidance’. Towards the end of the editorial, the calls for calm are finally attributed to Zuma. This buffers the claim made in earlier lines (‘There have been calls for calm’), where the agent of the calls was excluded to present a supposedly ‘balanced’ view.

The use of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ in this text presents the naturalised reader as no ‘racist to the left and right’ (as shown by ‘them’ in line 6, so the reader is excluded from that group). The reader is possibly part of the ‘calm’ group, as those who are not calm are ‘them’ against ‘we’ in line 25 and ‘us’ in the title. The calm group is seen to be neutral, as they do not believe in conspiracy theories, nor are they intolerant (like ‘both sides’ in line 12).

A comparison of the editorials

Tables 6 and 7 juxtapose the results for all three newspapers for easy comparison. *The Citizen* editorial has fewest Affectual judgements (21.4%). This is unsurprising, as it is evaluating people (Zuma, Malema), and entities (government) and to achieve this, the writer needs to express evaluations without showing overt emotion. This contributes to their strategy of not taking responsibility for the claims made. *The Citizen* presents a strong negative opinion of the government that is noticeable to the reader. *The Citizen*’s case of dog-whistling was specified earlier in this article as ‘mild’, mainly because the editorial is not trying very hard to hide its evaluation, but instead creates a groove of disapproval.

Table 6. Attitude subsystems as number of instantiations

Editorial	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation	+	-	Inscribed	Evoked	Total instantiations
<i>The Citizen</i>	6	11	11	6	22	20	8	28
<i>Sowetan</i>	11	13	12	8	28	20	16	36
<i>The Times</i>	12	15	9	12	24	26	10	36

Table 7. Attitude subsystems as a percentage of instantiations

Editorial	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation	+	-	Inscribed	Evoked	Total instantiations
<i>The Citizen</i>	21.4	39.3	39.3	21	79	71	29	100
<i>Sowetan</i>	31	36	33	22	78	56	44	100
<i>The Times</i>	33	42	25	33	67	72	28	100

Like *The Citizen*, *The Times* also tries to maintain a neutral stance and not make any distasteful comments. This aids in obscuring its support for the government. The 'neutrality' is supported by the fact that *The Times* has the lowest percentage (more than 10 per cent points less than *The Citizen* and *Sowetan*) of negative evaluations. Only about half of *Sowetan*'s evaluations are inscribed, whereas the other editorials have approximately 70 per cent inscribed evaluations. *Sowetan* therefore, has the highest percentage of evoked meaning (44%). It would seem to follow, then, that this newspaper would be the best case of dog-whistling (in terms of numbers). However, dog-whistling is by definition, only picked up by the target audience, and although so many meanings are evoked, readers (no matter what their stance) are left with a very definite impression that *Sowetan* is not a Terre'Blanche supporter. This feeling is generated by the semantic groove of negativity that the editorial creates.

Summary of main findings

The second research question looks for patterns evident in the data. The editorials use Attitude mainly to construe their disapproval of the acts and ethics of public figures (Terre'Blanche included), as well as groups in the community that they see as going against South Africa's post-apartheid values of unity and non-racialism. Negative evaluations of Terre'Blanche are upscaled by Graduation, or downscaled to ridicule him. Engagement weaves the meanings into structures that are used to contradict other people's ideas, or to dodge responsibility for statements, encouraging the reader to see these as facts.

The third research question seeks to investigate how the patterns of Attitude construe the newspapers' opinions of the murder. This is answered on two levels. First, all initial evaluations of the murder are negative. Later, the inscribed negative evaluations of Terre'Blanche himself create the groove that lead to neutral-seeming terms evoking negative connotations, and in cases such as *Sowetan*, the editorial gives the impression that Terre'Blanche's death is not a bad thing. The newspapers use mostly evaluations of Judgement (*The Citizen* – 39.3%; *Sowetan* – 36%; *The Times* – 42%), as they assess the behaviour and moral standing of various people. *The Citizen* uses negative Affect to blame the government for the murder, and *The Times*'s negative evaluations fall on everyone but the government, sidestepping the murder itself but highlighting its effects.

The fourth research question examines how Graduation modifies the editorials' opinions. Graduation focuses on amplifying the negative meanings describing Terre'Blanche and the government, while in *The Times*, qualities of the government are upscaled. Downscaling is prevalent in the description of Terre'Blanche in *Sowetan* to make him look like 'a laughing stock'.

The fifth research question asks how the Engagement strategies in the data attempt to align the reader. The editorials use monoglossia as the strongest means of construing propositions as fact, and thereby allow little space for readers' alternative stances. *The Citizen* allows readers' input by Acknowledging statements but Countering others to guide their views. *Sowetan* goes on the offensive, Countering actions of other parties before reaching their own conclusion, which the reader is left to agree with. *The Times*'s strategy is Subjective Pronouncement, nudging the reader into the authorial voice's stance. It does, however, get more forceful with instantiations of Denial and Countering.

Conclusion

In a country where democracy and freedom of speech (are supposed to) reign supreme, editorials should speak the minds of their writers. However, in the editorials that we have analysed, the writers make use of *covert* evaluation and alignment techniques, which project their opinions into the heads of readers. A murder that provokes a racially-charged debate should cue writers to be sensitive – and they are (by condemning the murder). The problem is that they use this opportunity to use emotive language to disseminate their views – the dog-whistling will easily be 'heard' by readers already wanting to blame the respective 'them' groups. This is not unique to newspapers, however. They are only 'citizens of their community', indicating a South African 'undercover judgement' mindset, where true feelings are not shown towards those who might be offended by the opinions lurking beneath the 'neutral' façade. By othering certain groups, the authorial voice defines who is a 'fellow citizen' of its community, and who should be shunned by other members. Readers allow these boundaries to be set as, after all, the newspaper is the one member of the community they 'know' they can trust.

Notes

- 1 It could be argued that racial statistics would contribute to better understanding the negotiation of the interpersonal relations found in the editorials. However, the inclusion of racially-based readership statistics may lead to blanket judgements that could interfere with the lexicogrammatical analysis (for example, assuming that an editorial with a predominantly white readership would praise Terre'Blanche). Also, our research aims to describe *how* the APPRAISAL strategies contribute to the authors' position – explaining *why* these positions exist is beyond the scope of this article.
- 2 Analysis using APPRAISAL tools is unavoidably subjective; because the system works at a lexicogrammatical level, the boundaries of the subsystems are less fixed than those found in a purely grammatical analysis. Martin and White (2005) acknowledge that Judgement and Appreciation represent 'institutionalised feelings' in that they are Affect in different (uncommonsense) worlds where values are shared. Judgement sees feelings in terms of behaviour, whereas Appreciation sees feelings in terms of the value of things. In some situations, therefore, the same lexis can be used either for Judgement or Appreciation, depending on the entity being evaluated. Double-coding, as described under the discussion of the Attitude system, is an attempt to capture all dimensions of meaning in the lexis.
- 3 Readers who wish to explore more nuanced meaning in the editorials can obtain the fully-coded Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement tables from the authors on request.

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Appendix A

Appendix A1: *The Citizen* editorial

Killing of ET exposes divisions

April 6, 2010

- 1 Whether there is a direct link between the murder of AWB leader Eugene
- 2 Terre'Blanche and the revival by ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema of the
- 3 'kill the boer' song, many in South Africa and overseas believe this is so.
- 4 When Peter Mokaba sang the song in 1993 the ANC National Executive
- 5 Committee
- 6 led by Nelson Mandela publicly rebuked him, saying the slogan undermined their
- 7 policy of promoting racial reconciliation.
- 8 The current limp-wristed leadership should have acted with the same speed and
- 9 firmness when Malema – clearly wishing to deflect attention from media
- 10 revelations
- 11 about his tenderpreneurship and amassing of obscene wealth – sang the song
- 12 several
- 13 times recently.
- 14 But with Terre'Blanche's murder the genie is out of the bottle. The political
- 15 temperature has risen: many callers to radio shows are shrill and angry, reflecting a

13 divided nation as Terre'Blanche's followers vow revenge and others call for
 14 celebrations.
 15 While President Jacob Zuma has appealed for calm, he stopped short of
 condemning
 16 Malema's use of the song. This prompted one political commentator to use the
 words
 17 of poet WB Yeats – 'the centre cannot hold' – to condemn the leadership vacuum
 18 which has allowed the likes to Malema to step into the public space.
 19 Terre'Blanche has minimal political support and his murder may indeed be
 because of
 20 a wage dispute as two farm workers were swiftly arrested. But in death he has,
 along
 21 with Malema, ironically taken centre stage as debate rages over the violence of the
 22 crime – one suspect is just 15 – and what it has exposed about our fractured
 nation.
 23 Sixteen years into democracy we have no capable leadership to unite SA and no
 24 coherent vision from the governing party for a shared future.

Appendix A2: *Sowetan* editorial

We can still live [the] dream
 Apr 6, 2010

1 There is no fence-sitting in Ventersdorp. The slaying of AWB leader Eugène
 2 Terre'Blanche has fuelled already existing divisions in that community.
 3 Some are angry while others are celebrating. It is another sad relic of our past.
 4 To family and friends we extend our condolences on the death of their patriarch.
 5 We abhor the manner of his death because killing and mutilating a man is a
 terrible
 6 thing. No man deserves this type of death. It dishonours all of us.
 7 Many farmers, to our distress and regret, have been killed.
 8 ET was no longer an influential figure in politics. He was generally regarded as a
 9 spent force and a laughing stock because of his archaic ideas.
 10 He had blood on his hands. Terre'Blanche killed one man and crippled another. To
 11 many, this was merely the abominable result of patriarchal employment practices
 on
 12 farms.
 13 His political platform had been abandoned by many because of its bankruptcy.
 14 His rabid rightwing beliefs failed to keep his dwindling followers at heel. The man

15 was not Chris Hani.
 16 But Terre'Blanche's fellow rightwingers have now emerged from the shadows,
 17 threatening mayhem and revenge.
 18 Blacks, on the other hand, say ET was a gogga. They will not forgive him for
 leaving
 19 Paul Motshabi brain damaged after a brutal attack.
 20 We hope, however, that the passing of ET will remind us of the brutal days of
 21 apartheid, and the miracle salvation of our nation in 1994.
 22 To take the dream of 1994 forward, we have to live and let live.

Appendix A3: *The Times* editorial

Terre Blanche: Let's all heed the president's call
 April 5, 2010

1 There have been calls for calm following the murder of the AWB leader, Eugene
 2 Terre Blanche. But, make no mistake, the overwhelming majority of South
 Africans
 3 are calm and would like to see justice take its course.
 4 Those who are not calm are the racists to the left and right for whom calm is the
 5 enemy.
 6 To them, the idea that a murder should be dispassionately investigated, the culprits
 7 subjected to a fair trial and then be found innocent or guilty is not acceptable.
 8 They would like to turn this event, which has all the hallmarks of another
 senseless
 9 farm killing, into an occasion for political mobilisation.
 10 There are those who say that Terre Blanche got what he deserved, and there are
 those
 11 who say he was the victim of a grand political conspiracy against whites.
 12 Both sides are fanning the flames of intolerance when they should be trusting this
 13 country's institutions to handle the matter.
 14 It is wrong to say that Terre Blanche got what he deserved because the strength of
 the
 15 rule of law is most severely tested when society's least loved require justice.
 16 It is also wrong to conjure up a conspiracy against whites when there is absolutely
 no
 17 evidence of it.
 18 The fact that numerous government leaders have been at pains to go to the scene
 of

19 the crime and to condemn the murder in no uncertain terms has done much to set
20 aside these sorts of conspiracy theories.
21 So too has the statement by President Jacob Zuma, who addressed the nation to
22 reassure all with the words: 'I call upon our people, black and white, to remain
23 calm,
24 and allow the police and other organs of state to do their work.
25 'This is not the time for speculation that can worsen the situation.'
26 We should all heed the president's call.