From functional to cognitive grammar in stylistic analysis of Golding's The Inheritors

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Abstract: Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is one of the most influential grammars used in stylistics, but more recently the discipline has witnessed a growing body of work using cognitive grammars to explain stylistic effects. This research has tended to make the positive case for cognitive grammar (CG) by demonstrating its similarity to functionalist approaches. However, it is also necessary to say how CG *adds to* an SFG account of literary effects. To do so, I return to Halliday's seminal analysis of Golding's novel, *The Inheritors*. I use CG to investigate the conceptual processes involved in the reader's interpretation of the character's deviant mindstyle and outline some of the ludic and dramatic effects of these reconstrual operations. Thus, whereas SFG focuses on describing the ideational structure of the representations proffered by texts, I argue that a unique affordance of CG is its focus on the readerly construction of meaning.

Keywords: Cognitive Grammar, Systemic Functional Grammar, *The Inheritors*, William Golding, construal, reconstrual, respecifying, rescoping, reprofiling

1 Cognitive Grammar in stylistics

Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG, for an overview, see Halliday and Matthiessen 2014) has been described as a 'cornerstone' (Harrison, 2017a: 7) of stylistics and 'the paradigmatic grammar in the field' (Stockwell, 2014b: 20). Certainly SFG has played a pivotal role in the development of the discipline, particularly as a tool for describing the ideational structure of texts and their ideological effects (for example, Jeffries 2010; Mills 1995; Simpson 1993). More recently, however, stylisticians have turned to new grammatical models to perform their analyses. There has been a rapid growth in research that utilises Langacker's (1987, 1991, 2008) Cognitive Grammar (CG) or Talmy's (2000a, 2000b) Cognitive Semantics (Browse 2018; Giovanelli 2017; Hamilton 2003; Harrison 2017a, 2017b; Harrison et al. 2014; Nuttall 2015, 2018; Stockwell 2009, 2014a). These cognitive approaches have now matured to the point that they are

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codified in a text-book, Giovanelli and Harrison's (2018) *Cognitive Grammar in Stylistics*.

The distinction between functional and cognitive perspectives is not a rigid one, and some literary linguists have combined both approaches (Gavins 2007). Langacker (2008: 7) himself argues that CG is part of a functionalist tradition because it sees functional considerations as 'foundational to the problem of describing language form'. Indeed, the major discussions and applications of CG in stylistics have emphasised the similarities between the frameworks (Harrison, 2017: 7; Harrison et al. 2014: 2, see also Stockwell 2002: 70). Stockwell (2014b: 20) suggests that we should treat 'SFG stylistics as a benchmark for any adequate model' and that analyses using CG 'must be at least as good as previous practices, in order to justify overcoming the inertia of sticking with the same paradigmatic model'. This is absolutely right. Stylistics is a progressive discipline (Carter and Stockwell 2008: 301) which means that new approaches should add to our understanding of the literary and rhetorical effects of texts on readers. The work cited above has tended to make the positive case for cognitive frameworks. However, a comparison of models must necessarily involve an explicit discussion of what this approach can do that SFG cannot. The aim of this article is to provide an answer to that question. In doing so, it is not my intention simply to argue for replacing SFG with a new paradigmatic Cognitive Grammar. Stylistics should be eclectic (though principled) in its theory and methods (Jeffries 2000). Different theoretical frameworks emphasise different aspects of the process of meaning construction. The goal of this article is therefore to delineate the unique points of emphases that set CG apart from its functionalist antecedent and the gaps that it might fill in the SFG account. The analysis offered here should thus be seen as a complementary rather than competitive account of the relationship between linguistic form and literary effect, intended to build on – rather than replace – previous SFG perspectives.

To provide this complementary account, I return to Halliday's (1971) landmark paper 'Linguistic function and literary style: An enquiry into the language of William Golding's *Inheritors*'. In the article, Halliday set out one of the first SFG analyses of literary effects (see also Halliday 1966), using functional categories to describe the 'mind style' (Fowler 1986; Semino 2002, 2011, 2014) of the main character in the novel, Lok. I compare the affordances of Halliday's framework with a CG perspective on the text. My approach, here, is rather similar to Gavins (2012), who traces the disciplinary development of stylistics by examining how functional (Halliday 1966) and contextualised (Widdowson 1975) frameworks have been used to analyse Yeats's poem 'Leda and the Swan'. She concludes by outlining the advantages of applying a cognitive stylistic perspective to the poem. However, whereas Gavins (2012) provides a detailed analysis of the discourse-level conceptual structures involved in the reader's apprehension

of context, I compare the contrasting manner in which SFG and CG account for what are patterns of predominantly clause-level linguistic phenomena. More specifically, I argue that while SFG very successfully describes the ideational representations proffered by the grammatical forms in a text, CG provides an account of how these representations are construed and – perhaps more importantly, in the case of *The Inheritors* – *reconstrued* by readers. Following Stockwell (2014b), I suggest that CG thus offers a more readerly account of the discourse participants' processes of meaning construction than SFG. Indeed, CG has been increasingly used in the analysis of reader response data for this reason (Browse 2018; Harrison 2017; Nuttall 2015).

To make this argument, Section 2 outlines Halliday's analysis and key claims. Section 3 traces the development of this literary linguistic reading of Golding's *The Inheritors* through the work of Black (1993), Hoover (1999) and Clark (2009), situating a CG perspective in relation to this broader body of stylistic research. Section 4 outlines a cognitive grammatical framework. Following Harrison (2017) I use lower case letters to describe this approach because it combines features of Langacker's (1987, 1991, 2008) Cognitive Grammar with Werth's (1999) Text World Theory (see also Gavins 2007; Gavins and Lahey 2016). In Sections 5 and 6, I apply these ideas to Halliday's own examples and introduce the concept of 'reconstrual' (Browse 2018; Forrest 1996; Harrison 2017: 58) and in Section 7 I explore the literary function of these reconstrual processes.

2 Systemic Functional Grammar and *The Inheritors*

Throughout his discussion of *The Inheritors*, Halliday is primarily concerned with what he calls 'criteria of relevance' in stylistic analyses (Halliday 1971: 330). The paper centres around the issue of foregrounding. He argues that while linguistic patterns in the text may be quantifiable, the statistical significance of a linguistic feature is not a guarantee of it being relevant to the meaning of the literary work (Halliday 1971: 344). His solution is that it should have some functional relevance: 'a feature of the text will be "foregrounded" only if it relates to the meaning of the text as a whole' (Halliday 1971: 339). Foregrounding is thus 'prominence that is motivated' (Halliday 1971: 339), or at least prominence that the reader perceives to be motivated by the overall meaning of the text. Halliday grounds this theory of stylistic relevance in his own functionalist framework, continuing:

> If a particular feature of the language contributes, by its prominence, to the total meaning of the work, it does so by virtue of and through the medium of its own value in the language – through the linguistic function from which its meaning is derived.
>
> (Halliday 1971: 339)

For Halliday (1971), language has three metafunctions: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual (see also, Halliday 1984; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). The first relates to the capacity of language to represent states of affairs in the world; the second, the manner in which it constructs relationships between language users; and the third, how it organises itself into a coherent message. According to Halliday (1971), then, the prominence of a linguistic feature or pattern is determined by its ideational, interpersonal or textual meaning and the thematic significance of these metafunctions to the literary work as a whole. He uses William Golding's novel to exemplify this argument.

The Inheritors (Golding 2011 [1955]) is about a group of Neanderthals, called 'the people'. After wintering by the sea, they travel back inland to find that their home has been overtaken by a tribe of *homo sapiens*. The encounter proves disastrous for the people, who – with the exception of an unnamed Neanderthal infant taken captive by 'the new people' – all perish as a result. Halliday (1971) argues that the novel can be split into three different sections, with three corresponding languages: Language A, B and C. The majority of the novel is written in Language A, which reflects Lok's Neanderthal point of view. The final chapters are written in Language C, which represents a more contemporary *homo sapiens*'s perspective. Language B is the transition point between A and C (Halliday 1971: 354, although, see Hoover 1999). Language A is exemplified by Halliday (1971) in the following extract (provided in full because it forms the basis of my own analysis in Sections 4–7, below):

1 The bushes twitched again. Lok steadied by the tree and gazed. A head and a chest
2 faced him, half-hidden. There were white bone things behind the leaves of hair. The
3 man had white bone things above his eyes and under the mouth so that his face was
4 longer than a face should be. The man turned sideways in the bushes and looked at
5 Lok along his shoulder. A stick rose upright and there was a lump of bone in the middle.
6 Lok peered at the stick and the lump of bone and the small eyes in the bone
7 things over the face. Suddenly Lok understood that the man was holding the stick out
8 to him but neither he nor Lok could reach across the river. He would have laughed if it
9 were not for the echo of the screaming in his head. The stick began to grow shorter at
10 both ends. Then it shot out to full length again.
11 The dead tree by Lok's ear acquired a voice.
12 Clop!
13 His ears twitched and he turned to the tree. By his face there had grown a twig:

a twig that smelt of other, and of goose, and of the bitter berries that Lok's stomach told him he must not eat. This twig had a white bone at the end. There were hooks in the bone and sticky brown stuff hung in the crooks. His nose now examined this stuff and did not like it. He smelled along the shaft of the twig. The leaves on the twig were red feathers and reminded him of goose. He was lost in a generalised astonishment and excitement. He shouted at the green drifts across the glittering water and heard Liku crying out in answer but could not catch the words. They were cut off suddenly as though someone had clapped a hand over her mouth. He rushed to the edge of the water and came back. On either side of the open bank the bushes grew thickly in the flood; they waded out until at their farthest some of the leaves were opening under water; and these bushes leaned over.

The echo of Liku's voice in his head sent him trembling at this perilous way of bushes towards the island. He dashed at them where normally they would have been rooted on dry land and his feet splashed. He threw himself forward and grabbed at the branches with hands and feet. He shouted:

"I am coming!"

(Golding 2011 [1955]: 96-97)

For Halliday (1971), the most interesting aspects of this extract (and Language A in general) relate to how it represents the situation depicted in the narrative – that is, the manner in which ideational meaning is expressed in the text. In SFG, transitivity relations are the most important way in which the ideational function is textually realised. These relations are described with respect to the type of verb processes that are used, the participants they involve and the circumstances in which the action of the verb happens. SFG provides a detailed taxonomy of different process categories, including material (processes of doing and happening), mental (sensing), relational (being and having), behavioural (behaving), verbal (saying), and existential (existing) (for a full overview, see Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). Following Halliday (1971), Table 1 summarises the features of a typical clause of Language A according to these descriptors. The overall effect of these transitivity patterns is that, in Language A,

> [T]here is no cause and effect. More specifically: in this language, processes are seldom represented as resulting from an experiential cause; in those cases where they are, the agent is seldom a human being; and where it is a human being, it is seldom one of the people.
>
> (Halliday 1971: 353)

This lack of cause and effect in the transitivity patterns of the novel – exemplified in the extract by Lok's inability to see that the man is in fact shooting arrows at him – has a thematic importance. Halliday (1971: 359) argues that 'the theme

Table 1: The functional characteristics of language A in The Inheritors according to Halliday (1971).

Clause element	Characteristics
Participants	– One participant only – Actor in a non-directed action (intransitive), or participant in a mental process (the one who perceives), or simply the bearer of some attribute or special property. – Unmodified other than by a determiner, or with parts of the body, a personal possessive.
Processes	– Action (which is always movement in space), or location-possession (e.g. 'the man had white bone things above his eyes') or mental process (thinking and talking as well as seeing and feeling but often with a part of the body as subject). – Active, non-modalised, finite, simple past tense.
Circumstances	– Static expressions of place or, if dynamic, expressions of direction (adverbs only) or of non-terminal motion, or of directionality of perception (e.g. 'peered at the stick') – Often obligatory, occurring in clauses which are purely locational (e.g. 'there were hooks in the bone')

of the entire novel, in a sense, is transitivity: man's interpretation of his experience of the world, his understanding of its processes and of his own participation in them'. It is arguably because of these 'limitations of understanding' that the people are unable to survive their interaction with 'beings at a higher stage of development' (Halliday 1971: 350). The deviant realisation of the ideational function in the text – deviant, that is, insofar as our *homo sapiens* perception is concerned – is therefore a foregrounded feature of the novel because of its broader thematic significance.

3 *The Inheritors* in stylistics: From text to text-and-reader

In developing a terminology and conceptual framework for describing the ideational function of texts, SFG provided discourse analysts with a powerful tool for investigating the variable means by which language is used to represent the world. Certainly, it gave to 'critical' forms of stylistic and discourse analytical research a useful set of concepts for examining the linguistic structure of

ideological representations (for examples, Fairclough 2001; Jeffries 2010; Mills 1995; Montgomery 1995; and for a comparison of cognitive and functional approaches in Critical Discourse Studies, see Hart 2014). In stylistics specifically, alongside investigations of ideology the framework has contributed significantly to analyses of narrative point of view (Simpson 1993). Indeed, insofar as Halliday (1971) presents a discussion of 'the world view of [...] a character, constituted by the ideational structure of the text', the article has been read as a pioneering analysis of 'mind style' (Fowler 1986: 214; see also Simpson 1993: 113; and for more contemporary elaboration of the concept, see Nuttall 2015, 2018; Semino 2002, 2011, 2014).

It is in the area of mind style that Black's (1993) subsequent discussion of *The Inheritors* augments Halliday's (1971). Whereas Halliday (1971) focuses on patterns of transitivity in the novel, Black (1993) emphasises the role of simile, metaphor and underlexicalisation in constructing Lok's Neanderthal perspective. Black's (1993) analysis builds on Halliday's (1971) earlier paper to provide a more holistic description of the linguistic means by which Lok is focalised. Conversely, Hoover's (1999) monograph re-evaluates some of Halliday's (1971) main claims about the text. His argument moves in two directions. First, he responds to Stanley Fish's (1980) well known critique of Halliday's work and stylistics in general. Fish (1980) had argued that in analysing a set of formal features, the stylistician already marks them as somehow significant to the literary work before even beginning to interpret them. Moreover, the leap from identifying a formal linguistic pattern to attributing to it a literary significance is itself a subjective act of interpretation. Hoover (1999) counters that Halliday's (1971) analysis is not, in fact, a formal description of linguistic features but a semantic description of the transitivity patterns in the text, and that whatever the response of the reader, the fact remains they respond *to* something. Systematic linguistic analysis is therefore a necessary prerequisite for describing literary effects because they are ultimately grounded in the text.

However, the second part of Hoover's (1999) argument is that Halliday (1971) fails to provide such a replicable account of textual structure in his treatment of the novel. For most of the monograph, Hoover (1999) uses corpus linguistic techniques to do just this. Whilst his investigation confirms much of Halliday's (1971) analysis, it also reveals problems with two of the observations made about the novel. First, whereas Halliday (1971) argues that Language B is the segue point between Language A and C, Hoover (1999) instead suggests that it has its own independent structure. Second, and more significantly, he argues that one of Halliday's (1971) key claims – that Language A has no cause and effect – is plainly wrong, pointing to several examples in the text which demonstrate that the narration, focalised through Lok, often involves the Neanderthal people acting as agents in agent-

patient relationships. Hoover (1999) suggests that the breakdown of causality in the novel is not a feature of the people's limited cognitive capacities, but rather a reflection of their lack of knowledge. For instance, in a scene where the people strip an animal carcass for meat, they are the agents of a variety of transitive verbs which reflects their competence in this familiar context. Conversely, Lok finds it hard to attribute agency to the new people when they attack him from the other side of the river (as per the extract in Section 2) because he does not know about bows and arrows. The lack of agency in Language A, then, is not the effect of restricted Neanderthal cognition, but is driven by the narrative and the unfamiliar situations in which the people find themselves. Indeed, for this reason I would argue that the thematisation of knowledge in the novel – that Lok's understanding of causality breaks down in unfamiliar situations – makes it ripe for cognitive stylistic analysis because cognitive approaches are particularly concerned with explicating the knowledge structures implicated in the act of reading (see Section 4). As is demonstrated in Section 7, it is in the mismatch between Lok's knowledge and the reader's that some of the literary effects of the novel are produced.

Although Hoover (1999) disputes some of the claims made in Halliday's (1971) analysis, like Black (1993) he addresses his argument to the linguistic peculiarities of Language A and the way in which it represents Lok's mind style. In this respect, Halliday (1971), Black (1993) and Hoover (1999) all occupy a similar problem space. Despite some suggestive remarks, all three concentrate on the linguistic structures constituting Language A 'without much reference to the inferential processes of readers' (Clark 2009: 173). Conversely, Clark's (2009) treatment of *The Inheritors* is oriented to the reception pole of discourse. He uses insights from relevance theory to investigate the inferential processes readers go through in order to interpret Lok's deviant mind style. The analysis offered in the present article is similarly reception-oriented because, like Clark (2009: 174), I view such a focus as 'a vital part of any adequate account of how texts are interpreted'.

There are, though, important differences in emphases between his perspective and the one advanced here. The first is that Clark's (2009: 179) approach assumes that 'linguistic expressions unproblematically represent propositional representations' (although he also points out this is a false assumption [Clark 2009: 179]). Following Langacker (for example, Langacker 2008: 30), rather than view meaning in propositional fashion, I see it as a form of conceptualisation. According to a cognitive linguistic perspective, meaning is embodied and experiential. Conceptualisations are thus forms of mental simulation based on embodied experience (Barsalou, 1993). This view of meaning entails a second difference in approach. Clark (2009: 202) is not primarily concerned with 'how semantic representations are fleshed out', but rather the moment by moment inferences readers make as they take part in the discourse and the unresolved

questions this process produces. My emphasis is the opposite; the analysis offered below attempts to specify the conceptual processes involved in readers "seeing through" (c.f. Werth 1994) Lok's mind style in order to create their own *homo sapiens* mental representation of what the discourse describes. My research question is not, therefore, related to what inferences readers make when they read *The Inheritors* and what questions go unanswered by the text, but rather: how do readers produce a mental representation of the discourse based on the linguistic cues (clues, even) in the text, and what forms of (re) conceptualisation are involved in this process?

Given the differences in these questions, the analysis provided here should not be seen as a challenge to Clark's (2009) account of how readers inferentially construct meaning from *The Inheritors*. As in my discussion of SFG and CG in Section 1, different theoretical approaches place emphasis on different aspects of their object of study. Clark (2009) focuses on the pragmatics of meaning construction in the novel. This paper adds to this with a discussion of the conceptual processes involved in mentally representing the events of the narrative. The aim of the remainder of this article is to demonstrate the analytical affordances of this shift in emphasis. Section 4 outlines a cognitive approach to the novel and in Sections 5, 6 and 7 this framework is applied to Halliday's (1971) own examples.

4 A cognitive approach to *The Inheritors*

Like other work in cognitive stylistics (Browse 2018; Harrison, 2017; Nuttall 2014; Stockwell 2009), the approach in this paper combines two cognitive perspectives on grammar: Text World Theory (Gavins 2007; Gavins and Lahey 2016; Werth 1999) and Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 1987, 1991, 2008).

The first of these, Text World Theory (TWT), is a 'cognitive discourse grammar' (Werth 1994: 90) which traces the discourse-level mental representations participants create as they engage with spoken, written or multimodal texts (for analyses of the latter, see Gibbons 2012). In TWT, the context in which the communicative event takes place is modelled with the concept of the 'discourse-world'.[1] The discourse-world comprises the immediate situation in which the discourse happens, alongside all the knowledge that participants bring with them to the discourse event. As the discourse proceeds, it causes participants to

1 SFG deals with context through the concept of 'register' (Halliday and Hasan 1976). For discussion of how this concept intersects with Text World Theory, see Browse (2018: 164, 177–178) and Stockwell (2014a).

use that knowledge to create mental representations of the events and situations described. These mental representations are text-worlds. Viewed from a TWT perspective, then, participation in discourse is a form of text-driven cognition in which the text functions as a prompt for discourse participants to deploy their pre-existing discourse-world knowledge in the construction of text-worlds. Text-worlds are deictic spaces defined by a set of world builders: textual references to place, time and the people and objects present in the text-world. When these parameters shift, it triggers a world switch and discourse participants create a new text-world. World-switches might also occur in the event that the ontological or epistemological status of the text-world changes; for instance, if the state of affairs described by the discourse is modalised (Gavins 2005, 2007), negated (Hidalgo-Downing 2000, 2002; Nahajec 2009), or if a metaphor is used (Browse 2014, 2016a, 2016b; Werth 1994). TWT thus provides a systematic framework for tracking the conceptual structures discourse participants generate as they engage with texts, and the ontological and epistemological relationships between these discourse-level mental representations.

In *The Inheritors*, the text-world structures created by discourse participants are complicated by the unusual focalisation. Halliday (1971: 358) points out that

> the difficulties of understanding [Lok's worldview] are at the level of interpretation – or rather perhaps, in the present instance, reinterpretation, as when we insist on translating *the stick began to grow shorter at both ends* as "the man drew the bow".

This issue of 'reinterpretation' is important because it suggests two parallel representations: the text-world representing events according to Lok ('the stick began to grow shorter at both ends') and the text-world according to the reader (following Halliday, 'the man drew the bow'). It is useful to think of these two worlds as 'layered' conceptual structures (Werth 1977, 1994). Werth (1977, 1994) discusses text-world layering in relation to the cognitive processes involved in extended metaphor and irony (for further discussion, see Browse 2014, 2016a, 2016b; Gavins 2007). One conceptual structure acts as the lens through which we see the other, and in the interaction between the two, new meanings are generated. In the case of *The Inheritors*, we extrapolate from Lok's account of the situation to generate a representation of what we suppose is the actual state of affairs depicted in the narrative. Our understanding of this "underlying" reality is both filtered through Lok's consciousness but also at times completely at odds with it. For instance, Lok believes the tree to have rapidly grown a branch, whereas the reader knows that it has in fact been hit by an arrow (for further discussion, see Section 6). Thus, the narrator, focalised through Lok, proffers a text-world representation of events, and – from this conception – readers construct their own ontologically and ideologically privileged text-world of what they

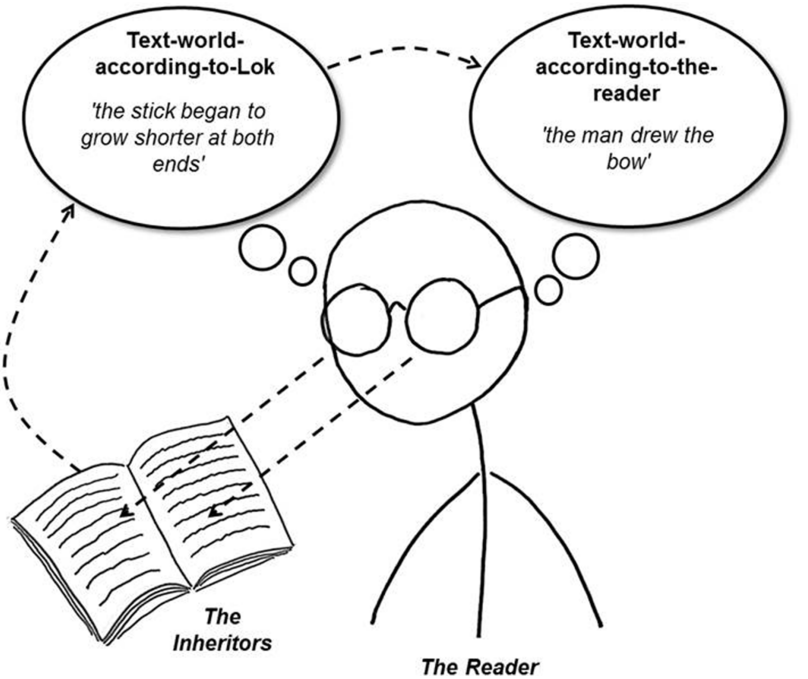

Figure 1: The parallel text-world structure of The Inheritors.

assume is the actual situation, a representation that at times clashes with the proffered text-world. This process has been represented in Figure 1.

What SFG does very well is describe the ideational structure of the proffered text-world. However, missing from the SFG account is a description of how readers get from the proffered representation to their own understanding of the narrative – that is, the conceptual processes involved in readers "seeing through" Lok's perception of events in order to come to their own *homo sapiens* representation of the situation depicted in the discourse. Langacker's (1987, 1991, 2008) Cognitive Grammar provides a useful set of terms for theorising this conceptual movement from the proffered text-world-according-to-Lok, to the text-world-according-to-the-reader. At the centre of my account of these processes is the concept of construal. Langacker (2008) describes construal as follows:

> An expression's meaning is not just the conceptual content it evokes – equally important is how that content is construed. As part of its conventional semantic value, every symbolic structure construes its content in a certain fashion. It is hard to resist the visual metaphor, where content is likened to a scene and construal to a particular way of viewing it.
>
> (Langacker 2008: 55)

Langacker (2008) details four dimensions of construal: specificity, focussing, prominence and perspective. My discussion of *The Inheritors* will focus on the first three of these categories. Specificity relates to the level of detail involved in the construal of conceptual content. Thus, in referring to the dog currently asleep in my living room, one could choose between a relatively simple noun phrase, like 'a dog', or something much more complex, for instance 'my sandy-coloured friendly old dog, Cassandra'. The former is quite schematic whereas the latter is a far more elaborate construal. Even more schematically, one might refer to Cassandra as 'a mammal', 'an animal' or, at the most extreme, 'a thing'. Specificity, then, concerns the degree of schematisation or elaboration of conceptual content, ranging from the most schematic construal ('thing') to an infinite level of elaboration (there is, after all, theoretically no limit to the size of a noun phrase).

The second dimension of construal is focusing. If conceptual content can be likened to a scene, focusing relates to what is in the viewing frame, so to speak. Focussing is described in terms of immediate and maximal scope. To return to the canine example, the immediate scope of the word 'paw' is represented in Figure 2 (a). It includes the paw itself, along with the space around it. The maximal scope of paw is depicted in 2b and encompasses the whole dog. The immediate scope is the "on stage" portion of conceptual structure, whereas the maximal scope of any predication is backgrounded.

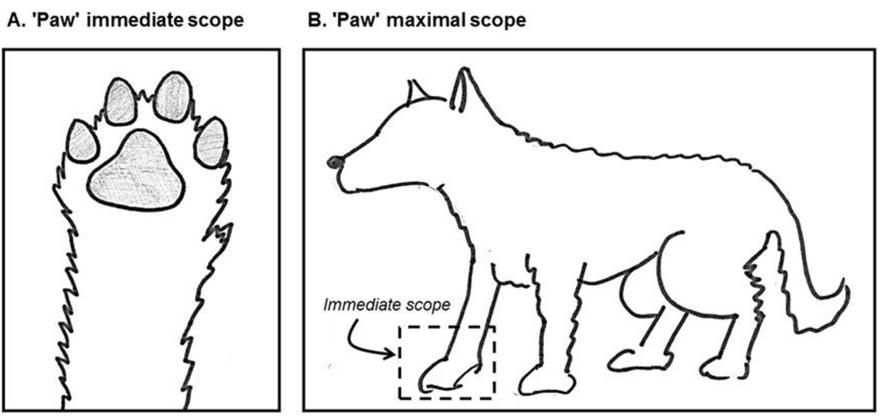

Figure 2: The immediate and maximal scope of 'paw.

The third construal phenomenon is prominence. This concerns the most salient aspects of conceptual structure in the immediate scope of predication – material which is said to be profiled. So, 'paw' profiles the things highlighted in Figure 3 –

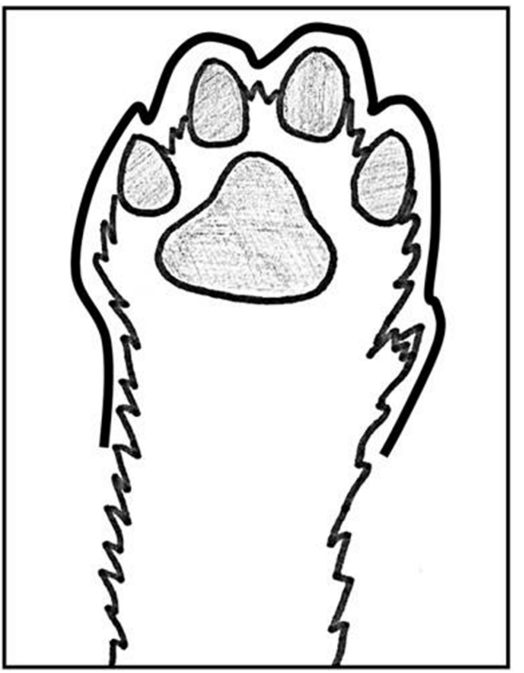

Figure 3: The profile of 'paw'.

the paw itself is foregrounded, whereas the lower portion of the dog's leg and the space around the paw are the conceptually less salient features of the immediate scope. Clauses also profile conceptual content. In CG, clausal relations are conceived as energetic interactions between entities in a billiard-ball model. Take, for example, the most schematic construal of a transitive clause, depicted in Figure 4. The billiard-ball model of the transitive clause involves a trajector (tr) that enters into an energetic interaction with a landmark (lm), in some setting (which comprises the immediate scope of the clause). Prototypically, the trajector is profiled. For instance, in 'the man stroked the dog', the man is the profiled entity. However, one could change the profile of the clause by emphasising the landmark. For example, in the passive voice ('the dog was stroked by the man'), it is the landmark – the dog – that is profiled.

These three dimensions of construal form an important part of the analysis offered below for two reasons. Firstly, like SFG, they furnish analysts with an additional means of describing the ideational structure of the proffered text-world. Secondly, and more importantly for my purposes, they also provide a terminology to describe how readers *reconstrue* (Browse 2018; Forrest, 1996; Harrison, 2017: 58) the text-world-according-to-Lok in accordance with their own text-world representations of the narrative – that is, how readers respecify, rescope and reprofile the

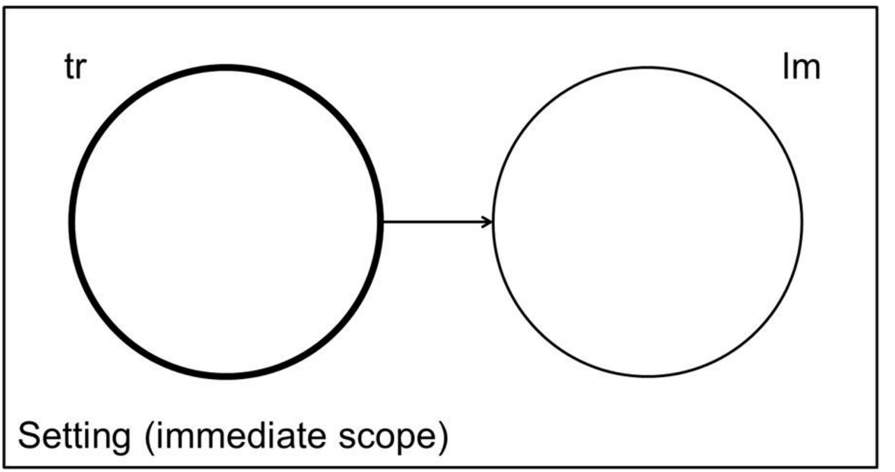

Figure 4: The profile of a transitive clause.

conceptualisations proffered by the text so as to get from 'the stick began to grow shorter at both ends' to 'the man drew the bow'. In SFG, these alternative linguistic structures are implicitly theorised as two discrete representations with different ideational structure. Conversely, a cognitive perspective sees them as different construals of the same underlying conceptual substrate. Here, the reader's knowledge functions as the pivot between the proffered construal and their own preferred construal (indeed, readers themselves often favour a particular construal of the knowledge structures they bring to the discourse situation. See, for example, Palmer et al. 1981 on 'canonical perspective'). This text-driven, experiential view of meaning construction is what enables CG better to describe the processes involved in the reception of the narrative. In the following section these construal categories are applied to Halliday's (1971) example of Language A in order to illustrate the reconstrual processes involved in mentally representing the story-world.

5 "Bottom up" reconstrual and *The Inheritors*

Turning first to respecification, Black (1993) suggests that one of the main stylistic features used in *The Inheritors* is underlexicalisation – when 'a non-specific noun [...] is used to refer to something for which a specific word exists in English' (Black 1993: 41). She points to instances of underlexicalisation in the extract reproduced in Section 2, above: 'stick' for bow (lines 5–7 and 9) and 'twig' for arrow (13–15,

17–18). Other examples in the extract include 'white bone things' (2 and 3), 'lump of bone' (5, 6 and on 15, 'white bone') and 'sticky brown stuff' (16 and 17). In terms of construal, 'things', 'lump' and 'stuff' are all very vague, abstract head nouns that construe their referents in highly schematic fashion. Although the head nouns are construed with a low level of specificity, their pre- and post-modification, alongside the accompanying co-text, gives the reader some clues about how they might be reconstrued in greater detail. The 'lump of bone' is in the middle of the stick then appears at the end of 'twig'. If the reader has managed to infer that the man on the other side of the river is shooting at Lok, then they should be able to respecify the 'lump' to a finer level of granularity – it is a bone arrowhead. This respecification is expedited by the background knowledge that early humans used bone, flint and stone tools. Similarly, the 'stuff' is 'brown', 'sticky', smells as though it would be unsafe to eat and sticks to the serrated edges of the arrowhead. This is probably enough information for readers to access a social stereotype of prehistoric or indigenous people – a knowledge structure that includes hunting methods, such as the use of poisoned arrows or darts. This background knowledge warrants the respecification of 'stuff' to the far less schematic noun, 'poison'. The 'white bone things' are perhaps more problematically reconstrued. It is unclear whether they are some form of facial adornment (piercings or a head dress?), or just a hairless *homo sapiens* face. In the case of the latter, the 'white bone things above his eyes' presumably refer to the man's forehead and those under his mouth, his chin. Indeed, in this context 'the leaves of hair' could well be read as an image metaphor (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 89) for the man's eyebrows, beard, or even just hair (the metaphor, here, taking a SOURCE FOR TARGET form [Goatly 2011]. For more discussion of image metaphor in the text, see Section 6). Despite these ambiguities, in all these examples – the 'stick' (bow), the 'twig' (arrow), 'white bone things' (facial adornments/face), 'lump of bone' (arrowhead) and 'sticky brown stuff' (poison) – the reader respecifies to produce a more elaborate text-world conceptualisation of the narrative reflecting the asymmetries between Lok and the reader's background knowledge (their awareness of bows and arrows, poison, *homo sapiens* facial structure etc.).

Rescoping also plays an important role in the construction of the text-world-according-to-the-reader. The proffered description of the archer begins with 'a head and a chest' (1–2), 'white bone things' (2) and 'leaves of hair' (2). The immediate scope of these noun phrases all zoom in on particular body-part features – head, chest, forehead (or piercings/head dress?) and eyebrows/beard. This confused, body-part breakdown of the man mimics Lok's bafflement at what he witnesses in the bushes. Readers see through this fragmented representation by rescoping these isolated body parts in relation to their maximal scope – the man holistically conceived. It is not until line 3 that the proffered text-world representation zooms

out with the nominal 'the man'. A similar strategy is used to refer to the archer's relationship to the bow. In 'the man turned sideways [...] and looked at Lok along his shoulder' (4–5), the immediate scope of predication includes only the man. Then, with 'a stick rose upright' (5), the viewing frame shifts to include only the bow. Thus the archer and the bow are not construed as an integrated whole, but in two discrete attentional windows (c.f. Nuttall 2014). This close-up construal of the man, then the bow, consequently masks the interaction between the two (this attentional windowing is also present in 'Lok looked at the stick and then the lump of bone and the small eyes over the face'. The succession of nominals, 'stick', 'lump of bone' and 'small eyes over the face' proffer a series of discrete viewing frames, rather than bringing the man, the bow and the arrow into interaction with one another). For readers, a far more natural construal is the maximal scope of both attentional windows, diagrammed in Figure 5, because it includes the man acting on the bow. However,

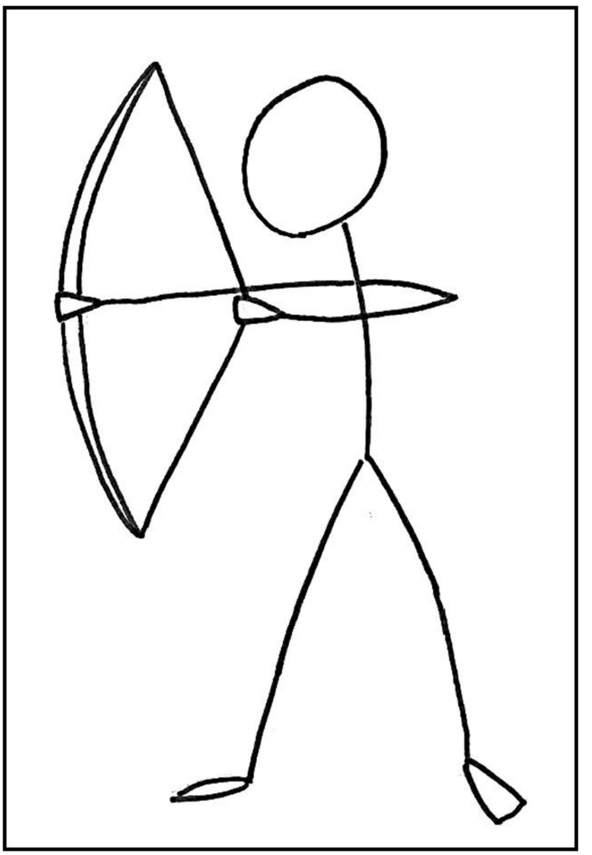

Figure 5: The maximal scope of bow.

this construal is not proffered by the text until lines 7–8, 'suddenly Lok understood that the man was holding the stick out to him'. Before this point, in order to construct an understanding of events in the narrative, readers are forced to rescope the proffered construal with respect to this underlying conceptual substrate. When the bow is drawn and fired ('the stick began to grow shorter at both ends. Then it shot out to full length again', 9–10), the focus returns to the stick. To understand that the bow is being drawn, readers must once again rescope in accordance with the maximal scope construal in Figure 5. Rescoping is thus fundamental to constructing the text-world-according-to-the-reader.

Throughout the extract, rescoping works in tandem with reprofiling. In 'a stick rose upright', the focus of the clause is the stick – the man is out of focus, missing from the immediate scope of predication. The stick itself is also, therefore, the profiled aspect of conceptual structure, being the active agent of the main verb, 'rose'. Similarly, in 'the stick began to grow shorter at both ends. Then it shot out to full length again', the stick is the profiled element. From a *homo sapiens* perspective – as Halliday (1971: 358) points out – the more prototypical construal is 'the man drew the bow'. The proffered construal is strange, then, because it profiles the stick (normally the patient of a transitive relationship) and not the man (who would normally be the much more salient agent). To create this parallel text-world-according-to-the-reader therefore requires that readers reprofile the proffered text-world-according-to-Lok in addition to rescoping in accordance with the conceptual substrate depicted in Figure 5. Rescoping and reprofiling are therefore complementary processes used to build the text-world ontologically favoured by the reader.

6 "Top-down" reconstrual and *The Inheritors*

In the title of the previous section, respecification, rescoping and reprofiling were called "bottom-up" forms of reconstrual. This term is meant to describe the sense in which these reconstrual operations all supplement the representation of events proffered in the text-world-according-to-Lok. So, in the case of the specificity of the proffered representation, readers increment additional information into their construal of nouns like 'things', 'lump' and 'stuff' in order to respecify them; in the case of focus and prominence, they rescope and reprofile 'the stick grew shorter at both ends' in relation to their knowledge of archers, bows and arrows and prototypical causality. The process here is additive. Rather than reject outright the proffered text-world as an inaccurate portrayal of events, the problems of understanding relate to the unusual construal placed on the

underlying conceptual content. It is worth considering, however, another form of reconstrual, "top down", which can be characterised not as an additive process, but one which involves fundamentally overwriting the representation in the proffered text-world.

Clauses like 'the stick began to grow shorter at both ends' do not really challenge our ontological assumptions about the world; it is easy to see how, from the front, a drawn bow would look as though it was a stick getting shorter. Consider, though, 'by his face there had grown a twig' (13). Lok's proffered representation of events is exactly the opposite of what has actually occurred. In the text-world-according-to-Lok, the twig has grown from the tree, when readers know that in fact the arrow has moved towards the tree at speed. Lok's construal of physical movement is the mirror-image of the reader's. The reconstrual operations involved in building the text-world-according-to-the-reader are not, therefore, a straightforward case of changing perspective by either adding more detail to the proffered representation, rescoping it or providing a different profile. It is not that Lok has simply represented things idiosyncratically; his own construal of events is – according to the reader (or at least the reader who has guessed what is happening) – simply wrong. Our understanding of the situation in the narrative, then, cannot be based on an additive process, but one that involves overwriting the proffered representation with what we perceive to be really happening.

This top-down reconstrual process can be examined through the lens of image metaphor (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 89). Rather than map between two conceptual domains, such as LIFE and JOURNEYS (see Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), image metaphors – as their names suggests – are those that map between two images. Lakoff and Turner (1989: 90) provide an example: 'my wife ... whose waist is an hourglass'. In this image metaphor, the curves of the hourglass are mapped onto the woman's waist. In 'by his face there had grown a twig', the mapping is not between two static images, but two dynamic construals with opposing image-schematic directionality. The speed of the arrow is likely to make it look as though the tree has rapidly grown a branch. However, just as we understand that the woman's waist is not literally an hourglass, so too do we understand that the arrow has not literally grown from the tree and that it only seems that way to Lok. We know that such rapid arboreal growth is impossible and therefore make an imagistic mapping between what Lok sees and what we assume is actually the case. Importantly, this is an image metaphor only to the reader. In the text-world-according-to-Lok, the arrow (or rather the twig) *has* literally grown from the tree. Our knowledge that this cannot have happened and only seems that way to Lok is what makes this a form of top-down reconstrual. Rather than add more conceptual material to Lok's construal of the situation, we instead disregard both the construal and the underlying conceptual substrate (the twig growing from the

tree) as an image metaphor and replace it entirely with a different conception of events (the arrow hitting the tree).

7 Reconstrual, ludic reading and dramatic irony

Top-down and bottom-up reconstrual processes are important because the reader's engagement in these conceptual manipulations has literary effects. In this section, I describe two: the ludic quality of reconstruing the narrative, and the sense of dramatic irony evoked by the interplay of the parallel conceptual structures created in the act of reconstrual.

Hoover (1999) suggests on several occasions that *The Inheritors* can be a very difficult novel. At times, it is hard to make sense of the narrative and it often presents itself as a kind of riddle to be solved. The reconstrual processes involved in understanding the situation depicted in the extract in Section 2 require cognitive effort (and certainly this extract is not the most impenetrable episode in the novel). There is, however, a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction gained by being able to decode Lok's often baffling construal of events. The reader's rescoping of the fragmented attentional windows in the extract, above, works very much like slowly putting together a jigsaw puzzle, or gradually being shown a picture one section at a time. For this reason, I call the effortful reconstrual involved in constructing the text-world-according-to-the-reader a form of 'ludic reading' (Nell, 1988). This use of the term differs from Nell's (1988) original usage. He found a diminishing correspondence between the difficulty of a text and the likelihood that it would be read for pleasure. Instead, rather than leisure reading, the term 'ludic' is here used to capture the riddle or game-like quality of the reader's interaction with the narration (indeed, see also Werth 1994: 82).

In this instance, the challenge of ludic reading consists of a process of conceptual alignment – in aligning the reader's discourse-world knowledge of things like bows and arrows with the construal proffered by the text. In the cognitive account offered above, meaning is constructed through the interaction of text and reader; the former provides a construal and the latter – using their discourse-world knowledge – the conceptual content to be construed. To reconstrue the text-world-according-to-Lok presupposes an underlying conceptual substrate which is backgrounded by the proffered representation. Without this substrate there can be no reconstrual because there is nothing with respect to which readers can respecify, rescope or reprofile. Similarly, in the case of imagistic, top-down processes, as in 'by his face there had grown a twig', there is nothing with respect to which readers are able to map the image of a rapidly growing twig onto an arrow hitting a tree. In *The Inheritors*, then, the success of ludic reading

very much depends on whether or not we are able to perform this act of conceptual alignment based on the clues in the text.

The ability to do so reaps cognitive dividends. Readers often talk about reading using a metaphor, READING IS INVESTMENT:

> Investment involves an assumption of ownership of resources that are available to be invested (the reader does not arrive in the emotional literacy marketplace as a blank slate). These resources are transferred in the transactional process of reading, an engagement which involves a potential loss, and therefore a risk. In emotional involvement, this risk can be perceived as wasting time (through a linked metaphor of TIME IS MONEY) or as opening up a vulnerability. The invested resources are understood to be at work, with an anticipation of a return on the investment that will outdo the initial loss. Clearly there are matters of risk and faith inherent in the investor, and a flow of resource to and trust in the object of investment. Investors look to an object in anticipation of an improvement in themselves.
>
> (Stockwell 2009: 94)

Stockwell (2009) discusses this metaphor in relation to empathy; we often invest in novels to empathise with the characters. Certainly this is an important emotional capacity in the case of *The Inheritors*. In the particular extract analysed above, expending cognitive effort in a ludic reading of Lok's mindstyle rewards the reader with both an understanding of the plot, but also of how Lok sees the world and the parallels between his perspective and our own. This latter understanding has cumulative effects on the level of the whole novel; for playing this game of perspectival translation, the prize – if it can be called that – is the empathetic sadness we might feel for Lok, the loss of his tribe and the kidnapping of his child. Reconstrual is therefore a form of cognitive investment that yields both immediate ludic and longer term emotional dividends.

The processes of conceptual alignment and reconstrual give rise to a parallel text-world structure – the text-world-according-to-the-reader. As was suggested in Section 4, one way of thinking about these conceptual structures is to see them as layers – we "see through" Lok's focalisation to what we assume is really happening in the story-world. Werth (1994) explores the notion of text-world layering specifically in relation to an ironic description of a woman in Fielding's (1964 [1743]) *Jonathan Wild*:

> Here, the irony takes us in two directions:
> (a) A eulogistic description of a beautiful lady;
> (b) A dyslogistic description of a grubby, rumpled slattern, a thing of stains and tatters.
> In this case, A is the direction of style, and B of content [...] the situation depicted (the text-world) is as it is; the 'problem' for the readers is to 'see through' the eulogistic style of the description.
>
> (Werth 1994: 81-82)

In *The Inheritors*, readers face a similar 'problem'. However, the effect of 'seeing through' the description is not comedic but rather dramatic irony. Unlike Lok, we know that both he and Liku are in mortal danger. The dramatic irony, here, is that while fearing for Liku's life, Lok is frustratingly unaware that he too is in peril: Lok is 'lost in a general astonishment' (18–19), oblivious to the threat from the bowman. Moreover, he even finds aspects of the situation amusing: 'Suddenly Lok understood that the man was holding the stick out to him but neither he nor Lok could reach across the river. He would have laughed if it were not for the echo of [Liku's] screaming in his head' (8–9). The frustration is amplified by Lok's only half-correct 'sudden understanding'. To him, the man is amusing because he fails to see that 'neither he nor Lok could reach across the river'; to the reader, it is the Neanderthal who has failed to see that the archer is actually employing a lethal means of making contact with him. The frustration in this instance is caused by Lok's inadequate shift in construal. Recall that before this point, Lok's proffered construal was a series of discrete attentional windows which had as their immediate scope either the stick or the man. In 'the man was holding the stick out to him', both man and stick interact in the immediate scope of predication, but this construal profiles the holding of the bow (rather than the man drawing and aiming it). In some respects, then, it is a movement towards the reader's construal, but one that does not go far enough in the direction of the text-world-according-to-the-reader. The result is to heighten the dramatic tension in the narrative. Lok's inspiration allows him to see that the man and the bow interact, but not enough to understand that the man is trying to kill him.

8 Conclusion

Given the analysis, above, a major advantage of CG over SFG is the way that it models the interaction of text and discourse participant knowledge. Readers are active participants who bring their conceptual "baggage" to the discourse event in order to construct meaning. What makes reconstrual possible is the conceptual alignment of the reader's discourse-world knowledge with the construal proffered by the text. This knowledge forms the underlying conceptual substrate of the text-world-according-to-Lok, which can then be reconstrued in order to construct the text-world-according-to-the-reader. Reader knowledge is thus the pivot between the two layered worlds. As I argued in Section 4, SFG has no way of theorising the shift between these two text-world structures because it provides a vocabulary only for describing the ideational structure of the proffered text-world (although perhaps on this account SFG has the advantage insofar it

furnishes analysts with a much finer-grained taxonomy of verb process types than CG). In this respect, SFG can be regarded as adhering to a 'sophisticated version of monism' (Leech and Short 2007: 27) – the idea that linguistic form and content are inseparable and that one determines the other. From this perspective, different transitivity patterns engender the creation of ontologically discrete text-worlds. Conversely, at first glance the position outlined in this article perhaps has more in common with dualism, a philosophical position which says that form and content can in some ways be detached (for full discussion see Leech and Short 2007). 'The stick began to grow shorter at both ends' and 'the man drew the bow' are different text-world representations of the same thing insofar as they differently construe the same underlying conceptual substrate. Notably, however, that substrate is provided by the reader in the process of conceptual alignment. Dualism, here, is less a principled philosophical position, and more a pragmatic strategy for making sense of the text. We do not believe, for example, that sticks magically grow shorter at both ends or that trees grow twigs in milliseconds, so via processes of reconstrual we seek alternative explanations. The equivalence between sticks and bows or twigs and arrows is thus the product of the reader's active engagement with the text. It is not that the idiosyncrasies of Lok's Neanderthal mind-style can be mapped onto an objectively pre-given reality; it is that readers *construct* an alternative text-world which better coheres with their own ideological models of physical and natural laws (or one could even imagine a naive reader who suspends their disbelief and takes the narration at face value). For this reason, the conceptual substrate that readers bring to the text – the "content", to use the language of the monist/dualist debate – may vary. For example, I have identified variability in the way nominals such as 'the white bone things' or 'leaves of hair' might be reconstrued by those attempting to make sense of the narrative. I would urge caution, then, in making a superficial identification between dualist conceptions of form and content and the account of meaning construction offered in this article. It is not simply that linguistic forms such as 'white bone things' express the same content differently, but that the content also changes from one reader to the next. Further exploration of this complexity and what a CG approach means for the monist and dualist philosophical positions would be an interesting avenue of future research.

For the sake of illustration, the analysis here has dealt with the ludic reading of a deviant mind style, but it is arguably the case that conceptual alignment and reconstrual are involved in the cognitive processing of *all* discourse. As Stockwell (2002: 135–136) suggests, textual meaning is heteronomous; it requires the cognitive activity of a reader. In cognitive grammatical terms, texts proffer construals that are only ever actualised once readers

"plug" their knowledge into them, so to speak. From this perspective, all discourse processing rests on the text-driven conceptual alignment of the reader's knowledge with the text. If the discourse participant's preferred construal of that conceptual content is similar to that which is proffered by the text then the subsequent reconstrual processes involved in discourse processing are likely to be minimal. Conversely, where a construal clashes with our preference, it is likely to engender a reconstrual. Deviant mind styles such as Lok's are but one instance of this process; there are other more mundane, non-literary examples where one might reject a proffered construal as faulty. Take, for instance, political discourse. Politicians are just as likely to be jeered as they are applauded for the way in which they represent events of social concern. Whilst their affective quality may be different – *The Inheritors* is poetic; political discourse often anger-inducing – I would claim that in both cases the top-down and bottom-up conceptual processes involved in reconstruing the proffered text-world are similar (see Browse 2018). Whilst Lok's mind-style may be atypical, then, arguably the conceptual processes required to interpret it are not. Certainly, to test these claims, a fertile avenue for future research would be to apply the reconstrual framework set out here to other forms of discourse in conjunction with reader-response or reading group data.

CG facilitates such a reader-centred programme of research whilst also maintaining a focus on the text. Just as Hoover (1999) asserts that reader responses are grounded in linguistic structures, the framework set out above is fundamentally text-driven; respecifying, rescoping and reprofiling are all conceptual operations which stand in relation to a textually-grounded proffered construal. That CG enables a description of the movement between these contrasting conceptualisations is what makes it such a powerful tool for analysing the readerly construction of meaning.

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