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Narration and Focalization

A Cognitivist and an Unnaturalist, Made Strange

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Keywords: William Golding, unnatural narratology, cognitive narratology, focalization, estrangement

Abstract: Any new narratological theory faces the test of being applicable to much-analyzed classics of prose fiction and of yielding new insights into narratives that have served as textbook examples of narrative strategies for decades. This essay is a constructed dialogue between imaginary narratologists who are paradigmatic proponents of two schools of thought in postclassical narratology: the cognitive and the unnatural. The two narratologists juxtapose their respective concepts and methodologies in an analysis of William Golding's late modernist classic *The Inheritors*, especially the narrative dynamics of "alien" Neanderthal focalization versus "naturalizing" *Homo sapiens* narration. Ultimately, *The Inheritors* reminds the cognitivist of how language-bound the readerly effects of estrangement and integration in internal focalization can be. Conversely, the same novel serves as an example for the unnaturalist of the paradoxical necessity for perceptual and emotional familiarization in our attempts to understand fundamental alterity. The parameters of cognitive and unnatural narratology may seem divergent at the outset, but in this essay their representatives find a common ground in an estranging reading of the enactive immersion in *The Inheritors*. Here the extraordinary embodiedness of the Neanderthal focalization is a key to a literary-allegorical reading of the Neanderthal mind as imagined by Golding. This reading, accomplished through a constructed debate between two paradigms, reflects the actual positions of the authors of this essay: Mäkelä and Polvinen are both proponents of an approach that acknowledges the inherent syntheticity and linguistic overdeterminedness of a literary narrative as well as its "natural" enactivist pull toward bodily immersion.

The following is a dialogue between a cognitivist and an unnaturalist, together trying to figure out what it is that still challenges us in William Golding's late modernist masterpiece *The Inheritors* (1955). Much classical and even postclassical narratological analysis and theory forming circulates around modernist prose fiction—what is there left in modernism for the

cognitive and unnatural paradigms to reveal? This dialogue zooms in on two elementary narratological concepts, focalization and narration, that expose the fundamentally disturbing tension between human and nonhuman in *The Inheritors*. Ultimately, Golding's Neanderthal protagonist challenges both the sworn cognitivist and the radical unnaturalist to rethink their theoretical premises and analytical methods and to find a mutual way to discuss the alien in the human and vice versa.

We start by revisiting the cognitivist and unnaturalist notions of focalization, including a brief excursion into studies on animal focalization, and test their applicability in explaining the readerly experience of Golding's intensely embodied and empathetic Neanderthal focalization, as well as of the contrastingly rational, calculating *Homo sapiens* point of view that the narration turns to at the end of the novel. The discussion proceeds to a reevaluation of narration, narrative voice, and narrative situation in *The Inheritors*, as both an unnatural approach and a cognitive approach to this novel are seen to benefit from keener attention to the relationality of perspectives between the narratorial and the figural level than has so far been afforded by Golding scholarship. Finally, the incongruence between the readerly encounters with the Neanderthal people, the *Homo sapiens* "new people," and the narrator (ethically and experientially somewhere between these two tribes) lead the cognitivist and the unnaturalist to join forces to elaborate on the allegorical and ethical dimensions of the representation of minds and bodies in *The Inheritors*.

In this article, the contrasting positions of the cognitivist and the unnaturalist are to some extent fictional, in the sense that neither of them fully represents the views we ourselves actually hold. Thus, we ask the reader to bear in mind that, especially during the first pages, the two synthetically constructed interlocutors may seem to hold positions that are almost stereotypical in

their theoretical purism. However, together we do argue that Golding's novel is the perfect test case for both unnatural and the current second-generation cognitive narratology (on the latter, see the introduction to this special issue) and that the consequences for both paradigms are more complex than one might readily assume. Our joint effort culminates in a new allegorical reading of *The Inheritors* that associates the Neanderthal mind and experience as imagined by Golding with the cognitive peculiarities of reading fiction. Closer attention to the dynamics between perception, embodiment, style, and ethics, we argue, will produce a more workable model of strange and difficult focalization and narration than holistically applied, macroframing unnaturalist or enactivist approaches would accomplish alone.

Focalization: Enactivist, Unnatural, Animal, Neanderthal?

Cognitivist: Golding's novel famously begins with an epigraph in which H. G. Wells describes the "repulsive strangeness" of the Neanderthal man. The story that follows of Lok, Fa, Liku, and the rest of their small tribe has conventionally been read as an antithesis to the brutish and dehumanizing nineteenth-century view expressed in Wells's description. Golding's sympathetic presentation comes across clearly in, for example, this passage from *The Inheritors*, describing the Neanderthals out looking for food:

> They padded down among the rocks and bushes. All at once the sun was through, a round of dulled silver, racing slantwise through the clouds yet always staying in the same place. Lok went first, then Liku, serious and eager on this her first proper food hunt. The slope eased and they reached the cliff-like border that gave on to the heathery sea of the plain. Lok poised and the others stilled behind him. He turned, looked a question at Fa, then raised his head again. He blew out air through his nose suddenly, then breathed in. Delicately he sampled this air, drawing a stream into his nostrils and allowing it to remain

> there till his blood had warmed it and the scent was accessible. He performed miracles of perception in the cavern of his nose. The scent was the smallest possible trace. Lok, if he had been capable of such comparisons, might have wondered whether the trace was a real scent or only the memory of one. So faint and stale was this scent that when he looked his question at Fa she did not understand him. He breathed the word at her. "Honey?" (1955: 50)

These Neanderthals embody a dead end of human evolutionary history, but the way the novel's narration engages with them—their intensely embodied and sensory being-in-the-world (their "miracles of perception") and their collective thinking and sharing of emotions through mental images and bodily simulation ("he looked his question at Fa")—calls for a reading that questions the accomplishments of human evolution. These Neanderthals are not capable of the kind of abstract and strategic thinking that is available to the *Homo sapiens*, but it is precisely such cognitive gains that promote war and rivalry in the more "advanced" human culture (see especially the ethical reading of the novel in Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes 2002).

The passage above demonstrates how the naturalization of the alien subspecies is accomplished through sophisticated although by now fairly familiar modernist focalization techniques that resonate in our own reading bodies. For cognitive narratology, narrative perspective in general and focalization in particular are dependent on readers' everyday sensory experiences and their natural ability to attribute minds and intentional behavior to other people. The effect has most often been seen as a reflex whereby the linguistic representation triggers the imagining of lifelike scenes in story worlds{**Au:** ***Story world*** **(two words, no hyphen as noun) to parallel** ***real world*****. MP: I am happy to go with your lead on this, but just note that "storyworld" is a technical term in Herman, and spelled there as one word.**} (Herman 2009). So, if we understand focalization as fictionalized versions

of everyday psychological processes—such as seeing things from a particular perspective; lending that perception an individual, subjective hue; and extending that perception from an individual moment to both memories of the past and imaginings of a future—it is clear that cognitive literary studies has many tools available for describing such processes. Marco Caracciolo (2015) has written an insightful cognitive-narratological analysis of *The Inheritors* that demonstrates just how Lok's focalization becomes natural and familiar to us—or at least imaginable—in the process of embodied enaction. In Caracciolo's reading, Golding excels at the phenomenological or kinesthetic way of engaging readers with Lok's represented mind while using the more complex, inference-based folk psychology only as a point of contrast between the mind of Lok and that of modern humans. Caracciolo's conclusion is that kinesthetic empathy created by the Neanderthal focalization helps readers to "negotiate in interpretive terms the evolutionary divide between ourselves and our ancestors" (2015: 216), and my own reading experience certainly lends support to his argument that it is precisely the sharing of the "low-level" experience with the Neanderthals that attaches us so strongly to their fate.

Unnaturalist: Wait a minute. I can imagine myself "becoming" Lok in a way, myself as a reader mimicking the way these Neanderthals share experiences, and unwittingly basing all those responses on my own bodily parameters and real-world experiences. Yet the exchange between myself and my imaginary Neanderthal friends is dependent on language and structures far beyond the reach of the Neanderthal mind. Therefore, I should think more focus on the synthetic (see Phelan 2007) is needed to balance out the mimetic embodiment that seems to underlie the cognitive-enactivist approach. In fact, if we consider *The Inheritors* primarily as literature, instead of mere simulation, we may notice how the novel comments on the cognitive peculiarity of literary fiction, with regard to both human and Neanderthal minds. Just think of

this one sentence: “Then, as so often happened with the people, there were feelings between them. Fa and Nil shared a picture of Ha thinking” (Golding 1955: 14). Isn’t this what we also do as readers, “share pictures”? But unlike Golding’s imagined Neanderthals, the reader shares through language and, in this case, through language that is far beyond the cognitive capacities of the subject in whose experience we are participating. I may be triggered to remember the scent of honey myself, maybe even accompany Lok’s bodily movements when listening to that passage, but only partially. It takes more to achieve literary empathy. One of the most heartbreaking aspects of *The Inheritors* is the cognitive differences between the empathizing reader and the Neanderthals; just look at the narrator mediating Lok’s inability to tell the difference between a mental representation and real-time sensory experience (“if he had been capable of such comparisons”) in the passage above. The “unnaturalness” of the focalization stems from this discrepancy between cognitive limitations in the Neanderthal mind and the exquisite verbalization and narrativization of those limitations.

Caracciolo is on the right track when he highlights “the doubly unsettling experience” (2015: 235) of the reader: we are asked first to adapt to the estranged point of view of the Neanderthal and then suddenly, in the last couple of pages of the novel, to switch into a *Homo sapiens* point of view—a perceptual and experiential move that does not, however, feel like an easy return to the familiar but instead like losing something that has become dear to us. What I would like to criticize in Caracciolo’s reading is the ultimate evolutionary recuperation of this cognitive discrepancy. For him, “this defamiliarizing process evokes distinct feelings of puzzlement and disorientation, which may become bound up in interpretation with the evolutionary distance between contemporary humans and proto-humans” (ibid.). I think that this

is only a partial interpretation of the cognitive dynamics of the novel, a reading that reduces literary ambivalence to natural-historical explanation.

Contrary to Caracciolo's reading—and, presumably, your own as well, my cognitivist colleague?—I think that the ultimate strangeness (as distinct from Wellsian "repulsive strangeness") of the Neanderthal point of view is the key to the allegorical depths of Golding's vision. You may have noted that there is almost no free indirect discourse in the first part of the novel, where the focalization is fixed on Lok, and the rare examples merely testify to the lack of complexity in his thinking ("But what use was a man save for smelling things out and having pictures?" [Golding 1955: 85]). Therefore, internal focalization (conveying perceptions and nonverbalized sensations) and not internal figural discourse (the Neanderthal "voice"), undoubtedly comprises the structural and thematic modus operandi **{Au: Not italicized because not a foreign term per Webster's.}**of these sections. It may be useful simply to adhere to Genette's classical formulation: "Let us not forget that focalization is essentially . . . a restriction" (1980 [1972]: 192; see also Nielsen 2013: 75), and to note how, contrary to the rhetoric of access **{Au: *Poetics Today* discourages the use of italics for emphasis, except where ideas may otherwise be misconstrued, so most have been removed from your article.}**to another's subjective coordinates promoted by the cognitivist paradigm, the classical discussion of focalization emphasizes constraint. *The Inheritors* obviously concretizes the idea of a "restricted" point of view, as so many other modernist texts with their unreliable focalizers do; we may be reminded, for example, of how Septimus Warren Smith's posttraumatic stress disorder distorts his perceptions in *Mrs. Dalloway* (Alber 2016: 97–98). Yet this notion of focalization also dramatizes the role of language as both the conveyor and regulator of point of view, as the narration renders the limits of Neanderthal verbalization just as tangible as it renders the superbly symbiotic relationship the Neanderthals have with their world.

Numerous stylistic approaches to the "mind style" in *The Inheritors*, including the eminent analysis by M. A. K. Halliday (1971), all emphasize the strangeness and difficulty of the Neanderthal focalization, concluding that stylistic anomalies contribute to the overall alienness of the Neanderthal people. In Billy Clark's words, "Many readers find *The Inheritors* deeply disturbing. . . . The first section [the Neanderthal focalization] is very difficult to process and there is a constant sense of uncertainty about what exactly is happening" (2009: 184, 202). Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes also mention the "intellectual frustration at being confronted with the apparently unintelligible" (2002: 49). When turning to the contrasting familiarity of the *Homo sapiens* focalization through the character of Tuami at the end of the novel, the linguistic analyses reveal their emphasis on epistemic and perceptual "naturalness": "We feel quite at home with this point of view. . . . There is an interesting contrast between a positive sense of being 'liberated' as processing becomes easier and negative implicatures about our nature and our effect on the world" (Clark 2009: 203).

Indeed, the pragmatic hypotheses about readerly experience inferred from stylistic analyses of Neanderthal focalization and mind style resemble the rhetoric used by some unnaturalists as they describe the readerly "discomfort, fear, or worry" (Alber 2009: 83) caused by unnatural narrative elements that defy easy naturalization. Should we maybe resist the cognitively and evolutionarily verisimilar reading, promoted by the cognitive-enactivist approach, and opt for the "unnaturalizing" reading strategy, instead?

In fact, all the different variants of unnatural narratology—however mutually contradictory they might be—provide new perspectives on this much-studied novel. First of all, we have contributions by Jan Alber (e.g., 2009, 2016) and Brian Richardson (e.g., 2015**{Au: please add to ref list or delete here. Done.}**) that highlight the semantic potential of antimimetic narratives

featuring physically or logically impossible story worlds and narrators. I think this approach offers a framework within which we may appreciate the nonrecuperable alienness of the Neanderthal focalization and the conceptual categories on which it relies, although the novel may not qualify as an "unnatural narrative" according to the strictly antimimetic definition promoted by these scholars. Then again, we have unnaturalness{**Au: *Poetics Today* discourages the use of scare quotes, except where ideas may otherwise be misconstrued, so most have been removed from your article.**}as understood, for example, by Henrik Skov Nielsen and Maria Mäkelä, for whom the "unnatural" is something inherent to the potentially noncommunicative nature of fictional-literary discourse, as manifested by internal figural discourse (Mäkelä 2013b), or impersonal first-person narration (Nielsen 2004, 2010; Mäkelä 2013a). This unnaturalizing perspective helps us to focus on the peculiarly asymmetric communicative setup of *The Inheritors*: we share sensations and experiences with a creature that is unable to decipher temporalities, modalities, or metaphoricity, even as those sensations and experiences are communicated through those very modeling strategies that are unavailable to Lok himself.

All in all, in the case of *The Inheritors*, I see the potential of unnatural narratology not as a consistent set of methods for analyzing literary fiction but primarily as a polemic position that challenges the cognitivist paradigm by always reminding recipients of the interpretive advantages of nonrecuperative reading (see also Mäkelä 2013b, 2016). That is why, instead of labeling Golding's novel an unnatural narrative, I would emphasize the profits of unnaturalizing reading strategies (Nielsen 2013) that do not explain away all linguistic and narrative surplus in the interest of establishing cognitive verisimilitude but remain open to both naturalizable and unnaturalizable tendencies within particular narrative strategies and in the process of reading in general.

Cognitivist: Fair enough: as their aim usually is to explain the "norm" in the processing of fictional narratives, cognitive approaches have presented readerly simulation through the perhaps more straightforward cases and argue that focalization—whether it is explicitly mentioned or merely alluded to—is a technique that triggers readers to simulate character's experience of their fictional worlds. However, in drawing from the enactive approaches in cognitive science (see Stewart et al. 2010), cognitive narratology is rethinking what simulation and perception mean in fiction. According toenactivism, cognition is embodied interaction with various real and imagined environments where questions of relevance are constantly in flux, depending both on the kind of activity the cognizer engages in and on the type of affordances available in the environment. Readers' perception of story worlds is thus seen as active and skillful navigation of cognitive contexts, including linguistic and rhetorical contexts, which is why cognitive narratology is getting ever better at catching nuances in the ways that novels engage us in fictional characters' perspectives (e.g., Caracciolo 2014; Kukkonen 2016). The cognitive paradigm has also started to question how far our models of simulated character experience are guided by metaphors that lead us to build theory on real-world conditions even in the case of fictional texts. In the case of fictional worlds, for example, the metaphorical structures draw on spatial intuitions and the idea of containers (and containers within containers), and with focalization we intuit these processes through the idea of a visual perspective. In both cases the metaphor helps in making certain abstract issues graspable, but at the same time it can push our conceptualizations too far into the concrete. What I mean is that "focalization" can make us think of the simulation process as something that can only include one point of view at a time—the same way that the idea of containers can make us think that we can imagine ourselves in only one world at a time. The visual emphasis in focalization was mitigated by Genette

himself (1988[1983])**{Au: add cite here? see query in ref list.}**, when he adopted the more psychologically encompassing idea of "perception," and again by Manfred Jahn's (2007) notion of "apperception," which covers a person's specific mode of perceiving something *as* something, and yet again by David Herman's (2009) "construal," which encompasses cognitive perspective-taking in a very wide sense. My point is that the phenomenon of focalization is still most often seen in terms of texts offering "windows" into some preexisting mental processing that readers can re-create within themselves.

Unnaturalist: Right, and in the case of *The Inheritors*, the thoroughly modernist idea (originally Henry James's; see Jahn 1996: 251–52) of the "house of fiction" could work: the narrator's gaze monitoring the insides of the "house" through its own window, and the focalizing character's consciousness as a mirror reflecting the narrator's point of view toward new, subjective dimensions. This captures the mediating and verbalizing functions of the narrator instead of merely suggesting that focalization would mean a "transportation" of the reader directly into the house of fiction, as so many first-generation cognitive narratologists seem to suggest (see Herman 2002: 5, 14, 271; Ryan 2001). Yet these window and mirror metaphors have nothing to do with the body beyond vision.

Cognitivist: Of course cognitive narratology has always aspired to go beyond the visual, as well as epistemic, fixations of structuralist narratology. Consider, for example, Jahn's reformulation of the Genettean definition of focalization: "Narration is the telling of a story in a way that simultaneously respects the needs and elicits the co-operation of its audience; focalization is the submission of (potentially limitless) narrative information to a perspectival filter" (2007: 94). This definition combines many of the aspects of narration and focalization deemed valuable within the cognitive paradigm: (1) a focus on the communicative nature of

narrative, (2) an understanding of its rhetorical dimension, (3) a view that the process of narrating and focalizing together form a selection of information about an event sequence and/or experience to be communicated, and (4) an interest in the perceptual and perspectival elements of focalization. Building on the elements of Jahn's definition, we can see that various first-generation theorists within cognitive literary studies (e.g., Gerrig 1998 [1993]; Currie and Ravenscroft 2002; Oatley 2011) have taken as their starting point the idea of narrative as communication of a point of view and have argued that the processes of focalization are specifically used in fiction to elicit participatory responses from the audience. Offering readers and/or audiences a specific character perspective on the fictional events therefore has the rhetorical purpose of engaging readers to form an empathetic and/or sympathetic connection with that perspective (see Sklar 2013). Lisa Zunshine's (2006) approach, on the other hand, focuses on how the restricting of perspective engages readers' capacity for evaluating or "source-monitoring" that information.

Moreover, Monika Fludernik's (1996) reorientation of narratology toward embodied experientiality has shaped the entire field and has a significant bearing on notions on focalization as well. The second-generation, enactivist view of focalization continues along this track but differs from Fludernik by virtue of seeing the experience "in" the text as the basis for the reader's experience rather than always seeing it either as a character's or a narrator's (Caracciolo 2013: 83–84). Internally focalized passages have been said not to "represent" the character's experience in a reifying way but to call for an active, first-person response on the reader's part. As Caracciolo puts it, "There is no experience other than the reader's at stake here," and thus a fictional consciousness can be seen less as an object than as "a way of experiencing (non-actual) things that is impressed on the reader's consciousness by a narrative text" (ibid.: 95–96). It is this

engagement with a text so that a focalizing character's experience is potentially enacted—rather than reading a text in order to decode that experience—that becomes increasingly relevant in the second-generation cognitive approaches.

Unnaturalist: The problem with fusing the enactivist approach with *The Inheritors*, it seems to me, is that the Neanderthal focalization is *too* embodied to elicit merely automatic bodily responses triggered by familiarity. The thoroughly embodied nature of the Neanderthal experience renders the *Homo sapiens* mind as abstract and disembodied in comparison, and therefore I find it inadequate to simply state that Neanderthal embodiment triggers bodily responses in us. The body is foregrounded beyond what could be immediately related to our normal embodied experience. Consider this example, describing the people's collective reaction to the old man Mal's controversial orders that foreshadow his death: **{Au: extracts are reserved for quotes longer than 80 words.}** "Now the thing was settled the people became restless. They knew in their bodies that something was wrong, yet the word had been said. When the word had been said it was as though the action was already alive in performance and they worried" (Golding 1955: 37). When Golding writes that the Neanderthals "know" something in their bodies, it's not exactly the same as the proverbial "embodied" or "distributed knowledge" of contemporary scholarly parlance. In contrast to "natural" human cognition, Neanderthal perception and experience appear to operate via radical semiotic shortcuts: words, ideas, sensations, and actions are all the same because the Neanderthal mind is not attuned to possible worlds or other such cognitive possibilities afforded by language. Everything happens here and now, without any reference to the nonactual that would emanate from the Neanderthal mind—only the mediating narrative voice may "tag" some representations as virtual ("as though the action was already alive in performance"). This is radical, not familiar embodiment. To be honest, I consider

Golding's experiments with focalization a tough nut to crack for cognitive narratology that bases its arguments on universalist claims about perception and experience. How can we grasp the defamiliarizing potential of literary embodiment if the methodology with which we are supposed to tackle the issue is on the lookout for kinesthetic familiarity and easy immersion?

Cognitivist: Okay, so let's hear what the unnaturalists have to say about focalization. To me, it seems that unnatural narratology does not provide any clear-cut redefinitions of narration and focalization that would support its case but, rather, appears to merely make additions to the *types* of narration we recognize (see also Mäkelä 2016).

Unnaturalist: Focalization is, admittedly, a phenomenon that unnatural narratology has overlooked to some degree while embracing the strangeness of nonhuman narrators and impossible narrative situations (see Alber et al. 2010). I can only think of Alber's (2013) analysis of the unnaturalness of heterodiegetic narration with either internal or zero focalization and of Nielsen's theory of the impersonal voice in first-person narrative fiction (e.g., Nielsen 2004, 2010) that aims to explain the unnaturalness of zero focalization in homodiegetic narration by establishing a noncommunicative model of narrative fiction. In their contribution to *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature*, Alber et al. list "first person narration in the present tense, you-narration, narratives by dead or non-human narrators, and paraleptic first-person narration" (2012: 351) as manifestations of unnatural narration, but there is no mention of the possibility of "unnatural focalization."

The fact that unnaturalists concentrate on narrators instead of the "voice" of focalizing characters may point to some deeper aesthetic and phenomenological assumptions guiding the unnaturalist movement. Alber, for example, stresses the unnaturalness of omniscience and epistemic access to the figural consciousness in heterodiegetic narration with either internal or

zero focalization but remains reticent on the figural voice as an unnatural, quasi-communicative instance in reflector-mode narratives (Alber 2016: 97–98). Of course, Alber's and many others' emphasis on the accessibility of fictional minds (Herman 2011: 18; Alber 2016: 98) instead of vocal qualities in internal focalization is due to the Genettean inheritance that we discussed earlier.

Yet I think that the much-studied "mind style" that conveys the Neanderthal perspective and embodiment is precisely a product of the tension between two "impossible" vocal positions. First, the modern omniscient narratorial voice accesses long-lost Neanderthal experience in its own cognitive terms (manifested in the language and structure of narrative). Second, the figural voice of Lok manifests in stylistic anomalies that point toward heightened bodily awareness and lack of conceptual thinking yet is embedded in a literary form that makes the best of the linguistic and conceptual evolution of *Homo sapiens*.

At least one thing we can learn from the unnaturalist paradigm in general is the focus on the literary affordances of narrative fiction, the foregrounding of those aspects of focalization that are dependent precisely on the fact that we are, ultimately, reading and not actually perceiving or moving around in the story world. This, at least, is an agenda that all the unnaturalists share: all the field-shaping theories of unnatural narratives (e.g., Nielsen 2004; Richardson 2006; Alber et al. 2010) keep reminding us that fictionality and textuality together are able to elicit perceptual, experiential, and interpretive strategies that defy the laws of "everyday experience," whether verbal or embodied. One way of contributing to this theoretical effort would be to pay more attention to the relationality of perspectives (see Nielsen 2013: 76) in *The Inheritors*, instead of assuming—as, it seems to me, cognitive narratologists habitually

do—that the reader uses one experiential frame (Lok *or* narrator) at a time, according to the logic of primacy and recency (e.g., Jahn 1997).

Cognitivist: Before we do that, I must say that I'm surprised that you have not brought up the nonhuman element in *The Inheritors*, although many of the unnaturalists are very keen on finding literary examples with nonhuman agents. Is it not precisely the novel's attempt to portray Lok as something other than human that makes *The Inheritors* the perfect test case, if we wish to put both cognitive and unnatural narratology on trial? Lok's experience is, initially, given to readers through the internally focalized narrative that may take some getting used to, but the section that most obviously compares to representations of animal cognition in literature is the final section of chapter 11, where, after the loss of Fa, Lok's internal perspective disappears, and instead we get an externally focalized narration about Lok as the "red creature" and its behavior after all the members of its group are gone. Here the descriptions of Lok's behavior are pointedly distanced, but despite the fact that we are told only that "lights" appear in the "caverns" on the creature's face and that "the lights became thin crescents, went out, and streaks glistened on each cheek" (Golding 1955: 220), we are still very well able to identify Lok's tears, read his mind, and sense the magnitude of his sorrow.

The cognitive scholarship on nonhuman narrators and on nonhuman experientiality in general (see, e.g., Herman 2017; Nelles 2001) has focused on human "mind-ascribing practices" (Herman 2017: 201), that is, on those processes of human cognition that allow us to see minds in other humans, in other animals, and even in a variety of objects. This ability has been posited as naturally human, and so pervasive that it is in fact difficult to turn it off, even when we would want to (Dennett 1987). In this respect, cognitive approaches have taken a very different tack than that of unnatural narratologists who emphasize the impossibility and illogicality of an act of

telling by a nonhuman agent, or the unlikeliness of the human mind ever being able to reliably represent and imaginatively inhabit a nonhuman consciousness. The lineage of this debate leads back to the philosophical question, what is it like to be a bat?, asked by Thomas Nagel (1974)**{Au: add cite and ref entry?}**: are we able to imagine, without anthropomorphizing, another creature's subjectivity, if its physical characteristics and sensory system differ from ours? The various answers given by philosophers of mind from Daniel Dennett (1993 [1991]: 441–42) to Andy Clark (2016: 239) have kept the debate going, and within cognitive literary studies we argue about how far fiction can provide a first-person perspective on radically other forms of being (see, e.g., Lodge 2002; Herman 2017; for focus on unreadable minds, see Abbott 2013: 123–39). I suppose cognitive scholars could be said to be more interested in exploring how fictional narratives help us to feel what it is like to be a bat in such a way that it feels normal to be a bat, rather than in those cases where that experience is presented as estranged or unnatural.

Unnaturalist: But in the specific case of *The Inheritors*, as I pointed out above, that focus on normality misses out the sense of difficulty that critics like Clark and Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes report. This comes out particularly clearly in moments where Lok's cognition is presented at its most animal-like. For example, when the people have returned to their summer camp and have settled down for the night around their fire in the hollow, Lok is falling asleep to the sounds from the nearby waterfall:

> Lok's ears spoke to Lok.
>
> "?"
>
> But Lok was asleep. (Golding 1955: 43)

Here, in relating the independence of Lok's animal senses from his conscious mind, Golding resorts to using symbols rather than words and in doing so emphasizes the need for a strange style for this strange mind, however embodied the experience being depicted.

Cognitivist: Might there be a middle way here? In an article on nonhuman narrators, Bernaerts et al. point out that "often, if not always, non-human narrators use the techniques of focalization, characterization, and consciousness representation to evoke non-human experientiality. Thus, non-human narration cannot be reduced to the unnatural and the strange, since it is caught in a dialectic of empathy and defamiliarization, the familiar and the strange, human and non-human experience" (2014: 75). Even though they also expressly say that they do not discuss nonhuman *focalizers* (ibid.: 89n1), the basic idea of this interplay could perhaps be maintained in our case as well.

Unnaturalist: True—the approach to the nonhuman by Bernaerts et al. as a "dialectic of empathy and defamiliarization" captures the potential of focalization as a literary technique that thematizes both sameness and otherness. When looking at the narrative setup of *The Inheritors*, this would mean that we appreciate the "anthropomorphization" (for lack of a better term) of the Neanderthal experience by a narrator who comes across as a *Homo sapiens* mediator. Just think of the use of "?" in the passage I just quoted: it's a sign of written language, signaling a semiotic sphere far beyond the reach of Lok, and at the same time, it's a sign that most effectively captures Lok's instinctive, nonsemiotic relationship to his environment.

Narration, Narrative Voice, Narrative Situation: Relationality of Perspectives

Unnaturalist: In fact, I wonder why the presence of the sometimes very lyrical and aestheticizing narratorial voice of *The Inheritors* has not attracted more attention in Golding

scholarship. The narrator's role as a sympathetic *Homo sapiens* mediator of the Neanderthal experience should be taken into account when discussing the dynamics of perspectival and stylistic shifting in the novel. One reason for the neglect must be that the early new critical and structuralist readings of Golding wanted to foreground the Neanderthal as a strange mind style, in spite of the fact that free indirect discourse is properly used only in the final chapter with the *Homo sapiens* Tuami as the center of consciousness. But just think of the phrase, "He performed miracles of perception in the cavern of his nose," in our opening example. Is this not the voice of a poeticizing anthropologist? Or, "They sank then into a settled silence that might have been mistaken for abstracted melancholy, were it not for the steady movement of the muscles that ran up from their jaws and moved the curls gently on the sides of their vaulted heads" (Golding 1955: 61–62). Abstracted melancholy? Could we almost say that here the narrator is constructing a hypothetical focal position within the story world for a contemporary *Homo sapiens*, while all along maintaining an aesthetically framing, allegorical distance?

Previous Golding scholarship, in its focus on the strangeness of the Neanderthal as a perceptual and experiential agent, falls into the same easy trap, in fact, as many unnaturalist approaches to narration: instead of focusing on the unlimited unnatural potentialities inherent in the hierarchically structured and vocally complex fictional narrative situation, the analysis establishes a singular narrative agent (a character or a narrator) as the ultimate source for the "unnaturalness" of our reading experience (but see Mäkelä 2013a, 2013b). For example, Brian Richardson's seminal *Unnatural Voices* (2006) finds "extreme narration" only in "new" types of narrative voice such as collective, multiperson, or second-person narration.

Maybe the ambivalence created by the relationality between discursive agencies in narrative fiction is so easily left outside the scope of unnatural narratology because including it

would mean, at least to some extent, an unwelcome rehearsal of the already stale debates of classical narratology, such as those concerning free indirect discourse. The only notable exception to this in the unnatural-narratological canon are Nielsen's contributions on the "impersonal" voice in first-person narrative fiction, revolutionizing our previously too mimetic and anthropomorphic take on the speaking *I* in fictional narratives (see, e.g., Nielsen 2004, 2010). Many of us unnaturalists seem to genuinely believe that we are fundamentally changing the narratological community's notions of fictional narration, but I'm afraid at least our most influential critics in the cognitivist camp consider us mere traditionalists. David Herman's (2011) famous critique of the "exceptionality thesis" bundles the approaches to fictional minds by the unnaturalists Richardson, Nielsen, and Mäkelä together with the classical theories of Dorrit Cohn (1978, 1999) that emphasize the unique accessibility of fictional minds as well as their verbal and structural affordances and limitations—which, in a way, is just fine, in terms of the history and the evolution of our discipline.

Herman's critique of the exceptionality thesis is grounded on two macroarguments he derives from contemporary cognitive science: the accessibility argument (we "read" each other's embodied minds in everyday interaction, too), and the mediation argument (the cognitive frames and scripts at work in making sense of actual persons and fictional characters are essentially the same). When confronted with novels like *The Inheritors*, however, I find myself thinking that a true "unnatural" challenge to the universalist tendencies in cognitivist narratology does not lie in arguments about the accessibility or inaccessibility of fictional and actual minds; in fact, the intense empathy with and involvement in Lok's embodied perspective and the seamlessness with which Golding's narration joins epistemological limitations and excessive perceptual abilities may even be seen to support Herman's accessibility argument. For me, the real problem is the

mediation argument. As the unnaturalist Stefan Iversen has noted in his critique of Herman, there are fundamental phenomenological differences between "social" and literary reading: "Real life offers persons but metaphorical readings, while written texts offer literal readings but no actual persons" (2013: 147). One of the elementary lessons in literary reading, therefore, is experiencing the narrative situation where all narrative agents exist only in relation to each other—this, indeed, is one of the teachings of classical narratology that has been almost completely eclipsed by the cognitive turn.

Cognitivist: To be sure, the unnatural and the earlier cognitive approaches share a limitation here. Neither of them was able to help us cope with the relationality between focalizers and narrators without overemphasizing them as separable positions. However, with second-generation enactive cognitive theory the situation improves, for example, when Karin Kukkonen (2014) strives to join Wolfgang Iser's classical reader model with the embodied reader, precisely with the intent of bringing back into cognitive theory the complex interplay between immersion in a character's experience and the weighing of that experience from the perspective of the narrative as a whole.

But just as you said, previous scholarship on Golding's novel has neglected the relationality of perspectives in the way Lok as the focalizing character is only accessible to readers in relation to the narrator's discourse. For example, while Caracciolo's enactive analysis of the kinesthetic effects of Golding's prose is insightful in its attention to the intuitive reactions readers have to representations of embodiment, that embodiment is by no means presented only from within Lok's perspective. Although the focalization is attached to Lok from the very first sentence ("Lok was running as fast as he could"), the unnatural qualities and abilities of the Neanderthal mind—the limited comprehension of cause and effect, on the one hand, and in-

group telepathy and extraordinary sensory engagement with the environment, on the other—are introduced only gradually, assisted by accompanying narratorial explication. The narrator's mediation is apparent, for example, in descriptions of physical reactions that would not be part of the character's experience of their own bodies, in references to concepts that would not exist for the character, or in explicit statements about what is not thought or experienced by the character. Thus, both Lok and the group as a whole are presented to readers through a voice that can describe behavioral patterns not experienced as such by the group, as when they empathetically connect with the tired stumbles of the elderly Mal and "became an affectionate and unconscious parody" of his movements (Golding 1955: 23). While parody as an action may even be available to the Neanderthals through embodied empathy, the concept of parody and thus the self-aware experience of it would not be. Nor would the concept of nakedness, referred to in the novel's opening where "the trees sifted chilly sunlight over their naked bodies" (ibid.: 15).

Where the naturalization common to most cognitive approaches would take such passages as containing layers of perception and cognition—of the narrator's perspective momentarily overlaying the otherwise more foregrounded focalizing perspective—both of us seem precisely *not* interested in analyzing the characters' thoughts within the frame of the narrator's thoughts as if both of those things existed independently or would have to be imagined to exist independently for the narrative to make sense. In fact, the unnaturalist Mäkelä argues against the first-generation cognitivist urge to track down embedded "levels of intention" in narrative discourse (see, e.g., Zunshine 2006: 77–82). No "3-D model of embedded consciousnesses" is required, Mäkelä argues, but instead "the cognitive trick lies in the fact that in literary representation, telling, experiencing, and the construction of the fictional world and its agents all happen on the same level—that of narrative discourse" (2013a: 138).

Such an unnatural phenomenology of reading, where the whole point of narration is to coalesce the agential frames, might work with the new enactivist approach, or at least work better than with the first-generation cognitivists' notion of narration as triggering the reader to infer separate mental representations and order them in neat Chinese boxes. In order to avoid merely going back to all those twentieth-century controversies on dual voice and the like, we should concentrate on the negotiation between embodied (3-D) experience and the mechanisms afforded by the entangled phenomenology of literary narration. This is something the cognitivist Merja Polvinen has tried to do in relation to the perception of fictional worlds, by arguing that focusing on the reader's deictic shift can obscure the fact that, as we negotiate a fictional environment, "the non-actuality of that environment is one of the qualities that we have to negotiate" (2016: 29).

Unnaturalist: I'm glad that we are well on our way toward a theoretical consensus here. But what does all this mean for the focalization and narration in *The Inheritors*?

Cognitivist: Well, a description of the relationship created by the interplay of the narration and focalization in *The Inheritors* is left halfway if it is attempted through a listing of frames and perspectives that readers would adopt, each to the exclusion of the other. However strange the Neanderthal mind is supposed to be, its attractiveness depends on its being perceived as an element in a larger artistic construction—a construction whose presence is indicated by the interplay between the engagement with and the observing of Lok's experience. Let us look at the passage describing Lok's temporary feeling of disconnectedness from his own people after having "enacted" the new man's movements in his tracking-down operation; this is a thematically dense moment as Lok is, almost literally, suspended between the Neanderthal and the *Homo sapiens* experience:

> He was cut off and no longer one of the people; as though his communion with the other had changed him he was different from them and they could not see him. He had no words to formulate these thoughts but he felt his difference and invisibility as a cold wind that blew on his skin. The other had tugged at the strings that bound him to Fa and Mal and Liku and the rest of the people. The strings were not the ornament of life but its substance. If they broke, a man would die. (Golding1955: 78)

In this scene, Lok is watching his peers from afar, a scene that in a paradigmatically modernist narration would be founded upon a "silent self-communion" (see Cohn 1978: v; Palmer 2004: 9). But in terms of phenomenology and verbalization, *The Inheritors* gives rise to a different kind of modernist contemplation that leaves much more room for the narrative voice, almost as if the external narrator had a mediating bodily presence in the narrative discourse, even if somewhat quasi metaphorically or quasi allegorically ("The strings were not the ornament of life but its substance").

Unnaturalist: Are you suggesting, then, that although we would both wish to get rid of the neat logic of mental embeddedness, we would still need to hang on to the concept of the narrator? I might agree, although in unnatural narratology, the emphasis on fictionality, incommunicability, and "logically and physically" impossible narrative situations aligns the whole paradigm with so-called no-narrator theories. **{Au: *so-called* is not followed by quote marks since it signals the questionable sense of the term that follows.}**This theoretical position is illustrated by Walsh—"the reader is not obliged to hypothesize a narrator who really is omniscient in order to naturalize the authorial imaginative act" (2007: 73)—as well as by Nielsen: "The author does not want the reader to believe that the described situation actually took place at some specific point in the real

world but wants the reader to acknowledge that he *invents* a situation in which they do" (2013: 89**{Au: emphasis is assumed original unless stated otherwise.}**).

Yet I think we are not depriving Golding of his role as the ingenious inventor of his Neanderthals even if we personalize the narrator of *The Inheritors*, at least to a certain degree. The ethos of contemporary no-narrator theories is pragmatic, but in our case a personalized "omniscient" narrator seems to be a thematic necessity. This necessity extends, however, only to the first part of the novel with Lok as the focalizing character; the last chapter, focalized through the perceptually and verbally more "familiar" consciousness of the *Homo sapiens* Tuami, does not foreground—does not need—a mediating narrative voice. Tuami, as demonstrated by the free indirect discourse rendering of his interiority, is himself capable of lyrical metaphors and allegorization of his own experience:

> It seemed as though the portage of the boats . . . from that forest to the top of the fall had taken them on to a new level not only of land but of experience and emotion. (Golding 1955: 225)

> I am like a pool, he thought, some tide has filled me, the sand is swirling, the waters are obscured and strange things are creeping out of the cracks and crannies in my mind. (ibid.: 227)

Contrary to those twentieth-century stylistic analyses of *The Inheritors* that emphasize the gap between the mind styles of Neanderthal and *Homo sapiens* focalization, I am tempted to see considerable similarities in the ways the *narrator* of the first part and the focalizing character Tuami in the second part reflect, metaphorize, and allegorize immediate bodily sensation and experience. The narrator's deeply humanistic and understanding point of view on the

Neanderthals seems to be transmitted to Tuami's reflections on his own kind and on the future of the entire species.

The Neanderthal Mind Is a Literary Mind (If There Ever Was One)

Unnaturalist: So what we agree on at this point is that neither the unnatural nor the first-generation cognitivist paradigm alone can explain the interpretive dynamics that narrative fiction creates by the relationality of points of view. If we wish to model readerly responses to complex narrative setups, it is not enough to focus on the epistemic or perceptual transgressions and limitations within one mind at a time. Instead, we need to account for the synthetic functions of perspectival shifting and relations that cannot be reduced to the familiarity–strangeness axis, a scale foregrounded both by the unnaturalists and the cognitivists. In *The Inheritors*, as in many other sophisticated narratives, unnaturalness and naturalness—or strangeness and familiarity—in narration and focalization coexist, and therefore the reader is neither completely at home nor feeling alien in Neanderthal or *Homo sapiens* focalization. This, I think, is also the point that Bernaerts et al. (2014) want to make when discussing the double exposure of nonhuman and human and the necessary anthropomorphizing in animal focalization. In *The Inheritors*, this ambivalent perspectival setup produces and, in turn, is also reinforced by the contradictory ethical effects that we have discussed earlier: the fact that what comes across as perceptually familiar to us (the *Homo sapiens* focalization) appears simultaneously as ethically estranging and vice versa with the Neanderthal focalization.

I'd like to return to the passage earlier cited from Clark's stylistic analysis of *The Inheritors* where, like many linguistically oriented readers before him, Clark claims that "the first section is very difficult to process" whereas "we feel quite at home with [the *Homo sapiens*] point of view" (2009: 202, 203).**{Au: please add cite here for these quotes.}** This dichotomous reading

clearly establishes the Neanderthal focalization as unnatural and the *Homo sapiens* focalization as natural. If we genuinely wish to challenge the unnatural and the cognitive narratological paradigms with *The Inheritors*, I think we should not overlook the novel's strong ethical dimension. Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes's early reading demonstrates that it is precisely the relationality and the dynamics of points of view that contribute to the ethical force of *The Inheritors*. Instead of treating the novel as a "mere lament for lost innocence," they discover "a subdued testimony to the ability to know the worst and remain loving" in the novel—an interpretation that, eventually, finds the deepest ethical dimension in the distressed yet reflective *Homo sapiens* focalization (Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes 2002: 96; recall Tuami's thoughts on the journey that takes his group "on to a new level not only of land but of experience and emotion"). About the perspectival inversion and its effect on ethical positioning they note, "It may be *necessary* to get to a distance, or we may still see and respond too simply" (ibid.: 92).

Two analytical discoveries that emerge from our discussion challenge the established stylistic readings and, conversely, lend theoretical support to Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes's interpretation: (1) the complexity of the narrative situation in the first part and especially the "inter-species," mediating narrative voice that simultaneously empathizes with and allegorizes the Neanderthal perception and experience; and (2) the notion of Neanderthal embodiment as radical in the sense that it triggers both cognitive familiarity and cognitive estrangement. The dynamics among narrative agents, and between the body and the text, should be of interest to both unnatural and cognitive-enactivist narratology. Such a model is able, I think, to capture the readerly experience of the dialectical negotiation of humaneness and naturalness between the novel's focal positions. The unnaturalist Mäkelä (2016) suggests that the main task for unnatural narratology should be to examine the "cognitive flip side" of easy story-world assimilation,

immersion, and enactment, thus foregrounding unnatural narratology's formalist inheritance of Shklovskian de-automatization and estrangement. *The Inheritors* seems to invite this double focus even more strongly than some other literary narratives. In a way, the novel hinges on double estrangement that is dynamic and relational in nature: the estrangement and the consecutive familiarization of the Neanderthal focalization—with the help of the allegorizing, interspecies narrator—results in the ethical estrangement of the focal position of our own kind, the rational and calculating "new man."

In fact, I think unnatural narratologists should be open about their proximity to the Russian formalists; a strong logic of estrangement is perceivable in all the variants of unnatural narratology, from the logically and physically impossible to the foregrounding of textuality and literary (non)communication. A genuinely new twist to the theory of estrangement offers itself in the emphasis on unnatural reading strategies. Here, a dialogue with cognitive narratology may prove most productive; for the formalists, the productive strangeness resided in the literary means of a text, whereas you cognitivists could teach us unnaturalists to focus on reading strategies. An unnaturalized interpretation of cognitive narratology might suggest that the direction of estrangement is not only from text to mind but can, in fact, be the other way around: our reading may just as well estrange a text.

Cognitivist: Indeed, the stone is made stony again here, so to speak! Does *The Inheritors* exhibit literary or biological evolution, and which of the two do we end up highlighting if we concentrate on the reading mind? This is where our collective, contrapuntal reading of *The Inheritors* diverges from Caracciolo's enactivist analysis: his notion of "kinesthetic empathy" can account for the cognitive similarities and differences between us and our imagined "dead end" ancestors, but if we attune our analysis to the literary dynamics of estrangement and

familiarization, we can see Golding's literary techniques as dramatizing the fact that the contradictory inheritance of attunement and separation lives on in us, in the oscillation between harmony and imbalance that so well describes the modern human's relation to her environment and to others.

And as you said, Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes's rich analysis, although dating from the 1960s, resonates with the enactivist approach as it highlights the strongly "participatory" agency that the Neanderthals assume in relation to their environment: "We can watch the People trying painfully to learn to put pictures together in a chain of thought. But we can also experience a fellow-feeling so intense that the People literally participate in one another when they share pictures, living not as individuals, but as part of a communal whole" (Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes 2002: 54). One of the most intense descriptions of this collective Neanderthal mind occurs when the People have just arrived at their summer residence, the overhang, and Mal is approaching his death. "One of the deep silences fell on them, that seemed so much more natural than speech, a timeless silence in which there were at first many minds in the overhang; and then perhaps no mind at all" (Golding 1955: 34). Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes note about this passage that "we are not looking at the mindlessness of animals," but instead "what we glimpse is a kind of consciousness wholly without that individual separateness and loneliness which is the definition of human consciousness as we know it" (2002: 55). Yet the "separateness and loneliness" that grounds this moral-allegorical interpretation is now an outdated notion of the human mind. Couldn't we say that current cognitive-scientific understanding of the mind as embodied, social, and distributed ultimately cancels out the sense that the Neanderthal mind is otherworldly and allegorical? It seems that contemporary cognitive science has turned us all into Neanderthals à la Golding, because by now we know that, indeed, human cognitive processes are

more or less equal to embodied sharing and interaction with the environment. Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes conclude rather cryptically that the Neanderthal lesson in collective experientiality is "an adventure, and we are the Inheritors; but the novel does not tell us, it makes us discover what that means" (ibid.: 55). But what would it mean for us to be "inheritors" of such a cognitive legacy? I might claim that whereas the modernist poetics of Golding may entail a polarized distinction between the "lost" collectivity and the modern, isolated individuality, today's readers might just as well opt for a more Neanderthalian reading strategy and acknowledge the scientific-historical limitations of the author's concept of the mind. Or how would you conceive of this inheritance that this modernist story passes on to us?

Unnaturalist: In other words, are you suggesting yet another naturalizing reading of the novel's stylistic discordances, just one that is updated to match current views of what is natural? I am tempted by it, especially because it accounts for the historical change in the literary poetics of the mind. What you are saying, in fact, is that whereas Golding's narration and experiments with focalization were originally aimed at allegorizing the Neanderthal mind, the twenty-first-century reader may take all that intense and interactive embodiment literally and instead read the *Homo sapiens* mind, as portrayed in the novel, as an allegory of (high) modernism and its epistemology-driven notion of human agency (see McHale 1987).

But let's face it, the moral-allegorical dimension of the Neanderthals' manner of being-in-the-world complicates the case for the cognitive-enactivist and pushes us toward seeing *The Inheritors* in terms of radical embodiment—but in a literary rather than a cognitive or philosophy-of-mind sense. Consider this characterization by Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes that paints the Neanderthals as both organically connected with their environment and, at the same time, embodying a radically different phenomenology than the instrumental embodiment of the

"new people:" "The world 'belongs' to them in the sense that they feel completely at home in it and see it filled with the same life that pulses through themselves; but nothing 'belongs' to them as property or as of right. They fit the world and the world fits them" (2002: 58). The noninstrumentality and lack of ownership in the Neanderthal experience thus connects to a strong humanist ethos. Isn't there something fundamentally and irreducibly literary—or readerly—in this point of view? Isn't this intensely participatory yet nonprofit engagement something that we share as readers of fictional narratives? I'm beginning to suspect that the ethical component in our reading of *The Inheritors*—as well as in many of the previous interpretations—is ultimately connected to an allegorical analogy between the Neanderthal focalization and the unnatural capacities of literary fiction. I would say that the dynamics between two focal positions results in an allegorical setup where epistemic and perceptual naturalness (the word *sapiens* denoting "wise" and thus connoting epistemic supremacy) is pitted against an allegorical and literary notion of human(e)ness, thus exposing the conflation inherent in the word.

What I'm saying is that many of those Neanderthal abilities foregrounded by Golding's narration point, in fact, to readerly engagement with fiction. What if we are indeed the inheritors of Golding's Neanderthals, not as integrated cognitive agents with our universal mental skills but particularly as readers? What if narrative fiction is the inheritance? If this is the case, then the telepathy among the Neanderthals, for example, would provide the perfect allegory for the exceptionality thesis, reflecting fiction's ability to share private mental content. The intense sympathy among individuals would equal to emotional immersion in the fictional characters' experiences; the reader's attachment to Other (the imagined Neanderthal) and his aversion from Self (the *Homo sapiens*) could be seen as an allegory of fiction's ability to transfer identity and

experience. Furthermore, the premetaphorical (see Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes 2002: 53) and emphatically embodied Neanderthal being-in-the-world accounts for fiction's ability to transfer the reader "beyond language," to the deictic and experiential coordinates of the story world. And what if preconceptual thinking and communication by having and sharing "pictures"—the Neanderthal people's vividly perceptual modeling of past or possible scenarios—stood for literariness itself?

This interpretation would highlight the sensory and the material aspects of fictional narratives more synthetically and thematically than the current cognitive-enactivist approach. Consequently, if we were to use Golding's Neanderthals as a test case in the exceptionality versus accessibility/mediation debate, we could say that their minds are indeed exceptional, different from the reading mind not in kind but in degree (or in terms of foregrounding)—not because of their lower capacities but because their internalized literariness. Golding's Neanderthals are a radically materialized version of the reader, embodying readerly activities. Might this constitute an enactivist reformulation of the exceptionality thesis?

Cognitivist: Indeed—we only need to remember how Lok is described when tracking the *Homo sapiens* man: he reconstructs the other's path—"not by reasoned deduction" as the narrator notes, but by becoming "Lok-other," perceiving by imitating, or simulating (Golding 1955: 77). And rather than taking this "Lok-other" as pertaining to a materialist and experiential notion of reading, we can take it as a herald of an interpretive, literary reading. If we enact fictions, properly speaking, we engage a cognitive environment that is the narrative, rather than a simulation of a reality generated by the narrative. And when we link up with the experience offered by the text, we link up not just with the story events but also with the discourse structure; even while we are enacting the experiences of the focalizing character, what is also being

enacted is the structure of narration. I believe this is what Kukkonen (2014) calls the "cascades" of probabilistic thinking and embodied experience when she brings together the Iserian, plot-oriented reader with the embodied, character-oriented one. Thus, second-generation cognitive narratology can accommodate an emphasis on the synthetic as long as we bear in mind that readers of fictional narratives are enacting something that is both an artifact and an environment and that calls forth skills related to both those aspects.

Unnaturalist: It seems as though we are approaching a genuine synthesis here. The internalized literariness of Golding's Neanderthal focalization dramatizes the irresoluble tension between embodied experiential schemata—the natural—and specifically literary capacities for mental foregrounding: the unnatural in the sense of inviting a nonrecuperative reading. Recall our opening example: the narrator clearly admires Lok's ability to perform "miracles of perception in the cavern of his nose." Does that hint toward an ideally embodied reader? And if readerly interpretation and immersion is "miraculous" in comparison with our everyday *Homo sapiens* undertakings, is it because it is unnatural, or precisely because it is so extremely natural?

Monodic Conclusion: Total Newness?

"Pictures fitted together in Lok's head. He saw himself turning out on the cliff to speak to the old woman because he had smelt fire when she was not there. But this was only another complication in a day of total newness and he let the picture be" (Golding 1955: 114). The dialogue shaping this essay is fictional—or should we say unnatural?—as it first dichotomizes and allegorizes the cognitive and the unnatural stance and then builds toward a workable consensus between the two approaches. In reality, the theoretical positions of the writers of this essay overlap in many respects, as both of us have criticized the very paradigms with which our work is associated (the cognitivist paradigm in Polvinen's case, the unnaturalist one in

Mäkelä's). A joint close reading paves the way for a productive methodological exchange where discussing limitations in one approach invites the other to tackle new questions. A common ground for the exploration of enactivist and unnatural positioning of narrators, characters, and readers can be found in the double exposure of immersion and reflection that, we suggest, permeates all fictional narration (Polvinen 2017; Mäkelä 2013a, 2013b).

Our dialogue demonstrates that while *The Inheritors* is in many ways a perfect test case for both unnatural and cognitive narratology in its manipulation of human epistemic and perceptive capacity, neither of these paradigms is able to sufficiently model the dynamics between strangeness and familiarity created by the ingenious setup of focalizations in the novel, let alone to conceptualize the resulting thematic effects the novel has on its readers. Our coconstructed interpretation of the novel is ultimately inspired by our shared understanding of the fundamental coexistence of experiential immediacy and the peculiarly textual and narrative possibilities and constraints of literary fiction. This stance, we believe, succeeds in bringing out the best of both approaches. When applied to *The Inheritors*—through our dialectical methodological setup—we hope to have demonstrated how the doubled, reflective perception makes the cognitive environment of the novel's reader different from what we would have in reality.

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