

The usual suspects: the grammar of perspective in narrative fiction

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1. RETURN TO PERSPECTIVE

This paper sits at the intersection of two domains —the study of **modality** and **evidentiality** in linguistics, and the study of what for some people has been calling ‘narrator’s voice’ —but may be better characterized as **perspective**— in narrative fiction.

My interest in the subject stemmed initially from the practice of writing fiction. My periodic forays into this thankless obsession over the past 35 years have seen my own approach to the narrator’s perspective undergo a radical transformation. Earlier on, I adopted a would-be existentialist —“objectivist”, “descriptive”— approach to the narrator’s voice (or lack thereof). Following Camus and Hemingway (or at least my interpretation of them), and buttressed by a certain measure of youthful empiricism, I strove to describe only “what happened”, eschewing “attitude” and “interpretation”. I resolved to let the characters speak for themselves. Which meant, in practice, confining any expressions of mental attitude inside the quoted dialogue.

I spent the intervening 30-odd years doing linguistic work, whereby it became apparent, rapidly indeed, that no communicative use of natural language —outside the relatively denatured confines of science and academe— was free of massive incursions of the narrator’s mental perspective. And further, that although the most conspicuous concentration of speakers mental attitudes is vested in the grammar of modality and evidentiality, the narrator’s mental attitude is liberally sprinkled over the entire grammar.

When I set out after a 30 years gap to revise my second novel RTG,¹ it became clear that my erstwhile Camus-esque avoidance of perspective was not only untenable, but in fact an elaborate exercise in self delusion. Invoked or uninvoked, perspective was always there. Perhaps surprisingly, I did not reach these conclusions through linguistic analysis, but strictly in the practice of revising an early version of the novel.

RTG was originally written, much like Camus' *L'étranger*, from the perspective of a single narrator speaking in the first person. Lifting a device out of Larry McMurtry's early novel *Leaving Cheyenne*,² I 'translated' the first two parts of the RTG into the perspective of two other main characters, respectively, leaving only part III in the —now much transformed— original voice. The main character is thus referred to in the third person —'he' or 'Robert'— in parts I and II, and only regains reference as 'I' in part III.

Initially I thought a contrastive analysis of the two versions of RTG —before and after my perspective 'translation'— could have furnished some insight into which part of the original narrative was due to the "core objective description" itself, and which to the narrator's perspective. However, due to the fact that my revision involved a considerable *adding of perspective* in addition to mere 'translation', a strict minimal-pair comparison has turned out to be impossible.

Further below, I will briefly resort to second best, examining the 'translation' of an episode from of a yet-to-be-published novel from the perspective of one character to that of another. The empirical taint such a procedure introduces is of course obvious. But the re-casting was done without conscious linguistic intent, and the writing was finished long before I started to write this paper.

2. FIRST PERSON VS. THIRD PERSON NARRATOR

The conventional wisdom I grew up with was that as a narrator one had two choices vis-a-vis the control of narrative perspective. First, one could cede the perspective to a participant character, who is then referred to as 'I'. That narrator knows the hard-core **facts** of the narrative because s/he was present on the scene. Their participation in the events —whether as central actant or peripheral observer— licenses their knowledge. And whatever **attitudes** are expressed in the course of the narrative are therefore indexed to that participant-narrator.

As a simple illustration of the pervasive range and scope of internal mental attitude expressed by a first-person narrator that are **externally inaccessible** to other persons present on the scene, consider the opening paragraph to Larry McMurtry's *Leaving Cheyenne*. In marking up this

passage, I rendered externally-accessible ('objective') predications in capitals. Internally-accessible ('mental', 'subjective') predications are italicized. Mental ('subjective') predications that extend *irrealis* scope are bold-faced, and their reality-obliterating scope is indicated with square brackets. The effect of *irrealis* operators is to render almost all expressions within their scope inaccessible to anybody but the person whose modal attitude licensed the *irrealis* operator.³ The marked paragraph is as follows:

- (1) "When I *woke up* Dad was **STANDING** by the bed **SHAKING** my foot. I **OPENED** my eyes, *but* he **never** [*stopped SHAKING* it]. He **SHOOK** it **like** [it WAS a fence post and he was *testing* it **to**[*see if* [it WAS in the ground *solid enough*]]]. *All my life that's the way* [he **WOKE** me up] — I *hate* it **like** [poison]. Once I **OFFERED**(?) [to SET a glass of water by the bed], **so** [he **could** [POUR that over me in the morning and **WAKE** me up]], *but* Dad **wouldn't** [do it]. I **SET** the water out **for** [him] six or seven *times*, and he *just let* it [SIT] and **SHOOK** my foot *anyway*. *Sometimes though, if* [he was *thirsty*], he'd [DRINK the water *first*]..." (L. McMurtry, *Leaving Cheyenne*, p. 9).

External accessibility is, on the whole, relatively easy to determine using a criterion implicit in much of evidentiality:

- (2) **Test for external accessibility:**
 "Could other persons present at the scene have had *direct* access to the information?"

For the great bulk of words used in narrative, accessibility decisions are relatively easy. Some problems arise with mixed metaphoric expressions, portions of which are clearly accessible while others reflect inaccessible mental attitudes. Thus, consider the use of 'testing' in (1). When we watch a person testing a fence-post as in (1), all we really see is that person grabbing hold of the post and pushing or pulling it or leaning on it. The knowledge that the pushing, pulling or leaning is done for the purpose of testing is already a **mental inference**.

Likewise, the verb 'stop' has some accessible components: One sees a person doing something, then all of a sudden one does not see them doing the same. But one never really actually sees the stopping. Stopping is a sophisticated, integrated mental inference.

As an alternative to first-person narration, one may choose to retain control of the perspective, and then vest it in some omniscient narrator of often murky ontology. That person has gained access to the hard-core "facts" of the story by some licensing arrangement entirely outside the narrative itself. Unlike the first-person narrator, who exists inside the narrative frame, the omniscient narrator resides **outside the frame**.

So far so good for the omniscient narrator's access to the hard-core facts of the story. But what about the omniscient narrator's mental attitudes? Whose are they? Or who are they vested in? Whose internal mental processes do they represent?

The conventional wisdom I grew up with suggested a simple, symmetrical answer: If mental attitudes are at all expressed in third-person narrative, they are most likely those of the omniscient narrator him/herself.

The first thing I would like to demonstrate in this study is that this simple answer need not be the case, and perhaps seldom is in well-written fiction. Rather, the presumed omniscient narrator in well written fiction often vests *all* expressions of mental attitude in the various participant characters⁴. I will begin this study with an examination of the deployment of perspective in the novel *Cold Mountain* by C. Frazier⁵.

3. THE DEPLOYMENT OF PERSPECTIVE IN *COLD MOUNTAIN*

3.1. Preliminaries

Cold Mountain (henceforth CM) is a historical novel taking place during the Civil War. Whether intended or not, the story follows in a rough way the trajectory of Homer's *Odyssey*. The stories of both Odysseus (Inman) and Penelope (Ada) proceed in parallel for the bulk of the novel (chs 1-17). They merge only toward the end (chs 18-20). A short epilogue (ch. 21) concerns only the surviving Ada.

In the first 17 chapters of CM, the two characters are geographically separated. The bulk of the description in the alternating Ada and Inman chapters concerns only one of the characters. And that character's perspective completely dominates the chapter. Only in four distinct episodes during these first 17 chapters are both characters present jointly on the scene. All four are memory reflections—two by Ada, two by Inman—about past events that took place prior to the opening of the novel.

In the last three chapters, the same strict separation of perspective is observed, but the pace is accelerated. Ada and Inman are jointly present on the scene in four distinct episodes. But within each episode, the strict separation in the control of perspective—either by Ada or by Inman—applies to short sub-episodes.

In the quantified study presented below, I included only the episodes in which the two main characters were jointly present on the scene. First, the full four memory-based episodes scattered across chapters 1-17. And second, the first of the four late episodes, in which the control of perspective shifts through alternating 8 short sub-episodes.

The reason for this selection is obvious. That either Ada's or Inman's perspective would dominate the narratives when he or she is the only main character present is predictable. Demonstrating that the same strict assignment of perspective also obtains when both main characters are present on the scene drives the point home more forcefully.

3.2. Perspective and irrealis scope

In this section I will illustrate some of the problems one encounters in deciding which expressions are externally accessible, which are strictly mental-internal ('inaccessible'); and which of the latter also impose irrealis (or realis) scope. What is extraordinary about the text is how difficult it is to find even short passages without massive intrusion of perspective. That is, of externally inaccessible expressions. My determination of scope is entirely derived from the study of modality in natural language⁶.

Example (3) below involves several accessible expressions in addition to two inaccessible ones ('saw', 'just') with no scope effects.

- (3) "...When not twenty feet GONE, though, he LOOKED BACK over his shoulder and *saw* her *just* TURNING..." (CM, 199)

Example (4) involves the **realis** scope of the factive verb 'know'. The other inaccessible predication ('unseemly') is scopeless:

- (4) "...*Knowing* [what she DID was *unseemly*]..." (CM, 202)

In example (5), two mental-internal predications are used ('apparent', 'fascination'), but neither imposes any scope:

- (5) "...Now would be the time" Inman SAID, LOOKING to where Ada STOOD alone, HER BACK TO the people, slightly STOOPED, PEERING in *apparent fascination* at the inscriptions..." (CM, 63)

In example (6), several inaccessible expression impose **irrealis/ non-fact** scope, each for its own reason:

- (6) "...Ada LOOKED Inman *directly* in the face, and he *realized too late* [that he *had not [planned [what to SAY]]]. Before [he could [formulate a phrase]],* Ada SAID..." (CM, 63)

First, negation ('not') imposes **non-fact** scope.⁷ Second, the non-implicative modality verb 'plan' imposes **irrealis** scope on its complement,⁸ a

scope further augmented by the non-referring WH-pronoun ‘what’. The irrealis adverbial (‘before’) is also under irrealis scope⁹. And the modal ‘could’ imposes irrealis scope. ‘Realize’ imposes *realis* scope. ‘Too’, ‘late’, ‘directly’ and ‘formulate’ are inaccessible expressions without scope. And the perfect auxiliary ‘had’ is most likely also indexed to Inman, probably because it falls under the *realis* scope of ‘realize’.

Example (7) involves a plethora of inaccessible scope-imposing expressions—the modals ‘could’, ‘would’ and ‘might’, the modality predication ‘draw up the nerve to’, and the irrealis time adverbial ‘until’. All this in addition to the *realis*-scoped ‘see’ and the scopeless ‘make a fool of himself’.

- (7) “...Inman **could** [see that they **would** all [TALK the topic round and round **until** [one or another that day **might** [eventually **draw up the nerve** [to GO to her and *make a fool of himself*]]]]...” (CM, 62)

What soon becomes evident is that perspective-coding expressions do not come isolated in the CM narrative. Rather, they are thickly bunched up together, with one often licensing the other. Thus, in (7) above, ‘would’ licenses the irrealis of ‘until’, which by itself could also mark a *realis* ADV clause; and the irrealis ‘until’ in turn then licenses the modal ‘might’.

Similar complexity is seen in examples (8) and (9) below, with multiple scopes piling one over the other:

- (8) “...He had LEFT it OPEN, and Ada **guessed** [he **wished** [he **had** CLOSED it] but **could not** [now **decide**] [**which** [was *worse*, the **awkwardness** [of TAKING THE TWO STRIDES to [DO it]], or the *sharp intimacy suggested by* [the *yawning doorway* and the NARROW bedstead]]]]...” (CM, 203)
- (9) “...She WENT to the door and OPENED it **for** [a BREATH of *fresh air*]. The night smelled [of wet rotten leaves] and was **so dark** [she **couldn't** [see beyond the drops of water *catching the door light* as they FELL from the porch eve]]. From the parlor *came the simple first notes* of Good King Wenceslas. Ada *recognized* [Monroe's *stiff phrasing* at the piano]...” (CM, 78)
- The non-fact scope of negation is again seen in example (10):
- (10) “...When Inman *finished*, Ada did **not** [*know what* [to SAY], so she SAID...” (CM, 198)

In example (11) below, the irrealis scope of the comparative/ likening operator ‘as if’ is further augmented with the irrealis scope of the nominalized ‘idea’, here acting as a non-implicative modality verb, with the non-referring REL-pronoun ‘what’ adding fuel to the already raging irrealis fire:

- (11) "...Not me" Inman said, **as if** [*testing the idea [to see if it stood plumb and level to the visible world...*] (CM, 199)

In (12), the irrealis scope of the manner subordinator 'how' is augmented by the modal 'might'. The irrealis scope of 'prospect' is augmented by the modal 'would have'. And 'summoned the wit' functions as a non-implicative modality verb, with irrealis scope over its complement ('see'). All this in addition to a plethora of scopeless inaccessible expressions:

- (12) "...What did *bother* her was Inman's QUESTION. **How [might she react to the news [of HIS DEATH]]?** She **didn't [know]**, though the **prospect** of it [*loomed darker* in her mind that evening that she **would have[thought]**]. And she **worried** [that she had *rudely dismissed* [Inman's STORY], had not **summoned the wit** at the time [*to see that it had not [been about an old woman]*, but *about his own fears and desires*]..." (CM, 200)

Finally, example (13) illustrates the irrealis scope of a purpose adverbial ('to check its breadth') and a comparison/likeness expression ('as if'). In addition, it shows how a conjunction ('so much so that') can block the spread of irrealis scope.

- (13) "...Ada *found* [that she HAD TAKEN more than one glass of champagne *beyond the prudent*]. Her face **felt [clammy]**, and her neck *was sweating*...Her nose **felt as if**[it HAD BEEN SWOLLEN], *so much so* that she PINCHED it between her two fingers [*to check its breadth*] and then WENT to the mirror, where she *started to see* it **looking [normal...]...**" (CM, 77)

In each one of the examples in (3) through (13), virtually all the mental-internal expressions were licensed by the single person who controls the perspective during the episode. To drive this feature of the CM narrative home, consider the entire sub-episode 5.1 (pp. 319-320), in which all perspective is controlled by Inman, and Ada's entire participation in the narrative is externally accessible. This is, incidentally, the first scene where Inman and Ada reunite after a 3-year separation, not to mention the 17 chapters of separate narratives. I have excised seven lines in the middle in which the terrain is described (still from Inman's perspective).

- (14) "...Inman *heard* a shot at no great distance from where he STOOD. He PULLED back the main hammer of the LeMatt's to full cock and WENT forward. He CAME OUT from under the dense hemlock shade into a chestnut grove which sloped off toward a... [7 lines excised]... Though Inman **could [not [see clearly** but three trees ahead through

the *blur*, it **seemed** [that at the end of the lane WAS A *vague* CIRCLE of light FRINGED around with SNOWY LIMBS]. He HELD the pistol *loose* in his hand, its muzzle *aimed nowhere in particular other than forward*. His finger *made contact* with the trigger so that *all* the metal parts linking with the hammer *touched* and *tightened like* [a spark RUNNING THROUGH from one end to another].

He WALKED ahead and soon a figure *bloomed* out of the light before him, a black silhouette ARCHED OVER by tree limbs. It STOOD STRADDLE LEGGED at the end of the chestnut tunnel and when it *saw* him it BROUGHT TO BEAR on him a long gun. The place was *so quiet* Inman **could hear** [the CLICK OF METAL as a hammer was THUMBED back].

A hunter, Inman **guessed**. He CALLED OUT, SAYING.

—"I am lost. And besides, we don't know enough about one another to start killing one another yet".

He STEPPED forward *slowly*. First he **could see** [the turkeys LAID each by each on the ground]. The he *saw* [Ada's *fine* face atop some *strange* trousered figure, **like** [a *mannish* boy].

—"Ada Monroe?" Inman SAID. "Ada?"

She did NOT ANSWER but just LOOKED at him.

He *was to the point* that he *figured, based on experience, that his senses were not* a thing to [put much stock in]. He *believed* [his *thought life might have gone astray* so that it *had no more direction* to it **than** [of little blind puppies in a box lid]]. What he *saw might* [be some *trick of light working on a disordered mind, bad spirits come upon him in form of to befuddle...*] (319-320).

Only in one ambiguous instance may a verb of mental experience ('see' in "...when it *saw* him...") possibly be attributed to Ada. But it may just as plausibly represent Inman's own inference.

What I have suggested, so far informally, is that the supposedly omniscient narrator of CM has in fact made a deliberate choice to "out-source" all perspective—in addition to his knowledge of the hard-core "facts"—by attributing it to a main character at any given point in the narrative. In the next section I will back up this suggestion with quantification.

3.3. The distribution of perspective-indicating expressions in *Cold Mountain*

In this section I present the results of a quantified study of the distribution of perspective control in the four earlier (memory-based) episodes of *Cold Mountains* in which both main characters (Ada and Inman) were jointly present on the scene. For each episode, I give the first line of text, via which the author cues us about which character controls the perspective.

Episode #1 (pp. 59-66), taken out of a chapter dominated exclusively by Inman's perspective, opens with the narrative line:

- (15) "**Inman** had attended church expressly for the purpose of viewing **her...**"

In Table 1, two main aspects of the text have been quantified. First the distribution of reference to the two main characters in terms of full NP (mostly name) vs. anaphoric pronoun or zero (combined). The reason for this quantification will be made apparent later.

The more important quantification concerns the division of predications into externally accessible ("objective") and inaccessible ("mental", "subjective"), and the distribution of those between the two main characters. The entire inventory of all the expression counted as "inaccessible", in all five episodes of CM studied, is given and discussed in section 3.4.

TABLE 1

Distribution of reference and predications in CM, episode #1 (pp. 59-66)

#1 (Inman)	Inman		Ada		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	22	37.2	9	15.0	
pro/Ø	37	62.8	51	85.0	
total:	59	100	60	100	60/119 = 50.4% A/I
objective	24	24.2	17	100	
subjective	75	75.8	/	/	75/75 = 100.0% I
total:	99	100	17	100	99/116 = 85.3% I

As one can see, the control of perspective in episode #1 by one character is near absolute. This lopsided "licensing" of perspective is reflected first in the fact that 100% of the 17 predications controlled by Ada are "objective", i.e. accessible to both participants. In contrast, fully 75.8% of the predications controlled by Inman are "subjective", i.e. accessible only to him. And fully 100% of all "subjective" predicates in the episode are controlled by Inman.

Inman's control of the episode is further shown in the distribution of total predication: 85.3% of them are referenced to Inman. But the great bulk of those —75/99— are "subjective" predications. However, this domination does not extend to total reference ('who is being talked about'), where Ada and Inman split almost equally (59/60).

Table 2. presents similar distributional results for episode #2 (pp. 76-79) out of a chapter dominated entirely by Ada's perspective. The episode opens with the line:

(16) “**Ada** also paid mild heed to the young men...”

TABLE 2

Distribution of reference and predications in CM, episode #2 (pp. 76-79)

#2 (Ada)	Inman		Ada		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	6	15.7	14	18.1	
pro/Ø	32	84.3	63	81.9	
total:	38	100	77	100	77/115 = 66.9% A
objective	28	84.8	33	33.0	
subjective	5	15.2	67	67.0	67/72 = 93.0% A
total:	33	100	100	100	100/133 = 75.1% A

Again, 93.0% of all perspective-coding (“subjective”) predications are controlled by Ada. Of all predications controlled by Ada, fully 67.0% are “subjective”. While only 15.2% of the predications controlled by Inman are “subjective”. Again, fully 75.1% of the predications in the episode are referenced to or controlled by Ada.

Table 3. presents similar distributional results for episode #3 (pp. 100-102) out of a chapter dominated entirely by Inman's perspective. The episode opens with the line:

(17) “**Inman** occupied himself pleasurably for quite sometime with this long sentence...”

TABLE 3

Distribution of reference and predications in CM, episode #1 (pp. 100-102)

#3 (Inman)	Inman		Ada		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	6	8.9	5	11.3	
pro/Ø	61	91.1	39	88.7	
total:	67	100	44	100	67/111 = 60.3% I
objective	25	29.4	32	96.9	
subjective	60	70.6	1	3.1	60/61 = 98.3% I
total:	85	100	33	100	85/118 = 72.0% I

Inman's control of the perspective here is underscored by the fact that 98.3% of all "subjective" (perspective-indicating) predications are controlled by him; that 70.6% of all Inman-controlled predications are "subjective" (as contrasting with only 3.1% of those controlled by Ada); and that fully 72.0% of all predications in the episode are referenced to or controlled by Inman.

Table 4. presents similar distributional results for episode #4 (pp. 195-204) out of a chapter dominated entirely by Ada's perspective. The episode opens with the line:

(18) "Saying **he** no longer matched that image didn't tell **Ada** much..."

TABLE 4

Distribution of reference and predications in CM, episode #4 (pp. 195-204)

#4 (Ada)	Inman		Ada		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	25	16.8	26	13.7	
pro/Ø	123	83.2	165	86.3	
total:	148	100	191	100	191/339 = 56.3% A
objective	93	95.8	73	28.4	
subjective	4	4.2	184	71.6	184/188 = 97.8% A
total:	97	100	257	100	257/354 = 72.5% A

The control of perspective here is just as lopsided. Ada controls 97.8% of all "subjective" predications. Fully 71.6% of the predications controlled by or referenced to Ada are "subjective" (as against only 4.2% for Inman). And Ada dominates 72.5% of total predications in the episode.

The next set of 8 tables give the same type of distributional results for the sub-episodes of episode #5 (pp. 319-322), the first one of the four joint episodes in which the two main narrative lines of *Cold Mountain* have merged and the two main character reunite (chapters 18-20). The sub-episodes are naturally much shorter. But the same strict assignment of perspective to either one or the other of the two main characters is observed. Only the pace of shift-of-control is now accelerated. And the sub-episodes now are both temporally and geographically contiguous.

Again, the first line in each sub-episode signals which of the two characters controls the perspective. Sub-episode 5.1 opens with the line:

(19) “**Inman** heard a shot at no great distance from where **he** stood...”

TABLE 5

Distribution of reference and predications in CM, sub-episode #5.1
(pp. 319-320)

#5.1 (Inman)	Inman		Ada		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	6	17.1	1	14.2	
pro/Ø	29	82.9	6	85.8	
total:	35	100	7	100	35/42 = 83.3% I
objective	19	35.1	8	100	
subjective	35	74.9	/	/	35/38 = 100.0% I
total:	54	100	8	100	54/62 = 87.0% I

Sub-episode #5.2 opens with the line:

(20) “**Ada**, hearing her name spoken, was confused...”

TABLE 6

Distribution of reference and predications in CM, sub-episode #5.2 (pp. 320)

#5.2 (Ada)	Inman		Ada		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	/	/	1	16.6	
pro/Ø	6	100	5	83.4	
total:	6	100	6	100	6/12 = 50.0% A/I
objective	5	100	3	27.3	
subjective	/	/	8	72.7	8/8 = 100.0% A
total:	6	100	11	100	11/17 = 64.5% A

Sub-episode #5.3 opens with the line:

(21) “**They** stood wary, about the number of paces apart specified for duelists. Not clasping heart to heart as **Inman** had imagined...”

TABLE 7

Distribution of reference and predications in CM, sub-episode #5.3 (pp. 320)

#5.3 (Inman)	Inman		Ada		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	2	6.9	/	/	
pro/Ø	27	93.1	1	100	
total:	29	100	1	100	29/30 = 96.6% I
objective	6	17.7	/	/	
subjective	28	82.3	/	/	28/28 = 100.0% I
total:	34	100	/	100	34/34 = 100.0% I

Sub-episode #5.4 opens with the line:

- (22) “**Ada** still did not know **him**. **He** seemed to her some madman awander in the storm...”

TABLE 8

Distribution of reference and predications in CM, sub-episode #5.4 (pp. 320-321)

#5.4 (Ada)	Inman		Ada		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	/	/	3	100	
pro/Ø	9	9	/	/	
total:	9	100	3	100	9/12 = 75.0% I
objective	/	/	1		
subjective	/	/	16	94.1	16/16 = 100.0% A
total:	/	100	17	100	17/17 = 100.0% A

Sub-episode #5.5 opens with the line:

- (23) “**Inman** heard the words and they seemed just...”

TABLE 9

Distribution of reference and predications in CM, sub-episode #5.5 (pp. 321)

#5.5 (Inman)	Inman		Ada		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	1	7.6	/	/	
pro/0	12	92.4	/	/	
total:	13	100	/	100	13/13 = 100.0% I
objective	6	24.0	/	/	
subjective	19	76.0	/	/	19/19 = 100.0% I
total:	25	100	/	100	25/25 = 100.0% I

Sub-episode #5.6 opens with the line:

- (24) “It might have been timbre of **his** voice, angle of profile. Length of bone in **his** forearm, shape of knucklebones under the skin of **his** hands...”

TABLE 10

Distribution of reference and predications in CM, sub-episode #5.6 (pp. 321)

#5.6 (Ada)	Inman		Ada		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	1	/	2		
pro/0	15	93.7	16	88.8	
total:	16	100	18	100	18/34 = 52.9% A/I
objective	1	20	17	39.6	
subjective	4	80	26	60.4	26/30 = 86.6% A
total:	5	100	43	100	43/48 = 89.5% A

Sub-episode #5.7 opens with the line:

- (25) “As they walked, **Ada** talked to **Inman** in the voice **she** had heard Ruby use to speak to the horse when it was nervous...”

TABLE 11

Distribution of reference and predications in CM, sub-episode #5.7 (pp. 322)

#5.7 (Ada)	Inman		Ada		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	/	/	3	17.7	
pro/0	/	/	14	82.3	
total:	/	100	17	100	17/17 = 100.0% A
objective	/	/	7	33.4	
subjective	/	/	14	66.6	14/14 = 100.0% I
total:	/	100	21	100	21/21 = 100.0% I

Finally, sub-episode #5.8 opens with the line:

(26) “**Inman** was too cloudy in **his** thinking to follow anything **she** said...”

TABLE 12

Distribution of reference and predications in CM, sub-episode #5.8 (pp. 322)

#5.8 (Ada)	Inman		Ada		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	1	33.4	/	/	
pro/0	2	66.6	5	100	
total:	3	100	5	100	5/8 = 62.5% A
objective	/	/	2	100	
subjective	7	100	/	/	7/7 = 100.0% I
total:	7	100	2	100	7/9 = 77.7% I

3.4. Type and distribution of internal/inaccessible predications in *Cold Mountain*

What is given directly below is an exhaustive list of the predications I counted as “inaccessible” or “internal/mental” in the same five episodes of CM¹⁰. For expressions that appear more than once, the number of occurrence is given in parentheses. A few comments are in order concerning my classification of the predications.

To begin with, my notion of “predication” is a bit expanded here, to include not only the obvious *verbs* and *adjectives*, but also *adverbs* and *lexical nominalizations*. In addition to all the items that were counted, I also noted four non-lexical *constructions* that impose an irrealis mode over what fall under their scope:

- (a) negation
- (b) conditional
- (c) likeness
- (d) purpose clauses
- (e) manner clauses

The otherwise-“external” predications in the scope of these constructions were counted, like all “external” predications under irrealis, as “internal” in the quantified study presented above.

Let me briefly illustrate the effect of such predicates in a few contrived examples:

- (27) a. **Outside irrealis scope:**
She SPOKE
- b. **Under NEG scope:**
She **didn't** [*speak*]
- c. **Under conditional scope:**
If [*she speaks*],...
- d. **Under likeness scope:**
It was **as if** [*she had spoken*]
- e. **Under purpose scope:**
She got up **to** [*speak*]

In addition, one must note one construction that produces **realis** scope, even though in the text counted here its use was unattested, clausal nominalizations. Its effect may be best illustrated under the scope of a predicate that otherwise imposes an *irrealis* scope. In many context, nominalizations resist this scope. Thus compare:

- (28) a. She **was told** [that her mother died],
though it turned out she didn't
- b. She **was told** [of her mother's death]
*though it turned out her mother didn't die
- c. She **thought** [her mother died],
though it turned out she didn't
- d. She **thought** [of her mother's death],
*though it turned out her mother didn't die

I divided all predications into those that impose modal scope and those that don't—at least in the context in which they were found in the CM text.

I then divided the scope-imposing expressions into those that impose **realis** scope and those that impose **irrealis** scope. In each of these two main modal subdivision we find well-known members of the three major classes of complement-taking verbs:

- (a) perception-cognition verbs
- (b) modality verbs
- (c) manipulation verbs

In addition, all **modals** —historically offshoots of irrealis-imposing modality verbs— were counted as irrealis-imposing predications.

1. Scope-imposing internal/subjective predications:

1.1. **Realis scope:**

1.1.1. **Factive perception-cognition verbs:**

see (21), know(18), be aware, remember(8), forget, find(5), discover, realize(3), recognize, figure(out)(2), understand, regret(2), be startled, be appalled, be troubled by,

1.1.2. **Implicative modality verbs:**

find oneself(doing)(3), catch oneself (doing), find a way, accomplish, achieve(2), begin(2), start, finish, stop(2), take a moment to

1.1.3. **Implicative manipulation verbs:**

make, let, provoke

1.1.4. **Clausal nominalizations**

1.2. **Irrealis scope:**

1.2.1. **Non-factive perception-cognition verbs:**

feel(11), seem(12), appear(4), look-like(2), hear(7), think(11), believe(2), imagine(3), be sure(2), wonder(if)(4), guess(3), fear(2), suggest(2), decide(2), dream, agree, mean, worry, suspect, hold to be, speculate,

1.2.2. **Non-implicative modality verbs:**

wish(5), want(3), choose(3), try(4), long, have a desire to, have a reason to, fail, lack, conspire, lack experience of (doing), need to, not bother to, draw up the nerve to,

1.2.3. **Non-implicative manipulation verbs:**

expect

1.2.4. **Modals:**

could(20), would(10), might (9), have-to(2)

1.2.5. **conditionals**

1.2.6. **purpose**

1.2.7. **negation**

1.2.8. **likeness:**

as if swollen(2), like a shadow (over him),

2. **Scopeless predications**

2.1. **Verbs**

formulate, have patience, admire, signify, catch one's breath, mind hovering, check, throw one's thoughts, call up an image, smell(4), occupy oneself, rest in one's head, leave no mark, skitter, fix one's mind, supply the missing details, construct, form, match, loose grip on one's mind, match the image, capture her recollections of, tease, test, catch oneself, testing, engage her, her ears ring, her thoughts tossed about, leave unsaid, react, loom darker in her mind, dismissed, summon the/one's wit, fall into them out of habit, adjust one's mind, go through the next day, pictures flowing into one's mind, filled with yearnings, awake, set right, materialize, signify, class as, elude, based upon, put stock in, gone astray, had no direction, bad spirits come upon him, befuddle, be overcome by, exist, left his mind scoured, left his heart jailed, do not matter, came to mind, count, follow (what she said), have a clear destination in mind, eyes rested on, mind turn on to, yearn for, arise in one's thinking, reconstruct, emerge

2.2. **Adjectives:**

addled, important, fine, foreign, beautiful, pretty, utterly awkward, patient, amusing, sincere, amused, prudent, clammy, normal, vivid(2), unplanned, confused, simple, lonesome, softer, faint, giddy, unable, content, puzzled, fantastic, perplexed, vague(2), sorry, cheerful, solemn, saddened, tender, shy suitable(2), visible, gloomy, mum, glib, flinty, pinched, clenched, tight, capable of, dark, unbidden, dreamlike, hypothetical, founded on, amazing, speculative, shadowy, without true form, wakeful, clearheaded, bright, considerable, unseemly, total, disheartening, fit, dim, worse, sharp, be like, quiet, confused, drawn (face), shining (eyes), firmer, unlooked-for, harder, thoughtless, wild, tender, likely, just, warranted, ungoverned, ravaged, worn ragged, weary, tired, nervous, same, calming, cloudy (person), fine, faint, muffled, firm, total, previous, disordered

2.3. **Lexical nominalizations:**

experience(2), expectation, question, a rushing in the head, behavior, the look on (his) face, attention, in preparation for(2), softness(2), feel, brightening, spirit, dream(2), thought(3), truth, intent, sound(2), lack of report, ache, prospect, idea, fears, desires, performance, belief, relief, mystery, feelings, knowledge, hopelessness, resolve, errors, display, wonderment, intimacy, absence, experience, life, trick, mind, trickery, love, ringing in his soul, estimation, timbre, shape, hunger's seal (on his brow), tone, easement, thinking, news, world,

2.4. Adverbs:

expressedly, for the purpose of, fiercely, pleurably, absently, evidently, entirely, too(2), with little success, truly, poorly, straight, successfully, clearly, truly, ahead of, nevertheless, seamlessly, well, just, straddle-legged,

As one can see, while the scope-less categories consist of a long list of lexical or phrasal —often metaphoric— expressions that seldom recur, the scope-imposing categories consist of much smaller lists with much recurrence. In a broad way, this division resembles the well-known division between **lexical** and **grammatical** morphemes. This, of course, is not an accident. The scope-imposing predicates identified here are **the usual suspects** in the grammaticalization of **modality** and **evidentiality** cross-linguistically.

In English, of course, only the modals are strictly grammaticalized. But the other scope-bearing verbs still furnish the bulk of indication of modality and evidentiality in English discourse, both spoken and written.

Of our list, the verbs that impose **realis** scope code either certain knowledge ('know' etc.), privileged sensory access ('see'), resulting emotional state ('regret', 'be appalled by'), successful initiation or termination ('start', 'finish') or successful manipulation ('make'). Of all sensory verbs, further, only 'see' qualifies for imposing realis scope. This recapitulates faithfully the predictions of the evidentiality literature (Chafe and Nichols, eds 1984; Givón 1982; *inter alia*).

The verbs that impose **irrealis** scope are either verb of less-privileged sensory access ('hear', 'feel'), verbs of belief ('think') or inference ('seem', 'appear', 'guess', 'suspect') or reduced certainty ('be sure', 'wonder if'), unconsummated intent ('want', 'wish', 'long', 'try'), downright failure ('fail', 'lack', 'not bother to'), or unconsummated manipulation ('expect').

Out of the irrealis-scope group, only one of the usual suspects is missing —conspicuously— from use in *Cold Mountain*: the hearsay indicator 'say'. All uses of this verb in the text I studied were strictly "objective", i.e., accessible to all present on the scene. This gap may be due to personal choices made by the author in either contents, style of genre. It also may be due to the fact that another hearsay operator —'hear'— has been used copiously (7 times).

4. SCATTERED PERSPECTIVE

The strict indexing of the perspective over contiguous chunks —parts, chapters, episodes or sub-episodes— of narrative to specific characters is

strikingly consistent in *Cold Mountain*. This practice turns out to have been my intuitive favorite long before I chanced upon this wonderful novel. What this practice accomplishes so well, in addition to bringing fictional characters alive, is to demolish the myth of the omniscient narrator.

In this section I would like to illustrate how another novelist deploys the very same device with much less skill and, I suspect, considerably less awareness. I will do this by applying exactly the same kind of quantitative analysis, used above on CM, to the farcical crime novel *Lucky You* by Carl Hiaasen.

Hiaasen, a newspaper reporter for The Miami Herald, has later in his career branched out into crime fiction, of sorts. As we shall see below, the high-frequency “subjective” predications he uses in *Lucky You* are the same ones identified in the CM text (section 3.4 above). What is more, the control of perspective in Hiaasen’s narrative is —just like in CM— always indexed to specific characters. However, the perspective does not always stay with the same character throughout an entire episode. Sometimes it indeed does, but at other times it switches rapidly back and forth between characters jointly present on the scene— during the course of even short sub-episodes. As a result, a faint but unmistakable aura of a *wise-guy omniscient narrator* hovers over the entire novel. And this may be precisely the right tone —perhaps the author’s intended tone— for a satirical novel.

As in the case of CM, I studied only passages of *Lucky You* in which both main character —Tom Krome and JoLayne Lucks— are jointly present on the scene. As an illustration of the constant shifting of the control of perspective, consider the following passage, marked the same way as CM passages above. Sub-sections with shifted perspective are separated.

- (29) “...ARRIVING home, she *recognized* Tom Krome’s blue Honda PARKED in the driveway. He WAS SITTING in the swing on the porch. JoLayne SAT DOWN next to him and PUSHED OFF. With A SQUEAK, the swing *started* [to MOVE]. JoLayne SAID: “...” [skipped 8 lines of pure quoted dialogue]
JoLayne EXTENDED her hand.

Krome *studied* the bite mark with *mock seriousness*,
“Grizzly!” he SAID.

She SMILED. Boy did it *feel good* [his touch]. *Strong and gentle and all that stuff*. Which was **how** [it always started], with a *warm and dumb tingle*.

JoLayne HOPPED OUT of the swing and said: “We’ve got an hour before sunset. I want to show you something”.

When they GOT to Simmons Wood, she POINTED OUT the For Sale sign.

“....”.

Tom Krome FOLLOWED her over the fence, through the pine and palmettos. She STOPPED to [POINT OUT bobcat scat, deer tracks and a red-shouldered hawk in the treetops.

“Forty eight acres” JoLayne SAID.

She was WHISPERING, so Tom Krome WHISPERED back. “How much do they want for it?”

“Three million and change” she SAID.

Krome ASKED about the zoning.

“Retail” JoLayne ANSWERED WITH A GRIMACE.

They STOPPED on the sandy bluff OVERLOOKING the creek. JoLayne SAT DOWN and CROSSED her legs. “A shopping mall and a parking lot” she SAID, “just like in the Joni Mitchell song”.

Tom Krome felt he **should** [be WRITING down everything she SAID. His notebook nagged at him from the back pocket of his jeans. **As if** [he still had a newspaper job]

JoLayne, POINTING at the tea-colored ribbon of water:

“....”

Still WHISPERING, like [she WAS in church]. Which he **supposed** [it was], in a way.

The entire list of the “subjective” predications used in five episodes of *Lucky You* in which JoLayne Lucks and Tom Krome are jointly present on the scene ¹¹ is given directly below.

1. Scope-imposing predications:

1.1. Realis scope:

1.1.1. Factive perception-cognition verbs:

see, mask, find(2), recognize, indicate, know(3), note, notice, be wonderful, be nice, amuse/be amused, no wonder,

1.1.2. Implicative modality verbs:

start(2), break out, go on, stop,

1.1.3. Implicative manipulation verbs:

help, let,

1.1.4. Clausal nominalizations

1.2. Irrealis scope:

1.2.1. Non-factive perception-cognition verbs:

think(6), hear(2), appear, feel(3), look, appear, seem(2), good, suppose, figure, be certain, intrigued by, make a case that, have a clue, scared, deny, wonder,

- 1.2.2. **Non-implicative modality verbs:**
want(3), wish, try(2), need to, make up one's mind, entitled to,
- 1.2.3. **Non-implicative manipulation verbs:**
motion for, tell,
- 1.2.4. **Modals:**
could(4), could have, must have, would, would have, should, might,
- 1.2.5. **conditionals**
- 1.2.6. **purpose**
- 1.2.7. **negation**
- 1.2.8. **likeness**

2. Scopeless predications

2.1. Verbs

have a point, stumble into, make way, go on, soothe, a chill go down X's arm, take it easy, mean, hurt, tear him up (inside), nagged at him, have a job, hush, disappear, sting, make eyes water, get, use/be used(2), could in head, minimize, make blood go cold, summon, cave (in), have, chose, solve, shiver, make a joke, happen, care about, count(2), have something to do with, take in,

2.2. Adjectives:

torn, fierce, metronomic, right, manic, raw, nicer, previous, frontal, total, sustainable, handful, encouraging, electric, mock(2), smitten, quick, unreadable, unresponsive, alone, preoccupied(2), freezing, true, deep, decent, strong, reliable, knuckleheaded, insane, stressed, standard, slicker, bemused, upset, nice, steady, strong, gentle, dumb, warm,

2.3. Lexical nominalizations:

sympathy, realization, anticipation, whisk, feelings, seriousness, satisfaction, mystery, expression, mystery, pillow talk, innocence, tingle,

2.4. Adverbs:

reluctantly, probably, in a raw voice, incredible, mischievously, in a way, quietly, sportively, deliberately, indescribably, no longer, cutting him a look, according to, consecutively, gravely, tensely, faintly, exactly, too, certainly, all that stuff, silently, enough,

The quantified results of the distribution of reference and control-of-perspective in the five episodes of *Lucky You* are given in tables 13 through 17 below, each preceded by the first line of the episode.

(30) "When **Tom Krome** saw **JoLayne**'s living room..."

TABLE 13

Distribution of reference and predications in LY, sub-episode #1 (pp. 52-55)

#1 (TK)	Tom Krome		JoLayne Lucks		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	16	45.7	12	32.4	
pro/Ø	19	54.3	25	67.6	
total:	35	100	37	100	37/72 = 51.3% JL/TK
objective	19	38.7	33	100	
subjective	30	61.3	/	/	30/30 = 100.0% TK
total:	49	100	32	100	49/74 = 66.2% TK

- (31) “Arriving home, **she** recognized **Tom Krome**’s blue Honda parked in the driveway...”

TABLE 14

Distribution of reference and predications in LY, sub-episode #2 (pp. 68-69)

#2 (TK/JL)	Tom Krome		JoLayne Lucks		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	13	46.4	15	34.8	
pro/Ø	15	53.6	28	65.2	
total:	28	100	43	100	43/71 = 60.5% JL
objective	21	70.0	39	69.7	
subjective	9	30.0	17	30.3	17/26 = 65.3% JL
total:	30	100	56	100	56/86 = 65.1% JL

- (32) “The bank’s computer indicated **JoLayne**’s Visa card hadn’t been used since the previous afternoon at Hooters...”

TABLE 15

Distribution of reference and predications in LY, sub-episode #3 (pp. 90-91)

#3 (TK?)	Tom Krome		JoLayne Lucks		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	7	30.4	9	33.3	
pro/Ø	16	69.6	18	66.7	
total:	23	100	27	100	27/50 = 50.4% JL
objective	12	46.1	26	100	
subjective	14	53.9	/	/	14/14 = 100.0% TK
total:	26	100	26	100	26/52 = 85.3% TK/JL

- (33) “According to the bank, **JoLayne’s** credit card had been used two nights consecutively at the same Hotters...”

TABLE 16

Distribution of reference and predications in LY, sub-episode #4 (pp. 114-115)

#4 (TK)	Tom Krome		JoLayne Lucks		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	11	68.7	11	47.8	
pro/Ø	5	31.3	12	52.2	
total:	16	100	23	100	23/39 = 58.9% JL
objective	13	50.0	19	90.4	
subjective	13	50.0	2	9.6	13/15 = 86.6% TK
total:	26	100	21	100	26/47 = 55.3% TK

- (34) “**Krome** looked preoccupied. Happy, **JoLayne** thought, but preoccupied...”

TABLE 17

Distribution of reference and predications in LY, sub-episode #5
(pp. 156-158)

#5 (JL)	Tom Krome		JoLayne Lucks		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	11	28.9	14	34.1	
pro/Ø	27	71.1	27	65.9	
total:	38	100	41	100	41/79 = 51.8% JL/TK
objective	14	100	18	25.0	
subjective	/	/	54	75.0	54/54 = 100.0% JL
total:	14	100	72	100	72/86 = 83.7% JL

As can be seen above, in three episodes —#1, #3 and #5— one of the participants (TK, TK and JL, respectively) controls 100% of “subjective” predications, although not necessarily so much of the total predication. But in episode #2 JL controls only 65% of the “subjective” predications (also 65% of total predications). And in episode #4 TK controls only 85% of subjective predications (and 55% of total predications). Carl Hiaasen, at least in the *LY* episodes studied, appears to be a much less consistent practitioner of the strict assignment —within discrete contiguous episodes— of the control of perspective. Still, it is hard to find a “subjective” predication in *LY* that is not unambiguously indexed to a specific character.

The strict indexing of perspective to a single character in *LY* persists even when less-savory characters occupy the scene. Thus, the following example is dominated by the perspective of either one or the other of the two main villains of the story, Bode Gazer and Chub.

(35) “...”Eat me” SAID Bode Gazer.

He was ashamed to admit [the truth, that he **could[n’t** (SPEAK the word “nigger.”) He’d [done so only once in his life, at age twelve], and his father had [promptly HAULED him outside and WHIPPED his hairless bare ass with a razor strop]. Then his mother had [DRAGGED him into the kitchen and WASHED his mouth with Comet, the scorch of which still revisited his tender throat at the mere WHISPER of “nigger.” UTTERING it ALOUD was out of the question.

Which was a major handicap for a self-proclaimed racist and militiaman. Bode Gazer worked around it.

Changing the subject, he SAID to Chub: “You need some camos, buddy”.

“I don’t think so”.

“What size pants you wear?”

Chub SLUMPED in the seat and *pretended* [he was **trying** [to *sleep*]]. He **didn't** [**want** [to RIDE *all the way* to Granger]]. He **didn't** [**want** [to BREAK INTO a *stranger's* house and *steal* a Lotto ticket]]

And he *sure as hell* **didn't** [**want** to WEAR camouflage clothes. Bode Gazer's *entire wardrobe* was *camo*, which he[*d* ordered from the Cabella's fall catalog on a *stolen MasterCard number*. Bode *believed* [*camo garb would* [be *essential for* [*survival when* [NATO troops *INVADED* from the Bahamas and the White Rebel Brotherhood *TOOK TO* the woods]]]. *Until* [Bode *OPENED* his closet], Chub *had had*[**no idea** [that *camo came in so many shrub-and-twig styles*]]. There was *your basic Trebark* (Bode's parka).; *you Realtree* (Bode's rainsuit); *your Mossy Oak, Timber Ghost and Treestand* (Bode's collection of jumpsuits, shirts and trousers), *your Konifer* (Bode's snake-proof chaps), and *your True-Leaf* (Bode's *all-weather* mountain boots).

Chub **didn't** [**dispute** [Bode's *announcement* [that *such a selection* of *camos, properly matched, would* [make a man *invisible* among the oaks and pines]]]]. *Having* [*grown up* in the mountains of north Georgia], Chub **didn't** [**want** [to be *invisible* in the woods]]. He **wanted** [to be *seen and heard*]. He *especially wanted* [**not** [to be *mistaken for a tree* by a *rambunctious bear or randy bobcat*]]...”

The switch of perspective from Bode's to Chub's following the short dialogue is unmistakable. Bode's beliefs, when embedded in the segment controlled by Chub's perspective, are presented there from Chub's perspective, not Bode's.

5. THE USE OF REFERENTIAL DEVICES TO RENDER PERSPECTIVE

Quoted below is an episode from *Sasquatch*, a yet-to-be-published novel. The central character's parents, Amanda and Leland McGraw, are jointly present on the scene. I will give first the current version, told from Amanda's perspective, then the preceding version of the very same episode told from Leland's perspective. The clear assignment of perspective, and the “mental” predications used, are no doubt similar to Frazier's practice in *Cold Mountain*. In the text-segment below, I have bold-faced the full-NP (name) vs. anaphoric pronouns that refer to the two main characters. Since only Amanda and Leland are present on the scene, the use of pronouns alone —‘she’ vs. ‘he’— would have presumably sufficed, if the purpose of the usage were only referential disambiguation.

As will be obvious, many of the pronouns are licensed by the conventions of **referential continuity**. But many others are not, and neither are any of the full-NPs.

(36) **From Amanda's perspective:**

"He's going to take the weird Gregersen boy with him" **Leland** tells **her**.

Thank God **Leland** knows better than to confide to anybody but **her**. **His** snap judgements, **she** knows only too well, can get them both in real trouble. **She** also knows **Lee** is sore about having been left out of the Jed's summer plans. **She** had better tread softly.

"That's the one called Ole" **she** reminds **him**. "Well, it's not such a bad idea, come to think".

In the mid-afternoon, the two of them are savoring the short hours when the sun hits the front deck. **She** has fixed a late soup-and-salad lunch. Jed had gone visiting, most likely the very same Gregersen boy.

The two of them are nursing large margaritas, **Leland's** favorite drink.

"Can you imagine those two taking off in the truck?" says **Leland**.

"Might be a sight" **she** concedes.

If the universe had had room for one person messier than her son Jed, **she** is convinced it would be Ole Gregersen.

"Don't you think we ought to swap cars?" **she** tells **Leland**.

"You mean, give him the Volvo?"

Their eyes meet over the glasses.

"Might be safer" **she** says.

"Safer for who? Not for the Volvo".

"Got a better idea?"

"Well..."

Leland hesitates. The way **he** does when **he** is stuck with a weak poker hand.

"I was thinking of driving them down myself".

She looks at **him** with feigned horror:

"You don't expect him to go for that, dear?"

Leland sighs.

"I guess not" **he** says. "Gascogne's only a short hop. I suppose I could give him my cell phone. They can call if the truck breaks down".

"That's a terrific idea, dear" **she** says. "Let'm take Bear too while they're at it. Between the three of them, he's got to be the most level-headed".

"Focused, you mean".

She has succeeded in distracting **Leland** from his disappointment, long enough for **him** to burst into laughter. **His** head is tossed back, **she** loves the way **his** severe face cracks up when, for a short moment, **he** drops **his** preoccupations —**his** obsessions— and with them **his** decorum. The way **he** used to back when they still doped. Sometimes **she** wished they still did. **Leland** was much more fun then. **She** suspects **she** probably was too.

She wonders at what point **she** can stir the conversation to what is on **her** mind. **She** had better let **Leland** get used to the idea of Jed going off on his own. **She** is still surprised how much harder Jed's impending departure is hitting **Leland**. **He** has been moping around for weeks, bitching about things that usually wouldn't matter.

Or is it Archie's mule? **She** doesn't think so. For all **she** can tell, the mule case has done nothing to **Leland** so far except infuse **him** with a dose of pre-trial adrenaline. It is **her** bad luck, **she** thinks, to be so intimately associated with a pair of adrenaline freaks. **She** must have selected at least the first. In which case, Karma is more like it.

"Think we should talk to the Gregersens?" **she** asks **Leland**.

"Yeah, make sure the boy has their permission. You better do it though".

"Would be nice to invite them over for dinner..."

"You kiddin'? You've not even started to unwind".

That, **she** decides, is the opening **she** has been waiting for.

"True" **she** says. "I'm still grading".

Leland bites.

"If that place ever lets you be" **he** says, "just long enough so I can grab 'n whisk you away for a weekend on the coast. Christ, Mandy, I've hardly seen you since Christmas".

"You've noticed?" **she** says.

What **she** has been planning to tell **Leland** would be easier to put across if that much is already conceded.

"Lee" **she** says, "listen".

"Yes?"

He is still got **his** mocking face on. **She** is sorry **she** has to drag **him** back down to serious stuff. But it can't wait.

She sets **her** glass down, gets up and crosses over behind **Leland**. **She** leans over and, automatically, **Leland's** arms wrap around **her**, dragging **her** down on **his** lap. **She** looks up at **him**.

"Lee" **she** says, **her** voice barely audible, "I don't think I can take it any more".

From close quarters, **she** can tell **she's** finally got **Leland's** full attention.

"That bad?" **he** says. "Like the high school?"

"Worse. If I don't quit soon, I'll go raving mad".

"Right now? With Jed going to Rice?"

She has anticipated that.

"Yes" **she** says, "I know. But listen, there is a way".

"Oh?"

Leland squints up at her. **She** goes on:

"You've been looking for someone to replace Marla for months, right?"

"Yeah, sure..."

Leland stops. It dawns on **him**:

“You’re not serious. Mandy, are you?”

“I am” **she** says. “I want to do it”.

“Be my secretary?”

“We can call it office manager. Administrative assistant. Research associate —there. They do come up with wonderful titles nowadays, don’t they?”

Leland is shaking **his** head in disbelief:

“Sure you can” **he** says. “But would you be happy doing it? Not to mention the lousy pay”.

“Couldn’t be worse than up at the college, the way they treat instructors”.

She has told **Leland** in graphic detail.

“How about the medical insurance?” **he** asks. “How about your retirement account?”

“All seven thousand dollars worth of it? Would hardly buy a decent cruise to Acapulco. For one. Might as well roll it into an IRA”.

Leland inspects her closely. **He** frowns.

“You are serious” **he** says.

“Isn’t that obvious?”

Her hands, clasped around **Leland**’s neck, are slowly tightening the noose **she** has thrown around **him**. Down below, **she** can already feel the portent of something stirring. Definitely.

“Speaking of obvious” **she** says, “while the two monsters are out, might the lady of the house, just maybe, entice the laird upstairs into her lair?”

“That obvious?”

“Race you” **she** says and vaults off **his** lap.

Leland’s worries will dissipate now, though **she** knows **his** amnesia will only be temporary. **He** will resume **his** brooding once they are done. **She** thinks **she** can handle that, too...”

In (37) below, the very same episode was told (originally so) from **Leland**’s perspective.

(37) **From Leland’s perspective:**

“He’s going to take the weird Gregersen boy with him” **he** tells **Amanda**.

He knows **he** can tell **her** this. **He** is indeed prone to making snap judgements that can get **him** —can get them both— into trouble. **He** is still sore, however, about having been left out of **Jed**’s summer plans.

“That’s the one called Ole” says **Amanda**. “Well, it’s not such a bad idea, come to think”.

In the mid-afternoon, the two of them are savoring the short hours when the sun hits the front deck. **Amanda** has fixed a late soup-and-salad lunch. **Jed** had gone visiting, most likely the very same Gregersen boy.

The two of them are nursing large margaritas, **his** favorite drink.

“Can you imagine those two taking off in the truck?” **he** asks **her**.

“Might be a sight” **Amanda** concedes.

If the universe had had room for one person messier than **his** son Jed, **he** is convinced it would be Ole Gregersen.

“Don’t you think we ought to swap cars?” says **Amanda**.

“You mean, give him the Volvo?”

Their eyes meet over the glasses.

“Might be safer” **she** says.

“Safer for who? Not for the Volvo”.

“Got a better idea?”

“Well...”

He stops. **He** knows **he**’s got a weak point there.

“I was thinking of driving them down myself” **he** says finally.

Amanda looks at **him** with feigned horror:

“You don’t expect him to go for that, dear?”

He sighs.

“I guess not” **he** says. “Gascogne’s only a short hop. I suppose I could give him my cell phone. They can call if the truck breaks down”.

“That’s a terrific idea, dear” says **Amanda**. “Let’m take Bear too while they’re at it. Between the three of them, he’s got to be the most level-headed”.

“Focused, you mean”.

Amanda has succeeded in distracting **him** from **his** disappointment. **He** bursts into laughter and **Amanda** joins **him**. For a moment, it feels like old times, the way it used to back when they still doped. Sometimes **he** wished they still did. **He** knows **he** was more fun then.

He can tell **Amanda** is stirring the conversation to something that is on **her** mind. Truth is, **he himself** is surprised how much harder Jed’s impending departure is hitting **him**. **He** knows has been bitching about things that usually wouldn’t matter.

Or is it Archie’s mule that’s bothering **him**? **He** doubts it. So far, the mule case has done nothing to **him** except infuse **him** with the expected dose of pre-trial adrenaline. Poor **Mandy**, stuck for life with a pair of adrenaline freaks. **She** must have selected **him** though. Karma.

“Think we should talk to the Gregersens?” **she** asks **him**.

“Yeah, make sure the boy has their permission. You better do it though”.

“Would be nice to invite them over for dinner...”

“You kiddin’? You’ve not even started to unwind”.

Amanda takes her time responding.

“True” **she** finally says. “I’m still grading”.

“If that place ever lets you be” **he** says, “just long enough so I can grab ‘n whisk you away for a weekend on the coast. Christ, Mandy, I’ve hardly seen you since Christmas”.

“You’ve noticed?” says **Amanda**.

He waits.

“Lee” says **Amanda**, “listen”.

“Yes?”

All of a sudden, **Amanda** seems dead serious.

She sets **her** glass down, gets up and crosses over behind **him**. **She** leans over and, automatically, **his** arms wrap around **her**, dragging **her** down on **his** lap. **She** looks up at **him**.

“Lee” **she** says, **her** voice barely audible, “I don’t think I can take it any more”.

Serious indeed.

“That bad?” **he** says. “Like the high school?”

“Worse. If I don’t quit soon, I’ll go raving mad”.

“Right now? With Jed going to Rice?”

But **he** expects she has thought about that.

“Yes” says **Amanda**, “I know. But listen, there is a way”.

“Oh?”

He squints up at her. **Amanda** goes on:

“You’ve been looking for someone to replace Marla for months, right?”

“Yeah, sure...”

He stops. It finally dawns on **him** what **she** has in mind:

“You’re not serious, Mandy, are you?”

“I am” says **Amanda**. “I want to do it”.

“Be my secretary?”

“We can call it office manager. Administrative assistant. Research associate —there. They do come up with wonderful titles nowadays, don’t they?”

He shakes **his** head in utter disbelief:

“Sure you can” **he** tells **her**. “But would you be happy doing it? Not to mention the lousy pay”.

“Couldn’t be worse than up at the college, the way they treat instructors”.

She has told **him** about it in graphic detail.

“How about the medical insurance?” **he** asks. “How about your retirement account?”

“All seven thousand dollars worth of it? Would hardly buy a decent cruise to Acapulco. For one. Might as well roll it into an IRA”.

He inspects **Amanda** closely.

“My God, you are serious” **he** says.

“Isn’t that obvious?”

He can feel **Amanda**’s hands, clasped around **his** neck, tightening like a gentle noose. Down below, something is stirring. **He** hopes it is not too obvious, but then it appears it is.

“Speaking of obvious” says **Amanda**, “while the two monsters are out, might the lady of the house, just maybe, entice the laird upstairs into her lair?”

“That obvious?”
 “Race you” **she** says and vaults off **his** lap.
 And **he** follows **her** into the house. There will be plenty of time to
 worry about **Amanda**’s startling plans later...”

Table 18 below gives the quantitative distribution of full-NPs (names) vs. anaphoric pronouns in the two versions of the episode. The distributions are indeed strikingly lopsided. In each version of the episode, the character from whose perspective the episode is told is coded only as a pronoun, never as a full-NP (name). Conversely, the other character commands 100% of the referential use of full-NP (name).

TABLE 18

The distribution of referential devices between Amanda and Leland
 in the two versions of the *Sasquatch* episode

(a) From Amanda’s perspective (36):

	Leland		Amanda		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	26	43.4	/	/	26/26 = 100.0% L
pro/Ø	34	56.6	60	100	60/94 = 63.8% A
total:	60	100	60	100	60/60 = 50.0% AL

(b) From Leland’s perspective (37):

	Leland		Amanda		
	N	%	N	%	
NP	/	/	22	52.4	22/22 = 100.0% A
pro/Ø	59	100	20	47.6	59/79 = 74.6% L
total:	59	100	42	100	58.4% = L

One may of course ask what was the author’s purpose in such usage, a usage that is apparently unattested in either Frazier’s or Hiaasen’s novels? Since the author is available to introspect after the facts, the answer is, happily, available:

- (i) A first-person narrator naturally never refers to her/himself by name, only by the pronoun ‘I’.
- (ii) But the first-person narrator will refer to another character appropriately by full-NP or pronoun/zero — depending on considerations of referential continuity¹².

The usage in the two versions of the *Sasquatch* episode, above, merely translates these conventions into third-person narrative —one in which the strict assignment of perspective to either one participant or another is observed. But of course, a related third factor may be also involved: Cognitively, anaphoric pronouns signal the **continued activation of the topical referent**. While the character controlling the perspective in fiction is not always also the more topical one, often s/he is. To drive this point home, consider the following observation, attributed to one of the central characters, in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997):

“I’ve told you before” she said, “I don’t want you going to **his** house. It will only cause trouble”.

What trouble, she didn’t say. She didn’t know.

Somchow, by not mentioning his name, she knew that she had drawn him into the tousled intimacy of that blue cross-stitch afternoon.

6. REVENGE OF THE OMNISCIENT NARRATOR

One can, it turns out, find rather conspicuous examples of an intrusive omniscient narrator usurping control of perspective from the characters in narrative fiction. Such intrusions are common in the work of commercial —highly successful— pulp-fiction writers. The deadly effect of such intrusions serves to further exacerbate the already-God-awful quality of the writing. Consider, for example, the following interaction between two sisters, Remy (older, married to Pinkie, a sleazebag lawyer) and Flarra (16 years old, a budding beauty locked up in a convent school)¹³:

- (38) “...She inched closer and lowered her voice to an urgent whisper. “I’m talking about a real kiss, Remy. I want to go on a real date without nuns watching every move. I want—”

“Romance”.

“Well, what’s wrong with that?” Reaching for Remy’s hands, she pressed them between her own. “Please, please, please, let me come and live with you and Pinkie and go to a coed school. Just for my senior year”.

Flarra was bursting to experience Life in its capitalized form. She was curious about men because her exposure to them was limited to Pinkie, who treated her like a father would —or at least a loving uncle. Like any youth of her age, her hormones were raging. That physiological boiling pot was seasoned with Flarra’s innate zest for life, her active imagination and natural exuberance, and her curiosity... (Brown, 1997, p. 98)

The intrusive narrator's voice can also be found in high-quality commercial fiction. The following passage is from a master crime-fiction writer. It begins with 3rd-person description of the reminiscences of a clinic receptionist, Dawn Charles, as she is being interrogated by Inspector Morse. At first, the perspective is clearly Ms Charles':¹⁴

(39) "...There was something else she would always remember, too...

By one of those minor coincidences (*so commonplace in Morse's life*) it had been just as most of the personnel from the media were preparing to leave, at almost exactly 8:30pm, that Mr. Robert Turnbull, the Senior Cancer Consultant, had passed her desk, nodded a greeting, and walked slowly to the exit, his right hand resting on the shoulder of Mr. J.C. Storrs. The two men were talking quietly together for some while —Dawn was certain of that. But certain of little else. The look on the consultant's face, as far as she could recall, had been neither that of a judge who had just condemned a man to death, nor that of one just granting a prisoner his freedom.

No obvious grimness.

No obvious joy.

And indeed, there was adequate cause for such uncertainty on Dawn's part, since the scene had been partially masked from her by the continued presence of several persons: a ponytailed reporter scribbling a furious shorthand as he interviewed a nurse; the TV crew packing away its camera and tripods; the Lord Mayor speaking some congratulatory words into a Radio Oxford microphone —all of them standing between her and the top of the three blue-carpeted stairs...

If only Dawn Charles could have recalled a little more.

"If" —that little conjunction introducing those unfulfilled conditions in past time which, as Donet reminds us, demand the pluperfect subjunctive in both clauses—a syntactic rule which Morse had mastered early on in an education which had been far more fortunate than that enjoyed by the receptionist at the Harvey Clinic.

Indeed, over the next two weeks, most people in Oxford were destined to be considerably more fortunate than Dawn Charles: She received no communication from the poetry lover of Pembroke; her mother was admitted to a psychiatric ward out at Littlemore; she was twice reminded by her bank manager of the increasing problems arising from the large margin of negative equity of her small flat;..." (Dexter, 1996, pp. 11-12)

In the three paragraphs that directly follow the first passage in (39), the perspective may still be plausibly ascribed to Inspector Morse himself; that is,

to a participant character. Indeed, these mildly intrusive paragraphs may represent Ms Charles' perspective as embedded inside Morse's perspective. The last paragraph, however, clearly conveys the perspective of the —erudite, urbane, but nonetheless intrusive— know-it-all Mr. Dexter.

Finally, as a reminder that grabbing the stage from one's fictional characters and speaking directly to the audience is an old custom, easily pre-dating Pirandello, consider the following passage from Homer's *Illiad*¹⁵. In the first (40), Homer's direct intervention bridges the transition between the narrative's focus on Ajax and the Hector-led Trojan raid on the beached Achaean boats:

- (40) "...He was panting hard, and the sweat streamed from all his limbs. He had not an instant to relax. Whichever way he looked, each moment added to his trouble.

Tell me now, you Muses that live on Olympus, how the Achaean ships were first set on fire. Hector went right up to Aias, struck his ashen spear with his great sword below the socket of the point and sheared the head clean off, leaving the truncated shaft to dangle foolishly in Talemonian Aias' hand..." (p. 295)

In the next passage, Homer's intervention occurs in the midst of Patroclus' fight with Cebriones as it shifts —fatally, it turns out— to Hector:

- (41) "...And he hurled himself at the noble Cebriones with the fury of a lion who has been wounded in the breast while assaulting the pens and falls a victim to his own audacity. *Thus, Patroclus, did you fling yourself at Cebriones.*

Hector had jumped down from the chariot on the other side, and the two fought for Cebriones like a couple of lions on a mountain height..." (p. 312)

In the next passage, the intervention occurred at a transition point in Patroclus' ferocious fight, when Apollo intervenes to tip the scale of battle:

- (42) "...Three times he charged with a terrific cry, like a wild god of War, and every time he killed nine men. But when he leaped in like a demon for the fourth time —*alas Patroclus?*— the end came into sight. In the heart of the battle Phoebus encountered him, Phoebus most terrible. Patroclus had not seen him coming through the rout: The God had wrapped himself in a thick mist..." (p. 313)

In the last passage, the intervention occurs just before Patroclus' death, between Hector's mocking rendition of an imagined exhortation by Achilles and Patroclus' dying response:

- (43) "...till you have torn the tunic on man-killing Hector's breast and soaked it with his blood". That is what he must have said; and like a lunatic you took him at his word.

And what did the knight Patroclus say to this? 'Hector', he replied, in a failing voice, 'boast while you may. This victory is yours—a gift from Zeus the son of Chronos and Apollo. They conquered me...' (p. 315).

Equating Homer's direct interjection of himself into the Illiad narrative with an intrusive author's perspective in modern fiction is, I believe, a bit of a stretch. To begin with, Homer is not a fiction author in our conventional sense, but rather more like a reciter of oral tradition. His interventions are conventional devices of the face-to-face story-teller, highly formulaic, inserted at major thematic junctures of the narrative. One such thematic juncture is the story-initial point. The Illiad indeed opens with an *imperative* construction, addressed to the Goddess in the *vocative*—thus with the author clearly if implicitly present¹⁶:

- (44) Meninaéide, Theá, Peléidéon Akhiléos
 anger-ACC sing-IMP Goddess-VOC Peleos-GEN Achilles-GEN
 'Sing, O Goddess, the wrath of Achilles (son) of Peleus...'

7. FINAL REFLECTIONS

This exercise has convinced me, in case I needed convincing, that perspective is indeed as ubiquitous in fiction as our work on grammar should have led us to suspect. It is expressed by a wide range of devices, some lexical, other grammatical. Among the latter, some devices—those related to modal scope—are amazingly in tune with current literature on modality and evidentiality. Other devices, while less predictable from our study of the use of grammar in communication, are nonetheless systematic and coherent.

While English is not currently counted as having a grammaticalized evidentiality system, the high text frequency of the evidential-marking verbs that spread modal scope over their complement clauses is a clear indication of the great potential for precisely such grammaticalization. They are, so it appears, **the usual suspects**.

The exact status of the elusive omniscient narrator in fiction is yet to be resolved. Such a narrator is indeed *omni-present* in non-fictional communication, including everyday conversation and, rather conspicuously, academic and journalistic writing. But it remains an open question, leastwise to me, how exactly the author's perspective is expressed in narrative fiction. And it may still be that the hallmark of well-written fiction is the conspicuous absence of an

intrusive narrator. Put another way, my strong bias is that in fiction *all* perspective is better off being indexed, consistently and unambiguously, to participant characters.¹⁷

There is, lastly, a good **cognitive-evolutionary argument** in support of such a —seemingly-normative— assumption. Fictional narrative is but the natural outgrowth of everyday face-to-face communication. In face-to-face communication, the assignment of perspective is clear as a bell. It is an assignment that has always been the foundation of human —and no doubt pre-human— communication: Control of perspective is, by *default*, vested in the speaker ('I'). Deviation from this default assignment is always the *marked* case. And one way or another, perspective is always unambiguously assigned.

The act of ceding the perspective to a third person must lie at the core of what distinguishes fiction from non-fiction. Fiction is the introduction into face-to-face communication of imaginary characters —neither the speaker nor the hearer nor person claimed by them to actually exist— whose fictional doings now become the *focus of the communication*. Assigning the control of perspective to those imagined third persons is indeed a supreme act of creating a fictitious universe and —for the moment and until further notice— suspending the 'real' universe of 'you and I' in which perspective is assigned, by default, to the speaker; or, grudgingly, to the hearer; but seldom to anyone else.

NOTES

¹ *Running Through the Tall Grass*, NY:Harper Collins (1997; henceforth RTG).

² Larry McMurtry, *Leaving Cheyenne*, NY: Harper and Row (1963; Penguin pbk edition 1986).

³ For extensive discussions of modality and modal scope, see Givón (1979 ch. 3; 1984 chs 7,8,9; 1995 ch. 3).

⁴ This obviously must leave out at least some framing elements of grammar itself which remain controlled by the speaker/writer.

⁵ C. Frazier *Cold Mountain*, 1997.

⁶ See again extensive discussion in Givón (1979 ch. 3; 1984 chs 7, 8, 9; 1990 ch. 13; 1995 ch. 3).

⁷ Givón (1979, ch. 3; 1984, ch. 9).

⁸ Givón (1984 ch. 4; 1990 ch. 13).

⁹ (Givón 1990 ch. 19; 1995, ch. 3).

¹⁰ #1: pp. 59-66; #2: pp. 76-79; #3: pp. 100-102; #4: pp. 195-204; #5: pp. 319-322.

¹¹ #1: pp. 52-55; #2: pp. 68-69; #3: pp. 90-91; #4: pp. 114-115; #5: pp.156-158.

¹² See Givón (ed. 1983; 1990 ch. 20; 1992).

¹³ *From B. Brown (1997) Fat Tuesday*, p. 98.

¹⁴ C. Dexter (1996) *Death is Now my Neighbor*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁵ Homer, *The Illiad*, tr. by E.V. Rieu (1950).

¹⁶ Glossed and translated by Steve Shankman (in personal communication).

¹⁷ A counter-example to this is Dickens' *Bleak House*, where perspective shifts regularly between an omniscient author and one character speaking in the 1st person.

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