Subjunctive clauses and inflection in English

a.   The term `finite' and what it means

In the whole of the preceding discussion we have made use of the term `finite', employing it - together with its opposite `non-finite' - to differentiate between the first (=leftmost) verb of the string (first and foremost in independent clauses but also in many types of subordinate clause) and those that follow. Thus we have said that in a string of verbal elements like the italicised one in the following:

(1a)   Tom **had** *been arrested* by a military policeman

only the first of the three verbal elements, *has*, is finite, whereas the others are all non-finite. Exactly the same assumption has been made about Italian: in an example corresponding to (1a) we will distinguish between finite and non-finite verbal elements in the same way:

(1b)   Gianni **era** *stato arrestato* dalla polizia militare

Thus once again it is the first verbal element - *era* - that we recognise as being finite; the others are said to be non-finite. As we have seen above, finiteness is linked with a syntactic position: as a general rule the verb bearing the features of finiteness is in the highest position available for verbs, the Infl position (outside VP). The only exception to this is the case of English, where a finite lexical - but not auxiliary - verb remains in VP. But what does it mean to say that a given verb is `finite' other than that it occupies the Infl position? Our answer to this question is implicit in the discussion in the preceding sections, and it is that finiteness consists in two things: morphologically realised agreement (with the Subject NP) and a morphologically realised choice of tense. Thus, in the Italian example (1b) we observe that the first verbal element has two features (`tratti') and that these features are not displayed by the verbs that follow. The first of the two features represented morphologically in the element *era*, the affix *-a*, realises agreement with the subject NP as regards person and number (but not gender). Indeed, a change of person or number in this NP will be clearly reflected in the verb: thus a change from third singular (*Gianni*) to second person singular (*tu*) triggers a clear change in the morphology of the first verbal element: *Tu eri stato arrestato dalla polizia militare*. But this only concerns the first verb; the others remain unchanged. It would of course not be correct to suggest that agreement is ruled out *tout court* for the other verbal elements in Italian. Indeed, if we change the number of the subject NP, this is reflected (in certain cases) in a change in the morphology of *all* the verbal elements (not just of the first one). If, on the other hand, we effect a change of gender, this is only reflected in the morphology of the second and third verbal elements, not in that of the first one:

(1c)   Gianni e Tommaso *erano stati arrestati* dalla polizia militare
(1d)   Gianna *era stata arrestata* dalla polizia militare

Two observations are in order about the agreement shown on the second and third verbal elements: crucially, as we have seen, this is agreement for gender and number, not for person and number. Not insignificantly, it is exactly the agreement pattern that is typical of adjectives in Italian. Secondly this (number and gender) agreement with the subject is not present on the second and third verbal elements in anything like all cases. For instance, in sentences such as *Gianni e Tommaso hanno telefonato alla polizia militare* the second verb shows no agreement whatsoever (though the first verb continues to do so), and in *Quella camicia, Gianni non l'aveva mai portata* the second verb shows agreement but not with the Subject (unlike the finite verb). What we observe then is that in Italian finiteness is associated with the morphological expression of agreement for person and number.

This conclusion is undoubtedly valid for Italian (and for many other

languages). That finiteness can be defined in this way in English is far from clear. Indeed, it has to be admitted that in this language subject-verb agreement is practically absent; it survives only in what is traditionally termed the Present Indicative, where the third person singular is differentiated morphologically - *works* versus *work* - from all the other persons, singular and plural (these share a common form). In the Past Indicative, agreement is totally absent (there is no **worked-s* or similar). One way of putting this would be to say that in English a choice of [+ Past] excludes the possibility of [+ Agreement]; this seems to reflect the general fact that in English no verb can carry more than one inflectional morpheme at a time. In many languages restrictions on the number of inflectional morphemes are less severe and verbs allow more than one of them to be added to the same verb. Thus in these languages one can have a positive choice of tense, [+ Past], and also overt agreement (as in Italian *lavora-v-amo*). It has to be admitted, then, that in English agreement is far from being the pervasive phenomenon that it is in Italian and the other Romance langauges. Indeed, even the brief description that we have just given might mislead the reader into thinking that there is more agreement than is really the case. Speaking of the Present Indicative we noted that English has one form for the third person singular and another `general' form for the rest of the paradigm. This might be taken as suggesting that English has one overt inflectional morpheme for third person singular and another overt inflectional morpheme for the rest. But this of course would not be true: what we find is that the `general' form (*work*) is not in fact morphologically complex: in other words, it is not analysable as the combination of a stem and an inflectional affix (unless one wishes to adopt an analysis in which it consists of the stem *work* plus a null or phonetically unrealised affix). The situation is thus as follows:

(2a) **Present Indicative**
         3rd person sing - base form + *-s*
         other   - base form

and **not** like this, where *-xyz* is supposed to represent a (non-existent) inflectional affix corresponding to the `general' case:

(2b) **Present Indicative**
         3rd person sing - base form + *-s*
         other   - base form + *-xyz*

The fact that the Present Indicative does not have two overt inflectional morphemes expressing different agreement values at least raises the possibility that it is wrong to talk of an agreement paradigm at all. We will not explore this possibility at this point in the presentation; rather we will explore the other feature associated with finiteness: tense.

         When we say that the finite verb (the first verb in the string) expresses a choice of tense, we imply that this differentiates it from the other verbs in the string. But what exactly do we mean by this? Let us begin by examining two examples:

(3a)   Jane and Tom **are** being interrogated
(3b)   Jane and Tom **were** being interrogated

These two cases are differentiated exclusively by a choice of tense, [- Past] in the first and [+ Past] in the second. This tense choice is clearly located on the first verb. It is this choice that explains certain facts about compatibility with time adverbials. Thus (3a) is fully compatible with an adverbial such as *now* or *at the moment* (both of which identify time spans that include the moment of utterance), whereas (3b) is not:

(3a')   Jane and Tom **are** being interrogated at the moment

(3b')   *Jane and Tom **were** being interrogated at the moment

Conversely, (3b), but not (3a), is fully compatible with a time adverbial such as *at 6pm yesterday*, which excludes the time of utterance:

(3a")   *Jane and Tom **are** being interrogated at 6pm yesterday

(3b")   Jane and Tom **were** being interrogated at 6pm yesterday

What we observe, then, is that the morphologically realised tense choice determines the compatibility with temporal adverbials which themselves express a relation with the time of utterance (`il momento dell'enunciazione'). What this suggests is that, like the temporal adverbials with which the tense selection has to be compatible, tense itself is a deictic category (`categoria deittica'). In other words, it serves to temporally locate an event or action or situation *in relation to utterance time*. If, by contrast, we remove the finite verb from sentences like the ones we have just examined, then two consequences are immediately apparent: first of all the resulting string cannot stand as an independent sentence:

(4a)   *Jane and Tom being interrogated at the moment

Thus (4a) is ungrammatical, if it is intended as a substitute for (3a) or (3b); this is hardly surprising if one reflects that (4a) is not fully interpretable - an important item of information - associated principally with the morphological tense choice - is simply not conveyed, regarding whether the situation is to be understood as located at utterance time or not.

This same failure to express a basic choice - [+/- Past] - is evident if we take the verbal string in (4b) and insert it in a suitable subordinate structure where it is syntactically acceptable:

(4b)   With [Jane and Tom being interrogated],......

Indeed, this structure is equally compatible with a main clause verb that chooses either [- Past] or [+ Past]:

(4c)   With Jane and Tom being interrogated, there **is** nothing to do but wait

(4d)   With Jane and Tom being interrogated, there **was** nothing to do but wait

If the subordinate structure itself expressed a choice of one or the other of the two values [+/- Past], we would not expect this compatibility[1].

It would appear, then, that our claim that only the finite verb expresses a choice of tense (in the sense of a choice that relates the situation described to utterance time) is justified; however, doubts may remain, especially in cases where a non-finite structure is centred around the -*en* participle, as in the following:

(5a)   (Once) released by the police, Jane and Tom.......

It might be thought that *released*, though undoubtedly a participle (and consequently non-finite), nevertheless expresses a tense choice since the event in which Jane and Tom are released is necessarily understood as being anterior to whatever event is represented in the main clause. This is of course true, and derives from the `completed action' meaning that the participles of many verbs have. Since the effect

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[1] Indeed, a finite subordinate clause would not show such compatibility:

(i)   *When Jane and Tom were being interrogated, there is little to do but wait

In this sentence we have two finite verbs; these display contrasting tense choices and the result is an unacceptable structure.

of this meaning is to locate the event in time before the the event (whatever it is) represented in the main clause, one might think that it performs a function similar to that of the tense morpheme in sentences such as (3a) and (3b). In reality, however, it is not the same thing at all, as is shown by the following examples:

(5b)   (Once) released by the police, Jane and Tom **will** proceed to their hotel

(5c)   (Once) released by the police, Jane and Tom **proceeded** to their hotel

What (5b) and (5c) reveal is that the participle serves only to locate the event it denotes in relation to some other event (the one represented by the main clause verb); it does not locate event in relation to utterance time. Indeed, this can only be done by the finite verb of the main clause. Thus in (5b) we understand (from the main clause verb) that the event in which Jane and Tom proceed to their hotel is temporally located in the future in relation to utterance time; in (5c) we understand that it is located in the past. In both cases we understand that the event in which Jane and Tom are released is anterior to the event in which they proceed to their hotel. This means that in (5c) it must be in the past, while in (5b) it is in the future. In either case it is the tense selection made by the finite verb of the main clause that determines the overall temporal location of the pair of events in relation to utterance time. The participle merely locates its event relative to the main clause event; it may be thought of as expressing `anteriority' but not deictic tense.

On the basis of the above discussion, we might conclude that, in the absence of real agreement paradigms, the key feature of finite verbs in English is the fact that they make a deictic tense selection (which they display morphologically, at least as regards the positive value of the binary [+/- Past] opposition). It is for this reason that the English verb is sometimes said to be `tensed' or `untensed' rather than finite or non-finite. As regards Italian, it is clear that finiteness in this language must be regarded as a question of both tense and agreement

b.   The `subjunctive' clause - 1

What has been said so far about finiteness in English is clear enough; there is, however, one case that casts doubt on the idea that tense selection is really criterial for finiteness in English. What we are concerned with is the subordinate clause embedded under the predicate *essential* in the following:

(6a)   It is essential [that they **work** together with the others]

At first sight there would appear to be little that is unusual about the subordinate clause contained in square brackets. However, as soon as we change from a third person plural subject to a third person singular one we note a difference: the agreement normally found in the third person singular [- Past] is absent:

(6b)   It is essential that he **work** together with the others

Secondly, and more significantly given that our discussion is centred on the role of tense, it is not possible to realise a [+ Past] selection on the verb in the subordinate clause (even in cases where the main clause verb selects [+ Past] and the semantic dependence of the lower clause event on the tense of the higher clause might seem to require it):

(6c)   At that time it **was** essential that he **work** together with the others

It would appear then that the sort of subordinate clause exemplified in these examples allows neither agreement nor tense. Given that we have defined finiteness in terms of these two systems it should follow that it is to be classified as non-finite. In other words, there would appear to be no reason based on verb morphology for considering what we have in the examples in (6) as any different from the following

(complement structures of verbs of perception):

(7a)   From this window you can see [the Queen leave the building]

(7b)   From this window they saw [the Queen leave the building]

where the verb of the lower clause expresses neither agreement (7a) nor tense (7b). However, it is easy to show that the parallel we have just drawn between the embedded clauses in (6) and (7) is false. The first point to be noted is that the embedded clauses in (6) are all introduced by *that*. As is well known, this element performs the function of complementiser (= conjunction) in various types of clause (content clauses, restrictive relatives, result clauses); what all these clauses have in common is that they are finite environments. If the embedded clauses in (6) were really non-finite, then they would be an exception to this: they would be the only example of *that* introducing a non-finite clause. The second point against the analysis of the embedded clauses in (6) as non-finite environments has to do with abstract case and the subject NP. In all subordinate clauses introduced by *that* we find that the subject NP, if pronominalised, displays nominative case. This is clearly visible in the examples in (6), where *he* appears and where accusative *him* would be impossible. This gives us a clear contrast with (7), where pronominalisation of the embedded clause subject yields accusative rather than nominative case:

(7a')   From this window you can see [her/*she leave the building]

(7b')   From this window they saw [her/*she leave the building]

Now accusative case subject NPs are generally a feature of non-finite clauses. Indeed, in subordinate clauses that are standardly analysed as having inifinitive verbs (accompanied by the marker *to*, generally assumed to be generated in non-finite INFL) we regularly find accusative subject pronouns, never nominative ones:

(7c)   They wanted [*him/*he* to **work** harder]

(7d)   They believed [him/*he to be ill]

What this suggests then is that in (6), despite the absence of tense and agreement, we nevertheless have a finite structure, while in (7a) and (7b) we have typical non-finite structures. What we don't understand about the structures in (6) is how they can be `finite' (as we have argued they must be) while displaying none of the features of finiteness in terms of verb morphology. Indeed, to call what we have in (6) `finite' appears to involve transferring a term invented to differentiate among verbs to clauses. In other words, we appear to be assuming that finiteness can be a property of the clause, without any morphological reflex on the verb itself. The embedded clauses we have just examined are known as `subjunctive clauses'; traditionally the form of the verb found in them is considered to be `Present Subjunctive'. It will be recalled that languages characterised by rich verb morphology generally have a separate Subjunctive paradigm of the verb (often with what are referred to as Present and Past tenses). In such languages the Subjunctive is analysed as a finite paradigm.

c.   Further remarks on verb morphology

As we noticed in the brief description of agreement in English given in the opening section, what is traditionally considered the Present Indicative `paradigm' in fact consists of one inflected form for the third person singular and another form that is not inflected and which is used indifferently in the other cases. In other words, the situation is as follows:

(8a)   Present Indicative `paradigm'

	Singular	Plural
	I **work**	we **work**
		you **work**
	he/she works	they **work**

The `common form' does not consist of a stem + affix; rather it is a stem alone (assuming one does not wish to adopt an analysis in which it is a stem + phonetically null affix). Indeed the form we find in these cases is exactly the same as the one we find in three other contexts (the verbs we are concerned with are printed in bold):

(8b) **Work** for another half a hour and then you can stop for lunch

(8c) They decided to **work** all afternoon

(8d) It is essential that Tom **work** together with the others

In (8b) we have what is generally considered to be the Imperative, whereas in (8c) the verb in question (following *to*) is generally said to be the Infinitive. In (8d) on the other hand we have what is generally known as the Subjunctive (see brief discussion of subjunctive clauses above).

The rationale for distinguishing these cases comes from languages like Italian, where each of them calls for a morphologically distinct form of the verb:

(9b) **Lavora** per un'altra mezz'ora e dopo puoi andare a pranzo

(9c) Hanno deciso di **lavorare** tutto il pomeriggio

(9d) È essenziale che alcune persone **lavorino** insieme

Significantly the forms we find in the Italian sentences just given - (9b) and (9d) - are morphologically distinct from the forms of the Present Indicative (only the form classified as Imperative is also represented in the Present Indicative paradigm; however, when part of that paradigm, it co-occurs with third person subjects, not second person subjects as is the case in the Imperative). What becomes clear if we compare the English data in (8a) and (8b) with the corresponding Italian data is: (i) that the forms of the Present Indicative in English are - with one exception - identical with the forms we find in contexts corresponding to Imperative, Infinitive and Subjunctive in other languages (in other languages, and particularly in Italian the verbs in non-indicative contexts tend to be morphologically distinct from the indicative); (ii) that what we have in all these cases (Present Indicative excluding the third person singular and non-indicative contexts) in English is a simple verb stem with no affix, whereas in other languages we always have the verb stem plus an affix (a different affix in each case). Indeed, in these languages the verb stem as such never appears in the syntax: it always bears an affix. In English - to put things in a way that emphasises the degree to which English is different from other languages - the finite verb only appears with an affix in two cases: the Past and the third person singular of the Present Indicative. In addition, what is standardly analysed as the Infinitive is also a form without an affix (in other words the stem of the verb).

Interestingly, the verb *be* shows noticeably richer agreement morphology than any other verb: in the Present Indicative it has three separate word forms (*am, are, is*) and in the Past Indicative two separate forms (*was, were*) - in other words it is able to express agreement overtly in the Past as well as the Present. Even more peculiar is the fact that, unlike all the other verbs of the language, *be* has different forms for in the Present Indicative from those occurring in Imperative, Infinitive and Subjunctive contexts. We can illustrate this with the following examples:

(10a) (i) We/you/they **are** early (ii) He/she is early   (iii) I am early

(10b) **Be** early, not late

(10c) I told him to **be** early

(10d)   It is essential that you **be** there at 6pm

The contexts illustrated in (10b), (10c) and (10d) are parallel to those examined above: what we find, then, is that there is one verb in English which appears to make a consistent morphological distinction between indicative and non-indicative.

The general situation we have illustrated above suggests that the true nature of agreement in English is obscured if we think in terms of languages such as Italian or Latin, i.e. in terms of languages where the verb, whether finite or non-finite, is always a conjunction of two things: a stem and an affix. It makes little sense to say that in the following sentences:

(11a)   I work for IBM

(11b)   We work for IBM

we have respectively the `first person singular' of the Present Indicative of *work*, and the `first person plural' of the same verb. The fact is that there is no overt difference between these `forms' for any verb except *be*. Similarly, in the following:

(12a)   He worked for IBM

(12b)   They worked for IBM

it makes little sense to say that in (12a) we have the `third person singular past form' of the verb *work*, while in (12b) we have the `third person plural form'. Once again, this distinction is not overtly expressed by any verb in the language except for *be* and *have*. If we were to continue speaking of different `forms' (meaning different underlying grammatical words) in cases such as (11) and (12), it would be tantamount to claiming that the English verbal system displays a vast amount of homonymy (`omonimia'). In other words we would be claiming that English in fact recognises different underlying `grammatical words' for first person singular Present Indicative and first person plural Present Indicative, for third person singular Past Indicative and third person plural Past Indicative, and that by chance - as it were - it does not have distinct word forms to represent each of them. This is exactly what we mean when we say that *faccia* (first/second/third person present subjunctive of *fare*) and *faccia* ("face") are `homonyms' (`omonimi'): the language recognises two completely different items but happens to use the same word form (phonetic and graphic form) for both of them. Clearly an analysis of the English verbal paradigm that starts from the assumption that the same wealth of underlying grammatical words is recognised in this language as in Italian or Latin would end up positing a totally implausible number of homonyms. It would therefore be a totally implausible analysis[2]. It is one thing to say descriptively and informally that *ran* in *We ran every day* is the first person plural, Past Indicative of *run*; it is quite another to claim that the language actually recognises a distinct underlying grammatical word of this type (rather than say a general Past Indicative form). If we say the first we are simply using a convenient label which is immediately comprehensible for anyone familiar with the verbal paradigm of an inflected language. If we make the second claim we are in fact transferring to English a set of assumptions that are only justifiable on the basis of an entirely different language.

The reality of the situation in English, then, is that there is certainly morphological evidence for recognising a general Past form (whether it is correct to distinguish between Indicative and other `moods' in the past is a question that we will

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[2] On this point, see Huddleston, R. (1984) *Introduction to the Grammar of English*, chap 2 §4.

return to later); the same is true for the third person singular of the Present. For the rest, it is not clear whether the phonetic/graphic form *run/work* (i.e. the form that has no overt morphological affix) which we find in contexts such as (8b), (8c) & (8d) and also in what is known descriptively as the Present Indicative (except in co-occurrence with a third person singular subject) should be regarded as corresponding to a single underlying grammatical word or more than one such word (in which case we would have to admit a degree of homonymy). Some evidence for positing two homonyms, one corresponding to Present Indicative general form (except for third person singular) and the other corresponding to `non-indicative' comes as we have seen from the verb *be*, which actually has non-coincident morphological forms in these cases. The evidence is slim, it has to be admitted, and the conclusion is by no means unproblematic since it means lumping together (under the label `non-indicative') a context that is undoubtedly non-finite (the Infinitive) with one that appears to be finite (the so-called Subjunctive). We will reserve judgement on this question for the moment (see the discussion that follows of the `subjunctive clause').

To conclude then on the question of agreement in English and its role in the definition of finiteness, it would not appear that expressing morphological agreement can be considered an important characteristic of finite verbs in English. Most express none; the single case in which an overt morpheme is added (with a function which appears to be that of expressing agreement) can hardly be regarded as the basis of an agreement paradigm.

d.   The `subjunctive' clause - 2

Our earlier discussion of the so-called subjunctive clause[3] aimed at

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[3] As Quirk et al. (1985) point out, it is necessary to distinguish between two different clausal structures (both introduced by *that*) and sometimes selected by the same higher verb. Thus one may have:

    (1a)   She suggested that I be responsible for the arrangements
    (1b)   She suggested that I was responsible for the arrangements
    (2a)   I insisted that he change his clothes
    (2b)   I insisted that he changed his clothes

In each case they gloss the first as `suasive' and the second as `assertive'. What these glosses are intended to capture is the fact that the first sentence of each pair is understood as evoking a situation that is `desired' rather than asserting or claiming that some situation actually exists. In the (b) versions we find normal `indicative' characteristics (agreement/tense selection): only the (a) sentences contain `subjunctive clauses'. Given their property of evoking a situation/state of affairs that is `desired' rather than `real', subjunctive clauses are sometimes said to be `intensional'.

Quirk et al. (op. cit.) give the following (non-exhaustive) list of predicates which may select a `subjunctive clause' complement (confined to adjectival predicates and verbs):

    propose/demand/recommend/decide/insist/move/order/prefer/request
    advisable/desirable/fitting/imperative/essential/appropriate
    decision/demand/decree/order/requirement/resolution

establishing that it is a finite environment, even if the verb itself actually displays neither of the features which are more or less obligatorily associated with finiteness in other languages (and indeed with finiteness in other syntactic environments even in English). Our aim in the present discussion is to offer an explanation of what is happening in `subjunctive clauses', an explanation that will account for the strange lack of inflectional morphology and make it clear that the form of the verb which we find in such clauses resembles the base form or `infinitive' because that it is indeed what it is.

We will begin by noticing some further characteristics of `subjunctive clauses'. Perhaps the most significant is constituted by the syntax of negation in these cases. The following is an attested example (from the *International Herald Tribune*) of a negated subjunctive clause:

(13a) Washington only agreed to send the Apaches and rockets on the condition that they **not be used** in combat without the formal approval of President Bill Clinton.

(the reference is to US Apache combat helicopters). What we notice in this case is that the negative adverb *not* precedes the verb *be* rather than following it as it does in other finite environments. Compare:

(13b) The helicopters **were not used** in combat
(13c) *The helicopters **not were used** in combat

Assuming that the negative adverb occurs in a position immediately following INFL, this suggests that the verb *be* is actually in VP in (13a). The question that this raises is clear enough: if in (13a) *be* is not in INFL, is this position empty (or perhaps simply absent)? We can represent this possible analysis as follows:

(13a') [.....] on the condition that they [$_{INFL}$] not [$_{VP}$ be used in combat without the formal approval of President Bill Clinton]

Extending our investigation slightly so as to encompass cases where negation would normally involve *do*-support, we find that this is not in fact possible:

(13d) Tom insists that she not arrive late tomorrow.
(13e) *Tom insists that she doesn't arrive late tomorrow.

The lexical verb *arrive* occurs on the right of the negative adverb (as did *be* in (13a)), and yet *do* does not occur in INFL as it normally would. Once again, then, we appear to have a structure in which INFL is empty:

(13d') Tom insists that she [$_{INFL}$] not [$_{VP}$ arrive late tomorrow]

Summarising, then, on the special properties of verbs in subjunctive clauses, we may draw up the following list:

a.   no agreement
b.   no tense selection
c.   no *do*-support
d.   no raising of verb such as *be* and *have* (normally these verbs raise to INFL in English)

Taken together, these properties recall those to be found in another syntactic

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agree/allow/arrange/ask/beg/command/concede/decide/decree/demand/desire/   determine/enjoin/ensure/entreat/grant/insist/instruct/intend/move/ordain/order/pledge/pray/prefer/pronounce/propose/recommend/request/require/resolve/rule/stipulate/suggest/urge/vote

environment in English (at first the sight the proposal we are about to make may seem strange but careful thought suggests that it is well-founded): when a modal verb (i.e. a verb belonging to the restricted group of modals - *will, can, may, shall* etc) is present in a clause in English exactly the same properties are (arguably) to be found:

> (14a)   Tom might not be late tomorrow.

Thus in this example, we see:

> (i)   there is no agreement (compare **mights*)
> (ii)   there is no (possibility of) Past Tense selection (indeed *might* refers to the present/future, as indicated by the adverbial)
> (iii)   there is no *do*-support (cf. **doesn't might*)
> (iv)   the verb *be* (normally a raising verb) occurs in VP

Now it might be objected that in (14a) properties (iii) and (iv) are simply to be attributed to the fact that INFL is physically occupied (as it were) by the modal verb and so neither introduction of *do* nor raising of *be* is possible. In fact it is exactly this point that provides the clue as to what is happening in subjunctive clauses. If we imagine that in these clauses the INFL position (which we have shown as empty in two representations above) is actually filled by an element that is the syntactic equivalent of a modal verb, only phonetically null (that is to say not pronounced), the list of properties we have given falls out as a natural consequence. Put in slightly different terms, what we get in subjunctive clauses is exactly what we would expect *if a modal verb were actually present*.

This analysis is substantially confirmed by the fact that the same higher predicates that select subjunctive clauses also select an equivalent structure (with an identical interpretation) where INFL is filled by an overt modal (*should*). We give the following (attested) example:

> (14b)   Advocates of reproductive autonomy clearly do not envisage that children **should** be kept in the dark about their origins, as adopted children used to be.

Indeed these two types of clause are virtually interchangeable[4], as is shown by the following text extract where the author uses a structure with a non-overt modal and then a structure with *should* in the space of a few lines:

> (14c)   [1] Speaking as a former comprehensive school pupil and Oxford graduate, I do not believe that candidates would want to win their place at Oxford for any reason other than their own individual merits, but it is crucially important that we **test** those merits in the fairest possible way, while dispelling ideas of quotas and positive discrimination. [2] Likewise, although we are always happy to receive applications from the children of Mertonians, it is clearly appropriate that we **should treat** these candidates in the same way as all others when it comes to the final selection.

Returning to the syntactic analysis of the structures in question, we can now revise the representations given in (13a') and (13d') - we renumber these here as

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[4] It is perhaps worth mentioning that the `subjunctive clause' (in the sense of the structure with the non-overt modal) is more common in American than in British English. It is nevertheless fully grammatical for educated speakers of standard British English and is, as Quirk et al. (1985:155) note, stylistically marked (formal).

(15a) and (15b):

      (15a) [.....] on the condition that they [$_{INFL}$ `MOp'] not [$_{VP}$ be used in combat without the formal approval of President Bill Clinton]

      (15b) Tom insists that she [$_{INFL}$ `MOp'] not [$_{VP}$ arrive late tomorrow]

Thus INFL is now shown as containing `MOp', i.e. an abstract modal operator similar in force to a modal verb. We will assume that this modal operator reflects the basic semantic character of subjunctive clauses as `intensional' contexts (see note 3 above). These clauses are systematically selected by certain types of higher predicate (*insist, be essential, require, intend* etc) and equally systematically excluded by others (*believe, hope, expect, regret, complain, be a pity* etc - e.g. *It's a pity that they are so obstinate/* be so obstinate*). We may assume that their COMP node[5] contains an abstract feature which serves to ensure that they are chosen by the right semantic category of higher predicate - intensional predicates (*insist*) and not epistemic (*believe*) or factive (*regret*) predicates, for instance. The natural assumption, given the intercommunicating nature of the two main functional nodes (COMP and INFL[6]), is that the special feature contained in COMP of subjunctive clauses is reflected in INFL by the choice of the abstact modal operator that we have posited.

      As will now be clear, the question of whether the English verb has a specific `subjunctive form', i.e. an underlying `grammatical word' of which the surface forms are the overt - and homonymous - realisations, now disappears. The `form' of the lexical verb found in what we have been calling subjunctive clauses is in fact the same as that found in the equivalent structures with the overt modal *should*: it is simply the base form of the verb, as found in any syntactic context where INFL is occupied by some overt element (*do, have, be* or a modal).

      The significance of the analysis that we have just presented in the wider context of the morphosyntax of English verbs (and in particular in the light of the fact that `verb raising' is absent in this language, at least as far as lexical verbs are concerned) should be clear: English is a language that instead of morphological mood (`subjunctive') has evolved an abstract modal operator (the equivalent of a lexical item, only phonetically null). The so-called subjunctive clause constitutes a concrete example of this, and the question naturally arises as to how pervasive this system is. In what other contexts can we expect to find null modal operators? Might the fact that English uses such an operator for a positive choice of mood (as in

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[5] On COMP (the syntactic projection of the complementiser and, together with INFL, one of the principal functional projections in clause structure), see Graffi, G. (1994) *Sintassi*, chap 7 (§ 0 & 1).

[6] That these two nodes are closely linked is suggested by the fact that auxiliaries and modals frequently move from INFL to COMP in the overt syntax. One very clear example of this concerns another context in which particular values in the mood system are selected, the hypothetical conditional (counterfactual). Indeed, in English these structures may have (in the `protasis' or *if* clause) their COMP filled either by the complementiser *if* itself (1a) or by the auxiliary (1b), which has presumably moved from INFL:

      (1a)   If you had warned us in time, we would have come.

      (1b)   Had you warned us in time, we would have come.

subjunctive clauses) imply that there is a similar operator that must be inserted when there is a negative choice?