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On the Prospective Use of the Latin Imperfect Subjunctive in Relative Clauses

W. J. Goodrich

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any writer can presume to palm off upon the readers of the *Poetry Review* such a pentameter as 'Whatsoever mercies, whatsoever charities' entirely passes my comprehension.

The abandoning of the Ovidian rule that no word to end a pentameter may have more than two syllables causes at once a loss of melody. For there is melody in Ovid's Elegiacs. Let me instance this by quoting for my conclusion a passage, also about spring, which stirred the Latin poet in much the same way as it stirs Mr. Brodribb:

Dic, age frigoribus quare novus incipit annus,
Qui melius per ver incipiendus erat?
Omnia tunc florent, tunc est nova temporis aetas,
Et nova de gravido palmitis gemma tumet:

Et modo formatis operitur frondibus arbor,
Prodit et in summum seminis herba solum:
Et tepidum volucres concentibus aëra mulcent,
Ludit et in pratis luxuriatque pecus.
Tum blandi soles, ignotaque prodit hirundo
Et luteum celsa sub trabe figit opus:
Tum patitur cultus ager et renovatur aratro:
Haec anni novitas jure vocanda fuit.

OXONIENSIS.

P.S.—The attempt to use classical metres in English verse seems to be growing. In the November number of the *Poetry Review* an American lady, Dr. Marion Mills, is quoted with approval for her English Sapphics, in which five lines out of sixteen have either a foot too few or one too many.

ON THE PROSPECTIVE USE OF THE LATIN IMPERFECT SUBJUNCTIVE IN RELATIVE CLAUSES.

THE object of this note is to call attention to a peculiar use of the Latin imperfect subjunctive in relative clauses, which, though recognised by implication in various stray renderings, has not hitherto, so far as I am aware, been established on a proper grammatical footing by a coordination and comparison of relevant instances. A list of these, capable, no doubt, of considerable extension, will first be given, and an attempt will then be made to discover some common principle of explanation:

1. Medea illa . . . quam praedicant in fuga fratris sui membra in eis locis, *qua* se parens *persequeretur*, dissipavisse, ut eorum collectio dispersa maerorque patrius celeritatem persequendi retardaret.—Cic. *de Imp. Cn. Pomp.* 9 § 22.

2. Nec vero eram tam indoctus ignarusque rerum, ut frangerer animo propter vitae cupiditatem, *quae* me manens *conficeret* angoribus, dimissa molestiis omnibus *liberaret*.—Cic. *Phil.* II. 15 § 37.

3. (Antony fleeing before Octavianus and his army) neglectis sacrificiis sollemnibus ante lucem vota ea, *quae* numquam *solveret*, nuncupavit.—*Ib.* III. 4 § 11.

4. Id cum Oppianicus sciret—neque enim erat obscurum—intellegebat Habito mortuo bona eius omnia ad matrem esse ventura: *quae* ab sese postea aucta pecunia maiore praemio, orbata filio minore periculo *necaretur*.—Cic. *pro Clu.* 15 § 45.

5. Alter plus lege agendo petebat, quam quantum lex in XII. tabulis permiserat, *quod*

cum impetrasset, causa *caderet*.—Cic. *de Or.* i. § 167.

6. Qui egregie cordatus et catus fuit et ab Ennio dictus est, non quod ea quaerebat *quae* numquam *inveniret*, sed quod ea respondebat, *quae* eos qui quaesissent, et cura et negotio *solverent*.—Cic. *de Rep.* I. 18, p. 285.

7. Et supererat multitudo . . . ad id pastores quoque accesserant, qui omnes facile spem facerent parvam Albam, parvum Lavinium, prae ea urbe, *quae conderetur*, fore.—Liv. I. 6. 3.

8. . . . Tullia per patris corpus carpentum egisse fertur, partemque sanguinis . . . tulisse ad penates suos virique sui, *quibus* iratis malo regni principio similes prope diem exitus *sequerentur*.—*Id.* I. 48. 7.

9. (Of two proposals for disposing of the spoil of Veii) Haec tutor visa sententia est, *quae* popularem senatum *faceret*.—*Id.* V. 20. 10.

10. In praesentia tribunos plebis fieri placuit, *quo* in magistratu sibimet ipsi viam ad ceteros honores *aperirent*.—*Id.* VI. 35. 3.

11. Se quisque eum optabat, *quem* fortuna in id certamen *legeret*.—*Id.* XXI. 42. 2.

12. (News of Agricola's death awaited by Domitian) Supremo quidem die momenta ipsa deficientis per dispositos cursores nuntiata constabat, nullo credente sic adcelerari *quae* tristis *audiret*.—Tac. *Agr.* 43. 3.

Now what is common to most, if not all, these instances (some, as will be explained, are included only tentatively) is that in the clauses indicated by italics the imperfect subjunctive refers to the future from the past: it is 'prospective' or 'anticipatory,' and expresses the various shades of meaning—'what was

to be,' 'was likely, or intended, to be,' and the like—which are usually expressed by forms in *-urus* with past tenses of *sum*, or by a *feri posset* where the verb is passive. It is not contended that these latter constructions would not be the normal ones in such cases, but that the imperfect subjunctive is allowed to stand for them as a shorter substitute. Further to define this special use, we must consider its relation to various others in the way of affinity or distinction. (a) Is it necessarily connected with *oratio obliqua*? It is so connected, actually or virtually, in the large majority of the instances: but this does not apply to No. 5, and applies very doubtfully to Nos. 3 and 6, all of which resemble the rest too closely to be excluded from our survey. Hence we must conclude that, whether or not indirect speech was a contributory cause in giving rise to this construction, this form of subordination is not a necessary condition of its use in actual practice. (b) The use in question is not to be identified with any of the more ordinary uses of the subjunctive in relative clauses expressive of purpose, class within which, definition, or cause. These are, indeed, sometimes prospective—always so where purpose is concerned. But this is the only point of connection: for in our instances the relative clauses are purely attributive (sometimes, as in No. 4, co-ordinative), and express contingent futurity without any of those added meanings. At least this holds good of all the more marked cases, though there are some in which it is difficult to say whether purpose is expressed or not. Thus in No. 10, which is quoted merely to illustrate this doubtful point, it is possible to see either purpose ('in which office it was intended they should open up for themselves,' etc.) or an anticipated event ('in which they would,' etc.) No great stress need be laid on such instances: but the suggestion may be thrown out that, whereas the subjunctive in relative clauses of purpose is in general to be accounted for as an 'indirect jussive,' a collateral source may have been the subjunctive of contingent futurity which is here under consideration. 'What would, or was likely to happen,' easily

passes into 'what was intended to happen.' This would apply, of course, wherever the relative clause describes a result which the agent both anticipates and desires. But a little consideration will show that in all the other instances but that mentioned such a notion is excluded either by the meaning or the structure of the sentence. (c) We must, then, fall back on the hypothetical subjunctive. In several of the instances an equivalent of a protasis is supplied by the context: as in Nos. 2, 4 and 8 by the participles, in No. 5 by the *cum*-clause. In the others we should have the potential subjunctive. But the tense cannot be reconciled with the accepted rules governing conditional sentences. For according to these the imperfect subjunctive refers either to present or past time, never to future time either from the present or the past. Hence we must recognise that this is a special use, confined to relative clauses, which may have been evolved under the influence partly of *oratio obliqua*, with which it is so often connected, partly of the types of relational subjunctive dealt with under the last section, though it is, as explained, distinct from them.¹

Having now approximately fixed the

¹ As the term 'prospective' was first introduced by Prof. Sonnenschein, I should like to bring the purport of this note into some relation with his views, and especially with his valuable treatment of the subjunctive mood in his *New Latin Grammar* (1914). I fail for two reasons to find there an adequate account of the particular construction under discussion. (1) The prospective subjunctive is confined to certain temporal clauses (§ § 339-41). (2) The uses of the subjunctive are divided under three heads according as it denotes (a) what is to be done (the *shall*-subjunctive), (b) what would happen under certain imagined conditions (the subjunctive of conditional futurity), or (c) has a weakened meaning, which does not here concern us. Such instances as he calls 'prospective' fall entirely under (a)—though it is true he suggests that (a) and (b) may have had a common original source (p. 162 footnote). Now it is beyond the scope of this note to go into the question of the original meaning of the subjunctive. I should be satisfied, provisionally at any rate, with the account given of the Greek subjunctive in Monro's *Homeric Grammar*, § 274, that it 'may be said in general to express either the *will* of the speaker or his sense of the *necessity* of a future event.' But in any case I assume that in classical Latin the subjunctive had acquired several derivative or differentiated

boundaries of our construction, I proceed to examine some of the instances more closely, together with the comments offered upon them. The perplexities which will thus be brought to light will, perhaps, furnish some excuse for the lengthiness of the preceding discussion.

In No. 1 King explains the relevant clause by 'in which her father was likely to follow her,' adding 'the subjunctive would have been used even had the sentence been in the *oratio recta*, as marking the motive with which the spots had been chosen by Medea.' This is not very clearly put. Even if we removed the main *oratio obliqua* (*quam praedicant*, etc.) the clause in question, so far as it continued to mark the motive (more properly 'conditions under which the motive operates'—for the motive proper is given by the *ut*-clause), would still be in *virtual oratio obliqua*, as expressing Medea's not Cicero's thoughts. It often happens that there is, or may be, an inner *virtual oratio obliqua* besides the main *oratio obliqua*: this applies notably to No. 12. Yet in view of No. 5 and some others, one cannot deny, as already said, that the subjunctive might apparently stand even in pure *oratio recta*. But then we should surely have to change *se* into *eam*.

The same kind of question arises on No. 3, which is difficult. "Which he was never doomed to pay"; *i.e.* Cicero expresses his belief that Antony's prayers would not be granted, and that so he would not be obliged to pay his vows' (King). This is probably right, and in that case we have pure *oratio recta*. But two other possibilities may be considered: (1) *Virtual oratio obliqua*, 'which he thought he would never have to pay'; (2) final subjunctive 'with no intention of ever paying them.' The latter is improbable: the use of *ea* is against it, and in a rhetorical sense it seems to overshoot the mark.

In Nos. 7, 9 it is possible to avoid the prospective sense by taking *conderetur*, *faceret* as standing in *oratio*

obliqua, and *virtual oratio obliqua* respectively for *condebatur*, *faciebat*. So too in No. 2 the subjunctives might be taken as expressing a tendency, or a prospect already realised in anticipation: 'an existence of which the continuance offered me nothing but overwhelming anguish, the renunciation, escape from all my troubles.' Attraction with *frangerer* might also have its influence on the mood. But none of this is necessary, and in all these cases there is a certain presumption in favour of the prospective meaning owing to its undoubted presence elsewhere.

On No. 4 there is an instructive discussion in Fausset's note *ad loc.* (1) Henry Nettleship quotes No. 5 as a parallel, which he renders "having obtained which, he *would*, or *was to*, be cast on the technical point." So here [*i.e.* in No. 4], "so (he thought) she *might be*, or *would be*, more easily killed," or "intending to kill her more easily." The imperfects express the future force of the subjunctive in past time.' This is in entire accordance with the view taken in this note, though attention is not explicitly called to the fact that in No. 4 there is, in No. 5 there is not *oratio obliqua*. It is also obvious that in No. 4, owing to the passive voice, futurity could otherwise be expressed only indirectly by *quae necari posset* (or *quam necari posse*): *quae necaretur* may well have been preferred as more concise and pointed. (2) Quite different is the view of H. J. Roby, that we may call the subjunctive 'simply hypothetical, *i.e.* apodosis with protasis *aucta pecunia, orbata filio*: "who would, if made richer, have furnished better reward for her death, and if deprived of her son, have been killed with less risk": R. § 1534, r. 642. One might have expected, instead of *quae . . . necaretur, quam necari posse*, so that this would have been dependent on *intellegebat*. But Cicero has chosen to put it independently.' It will be seen that 'independently' means in *oratio recta*, and that *necaretur* is taken as the apodosis in an ordinary past unfulfilled condition. But could the imperfect tense be justified? Fausset meets the difficulty thus: 'this imperfect subjunctive in past time answers to the present subjunctive in present

meanings, and taking Prof. Sonnenschein's classification as a basis I should bring the use exemplified in this note decidedly under (b) not (a).

time—giving an assumption possible at the time of its making, but falling in the province of things past: the case is regarded as simply imaginary (not as unfulfilled).’ He quotes in illustration *Tusc.* I § 90 ‘Cur igitur et Camillus *doleret*, si haec . . . eventura putaret, et ego *doleam*, si gentem aliquam urbe nostra potituram *putem*?’ and *pro Clu.* 22 § 61 *Quid enim tandem illi iudices responderent*, si qui ab eis *quaereret* . . .?’ Note, however, that the interrogative form in these passages permits us to regard the subjunctives in the main clauses as deliberative. But my chief objection to either of these views (for I take them to be distinct) is that (a) the separation of the clause *quae* . . . *necaretur* is extremely harsh and unnecessary, (b) the future reference of the imperfect subjunctive, which is surrendered in both alike, is irresistibly suggested both by the context and by

comparison with the other examples under discussion.

No. 12 is interesting, and I cannot but think that the recognition of the prospective use here greatly improves the force of the passage (*audiret* = *auditurus esset*)—indeed to take *audiret* as simply representing *audiebat* of *oratio recta* quite spoils the point. ‘While no one could believe that so much despatch would be shown in carrying messages which he would receive with regret.’ Strictly speaking, it was not the bulletins themselves, but their progressively adverse character, that was expected to cause Domitian satisfaction: but this is easily inferred from the Tacitean brachylogy.

W. J. GOODRICH.

*Bradford Grammar School,
Yorkshire.*

DOGMATIC DIVINERS AND PROPERTIUS.

IN June, 1916, Mr. Richmond published a series of contradictions to a series of conjectural notes on Propertius IV. x, which I had published in March of that year. Before continuing the miscellaneous adversaria on this author, of which that specimen moved Mr. Richmond’s protestations, I wish to reply in detail to the points which he makes, meeting in this way his challenge of methods. This article will examine in the series of counter-proposals, not whether Latinity and logic therein exhibited authorise Mr. Richmond to be heard on the subject—such an impertinence would outrage what little remains of the comity of scholars—but whether they are able to support the pretensions to exclusive competence which are there implicitly arrogated.

I fear that not many of the readers of the *C.R.* will have the patience or the curiosity to try this issue with exact application of mind, but will here beg anyone who can command enough of these two virtues, to read the two

articles side by side: for in order to moderate the length of my rejoinder, it has been necessary to proceed by allusion and by reference, not quoting Mr. Richmond’s words at large all the way through. If the matter were no more than a case of *καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ*, it would be worth nobody’s while; if only a few dubious readings in an ancient ditty were concerned, it would be silly to invite special attention; but there lies implicit (and easily to be disengaged) in the discussion of these passages, a question which affects the fundamentals of criticism. And criticism means the art of recovering truth from tradition and from documents in any part of History.

I. (a) On the noun *clausa* fem.

I do not press the suggestion *clausas aperire*, because the harshness of the zeugma in v. 2 is rather too aesthetic a difficulty to found upon. But the existence of *clausa* fem. is an interesting point; and as an instance of method it is worth while examining Mr. Richmond’s treatment of the case.