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## Obligation as Expressed by the Subjunctive

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twist it into a Madvigian interpretation of 'One is not to be bothersome,' or 'This is remarked, lest one' etc., whereby dramatic liveliness is extinguished. A similar remark applies to 'ne frustra sis,' of which there are 6 occurrences.

The rough and masculine Plautus may be ruled out as boorish, but Terence the 'Dimidiatus Menander' and paragon of elegance, cannot be so summarily dealt with. In the face of his evidence, which presents

a proportion practically of five to one, it seems impossible to maintain the Canon of Madvig as to classical Latin confining the Pres. Subj. in prohibition to a 'ficta persona' or a *τὸς* and excluding it in the case of a specific individual. The two instances of *Plurals* (= vos) in Terence, and the frequent instances of *Plurals* after *ne* in Plautus explode the doctrine into thin air, so far as the Dramatic authors are concerned.

W. D. GEDDES.

### OBLIGATION AS EXPRESSED BY THE SUBJUNCTIVE.

MR. ELMER's article in the May number of the *Classical Review* on the use of the subjunctive in expressions of obligation, while on the whole to be commended in its interpretation of the passages cited, is, I believe, fundamentally wrong in its implied explanation of this force in those passages. A method that rests upon translation for its classifications, cannot offer deductions to be received with great confidence. The same passage may seem to take on different shades of meaning as it is viewed with different insight into the context, or even as it is viewed at different times, though this is perhaps another way of saying the same thing. Two cases cited by Mr. Elmer as illustrating the 'subjunctive of obligation' are sufficient to make this point clear.

Terence, *Heaut.* 273 :

mane: hoc quod coepi primum enarrem,  
Clitipho.  
Post istuc veniam :

This certainly might mean 'allow me to finish what I have begun': in fact the vocative in the line almost compels that translation.

Plautus, *Poen.* 152 :

Cur ego apud te mentiar?

This seems like a question of *motive*, rather than of obligation, i.e. 'what motive have I to try to deceive you'?

I trust that this will suffice to show how insecure is the foundation which consists of classes whose members have no stronger tie than the meaning assigned them by the individual translator. I hope to show that there are other and safer lines of classification, and that Mr. Elmer, in disregarding

these, has, in some cases at least, lost sight of fundamental differences and based his classification on what is a mere accident of the situation; in other words, that the force of obligation in many of the cases cited by him is not the determining factor that calls for the use of the subjunctive mood. If I can establish that proposition, then it is obvious, for those cases at least, that there is no need to attempt to derive a 'subjunctive of obligation' from a postulated I. E. modal usage.

With this end in view, I will examine two of the classes cited in the article under discussion.

(a) Present subjunctive, 1st sing., in interrogative sentences, with no introductory particle (except *-ne*) :

My deductions are based on a complete collection of cases from Cicero's Orations, and these are reinforced by two or three cases from Plautus. Under this head Mr. Elmer cites cases that I prefer to call 'repudiating questions,' i.e. they repudiate the desire or suggestion of another. The cases which occur in the Orations,<sup>1</sup> though more obscure than might be the case in a less formal style, lead to the conclusion that the circumstance which calls for the use of the subjunctive mood is the fact that this type of question echoes in an indignant tone the (perhaps unexpressed) will or desire of some other person, thus becoming the

<sup>1</sup> I give the list that they may be examined by any who are interested. In *Verr.* ii. 1, 61, 157, ii. 3, 10, 25, ii. 5, 58, 150, p. *Caec.* 10, 26, *de Imp. Pomp.* 12, 32 and 33, p. *Clu.* 26, 70, p. *Sulla.* 30, 83, p. *Arch.* 8, 18, p. *Flac.* 11, 25, *de Har. Res.* 25, 53, p. *Balb.* 4, 8, in *Pis.* 20, 47, p. *Planc.* 13, 33 and 39, 93, p. *Scauro.* 15, 35, p. *Rab. Post.* 9, 23, p. *Lig.* 8, 24, *Phil.* iii. 5, 12, xi. 10, 25, xii. 7, 16, xii. 10, 24, xiv. 9, 25. Apparently of Doubt or Deliberation are: p. *S. Rosc.* 11, 29, p. *Sest.* 25, 55.

expression of the repudiation of that will or desire; and that the *ground* of the repudiation (be it obligation or otherwise) is a secondary matter, being determined by the situation, and varying in different cases. I feel sure that the study of one's mother tongue on the subject of syntax will greatly aid in the solution of many problems. In the present case I would like to illustrate by the repudiating question in English before proceeding to the Latin cases. Suppose that one man should suggest to another that he steal from a relative. He replies indignantly, 'I steal from him?' If the reason for the repudiation of the suggestion is clear to the other person, that may be a sufficient answer. If it is not clear, the speaker may add a defining clause: as, 'I steal from him, who has been so kind to me?' 'I steal from him, who is so sharp?' 'I steal from him, who is going to leave me his all?' In all these the form of the question remains the same, and is due to the one factor common to all, *i.e.* repudiation of the will or desire of some other person: the ground of the repudiation (obligation, possibility, advisability, etc.) being merely the colouring of the question. Note that the simple question without defining clauses might have all of these meanings and probably others, if the situation does not need definition. In speaking, the tone or look might give the desired hint.

The cases of this idiom in Latin display a surprisingly similar range of phenomena. I hope that the presence of defining clauses and of *auxiliary verbs* will make this clear.

1. *pro Arch.* 8, 18. Hunc ego non diligam, non admirer, non...defendendum putem?

The context implies obligation (cited by Mr. Elmer).

2. *in Verr.* ii. 3, 10, 25. Quantum poposcerit Apronius, dato...Ego tantum dem, quantum ille poposcerit? *poscet omne, quantum exaravero.*

This case shows the demand and the answer: the speaker repudiates the demand on the score of justice (or obligation) to himself.

3. *Phil.* xii. 10, 24. Hisce ego me viis committam, qui *Terminalibus nuper in suburbium...ire non sum ausus?*

This is repudiation on the score of the (in)advisability of the act, *cp. p. Sulla* 30, 83.

4. Plautus, *Pseud.* 288-90.

B. *Surruperes patri.* Ps. *Surruperet hic patri, audacissime?*

Non periculumst, nequid recte monstres.

B. Non lenoniumst.

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C. *Egon patri subrupere possim quicquam, tam cauto seni?*

This is a good case. To the same statement of obligation<sup>1</sup> (*surruperes*) *Pseudolus* answers with a repudiating question (*surruperet*) that has its ground in obligation or propriety, while his master repudiates it by a question having as its ground the (im)-possibility of the performance. This is shown by the use of the auxiliary *posse* and the phrase, *tam cauto seni.*

5. Plautus *Poen.* 149.

Egone istuc *ausim* facere, *praesertim tibi?*

Here the repudiation may have its ground in the obligation to the slave (*praesertim tibi*) or in the (im)possibility of the master's stooping to the thing suggested (*ausim*).

Note that in these two last cases, if the auxiliary verb were dropped out and the verb in the infinitive were changed to subjunctive, the sense would still be clear, particularly in the first case of the two, as that is doubly defined.

I must leave it to the reader to decide whether it is more likely to be true to the facts of language, to follow Mr. Elmer in the attempt to find a 'subjunctive force' to justify the colouring in each of these questions and such others as may be found, or to accept as the full explanation of the use of the subjunctive the one fact common to them all, *i.e.* repudiation of the wish or suggestion (even expectation) of an outside party.<sup>2</sup>

One more class we will take up in which the facts are, to my mind, much as in the case just discussed.

(b) Present subjunctive, 3rd pers. sing., in non-interrogative sentences.

Not to go into detail, which is hardly called for here, as it is not likely that the statement will be questioned, the study of active and deponent verbs of this person and number in the Orations, brings to light at least the following classes: the verbs express:—

1. Direct concession of the speaker to the subject of the verb.

2. Concession to the subject of the verb at the instance of another.

3. Exhortation to allow the subject of the verb to act.

<sup>1</sup> Possibly only suggestion.

<sup>2</sup> To guard against misapprehension, it might be well to state that light is thrown upon the nature of the repudiating question by cases outside of this person and number: these aid in reaching the above view.

4. Exhortation to cause the subject of the verb to act.

5. Exhortation directed to the subject of the verb action.

Generalizing on the basis of these divisions we may say that the subjunctive of this tense, person and number in Cicero's Orations is the expression of the will (or concession) of the speaker in regard to the action of the subject of the verb, sometimes involving a third party.<sup>1</sup> Let me once more appeal to English for an illustration. Suppose that we translate 'veniat' by 'Let him come.' Though that is rather formal, it may bear the following meanings in English.

1. He may come.

2. He may come (as you or they wish).

3. Allow him to come.

4. Have him come (as might be said to a servant of one in waiting).

5. I want him to come (he should come).

Thus we see that this one expression will translate very fairly all of the five uses noted in Latin. In Latin, as in English, the cases falling under (5) would be the ones among which we would naturally look for cases that express an obligation devolving upon the subject of the verb-action: naturally, because the speaker would be apt to exhort the subject to acts of obligation or propriety. Be it noted that the exhortation is at times of a very formal kind and is directed toward no one in particular, but lays down a rule for the *general* third person; here, of course, the force of obligation would be specially prominent.

In the English, examples of this usage would not be numerous; we have other more direct and less formal ways of expressing the idea of obligation. This may be in a measure true of the Latin usage as well. May it not be true then again in this case that the subjunctive is not due to the idea of obligation primarily, but is rather called forth by the relation of willer and actor, the fact that obligation is sometimes expressed being merely an incidental circumstance due to the situation?

The discussion of the two classes we have examined is sufficient to illustrate the wide

<sup>1</sup> This of course excludes *wishes*, which do not readily class with the other cases.

difference of method which it is the aim of this paper to bring out. Mr. Elmer follows a functional classification, selecting from formal groups instances which in their individual context show a similarity of meaning; then attempting to trace these meanings back through a course of development from prehistoric times. I have tried to show that in so doing he often tears apart cases that have a deep underlying likeness, and has chosen his examples, in the two cases discussed, on the basis of what may be only an accidental similarity. It needs no argument to prove that deductions drawn from such classification are not likely to lead to a right inference as to early modal usages.

I trust that I have likewise made it probable:

(a) That great underlying similarities may be looked for along the lines of the divisions that are formal: as person, number and the form of the sentence,<sup>2</sup> these being, if you please, the moulds into which language is cast.

(b) That, if we seek to understand I. E. modal uses, inferences based upon data so classified are more likely to lead to right deductions, than those based upon what may be only an accidental resemblance. The I. E. realm is so misty, however, that we can hope to make little advance in certain knowledge of modal uses in general, by speculating about it.<sup>3</sup>

In regard to the cases cited of *opinor* and *credo* used parenthetically or paratactically with the subjunctive, it is unfortunate that the data are not more complete.

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<sup>2</sup> See E. P. Morris's article in vol. xviii. of the *American Journal of Philology*, on the uses of the subjunctive in Plautus, particularly page 133 and pages 275 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Paul in his *Principien* tends to the belief that different forms (as for instance subjunctive and optative forms) in early time were used without clear distinction of meaning, and that time and use gradually portioned out a set of ideas for a form to express. (See Strong's translation, §§ 410 and 433.) If that be true, it is almost impossible to tell how far this process of differentiation of meaning had advanced when Latin began its independent development: so the subject is almost hopeless.

See also E. P. Morris's article cited above, pages 400 and 401.