CHAPTER 17

"The Relative Pronoun"

As has been the case in the last several chapters, this chapter really doesn't confront the neophyte with a lot of new grammatical concepts; it builds on knowledge already mastered. Still it's going to take a little patience, but we'll go slowly. Before we get to the relative pronoun per se, we're going to clean up a syntactical point you've already been working with, but may not have yet a firm conceptual understanding of. Let's look at what we mean by a "clause".

THE CLAUSE

You all remember the junior high school definition of a sentence: it's a complete thought. And by that we mean a thought which includes a noun, either expressed or implied, and a verb, either expressed or implied. That is, a complete thought must involve something which is doing something or which is being held up for description: "The road is blocked"; "The tree fell down"; and so on.

Now, the human mind is a wonderful thing. It reasons and perceives dozens of different kinds relationships between events, things, and ideas. It arranges events and facts logically and temporally, and in levels of priority. That is to say, it takes two or more things, things which are separate ideas, separate visions, and weaves them together conceptually and linguistically into what we "reasoning". The way this reasoning is expressed in

language is called "syntax", which literally means "arranging together"; putting together events and things and facts. For example, the two separate ideas or visions -- "the road is blocked" and "the tree fell down" -- might have a causal relationship, which the mind instantly recognizes and expresses linguistically with an appropriate conjunction: "The road is blocked because the tree fell down". The conjunction "because" in this example is spelling out the relationship the speaker perceives between the two ideas. It's arranging them into a cause and effect relationship: that the tree fell down is a fact, and because of that fact, the road is now blocked.

Each thought, idea, or event, when it is expressed in language, is a called a clause. Hence the sentence "the road is blocked because the tree fell" contains two "clauses": the fact that the tree fell is expressed in one clause, and the fact that the road is blocked forms another "clause". It's possible for a sentence to contain only one clause, as in "Roses are red". It's also possible for a sentence to contain an ungodly number of clauses. See whether you can spot all the clauses -- that is separate thoughts -- in this sentence:

> *"Since we are looking for the ideal orator, we must use our powers of oratory to portray a speaker free from all possible faults and endowed with every possible merit; for though it is undeniable that the large number of lawsuits, the great variety or public questions, the illiterate masses who make the audience of our public speakers, offer a field to ever the most defective orators, we will not for that reason despair of finding what we want" (Cicero, On the Orator, 26).*

Let's back up and take a look at a string of unsubordinated clauses. (The speaker's name is George.)

> *"The dog is mean. The dog lives next door. One day the dog bit George. George kicked the dog. George's neighbor came out of the house. George's neighbor owns the dog. George's neighbor screamed at George. George's neighbor called the police. The police came. The dog bit the police. The police shot the dog. George is happy. The dog is dead".*

We don't talk like this because our language has developed a whole system of conjunctions and pronouns which allows us (1) to avoid all the unneeded repetition of nouns and (2) to make the logical and temporal relationships between thoughts explicit. There are a hundred ways to cast this string of events and facts which make full use of range of linguistic apparatus English makes available to us. Here's only one:

> *"The dog that lives next door is mean, and one day he bit me. So I kicked him. My neighbor, who owns the dog, came out of the house and screamed at me. Then he called the police. When they came, the dog bit them too, so they shot it. I am happy the dog is dead".*

You can see here all kinds of linkage between these thoughts, and all kinds of different linguistic apparatus that makes it possible. The kind of linkage we're interested in now is the "relative clause". Let's look at how it's done.

ENGLISH RELATIVE CLAUSES

Here's a bare bones definition of a relative clause: "A relative clause is a subordinate clause which acts like an adjective by providing additional information about a noun in another clause". Now here's an example showing the evolution of the relative clause.

CLAUSE 1: "The five o'clock train is never on time".
CLAUSE 2: "Hundreds of people take the five o'clock train".

The two clauses have something in common: the five o'clock train. Two separate facts have been identified about this train: it's never on time and hundreds of people take it. A speaker may arrange these two clauses however he wishes, subject only to the idea he wished to convey to his listener. If, for example, the most important thing he wants his listener to know about the train is that it is late all the time, clause 1 will have to be logically and syntactically "superior" to the fact contained in clause 2. That is to say, the fact in clause 2 -- that hundreds of people take the five o'clock train -- will be added simply as additional information about the train. In grammatical circles we call the most important element in the sentence the "main" or "ordinate" or "independent clause"; we call any other clause a "subordinate" or "dependent clause", because it is, in a real sense, a subordinate, a worker in the employment of the main clause.

So let's assume that the most important fact the speaker wants to get across is contained in clause 1, and that clause 2 is going to be worked in only as subordinate material. How is this going to happen.

STEP 1: Substitute "the five o'clock train" in clause 2 with the appropriate pronoun. The pronoun will refer the listener to the noun stated in clause 1.

CLAUSE 1: "The five o'clock train is never on time".
CLAUSE 2: "Hundreds of people take it".

Now hold on. Why did we chose "it" as the appropriate pronoun to reproduce "the five o'clock train" in clause 2? Well, the noun which the pronoun has to reproduce is singular in number and inanimate, so "it" is the correct choice. Next, what case is "it" in? Look, it's acting as the object of the verb "take" in its clause, so "it" is in the objective (or accusative) case. (This was just a review. You already know that pronouns get their number and gender from their antecedents, but get their case from the way they're being used in their own clause.)

STEP 2: Embed the subordinate clause into main clause.

SENTENCE: "The five o'clock train -- hundreds of people take it -- is never on time".

We could almost stop here. The two sentences have been merged into one, and clause 2 has been subordinated to the idea in clause 1. That is to say, the structure of clause 1 forms the main architecture of the new sentence. But English developed a further modification to work these two clauses into one sentence. It replaces the pronoun of the subordinate clause with a pronoun which indicates without a doubt that the clause coming up is dependent, or subordinate to, the clause which has just been interrupted. We replace the pronoun with the relative pronoun

"who, which" in the proper case and move it to the beginning of the clause. Now the two clauses have been completely welded into one sentence.

STEP 3: Substitute and move the pronoun.

> *SENTENCE: "The five o'clock train, which hundreds of people take, is never on time".*

And there you have it. Clause 2 has been fully incorporated into the message of the first clause. As soon as you read the relative pronoun "which" in this sentence, your mind automatically understands two things:

(1) *the clause coming up is not as important as the clause you've just left and*
(2) *the clause coming up is going to give you more information about some thing in the main clause.*

So this sentence is saying something like this: "the five o'clock train -- which, by the by, hundreds of people take -- is never on time". And one last pesky question: what case is "which" in? It's in the objective (or accusative) case because it is still the object of the verb in the relative clause: "take". Remember, number and gender from the antecedent, but case from its clause.

Now let's go back to the two clauses when they were independent thoughts.

CLAUSE 1: "The five o'clock train is never on time".
CLAUSE 2: "Hundreds of people take the five o'clock train".

It's also possible that main idea the speaker wishes to get across is the fact contained in clause 2 and will have to subordinate clause 1 into clause 2, in which case clause 2 will provide the basic architecture for the new sentence. Like this: "Hundreds of people take the five o'clock train, which is never on time". Now what case is "which" in? Look at the relative clause. If that doesn't help, look at the sentence from which the relative clause evolved. It came from clause 1, where "the five o'clock train" was nominative. The "which" is simply standing in for it, so "which" must nominative. And it is.

THE ENGLISH RELATIVE PRONOUN: CASE SYSTEM

We're going to look at several more examples of this in a second, but for now I have a few more things to add about the English relative pronoun. Like the other pronouns in English, the relative pronoun preserves three distinct case forms and even distinguishes between animate and inanimate. There is no distinction between the numbers.

	ANIMATE	*INANIMATE*
Nom.	*who*	*which*
Gen.	*whose*	*whose*
Acc.	*whom*	*which*

Notes:

(1) *Obviously, since English has lost its grammatical gender, the relative pronoun "who, whose, and whom" are*

only going to be used for living beings, usually only human beings, though sometimes for animals.

(2) A lot of people sniff at "whom" as archaic and elitist. That's possible, but I look at it this way: you should know how and when to use "whom" properly. If you're in a situation where your audience will denounce your pretensions to aristocracy if you use "whom", then don't use it. Don't go into a bar and say "Is this the same team whom the Packers beat last week?" On the other hand, if your listener will dismiss you as a bumpkin and ignoramus if you say "These are the actors who I'd admire", then use "whom". Knowing when to use "whom" correctly is like knowing the difference between a salad and oyster fork. It's not knowledge that's useful every day of your life, but when you need it it's nice to have. In any case, never use "whom" when you should use "who". You'll outrage everyone. If you're in doubt as to which to use, use "who".

(3) The nominative and accusative case of the relative pronoun "who, which" has been almost entirely replaced in colloquial English by "that": "The boy that I saw..", "The girl that plays basketball..", The car that is in the garage..".

(4) English also has the option of omitting the relative pronoun altogether, and often it does: "The boy whom I saw is six feet tall" becomes "The boy I saw is six feet tall". Latin doesn't have this option. It must always use the relative pronoun.

DRILL

Combine these two English sentences into one. Use the case

system of the relative pronoun, and indicate which number and case the Latin equivalent would be in.

Examples:

A. *"George kicked the dog. The dog lives next door".*

English: "George kicked the dog that (which) lives next door".
Latin: nominative singular

B. *"The students don't like Latin. The teachers gave the students a book".*

English: "The girls, to whom the teacher gave a book, don't like Latin".
Latin: dative plural

1. *"They see the cars. The cars belong to George".*

English:

Latin:

2. *"George likes hard boiled eggs. George's brother is in jail".*

English:

Latin:

3. *"Many students are never prepared for class. The professor is writing a very difficult final exam for the students".*

   English:

   Latin:

4. *"The rocks fell off the cliff. The rocks were very slick".*

   English:

   Latin:

5. *"Betty avoids my brother. My brother's hair is dyed pea-green".*

   English:

   Latin:

THE LATIN RELATIVE PRONOUN

We've done all the difficult work. You understand what a relative clause is: (1) they are subordinate clauses; (2) they are introduced by relative pronouns; (3) the relative pronoun agrees in number and gender with its antecedent, but gets its case from the way it's being used in its own clause; and (4) they

modify something in the main clause. Now you have only to learn the declensional system of the Latin relative pronoun and practice with it.

The Latin relative pronoun has a full declensional system. That is to say, it has 30 separate forms: five cases in three genders in both numbers. The stem is "qu-" and it follows basically the pattern set down by the pronouns "is, ea, id", "ille, illa, illud", etc. But there are some substantial variations. Here is the full pattern. Look for regularities first; then go back and collect the deviations.

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
Nom.	qui	quae	quod
Gen.	cuius	cuius	cuius
Dat.	cui	cui	cui
Acc.	quem	quam	quod
Abl.	quo	qua	quo

Nom.	qui	quae	quae
Gen.	quorum	quarum	quorum
Dat.	quibus	quibus	quibus
Acc.	quos	quas	quae
Abl.	quibus	quibus	quibus

Let's start the close up examination by running down the masculine forms first.

(1) The nominative case singular is a little unusual: qui, but most of the demonstratives and pronouns are odd in the nominative singular.

(2) The genitive and dative singulars (of the genders) use the predictable pronoun case endings "-ius" and "-i", but the stem has changed from "qu-" to "cu-".
(3) In the accusative singular you'd expect "quum" ("qu" + "um"); but no such luck: "quem" is the form. The "-em" looks as if it's "borrowed" from the third declension, doesn't it.
(4) Things calm down for a while, but the dative and ablative plurals use the "-ibus" ending which they evidently import from the third declension. Notice again that "quibus" is the form for all the genders in the dative and ablative plural.

Now let's have a look at the feminine.

(1) Nominative's odd: "quae" instead of "qua". But so what?
(2) Genitive and dative singular: stem "cu-" + "-ius" and "-i". Like the masculine.
(3) Finally, the dative and ablative plurals aren't "quis" but, like the masculine, "quibus".

And then the neuter.

(1) After having seen the masculine and feminine forms of the relative pronoun, the only truly unexpected quirk of the neuter is the nominative, hence also accusative, plural: you get "quae" instead of "qua". Pay attention, now, the form "quae" can be any one of four possibilities: (a) feminine nominative singular; (b) feminine nominative plural; (c) neuter nominative plural; (d) neuter accusative plural. Context will be

your only guide.

Now try to write out the forms of the relative pronoun on your own.

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
Nom.	_____	_____	_____
Gen.	_____	_____	_____
Dat.	_____	_____	_____
Acc.	_____	_____	_____
Abl.	_____	_____	_____

Nom.	_____	_____	_____
Gen.	_____	_____	_____
Dat.	_____	_____	_____
Acc.	_____	_____	_____
Abl.	_____	_____	_____

Okay, now let's take apart a couple of Latin sentences with relative clauses. Translate these sentences, and tell me the number gender and case of the relative pronouns. Try following

these steps:

(1) Go slowly;
(2) First read the entire sentence and try to identify the main clause and the relative clause. The relative clause will begin with the relative pronoun and probably end with a verb;
(3) After you've isolated the relative clause, forget it for a moment, and concentrate on translating the main clause -- the main clause is, after all, the most important thought in the sentence;
(4) Next, look at the relative pronoun and try to figure out it number and gender -- forget about the case for now. You want to match up the relative pronoun with its antecedent, and the relative pronoun will agree with its antecedent in number and gender.
(5) After all that, then you're ready to translate the relative clause. For that you'll need to know the case of the relative pronoun. Look carefully, and use what you know about its gender and number to check off any multiple possibilities.
(6) The last step, then, after all the pieces of the sentence have been analyzed separately, is to put it all back together.
(7) Go slowly.

1. "Vidi canem qui ex Asia venit". (canis, -is (m) "dog")

Translation: _____

Relative Pronoun: _____

2. *"Vidi canes quos amas".*

Translation: _____

Relative Pronoun: _____

3. *"Puellae, quarum pater est parvus, sunt magnae".*

Translation: _____

Relative Pronoun: _____

4. *"Vidi pueros quibus libros dedistis".*

Translation: _____

Relative Pronoun: _____

5. *"Vidi pueros cum quibus venistis".*

Translation: _____

Relative Pronoun: _____

6. *"Civem quem miseratis laudaverunt".*

Translation: _____

Relative Pronoun: _____

Now let's do it the other way.

1. *"The tyrant destroyed the cities from which the citizens had fled".*

   _____

2. *"He came with the citizen to whom they had entrusted their lives".*

   _____

3. *"I saw the citizens with whom you had fled".*

   _____

4. *"They have the money with which the tyrant captured the city".*

   _____

5. *"The father whose sons were stupid came out of Asia".*

   _____

VOCABULARY PUZZLES

aut...aut It used like this: aut x aut y = either x or y.

coepi, coepisse, coeptus The first entry for this verb is the perfect tense, first person singular. The second is the perfect infinitive (which you have seen yet), and the third entry is the fourth principal part. The verb is listed this way because it has no first principal part -- which mean logically that "coepi" has no present system tenses: no present, future, or imperfect. Another way to list this verb would be: "----------, ----------, coepi, coeptus". Verbs which lack one or more principal part are called "defective verbs". To say "I begin", "I will begin", or "I was beginning", Latin uses the first principal part of the verb "incipio, -ere, -cepi, -ceptus.

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