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**THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE  
AND FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE:  
A STUDY OF DEVELOPMENTAL TENDENCIES**

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**1. Introduction**

The interplay of communicative and syntactic aspects in the historical development of the English language belongs to one of the less researched areas of diachronic linguistics. Having only relatively recently been brought to a more general attention, the investigations carried on in this field nevertheless seem to bring a number of interesting conclusions, raising questions about the extent to which the syntactic changes may be influenced by pragmatic parameters (Seoane, 2006: 360). This article attempts to develop some of the points that have been made in regard to this problem and to pinpoint the extent to which the standardization of syntactic structures may be viewed as having exercised an influence over the communicative aspects of the language in the period between the grammatical systematization of the 16th/17th century and the Present-day English standards.

**2. Early Modern English Syntax**

While Old and Middle English periods can be described in terms of sweeping changes and systemic transformations, the immediately following centuries may be seen as a time of regularization, systematization and functional expansion (Rissanen, 1999: 189). Shifts in the cultural and social climate as well as the changing dimensions of everyday life have brought an increasing pressure for gradual formation of a standard language variety that would be internally consistent, capable of providing an accurate and adequate medium for a discussion of a broad range of topics in different types of situations, and also flexible enough to be able to match the intricate aesthetics of such modes of expression as could be found in classical literature (Görlach, 1991: 95). On the level of grammar, this endeavour can be manifested in the process of slow unification and regularization of morpho-syntactic patterns, as well as in an increased preference for complex sentential structures, especially favoured under the influence of Ciceronian syntactic models. Particularly prominent among the non-coordinating constructions is the rise of non-finite clauses during the 16th century, as regards both their frequency and variety of usage, resulting in possibilities of greater economy of expression as well as in stylistic diversity.

In general, the nature of the period can be subsumed under the heading of transition, characterized by greater variation and grammatical flexibility. Many of the “firmly established syntactic rules” found today are still reported to be lacking (Görlach, 1991: 98), allowing for a certain amount of freedom of choice with respect to such matters as word order, patterns of negation or *do*-support (Barber, 1976: 280–283; Bækken, 1998: 4). Also blurred are the precise delimitations of sentential units in written discourse, which result at times in sentences “excessively long” for the contemporary eye, often equalling up to a whole stretch of one paragraph (Görlach, 1991: 126, 130).

The question of clausal arrangement at this stage of historical development has been put under in-depth investigation only relatively recently, as it has for long been “assumed that the main changes concerning word order at clause level took place in earlier periods” (Pérez-Guerra, 1999: 1). While it may be certainly claimed that the SVO order spread already in the course of Middle English, and that it had become by far the commonest pattern in declarative sentences (Barber, 1976: 280), current studies suggest that the process of transition towards a fixed SV sequence had not been as entirely straightforward as the initial impressions might suggest. The data given by Breivik & Swan (1994) in their investigation of initial adverbials, and by Bækken (1998, 2003) in her studies of word order patterns during the Early Modern period, indicate that the establishment of verb-medial order was a wavelike process progressing by leaps and bounds throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, rather than coming to a fixed state around the end of the 15th. In other words, while an Early Modern declarative sentence “shows a strong tendency” towards the SVO sequence, “this tendency is not yet grammaticalized [...], at least not in the sense of exhibiting the set patterns and fixed rules which characterize Present-day English” (Seoane, 2006: 361).

This is especially perceivable in the case of inverted subjects. Unlike in Late Modern English, the use of inversion during the fifteen and early sixteen hundreds was much less confined, allowing for combinations with different kinds of initial elements, including positive or non-restrictive adverbials, direct objects and subject complements. The choice of inverted vs. non-inverted patterns appears to be the result of an interplay of various factors, including the realization of the subject, length of the initial element and transitivity of the predicate. According to both Bækken (2003: 197) and Rissanen (1999: 264–266), the VS sequence after an initial adverbial was more likely to occur in cases where (1) the subject was realized by a noun-headed noun phrase instead of a pronoun, (2) the initial element was extremely light, (3) the verb phrase was short, mostly comprising just an intransitive verb, and (4) the predicate included one of a limited set of selected verbs, especially *have* and *say*. Similar conditions also appear to have applied to inversion after an initial object, the fronting of which was often done for the purpose of strengthening textual coherence.

### 3. FSP research on Early Modern English material

If comparatively little research has been carried out on the syntactic development in Early Modern English, an even lesser amount of studies appears to exist that have been specifically devoted to the FSP analysis of the texts dating from that period. Pérez-Guer-

ra's selective treatise (1995) of the syntactic developments occurring between Late Middle and Early Modern English utilises a structural concept of theme as the initial segment of a clause (Pérez-Guerra, 1999: 19–20). Constructions which do not place a lexical subject in the clause-initial position,<sup>1</sup> such as *there*-constructions, clefts, extrapositions, cases of topicalization and inversion are considered thematically marked. Comparing and mapping the changes in structural attributes and textual frequency of these constructions in the given time span, Pérez-Guerra (1999: 296) reaches two important conclusions. Firstly, no significant syntactic change pertaining to or directly affecting the analysed constructions seems to have been observed: “the basic syntactic organisation of the thematic variants within each subsystem did not undergo significant alteration within the periods analysed, which corroborates the assumption that the major patterns must have developed earlier.” Secondly, despite not having undergone a structural shift, significant changes seem to have occurred during the Early Modern stage in terms of consolidation of the marked variants, which was characterized both by an increase of the general frequency of their usage, as well as their expansion into a wider range of different text types. This consolidation is especially observable in the later stages of the period between 1640 and 1710, affirming the initial assumption of Early Modern English as a period significant for the development of thematic variations observed in the present-day language.

A different approach to thematic analysis is taken by Bækken, who in her corpus-based studies (1998, 2003) considers the nature of mutual relationship between the ways of encoding contextually given elements and their position in a sentence. Similarly to the Late Modern English data, her research shows that the 16th and 17th century texts have “a strong tendency for subjects to constitute given information” (2003: 116, 198).<sup>2</sup> The placement of subjects in relation to the position of predicates appears to be fully consistent with the principles of end-weight and end-focus, in that both context-independent, new subjects and to some extent non-pronominal given subjects are more likely to appear postverbally, rather than initially. Initial elements other than subjects and verbs, on the other hand, show a completely reverse functional tendency, in that the majority of preposed constituents are contextually new. Their initial position can thus be interpreted as a “focusing device”, endowing the element with a greater amount of informational importance (Bækken, 2003: 117).<sup>3</sup> The XSV order appears to show the greatest amount of

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<sup>1</sup> Pérez-Guerra draws upon Susan Stucky's concept of permutational word order variation for introducing the concept of thematic subsystems, i.e. an interrelated set of constructions which differ in no propositional or morpho-syntactic feature, but in the linear arrangement of their components (see Stucky, S. U., *Configurational Variation in English: A Study of Extraposition and Related Matters*, SRI International, 1987: 377–404). Stucky distinguishes between configurational variants (1987: 378), which encompass all syntactic constructions with identical propositional content, but of different structure, and permutational variants, which are “not dependent on the morphological form of lexical items” (1987: 379).

<sup>2</sup> This is also corroborated by Seoane (2006: 363), who stresses the universal validity of the given-before-new principle throughout the historical development of English.

<sup>3</sup> This phenomenon may be likened to the observed high emphatic effect of the marked placement of rhemes in current Czech described by Mathesius (1947: 340) and Firbas (1992: 120), due to the non-observance of the governing word order principle of FSP linearity compliance (Firbas, 1974: 13). The order of syntactic elements in which one or more rhematic elements precede the theme is by Mathesius termed “subjective”, as opposed to the unmarked, “objective” variant. In the course of Modern English, however, the marked character of these types of sentences does not primarily stem from the non-observance of the basic distribution of communicative dynamism; instead, the result-

consistency in terms of information flow, typically proceeding from a new initial element to a given, usually pronominal, subject. The same level of generalization is rather more difficult to make for the inverted patterns, as the frequency of particular combinations fluctuates for different initial elements; structures complying with the basic distribution of communicative dynamism nevertheless appear to be common, as they allow post-verbal placement of new subjects (Bækken, 2003: 118).

#### 4. Methodology

In the previous sections some of the key approaches to the problems of sentence ordering and information flow have been presented with respect to the grammatical shifts that have been observed to occur within the past five centuries. The present research does not strive to convey a comprehensive description of the relationship between the syntactic and communicative strategies in the mid-Early Modern English period; instead, it tries to map the key differences between the Early and Late Modern clausal syntax, with special attention to the limitations they impose on the observance of the FSP linearity principle and the possibilities they offer for reconciling this principle with the grammaticalized word order. In comparison with the studies of Bækken and Pérez-Guerra introduced earlier, the following analysis differs in two basic respects: (1) choice of the language material, and (2) selection of the pursued FSP theory.

Both of the previous investigations were relying on a one-dimensional, i.e. single-factor, approach to thematicity, based either on the initial position of an element within a clause or sentence, or on contextual givenness. For the purpose of the present research, thematicity is perceived in the Firbasian sense (Firbas, 1992) as a result of the interplay between the relation of the phrasal/clausal elements to the context, i.e. whether they are context-dependent or not, and their linear arrangement and semantics, which assigns to the individual communicative units different degrees of communicative dynamism on different syntactic levels (i.e. that of a phrase, clause and sentence). The analysis was simplified in the sense that only binary division was observed, differentiating between theme and non-theme. Instead of a detailed description of each distributional field, the primary focus is placed on the role of the grammatical principle of word order in determining the position of thematic elements.

Also unlike the research conducted by Bækken and Pérez-Guerra, the present study is based on a comparison of two parallel editions of a single text, rather than on corpus material. While the textual approach necessarily inhibits any stylistic or demographic analysis and faces the imminent danger of overgeneralization as a result of overestimating the role of the authors' own idiolects, the confrontational perspective it offers possesses the advantage of direct comparison of matching propositional contents and syntactic structures as they appear in actual discourse. The stress is thus placed on the observation and evaluation of specific differences ensuing under corresponding contextual conditions.

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ing emotive emphasis is a result of the deviation from the requirements of the grammatical principle, which delimits the sentence position of elements on the basis of their syntactic function (Firbas, 1992: 120–23).

The comparative analysis was carried out on two English translations of Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae*, the first dating back to the year 1609 (Text A), the second to 1999 (Text B). From the 17th century version 50 sentences were excerpted, to which a corresponding section encompassing an identical amount of semantic content was selected from the more recent publication.<sup>4</sup> Both pieces of text were then divided into individual clauses. Each clause was analyzed for (1) its realization, i.e. finite, non-finite, or verbless, (2) its syntactic function, i.e. main vs. dependent: subject, object, adverbial, etc., (3) its syntactic type, i.e. nominal content, nominal relative, adjectival relative, and adverbial, (4) its position within the sentence (this concerns mainly the cases of mismatch in linear arrangement between Text A and Text B), and (5) its FSP. Morphological differences were not considered.

On the basis of theoretical preliminaries concerning the nature of Early Modern syntax, several types of structural non-correspondences were expected to be found. One of the most basic mismatches was assumed to appear in the length and number of sentences, with the later version comprising shorter and more numerous instances. Given the fact that in both cases the original language from which the translations were produced was Latin, it was also suspected that the Early Modern version in particular might include a number of structures the presence and usage of which would be influenced by the original material. These were expected to pertain mostly to the means of sentence condensation. Cases of inversion and non-observance of the basic SVO order in declarative sentences were also expected to occur more frequently and in more varied environment than in Text B. The measure of adherence to the basic distribution of communicative dynamism was assumed to be closely similar, albeit the anticipated level of relative freedom in word order was expected to enable occasional changes in the linearity conducive to easier accommodation of the theme – non-theme sequence.

The following sections present an overview of the most important syntactic differences that have been observed in the two texts, with special regard to the changes in the FSP or its means, wherever relevant. Examples are given in each section of clauses pertaining to the issue in question; the full text of both versions is included in the Appendix. It should be noted, however, that the small number of sample sentences prohibits wider generalisations and a further, more large-scale study would be needed for any conclusive results.

## **5. Results**

### **5.1 The clause and the sentence**

After the initial identification and counting of individual clauses, the disproportions between the two texts appear to corroborate the observations that the Early Mod-

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<sup>4</sup> The original essay is written in a prosimetric form. As the metre may unduly restrict both the grammatical and lexical choices in the language, exercising an influence over its syntactic structures as well as FSP, all the metrical passages were excluded.

ern sentences are longer and thus less numerous than the sentences found in the Present-day version of the same text. Cf. the following:

**Table 1.** Total number of sentential and clausal units in Texts A and B

		<b>Text A: Early Modern English</b>	<b>Text B: Present-day English</b>
sentences	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>55 [+10%]</b>
clauses	finite	199 (89.6%)	215 (93.5%)
	non-finite	21 (9.5%)	15 (6.5%)
	verbless	2 (0.9%)	0 (0%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>230 [+3.6%]</b>

As can be seen from the Table, the difference in the number of sentences between the two texts reaches 10%. While the figures, given the small scale of the sample, cannot be viewed as fully conclusive, they nevertheless seem to lead towards the inference of the Late Modern sentences being shorter and less informationally packed than those of the Early Modern period. This overall tendency nevertheless should not be viewed as absolute in the sense that it excludes the possibility of lengthier sequences appearing in the newer version in places where the older one opts for shorter, separate structures. Counter to the assumption of the sentences being universally shorter goes especially the fact that the later version ranks higher in the number of individual clauses. This disproportion appears to suggest the existence of systematic differences both on the level of nominalization and in lexical choices between the two texts, resulting in the later version relying on a greater number of clauses to deliver the same propositional content. Rather than just in terms of length, it might therefore be more precise to claim that in this particular case, the Early Modern sentences tend to comprise a larger number of semantically relevant elements than the Late Modern ones, thus managing to convey more information within one unit.

Turning attention to the clauses themselves, we find a relatively high number of direct syntactic parallels. More than 60% of the clauses in each text have been found to correspond in terms of the finiteness of their predicates, their syntactic type, and in the function they perform. The remaining 40% comprise various types of clausal mismatches, which might be grouped into two large categories: (1) clauses with no direct clausal parallel in the other text, and (2) clauses the parallel of which differs in one or more of the basic syntactic features stated above. A proportional summary of the relevant data, showing the total number of occurrences of each correspondence type is given in Table 2:

**Table 2.** Different types of clauses according to the level of mutual correspondence

		<b>Text A: Early Modern English</b>	<b>Text B: Present-day English</b>
clauses corresponding in their syntactic type, function and realization to the parallel clauses in the other text	<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>140</b>
clauses unparalleled in the other text	finite	15 (71.4%)	35 (89.7%)
	non-finite	6 (28.6%)	4 (10.3%)
	verbless	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>39</b>
clauses differing in their syntactic type, function or realization from the corresponding clauses in the other text	finite	34 (66.7%)	40 (78.4%)
	non-finite	15 (29.4%)	11 (21.6%)
	verbless	2 (3.9%)	0 (0%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>51</b>

One of the most conspicuous disparities noticeable at first glance is the higher preference of the Early Modern translation for employing non-finite clauses, thus reaching a greater level of economy. The other most apparent disproportion concerns the number of clauses lacking a corresponding clausal unit in the other textual variant, which reaches almost twice as high a figure for the 20th century translation as compared with the 17th.

### ***5.2 Clauses with no direct clausal parallel***

By comparing the propositional and syntactic characteristics of the unparalleled constructions, we may conclude that the presence of an extra clause arises for one of three basic reasons: (1) The other text employs a significantly different structure for the nearest superordinate clause or for the sentence as a whole, including disparities in colligation and valency patterns of the predicate verb. (2) The clause possesses a semantic parallel, which is nevertheless expressed by non-clausal means. These include nominalizations, differences in lexical choices and cases of predicate coordination. (3) The clause shows no kind of semantic parallel, either clausal or non-clausal. This relatively rare type occurs in cases where greater explicitness is felt to be needed, usually of things deducible from the immediately preceding context.

The first group is very difficult to characterize in terms of any general tendencies, as the clauses falling under this heading are extremely varied and no significantly prevailing patterns appear to emerge. Exceptionally, the presence of an extra clause may be due to

diachronic changes, as in the case of 1.A; this, however, appears to be only an isolated example. The only relatively common denominative which may be observed in these clauses is the tendency of Text B to choose formulations, where possible, that deliver a higher measure of explicitness, as can be seen in 2.B or 3.B (the capital letters given after each number refer to the code letters of the source texts; the relevant clauses are underlined):

- 1.A *Having sayd thus she began to turne her speech to certaine other questions when I interrupted her, saying: [...].*
- 1.B *Following upon these verses, she was diverting the course of her words to discuss and explain certain other matters, when I remarked [...].*
- 2.A *Wherefore they which have reason, have freedom to will and nill. But yet I make this not equal in all.*
- 2.B *Hence creatures which themselves possess reason also posses the freedom to will or not to will, but my view is that this freedom does not exist equally in all.*
- 3.A *As though our question were which of them is the other's cause, the foreknowledge of the necessitie of things to come, or the necessitie of things to come of foreknowledge?*
- 3.B *The assumption here is that we are toiling over the problem of which is the cause of which: is foreknowledge the cause of the necessity of future events, or is the necessity of future events the cause of Providence?*

Contrary to the diversity of clause types found in the first group, the second set of clauses comprises regularly recurrent parallels between a phrasal or nominal expression in Text A on the one hand and an adjectival relative clause in Text B on the other. This set includes a whole third of the total number of extra clauses in B and is in almost 40% constituted by instances in which the parallel Text A employs a possessive pronoun in the function of a premodifier. Cf. the examples below:

- 4.A *'I make haste,' quoth shee, 'to performe my promise and to shew thee the way by which thou mayest returne to thy country.'*
- 4.B *To this she responded: 'I am in a hurry to fulfil the promise which I owe you, and to reveal the route by which you are to be restored to your homeland.'*
- 5.A *And these questions, though they be very profitable, yet they are somewhat from our purpose.*
- 5.B *These matters which you raise are admittedly useful to grasp, but they do divert us for a little while from the path which we have set ourselves.*
- 6.A *'My Aristotle,' quoth shee, 'in his bookes of nature declared this point briefely and truly.'*
- 6.B *'My Aristotle,' she replied, 'in his Physics has offered a succinct account of it which approximates to the truth.'*



The adjectival relative clauses in Text B seem to perform two important functions. Firstly, they necessarily contain a higher degree of specificity and explicitness, managing to store a greater amount of information than which can be conveyed by the possessive structures. Secondly, they play a vital role in the clause's FSP, as they generally render the modifying element more dynamic, stressing its rhematicity on the sentential level. It is important to note that in the last pair of examples, the presence of the adjectival relative in B is conditioned by the preceding clause placing a thematic element *it* at the end, while the earlier text ends its parallel with the rheme; this disproportion, however, is smoothed out in the distributional field of the sentence, where the final communicative units are always rhematic.

The third group of clauses that has been described in the beginning of this chapter is entirely typical of the newer translation. Some of these clausal structures appear to serve as a special type of *aides memoire*, reminding the reader of some point from the previous context, others appear to be included in order to clarify some of the more difficult passages. A special, though minor, subtype of these clauses features expressions of interaction, engaging the other interlocutor, and thus implicitly the reader, in the dialogue. As a whole, the group comprises a mixture of elements, including a discourse marker (7.B), style disjunct (8.B) and other various odd clauses included for explanatory or explicatory purposes (9.B, 10.B):

7.A 'What is that?' quoth she, 'for I already conjecture what it is that troubleth thee.'

7.B 'What is it?' she asked. Mind you, I can guess what is worrying you.'

8.A For it is a true sentence that of nothing commeth nothing, which none of the ancients denied, though they held not that principle of the efficient cause but of the material subject that is of the nature of all formes.

8.B It is a true saying, never challenged by any of the ancients, that nothing comes forth from nothing – though this foundation, so to speak, which they laid for all explanations of nature, they applied not to the creative originator, but to the matter subject to it.

9.A For that which naturally hath the use of reason hath also judgement, by which he can discern of every thing by it selfe, wherefore he putteth a difference betwixt those things which are to bee avoided and those which are to bee desired.

9.B What can by its nature deploy reason, possesses the judgement by which to discern each and every thing, and thus unaided distinguishes what must be avoided from what is desirable.

10.A Wherefore if from eternity he doth not only foreknow the deeds of men, but also their counsels and wills, there can be no freewill: for there is not any other deede or will but those which the divine providence that cannot bee deceived hath foreseene.

10.B So if God has prior knowledge from eternity not only of men's actions but also of their plans and wishes, there will be no freedom of will; for the only action and any sort of intention which can possibly exist in the future will be foreknown by divine Providence, which cannot be misled.

### 5.3 Differences in clausal realizations of corresponding semantic content

#### 5.3.1 Main vs. dependent clause

When comparing the overall structure of the sentences, Text B is occasionally found to employ a main clause where Text A resorts to subordination. At times this may result from differences in segmentation, but in other cases it appears to be merely a question of general preference for coordinated structures. Most frequently the newer translation seems to favour the usage of main clauses where the older version opts for clausal adverbials or adjectival relative clauses, although other types of combinations can also be found. It is to be noted that especially in the cases of propositional concordance between adverbial and main clauses, the avoidance of subordinate structures tends to impoverish the sentence of some of the relational explicitness it would otherwise carry. Consider the following examples:

- 11.A *'And these questions, though they be very profitable, yet they are somewhat from our purpose, and it is to be feared, lest being wearied with digressions, beest not able to finish thy direct journey.'*
- 11.B *These matters which you raise are admittedly useful to grasp, but they do divert us for a little while from the path which we have set ourselves.*
- 12.A *'There is no feare of that,' quoth I, 'for it will be a great ease to me to understand those things in which I take great delight, and withal when thy disputation is fenced in on every side, there can bee no doubt made of any thing thou shalt inferre.'*
- 12.B *'You must not have the slightest fear of that,' I said. It will be as good as a rest for me to identify the problems closest to my heart.'*
- 13.A *These are therefore the causes of this fortunate accident, which proceedeth from the meeting and concourse of causes, and not from the intention of the doer.*
- 13.B *So this is the explanation of that casual acquisition of his. It resulted not from any intention of the man who was digging, but from causes which met and fused with each other.*

In the first pair of clauses, the concessive structure of 11.A is mirrored in the parallel text by the use of a disjunct *admittedly*; such a kind of substitute, however, is not to be found in 12.B. A similar example is found in 13.A/B, where once again the difference in segmentation results in a main clause as a parallel of an adjectival relative clause in the function of a postmodifier. While this case differs from the previous one in that we may clearly perceive two opposing tendencies of linear progression in these clauses, the FSP does not appear to have been of any structural relevance in forming this decision. Judging from the rest of the available data, the reason for the older text containing a slightly higher number of dependent clauses presumably lies in the attempt to provide a more explicit indication of the logical implications resulting from the relationship between the semantic content of two clausal units and the desire to form closer propositional ties between them.

### 5.3.2 Finite vs. non-finite realization

As has been noted in section 5.1, the finite and non-finite realizations of clauses are not distributed equally. Let us now have a closer look at particular differences that have been observed between the two texts. The numbers of cases in which the corresponding clauses differ in respect to finiteness are given in Table 3:

**Table 3.** Non-correspondences in finite – non-finite realizations

Text A: Early Modern English	Text B: Present-day English	Number of cases
non-finite	finite	10
finite	non-finite	7
verbless	finite	2

When looking at the slightly less frequent correspondence of finite (A) ~ non-finite (B), it may be seen that with only two exceptions these concern the cases of postmodifying clauses of the adjectival relative type in text A as parallels of non-finite postmodifiers in B, e.g.:

- 14.A *Wherefore wee may define chance thus: that it is an unexpected event of concurring causes in those things which are done to some end and purpose.*
- 14.B *Thus we can define chance as the unexpected outcome of a conjunction of causes in actions carried out for some purpose.*
- 15.A *For that which naturally hath the use of reason hath also judgement, by which he can discern of every thing by it selfe, wherefore he putteth a difference betwixt those things which are to bee avoided and those which are to bee desired.*
- 15.B *What can by its nature deploy reason, possesses the judgement by which to discern each and every thing, and thus unaided distinguishes what must be avoided from what is desirable.*
- 16.A *For it is not necessarie that those things should happen which are foreseene but it is necessarie that those things should be foreseene that are to come.*
- 16.B *Their argument is that things foreseen do not therefore happen by necessity, but that things which will happen are necessarily foreseen.*

The motivation for the use of non-finite structures appears to be rooted in the attempt to achieve a greater amount of condensation in clauses where the presence or absence of the notional subject, or rather its substitute, is not especially relevant in terms of the informational load of the clause. Another reason, albeit perhaps more disputable, could be seen in the need for greater stylistic variety, for, as has been pointed out in 5.2, Text B contains a relatively high number of extra adjectival relative constructions, which

are not present in the older translation. This might also be corroborated by the fact that no similarly prevalent type of typological correspondence between the two texts appears to apply to the opposite situation, i.e. the non-finite (A) ~ finite (B) parallel. The examples may differ in realization only (17.A/B), or be illustrative of any other typological non-concordance, without a particular preference for any set type of structural parallel:

17.A *For having cast their eyes from the light of the soveraigne truth to inferior obscurities, forthwith they are blinded with the cloud of ignorance, molested with hurtfull affections, by yielding and consenting to which, they increase the bondage, which they layd upon themselves, and are after a certaine manner captives by their own freedome.*

17.B *The furthest degree of slavery is reached when they devote themselves to vices, and abrogate the possession of reason which is theirs; for once they lower their eyes from the light of the highest truth down to the world of darkness below, they are then shrouded in a cloud of ignorance, and become confused by destructive emotions.*

18.A 'I observe it,' quoth I, 'and acknowledge it to bee as thou sayest.'

18.B 'I take heed of your words,' I said, 'and I agree that it is as you say.'

19.A *But their greatest bondage is, when giving themselves to vices, they loose the possession of their owne reason.*

19.B *The furthest degree of slavery is reached when they devote themselves to vices, and abrogate the possession of reason which is theirs; [...].*

As can be seen from the examples, the primary motivation for the choice of (non-) finiteness appears to be that of concision, although a certain level of direct influence from the original Latin text might also play a role. In neither of the parallel patterns, i.e. finite (A) ~ non-finite (B) or non-finite (A) ~ finite (B), can it be plausibly sought in terms of communicative dynamism, for no significant change in FSP is involved. The only two solitary cases which differ in their basic linearity or appear to attribute a different degree of communicative dynamism to the individual communicative units can be found in 20.A/B and 21.A/B. Once again, however, neither of these contain any indication of the FSP being directly influenced by the type of realization of its clause; rather, the difference can be seen as stemming from the deliberate choice of the translator (21.A/B) or from the structure of the sentence as a whole (20.A/B); cf.:

20.A 'For I desire to know, whether thou thinkest chance to be anything at all, & what it is.'

20.B 'So the question that I pose is whether you think that there is such a thing as chance, and what you think it is.

21.A 'And these questions, though they be very profitable, yet they are somewhat from our purpose, and it is to be feared, lest being wearied with digressions, thou beest not able to finish thy direct journey.

21.B 'My fear is that these digressions will weary you, and that you will not be equal to complete the road lying straight ahead.

### 5.3.3 Other differences in syntactic structure and function

The last major group of structural disparities between the parallel texts concerns those cases in which the clauses do follow the same type of realization with respect to finiteness of their predicates yet differ in syntactic structure and/or function. Albeit these comprise a total number of 22 pairs, their characteristics are often so varied that they escape any possibility for broader generalizations. Two repeated patterns, nevertheless, appear to emerge.

First, it is the adjectival relative (A) ~ nominal relative (B) clause. The usage of nominal relative clauses is especially conspicuous in this context, since they appear in none of the clauses in Text A that fall under the heading of this section. Most frequently, these clauses perform the roles of a direct or prepositional object (22.B) in places where the older version opts for a postmodifier, although one case of a nominal relative clause performing the role of a subject has also been identified (23.B):

- 22.A *For that which naturally hath the use of reason hath also judgement, by which he can discern of every thing by it selfe, wherefore he putteth a difference betwixt those things which are to bee avoided and those which are to bee desired.*
- 22.B *What can by its nature deploy reason, by which to discern each and every thing, and thus unaided distinguishes what must be avoided from what is desirable.*
- 23.A *For if God beholdeth all things and cannot be deceived, that must of necessity follow, which his providence foreseeth to be to come.*
- 23.B *If God foresees all things and cannot be in any way mistaken, then what Providence has foreseen will happen must inevitably come to pass.*

The second notable feature, though less directly tied to any specific type of typological correspondence, is the number of extraposed subjects and cleft structures, which in Text B have parallels in various kinds of sentence constituents, namely subject complements (24.A/B) and adverbials (25.A/B):

- 24.A *For it is not necessarie that those things should happen which are foreseene but it is necessarie that those things should be foreseene that are to come.*
- 24.B *Their argument is that things foreseen do not therefore happen by necessity, but that things which will happen are necessarily foreseen.*
- 25.A *For although they be foreseene because they shall be and they doe not come to passe because they are foreseene: notwithstanding it is necessary that things to come be foreseene, or that things foreseen doe fall out; [...].*
- 25.B *Clearly the argument about Providence and the future is similar; for even if things are foreseen because they are about to happen, and they do not in fact happen because they are foreseen, nevertheless necessity lies either in that future events are foreseen by God, or that things foreseen happen because they are foreseen.*

It is interesting to note that both postmodifying relative clauses in 24.A are discontinuous, thus acquiring the unmarked rhematic position. Text B, on the other hand, places the focus both on the adverbial and the predicate.

### 5.3.4 Non-observance of SVO

The question of an accurate assessment of word order patterns in declarative clauses throughout the course of the Early Modern period is connected to the issue of evaluating the fluctuating tendencies in the permissibility and usage of what might be seen as the remains of the verb second principle (V2), as opposed to the preference of the future SVO standard. Since the original translation of Text A dates back to 1609, it was expected that several traces of inversion or other non-SVO patterns might be found in the text, possibly due to end-weight or FSP motivation. A similar investigation has been made into the Late Modern textual parallel in order to see whether or not the translator still chooses to employ linear deviations for the accommodation of the basic distribution of communicative dynamism where necessary. The results are presented below:

**Table 4.** Deviations from SVO pattern in declarative clauses without initial negative adverbial

Word order		Text A:	Text B:
		Early Modern English	Present-day English
OSV	FSP motivated	0	3
	FSP unmotivated	0	0
(O)VS	FSP motivated	1	0
	FSP unmotivated	11	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>

As can be seen from the table, linear arrangements divergent from the standard modern word order are relatively rare in both samples. The only types of patterns found in the two texts that do not comply with the basic SVO are those involving object fronting and subject-verb inversion. Several important observations need to be made, however, in respect to these data.

Firstly, it can be seen that each of the patterns is exclusive in the sense that it appears only in one of the texts, but not in both. Secondly, while the changes in the basic word order in Text B are made in order to reconcile the linear progression with the FSP principle, this motivation is almost entirely absent from the inversions in Text A. The only case in which inversion appears to be employed in order to achieve the basic distribution of communicative dynamism can be found in 26.A. While both the noun phrase and the prepositional phrase comprise entirely context-independent elements, the subject *nothing* in this sense is to be viewed as more important to the development of communication than the preceding adverbial, and constitutes the rheme proper:

- 26.A *For it is a true sentence that of nothing commeth nothing, which none of the ancients denied, though they held not that principle of the efficient cause but of the material subject that is of the nature of all formes.*
- 26.B *It is a true saying, never challenged by any of the ancients, that nothing comes forth from nothing – though this foundation, so to speak, which they laid for all explanations of nature, they applied not to the creative originator, but to the matter subject to it.*

The examples of the remaining eleven inversions share very specific common features: (1) they all pertain to an identical predicate verb *quoth*, (2) this predicate is followed by a thematic subject expressed by a personal pronoun, (3) the clause in which they appear is always preceded by another clause of the same sentence, and (4) this preceding clause features direct speech. When another *verbum dicendi* is chosen and the direct speech follows, or another subordinate clause is attached which delivers the proposition indirectly, no inversion is induced. Cf. the word order in the following sentences:

- 27.A *'I observe it,' quoth I, 'and acknowledge it to bee as thou sayest.'*
- 28.A *Having sayd thus she began to turne her speech to certaine other questions when I interrupted her, saying: 'Thy exhortation is very good and well beseeming thy authority.'*
- 29.A *Then I complained, that I was now in a greater confusion, & more doubtful difficultie than before.*

The inversion in the English of the author of the earlier translation appears to be closely connected to specific lexical choices; in this case, it is the strong colligation of the verb *quoth*. Almost nowhere in the Early Modern text is the VS order FSP motivated: on the contrary, the linear arrangement in these clauses goes against the basic distribution of communicative dynamism. The position of the reporting clause, which always follows direct speech, nevertheless raises the question of whether the inversion may not be interpreted in relation to the rest of the sentence as an implementation of the vestigial V2 principle, creating the sequence of Od (clausal) VS. With respect to clause-initial adverbials, however, the text appears to be considerably progressive, complying almost fully with the modern rules of negative/restrictive as opposed to positive/open semantics of the initial elements; the only exception to this being the solitary case of 26.A mentioned above.

Unlike the cases of inversion, the sentence-initial placement of object in Text B appears to be a strategy (1) employed primarily for the purpose of accommodation to the FSP linearity principle in that it succeeds in shifting a thematic element towards the beginning of the sentence, and (2) used as a means of textual cohesion. The connective role is especially perceivable in 31.B, where the object refers directly to the preceding piece of discourse. On the sentential level, the newly acquired initial position also helps to remove the object, if weighty, from the postverbal sequence and thus vacates the end of the sentence for rhematic elements:

- 30.B *But that statement* which you made a moment ago, that Providence is an issue which interlocks with a number of others, I find true from my own experience.
- 31.B *To this* she responded: 'I am in a hurry to fulfil the promise which I owe you, and to reveal the route by which you are to be restored to your homeland.'
- 32.B *It is a true saying, never challenged by any of the ancients, that nothing comes forth from nothing – though this foundation*, so to speak, which they laid for all explanations of nature, they applied not to the creative originator, but to the matter subject to it.

#### 5.4 Other notes on FSP

In the previous sections, the focus has been placed on the key differences between clauses based on the core structural disparities of function, type and realization. Some syntactically and communicatively relevant differences between the source texts are nevertheless to be found outside this scope. The most important ones include the issue of existential *there*-clauses and their parallels (5.4.1) and the differences in FSP emerging as a result of an alternative linear arrangement within a sentence (5.4.2).

##### 5.4.1 Existential *there*-clauses

Together the texts contain a total number of 19 cases of *there*-constructions, 12 in Text A and 7 in Text B. It is interesting to note that this time the disproportion is largely not due to clausal omissions, as mentioned in 5.2, but to alternative ways of translation, where another than a *there*-construction is used. The figures pertaining to each parallel type are listed below:

**Table 5.** *There*-constructions and their parallels

Text A: Early Modern English	Text B: Present-day English	Number of cases
<i>there</i>	–	1
–	<i>there</i>	1
<i>there</i>	<i>there</i>	8
<i>there</i>	other	7
other	<i>there</i>	2

In approximately half of the cases the change does not bear any special relevance to the rhematicity/thematicity of the notional subject, even though linear arrangement may vary (cf. 33.A/B and 34.A/B):

- 33.A '*There is no feare of that*,' quoth I, 'for it will be a great ease to me to understand those things in which I take great delight.'



33.B *'You must not have the slightest fear of that,' I said. 'It will be as good as a rest for me to identify the problems closest to my heart.'*

34.A *'For I desire to know, whether thou thinkest chance to be anything at all, & what it is.'*

34.B *'So the question that I pose is whether you think that there is such a thing as chance, and what you think it is.'*

In some sentences, however, the focus placed on the postverbal noun as a result of the use of the *there*-construction shifts towards the predicate, imparting to the verb phrase a higher degree of communicative dynamism than the subject. While the differences e.g. in 36.A/B may be attributable to the fact that the former contains a clausal postmodifier, causing the whole noun phrase to comply in its position with the principle of end-weight, other existential clauses, such as 37.A/B, suggest that this trend is not limited to cases of heavy notional subjects only. The tendency to place more stress on the propositional content delivered by the predicate, rather than to concentrate on the type of information introduced into the context by the notional subject is strictly limited to Text B:

35.A *'But if any thing proceedeth from no causes, that will seeme to have come from nothing, which if it cannot bee, neither is it possible there should be any such chance, as is defined a little before.'*

35.B *Now if something should emerge uncaused, it will be seen to have arisen from nothing; and if this cannot happen, chance in the sense in which we defined it cannot exist either.*

36.A *For if things can be drawn to any other course than was foreknowne, there will not be any firm knowledge of that which is to come, but rather an uncertaine opinion, which in my opinion were impious to believe of God.*

36.B *If such actions and aspirations can be forcibly diverted in some direction other than was foreseen, certain foreknowledge of the future will no longer exist, but instead there will be vacillating opinion; and I regard it as sacrilege to believe this of God.*

37.A *Wherefore there is necessitie in both in the one of the sitting, and in the other of truth.*

37.B *In each of the two formulations some necessity is present: in the one that it is true, and in the other that he is seated.*

#### 5.4.2 Differences in clausal ordering within a sentence

Despite the fact that the focus of this analysis was placed on the clause as the primary distributional field, a few brief observations need to be made on the differences in linearity and FSP of the sentence as a whole. The two texts observe a very similar order of individual clauses, changes in clausal arrangement being relatively rare. Two cases of such disparity can be found in sentences introducing direct speech:

38.A *'I make haste,' quoth shee, 'to performe my promise and to shew thee the way by which thou mayest returne to thy countrey.'*

38.B *To this she responded: 'I am in a hurry to fulfil the promise which I owe you, and to reveal the route by which you are to be restored to your homeland.'*

39.A *'I will,' quoth shee, 'doe as thou wouldst have me,' [...].*

39.B *Then she said: 'I shall indulge your wish.'*

Following Bækken's (2003: 117) findings, it might be argued that moving a part of the direct speech before the reporting clause suggests this to be a case of positional focalization stemming from the markedness of the initial placement of the object. An alternative explanation may be sought in the predicate verbs of the main clauses. A note has been made in 5.3.4 of the behaviour of *quoth* predicates, in that they always follow at least a part of the proposition they introduce. A possible view of these sentences as instances of V2 remnants seems plausible in the light of the reversed arrangement of clauses in 38.B and 39.B, especially so since this order renders the sentence more cohesive, as well as compliant with the basic distribution of communicative dynamism.

The remaining three cases of major differences in sentential linearity are somewhat more difficult to explain. The reversed clause order in 40.B results partly from the type of syntactic structure found in its superordinates, but partly because of the desire to place the main sentential focus on a different element: in Text A it is the hidden chest of gold, in Text B it is the place in which the hypothetical person started to dig:

40.A *For neither he that hid the golde, nor hee that tilled his ground, had any intention that the money should be found, but as I said, it followed and concurred, that this man should dig up that which the other hidde.*

40.B *Neither the person who buried the gold, nor the one who dug the field, intended the money to be found, but as I have explained, the place where one buried it happened to coincide with where the other dug.*

A similar case of focal shift as was found in some of the existential clauses appears in 41.B as opposed to 41.A. In a like manner, the older text chooses to rhematize the post-modifying clause which develops the noun phrase performing the function of the subject (i.e. *that* in 41.A), while the newer version chooses to end the sentence with a verb phrase (cf. the sentences below):

41.A *For if God beholdeth all things and cannot be deceived, that must of necessity follow, which his providence foreseeeth to be to come.*

41.B *If God foresees all things and cannot be in any way mistaken, then what Providence has foreseen will happen must inevitably come to pass.*

The third case of a major linearity change may be seen in the sentences presented under 42.A/B. The inversion of the propositional content of the second and third clauses in the B version of the text appears to be in accordance with the basic distribution of communicative dynamism; 42.A, on the other hand, chooses the seemingly less felicitous word order to be able to smooth the semantic transition in the second part of the sentence by placing those clauses next to each other which share the common referent

*the ancients/they*. The final element of the sentence in Text A appears to be the postmodifying clause because it naturally follows and develops the head noun of *subject*. The most important piece of new information carried by the clause, however, is to be found in the explication of the contrastive relationship between the objects. The newer translation tries to counter-balance this disproportion by introducing the heart of the propositional content carried by the last clause in 42.B earlier, thus achieving a shorter postmodifying sequence, which in the final position is somewhat less distracting:

42.A *For it is a true sentence that of nothing commeth nothing, which none of the ancients denied, though they held not that principle of the efficient cause but of the material subject that is of the nature of all formes.*

42.B *It is a true saying, never challenged by any of the ancients, that nothing comes forth from nothing though this foundation, so to speak, which they laid for all explanations of nature, they applied not to the creative originator, but to the matter subject to it.*

### 5.5 Between syntax and stylistics

As has been remarked in section 5.2.2, some of the clauses exclusive to the newer translation function as interactive elements, engaging the reader in the conversation and applying features more characteristic of a spoken discourse (the stylistic disjunct *so to speak* in 8.B, the discourse marker *mind you* in 7.B). The greater interactivity of the contemporary version is also manifested by other syntactic means:

43.A *For if any man sitteth the opinion which thinketh so must needes be true, and again on the other side, if the opinion that one sitteth be true hee must needest sitte.*

43.B *Take the case of a person who is seated. The belief which hazards that he is seated must necessarily be true; and conversely, if the belief that a certain person is seated is true, then he must be seated.*

44.A *This is thought to have fallen thus out by fortune, but it is not of nothing, for it hath peculiar causes, whose unexpected and not foreseene concurrence seemeth to have brought forth a chance.*

44.B *For example, when a man is digging the ground to cultivate his field, and he finds a quantity of gold buried there, people believe that this has happened by accident, but it does not come to pass out of nothing, for it has its own causes, and the conjunction of these unforeseen and unexpected causes seems to have produced a chance happening.*

In 43.B, the imperative mood conveys a direct appeal to the listener, triggering a deeper feeling of the addressee's involvement. Also unlike the Early Modern translation, the Present-day version contains explicit references to the general human agent *people* (44.B). In this sense, it might be claimed that the latter draws more closely on the stylistic anticipations of spoken language, trying to imitate some of the features characteristic of real life dialogue in order to deliver a more appealing, engaging argument.

## 6. Conclusion

This article presents a brief outline of the developments of English in sentential and clausal syntax between the Early and Late Modern period and the impact these developments have had on the information structure of higher syntactic units. The aim was to identify the tendencies in the usage of various syntactic means for the indication of the functional sentence perspective and to assess the extent to which these means are employed in the language during different chronological stages.

In accordance with the initial expectations, the Early Modern text has been found to tend towards a lower level of segmentation in terms of sentential units, expressing a corresponding semantic content in a lower number of sentences than the Present-day version. At the same time, this tendency is counterbalanced by higher concision and increased economy of expression. This is mainly achieved by frequent usage of non-finite forms and nominalizations in places where the parallel Late Modern text resorts to finite realizations. Especially noticeable is this disproportion in the usage of adjectival relative clauses in the newer version, which are often employed as a means of rendering a particular communicative unit more dynamic, stressing its sentential rhematicity. This is in line with a more general observation of the 20th century text inclining both towards a greater level of explicitness and specificity, and its disposition to employ constructions which achieve the accommodation of rhematic elements towards the end of a clause or sentence. A very perceivable manifestation of this tendency can also be observed in the focalization of predicates, a trend virtually absent from the Early Modern version.

Interestingly, the Early Modern text does not resort to some other types of constructions used in the later version in order to make clauses comply with the basic distribution of communicative dynamism. Inversions motivated by the principles of end-weight or end-focus are rare; they are mostly governed either by grammatical rules identical to those of Present-day English, or connected with lexical elements, viz. the regular inversion of pronominal subjects combined with *quoth* predicates, perceived as vestigial of the earlier stages of the language. Also absent from the earlier version are the elements of closer interaction employed in the Late Modern dialogues in order to achieve the impression of a more authentic, engaging discussion.

It should be stressed, however, that due to the limits of the methodology used in this research the findings here presented are necessarily tentative, as they are bound to the limitations of the authors' own idiolects and cannot thus be taken as representative of the language of the whole historical period.

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## VÝVOJOVÉ TENDENCE VE VZTAZÍCH MEZI SYNTAKTICKOU STRUKTUROU A AKTUÁLNÍM ČLENĚNÍM VĚTNÝM

### Resumé

Článek se zabývá popisem rozdílů v syntaktických prostředcích sloužících k indikaci informační struktury a jejich vývojovými tendencemi v období mezi angličtinou raně moderní a současnou. Činí tak porovnáváním dvou verzí překladu původního latinského textu Boethiovy *Filosofie utěšitelky*, jejichž dobu vzniku dělí rozmezí téměř čtyř století. Obě verze jsou srovnávány z hlediska způsobu větného vyjádření shodného významového obsahu, a to především v rovině jednotlivých klauzí. Formální rozdíly mezi paralelními syntaktickými celky jsou analyzovány jak z hlediska gramatického, kdy jsou identifikovány a kvantifikovány nejvýraznější typy frekvenčních disproporcí mezi oběma texty, tak z hlediska komunikativního, kdy je zkoumán dopad výběru odlišných větotvorných struktur na rovinu aktuálněčlenskou. V souladu s původními očekáváními výzkum potvrzuje tendenci raně moderní angličtiny vyjadřovat stejný významový obsah menším počtem více kondenzovaných souvětí než angličtina současná. Tato kondenzace se projevuje především v častějším užívání nefinitních struktur a nominalizací. Příklad 20. století naproti tomu využívá více konstrukcí finitních. Jedním z nejvýraznějších rozdílů v této oblasti je frekvence výskytu vztažných vět adjektivních, které jsou užívány jednak pro svou vyšší explicitnost a specifčnost, jednak z důvodů aktuálněčlenských. Díky své postpozici propůjčují vyjádřenému modifikátoru vyšší stupeň výpovědní dynamičnosti, čímž podtrhují jeho rematicčnost. Moderní text se rovněž snáze a častěji podřizuje základnímu rozložení výpovědní dynamičnosti, co se týče koncového umístování rematického predikátu i preverbálního předsunutí tematického předmětu. Inverze v raně-novoanglické verzi naopak slouží jako prostředek aktuálního členění jen výjimečně, v převážně většině případů je motivována buď nastupujícími gramatickými pravidly, shodnými s angličtinou dnešní, anebo determinována lexikálně, zbytkovou tradicí postpozice pronominálního podmětu po slovesu *quoth*.

## APPENDIX

### TEXT A:

#### **The fifth booke of Boethius of chance and freewill, and how they stand with providence.**

##### **Prose I**

##### *Of chance*

Having sayd thus she began to turne her speech to certaine other questions when I interrupted her, saying: 'Thy exhortation is very good and well beseeming thy authority. But I find it true by experience, as thou affirmedst, that the question of providence is entangled with many other. For I desire to know, whether thou thinkest chance to be anything at all, & what it is.' 'I make haste,' quoth shee, 'to performe my promise and to shew thee the way by which thou mayest returne to thy countrey. And these questions, though they be very profitable, yet they are somewhat from our purpose, and it is to be feared, lest being wearied with digressions, thou beest not able to finish thy direct journey.' 'There is no feare of that,' quoth I, 'for it will be a great ease to me to understand those things in which I take great delight, and withal when thy disputation is fenced in on every side, there can bee no doubt made of any thing thou shalt inferre.' 'I will,' quoth shee, 'doe as thou wouldest have me,' and withal beganne in this manner: 'If any shall define chance to be an event produced by a confused motion, and without connexion of causes, I affirm that there is no such thing, and that chance is only an empty voyce without any reall signification. For what place can confusion have since God disposeth all things in due order. For it is a true sentence that of nothing commeth nothing, which none of the ancients denied, though they held not that principle of the efficient cause but of the material subject that is of the nature of all formes. But if any thing proceedeth from no causes, that will seeme to have come from nothing, which if it cannot bee, neither is it possible there should be any such chance, as is defined a little before.' 'What then,' quoth I, 'is there nothing that can rightly bee called chance, or fortune? Or is there something, though unknownen to the common sort, to which these names agree?' 'My Aristotle,' quoth shee, 'in is bookes of nature declared this point briefly and truely.' 'How?' quoth I. 'When,' quoth hee, 'any thing is done for some certain cause and some other thing hapneth, for some reasons than that which was intended, this is called chance: as if one digging his ground with intention to till it, findeth an hidden treasure. This is thought to have fallen thus out by fortune, but it is not of nothing, for it hath peculiar causes, whose unexpected and not foreseene concurrence seemeth to have brought forth a chance. For unlesse the Husbandman had digged up his grounds and unlesse the other had hidden his money in that place, the treasure had not been found. These are therefore the causes of this fortunate accident, which proceedeth from the meeting and concurrence of causes, and not from the intention of the doer. For neither he that hid the golde, nor hee that tilled his ground, had any intention that the money should be found, but as I said, it followed and concurred, that this man should dig up that which the other hidde. Wherefore wee may define chance thus: that it is an unexpected event of concurring causes in those things which are done to some end and purpose. Now the cause, why causes concurre and meete

so together, is that of order proceeding with inevitable connexion, which descending from the fountaine of providence, disposeth all things in their places and times.'

## **Prose II**

### *Of freewill*

'I observe it,' quoth I, 'and acknowledge it to bee as thou sayest. But in this ranke of coherent causes, have wee any free will, or doth the fatall chaine fasten also the motion of men's minds?' 'We have,' quoth she, 'for there can be no reason, hath also judgement, by which he can discern of every thing by it selfe, wherefore he putteth a difference betwixt those things which are to bee avoided and those which are to bee desired. Now every one seeketh for that which he thinketh is to be desired, and eschuet that which in his judgement is to be avoyded.

Wherefore they which have reason, have freedom to will and nill. But yet I make this not equal in all. For the supreme and divine substances have both a perspicuous judgement, and an incorrupted will, and an effectual power to obtaine their desires. But the minds of men must needes be more free when they conserve themselves in the contemplation of God, and lesse when they come to their bodies and yet lesse when they are bound with earthly fetters.

But their greatest bondage is, when giving themselves to vices, they loose the possession of their owne reason. For having cast their eyes from the light of the soveraigne truth to inferior obscurities, forthwith they are blinded with the cloud of ignorance, molested with hurtfull affections, by yielding and consenting to which, they increase the bondage, which they layd upon themselves, and are after a certaine manner captives by their own freedom. Which notwithstanding that foresight of providence, which beholdeth all things from eternity, foreseeeth, and by predestination disposeth of every thing by their merits.'

## **Prose III**

### *Boethius proposeth the difficulty of concording God's providence with men's free-will*

Then I complained, that I was now in a greater confusion, & more doubtful difficultie than before. 'What is that?' quoth she, 'for I already conjecture what it is that troubleth thee.' 'It seemeth,' quoth I, 'to bee altogether imposible and repugnant that God foreseeeth all things and that there should be any free-will. For if God beholdeth all things and cannot be deceived, that must of necessity follow, which his providence foreseeeth to be to come. Wherefore if from eternity he doth not only foreknow the deds of men, but also their counsels and wills, there can be no freewill: for there is not any other deede or will but those which the divine providence that cannot bee deceived hath foreseeene. For if things can be drawn to any other course than was foreknowne, there will not be ay firm knowledge of that which is to come, but rather an uncertaine opinion, which in my opinion were impious to believe of God. Neither do I allow of that reason, with which some suppose that they can dissolve the difficulty of this question. For they say, that nothing is therefore to come to passe, because providence did foresee it, but rather contrarywise, because it shall bee, it could not be unknown to providence, and in like manner it is necessary that the other should be true. For it is not necessarie that those things should happen which are foreseeene but it is necessarie that those things should be foreseeene



that are to come. As though our question were which of them is the other's cause, the foreknowledge of the necessitie of things to come, or the necessitie of thing to come of foreknowledge? But let us endeavour to prove that howsoever these causes be ordered, the event of the things, which are foreknowne, is necessary, although the foreknowledge seemeth not to inferred necessitie of being upon the things themselves. For if any man sitteth the opinion which thinketh so must needes be true, and again on the other side, if the opinion that one sitteth be true hee must needest sitte. Wherefore there is necessitie in both in the one of the sitting, and in the other of truth. But one sitteth not because the opinion is true, but rather this is true because one sitteth. So that though the cause of truth proceedeth from one part, yet there is a common necessity in both. And the like is to be inferred of providence & future things. For although they be foreseene because they shall be and they doe not come to passe because they are foreseen:<sup>5</sup> notwithstanding it is necessary that things to come be foreseene, or that things foreseen doe fall out; which alone is sufficient to overthrow freewill. Besides how preposterous is it that the event of temporal things should be said to be the cause of the everlasting foreknowledge.'

## TEXT B: *Book 5*

### Chapter 1

Following upon these verses, she was diverting the course of her words to discuss and explain certain other matters, when I remarked: 'Your exhortation is doubtless all it should be, and is wholly worthy of the authority which you lend it. But that statement which you made a moment ago, that Providence is an issue which interlocks with a number of others, I find true from my own experience. So the question that I pose is whether you think that there is such a thing as chance, and what you think it is.'

To this she responded: 'I am in a hurry to fulfil the promise which I owe you, and to reveal the route by which you are to be restored to your homeland. These matters which you raise are admittedly useful to grasp, but they do divert us for a little while from the path which we have set ourselves. My fear is that these digressions will weary you, and that you will not be equal to complete the road lying straight ahead.'

'You must not have the slightest fear of that,' I said. 'It will be as good as a rest for me to identify the problems closest to my heart. At the same time, once every facet of your thesis incontestably holds good, there can be no uncertainty about what follows.'

Then she said: 'I shall indulge your wish.' At once she began like this: 'If one were to define chance as the outcome of a random movement which interlocks with no causes, I should maintain that it does not exist at all, that it is a wholly empty term denoting nothing substantial; for since God confines all things within due order, what place can be left for random processes? It is a true saying, never challenged by any of the ancients, that nothing comes forth from nothing – though this foundation, so to speak, which they laid for all explanations of nature, they applied not to the creative originator, but to the matter subject to it. Now if something should emerge uncaused, it will be seen to have arisen from nothing; and if this cannot happen, chance is the sense in which we defined it cannot exist either.'

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<sup>5</sup> The original 1963 edition reads "because they are *not* foreseene". As both the preceding context and the 1999 version clearly indicate a positive polarity, the clause has been checked against and revised after another edition of I.T.'s translation published in 1918 (see bibliography).

‘So is there nothing,’ I asked, ‘which can rightly be called chance or accident? Or is there something hidden from the public gaze for which these terms are appropriate?’ ‘My Aristotle,’ she replied, ‘in his *Physics* has offered a succinct account of it which approximates to the truth.’

‘How does he put it?’ I asked.

‘Whenever something is done with a particular purpose in mind,’ she said, ‘and as a result of certain causes something other than was intended occurs, it is called chance. For example, when a man is digging the ground to cultivate his field, and he finds a quantity of gold buried there, people believe that this has happened by accident, but it does not come to pass out of nothing, for it has its own causes, and the conjunction of these unforeseen and unexpected causes seems to have produced a chance happening. But in fact if the cultivator of the field had not dug the ground, and if someone had not lodged and buried his money there, the gold would not have been found. So this is the explanation of that casual acquisition of his. It resulted not from any intention of the man who was digging, but from causes which met and fused with each other. Neither the person who buried the gold, nor the one who dug the field, intended the money to be found, but as I have explained, the place where one buried it happened to coincide with where the other dug. Thus we can define chance as the unexpected outcome of a conjunction of causes in actions carried out for some purpose. What causes the conjunction and the coincidence of these causes is that order which unfolds in an irresistible chain, descending from its source in Providence, and allocating all things to their due place and time.’

## Chapter 2

‘I take heed of your words,’ I said, ‘and I agree that it is as you say. But in this sequence of interlocking causes, do we have any free will, or does the chain of fate constrain the movement of men’s minds as well?’

‘There is free will,’ she replied, ‘for no rational nature could exist if it did not possess freedom of will. What can by its nature deploy reason, possesses the judgement by which to discern each and every thing, and thus unaided it distinguishes what must be avoided from what is desirable. So the individual seeks what he judges to be desirable, and shuns what he reckons must be avoided. Hence creatures which themselves possess reason also possess the freedom to will or not to will, but my view is that this freedom does not exist equally in all. Heavenly and divine creatures command perceptive judgement, uncorrupted will, and the power to achieve what they desire; human souls, however, though necessarily free when they devote themselves to the vision of the divine mind, are less free when they slip down to the physical world, and less free still when they are bound fast in earthly limbs. The furthest degree of slavery is reached when they devote themselves to vices, and abrogate the possession of reason which is theirs; for once they lower their eyes from the light of the highest truth down to the world of darkness below, they are then shrouded in a cloud of ignorance, and become confused by destructive emotions. By yielding and lending consent to them, they intensify the slavery which they have brought upon themselves, and in a sense they become prisoners through the exercise of their freedom. However, the eye of Providence, which gazes on all things from eternity, observes these developments, and arranges predestined things according to the merits of each.’

### Chapter 3

At this I said: 'I fear that I am further disconcerted by a still more difficult doubt.'

'What is it?' she asked. 'Mind you, I can guess what is worrying you.'

'There seems to be a considerable contradiction and inconsistency,' I said, 'between God's foreknowing all things and the existence of any free will. If God foresees all things and cannot be in any way mistaken, then what Providence has foreseen will happen must inevitably come to pass. So if God has prior knowledge from eternity not only of men's actions but also of their plans and wishes, there will be no freedom of will; for the only action and any sort of intention which can possibly exist in the future will be fore-known by divine Providence, which cannot be misled. If such actions and aspirations can be forcibly diverted in some direction other than was foreseen, certain foreknowledge of the future will no longer exist, but instead there will be vacillating opinion; and I regard it as sacrilege to believe this of God.'

I do not subscribe to the argument by which some believe that they can disentangle this knotty problem. What they suggest is that Providence's foreknowledge of a future event is not the cause of its happening, but that it is the other way round. Since something is about to happen, this cannot be hidden from divine Providence, and in this sense, they claim, the element of necessity is reversed. Their argument is that things foreseen do not therefore happen by necessity, but that things which will happen are necessarily foreseen. The assumption here is that we are toiling over the problem of which is the cause of which: is foreknowledge the cause of the necessity of future events, or is the necessity of future events the cause of Providence? In fact, however, we are struggling to show that whatever the sequence of causes, the outcome of things foreknown is necessary, even if such foreknowledge does not appear to impose an inevitable outcome upon future events.

Take the case of a person who is seated. The belief which hazards that he is seated must necessarily be true; and conversely, if the belief that a certain person is seated is true, then he must be seated. In each of the two formulations some necessity is present: in the one that it is true, and in the other that he is seated. But the individual is not seated because the belief that he is seated is true; rather, the belief is true because the person was already seated. Thus, though the reason for its being true emerges from the fact that he was seated, there is a necessity which both statements share. Clearly the argument about Providence and the future is similar; for even if things are foreseen because they are about to happen, and they do not in fact happen because they are foreseen, nevertheless necessity lies either in that future events are foreseen by God, or that things foreseen happen because they are foreseen. This alone is sufficient to eliminate the freedom of the will.'