

2/ Relative of characteristic

[343]

a/ A relative clause may have its verb in subjunctive, and this has the effect of describing the antecedent with respect to the group to which it belongs. A double example will make it clear:

Cicero non est qui hoc dicit.

This is a normal relative sentence, with its verb in *indicative*, and it means something as simple as CICERO IS NOT THE ONE WHO SAYS THIS, in the assumption that somebody is saying something but it is not Cicero, it is somebody else. But if we put the verb of the relative in *subjunctive*,

Cicero non est qui hoc dicat

the sentence will mean CICERO IS NOT THE KIND OF PERSON WHO MAY SAY THIS.

So, we describe the antecedent with respect to the group to which it belongs: CICERO DOES NOT BELONG TO THE GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD SAY THIS.

b/ It may also be that the antecedent is not somebody identified but rather somebody indefinite (and not even expressed), like for instance in the sentence

Sunt qui dicant Ciceronem malum oratorem esse.

In this case, the translation should be THERE ARE THE KIND OF PEOPLE WHO MAY SAY THAT CICERO IS A BAD ORATOR.

✧ We could leave it as THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO SAY THAT CICERO IS A BAD ORATOR.

- *Sunt qui dicant, Quirites, a me eiectum esse Catilinam* THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO SAY, CITIZENS, THAT CATILINA HAS BEEN EXPELLED BY ME (*Cicero, In Catilinam*).

Another example of indefinite antecedent (in this case, the antecedent is mentioned through **nemo**):

- *Nemo est qui Ciceronem non amet* THERE IS NO ONE WHO DOES NOT LOVE CICERO.
 - ✧ In the sense of THERE IS NOT THIS KIND OF PERSON WHO WOULD NOT LOVE CICERO.
 - ✧ Catilina would have loved this example of relative of characteristic ...
- *Nemo est qui ullam spem salutis reliquam esse arbitretur* THERE IS NO ONE WHO THINKS THAT THERE IS ANY HOPE FOR SALVATION LEFT (*Cicero, In Verrem*).

c/ The relative of characteristic can even be used to replace **ut** in a *clause of result* :

[344]

- *Nemo est tam crudelis ut Caesarem necare velit = Nemo est tam crudelis qui Caesarem necare velit*
THERE IS NOBODY SO CRUEL THAT HE WANTS TO KILL CAESAR.
 - ✧ In the sense of THERE IS NOT THE KIND OF PERSON SO CRUEL WHO WOULD LIKE TO KILL CAESAR.
 - ✧ ... and Cassius would have loved this other example.
- *Nemo est tam stultus qui non intellegat ...* THERE IS NOBODY SO FOOLISH THAT HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND ... (*Cicero, Philippicae*).
 - ✧ We could have found **ut non intellegat**, but in this kind of sentences starting with **Nemo est tam ...** it is much more common to find the relative rather than **ut**.