

## Dealing with Subjunctives

(Wilson chs. 30-2)

### Subjunctive 1

1. The subjunctive 1 is the one that looks like the present tense:  
*sei, seien, habe, haben, werde, werden, glaube, glauben*
2. It most often signals indirect discourse or reported opinion:  
*Man sagt, er **sei** verrückt geworden.*
3. In such cases, it translates as an indicative. The governing verb is often *meinen, glauben, sagen*, etc:  
*Mein Kind glaubt, es **sei** zu dick.*
4. Again in the same construction, the tense of your translation depends on the governing verb and may thus have to be the past, even if the verb in the subjunctive looks like a present tense form:  
*Augustinus meinte, durch Abschaffung der Prostitution **werde** noch größerer Schaden angerichtet.*
5. The subjunctive 1 can carry on into subsequent clauses and sentences:  
*Miller hingegen schreibt den Schwanenmädchen-Fabeln eine sozioreligiöse Bedeutung zu: Die Schwanenjungfrau **repräsentiere** das Himmlische, der irdische Ehemann dagegen das Profane. Als Vermittlung zwischen diesen beiden Bereichen **fungiere** die Ehe.*
6. When not in indirect discourse, the subjunctive 1 usually carries a jussive or related sense. It translates as an English subjunctive, typically with the help of modal auxiliaries (*may, should*, etc.):  
*Man vergesse nicht, dass Goethe viele Jahre lang der “maître de plaisir” am Weimarer Hofe war. → “One should not forget. . .”*

### Subjunctive 2

1. The subjunctive 2 is the one that looks like the past tense.  
*wäre, wären, hätte, hätten, würde, würden, glaubte, glaubten.*
2. Again, the tense of your translation depends on the tense of the governing verb:  
*Sie behauptet, dass sie hilflos **wäre** → She asserts that she **is** helpless.*
3. It typically expresses unreality. As such, it often translates as *would*.  
*Obama würde Sicherheitsüberprüfung nicht überstehen → “Obama would fail security clearance” [i.e. if he were to go through security].*
4. Its English equivalent is very frequently the *if. . . would* construction (the *if*-clause commonly starting with *wenn*) or another construction with *if/as if*.  
*Hätte sich diese Armenunterstützung realisieren lassen, wenn alle dem Ruf zum freiwilligen Armut gefolgt **wären**?*
5. Other uses include reported speech (much like subjunctive 1) and the expression of a wish.  
*Ich wünschte, dass ich da sein **könnte**.* (N.B. *wünschen* is also in the subjunctive 2 [it just does that].)