

SOME BASIC PROBLEMS OF CLASSICAL CHINESE SYNTAX

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1. *The problem of defining the particles of subordination and co-ordination*¹

There are three major particles of subordination and co-ordination in Classical Chinese, *chih* 之 *yü* 與 and *erh* 而. Their functions are fairly well understood in practice but are not easily defined. The complicated problem of establishing acceptable definitions is of great interest since it forces us to make decisions about several of the fundamental problems of Classical Chinese grammar.

Let us begin by presenting rule-of-thumb descriptions of the functions of the three particles. *Chih* is a particle of subordination, sometimes possessive (仲尼之徒 "the disciples of Confucius"), sometimes more loosely subordinating one noun to another (古之人 "the men of old"), sometimes subordinating a verbal or adjectival phrase to a noun (賢聖之君 "worthy and wise rulers" 殺人之罪 "the crime of killing a man"), sometimes linking subject to verb in a nominalized clause (故王之不王不爲也, 非不能也 "Therefore that Your Majesty does not reign over the Empire is because you do not, not because you cannot"). *Yü* is a particle of co-ordination between nouns, translatable by "and": 穀與魚鼈 "the grain and the fish and turtles" (its function as preposition translatable as "together with", as in 與民同之 "share it with the people", does not concern us).

¹ Abbreviations:

M *Mencius*

SPTK *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* 四部叢刊

References, unless otherwise stated, are to the editions of the *Harvard-Yenching Index Series*.

Finally *erh* is a particle which *generally* stands between verbal or adjectival units, sometimes co-ordinating them (後義而先利 "put duty last and profit first"), sometimes subordinating the former to the latter (不遠千里而來 "come without thinking a thousand miles too far").

The rule-of-thumb that *erh* generally joins verbal or adjectival units is of great practical importance to a learner of Chinese, who, noticing that like *yü* it is often translatable by "and", finds it easy to confuse the two particles. Unfortunately it is a rule with certain puzzling exceptions. Prof. Walter Simon, whose five articles on *erh*² classify all its various uses and remain the foundation for all future work on the particle, has called attention to a pattern in which *erh* stands between subject and verb:

Ex. 1. *Analec*s 3/22 管氏而知禮, 孰不知禮

"If even Kuan knows the rites, who does not know the rites?"

There is a further interesting exception; *erh* can precede or intervene between nominal units, provided that they belong to the pattern "X Y (*yeh* 也)", "X is Y":

Ex. 2. M.5A/7 非予覺之而誰也

"If it is not I who awakens them who will it be?"

Ex. 3. *Hsün-tzū* 荀子 9/11 是己君子而人小人也。

"This is being a gentleman oneself and the other being a small man."

At first sight such sentences do not attract attention, and it may be worth considering for a moment why they do not surprise us. One answer might be that the verb "to be" in the translation deceives us into overlooking the absence of main verbs in the Chinese. A more interesting consideration is that we are following our deep-rooted prejudice, inherited from the Greeks, that the nature of the verb is in some way tied up with the nature of the grammatical sentence and the logical proposition, and that this prejudice has the justification that even in Classical Chinese the verbal unit and the nominal complement are alike in being the cores of sentences.

This raises the question whether we are after all bound to deny that the complement "Y *yeh*" may be treated as verbal. Certainly there is no alternative if we begin at the level of the word, and then extend the terms "nominal" and "verbal" to larger units according to their composition; following this procedure Y will be nominal (because, for example, it cannot be negated by the *pu* 不 which negates verbs, only by *fei* 非 "is not") and "Y *yeh*" cannot be verbal because it does not contain a verb. But we might instead define nominal and verbal units in terms of their functions in the sentence as a whole, descending from a higher level to unit and sub-unit instead of ascending from below; we should expect the resulting definitions to change our classifications of these complements but otherwise make no

² "Der *erl* *jiann* and der *jiann* in *Luencyu* vii. 25", *Asia Major*, NS, 2/1 (1951) "Functions and meanings of *erl*", *ibid.* sup. 2/2, 3/1, 3/2, 4/1 (1952, 1954).

difference to our common-sense identification of verbal and nominal units. Since such definitions would simplify the problem of defining *erh* let us explore this possibility.

2/1 Nominal and verbal units

The formal analysis of a dead language presents a well-known problem. When studying a sentence in a living language we may eliminate, substitute or expand at will, and then use an informant to verify that we have produced an acceptable sentence. With a dead language, on the other hand, we can verify only from existing sentences in a limited corpus. The starting-point of the present attempt is the fact that to understand Classical Chinese it is essential to be able to recognize whether sentences, clauses and phrases are structurally parallel. We may therefore assume the right to establish patterns and then use illustrative sentences to prove that a unit may or may not be eliminated, added or substituted in a pattern, without committing ourselves as to whether particular alterations may be made in a particular sentence. Sometimes our intuition of parallelism may be mistaken; in such cases these manipulations will expose its invalidity or its limitations. Let us begin with two parallel sentences in *Mencius*, which it will be convenient to translate very literally:

Ex. 4. M.1B/4

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
樂	民	之	樂	者	，	民	亦	樂	其	樂。
憂	民	之	憂	者	，	民	亦	憂	其	憂。

"In the case of one who enjoys the enjoyment of the people (that is, 'is happy that the people are happy'), the people likewise enjoy his enjoyment. In the case of one who is anxious about the people's anxieties, the people are likewise anxious about his anxieties."

The formula common to the two sentences may be analysed into units and sub-units, of which some are themselves sentence-forms while others are not. In the first place we may eliminate in turn ABCDE, F and G, each time leaving a sentence-form:

FGHIJ "The people likewise enjoy his enjoyment."

GHIJ "(They) likewise enjoy his enjoyment."

HIJ "(They) enjoy his enjoyment."

We confirm the possibility of these eliminations by offering illustrations of the three sentence-forms without the eliminated units:

Ex. 5. M.1A/2

F	G	H	IJ		
賢	者	亦	樂	此	乎。

"Do the worthy likewise enjoy these?"

Ex. 6. M.6A/4

G	H	I	J	
亦	長	吾	之	長。

"I likewise recognize as a senior a senior of my own people."

Ex. 7. M.6A/5

H IJ
敬 兄。

"One respects one's elder brother."

Can we take the further step of eliminating IJ, leaving H "(They) enjoy"? Certainly we can delete IJ and leave a sentence-form, again confirming the possibility by an illustration:

Ex. 8. M.2B/13

F H IJ
君子 不怨 天。

"The gentleman is not resentful towards Heaven."

Ex. 9. M.6B/3 怨。

"It is resentful."

However, this step is different in kind from the previous steps and cannot be recognized as elimination, which must allow the restoration of the original formula, however the remainder may be manipulated. Presented with HIJ we know that however we choose to expand it there will remain positions for ABCDE, F and G; the structure of the original formula remains intact. But after the deletion of IJ the remainder is syntactically ambiguous; it may be either H or the L of the following formula:

Ex. 10. M.4A/7

K L
A BCD E
順 天 者 存，
逆 天 者 亡。

"One who accords with Heaven survives, one who goes against Heaven perishes."

Ex. 11. M.1B/1

K K L
獨 樂 樂， 與 人 樂 樂， 孰 樂。

"Of enjoying music alone and enjoying it with others, which is enjoyed more?"

The last phrase in the second example cannot be read as 孰樂 which would be translatable as "Who enjoys (it)?"

Ex. 12. M.5A/5

H IJ
孰 與 之。

"Who gives to him?"

The remainder when IJ is deleted is therefore a sentence-form but syntactically ambiguous, H or L:

Ex. 13. M.4A/27

H IJ H/L H/L H/L

樂 之 實， 樂 此 二 者。 樂 則 生， 生 則 惡 可 已 也。

"The substance of music is to enjoy these two. If enjoyed they grow (/if you enjoy them you generate them). If they grow (/if you generate them) how can they be stopped?"

Ex. 14. M.6A/8 H/L H/L H/L H/L

操 則 存， 舍 則 亡。

"If you grasp it you keep it, if you relinquish it you lose it." ("If grasped it survives, if relinquished it perishes.")

Turning to the three eliminated units, we find that none is itself a sentence-form. Two are single-word units (F "the people", G "likewise"), the other is itself analysable into units, some of which are themselves sentence-forms (these we shall underline) while others are not:

ABCDE "One who enjoys the enjoyment of the people."

ABCD "(He) enjoys the enjoyment of the people" (sentence-form equivalent to HIJ) plus E *che*.

A/L "(He) enjoys/is enjoyed" (sentence-form equivalent to H/L) plus BCD "the enjoyment of the people".

BD "The people enjoy" (sentence-form equivalent to FHIJ with IJ deleted) plus C *chih*.

B "The people" plus D/L "(They) enjoy/are enjoyed" (sentence-form equivalent to H/L).

The deleted IJ is similarly analysable into I *ch'i* plus J/L "(He) enjoys/is enjoyed" (sentence-form equivalent to H/L).

It may be noticed that, although we have ignored this complication, the syntactic ambiguity of D/L and J/L (although not of A/L, H/L) is common to every level of analysis; nothing in the syntax of the formula forbids us to translate the original illustration by "In the case of one who enjoys the people being enjoyed, the people likewise enjoy his being enjoyed" (which is indeed a theoretically possible interpretation of our original translation, since "the enjoyment of the people" has the same ambiguity in English).

We can say then of every unit down to the single-word unit whether it is or is not itself a sentence-form. Let us now examine the ten single-word units. It is at once obvious that there is a pronounced difference between C, E and G and the rest. We have already noticed that when *lo* 樂 at H (or A or D or J) is detached from its context we no longer know whether, for example, it is H at the beginning of HIJ or L at the end of KL. Similarly *min* 民 at B and F might in isolation be, for example, F at the beginning

H IJ

of FGHIJ or IJ at the end (as in M. 7A/12 殺 民 "kill the people"). These constituents then provide no evidence as to what units will precede or follow them; we may call them "pattern-free". On the other hand if we isolate C, E or G from the formula we still have information about the preceding or succeeding unit; *chih* 之 at C must have sub-units on either side with which it composes a unit which is not a sentence-form, *che* 者 at E must conclude a unit which is not a sentence-form, *yi* 亦 at G must precede

a unit which is a sentence-form. These constituents then are "pattern-bound". In making these observations we refer of course to C, E and G as constituents of the formula, not to the words *chih*, *che* and *yi* in the illustrative sentences. We could not in fact recognize the functions of the constituents without understanding those of the words, but in theory (although not in all cases in practice) we might find sentences of the same form with other words at C, E and G; the point is that we should not have recognized the sentences as illustrations of the same formula unless the corresponding words were bound to the same patterns. At first sight we might suppose that I is similarly pattern-bound, because the word *ch'i* 其 "his" requires a succeeding word or phrase with which it composes a phrase which cannot be a sentence. However, when we compare IJ with BCD we find that they are of the same structure, with *ch'i* "his" in the place of *min chih* "the people's"; therefore I is further analysable into two ultimate constituents, the first pattern-free and the second equivalent to C. Since Classical Chinese is an almost pure example of an isolating language there are only a few such words; others are *chih* 之 "him, her, it", bound to position IJ, and *yen* 焉 which occupies both the pattern-bound position commonly occupied by *yü* 於 and the pattern-free position which follows it.

We may now propose three definitions. At any level of analysis:

- (1) pattern-bound units are "particle units" (C, E, G);
- (2) among pattern-free units, those which are themselves sentence-forms are "verbal units" (ABCDEFGH, FGHIJ, FHIJ, HIJ, ABCD, BD, A, D, H, J), those which are not are "nominal units" (ABCDE, BCD, IJ, B, F).

It will be noticed that among the ten single-word positions each of the three particle positions is bound to a different pattern and occupied by a different word (*chih*, *che*, *yi*); on the other hand all four verbal positions are occupied by the word *lo* and both nominal positions by the word *min*. There remains only the word *ch'i*, occupying both a nominal and a succeeding particle position. The question arises whether the distinction between the three classes (which may of course be further subdivisible) extends from sentence analysis to lexicography, so that the regular occupants of particle, verbal and nominal positions may be entered in the dictionary as particles, verbs and nouns. The simple fact that we cannot recognize the structure of a Chinese sentence at all unless we know the meanings of at least its key words impels us to draw this conclusion. When studying an inflected language we can go a long way towards the full analysis of a sentence without considering how a word is used outside the sentence, considering only its form; to recognize the word "transmogrify" as a verb we need not have met the word before, only its termination "-ify". But to analyse a Chinese sentence we must be familiar with the words themselves, preferably from other contexts as well as from the dictionary. As already noticed, we could not even recognize C, E and G as particle positions, and judge whether other

words could occupy these positions, unless we understood the use of *chih*, *che* and *yi* from previous experience. The same applies, although less obviously, to nominal and verbal positions. At first sight the formula ABCDEFGHIJ seems to have an exact parallel, except for the absence of E, in another passage in *Mencius*:

Ex. 15. M.7B/7

		?						?		
A	B	C	D	F	G	H	I	J		
殺	人	之	父	，	人	亦	殺	其	父	。

“If you kill another’s father, another will likewise kill your father.”

But BCD (“the enjoyment of the people”) is reducible to BD (“The people enjoy”), while the corresponding unit here (“another’s father”) is not reducible to a unit of the same structure. BD in turn is reducible to a verbal unit D/L “(He) enjoys/is enjoyed”, the corresponding unit here to a nominal unit, “father”. Yet there is nothing to prevent us from identifying the pattern of the opening words as ABCD except our experience of the words *lo* “enjoy” and *fu* “father” in other contexts, which leads us to expect the former in a verbal and the latter in a nominal position. This expectation is not always the immediate result of knowing the meaning of the word. We expect to find *ch’iang* 強 “strong”, *chih* 治 “govern”, *chiao* 教 “teach”, and *jen* 仁 “benevolent, kind” in verbal positions, but *li* 力 “strength”, *cheng* 政 “government”, *shih* 師 “teacher”, and *li* 禮 “propriety” in nominal, not because of a semantic difference, but because of the way that we have seen them operate in other sentences:

Ex. 16. M.4B/28 仁者愛人，有禮者敬人。... 我必不仁也，必無禮也。

“The kind love others, those who possess propriety respect others . . . It must be that I have been unkind, it must be that I have been lacking in propriety.”

Can we define nouns and verbs without reservation as words which may stand in nominal or verbal positions? Since Chinese is notorious for the apparent mobility of its words it may seem advisable to look for a more cautious pair of definitions. However, it may well be that apparent cases of verbs in nominal positions will always prove on further analysis to be cases of verbal sub-units inside nominal units, like *lo* “enjoy” at J which we translated by the English noun “enjoyment” yet identified as a verbal sub-unit inside the nominal IJ “his enjoyment”. I should like to risk the suggestion that on the present approach, by which each unit is analysable into sub-units down to its ultimate constituents, every verb will turn out to be confined to a verbal position and every noun to a nominal. The crucial problem is presented by apparent cases of nouns in verbal positions, as in the

H IJ
phrase 師之 “treat him as teacher”; these oblige us, if we follow the

present line of inquiry, to claim that *shih* “teacher” occupies a nominal position inside the verbal unit H. We shall return to this problem later.³ Here it is sufficient to point out that even the strictest definitions of parts of speech do not oblige us, for example, to deny that *li*, commonly a noun (“propriety”), is a verb in the following example:

Ex. 17. M.4A/4

H	IJ
禮	人 不 答 . . .

“If you are polite to someone and he does not respond . . .”

Here *li* is not used according to a syntactic rule that it assumes a causative function at H (in which case it would be translatable as “treat as being propriety”), but has changed in sense, and we can enter the word in the dictionary under separate headings: “*Li*. Noun; ‘rites, propriety’. Verb: ‘treat with propriety’.” Such changes of course are often accompanied by phonetic changes which allow us to distinguish different words, for example “*Wang* 王 (2nd tone). Noun: ‘king’. (4th tone). Verb: ‘reign’.”

Let us now consider two sentences of another pattern:

Ex. 18. M.6A/4

M	N	O	P
仁	內	也	
	非	外	也。
義	外	也	
	非	內	也。

“Kindness is inside, is not outside. Duty is outside, is not inside.”

The word *yeh* at P is bound to a final position in certain patterns of which this is the most familiar; it is therefore a particle. Position N is remarkable in that it is filled by *fei* “is not” in the negative but has no word to fill it in the affirmative. We may begin by eliminating P:

Ex. 19 M.1A/1

M	N	O
殺	其 君 者	必 千 乘 之 家。

“The one which murders its ruler will certainly be a family of a thousand chariots.” (Cf. also the first sentence in Ex. 13 above.)

Ex. 20. M.3B/8

M	N	O
是	非	君 子 之 道。

“This is not the way of the gentleman.”

We may next eliminate M:

Ex. 21. M.1A/3

N	O	P
非	我	也，
	歲	也。

“It is not me, it is the year.”

In *Mencius*, the text which we are using as basis, the *yeh* at P is present when M is absent from a sentence, for reasons which we shall consider

³ Cf. p. 202 below.

later.⁴ But in the negative both may be absent when NO is a subordinate clause:

Ex. 22. M. 7B/11

N O
 苟 非 其 人 . . .

"If he is not the man . . ."

By the present definitions then MNOP, MNO and NO are all verbal units. In the negative form we may take the further step of eliminating O, leaving the verbal unit N. At this stage too the final *yeh* is present in illustrative sentences, but we can find an example without *yeh* in an embedded clause:

Ex. 23. M. 2B/114

M N O N P
 仕 而 不 受 祿, 古 之 道 乎。 曰, 非 也。

"Was it the way of the ancients not to accept a salary when taking office?" "It was not."

Ex. 24. M. 7B/37

N
 惡 似 而 非 者

"I hate one who seems but is not."

It is clear that the deletion of O from NO is true elimination, since the remainder, *fei* "is not", always allows its restoration; the *fei* which one finds at L ("is wrong") and at H ("judge wrong") is another word. This shows that any resemblance to the pattern HIJ is only superficial, since IJ is not eliminable from HIJ. We may note also that the word *chih* "him, her, it" which is confined to position IJ cannot stand at O; the phrase *fei chih*⁵ "judge it wrong" (not "is not it") belongs to pattern HIJ. A further difference is that IJ is exclusively nominal while O, although nominal in the previous examples, may equally well be verbal:

Ex. 25. M. 1A/7

M N O P N O P
 B C D
 故 王 之 不 王, 不 爲 也, 非 不 能 也。

"Therefore Your Majesty's not reigning over the Empire is a case of not doing, is not a case of being unable."

At first sight it is difficult to admit that here O is a verbal. It might be suspected that the units at this position, although verbal, are expandable to BCD ("Your Majesty's not doing", "Your Majesty's being unable"), the nominal unit which we actually find at M. This was formerly my own opinion,⁶

⁴ Cf. p. 201 below.

⁵ M. 7B/37.

⁶ "Being" in Classical Chinese, in *The Verb "To Be" and its Synonyms*, edited John W. M. Verhaar (*Foundations of Language*, Supplementary Series, Vol. 1, 1967), p. 5.

but it is unquestionably wrong. The unit in question is expandable not to the nominal BCD but to the verbal BD:

Ex. 26. M. 5A/5

使之主祭而百神享之,

M N O
 B D
 是 天 受 之。
 M N O P

使之主事而事治, 百姓安之,

B D
 是 民 受 之 也。
 M N O P N O P

... 是 篡 也, 非 天 與 也。

"The spirits enjoying the sacrifice when he is put in charge is Heaven accepting him. Affairs being well conducted when he is put in charge, and the peasants being content with him, is the people accepting him . . . This is usurpation, it is not Heaven giving it."

In the affirmative form position N is sometimes occupied by *wei* "constitute, act as, fill the role of":

Ex. 27. M. 2A/9

M N O
 爾 爲 爾,
 我 爲 我。

"You are you, I am I."

Here the pattern is evidently MNO and not FHIJ, since *wei* in this sense is not followed by *chih* "him, her, it"; the *wei chih* of pattern HIJ⁷ is translatable as "do it", not "be it". However, the negative of *wei* is not *fei* but *pu wei*,⁸ so that we cannot assume that the word is always suppliable when N is vacant. In sentences without *wei* the verbal NO ("is O") is not internally distinguishable from the nominal or verbal O inside it, and requires an external indicator to mark it. This is the function of the particle *yeh* at P, which is not, however, always indispensable. When O is nominal NO is sufficiently identified by an external indication of a verbal unit in this position. As long as the context clearly defines the limits of a sentence the mere presence of M will be enough to show that what follows is verbal, as we can see from the first sentences in Ex. 13, 24. In Ex. 19 the word *pi* 必 "certainly", invariably pre-verbal in *Mencius*, establishes the next unit as not nominal⁹ but verbal NO. But when M is absent NO is not identifiable in the affirmative, which explains the fact already noticed⁹ that in the absence of M the final *yeh* is regularly present. Should we infer that even the final *yeh* serves only to mark the end of a sentence and therefore of the verbal

⁷ M. 3A/4.

⁸ M. 3B/7.

⁹ Cf. p. 199 above.

unit which is its core? This explanation would be adequate if O were always nominal, but does not account for Ex. 26 where it is verbal: O "(You) do not", NOP "(It) is a case of not doing." When O is verbal there must be a marker which distinguishes NO from other verbal units, if not *yeh* then the *shih* "this" at M which we find three times in Ex. 27, once unsupported by a final *yeh*.

It seems then that MNOP, MNO, NO and N are sentence-forms and therefore verbal, by the same criteria by which we identified verbal units in ABCDEFGHIJ and KL. We find, however, the anomaly that in sentences where neither *wei* nor *fei* can stand at N there is no copulative verb to occupy it; the position is not merely vacant, there is no word in the language to fill it. In spite of this gap in the vocabulary, verbal NO is distinguished from the nominal or verbal O inside it by a variety of external markers, in particular by final *yeh* at P. A grammatical description which postulates a position which cannot be filled at all may seem artificial, but it has the advantage of locating what in relation to the history of the language we have reason to regard as an area of tension in the system, resolved by the evolution of *shih* "this" into the copulative verb *shih* of the colloquial language. Even in Classical Chinese *shih* is noticeably attracted towards the vacuum at N. In *Mencius* it is common at M as an external marker of NO, as in Ex. 26. In other texts it appears as the opposite required by *fei* "is not (it)" (just as in the sense of "right" it is the opposite of *fei* "wrong"), in spite of the asymmetry of having *shih* at O but *fei* at N:

Ex. 28. *Mo-tzū* 42/26/42 輪匠執其規矩以度天下之方圓，曰，

M N O P M N P

中者 是也，不中者 非也。

"Wheelwrights and carpenters bring their compasses and set-squares to measure the world's square and round things and say: 'What coincides is it, what does not coincide is not.'"

Mencius itself seems to have an example of *shih* actually at N:

Ex. 29. M.6A/15

N O P
鈞 是 人 也。

"They are equally men."

The concept of an unoccupiable position N is useful to account for apparent cases of nouns in verbal positions:

Ex. 30. M.4B/31

M N O P
會子 師 也。

"Tseng-tzū was a teacher."

Ex. 31. M.4A/8

H IJ
莫 若 師 文王。

"The best course is to take King Wen as teacher."

With this we may compare examples of KL and HIJ:

Ex. 32. M. 7A/31

K L
太 甲 賢。

"T'ai-chia was worthy."

Ex. 33. M. 4B/29

F H IJ
孔 子 賢 之。

"Confucius judged him worthy."

In the latter examples the verbal unit H is equivalent to verbal L ("is worthy"), rendered causative by its new position ("cause to be worthy, regard as worthy"). Similarly in the former examples verbal H is equivalent, not to nominal O ("teacher") but to verbal NO ("is a teacher"), rendered causative in just the same way ("causes to be one's teacher, regard as one's teacher"). The noun *shih* "teacher" therefore occupies a nominal position inside a unit identified as verbal by its context, just as in Ex. 31 it occupies a nominal position inside verbal NO, which is distinguished from it by the external marker *yeh*.

This analysis helps us to understand how it is that Classical Chinese can allow what seems at first sight to be a free interchange of noun and verb without a total disruption of its syntax. We could hardly read the language at all if, for example, the isolated sentence 性善 could be taken as either KL ("Human nature is good") or HIJ ("He treats goodness as human nature"). But the point is not that the noun *hsing* "nature" may be used as a verb but that its position may be inside a verbal unit identified only by its context. Here *hsing* has no such context, so that the pattern can only be KL. But we might conceivably meet the sentence with the pre-verbal negative *pu* in front of *hsing*, or as one of a series of parallel clauses of form HIJ; if we did we should recognize the pattern with the same confidence as HIJ.

It will be seen that the present definitions of nominal and verbal do considerably simplify our initial problem, that of describing the functions of the subordinating and co-ordinating particles. The rule-of-thumb that *erh* stands between verbal or adjectival units may be reformulated as a provisional rule (we shall in due course revise it again) that *erh* stands between verbal units. The puzzling examples of *erh* after the subject still present difficulty. But the nominal complements which were previously troublesome are now reclassified as verbal units; and we need not consider adjectives, since even if we recognize them as a sub-class of the verb the positions which they occupy in a sentence-form are by our definitions verbal. We must now attempt definitions of "subordinate" and "co-ordinate".

2/2 Subordination and co-ordination

Of two units, at any level of analysis, if only one is eliminable without the elimination of the other it is "subordinate" and the other "super-

ordinate" (for example, ABCDE is subordinate to FGHIJ, F to HIJ). If either is eliminable without the elimination of the other the two are "co-ordinate" (for example, the two clauses in each sentence of Ex. 18).

As in the analysis of HIJ¹⁰ we recognize a deletion as elimination only if the remainder is still identifiable as a reduced form of the original unit, that is only if the deleted part may be restored whatever the context in which we choose to place the remainder. Consequently the possibility of omitting a word from a phrase does not oblige us to treat its position as eliminable from the pattern:

Ex. 34. M. 1B/15

H	IJ
	Q R
事	大國

"serve a great state".

Ex. 35. M. 1B/3

H	IJ
	Q R
事	大

"serve the great".

Here, in spite of the vacancy of the position, the nominal R is not eliminable from nominal QR, because the remainder is no longer identifiable as a reduced form of QR; it can stand in positions where R cannot be restored:

Ex. 36. M. 7A/4

樂莫大焉。

"No joy is greater than this."

On the other hand the verbal Q is eliminable, because the remainder is nominal and an ultimate constituent which is nominal is expandable to QR whatever its context:

Ex. 37. M. 4A/13

M	N	O	P
		R R	
思	誠者	人之道	也。

"To think about being sincere is the Way of Man."

Ex. 38. M. 3B/2

H	IJ
	Q R
行	天下之大道

"practise the great Way of the Empire".

Ex. 39. M. 3B/9

K	L
Q R	R
聖	人之道衰。

"The way of the sages decayed."

¹⁰ Cf. p. 195 above.

Following this procedure we again escape the temptation to suppose that a verb is occupying a nominal position. In Ex. 35 the verb *ta* 大 "great" stands not at the nominal position IJ but at verbal Q subordinate to the vacant nominal R. There are other nominal complexes in which a verb may similarly stand at the only occupied position:

Ex. 40. M. 7A/25

S	T	U
	利	與善之間也。

"It is the gap between profit and goodness."

Here U is nominal, following the inter-nominal particle *yü*; the verb *shan* 善 "good" occupies a verbal position inside it, precedable by the pre-verbal negative *pu*:

Ex. 41. M. 4A/2

S	T	U
	仁	與不仁而已矣。

"There is none except kindness and unkindness."

The verbal position is the X of a nominal VWX similar to the BCD analysed above:¹¹

Ex. 43. M. 6A/2

V	W	X		B	C	D
人	性	之善也	猶	水	之	就下也。

"Human nature being good is like water tending downwards."

VWX is reducible to verbal VX, just as BCD is reducible to verbal BD:

Ex. 44. M. 6A/6

V	X
性	善。

"Human nature is good."

It may be noticed that in Ex. 41 *li* 利 "benefit, profit" is not susceptible to the same treatment as *shan* "good". It might be possible to take it as occupying verbal Q with nominal R vacant: "what profits". If we find this solution artificial, and can identify no other nominal complex in which it may be occupying a verbal position, we must conclude that the behaviour of *li* in varying positions, unlike the behaviour of *ta* "great" and *shan* "good", cannot be explained solely by syntactic rules. It will then require separate entries in our dictionary: "*Li*. Verb: 'to benefit, profit'. Noun: 'benefit, profit'." This recognition of a lexicographical distinction would not be comparable with offering separate definitions in the case of *shan*: "*Shan*. Verb: 'good'. Noun: (1) 'good one'; (2) 'goodness'." The definitions of the noun *shan* would be superfluous even for a reader who thought them theoretically legitimate; he would learn nothing from them which he did not already know from the definition of the verb and his practical experience of Chinese syntax.

¹¹ Cf. p. 196 above.

A sentence-form may be expanded at every level by adding subordinates in front of a unit or co-ordinates adjoining it. The rule-of-thumb that subordinates precede their superordinates is especially wide in range accounting for the subordination of clauses to the main clause, subject to sentence-core, instrument with *yi* 以 and negative, distributive and temporal particles to the verbal positions. In a sentence of any complexity it is likely to account for the placing of most words in the sentence.¹² Since the rules that co-ordinates adjoin and subordinates precede explain so much, we may approach the problem of Chinese word-order by considering first what kind of sequence is not explained by them. This will be the sequence of uneliminables and of subordinates which do not precede them; these compose what we shall call the "core" of the sentence-pattern. We may then reformulate our rule-of-thumb as the binding rule that subordinates outside the core precede their superordinates. How we choose to classify the core-patterns and their positions will depend, for example, on whether we prefer to assimilate KL to ABCDEFGHIJ or to distinguish them, whether we find it convenient to recognize two object positions (for the sake of such a phrase as 與之天下 "give him the Empire") or are satisfied with one. Here we shall propose two core-patterns, the first shared by ABCDEFGHIJ and KL, and the second equivalent to NOP. We shall use a vertical stroke to mark the beginning of the core, brackets around subordinates and a dot between co-ordinates.

(1) Type HIJ

(Core-subordinate)	I	2	3	4	5
	Main	Object	Directive	Modifier	Final
	verbal	(nominal,	(nominal,	(verbal)	particle
	position	occupiable	preceded		
	(precedable	by <i>chih</i>)	by <i>yü</i> ,		
	by <i>pu</i>)		occupiable		
			by <i>yen</i>)		

M.6B/3 | 怨。

"It is resentful."

5A/5 (天) | (不)言。

"Heaven does not speak."

3A/5 (爲富) | (不)仁

"One whose concern is wealth is no longer kind." 矣。

1A/6 (王) | 知 (夫)苗

"Does Your Majesty know the rice-shoots?" 乎。

4B/18 (君子) | 恥 之。

"A gentleman is ashamed of it."

	1	2	3	4	5
1A/5	(西)喪	地	於秦	(七百)里。	13
	"In the West we lost seven hundred <i>li</i> of land to Ch'in."				
2A/2	賢	於堯舜	遠	矣。	
	"He was far worthier than Yao or Shun."				
1A/3	盡	心	焉	耳矣。	
	"I simply put my whole heart into it."				
7A/4	(樂) (莫)大		焉。		
	"No joy is greater than this."				

(2) Type NOP

(Core-subordinate)	1	2	3
	(Copula,	Complement	Final
	verbal,	(nominal	particle
	negative	or verbal)	(commonly
	form <i>fei</i>)		<i>yeh</i>)
M.4B/28 (舜)		人	也。

"Shun was a man."

IB/14 | 非 (擇而)取之, 不得已 也。

"It was not that he took it by choice, the fact is that he had no alternative."

5B/1 (我) | 爲 我。

"I am I."

5A/4 (此) | 非 (君子之)言。

"These are not the words of a gentleman."

4A/18 | 禮 也。

"It is the custom."

By this analysis the subject is treated as a subordinate of the whole core, and so distinguished from the subordinates of the main verbal position. The question may be raised whether it might not be more convenient to class it among the eliminables inside the core. However, the only criterion we have found to decide the limits of the core is whether or not subordinate precedes superordinate, and by this test we must exclude the subject just as we must exclude the instrument with *yi*. We may notice also that the subject is only one of a series of possible preliminary positions each subordinate to the whole of what follows. In front of the subject we may find an exposed element such as ABCDE, which we eliminated before the subject F. There may also be still earlier nominal preliminaries such as (是故)(昔者)

¹³ This type of numerical expression seems to fall under the general heading of verbal unit, not nominal: it is negated not by *fei* but by the pre-verbal *pu*. Cf. M.6B/8 不千里, 不足以待諸侯. "If it is not a thousand *li* it is inadequate for receiving the feudal lords."

¹² Cf. p. 210 below.

"Therefore formerly . . .", each subordinate not to the next unit nor to the core, but to all which follow it.

We shall find this classification of the subject useful for simplifying the definitions of the particles *chih* and *erh*.¹⁴ It also simplifies the description of pronouns, as Dobson notices.¹⁵ It is remarkable that although there are resumptive pronouns bound to the positions of object (*chih*) and directive (*yen*) there is none which is exclusively subject; on the other hand there is a pronounced distinction in all persons between pronouns which are confined to subordinate positions (such as *wu* 吾, *erh* 而, *nai* 乃, *ch'i* 其) and those which are not (such as *wo* 我 and *ju* 汝), in Dobson's terminology those which are "determinant" and those which are "pregnant". Among the former we can recognize a further distinction, not between subject and possessive, but between those confined to the kinds of subordination which we shall later class as "peripheral"¹⁶ (such as *ch'i* "his, her, its", found in the position of subject only in clauses outside the main clause) and those not so confined (for example, *wu* "I, my", which may be subject in the main clause).

2/3 Central and Peripheral Relations

The sentence-core may be expanded with units subordinate to or co-ordinate with its constituents at every level from the clause down to the one-word unit. It is clear that as long as structure is displayed only by word-order (subordinate preceding superordinate and co-ordinates adjoining) such expansion cannot proceed far without obscuring the whole organization of the sentence. But further expansion is possible with the aid of particles such as those with which this inquiry started, *chih*, *yü* and *erh*. These particles mark the limits of units, establish them as verbal or nominal, distinguish the subordinate from the co-ordinate. All three stand between the units which they interrelate; it is therefore convenient to call them conjunctions, defining a conjunction as a particle which must be eliminated with the elimination of either of the units between which it intervenes. This definition will serve to distinguish *yü* as conjunction from *yü* with other functions which do not concern us:

Ex. 44. M.1A/7 鄒人與楚人戰

"If the men of Tsou went to war with the men of Ch'u . . ."

Here *yü* is not a conjunction, since it remains after the elimination of the preceding unit: "If they went to war with the men of Ch'u . . ." (cf. M.1B/2 與民同之 "share it with the people").

Ex. 45. M.3A/3 在君與子矣

"It depends on your lord and yourself."

Here *yü* is a conjunction, since it must be eliminated whether we eliminate the preceding or the succeeding co-ordinate: "It depends on you", "It depends on your lord" (cf. M.3A/2 是誠在彼 "This truly depends on me").

The addition of co-ordinates does not greatly complicate the sentence, since all remain on the same level. But the complexity of subordination at different levels even in fairly short clauses may be seen from the following examples, where superordinates are underlined and subordinates bracketed:

Ex. 46. M.2B/4

a b c d e f g h i j k l
子之持戟之士一日而三失伍，則去之否乎。

()
() *chih* () *erh* ()
() *chih* () ()

"If a spear-carrying officer of yours broke ranks three times in one day, would you get rid of him or not?"

Ex. 47. M.5A/9

m n o p q r s t u v
知虞公之將亡而先去之。

() *erh* ()
() *chih* ()

"Knowing that the Duke of Yü was about to fall he left him beforehand."

It can be seen from these examples that the presence or absence of *chih* and *erh* serves to distinguish between levels of subordination. In the first place we do not find particles between the core and its subordinates (the subject and other nominal preliminaries) in the main clause (between *abcdef* and *ghijkl*), but do find them at this position in subordinate, embedded or auxiliary clauses (between *no* and *qr*). In the present instance of an embedded clause (*nopqr*) the clause is nominalized and the particle is *chih*; we shall later consider examples of *erh* at the same position in verbal clauses other than the main clauses.¹⁷ In the second place when we identify the ultimate superordinates inside subject and core we find a particle after the primary subordinate only once in five cases (between *cd* and *f*, but not between *g* and *h*, *j* and *kl*, *q* and *r*, *t* and *uv*), but after the secondary subordinate in all three cases (between *a* and *cdef*, *gh* and *jkl*, *mnpqr* and *tuv*).

It may be noticed that while in the first case the presence or absence of particles depends on the absolute distinction between the main and other

¹⁴ Cf. p. 211, 212 below.

¹⁵ W. A. C. H. Dobson, *Late Archaic Chinese*, Toronto, 1959, 3.5.2. I have elsewhere criticized several points in Dobson's description of the pronouns (*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 22/3 (1959), 557-60).

¹⁶ Cf. 2/3 below.

¹⁷ Cf. p. 212-215 below.

clauses, in the second case there seems to be some latitude. Among the primary subordinates those without a particle are all simple (*g, j, q, t*), the one followed by *chih* is complex (*cd*). Degrees both of complexity and of distance from the superordinate seem to be relevant to the presence or absence of a particle. Verbal subordinates of the pattern QR do not allow a particle when they are simple (M.3A/3 賢君 "worthy rulers", 3B/9 聖王 "sage kings") but do when they are complex (M.2A/1 賢聖之君 "worthy and sage rulers"). Nominal subordinates allow a particle not only when they are complex (M.1B/11 天下之兵 "weapons of the Empire"), but also when they are simple (M.1A/2 古之人 "men of ancient times"). This difference may be explained by the fact that nominal subordinates are "farther" than verbal ones from their superordinates, in the sense that they allow the intervention of a still nearer verbal subordinate (M.7A/8 古之賢王 "worthy kings of ancient times" M.1A/5 秦楚之堅甲利兵 "hard armour and sharp weapons of Ch'in and Ch'u"). But the need of a particle even in secondary subordination is not absolute but relative to the complexity of the sentence as a whole. Thus in *Mencius* the noun *ku* 古 "ancient times" is nearly always subordinated by *chih*, yet twice lacks *chih* as secondary subordinate in very short sentences:

Ex. 48. M.2A/2 皆古聖人也。
 () _____
 () _____
 () _____

"They were all sages of ancient times."

(The second example, in M.2B/9, is identical except for the absence of the first word.)

We may sum up these results by proposing a distinction between "central" and "peripheral" subordination. "Central" relationships are between

- (1) the core of the main clause and its subordinates (the subject and other nominal preliminaries);
- (2) superordinates inside and outside the core and their simpler and nearer subordinates.

The particles *chih* and *erh* are absent at the centre, multiply towards the periphery. They serve to distinguish not only between one unit and another, nominal and verbal, subordinate and co-ordinate, but between central and peripheral subordination; their absence may be as significant of the former as their presence of the latter.

5. Symmetrical definitions of the particles of subordination and co-ordination

Let us now work out definitions for the conjunctions *chih*, *yü* and *erh*.

In the case of *chih* the unit on either side may be either nominal or verbal, in three of the four theoretically possible combinations:

M.1B/11 天下之兵 (nominal plus nominal), "the weapons of the Empire".

2B/4 持戟之士 (verbal plus nominal), "officers who carry spears".

1A/7 王之不王 (nominal plus verbal), "that Your Majesty does not reign".

What is common to all possibilities is that the combination itself is nominal. We must therefore define *chih* in relation to the combination and not to its members:

Definition 1. *Chih* is the conjunction of subordination in a nominal combination.

To consider what unit contains the conjunction rather than what sub-units it combines agrees with our procedure throughout this inquiry, which has been to work downwards from the form of the sentence as a whole, not upwards from its constituents. Let us try the same approach to *yü*:

Definition 2. *Yü* is the conjunction of co-ordination in a nominal combination.

At first sight this result is disappointing, since the proposed definition is looser than the quite satisfactory rule-of-thumb that *yü* stands *between* nominal units. But it will be remembered that by the present definitions units are co-ordinate if either is eliminable without the elimination of the other,¹⁸ and also that a unit is eliminable only if the remainder can occupy the same positions as the combination itself, which in this case occupies nominal positions.¹⁹ It follows that since the combination is nominal both members are nominal, and we may establish the rule-of-thumb as a binding rule which we deduce from the definition:

Definition 2, Corollary. Both members of the combination are nominal.

The possibility now arises that the same procedure may dispose of the exceptions to the rule-of-thumb that *erh* links verbal units. In the case of *erh* it seems natural to consider the members rather than the combination, because it may link very long clauses; but this consideration need not worry us, since by the present definitions the sentence itself is verbal.²⁰

Definition 3. *Erh* is the conjunction of subordination or co-ordination in a verbal combination.

In this case, as in the last, we may deduce corollaries from the definition. When the members are co-ordinate both will be verbal, for the same reason that both are nominal in the case of *yü*. When the first member is subordinate its elimination, since the combination is verbal, will leave a verbal remainder; therefore at least the second member will be verbal whether the *erh* subordinates or co-ordinates:

¹⁸ Cf. p. 204 above.

¹⁹ Cf. p. 195, 204 above.

²⁰ Cf. p. 197 above.

Definition 3, Corollary 1. Both members of the combination are verbal except in one contingency: when *erh* subordinates, the first member may be either verbal or nominal.

In what constructions are there nominal subordinates of verbal units? We might suggest the phrase 一日 "a single day", followed by *erh* in Ex. 47, but there is reason to treat it as verbal.²¹ The same may be suspected of such idioms as 中道 "mid-road", of which Simon has collected many examples followed by *erh*;²² among the variations which he documents is the phrase 中之 "in the middle of it",²³ containing the pronoun *chih* which is exclusively post-verbal. In any case the most important nominal subordinates of verbal units are the subject, exposed element and other preliminaries of the sentence-core. Now clauses with *erh* after the subject are precisely the examples which we have noticed as the most persistent exceptions to the rule-of-thumb that *erh* links verbal units.²⁴ Moreover the present procedure does not merely explain these exceptions; it provides premises for a further deduction by which we can test the adequacy of the explanation. We have seen that in the main clause the nominal preliminaries cannot be followed by the subordinating particles, which are used not for central but for peripheral relationships.²⁵ We may therefore deduce a further rule, and test by examples whether in practice the exceptions to the rule-of-thumb stay within the bounds of this rule:

Definition 3, Corollary 2. Among nominal subordinates, the subject, exposed element and other preliminaries of the core may be followed by *erh* only in clauses other than the main clause.

Mencius, the text on which we have so far depended, is not rich in test cases; we shall therefore abandon it for the treasury of 271 illustrative sentences quoted by Simon, who has assembled crucial examples of *erh* from the whole of pre-Han and early Han literature. This source is especially useful for present purposes since Simon does not himself attach significance to the status of the clause in which *erh* follows a nominal unit. Simon gives a set of three examples of *erh* after the subject, the second of which is the same as Ex. 1 above and the third almost identical with it; the first is as follows:

Ex. 49 (Simon Ex. 53). *Shih chi* 史記 ch. 87 (Chung-hua Book Company, Peking 1959, p. 2551/8)

父而賜子死，尙安復請。

"When a father allows his son to die, how can there be any question about sending back a request?" (Simon, quoting Bodde).

²¹ Cf. p. 207 n. 13 above.

²² Simon Exs. 129-44.

²³ Simon Ex. 144.

²⁴ Cf. p. 193, 203 above.

²⁵ Cf. p. 210 above.

In all three instances *erh* follows the subject in a hypothetical clause preceding the main clause. This is a type of sentence in which the older Chinese scholars who explained one particle in terms of another supposed that *erh* is equivalent to *ju* 如 "if", although recent scholars who are aware of syntax as well as lexicography show some uneasiness over the explanation.²⁶ But although obsolete this explanation is significant; it reflects an assumption, surely common to all experienced readers of pre-Han Chinese, that the opening clause with *erh* after the subject cannot be a sentence, that the main clause must be still to come. A reader expects in practice to find subordinating particles after the subject only on the periphery of the sentence, even if he lacks the means to formulate the elusive principle behind his expectation.

Simon gives four examples of another interesting pattern in which *erh* follows the subject. In each the subject is concluded by the particle *che* and belongs to a clause following the main verbal position, which is occupied three times by *yu* "there is" and once by *wen* 聞 "hear".

Ex. 50 (Simon Ex. 48). *Chan-kuo-ts'e* (SPTK 3,22A/4,5)

費人有與曾子同名族者而殺人。

"Among the men of Pi there was one of the same personal name and surname as Tseng-tzū who was a murderer."

This is surely a special case of the pattern in which *yu* precedes the subject of a clause:

Ex. 51. *Mo-tzū* 50/31/22

有神入門而左。

"There was a spirit which entered the door and stood on the left."
(Here the *erh*, linking verbal units, is irrelevant to the pattern.)

In this pattern to have a subject ending with *che* would expose the reader to the danger of supposing that the particle terminates the unit after *yu* and therefore the sentence. The danger is avoided by placing a subordinating particle after the subject; since the clause is verbal this is not *chih* but *erh*.

In another important pattern uncovered by Simon *erh* follows the subject in a clause following a main verbal position occupied by a causative verb such as *ling* "command, cause":

Ex. 52 (Simon Ex. 231). *Chia-yü* (SPTK 4, 5B/3,4)

欲令曾皙而聞之。

"He wished to make Tseng Hsi hear it."

He shows convincingly that *shuai* "lead" is one of these causative verbs, and so accounts for a puzzling sentence in *Mencius*:

²⁶ Cf. Chou Fa-ko 周法高, *A Historical Grammar of Ancient Chinese*, Part 1: *Syntax* (Academia Sinica Special Publications No. 39, Taipei, 1961), 217-19.

Ex. 53 (Simon Ex. 226). M.1A/4

此率獸而食人也。

"This is to lead on the beasts to devour men."

Simon does not separately classify examples of *erh* after the exposed element. Those which I have noticed in his series of articles²⁷ share the common feature of his illustrations of *erh* after the subject, that *erh* is never in front of the main verbal position. In the following example it is inside an embedded clause:

Ex. 54 (Simon Ex. 61). *Shih chi* ch. 110 (ut sup. 2888/4)

鳴鏑所射而不悉射者斬之。

"Anyone who does not shoot at whatever the whistling arrow shoots at will be executed."

When analysing the nominal pattern ABCDE ("One who enjoys the enjoyment of the people") we began by eliminating the particle *che* at E, leaving the sentence-form ABCD "(He) enjoys the enjoyment of the people."²⁸ In the present case if we eliminate *che* we do not have a sentence unless we also eliminate *erh*: "What the whistling arrow shoots at (he) does not in every case shoot at." These two eliminations show that the position of *erh* is between exposed element and core. If we replace the *erh* the clause remains verbal but can no longer operate as main clause of a sentence. The further replacement of *che* nominalizes the clause: "One who what the whistling arrow shoots at does not in every case shoot at."

In his final "Synopsis of the main functions of *erh*" Simon includes the function of resuming the subject "in a simple sentence."²⁹ But he betrays some difficulty in finding an illustration; he does not appeal to any of his 271 numbered sentences but to a new example, and supports it by another in a footnote:

Ex. 55. *Analects* 6/8

亡之，命矣夫，斯人也而有斯疾也，斯人也而有斯疾也。

"... But that such a man should have such a sickness." (Simon, quoting Waley.)

Ex. 56. *Kuo-yü* 國語 ch. 20 (SPTK 20, 4B/6)

孰是(吾)君也而可無死乎。

"Who then can refuse to die for such a prince?" (Simon.)

(The bracketed character, found in the Sung edition,³⁰ is missing in the Ming edition reproduced in the *Ssü-pu ts'ung-k'an* used by Simon.)

These examples are unusual among Simon's illustrations in having the particle *yeh* after the first member of the combination. We might therefore

²⁷ Simon Exs. 56-8, 61, 64, 66, 68, 234.

²⁸ Cf. p. 196 above.

²⁹ *Asia Major*, NS, 4/1, p. 22.

³⁰ *T'ien-sheng Ming-tao pen Kuo-yü* 天聖明道本國語 Kuang-hsü keng-tzü 光緒庚子 edition, 3/72A/5.

suspect that the first member is the complement of the "XY *yeh*" pattern, and so verbal by the present definitions:

"It was this of all men and he had this illness!"

"Who, it being this prince, could refuse to give his life?"

But in any case both examples are of doubtful relevance. In Ex. 56 we should probably prefer the Sung to the Ming reading:

"Who, when this man is our ruler, could refuse to give his life?"

In Ex. 55 the pair of final particles after the second of the four clauses, and the *yeh* after each of the last two, suggests one of the inverted constructions common in the *Analects* (cf. 6/9 賢哉回也。 "Worthy is Hui!" 1/3 巧言令色，鮮矣仁。 "Skilful talkers who put on a fine show, it's rare that they are good."):

"We have lost him. It was ordained, it seems, that this of all men should have this sickness, that this of all men should have this sickness."

It would seem then that *erh* is like *chih* in that although it can stand after the subject or exposed element it can do so only on the periphery of the sentence; they differ however in that *chih* nominalizes a clause while the clause containing *erh* remains verbal. There is the further difference that a clause requires *chih* if nominalized, but if it remains verbal does not require *erh*; we find *erh* after the subject or exposed element only in certain patterns of which some at least have special functions. It seems clear for example that in hypothetical clauses with *erh* after the subject there is, to use Simon's term, an "intensifying"³¹ of the subject, as in Ex. 1: "If *even* Kuan knows the rites . . ." We are concerned here, however, with the positions occupiable by syntactic particles, not with the significance of particular patterns which contain them.

There is one interesting asymmetry in our definitions of the three conjunctions. Why should there be distinct particles of subordination and co-ordination for nominal but not for verbal combinations? To find the answer to this question, let us exhaust the letters of the alphabet on a last sentence-form from *Mo-tzü*:

Ex. 57. *Mo-tzü* 9/9/12 w x y z
 | 天 鬼 富 之。

Here the unit *wx* is nominal, but without a further search through the text of *Mo-tzü* we cannot decide with confidence whether *w* and *x* are co-ordinate ("Heaven and the spirits enrich him") or whether *w* is subordinate to *x* ("The spirits of Heaven enrich him"). In the former case either is eliminable without the other, leaving two sentence-forms (*xyz* "The spirits enrich him", *wxy* "Heaven enriches him"); in the latter case only *w* is eliminable from *wx*, and of the two reduced forms only *xyz* is possible. It follows that in a nominal unit such ambiguity will affect the whole structure

³¹ *Asia Major* NS 2/1, p. 62.

of the sentence and therefore the information we derive from it; we remain in doubt whether Heaven has a hand in enriching him. But in a verbal combination the ambiguity has no such catastrophic effects:

Ex. 58. M. 2A/7

發而不中 . . .

"If he shoots and does not hit . . ."/ "If when he shoots he does not hit . . ."

Here the difference between the alternative translations is hardly more than a matter of phrasing. A reader of Chinese is very often at a loss when it occurs to him to ask whether a verbal unit is a subordinate or a co-ordinate, but in practice is seldom worried by the problem. The sentence-form *wxyz* raised the crucial question of whether it was analysable into two sentence-forms or merely reducible to one. But the present example, whether the relation is one of subordination or of co-ordination, is in either case analysable into the same two sentence-forms ("He shoots", "He does not hit"). For the grammarian the only question is whether the first is the only one eliminable without the other, for the translator whether the writer is equally interested in making both points or primarily interested in making the second.