Where Do Classical Chinese Nouns Come From?

With Some Notes on a Syntactic Hybrid in Koine Greek

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Owing to the pioneering contributions to Chinese linguistics by Bernhard Karlgren and many others, very considerable progress has been made in the reconstruction of the ancient Chinese sound system. Interesting hypotheses have been proposed on the internal morphology of ancient Chinese syllables, and important contributions have been made on this basis to the study of Classical Chinese syntax. Also, from a traditional, philological point of view, such scholars as Lü Shuxiang, Mullie, and many others have since added considerably to our understanding of Chinese particles.

The present experimental essay, based partly on methods expounded by me previously (1980, 1982), approaches some fundamental problems in Chinese grammar not from a phonological or etymological point of view, and not from a traditional philological point of view, but from the point of view of logic and the philosophy of language. In Aspects of Classical Chinese Syntax (1981, hereafter Aspects) I have applied the principles of logic to the study of quantification, negation, conditionals, and to pronominalization. I believe I have shown that Classical Chinese grammar can be made more precise by circumspect use of logical analysis.

In standard, formal logic there are no verbs and nouns, there are only predicates: a subject noun may be interpreted in logic as a classificatory predicate in a subordinate position; the object noun is interpreted as a classificatory predicate in an embedded position. In this regard, a nominal predicate differs from a verbal predicate mainly in that the nominal predicate is classificatory (neither narrative nor descriptive).

From a grammatical point of view the distinction between nouns and verbs is morphologically manifest in a language like Greek in which nouns neither look like nor work like verbs in that
language. In a language like Classical Chinese, however, the nominal nature of nouns is syntactically manifest: nouns occupy different positions in the sentence and interact differently with certain particles.

The question underlying and inspiring this exploratory and highly tentative study is this: what if grammarians of Chinese could learn something not only from the paradigm of the usual categories like "noun" and "verb," but also from the paradigm of the logical predicates in the representation of propositions in standard first order predicate logic? What if Chinese nouns and verbs in some ways work like predicates in logic?

The concrete and empirical hypothesis I want to test, then, is the following: do Chinese nouns and noun phrases show any syntactic signs of being, like verbs, capable of functioning as main predications in sentences without a copula, but differing from verbs firstly by the position they occupy in the sentence and secondly in being classificatory rather than narrative or descriptive predicates? I shall not be arguing that there is no difference between nouns and verbs in Classical Chinese. On the contrary, I shall try to define what it is to be a noun and a verb in Classical Chinese in terms not taken—in the traditional philosophical manner—from translation into a European language, but from internal Chinese grammatical evidence.

I am aware that my approach may seem bizarre and unnatural to those who are not used to handling standard first order predicate logic. Most of us, after all, are not used to handling artificial languages like that of logic. Moreover, we are naturally reluctant to use an artificial language as an inspiration for the interpretation of a natural language.

I am also aware that my conclusions are far from conclusive or clear-cut. The picture emerging of the nominal predicate, the subject, and the nominalized subject in my interpretation seems to me plausible enough, and significantly superior to traditional accounts. But when it comes to the object and especially the nominal modifier, my analysis remains highly tentative and offers little new insight.

My subject is so broad and so central to the study of Chinese syntax that I could, and perhaps should, have kept on working away quietly, waiting for others more experienced than myself to pronounce on matters of this order of importance and generality.

But if this paper provokes or inspires my more experienced colleagues to enter into a lively and informed discussion on basic questions of Classical Chinese syntax and perhaps to provide
evidence against my conclusions, I shall feel most amply rewarded — I shall not have made a fool of myself in vain. If it takes a fool to make Classical Chinese grammar into more of a fröhliche Wissenschaft I shall be delighted to play the part.

1. THE NOMINAL PREDICATE

Consider the Classical Chinese sentences that are construed as nominal in current grammatical descriptions of the language. For example:

(1) 禮也
RITUAL YE
It is in accordance with ritual.

(2) 非禮也
NOM-NEG(FEI) RITUAL YE
It is not in accordance with ritual.

Symptoms of the nominality of such sentences are the presence of the particle ye sometimes said to function as a postposed copula; the presence of the negative fei 非 often said to be a nominal negative or a negative copula; and the impossibility of the negative bu 不 often said to be a verbal negative. Another striking feature of the nominal sentence is the absence in all such sentences of the aspectual final particle yi 之 which is restricted to verbal predicates.

The grammatical distinction between nominal and verbal sentences in Classical Chinese would thus appear to be a well-established fundamental feature of Classical Chinese sentence typology.

1.1 Final ye 也

The "postposed copula" ye turns out to be quite unsuitable as a standard of nominality of a Classical Chinese predicate. As I have demonstrated (Harbsmeier 1980), post-verbal ye is very common in Classical Chinese, and part of the function of post-verbal ye is to convert a narrative or descriptive sentence into a judgmental or disquisitional one:
(3) 我必不仁也
I CERTAINLY NOT(BU) HUMANE YE
I am certainly to be counted as not humane. Meng 4B28; cf. Xun 30.11, etc.

What makes this case so clear is the presence of the verbal negative bu 不, but even when we do not have bu, ye does not always mark a nominal predication:

(4) 虎狼仁也
TIGER WOLF HUMANE YE
Tigers and wolves would count as humane. Zhuang 14.6

Note that ren 仁 is quite common as a noun, and still cannot be taken as one in this example, in spite of the presence of the final ye.

Now in view of the last two examples the problem arises, whether to take ren verbally or nominally in the following examples:

(5) 分均仁也
DIVIDE EVEN HUMANE YE
A. Dividing the booty equally counts as humane.
B. Dividing the booty equally counts as humaneness. Zhuang 10.12

(6) 黥賢仁也
貶不肖亦仁也
HONOR TALENTED HUMANE YE
HUMBLE NOT(BU) BE-UP-TO-IT NONE-THE-LESS-ALSO GOOD YE
A. Honoring the competent counts as humane, but showing no respect to the incompetent also counts as humane.
B. Honoring the competent counts as humaneness, but showing no respect to the incompetent also counts as humaneness.
Xun 6.21

The decisive question at this point is the following: do the alternatives A and B above mark a sharp structural ambiguity inherent in Classical Chinese syntax, or do these alternatives just represent two ways of verbalizing in English the content of these sentences? Would a speaker of Classical Chinese recognize
our last two examples as structurally ambiguous in the way indicated by alternatives A and B?

One might think that in the case of identificatory nominal predicates, at least, the problem will go away, but in fact it won't:

(7) 一者何也？
曰: 仁也

ONE THAT-WHICH(ZHE) WHAT YE
SAY: HUMANE(REN) YE
What is this one thing?
It is (identical with) humaneness. Meng 6B6

Is not this sort of sentence prima facie evidence that ren means "be identical with humaneness"? That would explain why we construe ren zhe仁者, HUMANE HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH, either as "he who is humane" or as "that which is identical with being humane."

If we assume that this sort of identificatory predicate is a specialized (i.e., identificatory) classificatory verb then we achieve a unified account for post-nominal and post-verbal ye. Ye turns out to be obligatory in identificatory sentences not because the predicate is nominal (as traditional accounts have it) but because the predicate is always used in the judgemental mode of predication. One always judges two things to be identical.

There may still be uncertainty about the details in the interpretation of post-verbal ye, but this will in no way affect our present argument as long as one recognizes that the VP followed by ye is not nominalized. And that must be uncontroversial even on the evidence presented in this section.

Since final ye, no matter precisely how we will account for its post-verbal uses, will not be suitable to serve as a criterion for the nominality of a predicate, one might be tempted to turn to the "nominal" negative fei负 for help. After all, one might try to say that a predicate must count as nominal if it would be negated with fei rather than the "verbal" negative bu不. Let us look at the evidence.
1.2 Pre-verbal fei

Consider the pattern fei非 ...ye也:

(8) 王非置兩令尹也
KING NOT-BE(FEI) APPOINT TWO CHIEF-MINISTERS YE
A king will not appoint two Chief Ministers. ZGC 1.108

(9) 吾非愛道也
I NOT-BE(FEI) LOVE/BEGRUDGE SPEAK YE
It is not as if I was stingy with words... LSCQ 24.5

(10) 吾非能相人也
I NOT-BE(FEI) CAN PHYSIOGNOMIZE MAN YE
It is not as if I was able to physiognomize... LSCQ 24.6

(11) 絕非能害也
PROPER-NAME NOT-BE(FEI) CAN HARM YE
It is not as if I could harm people... Zuo Xiang 23.11

One may want to disagree about the precise force of this sort of pre-verbal fei as presented in Aspects 1.1, but there can be no doubt that the scope of fei in sentences like (8) to (11) is verbal, not nominal. In (8) we do not have a nominal predicate "be (a case of) an appointment of two Chief Ministers." Similar observations apply to all the examples of pre-verbal fei adduced in Aspects 1.1.

Given, then, that we have a wide range of sentences with pre-verbal fei, the negative fei ceases to be a suitable criterion for the nominality of the predicate in its scope.

In view of this, contemplate now the following example:

(12) 殺一無罪非仁也
KILL ONE LACK CRIME NOT-BE(FEI) HUMANE YE
A. It is not humane to kill (as much as) one innocent person.
B. Killing one innocent person is not a case of humaneness.
Meng 7A33

In the first place: is it not (excuse me) analytically bloody-minded to insist that there is a sharp syntactic contrast in Classical Chinese between the reading A and B? Second: is it not grammatically wrong-headed to insist that fei marks nominal predi-
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cates in sentences like (12)? What, in any case, would one mean in terms of Classical Chinese by saying that the predicate in (12) is nominal, once fei and ye are no longer available as criteria? Surely, the argument from possible alternative translations into English is out of court. What, then, is the internal Classical Chinese evidence for a dichotomy between A and B?

Consider the connectives \textit{yu} 和 WITH and \textit{er} 以及 AND/THEN. One might be tempted to say that a nominal predicate would have to be conjoined with \textit{yu}, while a verbal predicate would have to be conjoined with \textit{er}. This indeed would be an interesting test. But the Classical Chinese evidence on conjoined nominal predicates in \textit{yu} is deplorably slim, and in the case of non-identificatory nominal predicates my suspicion is that \textit{er} rather than \textit{yu} would be acceptable.

Reconsider now even a standard nominal sentence like:

(13) (非禮也)

\textit{(NOT-BE[FEI]) RITUAL YE}

A. It was (not) ritually correct.

B. It was (not) (an instance of) ritually correct behavior.

\textit{Passim}

How do we tell whether this sort of non-identificatory "nominal" predicate would be conjoined with a grammatically similar predicate by \textit{yu} or \textit{er}? Wherein consists the alleged nouniness of the predicate in (13)? How can one be sure that the predicate in (13) is to be construed as in B and not as in A? And most importantly: how do we know that a native speaker of Classical Chinese has to make a syntactic choice between readings A and B in the first place? (And remember that the arguments from \textit{fei} or from \textit{ye} have no force in this connection.)

Until clear arguments to the contrary are forthcoming one is tempted to diagnose syntactic indeterminacy for sentences like (12), and perhaps even for (13). Such syntactic indeterminacy would be the grammatical pendant to the stylistic phenomenon of suspended ambiguity. There is nothing more outrageous about syntactic indeterminacy in grammar than there is about suspended ambiguity in literature.

Understanding suspended ambiguity in literature involves the ability to take the coexistent readings of a sentence with a pinch of salt. Grasping syntactic indeterminacy involves the ability to take rigid syntactic structures with a pinch of salt. If you read literature in a bloody-minded way you will miss out on the subtle suspended ambiguities that often enliven and enrich literary works
of art. If you analyze sentences in a bloody-minded way you will miss out on the suspended ambiguities of grammatical structure that enliven and enrich sentences. Among other things you will miss out on the important phenomena of syntactic indeterminacy.

But even if one admits that the distinction between nominal and verbal predicates is systematically blurred in Classical Chinese one might still insist that at least for complex nominal predicates the case is crystal clear. Surely, one might feel, there is a world of difference between a nominal and a verbal head of a complex phrase. Let us consider the evidence.

1.3 Pre-nominal zhi 之

Consider the function of zhi in a compound nominal predicate. The current, and very plausible, view is that this zhi marks the fact that one noun phrase or complex verb phrase modifies another noun phrase. On our new view of the noun as basically a classificatory verb we will construe zhi as nominalizing throughout.

(14) 此匹夫之勇也

This commoner zhi COURAGE YE This is a commoner's that which is identical with courage. Meng 182

(15) 北宮黴之養勇也

PROPER-NAME ZHI CULTIVATE COURAGE YE Such a case is Beigong You's that which is identical with cultivating courage. Meng 2A2

It turns out that the "genitival" zhi in (14) can be interpreted in exactly the same way as the "nominalizing" zhi in (15), if we take nouns as classificatory verbs. The connection between "genitival" and "nominalizing" zhi becomes transparent. Zhi may always be construed as a nominalizer. It can nominalize both classificatory and non-classificatory predicates. And since zhi indeed nominalizes the predicate it precedes, it naturally cannot precede a predicate in its narrative function. Therefore zhi does not mark adverbial modification in Classical Chinese.

It is plausible to assume that the "genitival" zhi derives historically from the demonstrative zhi as in zhi ren 之人 "this man." My new account of pre-nominal zhi may look historically implausible until one realizes that the function of a demonstrative, from a logical point of view, is to create a referring
expression of some sort from an expression that would not by itself be referring in the same way without the demonstrative.

**Conclusion**

If we take what we translate as predicate nouns in Classical Chinese as essentially classificatory verbs we get a natural unified account of the particles ye, fei, and zhi. If we furthermore assume that these Classical Chinese classificatory verbs, because of their special classificatory meaning, often have a final zhe understood, then the similarities with what we are used to as nouns in many other languages are also naturally and systematically accounted for.

The evidence for our assumption that Classical Chinese nouns are basically classificatory verbs is not limited to the simplification of our grammatical description of Classical Chinese nominal predicates which it enables us to achieve. If this assumption is correct we would expect a wide range of syntactic evidence for the verbality or predicativeness of Classical Chinese nouns in other than predicative positions. For example in subject or topic position.

2. **THE NOMINAL SUBJECT**

From a logical point of view the subject/predicate sentence involves two predications, not one. In

(16) Confucius is wise

an item is said to be identical with Confucius and that same item is said to be an example of wisdom. We may paraphrase (16) from a logical point of view as "The one who is Confucius is wise," or even "Someone is Confucius and he is wise."

On the other hand a sentence like:

(17) Confucians are wise

may be made more logically transparent by a paraphrase like "If someone is a Confucian then he is wise." From a logical point of view, then, the grammatical subject—like the grammatical predicate—ascribes a property, etc., to an object in the world. Subject and predicate differ only in the style or mode in which they ascribe the properties in question. The subject property is typically introduced in a presuppositional way (e.g., an item is presupposed to be Confucius and asserted to be wise), or in a
subordinate way (e.g., assuming someone is a Confucian, then he will be wise).

For a language like English or Classical Greek such considerations as these remain abstract and are of little obvious practical use in the description of the syntax of those languages. I hope to show that the case is different for Classical Chinese. The hypothesis that Classical Chinese subjects are non-main predicates of a classificatory kind leads to the simplification of many fundamentally puzzling features of Classical Chinese syntax. Some of these will be listed below.

2.1 The final particle ye 也 after the subject/topic

Like the nominal predicate, the nominal subject—notably nomina propria in direct speech, but also other subjects—may be marked by ye. On our interpretation of the Classical Chinese noun both the ye in the following example will be explained along similar lines:

(18) 興也太師也
PERSONAL-NAME YE GRAND MUSIC-MASTER YE
(X is identical with Kuang and he is the Grand Music Master, i.e.:) Kuang is the Grand Music Master. Li Ji, "Tan Gong," I.222
(3 examples)

Karlgren (1951) suggests that ye should here be understood as a resumptive pronoun, rather on the lines of the German "Der Schmidt ist eben gekommen," etc. It would have been more appropriate for him to quote sentences like "Hans der spinnt wohl!" with a postponed demonstrative pronoun. This is highly implausible in view of sentences like the following all of which come from the very Tan Gong which Karlgren uses extensively but none of which he quotes:

(19) 今斯師也殺厲也
NOW THIS ARMY YE KILL CONTAGIOUSLY-ILL
Now this army has killed contagiously ill people. Li Ji, "Tan Gong," I.219

(20) 斯子也必多曠於禮矣夫
THIS SON YE CERTAINLY MUCH NEGLECT IN RITUAL YI FU
This son certainly has much neglected rituals. Li Ji, "Tan Gong," I.219
(21) 夫夫也為習於禮者

THIS(FU) MAN YE DO/BE PRACTICE IN RITUAL HE-WHO(ZHI)

This man is well versed in ritual. Li Ji, "Tan Gong," I.152

(22) 是夫也多也

THIS(SHI) MAN YE MANY WORDS

This man has much to say. Li Ji, "Tan Gong," I.218

There are earlier examples:

(23) 夫也不良

HUSBAND YE NOT GOOD

My husband is not good. Shi 141.1 and 2b

But this sort of ye, I suppose, one might want to attribute to the special style of early poetry.

Next, we have a case where a name, Confucius, functions as a first person pronoun, i.e., not as "he, Confucius," but as "I, Confucius":

(24) 丘也嘗使於楚矣

CONFUCIUS YE ONCE EMPLOY IN PLACE-NAME YI

I was once employed in Chu. Zhuang 5.33c

Not: "Der Konfuzius war einmal...."

Again, we have a case where ye comes after a noun in pronominal function:

(25) 臣也以臣之事觀之

SERVANT YE USE SERVANT'S BUSINESS LOOK-AT IT

I will look at this from the point of view of a minister. Zhuang 13.71

We are almost inclined to construe literally: "I, being a minister, will look at this from the point of view of a minister's business."
We also have *ye* after time topics:

(26) 古也墓而不坟

ANCIENT YE BURY BUT NOT MAKE-TUMULUS
In ancient times they buried the dead but did not make a tumulus. Li Ji, "Tan Gong," I.113d

Correspondingly we have:

(27) 易墓非古也

WEED GRAVE NOT(FEI) ANCIENT YE
The practice of weeding the grave was not ancient. Li Ji, "Tang Gong," I.149e

On our new account of Classical Chinese nouns these two *gu* *ye*
古也 will be explained along the same principles. It will be
noted that the above examples, including perhaps even the quotation
from the old *Book of Songs*, occur in direct speech. The *ye*
we are talking about probably was a special feature of ancient
colloquial Chinese, as Karlgren claims. Similar observations, it
will be found, apply to the Koine Greek phenomena discussed below.

In the context of the present discussion it is important to
remember firstly, that we do also have *ye* after other than
personal subjects and time topics:

(28) 三國也入韓

THREE STATE YE ENTER HAN...
If the three states enter Han... HF 30.41.23f

Secondly, it is significant that post-subject *ye* is quite
common after complex noun phrases that are not subordinate
sentences by traditional accounts:

(29) 公孫鞅之法也重輕罪

GONGSUN YANG'S LAW YE REGARD–AS–HEAVY LIGHT CRIME
Gongsun Yang's laws regarded light offenses as heavy. HF 30.23.1

(30) 其言也善

HIS WORD YE GOOD
His words are good. LY 8.4

Not: When he speaks he is good.
On our new account of Classical Chinese nouns and noun phrases there is no need to talk of ye marking an "emphatic pause" or the like after a subject nominal. The structural connection between ye after the subject and after the predicate can now be explained. The explanation is connected with that of post-clausal ye:

(31) 吾少也貶
I YOUNG YE HUMBLE
When I was young I was humble. LY 9.6

Consider the following borderline case:

(32) 古之君子其過也如日月之食
ANCIENT 'S GENTLEMAN HIS FAULT YE LIKE SUN MOON ZHI ECLIPSE
A. As for the gentlemen of old their faults were like eclipses of the sun and moon.
B. As for gentlemen of old, when they made mistakes, these were like eclipses of the sun and the moon. Meng 2B9

The common occurrence of ye after subordinate clauses (noted by Karlgren) corresponds beautifully to the presence of ye after the subject, since for independent reasons we are inclined to construe Classical Chinese subjects as non-main clauses in the first place. Karlgren's arguments for regarding ye after proper names as entirely different from the other occurrences of post-subject ye are less than convincing. The fact that ye is more common after proper names in non-subject position is an idiomatic detail that is by no means conclusive.

Post-nominal, post-verbal, and post-clausal ye turns out to admit of one homogeneous explanation. In all these cases ye marks non-narrative (judgemental or disquisitional) styles of predication.

Nonetheless there remains a fascinating difference between nouns in subject and predicate positions:

(33) 禮也
RITUAL YE
standardly means "be an example of correct ritual behavior" in predicate position, whereas the subject

(34) 夫禮者
AS-FOR RITUAL THAT-WHICH(ZHE)
can apparently only mean "as for that which is identical with ritual."

2.2 Post-nominal zhe

Like the verbal predicate, the nominal predicate in subject position may be followed by the nominalizer zhe:

(35) 民者好利祿而惡刑罰
PEOPLE THOSE-WHO(ZHE) LOVE PROFIT REWARD AND(ER) HATE PUNISHMENT FINE
(Those who may be classified as) people like profit and rewards, and they hate punishment and fines. HF 55.1.14

(36) 人情者有好惡
MAN TRUE-NATURE THAT-WHICH(ZHE) HAVE GOOD BAD
In (that which is identical with) human nature there are likes and dislikes. HF 19.2.12

If we adopt our new account of nouns as classificatory verbs these uses of zhe present no special problem of analysis. There is no need to claim that zhe has some nebulous function as a pause marker any more. Its grammatical function in post-nominal position becomes perfectly transparent.

At the same time the syntactic origin of phrases like Mozhe 墨者 PROPER-NAME HE-WHO(ZHE) "Mohist" (LSCQ 1.5, etc.) and the more frequent Ruzhe 儒者 CONFUCIAN HE-WHO(ZHE) "Confucian" (passim) becomes clear. Zhe after proper names, as in Mo Zi zhe 墨子者 (HF 32.8.2), and Zi Chan zhe 子産者 (HF 33.36.1) cease to be grammatically scandalous. Proper names are simply instances of identificatory predicates.

The grammatically symptomatic structural parallelism between the following two sentences will be recognized by the grammatical description:

(37) 仁者無敵
HUMANE HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE) LACK ENEMY/EQUAL
He who is humane will have no equal. Meng 1A5
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(38) 仁者如射

HUMANE HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE) RESEMBLE SHOOT-WITH-BOW-AND-ARROW

That which is identical with being humane is like archery.

Meng 2A7

Zhe has the same function in both sentences, but it applies to different types of predicates.

The fully—and redundantly—explicit form of the subject nominal turns out, then, to be

(39) 禮也者

RITUAL YE THAT-WHICH(ZHE)

As for that which is identical with ritual...

Consider now the topicalized object in zhe:

(40) 賢者則貴而敬之

TALENTED HE-WHO/THOSE-WHO(ZHE) THEN HONOR AND REVERE HIM

A. If someone was competent, he would honor and revere him.

B. Those who were competent he would honor and revere.

Xun 13.39

Is this sentence ambiguous between readings A and B? I shall take up this question systematically in the next section on nominalized subjects. At this point it is useful to note the presence of the sentence connective ze (则) between what apparently is topic and comment.

2.3 Post-nominal sentence connectives

If Classical Chinese nouns were classificatory verbs one would predict that these verbs could be followed by sentence connectives. The fact that we commonly get sentence connectives like ze (則) THEN, erhou (而後) ONLY THEN, er (而) AND/THEN, etc., between subject and predicate thus finds a very natural explanation:
(41) 趙之福而秦之禍也
PLACE-NAME 1 'S(ZHI) GOOD-FORTUNE AND/THEN(ER) PLACE-NAME 2 'S(ZHI) ILL-FORTUNE
(Something is identical with) the good fortune of Zhao, (and it is) the misfortune of Qin. HF 2.2.22

For more discussion of sentence connectives between subject and predicate see my previous discussion (Harbsmeier 1979:219-256). Graham (1969) has focused particularly on the conditions under which er 而 can occur between subject and predicate.

(42) 人而無信不知其可也
MAN AND/THEN(ER) LACK FAITH NOT KNOW HIS/ITS(QI) ALL-RIGHT YE
(If one is a) man (but) lacks good faith, then I do not know how one can get on. LY 2.22

It turns out that what logical analysis would have us believe is that two conjoined sentences also grammatically look like two sentences in Classical Chinese. The sentence connectives between subject and predicate in Classical Chinese are no longer anomalies, they can be shown to be a direct consequence of the principles of Classical Chinese grammar if we assume that Classical Chinese nouns are in fact classificatory/identificatory verbs. Similar observations apply to the negated subjects in Classical Chinese.

2.4 Negated subjects

If Classical Chinese nouns really are classificatory verbs we would expect that they can be negated in subject position:

(43) 非聖人而能乎
NOT-BE(FEI) SAGE MAN AND/THEN(ER) CAN QUESTION-MARKER
If someone is not a sage, can he be like this? Meng 7B15

In view of sentences like this: is it plausible to ascribe a completely different structure to an ordinary sentence like the following?

(44) 聖人能之
SAGE MAN CAN IT
The sage can do it. (hypothetical)
If we assume that Classical Chinese nouns are classificatory verbs the two turn out to be basically of the same structure.

2.5 "Concessive" subjects

Compare pre-verbal and pre-nominal sui 畏:

(45) 難博必誤
EVEN-IF(SUI) BROAD NECESSARILY MISGUIDE
He may be wide-ranging, but he is bound to be misguided. Xun 8.104

(46) 難大國必畏之
EVEN-IF(SUI) LARGE STATE NECESSARILY FEAR IT
Something may be a large state, but it will certainly fear them. Meng 2A4

If we assume that nouns are classificatory verbs we have a clear and unified account of the particle sui and do not have to talk of two separate meanings "even" and "although." For more evidence for this interpretation of sui see Aspects 4.1.

Surprisingly, the particle yi 亦 provides another case where our assumption leads to a simplification of our grammatical description of Classical Chinese:

(47) 難不識義亦不阿惑
EVEN-IF(SUI) NOT KNOW RIGHTEOUS ALSO/NONETHELESS(YI) NOT BE-DELUDED
I may not know of righteousness, but I am not deluded. GY 7.5455

(48) 國亦有染
STATE ALSO/NONETHELESS(YI) HAVE DYE
Something may be a state, but it will still be dyed. LSCQ 2.4

(49) 禍亦不至 福亦不來
DISASTER ALSO/NONETHELESS(YI) NOT REACH GOOD-FORTUNE
ALSO/NONETHELESS(YI) NOT COME
When something is a disaster it still will not reach him.
When something is a good fortune it still will not reach him. Zhuang 23.42
When he is riding he still is unaware. When he is falling he still is unaware. Zhuang 19.13

The general force of yi 亦 in these contexts is "in spite of the contrast." For a more detailed account of this interpretation see Aspects 2.5.1

Once we assume that Classical Chinese nouns are classificatory verbs post-verbal and post-nominal yi find a natural unified explanation. There is no need to talk of two meanings:
1. "nonetheless"; 2. "also."

2.6 The topic-marker fan 凡 and the particle mei 每

The ambiguity of fan 凡 1. pre-nominal: "speaking in general of"; 2. pre-verbal: "whenever" is dissolved if we take nouns as classificatory verbs:

(51) 凡道不欲壅
GENERALLY(FAN) WAY NOT WANT OBSTRUCT
Whenever something qualifies as the Way it does not want to be obstructed. Zhuang 26.38

(52) 凡慮事欲熟
GENERALLY(FAN) MAKE PLANS BUSINESS WANT FAMILIAR
Whenever one is making plans for an enterprise one wants to be careful. Xun 15.50

On our new account there is no need to ascribe completely different structures to these two sentences. The difference is in the nature of the verb, in the mode of its predication, not in the function of fan 凡.

Similar observations apply to the much less frequent particle mei 每 1. pre-nominal: "every"; 2. pre-verbal: "whenever."
(53) 每至於族吾見其難為
GENERALLY(MEI) REACH IN/AT/TO TIGHT-PLACE I LOOK-AT ITS(QI) DIFFICULT DO
Whenever I get to a tight place I notice the difficulty. Zhuang 3.10

(54) 伯宗每朝其妻必戒之
PROPER-NAME GENERALLY(MEI) COURT HIS WIFE NECESSARILY WARN HIM
Whenever Bo Zong went to attend court his wife would be certain to warn him. Zuo Cheng 15

(55) 王每見之必泣
KING GENERALLY(MEI) SEE HIM NECESSARILY CRY
Whenever the king saw him he would inevitably cry. Zuo Xiang 22

(56) 今也每食不飽
NOW YE GENERALLY(MEI) EAT NOT SATISFIED
A. Now at every meal we do not get our fill.
B. Now whenever we eat we do not get our fill. Shi 135

(57) 毎舍穀焉
GENERALLY(MEI) SPEND-NIGHT/STATION REDUCE-NUMBER IN-RELATION-TO-IT
A. At each way-station he reduced their number.
B. Whenever he spent a night he reduced their number. Zuo Zhao 13

(58) 左師每食擊鍾
LEFT ARMY GENERALLY(MEI) EAT BEAT BELL
A. The army of the left would sound the bell at every meal.
B. The army of the left would sound the bell whenever they ate a meal. Zuo Ai 14.10

(59) 子入太廟每事問
MASTER ENTER GREAT TEMPLE GENERALLY(MEI) MATTER ASK
When the Master entered the Great Temple he would ask about every matter. LY 3.15; cf. LY 10.15
Therefore, if those in charge of the government were to please everybody they surely would not have enough days at their disposal.

(60) 故為政者每人而悦之曰亦不足矣

THEREFORE PRACTICE GOVERNMENT THOSE-WHOM(ZHE) GENERALLY(MEI) MAN AND/THEN(ER) PLEASE HIM. DAY SURELY NOT SUFFICIENT PERFECTIVE-ASPECT-MARKER

Therefore, if those in charge of the government were to please everybody they surely would not have enough days at their disposal. Meng 4B2

(61) 凡與客人者每門讓於客

GENERALLY(FAN) BE-WITH GUEST ENTER HE-WHOM/THAT-WHICH(ZHE) GENERALLY(MEI) GATE GIVE-WAY IN/AT/TO GUEST

Whenever one enters with a guest, then at every gate one gives way to the guest. Li Ji I.18

(62) 每日遷舍

GENERALLY(MEI) DAY CHANGE ABODE

Every day he changed his abode. Zuo Xi 9.2

Conclusion

There is clear and varied syntactic evidence that subjects and topics in Classical Chinese must be construed as non-main classificatory predicates if one is to achieve a coherent explanation of their grammatical characterization.

On the other hand one might well wonder whether the more complex nominalized subjects or topics do not suggest a more conservative grammatical interpretation of the relation between subject and predicate in Classical Chinese, and in particular of Classical Chinese nouns. We shall have to see.

3. THE NOMINALIZED SUBJECT

Try to say in Classical Chinese: "his death." The chances are that you will also have said something translatable as "when/if he dies." It turns out that there are pervasive syntactic links between subordination and nominalization in Classical Chinese, and these are the subject of the present section.

The generalization I shall try to establish is that the Classical Chinese nominalizers zhe 者 THAT-WHICH/HE-WHOM, zhi 之 "GENITIVE PARTICLE," qi 其 HIS, and fu 夫 AS FOR regularly
serve to mark off subordinate clauses, besides nominalizing such clauses.

With respect to zhe and zhi my contention is controversial. With respect to fu it has not hitherto been considered, so far as I know.

Part of the force of my argument lies in the rigid coherence of the overall pattern of coincidence between the characterization of nominalization and of subordination in Classical Chinese which I shall document in this section.

James Matisoff informs me that closely similar relations between nominalization and subordination obtain in a very wide range of Sino-Tibetan languages. I am not sufficiently familiar with any of these to want to discuss them. On the other hand I found closely related phenomena in Koiné Greek, which for various reasons I feel are worth presenting in some detail.

3.1 Nominalizing and subordinating zhe

In section 2.2 I have provided an unified account of post-nominal and post-verbal zhe. Let me now turn to post-clausal zhe:

(63) THEREFORE ISSUE-FROM MOUNTAIN TOP WATCH BUFFALO HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE) RESEMBLE GOAT
   A. As for the possible case of looking at buffaloes from a mountain, (the buffaloes) resemble goats.
   B. If you look at buffaloes from a mountain they resemble goats.

Paraphrase A, suggested in Egerod (1982), represents an attempt to subsume the apparently subordinating zhe under the ordinary nominalizing zhe. And while it would indeed be an asinine mistake to translate this sentence as "those who look at buffalo from a hill look like sheep," Egerod's paraphrase is a much more serious competitor. Note first that from a logical point of view the difference between A and B is simply that B is more logically transparent than A. One only understands A to the extent that one is able to construe it as an alternative way of articulating the proposition more transparently identified in B. Nonetheless, the articulatory strategy in A and B is not the same. It makes good sense to ask oneself which articular strategy we must attribute to the writers and speakers of Classical Chinese.
Now the crucial feature of A is the need to introduce the little word "possible" to indicate that the case envisaged is hypothetical. Egerod explains the seemingly subordinating effect of zhe in terms of nominalization, and he introduces the word "possible" to achieve the logically crucial nuance.

Egerod's suggestion serves to illustrate the close connection between nominalization and subordination even in English. Compare:

(64) a. In the case of an emergency  
b. In the case that there is an emergency  
c. In case there is an emergency

Where do nominalizations end and subordinate clauses begin? But note that English does not permit nouns or noun phrases as the scope of a word like "if." On the other hand that is precisely what seems to happen all over the place in Classical Chinese. We find systematic patterns like the following:

(65) a. 若  S₁者  S₂  
     IF(RUO)  SENTENCE-1  HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE)  SENTENCE-2  
b. 如  S₁者  S₂  
     IF(RU)  SENTENCE-1  HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE)  SENTENCE-2  
c. 菩  S₁者  S₂  
     IF(GOU)  SENTENCE-1  HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE)  SENTENCE-2  
d. 雖  S₁者  S₂  
     EVEN-IF(SUI)  SENTENCE-1  HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH SENTENCE-2  
e. 使  S₁者  S₂  
     SUPPOSING(SHI)  SENTENCE-1  HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH SENTENCE-2  
f. 比  S₁者  S₂  
     WHEN(BI)  SENTENCE-1  HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH SENTENCE-2

Moreover we frequently find the sentence particle ze "then" after zhe HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH.
Egerod (1982) comments as follows on this phenomenon:

But the very fact that such words as ruo 若, guo 勾, and ze 则 occur (and the last one with increasing frequency into the Han dynasty) in such constructions seems to us to indicate that the marking of condition is not found in zhe itself but elsewhere in the sentence, just as in the case of the hypothesis in English ("His death was ...." "His death would be ..."). The particle has no more to do with condition than does the category nominal in general.

I would like to add that the evidence is that the category nominal has a great deal to do with condition. Moreover, since nominalization with zhe is standardly marked pleonastically with fu 夫 ...zhe 者 AS-FOR...HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH, NP zhi 之 VP zhe 者, qi 其 VP zhe 者, it would be only natural to contemplate the possibility of pleonastic marking also in the case of subordination.

My point is simply that the scope of the sentence connective gou 贅, shi 使, etc., is not nominal by any stretch of the imagination, and that since the scope of the zhe in patterns like (65) is the whole subordinate sentence, it follows that zhe cannot be construed as strictly nominalizing in (65). With John Cikoski one might be tempted to call zhe not nominalizing but more generally peripheralizing.

Zhu Dexi (1983:28) adopts a different strategy with respect to the patterns (65)a and b. Ingeniously he suggests that the presence of zhe in these cases is due to the verbal meaning of ru 女 and ruo 若 "to resemble," and he points to the pattern (66) 女/若/者

RESEMBLE X HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH

...it is like X.

which is frequent in pre-Qin texts. Zhu Dexi's explanation of the historical origin of the zhe in (65)a and b may have some plausibility, but it does nothing to account for sentences like the following:
(67) 使壘城者不得復築也
SUPPOSING(SHI) DESTROY CITY HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE) NOT ACHIEVE REPEAT BUILD YE
If the city walls should be destroyed one would not be able to build them up again. Guan 22(2.3-5); cf. also Guan 22(2.3.12)
I add two splendid later examples:

(68) 使武安侯在者族矣
SUPPOSING(SHI) PLACE-NAME LORD BE-PRESENT HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE) EXTERMINATE-CLAN
If the Lord of Wuan was alive, I would exterminate him and his family. Shi Ji 107.29

(69) 使古而無死者則太公至今猶存
SUPPOSING(SHI) ANCIENT AND/THEN(ER) LACK DEAD HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE) PROPER-NAME REACH PRESENT STILL BE-ALIVE
If in antiquity there had never been death then Tai Gong would have survived to this day. HSWZ 10.11 (Does one really have to take si zhe 死者 to mean "dead people" here?)

Again we have:

(70) 雖聞道者亦未聞道
EVEN-IF(SUI) ASK WAY HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE) ALSO/NONETHELESS NOT-YET HEAR WAY
Even if he asks about the way, he still will not hear about the way. Zhuang 22.50

(71) 貧願富賤願貴苟無於中者必求於外
POOR WANT RICH, HUMBLE WANT NOBLE. IF(GOU) LACK IN MIDDLE HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE) NECESSARILY SEE OUTSIDE... IF(GOU) HAVE IT MIDDLE HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE) NOT REACH ON OUTSIDE
The rich want wealth, the humble want status. If they really lack something within them then they are sure to seek it from outside... If they do have something within them then they certainly do not reach for it on the outside. Xun 23.33

Our conclusion must be that the particle zhe has two distinct but related functions: it nominalizes and it marks subordinate
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clauses. Why, one might ask, should one single particle perform two such apparently quite different functions? The answer is that the functions are not really as different as they appear. Let us return to a simple nominalizing case of *zhe*:

(72) 仁者樂山

HUMANE HE-WHO(ZHE) ENJOY MOUNTAIN
A. Those who are humane love mountains.
B. Assuming someone is humane he will love mountains.

I submit that if we spoke not English but something like Leibniz's *characteristica universalis*, a language built on strictly logical principles, then the alternatives A and B above would turn out to be identical. For whatever the fine semantic difference between them, they do express the same logical proposition. General terms in subject position are, one might say, systematically misleading expressions. They hide a conditional logical structure.

The crucial point is this: *zhe* is not in this way systematically misleading. In this instance it is logically transparent. *Zhe* tells you that the predicate "be humane" is here to be construed as a non-main predicate (in the mode of an assumption or conditional protasis).

Again our second example:

(73) 仁者如射

HUMANE HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH RESEMBLE SHOOT-WITH-BOW-AND-ARROW
A. That which is identical with being humane is like archery.
B. Presupposing that something is identical with being humane that thing is like archery. Meng 2A7

Here *zhe* tells you that the predicate "be identical with being humane" is to be construed as a non-main predicate (in the presuppositional mode).

The profound connection between subordinating and nominalizing *zhe* turns out then to be the connection between assuming a non-main predicate (in subordination), and presupposing it (in nominalization). The fact that we negate sentences without negating the scope of *zhe* then simply reflects the logic of conditionals and of presuppositions: we normally negate a conditional by negating the apodosis, not the protasis. The presuppositions of a sentence will normally remain intact when that sentence is negated.
Graham (in press) concludes from this: "It is disquieting to have to question the line between verbal and nominal, one of the few in Classical Chinese which seemed inviolable, but it looks as though it no longer holds for the preliminaries of the sentence."

Note that the line between subordination and nominalization is blurred in unexpected places even in English. There are plenty of cases where we would want to say that we have clear nominalizations in Classical Chinese, and where nonetheless the best translation is with "if":

(74) 廢除之地不得者豈齊不欲地哉
SLIGHTEST-BIT ZHI TERRITORY NOT GET HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE) HOW QI
NOT WANT TERRITORY EMPHATIC-QUESTION
If Qi did not get any territory at all, how would that be because they did not want territory? ZGC 1.64

Similar remarks apply to the following slightly more complex case:

(75) 事不同皆王者時異也
BUSINESS NOT IDENTICAL ALL KING HE-WHO/THAT-WHICH(ZHE) TIME
DIFFERENT YE
If they all became kings although they conducted affairs differently that is because times were different. SJ 136

Now, if zhe really is to be explained in terms of a general and profound logical relation between nominalization and subordination in natural language (and in particular in Classical Chinese) then the other notorious nominalizers in Classical Chinese—ideally all other nominalizers in Classical Chinese—should turn out to mark not only nominalized but also subordinate structures.

3.2 Nominalizing and subordinating zhi 之

Zhi may be used to subordinate or to nominalize a clause:

(76) 國之將興明神降之
STATE'S(ZHI) BE-ABOUT-TO RISE ILLUSTRIOUS SPIRIT DESCEND-ON IT
When a state is about to rise the illustrious spirits descend on it. Zuo Zhuang 3.2
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(77) 國之不可小有備 故也

STATE 'S(ZHI) NOT CAN (REGARD-AS)-SMALL HAVE PREPARATION REASON YE
If the state must not be taken lightly that is because it has taken defensive precautions. Zuo Zhao 18.2

The "if" in the last translation is logically treacherous because it does not indicate a condition but rather a nominalized (factive, to use Kiparski's term) subject. Grammatically on the other hand it is most interesting to note as a fact of English that the conditional sentence connective is commonly used to mark factive nominalization.

In (76) zhi invites you to assume that a state is about to rise, and to contemplate the resulting situation. In (77) zhi invites you to share the speaker's presupposition that the state may not be taken lightly and to contemplate some comment on this fact.

A clause subordinated by zhi may in fact have a concessive relation to the main clause:

(78) 紂之百克而無後

PROPER-NAME 'S(ZHI) HUNDRED WIN AND/THEN(ER) END LACK LATER
Although Zhou was successful a hundred times, in the end he had no heirs. Zuo Xuan 12.3

Here zhi invites you to share the speaker's presupposition that Zhou was a hundred times successful and to contemplate a contrasting statement.12

Zhi is very common in marked temporal clauses.

(79) 及饗之華

WHEN(JI) MEAL 'S(ZHI) FINISH
When the meal was finished... Zuo Zhao 28.6

(80) 逮吳之未定君其取分焉

UNTIL(DAI) PLACE-NAME 'S(ZHI) NOT-YET SETTLE RULER TAKE PART IN-
RELATION-TO-IT
While Wu is still unsettled, you should take a part (of Chu). Zuo Ding 4.15
Cases of this sort might be explained by pointing out that 如果 and 如果 are transitive verbs, and that what we have is syntactically a verb-object construction.

Similar arguments might be applied to conditional 如果 and 如果 in sentences like this:

(81) 若事之捷，從叔為無謀矣

IF(如果) BUSINESS 'S(ZHI) SUCCEED, PROPER-NAME BE LACK PLAN PERFECTIVE-ASPECT
If the action is successful, then Sunshu will be at a loss.
Zuo Xuan 12.31

The common use of 如果 in concessive clauses marked by 如果 on the other hand does not lend itself to such an explanation.

(82) 雖鞭之長不及馬腹

EVEN-IF(如果) WHIP 'S(ZHI) LONG, NOT REACH HORSE STOMACH
A whip may be long, but it will not reach a horse's stomach.
Zuo Xuan 15.21

The crux is that this is not a proverb about the length of a whip. The length of the whip is not in any sense a grammatical theme in (82). There is no question of paraphrasing sentences like (82) on the lines of "even the whip's length." Strict nominalization will not explain the presence of 如果 in sentences like (82).

In a very large number of cases there is systematic ambiguity between nominalization and subordination in Classical Chinese. This comes out in a characteristically striking way in sentences like:

(83) 言之無文行而不遠

WORD 'S(ZHI) LACK PATTERN, WALK AND/THEN(ER) NOT FAR
A. If words lack proper patterning they will not travel far.
B. Words without proper patterning will not travel far. Zuo Xiang 15.21

(84) 羹之有菜者用桟，其無菜者不用桟

BROTH 'S(ZHI) HAVE VEGETABLE THAT-WHICH(ZHE), USE CHOPSTICKS.
ITS(QI) LACK VEGETABLE THAT-WHICH/HE-WHO(ZHE), NOT USE CHOPSTICKS.
A. When there are vegetables in the broth one uses chopsticks. When there are no vegetables in it one does not use chopsticks.

B. In the case of broth with vegetables one uses chopsticks. In the case of broth with vegetables one does not use chopsticks. Li Ji I.39

The question is whether A and B represent a real structural ambiguity in Classical Chinese, or whether we just happen to have two alternative translations available in English for a Classical Chinese version which is structurally more abstract than both. 16

3.3 Nominalizing and subordinating qi 其

The particle qi can nominalize a clause:

(85) 其喪師也不亦宜乎

HIS(QI) LOSE ARMY YE NOT ALSO FIT QUESTION-MARKER
That he lost his army was surely proper. Zuo Yin 11

But qi can also subordinate clauses:

(86) 其後亡也成子得政

HIS(QI) LATER PERISH YE PROPER-NAME ACHIEVE GOVERNMENT
When eventually it perished, the officer of Cheng gained control of the government. Zuo Zhuang 22

According to Malmqvist (1982) there are 50 nominalizing cases like (85) and 48 subordinating cases like (86) in Zuo Zhuan; the two "uses" appear to have to have roughly the same frequency.

Qi is also frequent in marked subordinate clauses:

(87) 雖其和也猶相積惡也

EVEN-IF(SUI) HIS(QI) HARMONY YE STILL ONE-ANOTHER PILE-UP HATE YE
Although they may be reconciled, they are still building up ill-will against each other. Zuo Xiang 30

According to Malmqvist (1982) there are 33 such cases in Zuo Zhuan.
(88) 及其亂也諸侯貪冒

WHEN(JI) HIS(QI) DISORDER YE FEUDAL–LOORDS BE–GREEDY BE–ADVENTUROUS

When there is disorder the feudal lords are greedy and adventurous. Zuo Cheng 12

According to Malmqvist (1982) there are 14 such cases in Zuo Zhuan, 13 of them with the particle ye 也.

(89) 若其不還君退臣犯

IF(RUO) HIS/THEIR(QI) NOT RETURN, RULER RETIRE MINISTER EXERT–PRESSURE

If they do not withdraw, the ruler will retire, and his subjects will exert pressure on him. Zuo Xi 28

According to Malmqvist (1982) there are nine such examples in Zuo Zhuan, all of them without the final particle ye 也.

(90) 比其復也君無乃勤

WHEN(BI) HIS/THEIR(QI) RETURN YE RULER LACK THEN BE–EXHAUSTED

Will you not be exhausted by the time he returns? Zuo Ai 21

According to Malmqvist there is only one such example in Zuo Zhuan.

Here again it is easy to demonstrate the fuzziness of the distinction between nominalizing and subordinating qi: 

(91) 其濟君之靈也

不濟則以死繼之

HIS/THEIR SUCCEED, RULER 'S(ZHI) SPIRITUAL POWER YE NOT SUCCEED THEN USE DEAD FOLLOW–UP IT

A. If it succeeds that will be due to your lordship's spiritual influence; if it does not succeed I will go on to die.

B. Its success would be due to your lordship's spiritual influence. If it does not succeed I will go on to die. Zuo Xi 9.6

It seems to me that A and B are no more than two alternative ways of articulating the same logical content. Moreover, as Malmqvist (1982:373) rightly points out, the pattern "qi 其 V, ..., bu 不 V,
"ze" is very frequent in Zuo Zhuan. Thus (91) is in no way marginal or grammatically anomalous. The explanation of this idiom is as follows: "qi V" is explicitly subordinate already so that there is no need for further marking of the subordination by "ze". "bu V" on the other hand could serve as a main clause and therefore invites (but does not necessitate) subordinating "ze".

It is fascinating to observe the peculiar contrast between "zhe" and "ye". Thus we quite regularly have "qi V" meaning "when the subject VPed," while we hardly ever find "zhe" in such temporal clauses. Similarly, "SUBJECT zhi V" is always temporal "when the subject VPed." Conditional clauses marked by "zhi", on the other hand, never have "ye" (cf. Mullie 1942:376ff). None of these conditionals in ruo qi 若其 in Zuo Zhuan have the final particle "ye".

One of these instances deserves special attention:

(92) 若其弗賞是失信也

IF(RUO) HIS/THEIR(QI) NOT-THEM REWARD, THIS LOSE FAITH YE
A. If one did not reward them that would be a break of faith.
B. One's not rewarding them would be a break of faith. Zuo Zhao 155

Here the compounded ambiguities of the particles "qi" and "ruo 若" "if, 2. as for the case of" seem to conspire to make the sentence grammatically ambiguous between readings A and B. Or is "one's not rewarding them" a bogus nominalization? Seen in the context of our present discussion, the apparent ambiguity of "ruo 若" is in any case far from incidental.

3.4 Nominalizing and subordinating fu 夫

Fu is not only a topic-marker, it is also a nominalizer:

(93) 夫貴為天子富有天下
是人情之所同欲也

AS-FOR(FU) NOBLE BECOME EMPEROR, RICH OWN WORLD, THIS MAN TRUE-NATURE THE-OBJECT-WHICH(SUO) EQUAL/SAME WISH YE
Becoming so noble as to become emperor, becoming so rich as to own the empire, this is what men by their nature equally desire. Xun 4.72

Of course, the nominalizing *fu* can be understood as the topic-marker *fu* applying to an unmarked nominalization, but this seems to be artificial.

Consider next subordinating *fu*:

(94) 夫苟不好善則四海之內皆將輕千里而來告以善夫苟不好善則人將曰詭詭

As-for(*fu*): If(Gou) love good, then Four Sea 's(Zhi) inside all be-about-to think-light-of 1000 mile and/then(ER) come advise with good. As-for(*fu*) If(Gou) not love good then man be-about-to say: self-satisfied self-satisfied
If you love goodness then everybody within the Four Seas will disregard distances of a thousand li and come forward to advise you in terms of goodness. But if you do not love goodness then they will say: "He is all self-satisfied!" Meng 6A13

Note that the second *fu* leaves us no room to resort to the customary inane gloss "now" for sentence-initial *fu*. Compare in this connection the following:

(95) 彼愚者之定物 以疑決疑 決必不當

Those stupid people, when settling a thing, will use doubtful means to solve doubts, and their solutions will inevitably be inadequate. And if they really are inadequate, then can they avoid making mistakes? Xun 21.74

Here one might get away with translating "Now if they really are inadequate...," but this does not affect the basic point that the scope of *fu* in this instance is a subordinate sentence and not a nominal topic."
In some cases *fu* appears to have a subordinating function even when there are no other overt sentence connectives present:

(96) 夫随其成心而師之 誰獨無師乎

AS-FOR(FU) FOLLOW HIS/ONE'S(QI) FINISH MIND AND (MAKE-ONE'S)MASTER IT, WHO ALONE LACK MASTER QUESTION-MARKER
If one is to follow one's fixed opinions and make them one's master, then who would be without a master? Zhuang 2.21

And occasionally one is not even sure what to count as a sentence connective in this context:

(97) 夫輕諾必寡信

AS-FOR(FU) LIGHT(LY) AGREE NECESSARILY FEW BELIEVE
If one is quick to make promises one is sure to enjoy little trust. Lao 63

Is *bi*必 a sentence connective? And to make things more transparently confusing I will add that the *Yan Zun* edition of the *Lao Zi* text reads *qing no zhe*輕諾者 for Wang Bi's *fu qing no*夫輕諾.

By far the most common connective after *fu* is *ze*:

(98) 夫以君臣為父子則必治

AS-FOR(FU) USE RULER MINISTER REGARD-AS FATHER SON THEN(ZE) NECESSARILY GOVERN
If one regards ruler and minister as father and son then there will inevitably be proper government. HF 49.5.16

(99) 夫賞無功則民偷幸而望於上

AS-FOR(FU) REWARD LACK ACHIEVEMENT THEN(ZE) PEOPLE STEAL FORTUNATE AND/THEN(ER) HOPE IN/AT/TO ABOVE
If one rewards people without achievements, then the people will try to sneak their ways to good fortune and place their hopes in superiors (instead of being self-reliant). HF 37.4.19

(100) 夫舍常法而從私意

AS-FOR(FU) DISCARD CONSTANT LAW AND FOLLOW PRIVATE IDEA. THEN(ZE) MINISTER UNDER EMBELLISH IN/AT/TO WISDOM BE-ABLE
If one discards the constant law and follows one's private ideas, then one's ministers and subordinates will make a superficial show of wisdom and ability (to impress one). HF 19.5.35; cf. Guan 3.54-1; SJ 14, p. 114

(101) 夫覆巢毁卵則鳳凰不至
AS-FOR(FU) OVERTURN NEST DESTROY EGG, THEN(ZE) PHOENIX NOT ARRIVE
If you overturn nests and smash eggs then the phoenix will not come to dwell. LSCQ 13.2

(102) 詐者不信於民 夫不信於民則亂
CHEAT THEN(ZE) NOT BELIEVE BY PEOPLE. AS-FOR(FU) NOT BELIEVE BY PEOPLE THEN(ZE) CHAOS
If you are dishonest you will not be trusted by the people. And if you are not trusted by the people, then there will be chaos. Guan 1.90-6

Examples are abundant in the literature.

Other connectives are much rarer, but they do occur:

(103) 夫必定是說 然後及其大人
AS-FOR(FU) NECESSARILY MANY HAVE THIS EXPLAIN ONLY-THEN(ERHOU) REACH HIS/ITS/THEIR(QI) GREAT MAN
There must be many people who talk this way before the talk reaches the powerful people. Zuo Zhao 18

(104) 夫懸衡而知平
AS-FOR(FU) HANG LEVELLER AND KNOW LEVEL
When you hang up the heng-leveller you know whether something is level. HF 19.5.73; cf. Mo 39.58

(105) 夫以湯止沸 沸愈不止
AS-FOR(FU) USE BOILING-WATER STOP BOILING BOILING MORE NOT STOP
If one tries to stop something from boiling by adding boiling water to it, the boiling will increasingly continue. LSCQ 1.3

3.5 Pre-nominal and subordinating fei

The negative fei is not a nominalizer, but it does serve to make a kind of negative subject. I have a neat late example from Shi Ji at hand:
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(106) 非此母不能生此子
NOT-BE(FEI) THIS MOTHER, NOT BE-ABLE GIVE-BIRTH THIS SON
Unless someone is this mother, she could not have given birth to this son. *Shi Ji*, "Zhang Tang Zhuan"

At the same time fei is common in subordinate clauses:

(107) 非有大故不入其門
NOT-BE(FEI) HAVE LARGE REASON, BUT ENTER HIS/THEIR(QI) GATE
Unless he has an important business he will not enter the gate. *Li Ji* I.31

As we would predict subordinating fei co-occurs with sentence connectives:

(108) 苟非明法以守之也危亡為其鄰
IF(GOU) NOT-BE(FEI) (MAKE)BRIGHT LAW IN-ORDER-TO KEEP IT YE DANGER LOSE BE NEIGHBOR
If you do not make the laws clear and guard them, then you move in the vicinity of danger and ruin. SJ 20, p. 161

(109) 君子非得勢以臨之則無由得開內偣
GENTLEMAN NOT-BE(FEI) OBTAIN POSITION IN-ORDER-TO APPROACH IT/HIM, THEN LACK FROM ACHIEVE OPEN INSIDE IN-RELATION-TO-IT
If the gentleman fails to obtain a position of power from which to approach people then he has no basis for opening them up and inculcating (his values) into them. Xun 4.51

(110) 非劫之以形勢 非振之以誅殺
NOT-BE(FEI) CONSTRAIN IT/ THEM USE POWER POSITION, NOT-BE(FEI) SHAKE IT/ THEM USE EXECUTE MURDER, THEN LACK (WHAT-TO) USE HAVE HIS(QI) BELOW.
If such a ruler did not constrain the people by means of his power and position, if he did not shake up the people by means of execution and murder, then he would not have the means to remain in charge of his subordinates. Xun 5.20

There is a beautiful case where fu, zhi, and fei combine to produce multiple subordination:
AS-FOR(FU) ULCE' S(ZHI) SICK YE, NOT-BE(FEI) PIERCE BONE MARROW THEN(ZE) UPSET MIND NOT CAN SUPPORT YE, NOT-BE(FEI) RESEMBLE THIS, NOT BE-ABLE CAUSE MAN USE HALF INCH NEEDLE STONE EXPLODE IT. When an ulcer is painful, then unless you pierce the bone and marrow, the pain will upset the mind and be unbearable. If you do not act like this (i.e., if you fail to pierce the bone and marrow) you cannot get people to use the half-inch stone needle to burst the ulcer. HF 34.30.8

NOW HAVE 1000 LEAGUE 'S(ZHI) HORSE IN/AT/TO THIS NOT-BE(FEI) OBTAIN GOOD WORKER STILL RESEMBLE NOT-THE-OBJECT TAKE Suppose there is a horse that can go a thousand leagues. Unless you have a competent (horse-)specialist it is as if you nonetheless had not got hold of the horse. LSCQ 9.5

It thus turns out that the scope of fei may be either nominal or a verbal but non-main predicate. If we regard nouns as classificatory verbs, then we get a unified account for these apparently quite distinct uses of fei.

Conclusion

We have found varied and pervasive evidence for a systematic link between nominalization in subject position and subordination in Classical Chinese. In some cases the two seem even to be indistinguishable. As far as it goes, this further corroborates our claim that Classical Chinese subjects may be construed as subordinate clauses, and that to be nominal in Classical Chinese is to be a non-main classificatory predicate.

But nominals do not only occur in predicate and in subject position. Surely, nominals in object position show very little evidence that they derive from classificatory verbs.

4. OBJECT NOMINALS

In general I must report that the deeper embedded a noun is in a Classical Chinese sentence (i.e., the more peripheral it is from the main predication), the less obvious its verbal qualities
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become. But let us see if there are any verbal symptoms at all in Classical Chinese nominal objects.

Note first that the pre-posed topocalized object is often negated:

(113) 伯夷非其君不事
PROPER NAME NOT-BE(FEI) HIS/ONE'S(QI) RULER NOT SERVE
If someone was not his ruler, Bo Yi would not serve him. Meng 2A9

(114) 我非堯舜之道不敢陳於王前
I NOT-BE(FEI) PROPER-NAME PROPER-NAME 'S(ZHI) WAY NOT DARE PUT-FORWARD IN/AT/TO KING FRONT
If something is not the way of Yao and Shun I dare not put it forward. Meng 2B2

Even in its proper post-verbal position an object may be negated with fei:

(115) 何事非君 何使非民
HOW SERVE NOT-BE(FEI) RULER? HOW EMPLOY NOT-BE(FEI) PEOPLE?
How could I serve someone other than my ruler? How could I employ someone other than my people? Meng 5B1

(116) 民不祀非族
PEOPLE NOT SACRIFICE NOT-BEI(FEI) CLAN
The people will not sacrifice to others than their own clan. Zuo Xi 10 fu

(117) 君子不犯非禮
GENTLEMAN NOT OFFEND NOT-BE(FEI) RITUAL
The gentleman will not commit what offends against ritual. Zuo Zhao 3 fu 2

(118) 主者使非其有者也
RULER HE-WHO(ZHE) EMPLOY NOT-BE(FEI) HIS(QI) HAVE THAT-WHICH(ZHE) YE
The ruler is the sort of person who disposes of what he does not own. LSCQ 3.52
In the problematic Wei Liao Zi I even found a passage where a pivot within an object clause is negated with fei:

(119) 使天下非農無所得食

CAUSE WORLD NOT-BE(FEI) AGRICULTURE LACK THE-OBJECT-WHICH OBTAIN EAT

He saw to it that those who did not work with agriculture got nothing to eat. Wei Liao Zi jinzhu jinyi (Taipei, 1975), p. 41

(120) 鬼神非人是親

GHOST SPIRIT NOT-BE(FEI) MAN THAT-OBJECT BE-CLOSE

It is not for humans that the ghosts and spirits feel affection. Zuo Xi 5.9

Now if we assume that nominal objects are to be grammatically construed as embedded clauses of the sort "that which is (identical with) the object," examples like those above raise no special problems. Moreover the absence of an explicit zhe 者 in most nominal objects should not worry us unduly:

(121) 尊賢使能有庶氏服

HONOR TALENTEmploy BE-ABLE, PROPER-NAME SUBMIT

If you honor the competent and employ the able, then within a year the You Yi will submit. LSCQ 3.3

Here one might have expected zhe 者 after xian 賢 TALENTE, after nenq 能 BE-ABLE, and indeed after the subordinate clause. There is nothing strange about the zhe being omitted after classificatory verbs, because these are so often and so naturally used to identify items. The context makes zhe redundant, especially after proper names. Thus the Classical Chinese for "be able" naturally comes to mean "the able," etc.

In direct speech we even find the "sentence-final" particle ye after personal names in object position:

(122) 子之不使白也喪之何也

YOU 'S(ZHI) NOT LET BO YE BURY HIM WHY YE

Why is it that you did not let Bo bury him? Li Ji, "Tan Gong," I.111; cf. ibid., I. 572
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You return and stay with Ren. Zuo Ai 6; cf. Li Ji, "Tan Gong," 1.137

If we take the objects of main verbs and even of coverbs to be embedded clauses on the lines of "he who is identical with X," then this sort of ye speech becomes transparent. Why, on the other hand, it should be limited to proper names in object position is a question of idiomatic usage that still remains to be explained.

Conclusion

The acceptability of fei before the object suggests that object nominals are best construed as embedded clauses. However, the direct evidence for this way of construing the object in Classical Chinese is limited and inconclusive by itself. It is only against the general background of the peculiarities of Classical Chinese nouns that the clausal interpretation of object nouns becomes plausible. If we interpret nouns as embedded clauses we achieve a coherent and unified account of nouns in subject, predicate, and object positions. But what about nominal modifiers? Is not nominal modification fundamentally different from verbal modification?

5. THE NOMINAL MODIFIER

Consider a phrase like the following:

(124) a. 国人
STATE MAN
The people of the state. Meng

b. 小人
SMALL MAN
An insignificant person. Meng

The point is simply that the people of a state are not both a state and people, while an insignificant person is both insignificant and a person. Thus, if nouns are classificatory verbs we need to know why nouns and verbs function so differently in modifying position.
But are they quite as different as that? The following longish passage deserves especially close scrutiny in this connection:

(125) 所謂古之衣服者皆嘗新矣。而古之人
言之服則非君子也。然則必服非君子之服
言非君子之言，而後仁乎

In the context of Mo Zi's argument one can quite definitely not translate: "Then presumably one has to wear what are not clothes of a gentleman and speak what are not words of a gentleman in order to be humane?" The scope of this fei 非 is clearly a nominal modifier. And if we assume that nominals are essentially classificatory verbs, then sentences of this sort will present no problem. We have seen that a nominal modifier may apparently be negated by fei 非. Correspondingly one can find an example with ye after the modifier:

(126) 為佼也妻者是為白也母

Even nominal modifiers show some marginal signs that they have their origins in classificatory predicates. On the other hand the more deeply embedded a noun phrase becomes, the further it gets removed from its predicative origins, the "more nominal" it becomes.

Indeed, one might think that the distinction between nominal and verbal modification must be reasonably clear. But consider now:
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(127) a. 强臣 (強臣)

STRONG MINISTER
strong minister. Morohashi, p. 1444

b. 力臣

STRENGTH MINISTER
strong minister. Morohashi, p. 4175

By current accounts (127)a will be taken to involve nominal modification, because 力, STRENGTH, is a noun. Similarly, (127)b will be taken to involve adjectival/verbal modification because 強, STRONG, is an adjective or stative verb. By current accounts (127)a and b represent two sharply distinct syntactic structures.

By our new account both will be assigned basically the same syntactic structure. In both cases one predicate modifies the other. However, (127)a and b will not be predicted to be completely synonymous by our new account. Since 力 will be assumed to ascribe a relatively stable "inherent" property, 力臣, STRENGTH MINISTER, will be interpreted on the lines of "(generally, more or less permanently) powerful minister," whereas 強臣, STRONG MINISTER, will be interpreted to mean something more like "(currently, for the time being) influential minister." Unfortunately, the validity of this prediction is very hard to test.

Compare also

(128) a. 强争

STRONG FIGHT
fight strongly. Morohashi, p. 4163

b. 力争

STRENGTH FIGHT
fight strongly. Morohashi, p. 1443

Are we to assume that these two phrases have clearly distinct syntactic structures? Our new account of Classical Chinese nouns allows us to give closely related explanations for both.
In spite of marginal observations like those in (125) to (128) it remains true that the distinction between nominal and verbal modifiers is by and large very clear. The observations above on (124)a and (124)b speak a simple and clear language. And if nouns and verbs were as distinct in their semantic functions generally as they are in this particular position there would have been little to write about in a paper on the de-verbal nature of Classical Chinese nouns.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Consider the notorious sentence:

(129) 事物非物
THING THING THAT/WHICH(ZHE) NOT-BE(FEI) THING
That which causes things to be things is not a thing. Zhuang 22.75; cf. Zhuang 20.7
Suppose we construe wu 物, THING, as a classificatory verb ("be a thing," "be the thing") then it follows from the principles of Classical Chinese lexicography that wu should also be able to have a causative meaning ("cause to be a thing," "cause to be the thing"). We get a natural and unified account of the apparently exotic syntactic behavior of wu 物, THING. Similarly for:

(130) 人生不生生
LIVE LIVE THAT-WHICH(ZHE) NOT LIVE
That which cause things to live does not live. Zhuang 6.42
The functional flexibility of Classical Chinese words that I have discussed in some detail (Harbsmeier 1979:155-217), especially with respect to the distinction between nominal and verbal uses of Classical Chinese words, can be much more naturally accounted for if we assume nouns to be basically classificatory verbs.

The fact that the distinction between classificatory or narrative uses of words is sometimes marked by gu-sheng-derivation (as in warng "king" versus wang "be king over") does not affect our argument any more than the presence of such pairs as shi 師 "teacher" and jiao 教 "teach." Such pairs turn out to be essentially of the same kind as si 死 "die" versus sha 殺 "cause to die."

From the causative uses of wu 物, let us turn to the putative uses of that word:
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(131) 物物而不物於物
THING THING AND/THEN(ER) NOT THING BY THING
He treats things as things and does not (permit himself to be) treated as a thing. Zhuang 20.7

Again it follows naturally from the general principles of Classical Chinese grammar that a verb for "be a thing" can come to mean "consider/treat as a thing."

Some pervasive puzzling phenomena of so-called class cleavage in Classical Chinese thus find a perfectly natural and easy explanation.

A NOMINALIZING/SUBORDINATING HYBRID IN KOINÉ GREEK

Consider the following passage from the Gospel of Mark with its unflinching translation in James I's version:

(1) ὃ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· τὸ εἶ δύνασαι πιστεύσαι πάντα δυνατά τῷ πιστεύοντι.
BUT JESUS SAID: THAT-WHICH IF CAN BELIEVE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO-THE BELIEVER.

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. Mark 9.23

The word to "the, that which" nominalizes, but it is followed by the conditional εἰ "if." We have an exact parallel to our Classical Chinese examples with sentence connectives together with nominalizers.

(2) Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν· δὲς ἐὰν μὴ δέξῃταί τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ώς παῖδον οὗ μὴ ἐξέλθῃ εἰς αὐτὴν.
AMEN TELL TO-YOU: HE-WHO IF NOT RECEIVE THE KINGDOM OF-THE GOD LIKE CHILD, NOT BY-NO-MEANS WILL-ENTER INTO IT.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. Mark 10.15

(3) ... ἀλλ' δὲς ἐὰν θέλῃ γενέσθαι μήγας ἐν ὑμῖν ἐσται ὑμῖν διάκονος, καὶ δὲς ἐὰν θέλῃ ὑμῖν γενέσθαι πρῶτος ἐσται πάντων δοῦλος.
BUT HE-WHO IF WISH BECOME BIG AMONG YOU BE SERVANT YOURS
(You know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you:) but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all. Mark 10.42

(4) "Ἀμὴν γὰρ ἔχειν ὑμῖν ὅτι δὲ ἐὰν εἶπῃ τῷ ὑπὲρ τούτῳ ἀρχήτω καὶ βλήθητι εἰς τὸν θάλασσαν, καὶ μὴ διάκριτον ἔν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ πιστεύσῃ ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς γίνεται, ἦσται αὐτῷ ὁ ἐὰν εἶπῃ.

...IT-WILL-BE TO-HIM THAT-WhICH IF SAYs

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass) he shall have whatsoever he saith. Mark 11.23

Note that the Greek has the innocuous hos an "he who might" for the first "whosoever" of James' version, whereas it has hos ean for the second. The strategy of grammarians of Koine Greek has been to say that the ean "if" in these sorts of constructions stands for or should be understood as the current Attic Greek an.

In the earliest attested occurrence of our construction, a passage attributed to Socrates in Xenophon's Memorabilia, the ean has even been replaced with an and relegated to the apparatus criticus by modern editors, although all ancient text-witnesses agree on ean. The reason for the learned emendation was no doubt the proverbial Weil nicht sein kann, was nicht sein darf.

But in fact, our syntactic hybrid is quite common in Hellenistic times both inside and outside the New Testament. Take the following memorable passage I found in emperor Marcus Aurelius's remarkable book Eis heauton:

(5) "Ἡτὶς ἐὰν οὖν πράξῃς σου μὴ ἔχῃ τὴν ἀναφορὰν εἴτε προσεχεῖς εἴτε πόρρωθεν ἐπὶ τὸ κοινωνικὸ τέλος ἀστὴ διασπῇ τὸν βλέπῃ καὶ οὐκ ἔχῃ ἐνα εἶναι.

WHATEVER IF CONSEQUENTLY ACTION OF-YOU ...

Whatever action of yours that does not tend either directly or indirectly towards the public aim, such action will make your life disparate and disunited. Marcus Aurelius, Eis heauton 9.23
Both Socrates, Jesus, and the emperor of Rome use the hybrid expression. I suggest it became a natural hybrid idiom in Hellenistic times, which it would be wrong to emend or explain away. The construction is indeed messy and indeterminate. But so is life.

NOTES

a. Karlsgren (1951:111-113) has studied ye after nomina propria in detail, but fails to notice the close connections with ye after "pronominally" used names and other subjects.


c. I am indebted to Göran Malmqvist for correcting my earlier mistranslation of this sentence.

d. Cf. ibid., I.206 (2 examples); I.120; I.134; I.433; I.437.

e. Cf. ibid., I.173; I.177; I.199.

f. Cf. Guan 12 (1.55-4).

g. We note in passing that in this context post-subject ye is not limited to direct speech. (And if it was, this would not affect our logical argument.) Karlsgren (1951) regards ye after complex noun phrases as entirely separate and different from ye after nomina propria. His argument is that ye after nomina propria also occurs in other than subject position. I shall discuss these later cases in Section 4 of this paper and show that these cases actually strengthen our present account of Classical Chinese nouns.

h. The existence of post-nominal ye in object position does not affect the present argument and will be discussed below in Section 4 on the object.

1. Compare the uses of ye in the following passage:

仁人也不可失也
He is a good person. He must not be lost. Meng 1B15

It seems plausible to explain both these ye on the same principles, and it does not seem plausible to take bu ke shi 不可失
as a nominal construction. Compare the more detailed discussion in Current Issues.


3. For the relation between nominalization and subordination in Classical Chinese see Section 3 on the nominalized subject.

4. For further discussion of this contrasting pair see Section 3.1.

5. For more detailed treatment of the particle fan see Aspects 2.6.


8. In fact it is the analysis in A that I ought to have discussed and considered in Aspects 3.4, as the reactions of Zhu Dexi (1983) and Egerod (1983) show.

9. Note on the other hand the idiom "in case" in sentences like "In case he does not arrive in time I shall leave him a note."

10. Cf. Aspects 4.4, examples (12)-(15) for further documentation of the pattern.


12. Compare English sentences like: "That distinguished engineer was unable to fix his own bicycle," where we have a concessive relation between subject and predicate.

13. Cf. also Zuo Ding 4.12.

14. There are two examples in the context. Cf. also Zuo Xiang 31.6.

15. Our interpretation of nominalization with zhi will also have to account for nominalized objects:

Moreover I resent other people's usurping my merits. Zuo Zhao 30

In this case there can be no question of sentential subordination of the nominalized clause, but we do have embedding.
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16. Cf. Zuo Xi 28.5 (two examples); Cheng 2.4; Zhao 5, fu 1; Zhao 15.5; Zhao 26.2; Zhao 30.3; Ding 10.3; and Ai 2.7.

17. If we take nouns to be classificatory predicates, then the double function of fu as a nominalizer and as a marker of nouns is perfectly predictable. Fu will be taken as a nominalizer in both cases. See Sections 2.1 and 2.2.

18. In fact Mencius was remarkably fond of this construction, as the examples in Meng 3B1, 5B7, etc., show. Cf. also Zhuang 17.86; 12.65; etc.


20. The same sentence is also found in Shangjun Shu. Compare the common modern saying: 答非所問 (ANSWER NOT-BE [FEI] THE-OBJECT-which ASK, i.e., "Not answer the question properly").


PRIMARY SOURCES

(arranged alphabetically by abbreviation or title)

Guan

GY

HF

HSWZ
124

Christoph Harbsmeier

HYISIS Harvard Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series. Peking.

Lao Lao Zi. SBBY edition.

Li Ji Li Ji. Couvreur, S., tr. Li Ki. Ho Kian Fu. 1899.


LY Lun Yu. HYISIS edition.

Meng Mencius. HYISIS edition.

SBBY Si Bu Bei Yao.

Shi Shi Jing. HYISIS edition.


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SECONDARY SOURCES


Where Do Classical Chinese Nouns Come From?


Where Do Classical Chinese Nouns Come From?

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COMMENTS

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On the Verbality of Classical Chinese Nouns

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In his paper "Where do Classical Chinese Nouns Come From?," Christoph Harbsmeier has turned his incisive analytical skills to the question of the relationship between nouns and verbs in Classical Chinese and has proposed a new interpretation. In this paper he has pointed out a series of grammatical phenomena that current grammatical views are either unable to explain or else are unable to explain fully. In his view, these phenomena come together to explain one thing, that in Classical Chinese nouns are possessed of verbal qualities, and by their basic nature are a type of classificatory verb.

The reason that Harbsmeier could arrive at this type of conclusion is because he has noticed an important phenomenon of Classical Chinese syntax, that nominal expressions in subject position have the quality of predicates. Because of this, he says that the subject/predicate sentence of Classical Chinese involves two predications. This view is entirely correct. It is worth noting that Y. R. Chao also observed a similar phenomenon in Modern Chinese, saying:

But if you put the two minor sentences together, then you get exactly the makeup of a full sentence: topic and comment, expressed as subject and predicate. Thus we have arrived at the surprising, and yet obvious, conclusion that a full sentence is a complex sentence consisting of two minor ones.

(Chao 1968:83)

However, that the subject nominal has predicationality does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that nouns have verbality. On this point, Harbsmeier has obviously taken too great a step. If his logic were to be correct, then we could derive a similar
conclusion that in Modern Chinese nouns have verbality, and yet this is obviously not the case.

Aside from this, there is yet another obvious flaw in Harbsmeier's theory. In this essay he has devoted considerable space to proving that nominal expressions in subject position have verbality, but he has not been able to cite many examples to prove the verbality of nominal expressions in object or modifier position. In order to explain this contradiction, he says: "In general I must report that the deeper embedded a noun is in a Classical Chinese sentence (i.e., the more peripheral it is from the main predication), the less obvious its verbal qualities become." This, I'm afraid, is a misconception of his. In fact, this phenomenon shows no more than that in Chinese (including both Classical Chinese and Modern Chinese) nominal expressions carry predication only when acting as subject, which can be seen as the non-main clause of a complex sentence; when acting as an object or modifier they do not have this quality.

Harbsmeier believes that his theory regarding Classical Chinese nouns as classificatory verbs has one obvious advantage, which is that he is able to obtain a thoroughly simple unified explanation for a few syntactic forms which due to their inclusion of different word-classes were previously always viewed as having different structures. For example, the particle "mei" 近 has both pre-nominal and pre-verbal uses. In the former position it means "every," while in the latter position it means "whenever." If we were to regard the noun as a classificatory verb, then we could arrive at a unified explanation for these two forms and there would be no need to posit two different meanings.

We know that in Classical Chinese nouns and verbs are two different parts of speech and that their distribution is naturally different, but this in no way keeps them from appearing in similar syntactic environments. It is especially noteworthy that both nouns and verbs can appear in subject position. This is the case in both Classical Chinese and also in Modern Chinese, but is poles apart from the case of Indo-European. Owing to the influence of Indo-European grammatical conceptions, to this day there have always been those who would like to explain the verb in subject position as a noun. This is exactly opposite from Harbsmeier, who wants to view the noun in subject position as a verb. But, in my view, neither of these theories can stand or, at any rate, are necessary. This is true not only in the case of the subject position but also in all other positions. Let us take the case of mei mentioned above as an example. We said that mei could be followed by either a noun or a verb, which is in itself a "unified explanation" of the two forms "mei + N" and "mei + V." In his contention that pre-nominal mei means "every" while pre-verbal mei
means "whenever," Harbsmeier has fallen prey to translating and to viewing the problem through the eyes of the English language. If we look at the problem instead from the viewpoint of Modern Chinese, then the pre-nominal "each thing" (meishi 每事) can be explained as "each single thing" (meiyijian shi 每一件事 ) and the pre-verbal "each time" (meizhao 每朝) can be explained as "each single time" (meiyici zhaojian 每一次朝見), both meanings including a concept of unit of quantity. Does this not in turn demonstrate a common linguistic meaning for mei in its two different positions?

Harbsmeier has also sought to demonstrate the unified nature of ye 也 in the post-nominal, post-verbal, and post-clausal position, and also the unified nature of "nominalizing zhe 者" and "subordinating zhe" (which correspond respectively to what I have termed zhe 中 and zhes). I am sympathetic with his exertions in this regard, for this is certainly not an easy task. But his explanation of zhe has obviously not been successful. I have previously suggested a hypothesis regarding the unified nature of "zhes" and "zhet" but there is no assurance that that is correct either. To demonstrate the unified nature of ye, one would also come up against a number of difficulties. For example (the references to the following texts are to the Harvard-Yenching Index Series unless otherwise noted):

1. 參也與子游聞之. Li Ji, "Tan Gong" (Shih-san-ching chu-shu [Taipei: Yi-wen, 1965]) 8.7a
2. 若之何其以虎也. Zuozhan Xiang 21.4
3. 子之不使白也喪之, 何也? ... 僕其安能? 為僕也者者, 是為白也母, 不為 僕也者者, 是不為白也母. Li Ji, "Tan Gong" 6.5a
4. 焉使鹿也駄. Shijing, Mao 23
It seems that Harbsmeier's thesis regarding "ye" is incapable of explaining any of these examples.

The above discussion has been limited to the sphere of nominal subjects comprised of nouns. The case of nominalized subjects comprised of verbs is very different and needs to be discussed separately.

In Classical Chinese, there are four principal nominalizers, zhe 者, zhi 之, qi 其, and suo 所. The case of suo is unrelated to the present topic and need not be discussed here. Let us first take up the case of zhe.

In Zhu 1983, I divided zhe into two types, one signifying "transferred-designation" (zhet) and one signifying "self-designation" (zhes). The difference between the two is this: when compared with VP, "VP zhet" not only shows a change in word-class but also manifests an obvious change in meaning (仁者 t [≠ 仁] 孝山); on the other hand, the difference between VP "VP zhes" is only one of word-class, with the meaning maintained without change (仁者 s [= 仁] 人也). According to this view, "VP zhes" is a nominal expression and is only able to serve as the subject or object of a sentence. But "VP zhes" can sometimes exhibit conditionality, with its linguistic use corresponding to a non-main clause. For example:

5. 魯有君子者 , 斯惠取斯 ?
   Lunyu 5.3

6. 為君計者 , 勿攻使 .
   Zhanguo ce 24.5 (Taipei: Li-jen shu-chu, 1982), II, p. 894

7. 故從山上望牛者
   若羊 , 而求羊者不下
   規也 , 遠蔽其大也 .
   Xunzi "Jie bi" 8/1/71
   (Harbsmeier 62–76)

My explanation of this type of phenomenon is that the conditional meaning expressed in "VP zhes" is derived from "ruo 若 , (ru 喂 ) VP zhes," which expresses a sense of similarity. Due to the interrelationship between conditional sense and the sense of similarity (Latin si, Dutch zoo, and Chinese ru and ruo all have the two meanings "like" and "if"), ruo/ru gradually developed from...
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a verb into a conjunction, and "zhe" also gradually changed from a nominalizing marker into a subordinating particle. Thus, "VP zhe" is capable of being separate from the preceding ruo or ru and still independently serve a conditional function.

Harbsmeier believes this theory is incapable of explaining the following type of sentence.

8. 使壞城者不得復筑也. Guan 22(2.3-5) (Harbsmeier 80)

9. 使武安侯在者族矣. Shi Ji 107.29 (Harbsmeier 81)

10. 使古而死死者則太公至今猶存. HSWZ 10.11 (Harbsmeier 82)

In fact, however, there is nothing at all difficult about this. This type of sentence is formed simply by adding at the beginning the conditional conjunction shi 使 after the "VP zhe" had already developed to the point where it could independently express a conditional meaning apart from ruo or ru.

The function of "zhi" is to nominalize an S-P expression. "N zhi VP" expresses self-designation, and is extremely close in meaning to the corresponding NV. This type of semantic interrelationship hastens the unification of linguistic function. Therefore, although "N zhi V" is a nominalized expression, at the same time it also carries an obvious verbal nature and in a sentence can serve as a non-main clause.

"Qi VP" is the pronominalized form of "N zhi VP," and therefore like "N zhi VP" similarly has both nominal and verbal natures. The negative form "bu 不 VP" which is parallel to the subordinate clause "qi VP" is just a purely verbal construction.

The relationship between noun and verb is possibly "universal," and yet it is probably also a universal that between these two word-classes there exists an intricate and complex relationship. Otto Jespersen has said that although the modern English infinitive is purely a verb, it still retains a few nominal features. Similarly, the English gerund is also replete with both nominal and verbal features. He said:
It may therefore be termed a hybrid between these two word-classes, and as such has become an extremely supple means of combining and subordinating ideas.

(Jespersen 1933:320)

The cases of the Classical Chinese nominalized expressions "VP zhe," "N zhi VP," and "qi VP" are all exactly the same.

In summation, then, Harbsmeier's theory that Classical Chinese nouns have verbal natures must be restricted in scope. I would suggest that it is only appropriate to nominalized expressions composed of zhe, zhi, and qi and is appropriate for true nouns.

* * * * *

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It is the assumption in what follows that Late Archaic Chinese (LAC) had two word classes (with some overlapping and some marginal blur): N(ouns) and V(erbs). Christoph Harbsmeier does not contest the existence of two such classes, but wants to subsume both under V, so that N becomes a special (classificatory) Verb. There are some fascinating arguments in favor of this view, but in the following I shall try to produce some arguments against it.

First I shall give a compressed summary of my (not very revolutionary) understanding of how LAC grammar works. Then I shall look at some of Harbsmeier's examples in the light of these general views.

An N can function as Subject (N1 ... 也), Predicate (... N2 也), Agent (NV), Object (VN), Regimen of Preposition (於 N), Noun Modifier (N1 之 N2), Verb Modifier (N 而 V), Sentence Modifier, and Theme. A Theme containing a condition I suggest calling a Scenario (see Egerod 1982).

Some of these usages of N can be suspected of containing a (classificatory) verbal function. As Subj or Agent, N may mean "if someone or something is N," and as Pred it conveys the meaning "is N." In N 而 V, N functions as a Verb Mod, in the sense of
"if someone *is* N* or substituting for an Obj or Reg which would otherwise be placed after the V, in which latter case (e.g., 中道而... "in the middle of the road") there is no clear verbal function. An Obj negated by *非* forms a Subordinated Sentence "he who *is* not N," and it is the covert Subj "he" of that Subord Sent which is the Obj in the Main Sentence. An N with *者* may be said to mean "that which *is* N), and it is again the covert Subj of this Predication ("that") which functions as N in the Main Sentence.

The question is, whether the classificatory verbalness is present in the N (and is suppressed in functions not containing "is"), or is expressed covertly by the functions Subj and Agent, and overtly by the grammatical words 也, 而, and 者 (which when functioning with V do not have to supply the already present verbalness). But let us also look at the functions of Verb.

A V can function in a V(erb) Ph(rase) with or without Agent or Obj, and the VPh can constitute a verbal (narrative or injunctive) Sent (possible Copula 而) or a determinative Sent (possible Copula 也). A VPh with an overt Agent can be nominalized by a preceding 之 which at the same time makes the Agent into a N Modifier. A VPh can also be nominalized by means of 者 in which case it can function as the Subj of a following Pred. This same construction (VPh 者) can be used for establishing the covert Agent or the Obj of the V as an Agent of a following V in the Main Sentence.

Many Sino-Tibetan languages have copulas. Akha has some twenty or thirty of them. LAC had the two postposed copulas mentioned above: dia 也 and zjag 矣 with the negative circumposed forms: pijwar ... dia^非 ... 也, and mijwad ... dia^未 ... 也, and dia^也 with VPh only, 也 and dia^也 with VPh and Noun. Sentence final 也 is not present in embedded clauses. Early Archaic Chinese had a preposed copula dia^是, which has survived in LAC in the fusion forms pijwar 而 "is not" and sijwar 雖 "it may well be that ..., (but) ...."

Six grammatical particles of LAC form the system noted in Figure 1.
When Mencius says (1A3) "ne wǒ yǒu wéng wèi", I assume he means "It (i.e., the Agent that killed the man) was not I, it was the weapon." If I understand Harbsmeier correctly, the translation could be expounded into "It was not that which is identical with me, it was that which is identical with a/the weapon." I don't think that "is I" and "is weapon" are necessarily the basic meaning of 我 and 兵. I would rather look for the "is" in the two copulas, which are likely candidates for the content "esse" in the classificatory use.

Harbsmeier uses 仁 "humaneness" to illustrate the verbalness of nouns. But 仁 in its semantics already contains a strong adjectival or predicative side "being humane." Harbsmeier translates 我不仁 also as "I am certainly to be counted as not humane." One could suggest a narrower translation, "As for me, I am certainly an inhumane one." As a member of a N₁N₂ 也 construction, 不仁 is nominal, even though inside its own phrase it is verbal(ized).

A more difficult case is 分均仁也. The meaning depends on whether the Subj is "to divide equally, dividing equally" or "he who divides equally, when someone divides equally." The Pred will be "to be humane, humaneness," or "is a humane person," respectively. Is the Subj a VPh or the Agent of the Verb? It depends on the Subj whether the Pred is an abstract N or a person with a certain quality. In either case the construction is N₁N₂ 也 with the "is" supplied by 也.

If this hunch is correct, 也 is not a Verbal Particle which forces us to take every noun as a Classificatory Verb, but a Determinative Copula which does not deal directly with verbs at all, but with Nouns and Sentences.
Commenting on 王非置雨令尹也 Harbsmeier says that "We do not have a nominal predicate 'be (a case of) an appointment of two Chief Ministers.'" But I don't know why not. "As for a/the King, that is not a case of someone appointing two Chief Ministers" or, applied to a specific situation "... it is not normal that he appoints (should appoint, will appoint) two Chief Ministers." Similarly other examples: 吾非愛道也, "it is not (true) that I was stingy with words." Harbsmeier's rendering of such examples with "it is not as if ..." tends to obscure the grammatical values and through the translation make ultimately nominal phrases appear more verbal or even adverbial than they otherwise would. It seems simpler and more in harmony with other languages to talk about Nominal(ized) Verb Phrases than about innate Verbal Nouns.

The innocent (1) example 殺一無罪非仁也 is so evident to Harbsmeier that he feels inspired to brand possible objectors to his theory (including himself, should he falter) as "analytically bloody-minded" and "grammatically wrong-headed." Maybe I am both, but to my mind the sentence means "to kill one innocent person [無罪] is another VPh, whose covert Agent is Obj of the V in the Main Sent] is not to be humane" and both members of the N1N2 also construction are nominal, whether we translate "to be humane," "being humane," or "humaneness." Harbsmeier's "It is not humane" is just another way of saying "it is not being humane" or "it is not a case of being humane." The main thing is that if the Subj is a normalized VPh, the Pred is also Noun.

In connection with pre-nominal之 he again chooses an example which does not seem to cover N in general. Few will dispute the fact that勇 has an "adjectival" side and that "courage" means "to be courageous, being courageous." So 匹夫之勇 talks about "the commoner's courage, his (way of) being courageous." And 養勇 "cultivating courage" can be taken to mean "cultivating being courageous." 之 nominalizes this verbal interpretation of the "adjectival" Noun勇—to spell it out in all stages of the process. Harbsmeier claims that nominalizes everywhere—I would say, certainly, except where the Head of the N1之N2 construction is already a Noun.

The author investigates the interesting fact that 之 can occur not only after the Pred, but also after Subj or Agent. (I
have myself [Egerod 1971] expressed the matter in similar terms. This is also true of, for instance, Akha couplas (forming "cleft" sentences, "it is A who ... "). But there are two constraints on this phenomenon in LAC, which make it less useful in the present context: 1) This occurs most commonly after Personal Nouns in direct quotation, and 2) It occurs also when PN in direct quotation occupy other syntactic nominal places than that of Subject.

Since in this latter usage cannot in any sense of the word be a copula or have anything to do with a nominalizing function, it is better understood here as a postposed pronoun. The pronominal function may well be the origin of its use as a copula, but this is a historical hypothesis, not a synchronic fact. 

Quixotically Harbsmeier fights quite a few windmills—such as "the nebulous function (of 也) as a pausemaker" or 

being grammatically scandalous." We have put these and other curiosa behind us, I think, and are further along—without necessarily having to make V out of all words occurring with 者, or of all proper nouns.

In the construction V 者 then V the author assigns the "if" which we can insert into the translation of V 者 to the particle 者, when in fact it is more likely to be indicated or selected by 者, and is in principle no different from the "if" which he admits in a simple N Subj such as "Confucians" = "If someone is a Confucian." The particle 者 nominalizes. What further happens belongs to the story of the Noun.

It would seem at first sight as if the construction N 而 V "if someone is N ... " would constitute a strong case in favor of Harbsmeier's views, since the N functions as a V Mod and there is no clear connection between V Mod and "condition plus is .... " But in actual fact the N in this construction behaves in ways we have already met above. It can represent an Agent in which case N 而 V is part of a larger Sentence ("if somebody is N and yet "verbs," then ..."), or an Obj or Regimen, in which case the Sent may end right there ("in relation to the Obj, he 'verbed it'" or "in the Reg he 'verbed' "). All three usages are transforms of ordinary V Phrases: Agent V or V Obj, and the N keeps its verbal
or non-verbal values intact in the transforms. 人而無信  is a transform of 人無信  which emphasizes the agential and conditional status of 人 and makes the whole sentence into a Theme (a Scenario) in another Main Sentence. I don't see why 而 should be an "anomaly" (another windmill!) even if we do not assume that 人 is fundamentally a Verb.

In order to identify prenominal and preverbal 每 "every, every instance of, every time that ..." the author assumes that all N following 每 are classificatory Verbs. Is this simpler than having 每 nominalize a following VPh? I fail to understand the verbalness of 事 in "he asked about every matter," even though 事 is, of course, in some other usages with a different meaning verbal. And it seems to me that 每日邁舍 does not comment on "every instance of something being a day," but tells us that it was "every day" (Sent Mod) that he moved.

Harbsmeier reverts to the by now well-known "asinine mistake" of making those who look at buffaloes resemble goats in 故從山上望牛者如羊 . The wrong translation makes the covert Agent of the first Phrase the covert Agent of the second and Main Sent also. This is grammatically possible but contextually impossible. The good translation makes the overt Obj of the first Phrase the covert Agent of the Main Sentence. The grammar simply gives us "as for the case of somebody(Agent) looking at(V) buffaloes(Obj), the Agent or the Obj or the whole VPh ('looking at buffaloes') resembles goats." Only the Obj is a possibility in this context. In 1982, I added the word "possible" to the paraphrase "as for the possible case of ...." I do not insist on this. The grammar of LAC does not formally distinguish between the possible and the actual case (the Scenario and the Theme).

We saw above that Harbsmeier wanted to transfer the grammatical content of 使 to 者. Likewise he maintains that the grammatical meaning of "if" is also present in 者 in the example "supposing that Wu'an was alive ...." In this way he renders the clarifying words 者 and 使 grammatically superfluous. Let us rather say naively, in order to convey something like the grammatical semantics of Chinese, that 使 means
"supposing" and 者 means "that." Or take the example 莫有之 者 ... 

A

B

C

where we can translate A as "they have it inside," B as "that they have it inside," and C as "supposing that they have it inside." Harbsmeier comes back to the semantics of 仁 when discussing 仁 者 如 射. Again we have to look at the grammatical possibilities. What is the Agent of 者? Is it 仁 or the covert Subj of 仁? In the first case the Sent would mean "the quality of being humane is like performing archery," in the second case "that which is humane resembles archery" or "presupposing that something is humane, it resembles archery." The two translations under the second case are logically different. Harbsmeier labels them assumption (in subordination) and presupposition (in nominalization) respectively. The first case without a Subj may not be good formal logic at all, but it may well be good grammar in the light of absence of Subj or Agent in other constructions (in Han Fei Zi's 此則謂傷也 it seems strained [bloody-minded?] to visualize a covert Agent in 傷也).

Harbsmeier has interesting observations on the function of sentences nominalized by 之 (between Agent and V), but again I view the same fact differently. He finds that 之 sometimes subordinates, sometimes does not, where I would say that it is the nominalized Sent which can be used as Subj, Theme, or Sent Modifier. In the case of 國之不可小者備故也 we have an N1N2 也 construction: "That the state cannot be taken lightly is because [is the effect of the fact that] it has taken defensive precautions," so the nominalized Sent functions as Subject. 國之將興明神降之 "when a state is about to rise, the illustrious spirits descend on it" is a complicated transformation by exposure, of 明神降 [於] 興之國. The exposed entity is a Scenario. In 萬之百兔而無後 "(concerning) the fact that Zhou was successful a hundred times, yet had no heirs" the
nominalized phrase is the object (regimen) of 鬼 "in regard to, concerning," a fact which Harbsmeier seemingly forgot to note, when he copied the example from Zuo Zhuan, Xuan Gong 12th year.

Harbsmeier does not in itself give us a clue as to what the nominalized Sent is going to be used for—other grammatical hints and common sense must tell us that. This important facet of LAC grammar in general has actually been beautifully stated by Harbsmeier himself in his Philosophical Grammar (1979:110-16) in connection with the "principle of economy" (cf. Egerod 1982:91).

Another case presents an interesting anomaly: "even though the whip is long ...." Harbsmeier has demonstrated that 鬼 contains as one element of a fusion. 鬼 here nominalizes the same way as ... 也 does: "It may well be that a whip is long ...." There is good grammatical sense in this overt nominalization with 之, even though usually sentences established by copula are not further marked for nominalization.

I shall not here enter into the problems connected with the possible inherent modality of 其. Certainly in some cases 其 is the equivalent of covert "third person pronoun plus 之," and the function is then the same as N plus 之. It can therefore nominalize a VPh and this nominalized phrase can function in various syntactic structures (one which is subordinated, not subordinating; cf. Egerod 1982:107-9). In other cases many researchers (including Karlgren and Malmqvist) find that the usage and content of 其 is different from "pronoun plus 之" and may represent a totally different word. Malmqvist has made an important contribution by investigating the problem in a single text, the Zuo Zhuan. More research is needed to illuminate all the synchronic and diachronic aspects of this puzzle.

The author is, of course, right that an Obj containing 非 is an embedded clause (see above under functions of N). In 何事 非 君 "How could I serve someone other than my ruler?" the Obj of 事 is the covert Subj of 非 君 "someone who is not my ruler." 非 is a negative copula, which sheds its final also when the clause is not a main one. But does that necessarily mean that the positive counterpart means "serve someone who is my ruler?" At least no more than in English, where "my ruler" and "someone who is not my ruler" form exactly the same kind of semantic and grammatical contrast as in Chinese. I venture to postulate that it is the
negative \( \exists \) which indicates and necessitates an embedding here, not the noun.

Harbsmeier concludes that "to be nominal in Classical Chinese is to be a non-main classificatory predicate." I would maintain that to be nominal means to be a noun or a nominalized phrase used as a nominal by the grammar. Nouns and nominalized phrases can also be used with other values, again depending on the grammar.

He also finds that "the deeper embedded a noun is in a Classical Chinese sentence (i.e., the more peripheral it is from the main predication) the less obvious its verbal qualities become." I would rather turn this around and say that the closer to the surface the noun gets, the more likely it is to occur in constructions (such as predication and sexualization), indicated by copulas, particles, and other grammatical means, which entail a classificatory function.

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In the letter inviting me to participate in this discussion reference is made to the novelty of Dr. Harbsmeier's approach. Alas, if only it were so! From my perspective his critique of current views on Classical Chinese grammar seems merely to want to dissolve the hard-won gains that have been made over the past two or three decades through trying to analyze Classical Chinese as a language like any other and to take us back to the muddled ideas that prevailed when I was a beginning student. In those days it was quite an issue whether Chinese had "parts of speech" and sentences in which nouns were apparently used as verbs and vice versa were triumphantly cited to demonstrate that it did not. Now Harbsmeier wants to call nouns "classificatory verbs," effectively sending us back to those "good old days."

Of course the critique must be answered. A dogmatic claim that, because Chinese is a language, it must conform to principles of universal grammar cannot be justified simply by appealing to the authority of Noam Chomsky. On the other hand, one might suppose that it behooved those who reject such a claim to show up by what other principles Chinese can perform its functions. It seems to me that Harbsmeier delights in blurring distinctions that others have tried to make but offers very little in return in the
way of new distinctions by which we can achieve a better analysis. While I would not claim to have the answers to all the points he raises, I feel sure that most of them can be disposed of very easily and that, in general, the assumption that Chinese grammar operates on principles that are found in all languages is heuristically the only sound approach to the subject.

A point-by-point refutation of his arguments would take up far too much space. Let me begin, however, by discussing the examples he cites to show that the particle 也, frequently follows verbs and cannot, therefore, be taken as an indicator of noun predication. I would agree that 也 can occur with genuinely verbal predicates—some thoughts on how this is to be explained will be offered below. In the examples he cites, however, in spite of his claim to the contrary, there can be no doubt that what we have are ordinary noun predicates with sentences taking the place of nouns, in other words, what I call unmarked nominalization.

In Classical Chinese one can mark a VP as nominalized by inserting the genitive particle 之 between the subject and the verb, or replacing the subject by 其 if it is pronominalized. Furthermore the particles 者, which stands for the pronominalized head of a noun phrase, and 所, which stands for the object or locative complement of the verb in a relative clause when this is co-referent with the head, may serve as markers of nominalization. It is also possible, however, in certain conditions, for a VP to replace a noun in a sentence without any overt sign of nominalization, as in:

(1) 是亦走也.
"This is also running away." Meng 1A/3

(2) 故王之不王，不為也，非不能也.
"Therefore, Your Majesty's not achieving true kingship is not-doing, it is not not-being-able." Meng 1A/7

If the subject is omitted and the nominalized VP is not in a relative clause, there is, of course, no possibility of marking the nominalization. In examples such as these, however, the VP fulfills the syntactic role of a noun just by being inserted in a noun slot. It should be noted, furthermore, that even a sentence with an overt subject may appear in the noun predicate construction with 也, as in:
(3) 是篡也非天與也
"This would have been usurping, it would not have been
Heaven's bestowing."  Meng 5A/5

Unmarked nominalization by inserting a VP in the noun predi-
cate formula: (fei) X ye "is (not) X"—is used especially (a) when
two predicates are contrasted or correlated—"it is A, it is (not)
B," etc., (b) in order to add an explanation to what precedes—"it
is that ...." "it is because ...." Harbsmeier's examples are short
snippets out of context but when we place them in context we can
easily see that they can be accounted for according to these
principles. His example (3) is given below in fuller form as (4):

(4) 有人於此，其待我以衡逆，則君子必自反也，
我必不仁也，必無禮也。
"There is a man here. If his treatment of me is perverse and
unreasonable, then the superior man must reflect on himself,
'It must be that I am inhumane, it must be that I am lacking
in politeness.'"  Meng 4B/28

The first ye in the passage does, indeed, follow a verbal
predicate and requires some different kind of explanation. The
second (which Harbsmeier cites) and the third, however, are easily
accounted for as in my translation. That is, the speaker does not
simply assert that he is inhumane and lacking in politeness. He
offers this as a possible explanation of the other party's
conduct. (It should be noted that in the two nominal predicates
bì 必: "necessarily" modifies the predicate as a whole and not the
verbs. It might be thought that the word order in the first, with
wǒ in front, required a different interpretation but it is quite
normal for the subject of a clause to be displaced in front of a
particle such as fei "if not," rú "if" which governs the clause as
a whole.)

Harbsmeier's second example—hū láng rén yě 虎狼仁也
—is Zhuangzi's answer to an enquiry about rén. It clearly is
not an assertion that "tigers and wolves are humane" which would
be the meaning of hū láng rén, without the final particle. The
intention is surely something like "if you want examples of things
show the quality of rén, I give you tigers and wolves." Harbsmeier's
translation, "tigers and wolves would count as
humane," in fact, expresses this very well. A parallel sentence
would be hū láng shòu yě 虎狼獣也."Tigers and wolves are
(examples of) wild animals." It is not, however, that shòu is
then a "classificatory verb" but that class membership is one of
the meanings of the verbless noun predicate construction, as it is of the copula in English.

In 1.2 Harbsmeier gives four examples of what he calls "preverbal fei." In each case fei appears between a noun or pronoun subject and its verb. Nevertheless fei governs the clause as a whole and not just the following verb. That is, the subject is attracted into initial position as in (3) above. Even Harbsmeier's translation shows this in three of the four cases. Thus his example (9) is translated "it is not as if I was stingy with words." One could say more simply "it is not that I am stingy with words."

A curious paradox in Harbsmeier's theory is that, although he regards nouns as a subcategory of verbs, he still uses the term nominalization. Apparently even a noun (that is, a classificatory verb) can be nominalized. Thus, he reinterprets the genitival particle zhi as "nominalizing" even when it "marks the fact that one noun phrase or complex verb phrase modifies another noun phrase." How are we to interpret this "nominalizing" of a noun? It would seem from his discussion that nominalizing means converting to a classificatory verb. Example (14), which the unenlightened would translate as "This is a commoner's courage" is interpreted as "This is a commoner's that which is identical with courage." But if a noun by itself means not simply "X" but "that which is identical with X," should we not more precisely construe the sentence as "This is a commoner's that which is identical with that which is identical with X"—and so ad infinitum? If this is where philosophical grammar leads us, I fear that it is a too rarefied atmosphere for an ordinary mortal like myself.

In Section 2, Harbsmeier discusses the role of the particle ye when it occurs after the subject or topic. No doubt, as he argues, this usage is related to the noun predication construction. In this respect ye resembles the preclassical copula wei, which also often introduces a topic. Vestiges of this syntax survive even in later Classical usage where it has the more restricted meaning of "only." These uses of ye and wei, however, strengthen the connection with nouns and nominalized VP's, marked or unmarked, and do not, as far as I can see, require any deep philosophical questioning of the validity of the distinction between nouns and verbs.

Section 3 discusses the particle zhe, which I explained above as standing for the pronominalized head of a noun phrase. One can present this in the formula: \( N_2 \text{ zhi } \text{ zhe} \rightarrow N_1 \). Here, \( N_2 \) need not be a sentence and the relationship between \( N_2 \) and \( N_1 \)
can be of various kinds, not necessarily possession or description. Thus 稷塗狗豕之畜 (Meng 1A/3) means "domestic animals, including chickens, pigs, dogs, and swine." Nor is it necessary for N₂ to be a nominalized clause before N₁ can be pronominalized. Thus in Meng 1B/2 the phrases 稷塗人, "hay and firewood ones," and 稷塗人, "pheasant and hare ones," obviously mean "people who gather hay and firewood" and "people who catch pheasants and hares" but no such verbs appear, nor do we need to supply them, in the Chinese. The nouns "hay," "firewood," "pheasants," and "hares" are sufficient to define the types of people that are referred to.

The commonest use of zhē is, to be sure, that in which N₂ is a nominalized VP and this is why zhē is often referred to as a nominalizer. It is important to recognize, however, that zhē is strictly the head of the phrase and only incidentally a marker of nominalization. Note, further, that zhē can either be co-referent with one of the nouns associated with the subordinate VP, most commonly the subject, or can stand for an abstract noun meaning something like English "thing." Hence shā rén zhē 殺人者 can mean either "one who kills people" or "the thing of killing people" and only the context can disambiguate the surface identity. (For a fuller discussion of relativization in Classical Chinese, see my forthcoming article, "Some embedding constructions in Classical Chinese," to be published by the Chinese Language Society of Hong Kong in a volume in honor of Wang Li.)

In the light of this how are we to interpret Harbsmeier's example (63)? There would seem to be only two possibilities of construing the phrase 从山上望牛者: (a) "one who looks at oxen from the top of a mountain" and (b) "the thing of looking at oxen from the top of a mountain." Neither of them appears to make sense as the subject of the following verb phrase 如羊 is/are like sheep." Though Harbsmeier calls the first "an asinine mistake," it is the one that is supported by the parallel sentences in the same passage from Xunzi (which I do not cite for reasons of space) and I feel sure that it is correct. What we need to do in order to make sense of it is to understand an ellipsis in the predicate: [wang zhī] 如羊 [望之] 如羊 "[looks at them] as sheep." The omission avoids a repetition of the verb wang, which already appears in the relative clause. This reading allows us to interpret zhē in exactly the same way as in the adjacent sentences in
the text and there is no need to introduce irrelevant considerations about an alleged "subordinating role."

It is certainly true that *zhē* appears in new usages in the Han period. I have not given this any close study but it would seem that it had acquired a function as a marker of the end of a clause. This is, however, a diachronic change in the language and is irrelevant to the synchronic analysis of the language of the Classical period.

Finally let me revert briefly to the question of *yē* after verbal predicates, which Harbsmeier does not really go into at all, since all his examples are cases of unmarked nominalization, but which presents the most serious challenge to the interpretation of *yē* as a marker of noun predication. Unfortunately I do not have a fully worked out answer. My hypothesis is as follows. Because verbless noun predicates in *yē* are inherently aspectless and cannot be followed by the perfective marker *yī* 

In support of this idea one may note the regular collocation of *yē* with the negative of non-perfective aspect, *wèi* "not yet, never," which, like verbless noun predicates and the negative *fēi*, can never be followed by *yī*. In Mencius sentences with *wèi* in the main clause mostly end in *yē*, as a consultation of the concordance will quickly reveal. This is much less prevalent in the more archaic language of the Zuozhuan.

This is probably not the whole story. Aspect is a notoriously tricky thing to analyze and *yē* is such a frequent particle that a comprehensive study would be a long and arduous task. Nevertheless I feel sure that one can only hope to unravel the intricacies of its usage by carefully distinguishing different stages in the evolution of the language and paying close attention to diachronic development. Any attempt to find a holistic solution that will unite all usages under a single philosophical definition seems doomed to failure.
REPLIES

By: Christoph Harbsmeier
15 November 1985

Three scholars whom I have held in the highest esteem ever since I embarked on the study of Chinese have found it worth their while to comment on my paper. Arguing against those whom one truly admires is not easy. Here, for what they are worth, are my replies to the masters' objections. I hope they will serve to clarify the methodological and substantial issues involved.

Zhu Dexi

Zhu's general comments are most apposite and welcome. Most appropriately he quotes from Y. R. Chao and Otto Jespersen, two linguists for whom I have expressed the greatest admiration, and whose work indeed has been a constant inspiration throughout my work with Chinese grammar. His quotes are entirely pertinent to the central questions under discussion and had I been more thoughtful I would have quoted these passages myself.

Zhu disagrees with the view that nouns are verbal, insisting that they are only predicative. I quite agree. This is a good way of expressing the facts as I see them.

Zhu's point on Modern Chinese raises the interesting question whether my arguments would work for Modern Chinese? He feels they don't, and again I most certainly agree. When he concludes, however, that what is apparently untrue for Modern Chinese cannot have been true for Classical Chinese, I beg to disagree. I only wish the matter was as simple as this, but deep structural change in languages is common.

Zhu's insistence on the weakness of the evidence I present concerning the object and the nominal modifier is entirely natural and correct. This weakness does not become theoretically less important because I repeatedly emphasize it myself in my paper. However, Zhu's solution which concedes the noun predicativeness in subject position but denies it that predicativeness in object position, raises a very big problem—surely we all do want a unified account of the noun in these two functions. It is for this reason that I emphasize the consistency of my account of the noun as a classificatory verb with the grammar of the nominal object. The tragedy is that while I feel my account explains many previously unexplained features of nouns in subject and predicate
position, I can only sheepishly claim that my story can be applied
to the object nouns as well—although telling the story gives one
little empirical pleasure.

Zhu insists that the distribution of nouns and verbs is
different in Classical Chinese. I quite agree. But I explain
this difference in terms of the classificatory nature of the noun,
and its tendency to have a nominalizing zhe understood, whereas he
prefers a different view on more traditional lines. Zhu offers no
arguments to decide between the two approaches.

Zhu concurs that zhe 乍 on its own can function as a marker
of conditional clauses. This is an absolutely central point of my
argument and I am delighted that he thinks this way. We now only
differ on the question of how zhe came to function this way, i.e.,
as regards etymology and historical explanation. I maintain zhe
functions that way because there is a profound logical link
between nominalizing and subordinating sentences, so that one
particle would naturally come to mark both these things. Zhu
holds that zhe on its own came to mark conditional clauses because
it originally co-occurred for good and natural reasons with ruo
若干 and ruo it and later came to take over the function of these
conditional clauses by itself, so that the conditional particles
could be omitted.

I still feel the suggestion is an ingenious one. But once
Zhu concurs that zhe works as a subordinating particle on its own,
our dispute has lost some of its empirical edge. It is now not a
matter of how to understand zhe, but how to interpret our agreed
understanding of zhe.

I am very grateful for Zhu's sympathy towards my quest for a
unified account for ye ye, zhe, etc. It greatly amuses me that the
examples he brings up as relevant to my discussion are just
the ones that I found important to include in the final draft of
my paper, where ye marks nouns in other than subject position. He
evidently assumed that the final version of the paper was identi-
cal with an earlier draft. What this coincidence does show is
that our problems are sufficiently well-defined, so that it is
evident what would count as relevant evidence and what would not.
In effect, the examples that Zhu quotes are among the precious few
scraps of evidence I claim to have for the classificatory-verb-
interpretation of nouns in other than subject and predicate
positions.

Zhu's general conclusion is indeed thoroughly tempting and
reasonable. He agrees on the problem about nominalization and
subordination, and on the noun in subject position, but refuses to
let this uncertainty infest the basic and thoroughly useful time-
tried and apparently universal division between nouns and verbs.

Zhu need not agree with my reply to this, but I like to think
that he will sympathize as indeed I sympathize with his commonsen-
sical suggestion. The only reason why I propose an interpretation
of the noun as a classificatory verb is that I prefer a unified
homogeneous account of what it is to be a noun in Classical
Chinese to a discontinuous one. Once the nominal predicate and
the nominal subject are shown to invite other than the traditional
nominal treatment in Classical Chinese, then it seemed worthwhile
to see whether the syntax of the NP in other positions is incon-
sistent with an interpretation as a classificatory noun. The
answer I found is that the syntax of NPs in these other positions
provides little independent support for such an analysis, but is
entirely consistent with it.

The trouble is that such consistency is not worth very much.
It is pretty obvious that I can interpret a word like rabbit as
"that which is identical with a rabbit." The question is why I
should! I can indeed also consistently analyze rabbit as "that
which is identical with something that is identical with a
rabbit," but why on earth should I do that? Indeed I can make my
analysis of rabbit as complicated as I like without my analysis
becoming inconsistent with the usages of rabbit. Why not take a
rabbit as a rabbit and have done with it? Why not call a spade a
spade, even if in some contexts there can be problems about what a
spade really is?

This, I think, is the gut objection to my paper which weighs
much more heavily than the detailed empirical queries. After all,
if it turns out that one example does not work so well for me, I
can find another. But there is no shirking this essential problem
which I think comes out most clearly in Zhu's response. I had
better come up with a good riposte and a plain defense of my
unnatural suggestion.

First of all, I want to submit by way of an apology that the
very possibility of making a case for the interpretation of nouns
as classificatory verbs for Classical Chinese seems to me to be
significant. In Greek, for example, I would not know where to
begin. And in English, it turns out, the evidence that has been
provided for such a view is curiously abstract by comparison with
Classical Chinese. In all other languages I know I would feel
throughout as I do in connection with the nominal objects in
Chinese. My thought was that by carrying the argument as far as I
plausibly could in Chinese I would be exploring something which is
not unknown in other languages but, being particularly strongly
represented in Classical Chinese, is a characteristic feature of that language.

Second, the idea that nouns and verbs are predicates and differ in respect to their tendency to be embedded (nouns being liable to come in frames like "someone/thing who/which Ns") is inherent in the standard logical account of natural languages—in English this structure is hidden, why could it not be somewhat more plain in Chinese? Perhaps it is the morphemic complexity of very synthetic languages that can obfuscate logical structure? The matter deserves an empirical enquiry. I try to make such an enquiry, and I shall present a more comprehensive survey of this in the section of "Language and Logic" in Needham's Science and Civilization in China.

Third, since we do need a predicative account of nouns in some positions (like that of subject and predicate) anyway, why not try to give all nouns a coherent treatment of this sort?

Fourth, Ockham's razor is badly needed. We must not introduce logical complexities and subtleties praeter necessitatem (without a sound basis in empirical observation). But the point is that my account of the noun is the simplest logical construction I can think of. Indeed, much simpler than the traditional conception of the noun which involves very considerable hidden complexities. If my account is correct then Chinese may, in some respects, be a logically simpler and more transparent language than English or Greek. Is that unthinkable?

I suggest the final proof of the grammatical pudding is in the philological practice. The reader must find out for himself whether or not he feels he gets a subtler picture of Chinese sentences when, for example, he regards the subject as a minor sentence, the nominal predicate as a classificatory verb, zhe 者 as a subordinating as well as a nominalizing particle, and fei 未 as a judgemental negative. I shall be quite satisfied if he finds such ways of taking these particles useful. And if he refuses to go so far as to conclude that nouns are classificatory verbs he will be forgiven. As I said before: I am not that sure myself.

Egerod

Egerod raises a question that is crucial, namely whether the classificatory verbalness is present in the noun or is expressed covertly in the functions subject and agent, and overtly by the grammatical words ye 也, er 而, and zhe 者. This is indeed an interesting possibility and an original suggestion which needs
thorough reflection. Egerod's reflections gain in weight because they are based on a comparison with other East Asian languages with which I am not familiar.

Egerod agrees that ye comes in irreducibly verbal sentences, but when it does, he suggests, it has the whole sentence as its scope and is determinative in the style of "it is that." I agree on the matter of scope, but I still feel it is misleading to think of the verbal sentences in ye as involving sentential nominalization of the type "it is that."

Why, then, do I refuse to take ye as a copula dealing with nominals and (nominalized) sentences? I have already addressed this question briefly (1980:130ff.) and will not repeat myself. I find it wrong-headed to construe an imperative like 

"if someone is cantankerous, don't argue with him!"

on nominalized lines (Xun 1.40; this is a snippet from a context which contains four close structural parallels). For example: where does the wu 則 go under such a nominal interpretation? WU definitely does not take NP-PREDs as its scope.

Consider: 

"Therefore it is said: Heaven and Earth must be said to practice non-action, and not to leave anything undone." (Zhuang 18.14)

This does not say that Heaven is a practitioner of non-action and a leaver-of-nothing-undone. But neither does it say: "Therefore it is said: It is that Heaven and Earth practice non-action, and it is that they leave nothing undone." A special problem for Egerod's account (but not for mine) arises from the presence of two ye's: can er plausibly be taken to precede NP predicates? In my account, the ye, which so commonly follows sentences introduced by gu Yue 故曰, simply indicates that the sentence so introduced is (singled out as) a general judgement.

Er 而 can obviously come inside nominalized clauses, but I find no instances of the pattern er (SUBJECT) NP-PRED ye meaning "and (the subject) is a NP-PRED." In my account of ye, er is excluded before classificatory predicates but is perfectly possible in front of other verbs used in the judgemental mode—or in whatever precise mode one finally decides is marked by post-verbal ye.
Again, we can take the ubiquitous pattern 焉之 VP 也，"nothing can VP it." (Compare incidentally Piers Plowman's famous line: "I ken not perfectly my Paternoster as the priest it sayeth, but I ken rhymes of Robin Hood and Randle Earl of Chester.") The VP in itself cannot here be taken as nominalized (unmarkedly), because mo takes no nominal scope: 焉 NP-PRED 也，"nothing is a NP," is apparently not good Classical Chinese. Also, the preposed zhi 之 would be hard to explain if what comes after mo were to be construed as a nominalized VP. This much, I think, Egerod would agree with. But it also will not do in many contexts to read the pattern as "it is that nothing can VP it," which is how Egerod proposes to construe the sentential ye. By contrast it clearly is plausible to read "I judge that nothing can VP it" in all the relevant contexts.

Apart from these patterns, I find ye common in assertive contexts where a sentence-nominalizing interpretation seems problematic to say the least: for example, "Suppose Qin were to demand Henei. Would you give it to them?" The King replied: "I would not give it." 引与 也, (LSCQ 18.7). (Note that the answer is a hypothetical judgement and as such easily subsumed under my analysis.) In the very common cases like this one, I am not inclined to put up with the paraphrase "it is that I would not give it to them."

Consider an example like this: 知道 焉之 若也 而不从 道者,无之有也.

"There is no one who, knowing that nothing can compete with the Way, nonetheless does not follow the Way."
(Xun 22.67; cf. also Xun 21.94; 22.78/79 [3 examples])

The sentiment expressed may evoke a traditional Socratic dictum, but the grammatical structure is not easily subsumed under traditional grammatical categories. As Egerod would agree, a nominal interpretation "is a non-existing thing" is unacceptable. But a sentence-nominalizing paraphrase seems equally misplaced, especially when we have an alternation with zhe 著.

The scope of ye is often not the sentence which it tails, but a whole sequence of parallel sentences, so that Egerod would make a sequence of sentences into a nominalized conjunction, and I would have to take ye to mark the judgemental mode of a whole sequence:
"Only if someone is talented will he enjoy this. If someone is not talented, then, even if he has it he will not enjoy it." (Meng 1A2)

The Shen Zi (Thompsen, fragment no. 113) has a sequence of six sentences in three parallel couplets, with only one ye at the very end. In such cases I suspect, but cannot prove, that the scope of ye stretches several sentences and marks them all out as judgements. Is it plausible to let nominalization operate over sentence boundaries?

I do agree that there may be a link between nominalization and the judgemental mode. However, Egerod’s attempt to explain post-verbal ye in terms of sentential nominalization on the lines of "it is that S," interesting though it is, turns out to be abortive.

I insist, then, that post-verbal ye 也 in the language(s) of the 5th to 3rd centuries B.C. cannot in general be taken as a nominal copula. Post-verbal ye cannot be explained only in terms of the well-known sentential nominalization, "It is because/it is that," or the standard unmarked de-verbal nominalization, "the one who/someone who/a thing which," or the usual unmarked nominalization corresponding to the marked English running versus runs. We must recognize a post-verbal ye marking (apparently) a judgemental or disquisitional sentential mode.

This position is not inconsistent with the idea that ye etymologically was a post-posed copula, or indeed a resumptive demonstrative particle; perhaps even both these things. That is a question for students of comparative Sino-Tibetan linguistics. As Egerod rightly insists, one must distinguish between historical hypothesis and synchronic fact.

I am an amateur in this field, and I gladly acknowledge that my respondents are among the world’s leading specialists. I am simply willing to accept what they tell me of the likely etymological status of ye, but I insist that the semantics of ye must in principle be discussed not on the basis of etymological reconstruction and comparison, but on the evidence from the texts. I readily admit that historical evidence and typological comparisons can give crucial hints, but they must remain subsidiary in the exercise of grammatical description.

Once we contemplate the hypothesis that ye marks a judgemental sentential mode, then (and only then) the phrase 分均,仁也, which I certainly agree could be analyzed the way
Egerod does, appears in a new light. It becomes possible in
decline equally is/counts-as
humane." There is no need any more, then, for Egerod's elabora-
tion "is a humane person." Judging a person to be humane is as
much a judgement as classifying him as a humane person. Ye is
appropriate in both cases.

Now once we have discovered that the paradigm of post-nominal
Ye will not explain the post-verbal case, we have two alterna-
tives: we can either give up the hope for a unified account and
simply say there are two different kinds of Ye, or we can try to
explain the familiar post-nominal Ye, perversely, in terms of the
less familiar post-verbal Ye. I have chosen to try this latter
path of enquiry.

Closely similar considerations apply to fei/. Having
found that there is a common pre-verbal fei which can not be
assimilated to or subsumed under pre-nominal fei, I have tried to
explain the familiar pre-nominal fei in terms of the less familiar
but quite common pre-verbal fei.

When it comes to a sentence like 王 非置兩令尹也 I
agree that fei etymologically is a copula with a negative prefix.
But I also insist that in this sentence a King is neither an
appointment of two Chief Ministers, nor a case of an appointment
of two Chief Ministers. And I insist that pre-verbal fei,
precisely like post-verbal ye, marks a judgemental mode of
(oral) negation. Egerod does not address this issue when he
suggests a different paraphrase, "As for a/the King, that is not a
case of someone appointing two Chief Ministers." My first
(feeble) objection is that zhe 者 would seem to be obligatory in
a sentence expressing what his paraphrase says. But secondly, the
important point is that given pre-verbal fei there is no need any
more for contortions of this kind. One might have to live with
them otherwise, but as long as pre-verbal fei is no more neces-
sarily nominalizing, such contortions become superfluous.

The crux is whether or not we must accept pre-verbal fei just
as we accept post-verbal ye as not nominalizing but only
judgemental.

Compare two readings of the familiar: 殺一聖罪,非
仁也 .

A. Killing (as much as) one innocent person does not count
as/is not humane.
B. Killing (as much as) one innocent person does not count
as (an act of) humaneness/being humane.
I call (A) a verbal reading, and it becomes possible only after one has accepted genuinely post-verbal ye and genuinely pre-verbal fei. I call (B) the nominal reading which has always been available, and which Egerod is entitled to prefer. However, given our account of fei and ye in verbal sentences I find myself in the unhappy position of not being able to decide between these two readings. I wonder whether we could not have suspended grammatical ambiguity, or to use Quine's fashionable phrase, grammatical indeterminacy.

It seemed uncongenial to impose a verbal/nominal distinction on an "innocent" predicate in a sentence which looks inherently indeterminate and indifferent to that distinction. To impose a distinction between nominal and verbal predication where none is called for seemed wrong-headed. And still, I can imagine contexts in which I would go for a nominal versus a verbal interpretation of this sentence—except that I would, of course, describe myself as deciding between a classificatory and descriptive reading.

Egerod's identification of "it is not humane" as another way of saying "it is not being humane" is rather infelicitous on several accounts: for one thing it is profoundly ambiguous (cf. he's not being nice to me, that's not being nice to one's pupil). For another, the fact remains that a person cannot be (identical with) being humane.

The simple point is that murder is both immoral and an immorality. That is why our problem arises with sentences involving nominalized-action-subjects. A person, on the other hand, can be immoral, but not in any ordinary sense an immorality. That is why the problem does not generally arise with sentences involving individual subjects.

Egerod's point on 每日迁舍 not commenting on "every instance of something being a day" is elegant, but easily answered: the sentence does comment on "whenever it is a day." Contrast for mei shi 每事, "whenever something is a (relevant) business/matter." I quite agree that my paraphrases are idiomatically awkward, and they certainly are less simple than standard non-verbal readings. Their purpose is only to explain pre-verbal and pre-nominal mei on one unified principle. To bring out what makes mei appropriate in both cases.

Similarly for the particle zhi 之. I claim that zhi can be construed as nominalizing everywhere. Egerod objects: "certainly, except where the Head of the N1 zhi N2 construction is already a N." My claim is very simply that I can explain that exception.
That, indeed, is the point of the exercise: "My way is to try to find the one pervading principle."

I gladly concur that there is no novelty in this approach. Indeed, I proudly admit my debt to Confucius and Analects 4.15 as an important inspiration. Perhaps, indeed, as Pulleyblank suggests in his closing remarks, my old-fashioned quest for a unified account is doomed to failure. Nonetheless I feel in good company for trying my best to find one. And I do insist that the search for unified coherence in apparent multiplicity is essential to sound scientific method.

On the other hand, it seems to me that there is a fruitful competition between the systemic approach which I take and the more comparative historical-philological approach which informs Egerod's grammatical strategy. I do feel there is room and need for both these approaches. Ideally, one would like to combine them and study the synchronic system within its comparative and historical context. I still know far too little of the grammar of surrounding East Asian languages or, for example, of the grammar of the Shang inscriptions, to reach this ideal. That is why I find a dialogue of the kind Early China has organized so fruitful.

Pulleyblank's reactions are most refreshing for their out-spokenness and directness. Reading his pages, I can hear him talk, and this brings back fond memories of evenings well spent, where I feel I learned a great deal from the master. Pulleyblank brings up very fundamental points of method and of detail, and I hope he will forgive me if I reply with the same uncompromising candidness that I admire him for.

Pulleyblank considers my essay as a great leap backward to the times when there was felt to be a problem about word classes and parts of speech in Classical Chinese. If he feels the problem has been solved, he should have told us by whom and where. Until he does, I shall consider his objection vacuous. I shall most certainly insist that the problem of parts of speech is absolutely basic to Classical Chinese grammar, and that the issue is still wide open.

Problems do not go away (nor become less important) because they are not (to his knowledge) widely discussed since Pulleyblank's student days. I make no apologies for the view that divisions between word-classes may be softer in natural languages than in artificial ones, and softer in Chinese than in Greek. The issue may not suit Pulleyblank's taste, but de qustibus non est disputandum. When I wrote Aspects I did decide to disregard
general theoretical issues such as those discussed in this paper, but I do feel one must be free to discuss them.

Pulleyblank says that I am engaged in "deep philosophical questioning of the validity of the distinction between nouns and verbs." As I say in my paper, as other respondents have understood, and as Egerod explicitly says, I do not question the validity of the distinction between nouns and verbs: I try to (re)interpret it, and to show that there are certain borderline cases. That is all.

On post-subject 也, I am in total agreement with Pulleyblank. Indeed, I find his reference to the pre-Classical copula 无 instructive and pertinent to the core of our problem. And since I have so many critical remarks on Pulleyblank's contribution I want to stress that I also find his final suggestion on the importance of the diachronic perspective thoroughly constructive and relevant: it will be fascinating to see whether some of the observations relevant to my discussion will look different when they are placed in a precise diachronic context.

Moreover, I agree that the context is often crucial to the analysis of clauses in 也, e.g., a sentence like "万物各從其類也" (Xun 1.15) may look in your card file like a perfect illustration of judgemental 也, "I hereby judge all things to follow their own kinds." The trouble is that the meaning is, "It is because all things follow their own kinds," and the passage provides no evidence at all for or against my interpretation of 也. When one has shuffled a record card with an example sentence long enough, a context can get forgotten or distorted, and this is indeed dangerous. Pulleyblank's point on 我必不仁 also is well taken, although it does not affect the overall argument.

I am surprised to find Pulleyblank refer to "principles that are found in all languages." It would have helped his case, I humbly submit, if he had specified the relevant principles. Until he does, I shall consider this point as again vacuous. Moreover, from a philosophical point of view I submit, with the philosopher W. V. O. Quine, that principles are not found in languages, they may only be, more or less successfully, applied to languages. This fine epistemological distinction may not interest Pulleyblank, but it interests me a great deal. It makes all the difference to me whether our principles of grammar are conceived as inherent in a theory about language or inherent in language itself.
Even if there were generally accepted and specific "principles that are found in all languages" (which I emphatically dispute), I still would insist that these need to be tested against and not just applied to the evidence from special languages like Chinese. Chinese grammar must start from Chinese evidence, not from purported "principles that are found in all languages."

Here lies a profound difference between Pulleyblank and myself. What he calls "heuristically the only sound approach to the subject" I consider as muddled prejudice. "Muddled," because to my knowledge there are no clear principles to appeal to. "Prejudice," because sound methodology must be prepared for unexpected results that do not fit apparently self-evident principles. One must be constantly on the look-out for counter-evidence to seemingly evident assumptions. This certainly is not an innovative point of view on my part, but I submit that it is reasonable and worthwhile nonetheless.

Newtonian principles were quite self-evident and certainly quite generally recognized—until they were shown to give a simplified and a theoretically incorrect picture of physical reality. What, in my very small way, I have tried to show is that the traditional notion of word-classes and parts of speech gives a similarly simplified and theoretically incorrect picture of Chinese grammatical reality.

Of course, one can and does get by with Newtonian physics for basic practical purposes. But it would be a curious thing, for that reason, to accuse adherents of a new-fangled abstruse theory of relativity of messing up Newton's hard-won theoretical gains, of delighting in blurring distinctions that others have tried to make, or dissolving hard-won gains that have been made over the centuries.

My account of Chinese nouns allows Pulleyblank to go on saying most of what he has been fond of saying since his student days. It puts a new interpretation on it, and, crucially, it claims to solve some problems that cannot be solved the traditional way. The comparison with Newtonian physics is, I emphasize, out of all proportion. But it does explain the relation between the new and the old theories of Chinese grammar—if I turn out to be right that is. I only wish that I was as satisfied with the adequacy of my account as physicists are of the theories of relativity, and as Pulleyblank is of his "principles that are found in all languages." I am not. But at least I am trying to argue my case.
When Pulleyblank suggests that what I claim about Chinese is in contravention to whatever he conceives as "principles found in all languages," it is quite embarrassing to have to point out that in point of fact the title of my paper is borrowed from a very famous article by Professor James McCawley of the University of Chicago entitled "Where Do Noun Phrases Come From?" and that in this paper a view of the English noun phrase is discussed which is very closely related to the analysis of Chinese NPs that I propose:

Bach (1968) then discovered some quite convincing arguments that the noun-verb distinction need not be part of this inventory of categories. He argues that all nouns originate in the predicate position of a relative clause construction (e.g., the anthropologist arises from a structure roughly paraphrasable as the x who is an anthropologist) ... (McCawley 1970:169)

The well-known article by Bach, titled "Nouns and Noun Phrases," is contained in a work significantly titled, Universals in Linguistic Theory.

Thus, while as a matter of principle I would not hesitate to seek evidence against general linguistic theory, in this instance I happen to be doing the very opposite, that is finding to what extent an interesting hypothesis on nouns in English can be made applicable to Chinese.

Pulleyblank finds it paradoxical that having tried to demonstrate that nouns may usefully be analyzed as classificatory verbs I continue to speak of nominalization. It is embarrassing to have to spell out that under my interpretation nominalization becomes a process in which a non-classificatory predicate is turned into a classificatory one with zhe 者 understood. That is all. There is not only no need for Pulleyblank's recursive gymnastics ad infinitum, indeed, there is no room for it. His task becomes finite with the first zhe. Since Pulleyblank speaks of himself as an ordinary mortal out of his depth in the rarified realm of philosophical grammar, could it be that he is uninterested in philosophical logic? I hasten to emphasize, in all humility, that I do not regard myself an extraordinary immortal for trying to apply basic logic and common sense to Chinese grammar. And I stubbornly insist that we all have much to learn from philosophers of language, and vice versa!

Curiously enough, my attempt to demonstrate the softness of categorial distinctions in Chinese is paralleled by several modern studies in English grammar. A notorious precursor to this fashion was the paper, "The Category Squish: Endstation Hauptwort"
by Professor John Robert Ross of MIT (Papers from the Eighth Regional Meeting, Chicago Linguistic Society [1972]:316-328).

I am not referring to such transformationalist analyses because I agree with them. However, I do want to maintain that it is being increasingly appreciated by philosophers of language as well as general linguists that natural languages differ from artificial ones precisely in the softness of their categorial and syntactic characterization. Perhaps McCawley, Bach, and Ross, the theoreticians, were sadly ignorant of Pulleyblank's "principles that are found in all languages" because they knew an insufficient number of languages. Very well, then. How about the incomparable Jim Matissoff? He writes in his splendid A Grammar of Lahu (1973: xlvii), "I am increasingly impressed by the continuum as a better characterization of linguistic structure than the 'all or none' model." I beg permission to sympathize with Jim Matissoff without being accused of ignoring what is generally known about human languages.

It is, in my view, the organic softness and suppleness of the system which makes organic, historical evolution and change of the system possible. (Compare, for example, the change of the English verb will from a verb to an auxiliary or the evolution of the Chinese prepositions. The Chinese case is not at all unique.)

Given such current lines of research in general linguistics and in analytical philosophy, I find it most extraordinary that Pulleyblank should object on grounds of methodological principle to my investigating the grammatical system of Chinese from this analytical point of view.

I do envy him the superb confidence with which he claims he can "very easily" dispose of "most of" my arguments. I confess that I cannot get myself to speak with such generalizing abrasiveness on subtle matters of grammar. It will be interesting to see how I shall write in 28 years' time.

Pulleyblank complains that a point-by-point refutation of my arguments "would take too much space." Let us see how he fares where he tries. Having agreed with my contention "that ye 也 can occur with genuinely verbal predicates" he spends a great deal of time on the claim that in 虎狼仁也, "tigers and wolves must count as humane," we have unmarked nominalization with ye and must paraphrase: "if you want examples of things that show the quality of 仁，I give you tigers and wolves." This analysis obfuscates rather than elucidates the grammatical structure. Why not simply: "Tigers and wolves are (examples of) goodness?" This is
indeed the paraphrase of similar constructions that I discuss in my paper, and it seems to be the analysis that he has in mind.

Pulleyblank's suggestion here is an interesting one. Appealing to the very well-known phenomenon of unmarked nominalization he asks: why not take ren ye 仁也, "it is a case of somebody being humane," in the same way as zou ye 走也, "it is a case of somebody running?" The logical difference between our instance zou ye, "it is a case of running," and ren ye, "he is an example of humaneness," meanwhile, is profound: running is a kind of action; humaneness is not a kind of individual. An action is being identified as being "running." A person is not being identified as being "humaneness/being humane." An individual is not humaneness, he is humane. The two predicates look alike but work quite differently. The difference is crucial to my argument.

Moreover, it is healthy to consider one of the common similar sentences, as in the following snippet:

The people all found it (scil. the law) good and he (scil. Hui Zi) submitted it to King Hui. King Hui found it good and he showed it to Huo Jian.

Huo Jian said: "It is good (善也 )."

"But can it be carried out in practice?"

"It cannot!" (LSCQ 18.5)

Huo Jian did not mean to say "It is a case of (something) being good" if I understand the context.

Pulleyblank may poke fun at the meticulousness and unnaturalness of logical reflections, but he disregards them at his peril. The parallel example he quotes: 虎狼 獸也, "Tigers and wolves are (examples of) wild animals," shows precisely how deep his misunderstanding is: tigers and wolves are being identified as wild animals! If I had quoted a sentence like 贵贱仁也 贱不肖亦仁也 "honoring the talented counts as humane and despising the untalented also counts as humane" (Xun 6.21), Pulleyblank's query would be more difficult to answer. That is perhaps why I did not use that sort of example!

Unless and until Pulleyblank is prepared to apply his trick of unmarked nominalization to all the patterns and instances of post-verbal ye I shall consider his objections as insubstantial. At best they might show that I might have chosen one or two better
examples to illustrate my point. That, unfortunately, is all the substance there is to his argument on *ye*.

Pulleyblank suggests that what I call pre-verbal *fei*

has the whole sentence as its scope. I am glad he thinks so, especially since I say so myself in both *Current Issues* (1980) and *Aspects* (1981). What this idea has to do with his example (3) escapes me. As far as I am concerned, the relevant question is whether pre-verbal *fei* and post-VP *ye* nominalize or do not nominalize whatever their scope is. If I understand Pulleyblank he suggests that they do, but that the nominalization is unmarked. Thus when I translate the opening snippet of a paragraph in Han Fei Tzu (20.28.1) 人希见生象也, as "In my judgement men rarely see living animals" and insist that there is no evidence here of nominalization, Pulleyblank seems committed to the current paraphrase "It is that men rarely see living animals." As an opening sentence in a paragraph this seems to be an extraordinary interpretation to impose although it seems this is the received view on this sort of *ye*. Moreover, I submit that until he provides evidence that this postulated nominalization can be marked, Pulleyblank's argument remains unsubstantiated. The point is that verbal sentences with *ye* do not contain the nominalizers *zhi* or *qi*, and neither do verbal sentences negated with *fei*

When Pulleyblank writes "...nevertheless *fei* governs the clause as a whole and not just the following verb. That is, the subject is attracted into initial position," I find this extraordinarily vague and can only understand him to suggest that the pattern:

A. Subject *fei*

VP *ye* 也 derives from the pattern

B. *fei*

subject VP *ye* 也

by a process in which the subject is "attracted" to the front. I submit that patterns A and B are fundamentally different from each other in that A is endo thematic whereas B is exo thematic. Until Pulleyblank provides any argument for his analysis I shall continue to consider these two patterns as separate and to look for semantic differences between them. In any case, I would emphatically reject any suggestion that the pattern A should be analyzed as if it was B which is what Pulleyblank seems to suggest.

A related problem arises in Pulleyblank's discussion of *zhe* and of the "one who looks at oxen from the top of a mountain." He postulates an ellipsis on which he says: "I am quite sure that
it is correct." I do envy him the magisterial strength and confidence of his convictions. And I completely agree that if the text had had the characters 望之如, this would have been rather nice for Pulleyblank's case. Meanwhile, I humbly submit that there are no such characters in the text. I have simply been bold enough to try to make sense of the text as it stands.

I recognize that one occasionally has to resort to postulating ellipses and the like, but I prefer to analyze sentences as they stand instead of guessing what the ancient Chinese were really thinking (of writing). Postulating an ellipsis, especially without support from ancient commentaries, is to me a last resort. Here Pulleyblank may justly accuse me of not being sufficiently innovating, but I make no apologies for being old-fashionedly interested in the text as it stands.

Still, Pulleyblank's suggestion is an interesting one, especially since there is no parallel sentence 望之如 x in the context, in the Xun Zi, in the indexed pre-Han literature, or, indeed, in the unindexed literature as far as I know, and since none of the editions I usually consult (Wang Xianqian; Liang Qixiong; anon., Shanghai, 1974; Xiong Gonghe, 1975; anon., Beijing, 1979) find it necessary to mention such an ellipsis. None of the scholars with whom I have extensively discussed the passage have found Pulleyblank's solution to the problem convincing. However, Pulleyblank's very innovative suggestion would gain weight if he divulged what features of the context induce him to postulate a sentence pattern 望之如 x which is unattested throughout the rest of the pre-Han literature. I am quite unable to find them, and until Pulleyblank submits his evidence I shall consider his argument, also on this point, as vacuous.

Moreover, since the pattern 望之如 x is quite common in pre-Qin literature, Pulleyblank would have to postulate ellipses for many dozens of passages (and he would have to continue producing new postulates as more pre-Han texts are discovered). But we do not have to wait for such new discoveries. In Aspects (p. 214) Pulleyblank might, for example, have found the snippet:

田墾則粟多，粟多則國富
國富則兵強，兵強則戰勝，戰勝則地廣.

When fields are opened up then grain is ample. When grain is ample then the state is rich. When the state is rich the army is strong. When the army is strong, battles are won. When battles are won, the territory is expanded.
For, as I demonstrate in Aspects and have since confirmed in daily reading, and as Zhu as well as Egerod are plainly aware, the pattern is really quite varied and common in pre-Han texts, and it certainly does not allow of a unified explanation through postulating one kind of ellipsis.

Unlike Zhu and Egerod, Pulleyblank very seriously misunderstands the theoretical background and the logical purpose of my paper. As a result, he focusses quite gratuitously on details and questions which are of no central concern to the issues I raise. Moreover, many of the detailed points he raises are insubstantial in themselves. Nonetheless, his final historical speculation on the historical evolution of post-verbal ye 也 is an interesting one which deserves empirical investigation. (What does one do about the many entries of wei 與 with final ye in the Book of Changes, outside the appendices? What about the many cases in the Analects?) The last word has not been said on the evolution of ye. But in any case, speculation on the historical evolution of ye is not directly relevant to the purpose of my paper. Statistical observations of the kind Pulleyblank suggests, even if substantiated by detailed research, certainly have no direct bearing on my argument. Here, as throughout his comments, Pulleyblank, quite unlike Zhu and Egerod, seems curiously wide of the mark. The case for the sort of grammatical conservatism Pulleyblank sympathizes with is much stronger than his paper on this occasion makes it appear.

Finally, I wish to say that I am deeply grateful that three eminent scholars have found it worth their while to put forward their views on the questions at hand. I am quite moved by the fact that the Vice President of Peking University, Zhu Dexi, should have found the time to join this discussion, and it is my sincere hope that this bodes well for an increasing intellectual exchange between Chinese and Western students of Chinese linguistics.