

Argument and Persuasion in the First Chapter of *Huainanzi* and its Use of Particles

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1 Notes on Grammar

Huainanzi 淮南子 belongs to the first philosophical texts of Chinese tradition that consist of essays characterized by coherent arguments presented in the form of long causal chains. There were, probably, earlier texts to introduce this kind of argumentation. Among them, *Xunzi* 荀子 played an especially important role.¹ Yet, when comparing the essays which make up *Huainanzi* with these earlier examples of prolonged philosophical argumentation one does feel that the way how *Huainanzi* was written was innovative in its time because the prose of the authors of *Huainanzi* seems to be more elaborate and at the same time more complicated.

Technical factors, such as a more widespread use of silk or precursors of paper, may have aided this process of refinement which must have taken place during the first half of the second century B.C. – although it should have been perfectly possible to make long arguments on bamboo-strips, too. Yet, because of its lack of an elaborated morphology Classical Chinese is not a language which favours long philosophical considerations, especially when they are monologic.

The main problem when reading longer ancient Chinese arguments is that one often loses the thread and does not know where an argument starts and where it ends:

I have divided the text where it seemed most appropriate. This treatise, while for the most part internally consistent, does not always have one continuous theme readily identifiable in each of the sections. Often one section is a series of related ideas, one leading to the next, all falling loosely under one subject heading. That I have been reasonably accurate in dividing the text is supported by a general correspondence between my attempts and the divisions found in the Wen tzu and the Ch'ün-shu chih-yao.

In this way Roger Ames in the introduction to his translation of chapter 9 of the *Huainanzi* aptly describes the problem.² Modern Chinese readers and Western sinologists have come up with a great number of different ways to structure the *Huainanzi* text.³ A problem which vexes translators of *Huainanzi* into any Western language is its frequent use of particles such

1 A majority of the essays of *Xunzi* is generally accepted as authentic, although it has been suggested that there are some later interpolations in the received text. See the comments on the authenticity of *Xunzi* by Michael Loewe, in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China, 1993), 179–180.

2 Roger Ames, *The Art of Rulership: A Study of Ancient Chinese Political Thought* (Albany: SUNY, 1994), 168.

3 The latest contribution has been the translation of the *Huainanzi* into French published in 2003: *Philosophes Taoïstes II: Huainan zǐ*, ed. Charles Le Blanc, Remi Mathieu (Paris: Gallimard, 2003). It should, of course, be regarded as a great success that a long text as difficult as *Huainanzi* has, for the first time ever, been translated completely into a Western language. Yet, the overall structuring of the chapters in my view poses problems. This becomes evident when one compares the French translation with various Chinese editions which often start paragraphs where their European colleagues had obviously decided to mark a coherent argument, or *vice versa*.

as *gu* 故, *shi gu* 是故, *fu* 夫, *jin fu* 今夫 or *shi yi* 是以. There does not seem to be a good way to imitate this feature in Western languages. A translation of all these particles will result in a terse style which, as it seems, Western readers do not enjoy. Many translators have, therefore, decided not to render most of these particles. Although this is understandable, I think that the particles are one crucial element by which the *Huainanzi* authors tried to help their readers who were confronted with a confusingly new way of writing arguments down.

In the following lines, I will try to show how particles and especially the particle *fu* – which incidentally is the very word with which *Huainanzi* starts – can help to structure the text. I will start with chapter 9, but will then focus on chapter 1 of the text, hoping that my findings may prove to be correct also with regard to other chapters.

Many translators assume that the particle *fu* always serves as starting point for a new paragraph or that it introduces a conclusion. For example, Eva Kraft in her masterful study of the first two chapters of *Huainanzi* writes:

Mit der Partikel fu – nun – ist jedesmal gleichsam ein neuer Anlauf gegeben. Das vorhergegangene Bild ist ausgerundet, tritt nun als ein Ganzes gleichsam ein wenig zurück und vor diesem Hintergrund wird nun ein neues Bild gerufen, das erst in seinem Kontrast und seinem Wechselspiel zu dem im Geist anschaulich lebendigen Bild erst Farbe und Leben gewinnt. Das ganze Denken ist ein ständiges Operieren mit Denkbildern, die bald so ganz anders auf einander zubewegt oder gegeneinander abgehoben werden.⁴

In their recent translation of *Huainanzi* 1, D.C. Lau and Roger Ames have made many decisions which look quite similar to those taken by Kraft.⁵ They very often start a new section when the particle *fu* occurs.

To summarize: recent translators have either often left out particles altogether, thus giving the reader a long series of paragraphs with no structuring elements at all, or they think that *fu* should serve as an introductory particle which starts a new section.⁶ Yet, by taking *fu* as an introductory particle one often cuts through main arguments of the text and sometimes even destroys the logic of the text, no matter whether one translates the particle or not.⁷ Hence it seems imperative to pay attention to the use of particles in *Huainanzi* and to find an intelligent way of structuring the text accordingly in order to give the Western reader an idea of its inner logic.

4 Eva Kraft, “Zum Huai-nan-tzu,” *Monumenta Serica* 16 and 17 (1957, 1958), 136, n. 17. Note that Kraft does not explicitly claim that *fu* always introduces a wholly new paragraph.

5 Roger Ames and D.C. Lau, *Yuan Dao: Tracing Dao to its source* (New York: Ballantine, 1998). It seems, though, that they overlooked Kraft’s work – at least is it not listed in their bibliography.

6 Compare also the opinion of W.A.C.H. Dobson, *A Dictionary of Chinese Particles* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1974), 273, who thinks that *fu* is simply a particle of accentuation which precedes the accented word.

7 It is important to note that in the *Qunshu zhiyao* 群書治要, to which Ames refers, only very few paragraphs start with a *fu*. Maybe its compilers simply did not want to quote what I will define as complete sections below but just some highlights of them, which then eventually did start with this particle. In the *Wenzhi* 文子, which Ames quotes as well, paragraphs usually start with a quotation taken from *Laozi*. These quotations sometimes begin with *fu*, but this may also be intentional: The authors may have wanted to stress the continuity of the text.

Traditional Chinese commentaries and grammars have, of course, discussed the use of *fu* extensively. Xing Bing 邢昺 (932-1010) in his commentary to the initial words of the preface to the *Erya* 爾雅 says that

夫者發語辭，亦指示語。⁸

fu is a word for beginning to speak, but is also a demonstrative word.

In his *Xiaojing* commentary, Xing says that *fu* occurs at the beginning of a speech (*fu fa yan zhi duan* 夫發言之端).⁹ But he also says that it takes up what had been said before. Yuan Renlin 袁仁林 (17th/18th century), who at the beginning of the Qing period, wrote a book on particles, acknowledges that *fu* at the beginning of a paragraph can be used to start a new thought, but stresses that in most cases it is used to elaborate on something which had been said before:

用以承頂上文者，意注前文，即將上件來明說，覆說，總說也（…）用以離前文開說者，意在充拓（…）後必關會前文。

It is used to take up the previous text. The attention is directed to what has been written before and wants to give explanatory, (...) and conclusive statements. (...) used to separate from what was said before. The intention is to elaborate (...) The latter part has necessarily to catch up on what was written before.¹⁰

Ma Jianzhong 馬建忠 calls *fu* a “raising conjunction” 提起連字, stresses its demonstrative value and says that it serves to take up something which had been said before. He explicitly says:

是則夫字仍為指示代字，而非徒為發語之虛字也。¹¹

“This means that the word *fu* is a demonstrative pronoun and not just an empty word at the beginning of a speech.”

Ulrich Unger in his unpublished *Grammatik des Klassischen Chinesisch III* criticizes Gabelentz who thought that “*fu* takes up a piece from a preceding speech”. According to Unger, this aspect is just one function of *fu*. Important is, in his view, that the particle adds a new point in the argument, usually in order to broaden the statement made before.¹²

I think that it is important to keep these definitions in mind when dealing with the difficult language of the *Huainanzǐ*. Maybe a better understanding of this small particle helps to structure the text more clearly.

8 *Shisan jing zhu* (SSC) 十三經注疏 (Peking: Zhonghua, 1980), 2567A. Compare Edwin Pulleyblank, *Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1995), 89f, who points to the fact that the particle *fu* had probably developed out of a demonstrative pronoun.

9 SSC 2558A.

10 I have used the edition contained in Roland Winkler, *Gelehrte Worte über Leere Wörter: Das Xuzishuo von Yuan Renlin und die Partikeln in der traditionellen chinesischen Philologie, Stilistik und Sprachwissenschaft* (Heidelberg: Groos, 1999), 71-78. *Fu* is the first particle which Yuan treats.

11 *Mashi wentong* 馬氏文通 (first published 1898; *Mashi wentong duben* 馬氏文通讀本, edited by Lü Shuxiang 呂叔湘 and Wang Haifen 王海葵, Shanghai: Shanghai guji 1986), 464 f. Cf. also 470 f.

12 Ulrich Unger, *Grammatik des Klassischen Chinesisch* (Münster, privately circulated, 1992), 158.

The first thing that comes to mind when discussing the particle *fu* in *Huainanzi* is that in many cases it introduces images or similes taken from nature or from the human world. Section 2 of Roger Ames' translation of chapter 9 of the *Huainanzi*, for example, starts with the preservation of one's spirit and communion with the way of heaven. It then goes on to speak about Shen Nong who in ancient times governed the empire and was a good example for one who successfully achieved this preservation of his spirit. Then *Huainanzi* moves on to government in a declining age which is different from this. It describes how those above know no measures whereas the people become impoverished, how cleverness and deception sprout and how as a result punishments are increased by the authorities. This is compared to the attempt to allure a bird by means of a slingshot or to approach a dog with a stick in one's hand. Then the text, in the order given by the *Huainanzi jishi* (HNZJS) edition,¹³ continues:

亂乃逾甚。

夫水濁則魚媮，政苛則民亂。故夫養虎豹犀象者為之圈檻，供其嗜欲，適其饑飽，違其怒恚，然而不能終其天年者，形有所劫也。是以上多故則下多詐，...故聖人事省而易治。

HNZJS starts a new paragraph before *fu* here, and for Roger Ames this is even the beginning of a new section.¹⁴ The French translation, in contrast, runs:

Ils ne font qu'attiser les désordres. Les poissons suffoquent en eau trouble, le peuple s'agite sous un régime oppressif. /

Les éleveurs de fauves – tigres, léopards, rhinocéros ou éléphants -, après les avoir parqués dans des enclos, s'ingénient à combler leurs moindres désirs: ils les gavent de nourriture et préviennent toute source de contrariété, sans que, confinés dans un cadre qui leur est contraire, ces pauvres bêtes puissent atteindre au terme naturel de leur existence!

À souverain retors, sujets plein d'artifices: à prince trop affairé, peuple trop affecté; à supérieurs tracassiers, inférieurs remuants; à maître exigeant, serviteurs revendicateurs.

S'adonner à l'accessoire au lieu de cultiver l'essentiel, c'est soulever la poussière en croyant la ramasser, se précipiter avec des fagots pour éteindre un incendie! Le sage intervient peu et tout se règle aisément (...)¹⁵

As I will show by comparison with other examples from chapter 1, Jean Levi was right to attach the first simile to the paragraph above. *Fu* is used here to introduce a kind of proverb which illustrates what was said above. It does not introduce an entirely new thought but just another connotation; in this case what was said above has certain consequences. *Gu fu* 故夫, which follows directly afterwards, marks the introduction of a second simile, and it means something like: If this short proverb is not enough, I shall give you a more elaborate image about what happens when one uses punishments to restrain the people as was done in the dark age of which we spoke above. In Ames' translation this connotation is entirely lost, because the reader thinks that with a new section a new argument has to start.

13 *Huainanzi jishi* (HNZJS) 淮南子集釋 (ed. Xinbian zhuzi jicheng, Peking: Zhonghua, 1998), 611.

14 Ames, *Art of Rulership*, 170.

15 Le Blanc and Mathieu, *Huainan zi*, 370.

The next paragraph, which talks about superiors who unduly use cleverness, begins with *shi yi* 是以 in Chinese and applies the two images to what had been mentioned above: the declining age. Both Ames and Levi have decided to leave *shi yi* untranslated, which makes it difficult for the reader to follow the argument.¹⁶ I would interpret these two particles as “these two similes prove that”. This is clearly different from the meaning of *fu* which is used to introduce comparisons. Now that the argument is moved to a new stage, the sage is mentioned. This idea is introduced by the particle *gu*, again left untranslated by Levi and Ames – although the author clearly knew why he used this particle. What he wanted to say is: As a consequence of his insight into these subtle connexions the sage takes such and such measures.

The *Huainanzǐ* author adds¹⁷ that punishments are an inadequate means to change social customs, that only divine transformation is estimable and that only the highest essence (*zhi jing* 至精) is divine. Again, a simile is introduced with the particle *fu* to explain this: Someone who cries as loud as he can will nevertheless only be heard within the range of a few hundred paces, whereas one who concentrates his will on being understood will reach a circuit of a thousand miles. All living creatures, the simile continues – therefore no new particle in the text and no need to start a new paragraph –, turn to the sunlight in winter and to the shadow in summer without anyone having caused them to do so. After this, *gu* is used to show that the simile is finished and that a consequence is drawn from what was said before: Living creatures will come without having been called and no-one will be able to explain how this came about.¹⁸ I think that “now” or “for” are indeed good choices to translate the reflexive particle *fu* here and in other cases, whereas *gu* clearly means “therefore” or “hence”.

It is obvious that it is not easy to follow the argument of the *Huainanzǐ* author if these particles are not rendered, simply because the argument which is structured by particles is otherwise lost. To recapitulate: The passage starts with the good times of high antiquity, then proceeds to speak of the declining age, introduces two similes by *fu* and *gu fu*, in which it is explained what will be the result of the practices in a declining age.¹⁹ It then states that, as a consequence (*shi yi*) of this insight, it is plain that subjects will not behave nicely if their superiors use wrong methods and that therefore (*gu*), the sage will – unlike rulers in a declining age – not have many affairs and that all living beings will follow him just as an echo. The particles in this example clearly serve to structure the argument rather than to divide the text into different sections.

16 However, they both show that the text passage which follows after rhymes.

17 Without a further particle and hence still as a consequence of what was said above and of the way of the sage – this is at least the opinion of the *Huainanzǐ jishi* editors. I think that the start of a new paragraph should be marked here, since a new argument is made which is again followed by several *fu* and *gu*.

18 Levi in Le Blanc and Mathieu, *Huainan zǐ*, 370, here convey the meaning of *fu* very aptly by rendering it in translation with “ainsi”. *Gu* is not translated by Ames who, however, shows that what follows this particle is rhyming. This gives the reader the correct idea that it does not belong directly to the simile before.

19 At the end of the chapter we even find additional and longer particle-clusters such as *shi fu gu* 是夫故 or *jin fu* 今夫. I will not discuss this feature in this paper, but it does seem plausible to me that with these clusters the author introduces his final conclusions.

2 *Huainanzǐ* 1

Section 1

Let us now turn to the first chapter of the *Huainanzǐ* to check whether what has been discussed with regard to one particular paragraph in chapter 9 can be applied there, too. After a long introductory discussion about the Dao and two sovereigns of highest antiquity identified by the commentary of Gao You 高誘 (fl. A.D. 200) as Fuxi 伏羲 and Shen Nong 神農 – two mythical emperors who were said to be able to act in accordance with the Dao 道, the text speaks of two charioteers of old (xi 昔). They drove their cloud-chariot and rode to Heaven's gate in a way which charioteers of an end age (*mo shi* 末時) were not able to imitate. As a consequence (*shi gu* 是故), the great man (*da zhangfu* 大丈夫) remains tranquil and does not think, takes heaven as his baldachin and earth as his chariot. It seems clear here that the text deliberately uses the strong particle *shi gu* in order to show that the great man has to draw a conclusion from the fact that living in an end time he is not able to compete with the sages living in highest antiquity: All he can do is to at least try to get close to them.²⁰ Only then will he be able to get to the four corners of the world and to return to the pivot – the centre of the realm he governs. Therefore, and again the text uses the particle *gu*, to recall something which has been said above and bring it to the next stage of the argumentation, the one who uses heaven as his baldachin will leave nothing uncovered and he will be able to succeed. Hence it is not allowed to work out the affairs under heaven consciously. Instead one should follow their natural course.²¹

The text adds two more conclusions introduced with *shi gu*, the second of which is that one *therefore* should understand that the affairs of the world can not be made (*tian xia zhi shi bu ke wei* 天下之事不可為). This is clearly the main conclusion of the foregoing argumentation, and therefore at this point²² a simile is introduced, again with the particle *fu*, which explains this thought: mirroring water attaches itself to the forms without thinking and yet no shape can escape it. Hence (*shi gu*)²³ the echo and the shadow by themselves call back and imitate. In the *Huainanzǐ jishi* edition, and with good reason, this is the end of the long section on the charioteers of old and their successors in the times of an end time: It is a good idea for a great man to accept that he does not live in the good old times of high antiquity and that he should therefore not act but react. The French translation,²⁴ however, as well as the one of D.C. Lau and Roger Ames²⁵, starts a new section with the simile and attaches what follows to it.

To summarize: If we look at the overall structure of the introduction to *Huainanzǐ* 1 as given in HNZJS, we see that there is first a long paragraph on the Dao, introduced with *fu*, which is followed by a description of the perfect government in highest antiquity which was in accordance with the Dao. Almost no structuring particles are used in this part, which

20 HNZJS, 18. The translation of Le Blanc and Mathieu, *Huainan zǐ*, 18, starts a new paragraph but ignores *shi gu*.

21 HNZJS, 22.

22 HNZJS, 23, Le Blanc and Mathieu, *Huainan zǐ*, 19.

23 In this case I follow Kraft, "Zum Huai-nan-tzu," 138, who argues that *shi gu* does not offer a conclusion in an "occidental way" but uses a new image to show what the previous image means.

24 Le Blanc and Mathieu, *Huainan zǐ*, 19.

25 Lau and Ames, *Yuan Dao*, 73.

clearly shows that it was to be seen as a unity. The editors of HNZJS then begin a new paragraph with the two charioteers whom drivers in later ages could not imitate anymore. It is clear that a break in argumentation is intended here: After the description of the ideal circumstances prevailing in antiquity, the text speaks about what it is actually interested in: its own time and how a great man who learns from the example given in high antiquity should behave as a consequence of the fact that the Dao is not prevailing anymore. Interestingly, this break is *not introduced* by a particle. Only then the series of particles starts. The particle-structure of the whole first section looks like this:

1. *Fu* (the Dao) → *xi* (in ancient times) → *shi gu* (strong conclusion) → *gu* (conclusion) → *shi gu* (strong conclusion) → *shi gu* (even stronger conclusion) → *fu* (simile) → *shi gu* (strong conclusion, end of paragraph)

Section 2

Section 2 in the “Yuandao” chapter begins with the sentence:

人生而靜，天之性也。感而後動，性之害也。²⁶

At his birth man is quiet, this is his heavenly endowed nature. After he starts to feel he starts to move, and this is harmful to his nature.

Huainanzǐ explains why this is the case and that therefore – *gu* introducing a new thought which is a consequence of what has been said before – the one who is in accord with the Dao will not attach more importance to human affairs than to his heavenly nature. In this way no-one will contend with him when he is in a leading position. This is a consequence, not a conclusion, and it is introduced with a new particle, namely *shi yi* 是以. Again a simile follows, as usual introduced by *fu*, about the fishermen and the archer who will never be able to catch as much as the one who takes the sea and the whole world as his basket or net. This serves to explain the thought outlined before: one should not act consciously or work with techniques but should try to remain in accord with one’s heavenly nature just as the newly born baby. There follows a second *fu* which at first sight poses problems:

夫釋大道而任小數，無以異於使蟹捕鼠，蟾螭蚤捕，不足以禁姦塞邪，亂乃逾滋。

Now, the one who lets loose the great Dao and employs small numerical arts is not different from someone who uses crabs to catch mice and frogs to get lice. This does not help to prohibit crimes and stop evil. The chaos will only spread more.

One would have expected a *gu* here, because this is a conclusion. Yet, I think it is clear that *fu* is used because of the image taken from the world of nature. It is clear that this *fu* does not introduce a new thought but attaches something to what was said before.

We can go on to get more evidence. There is no really new argument in the next paragraph of HNZJS; it starts with an example for what was said before.²⁷ In olden times (*xi* 昔) Gun 鯀 built city-walls which were too high, and he therewith provoked the wrath of the empire. The text then elaborates on the idea that the sage should act in conformity with nature:

26 HNZJS, 24. Cf. *Lǐjì* 禮記 (SSC), 1529A.

27 I am not convinced by the paragraph break which HNZJS, 29, decided to make here.

是故禹之決瀆也因水以為師，神農之播穀也因苗以為教。

Hence when Yü dug the canals he took the waters as his teacher, and when Shen Nong spread out grain he let himself taught by the sprouts.

Fu again introduces a simile here: water-plants take their roots in water, trees in the earth and so forth.²⁸ A *shi gu* follows which explains that as a consequence of harmony in nature beings of all kinds can live. All this is told in order to explain that what Yu did was right and what Gun did was wrong.

The next example which the text gives is the human world: By watching the differences between people living in the north and the south here, too, we can see that one has to act in accordance with nature in order to survive. Therefore (*gu*), Yu put off his clothes when he went to the country of the naked and he laid on his girdle before he left. By way of the double particle *jin fu* 今夫 this is likened to a tree which, when transplanted to an environment that does not correspond to its nature, will wither and die. Yu knew this and, contrarily, was able to change and adapt to the circumstances. This is clearly a continuation of the thought outlined before but not yet concluded: the new element in this simile is that those who do not pay attention to this natural rule will die.²⁹

Although HNZJS divides the text analyzed above into altogether three different paragraphs, I think that the whole section starting with the remarks on men's nature together forms one section, the second one of this chapter. The structure of the paragraph is thus:

2. x → *gu* (conclusion: the one who understands Dao will not replace what is heavenly by his human capacities), *shi yi* (consequence: nobody will rebel) → *fu* (simile: the fisher) → *fu* (second simile: to catch mice and lice instead of crabs) → *xi* (example from the past) → *gu* → *gu* → *shi gu* (Yu's and Shen Nong's conclusions: human behaviour should be tranquil, thus they adapt to nature) → *fu* (simile: the same can be observed with regard to all living beings) → *shi gu* (conclusion: only if this is provided for, living beings are able to sprout; generalization of the simile). x (new aspect: every thing in nature has its particular environment and lives accordingly. The same holds true for different people in the world) → *gu* (conclusion: again Yu who adapted to circumstances) → *jin fu* (simile: a tree can not be shifted to an environment which it does not belong to) → *gu* (conclusion: otherwise it will die) → *shi gu* (strong conclusion, and end of the whole paragraph: The one who understands the Dao will return to quietness and enter the "Heavenly Gate" (*tianmen* 天門)).

28 HNZJS, 34, and Le Blanc and Mathieu, *Huainan zi*, 22, agree in separating the simile from the preceding paragraph. Lau and Ames, *Yuan Dao*, 81, even decided to start a new section: no. 9. The reason which caused the Chinese editors to do so was certainly that the image taken from nature is very long here, not just two or four lines as usually. Nevertheless, one gets the impression that the editors of HNZJS did not think much more systematically about the particles than their Western colleagues did. It seems, however, that they sometimes had a better feeling for the text.

29 HNZJS, 40, Le Blanc and Mathieu, *Huainan zi*, 40. *Jishi* correctly attaches the *jin fu* section to the text above, whereas Le Blanc and Mathieu start a new paragraph. For Lau and Ames, *Yuan Dao*, 85, the simile starts section 10 of the text. This is not really understandable, since it is obvious that the tree analogy should be understood within the context of emperor Yu. *Mashi wentong*, 470, maintains that there is no difference between *fu* and *chin fu*. I do, however, think that *jin fu* is stronger and occurs here because this is the second or third simile adduced here to stress one and the same statement.

Section 3

After this passage, *Huainanzǐ* moves on to the difference between the qualities of heaven and man.³⁰ This is a new thought. At the beginning of the second paragraph the text had said that one should not rely on one's human capacities and dispense with one's nature ordained by Heaven. The whole paragraph had listed examples of human beings who either relied on their human strength and perished or adapted to circumstances and thereby created order. Now the text says what it actually means by "Heaven" and by "man". Again, the new paragraph is not introduced by a particle but by the phrase: "What I mean by Heaven" (*suo wei tian zhe* 所謂天者). The text shows that man will ultimately always be inferior to Heaven and concludes that the sage is successful because he acts in the same way as Heaven does. Again a simile follows:

夫善游者溺，善騎者墜，各以其所好，反自為禍。

For:

A good swimmer is sure to drown,
And a good rider is sure to fall from his mount.
Each through what he is fond of doing
Ironically brings calamity on himself.³¹

Once again, previous interpreters mostly argued that this simile constituted a new argument.³² Yet, I think that it is plain that the *Huainanzǐ* author used this simile to show that what he had said before was correct, namely that one should not rely on human abilities – in the end they will turn out to be harmful, no matter how good one is at them. Again, examples from the past, introduced by *xi*, explain the point. What follows is a conclusion concerning the behaviour of the sage, introduced by *shi gu*. An explanation of what "Heavenly detachment" (*tian jie* 天解) means ends this thought. Thus, the structure is as follows:

3. *Suo wei* 所謂 ("what I mean with"; altogether 4 more *suo wei* follow shortly after each other) → *gu* (conclusion, behaviour of the sage, will not go against Heaven) → *fu* (simile: swimmer goes against Heaven) → *shi gu* (conclusion = generalization of the simile) → *xi* (examples from the past) → *shi gu* (conclusion on the Dao) → *fu* (takes up examples from the past) → *shi gu* (strong conclusion about the sage).

Section 4

What follows is the argument that the one who has found the Dao will favour weakness and emptiness of the mind over strength. This is the first new section, the only one in the entire chapter which is introduced by a particle, namely by *gu*. The reason for this usage is probably that the way of the sage has been spoken of before: The particle is needed to remind the reader of something which had been discussed already.³³ Just as in the case of section 3, it is a *suo wei* explanation on weakness and strength by which this section is in fact introduced.

30 HNZJS, 41.

31 HNZJS, 44. Translation by Lau and Ames, *Yuan Dao*, 89. I have only added "for", since Lau and Ames do not translate *fu*.

32 Le Blanc and Mathieu, *Huainan zǐ*, 26, HNZJS, 44. Lau and Ames take the *fu* as marker for the beginning of their section 11.

33 HNZJS 548–556; Lau and Ames, *Yuan Dao*, 101–105; Le Blanc and Mathieu, *Huainan zǐ*, 28 f.

There are three *shi gu*-conclusions and one *gu*-conclusion, all of which show what this wisdom entails for human behaviour. Two of these *shi gu*-passages are followed by a rhymed statement, a feature which, by the way, applies to several of the previous *shi gu*-passage as well.³⁴ Upon this, the sage is mentioned who, as a consequence, keeps behind the others. Again, a rhymed paragraph introduced by *shi gu* ends the first part of the paragraph on the advantage of sticking to weakness.³⁵ These *shi gu* thus introduce conclusions which strengthen the argument by adding sayings of wisdom to be memorized. I think that the difference between *fu* and *shi gu* is that the latter contains a kind of lesson to be learned from what had been said before, whereas the former is added to enlarge and add colour to a previously discussed thought.

Huainanzi continues the section on “weakness” by making the argument that nothing on earth is softer than water, the capacity of which he calls “highest potency” (*zhi de* 至德). It then uses *fu* to introduce the reason why water is able to unfold this highest potency in the world – namely because it is fluid –, adds a sentence that is also introduced by *fu* discussing the general fact that what has no fixed form – such as water – is the “great ancestor” of things and then gives the reader a simile, introduced with *fu*, on light and again on water which shows that what has been said before must be correct. There can be no doubt that the particle serves the author for giving additional evidence for what he had said before, rather than using the particle to demarcate the beginning of a new argument.”

The paragraph on water ends with the admonition to imitate water. This final argument starts with *shi gu*, the conclusion of all that was said before, and it ends with the result of what happens if one conforms to the demand which has been made: One falls into formlessness (*wu xing* 無形). Again we should take a look at the structure of the whole fourth section. It runs like this:

4. *Gu* (conclusion, but yet a new paragraph), *suo wei* (2 more *suo wei* in this section) → *shi gu* (conclusion/lesson) → *shi gu* (conclusion/lesson) → *shi gu* (conclusion/lesson) → *gu* (conclusion) → *shi gu* (conclusion/lesson; all this on what one has to do because weakness is better than strength) → *gu* (example from the past) → *fu* (simile on the moon and the sun) → *shi gu* (conclusion/lesson on the behaviour of the sage). x (water) → *shi gu* (conclusion on water) → *fu* (simile on water) → *gu* (conclusion: Laozi) → *fu* (formlessness) → *shi gu* (conclusion about Dao and De).

34 Compare Ulrich Unger, *Einführung in das Klassische Chinesisch*, Vol. II (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1985), 78 (notes to lesson 25A): “[shi gu] leitet Folgerungen ein, aber auch Zitate, welche im Zusammenhang mit dem Gesagten stehen.”

35 HNZJS, 54.

Section 5

Formlessness, then, has to be explained and a new argument to be made.³⁶ Again, the beginning of this new, fifth section is the phrase “what I mean with (...)” (*suo wei wu xing zhe* 所謂無形者). A long dissertation on the meaning of formlessness follows. Formlessness can only be understood with regard to the senses and the sense-objects: the five sounds, the five colours and the five flavours. As a consequence of the great number of melodies, images and tastes it is impossible to get them all – therefore the best man (*zhi ren* 至人) will in his government dispense with all of them. At this point of the argument we again find a *fu*:

夫任耳目以聽視者，勞形而不明。是故聖人一度循軌不變其宜，不易其常（…）夫喜怒者，道之邪也，憂悲者，德之失也。

Now the one who relies on his eyes and ears to see and hear, tires out his form and will yet not be enlightened (...). Therefore the sage follows the course of the one norm. He does not change what is suitable to it or alter what is constant (...).³⁷

Here, a second *fu* follows:

夫喜怒者，道之邪也。憂悲者，德之失也。好憎者，心之過也。嗜欲者，性之累也。

Now gladness and anger are a deviation from the Dao; worry and sorrow are a falling from de; likes and dislikes are excesses of the heart, cravings and desires are a burden on the nature.

Although the sections introduced by *fu* both bring new contents into the play, they both clearly belong to the argument made before. The conclusion from all this, introduced by *shi gu*, is that one has to control the exterior from within in order to be able to gain control over the world – this constitutes highest virtue.³⁸ Highest virtue, the text then says, means joy.

Here most editors think that a new section starts with the explanation of what real joy is, and it is tempting to accept this, since this paragraph again starts with a *suo wei* (what I mean with joy). Yet, it seems that the subject of the section is still the same, namely the emotions. The whole section on “formlessness”, which is dealing with the senses, culminates in the words “highest virtue” and “joy”. The author concludes that conventional means to satisfy one’s senses certainly are only inferior forms of joy. To grasp the Dao is joy, and to arrive at the state when one does not have desires anymore is highest joy. At this point, *fu* again introduces a summary which adds yet another component: conventional pleasures can not provide man with enduring joy. The problem is that

不以內樂於外，而以外樂於內。

(...) what is inside does not give pleasure to the one without but that one uses what is without to give pleasure to what is within.”³⁹

Therefore (*shi gu*), what can not be found within will not be attached to the body and not stay in the heart, the mind and the five viscera. There follows, introduced by *gu*, another conclusion about how this theoretical position works in practice, and then there is again a

36 HNZJS, 58-64, Lau and Ames, *Yuan Dao*, section 15 and 16, 107-115; Le Blanc and Mathieu, *Huainan zǐ*, 32-35.

37 HNZJS, 61, Lau and Ames, *Yuan Dao*, 111, translation slightly changed.

38 HNZJS, 65, Lau and Ames, *Yuan Dao*, 115, Le Blanc and Mathieu, *Huainan zǐ*, 35.

39 HNZJS, 70.

sentence introduced by *fu*, which goes back to the idea of the sphere “within”. Another *fu* following shortly after the preceding one takes up the idea of the “heart” as the lord of the “five viscera” mentioned above. Hence, it is quite clear in this passage that *fu* throughout refers back to something which has been said before adding a new element to this thought.

Again, the structure of the whole section will be made transparent:

5. *Suo wei* (on form) → *shi gu* (sense organs; lesson: rhyming citation) → *shi gu* (sense objects; lesson: rhyming citation) → *gu* (sense objects; lesson: rhyming citation) → *shi gu* (the rule of the best man conformed to this; rhyming citation) → *fu* (summary on sense organs, adding new component) → *shi gu* (the sage; lesson: rhyming citation) → *fu* (emotions; adding a new component to sense organs) → *gu* (conclusion about the right way how to deal with emotions) → *shi gu* (general conclusion on how reacting to things will lead to joy → men of antiquity as opposed to end time

Suo wei (on joy) → *gu* (examples from olden times) → *shi gu* (conclusion: how to arrive at “non-joy”) → *fu* (new element: music as a special form of joy, challenge for the sense organs) → *shi gu* (conclusion: reaction from within or control from without?) → *fu* (new thought on inner and outer) → (new element: the heart as the controlling organ of the five sense organs) → *shi gu* (wisdom regarding the one who does not act accordingly: he is not able to rule)

Section 5 to 6

By now, it should have become clear what the central issue of this paper is. In what follows, a crucial passage of the *Huainanzǐ* text will be rendered both in the recent translation by Ames and Lau and in my own – slightly differing – version. It is a good example for a sentence/ semantic unit in which the three particles *fu*, *gu* and *shi gu*, are used in alternation:

[1]夫心者五藏之主也，所以制四支流行血氣，馳騁于是非之境而出入于百事之門戶者也。是故不得於心而有經天下之氣，是猶無耳而欲調鐘鼓，無目而欲喜文章也，亦必不勝其任矣。

[2]故天下神器不可為也，為者敗之，執者失之啊

[3]夫許由小天下而不以己易堯者，志遺於天下也。所以然者何也？因天下而為天下也。天下之要不在於彼而在於我，不在於人而在於我身，身得則萬物備矣。

[4]徹於心術之論則嗜欲好憎外矣。

[5]是故無所喜而無所怒，無所樂而無所苦，萬物玄同也。無非無是化育玄耀生而如死。

[6]夫天下者亦吾有也，吾亦天下之有也，天下之與我，豈有間哉！夫有天下者豈必攝權持勢，操殺生之柄而以行其號令邪？吾所謂有天下者，非為此也，自得而已。自得，則天下亦得我矣。吾與天下相得，則常相有己，又焉有不得容其間者乎？

[7]所謂自得者全其身者也。全其身則與道為一矣。⁴⁰

Translation Ames/ Lau:

[1] The heart is the ruler of the five viscera; it is responsible for regulating and engaging the four limbs, circulating the blood and *qi*, galloping about in the realm of right and wrong, and going in and out of the gateway from which the various affairs of the world issue. Hence, for a man to have the ambition to manage the world while not finding it in his own heart is like a person without ears trying to tune the bells and drums, or a man without eyes wanting to take delight in colours and designs. He is sure to be unequal to the task.

[Section 18]

[2] Thus, “the empire is a sacred vessel, and cannot be deliberately managed.

To manage it is to spoil it;

To grasp it is to lose it.” (Cf. *Laozī* 29).

[3] That Xu You belittled the empire and would not change places with Yao was because the empire did not figure in what he was intent upon. Why was this so? Because he was of the mind that the empire should be managed by taking it for what it is.

The essence of the empire

Lies not with it

But with me;

Lies not in others

But in my person.

Once one’s person is gained,

the full complement of the myriad things will follow.

[4] Once one understands the theory about the way of the heart, then desires, likes, and dislikes all become extraneous.

[5] Hence, there is nothing one is pleased with, there is nothing one gets angry about,

There is nothing one finds enjoyment in, there is nothing one finds hardship in.

The myriad things merge in mysterious unity:

Without right or wrong,

In a bedazzling transformation,

Life is like death.

[Section 19]

[6] The empire is something which I possess, while I am also something which the empire possesses. How could there be any gap between the empire and me? Why must “possessing the empire” mean effecting one’s edicts and commands by holding authority and power and wielding the handle of life and death? By “possessing the empire” is not meant this, but simply finding it in oneself. If I find it in myself then the empire also finds me in it. If the empire and I find it in each other, then we will always possess each other. Again how can there be room for anything to be wedged between the empire and me?

[7] “Finding it in oneself” is to preserve oneself intact, and when one preserves himself intact, he is one with dao (...) ⁴¹

41 Ames and Lau, *Yuan Dao*, 123-125; compare Le Blanc and Mathieu, *Huainan zī*, 38-40.

Compare to this the following translation of my own (in which the structuring elements which I intend to make more transparent have been underlined):

[1] Now, as far as the heart [which we have spoken of before] is concerned, it is the ruler of the five viscera; it is the means by which we regulate and engage the four limbs, let the blood and *qi* circulate, can gallop in the realm of right and wrong and go in and out through doors of the manifold affairs. Hence, to have the spirit to order the empire without having found [a method for this] in one's heart is like wanting to tune the bells and drums without having ears or wanting to take delight in patterns and ornaments without having eyes. In the same way [as in these two cases] you will not be able to master this task.

[2] Therefore, a sacred vessel such as the empire can not be made:

To make it is to spoil it,

To grasp it is to lose it. (*Laozi* 29)

[3] Now, the fact that Xu You belittled the empire and would not change places with Yao [was so extraordinary] that his intent was left behind in the empire.⁴² Why did this happen? Because he managed the empire only by basing himself on it.⁴³ The central element of the empire does not lie within him but within myself, it does not lie in somebody else but in my own person. If I have found my own person, the myriad things are all at my disposition.

[4] Once one is on the right track with regard to our discussion of the techniques of the heart, desires, likes, and dislikes all become extraneous.

[5] Hence,

There is nothing one is pleased with, there is nothing one gets angry about,

There is nothing one finds enjoyment in, there is nothing one finds hardship in.

The myriad things merge in mysterious unity:

Without right or wrong,

In a bedazzling transformation,

Life is like death.

[6] Now, the empire is something which I possess as much as it possesses me. How could there be any gap between the empire and me? Why must, what we spoke about before (*fu*), “possessing the empire”, mean effecting one's edicts and commands by holding authority and power and wielding the handle of life and death? By “possessing the empire” I do not mean this, but simply finding it in myself. If I find it in myself then the realm also finds me in it. If the realm and I find each other, then we will constantly possess each other. Again how can there be room for anything to be wedged between the realm and me?

42 I do not follow the old commentary here which suggests the translation “was because the empire did not figure in what he was intent upon. This is a *xuan xue* reading, but the text is understood more aptly, in my opinion, in the above proposed interpretation.

43 Note that *fu* here again introduces an example for what was said before, in this case stating that the world cannot be made.

Section 6

[4] What I mean with finding it in oneself (...)

This passage is the culmination of chapter 1 of the *Huainanzǐ*. Although the fact that the empire cannot be made is mentioned earlier in the text, this is the only passage which speaks extensively about the “empire” (*tian xia* 天下) and about the question of how to govern it. Here the author applies his theory to practice. He goes back to the end of section 1 on the Dao and the way of the sage where he had for the first time stated that “the empire cannot be made”. The end of this first section was in my interpretation a *shi gu*-phrase which ends with the necessity to “find it in oneself”. The same subject is taken up here, while the section on the sense organs and on the emotions is brought to an end. Of course, the paragraph on the heart, introduced by *fu*, belongs to the section on the emotions.⁴⁴ The last paragraph, the one on “possessing” the empire, semantically belongs to this section and should not be cut off simply because it starts with a *fu*. It is rather the conclusion of what was said before: You can not manage (or literally: “make”) the empire, so you have to understand that you are the possession of it as much as you possess it yourself.

I am in agreement with He Ning 何寧, the editor of the HNZJS, who assumes that the passage starting with “Finding it in oneself is to preserve oneself intact, and when one preserves himself intact, he is one with the Dao (...)” is the beginning of a new section which explains what the expression *zǐ de* 自得 means. As many other sections do, this one starts with the words: “what I mean with” (*suo wei*). *Fu* here, as in all other passages discussed in this article, clearly serves to take up a word which has been discussed but not fully explained before. Additionally, as in several other cases, the beginning of the new section is clearly marked by repeating a combination of words.

It is not necessary to discuss the whole last section of this chapter in detail. Suffice it to say that: “To find it in oneself” is the final conclusion in which the *Huainanzǐ* author explains why all this is relevant for the sage. This final passage explains the respective roles of body and spirit, among which, of course, the spirit has to take the lead. The chapter, thus, follows the structure of the *Book of Changes*: Just as the kingly fifth out of six lines is the culmination of every hexagram, only in the paragraph preceding the last one does the chapter speak of the ultimate goal: to rule the empire. And just as the fifth line of a hexagram is topped by yet a sixth line, which is sometimes referred to as the ruler’s temple of ancestors and sometimes as an experienced advisor of a young emperor, the *Huainanzǐ* text after its paragraph on ideal rulership turns back to the sage who can be a ruler but must not necessarily be one. Just in passing, it may be interesting to add that here, in its very last section, the text for the first time mixes the particles *gu* and *fu* as well as *shi gu* and *fu* to form whole particle-clusters.⁴⁵ As most other long sections do, this one, too, ends with a *shi gu*-conclusion focussing on the behaviour of the sage.

44 HNZJS, 23: 是故天下之事不可為也 (...) 是故響不肆應 (...) 默然自得. HNZJS, 72: 故天下神器, 不可為也 (...) 吾所謂有天下者, 非謂此也, 自得而已.

45 HNZJS, 80: *Gu fu* 故夫 and *shi gu fu* 是故夫.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to show that paying attention to particles and structuring elements may result in better translations of ancient Chinese texts. I would suggest that future translators should, just as Ames and Lau have done with chapter 1 of the *Huainanzǐ*, structure long chapters into sections. As I have demonstrated, I myself tend to divide *Huainanzǐ* 1 into six large sections. The first introduces the Dao and speaks about the behaviour of the sage in a later age (pp. 1 to 24 in HNZJS), the second of the fact that the nature of man is the same as the one of all living beings (pp. 24-41 in HNZJS), and the third that, contrary to the nature of other living beings man's nature is characterized by two different aspects, namely an heavenly as opposed to an human one (pp. 41-48). As the fourth section explains, one has to rely on those aspects which have been ordained by Heaven by sticking to weakness and emptiness (pp. 48-58). The fifth section elaborates on this. It deals with emotions and sense-organs (pp. 58-72). A very short paragraph is inserted here on governing the empire (pp. 72-74), before the final section turns to explain how one can find oneself and make sure that the mind rules over the body (pp. 74-90). As these six sections are rather long, it would be useful to introduce subdivisions.

With the notable exception of the first two sections, all major sections in this division start with the phrase “what I mean with” (*suo wei*). There are more *suo wei*, but it is usually easy to detect where a *suo wei* starts a section and where not, because of the overall content of a section and because these *suo wei* usually show up in clusters. Sometimes a subdivision may start with these additional *suo wei*. Main sections usually do not start with a particle such as *fu* or *shi gu*. Although *shi gu* in general serves as a marker which shows the reader that a rhymed truism elucidating what has been said before will follow, it also occurs at the end of all sections that I have demarcated and seems to have throughout also the function of making a final statement. In these final statements, the author usually refers back to the subject of the whole section which he introduces at its beginning, after the *suo wei* compound. With the single exception of the very last section, somewhere in the middle of our sections, we find one or two examples from the distant past which underscore the argument which has been made at the beginning. *Fu* does have the two meanings which earlier authors have already defined: It either refers back to what has been said – in the *Huainanzǐ* often in form of a simile – or adds a new element to the strain of thought discussed. It should be stressed once again that this does not mean that it would be useful to start an entirely new section every time this particle occurs.