

## Xunzi (荀子) and Virtue Epistemology

Cheng-hung Tsai

Department of Philosophy, Soochow University

chtsai@scu.edu.tw

**Abstract:** Regulative virtue epistemology is the view that the possession of intellectual virtues regulates, guides, and enhances one's epistemic practices, and that such intellectual virtues are something that can be cultivated to a higher degree. The question is, what kind of intellectual virtues, faculty virtues (such as sight and hearing) or character virtues (such as intellectual courage and open-mindedness), can be a candidate? Most assume that it cannot be the former. However, this paper shows that there can be a regulative faculty-based virtue epistemology, which takes cognitive faculties as intellectual virtues. I do not intend to establish such a version of virtue epistemology from scratch. Instead, I suggest that this form of virtue epistemology can be constructed from the philosophical works of Xunzi 荀子, one of the founders of Confucianism.

**Keywords:** Intellectual Virtues, Sosa, Xunzi, *Xin* (the mind-heart), Perceptual Knowledge

### 1. Introduction

Virtue epistemology generally aims to explain our epistemic practices through the notion of intellectual virtues. However, there is no general agreement among virtue epistemologists about the nature of intellectual virtues. Some virtue epistemologists (e.g., Sosa 1991; Greco 2000) consider intellectual virtues as cognitive faculties, such as perception, memory, introspection, and reasoning, whereas others (e.g., Montmarquet 1993; Zagzebski 1996) consider intellectual virtues as an epistemic agent's character traits, such as intellectual courage, honesty, humility, and open-mindedness.

Regardless of the different understandings of intellectual virtues, both camps of virtue epistemology share a common trait in the primary aim of epistemology. According to Robert Roberts and Jay Wood (2007), there are two kinds of epistemology according to how the aim of inquiry is established, namely, "analytic" and "regulative".<sup>1</sup> Analytic epistemology "aims to produce theories of knowledge, rationality, warrant, justification and so forth, and proceeds by attempting to *define* these terms" (R&W 2007: 20; emphasis added). On the contrary, regulative epistemology, which "does not aim to produce a theory of knowledge",<sup>2</sup> is an

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<sup>1</sup> The distinction was originally made by Wolterstorff (1996).

<sup>2</sup> To say that regulative epistemology does not produce a theory of knowledge is not to say that it provides no analysis of the concept of knowledge. Regulative epistemology rejects a "theory of knowledge" that is understood as a theory that aims to give an "e-definition" of knowledge, that is, to

epistemology that “tries to generate guidance for epistemic practice, ‘how we ought to conduct our understandings, what we ought to do by way of forming beliefs’ ” and offers “a response to perceived deficiencies in people’s epistemic conduct” (R&W 2007: 21). According to Roberts and Wood, all contemporary epistemologies, including virtue epistemology, are analytic epistemologies.<sup>3</sup> As such, virtue epistemology aims to define knowledge (that is, specifying the individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for knowledge) in terms of intellectual virtues.

Roberts and Wood regard analytic epistemology as problematic;<sup>4</sup> thus, analytic virtue epistemology is also problematic. Instead, they offer a kind of virtue epistemology that takes regulative epistemology as its meta-epistemology. For regulative *virtue* epistemology, the possession of *intellectual virtues* regulates and enhances one’s epistemic practices. The question is, what kind of intellectual virtues, faculty virtues or character virtues, can be a candidate?

Roberts and Wood choose character virtues. They study intellectual virtues such as love of knowledge, firmness, courage, humility, autonomy, generosity, and practical wisdom. These virtues are acquired excellences and can be cultivated to a higher degree. Faculty virtues (such as sight and hearing) are intellectual excellences because they reliably lead one to the truth; however, these virtues are not acquired but natural or inborn. If a philosopher attempts to offer a regulative virtue epistemology that yields characterizations of various intellectual virtues, to persuade ordinary people to cultivate such intellectual virtues so as to regulate and enhance their intellectual practices and lives, and to evaluate (i.e., to praise or blame) one’s intellectual practices according to the intellectual virtues, it is natural for the philosopher to choose character virtues as his focus of inquiry because, after all, it is character virtues rather than faculty virtues that can be cultivated by agents and for which agents are

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specify individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for knowledge (cf. R&W 2007: 9). But regulative epistemology does not reject an analysis of the concept of knowledge that does not aim at an e-definition of knowledge. Moreover, an analysis or non-e-definition of the concept of knowledge is required for regulative epistemologists to generate guidance for epistemic practices. Here a non-e-definition of knowledge is used as an “expedient of regulation” (R&W 2007: 27): “If we think of a definition not as a single formula that captures without remainder the essential characteristics of every instance of some kind, but rather as an expedient for making a concept more ‘definite’ for some person or group of persons, then we too are offering ‘definitions’ of various concepts” (R&W 2007: 20).

<sup>3</sup> Some might question whether *all* contemporary epistemologies are analytic epistemologies. See, e.g., Turri (2012).

<sup>4</sup> According to Roberts and Wood, “the reason why simple definitions fail is the complexity and diversity within the concept of knowledge. The concept may be held together by a set of overlapping resemblances between kinds of cases, as Wittgenstein argued that the concept of *game* is, rather than by a single set of properties that are both individually necessary and jointly sufficient for any case to belong to the class” (R&W 2007: 19). In this paper, I shall not examine Roberts and Wood’s criticism of analytic epistemology and focus instead on their classification of epistemologies.

responsible.

Now we have three distinctive forms of virtue epistemology based on their different primary aims of epistemology and intellectual virtues: analytic faculty-based virtue epistemology, analytic character-based virtue epistemology, and regulative character-based virtue epistemology. However, a possible form remains, which is regulative faculty-based virtue epistemology. Let me sketch the four possible forms of virtue epistemology as follows: (“VE” is used as an abbreviation for “Virtue Epistemology”)

Concerning the Aim of Epistemology \ Concerning Intellectual Virtue	Faculty-Based	Character-Based
Analytic	Analytic Faculty-Based VE (Sosa)	Analytic Character-Based VE (Zagzebski)
Regulative	Regulative Faculty-Based VE (?)	Regulative Character-Based VE (Roberts & Wood)

Table 1: Taxonomy of Virtue Epistemologies

The pioneers or representatives of analytic faculty-based virtue epistemology, analytic character-based virtue epistemology, and regulative character-based virtue epistemology are Ernest Sosa (2007, 2009b, 2011), Linda Zagzebski (1996, 2009), and Roberts & Wood (2007), respectively. Who is the representative of regulative faculty-based virtue epistemology? It seems difficult for Western philosophers to conceive of this kind of virtue epistemology. The question with which I am concerned in this paper is how to conceive of a faculty-based virtue epistemology as a regulative one; that is, if a regulative virtue epistemology is possible, or if there can be a virtue epistemology that takes cognitive faculties as intellectual virtues and treats such faculty virtues as something that can be cultivated to a higher degree, what is the nature of such faculty virtues? I address this question in this paper. I do not intend to establish such a form of virtue epistemology from scratch. Instead, I suggest that this form of virtue epistemology can be constructed from the philosophical works of Xunzi 荀子 (c. 310-219 BCE), one of the founders of Confucianism. I show that the key to constructing such epistemology lies in Xunzi’s commitment to a both natural and cultivated faculty of perception due to his understanding of the exercise of the faculty of perception as the co-exercise of *xin* (the mind-heart) and the sense organs.

The aim of this paper is to establish a version of regulative faculty-based virtue epistemology, and I will achieve this aim by exploring and interpreting Xunzi’s epistemology. I hope that this work presents a cross-cultural as well as a theoretical interest. The structure of this paper is as follows: In Section 3, I will explain why, or in what sense, Xunzi’s

epistemology is a *virtue* (§3.1), *faculty-based* (§3.2), and *regulative* epistemology (§3.3). Prior to Section 3, in Section 2, I will introduce Sosa's version of virtue epistemology, the paradigm of analytic faculty-based virtue epistemology. With this paradigm, we can understand in what sense Xunzi's epistemology can be classified as a faculty-based virtue epistemology, what distinctive features it possesses, and what contribution it may make to contemporary virtue epistemology.

## 2. Sosa's Faculty-Based Virtue Epistemology

### 2.1 The Core

According to Sosa, the core ideas of his virtue epistemology are as follows:

- (a) affirm that knowledge entails belief;
- (b) understand "animal" knowledge as requiring apt belief *without* requiring *defensibly* apt belief, i.e., apt belief that the subject aptly believes to be apt and whose aptness the subject can therefore defend against relevant skeptical doubts; and
- (c) understand "reflective" knowledge as requiring not only apt belief but *also* defensibly apt belief (Sosa 2007: 24).

Sosa's bi-level virtue epistemology distinguishes "animal knowledge" and "reflective knowledge". Animal knowledge is apt belief, and reflective knowledge is apt belief aptly noted. It is evident that understanding the notion of aptness is crucial for understanding Sosa's notions of animal knowledge and reflective knowledge (and then how he uses them to deal with several central issues in contemporary epistemology, such as the debates between foundationalism and coherentism, between internalism and externalism, and the value problem). The notion of aptness can be best understood by Sosa's general account of performance normativity in which the aptness of a belief is treated as a special case of the aptness of a performance.

Sosa's account of performance normativity has five key concepts: full aptness, meta-aptness, aptness, adroitness, and accuracy. The first concept is defined by the second and third concepts together, and the second and third concepts are defined by the fourth and fifth concepts together at different levels. We proceed from the last to the first concepts. In assessing a performance, the last three concepts (accuracy, adroitness, and aptness) constitute what Sosa calls the "AAA structure" of a performance, which can be illustrated by the example of archery:

When an archer takes aim and shoots, that shot is assessable in three respects. [...] First, we can assess whether it succeeds in its aim, in hitting the target. Although we can also assess how accurate a shot it is, how close to the bull's-eye, we here put degrees aside, in favor of the on/off question: whether it hits the target or not. [...] Second, we can assess whether it is adroit, whether it manifests skill on the part of the archer. Skill too comes in degrees, but here again we focus on the on/off question:

whether it manifests relevant skill or not, whether it is or is not adroit. [...] A shot can be both accurate and adroit, however, without being a success creditable to its author. Take a shot that in normal conditions would have hit the bull's-eye. The wind may be abnormally strong, and just strong enough to divert the arrow so that, in conditions thereafter normal, it would miss the target altogether. However, shifting winds may next guide it gently to the bull's-eye after all. The shot is then accurate and adroit, but not accurate *because* adroit (not sufficiently). So it is not apt, and not creditable to the archer. [...] An archer's shot is thus a performance that can have the AAA structure: accuracy, adroitness, aptness. (Sosa 2007: 22)

A performance with an aim can be assessed by whether it succeeds in its aim (i.e., whether it is accurate or successful), whether it manifests relevant competence (i.e., whether it is adroit or competent), and whether it is accurate because of its adroitness (i.e., whether it is apt). The concept of "aptness" is epistemic in the sense that it is used to deal with Gettier-type cases in particular (i.e., to exclude as cases of knowledge those instances in which a belief is true because of epistemic luck) and in general (i.e., to exclude as cases of [better] performance those times when a skilled operation is successful because of luck).

A performance can be meta-apt. A skilled operation might not be performed at a particular time *t* because the agent in question decides not to perform it then. The agent might make this decision because he knows that the operation will not succeed at *t* for some reason. Neither aptness nor inaptness applies in this case because (ground-level) success is not an objective. However, this conclusion does not mean that no performance occurs. According to Sosa, the agent's forbearing is a kind of performance with an aim, i.e., avoiding ground-level failure (Sosa 2009a: 11). This performance can also be assessed through the AAA structure. The performance of forbearing is meta-accurate if and only if it succeeds in avoiding ground-level failure; the performance of forbearing is meta-adroit if and only if it manifests the agent's meta-competence in risk-assessment; and finally, the performance of forbearing is meta-apt if and only if it is meta-accurate because meta-adroit.

A performance of forbearing might be meta-apt. However, this definition does not mean that all performances at the meta-level must entail forbearing, which is negative in the sense that it does not suggest the execution of ground-level skilled operations. For Sosa, "[t]he forbearing might be meta-apt ... in being a proper response to the perceived level of risk... Sometimes an agent responds properly by performing on the ground level, in which case that *positive performance* is meta-apt" (Sosa 2009a: 12). Suppose an agent's performance at the meta-level aims to avoid the failure of his ground-level performance. Two possible cases follow. First, if the agent perceives that the rate of failure is too high, then he might respond by forbearing. Second, if the agent perceives that the rate of failure is low enough that the success of the ground-level performance can be secured, then he might respond by executing his ability. In the second case, we see that the execution of the ground-level ability can be connected to the meta-level perspective on that execution. Here, I introduce the fifth and

final concept in Sosa's account of performance normativity, full aptness:

A performance attains thus a special status when it is apt at the ground level and also its aptness is explained through competent risk assessment. Suppose this risk-assessment issues in the performer's knowing that his situation (constitutional and circumstantial) is favorable (where the risk of failure is low enough) for issuing such a performance. If these conditions all obtain, then the performance's aptness might stem from its meta-aptness; that is to say, its aptness might be relevantly explicable through the performer's meta-knowledge that his first-order performance is likely enough to succeed and be apt. [...] This applies to performances such as a shot that hits its prey. That shot is superior, more admirable and creditable, if it is not only apt, but also meta-apt, and, further, *fully* apt: that is, apt because meta-apt. (Sosa 2009a: 13)

A performance at the ground level is fully apt if and only if it is apt and its aptness stems from its meta-aptness. In Sosa's model of full aptness, an agent's meta-knowledge about his situation can contribute to the manifestation of his ground-level competence; that is, such meta-knowledge can make the manifestation or performance of the competence fully apt. For Sosa, fully apt performances are better or more valuable than either inapt or merely apt performances (Sosa 2009a: 13-4).

As Sosa suggests, once we regard a belief as a performance, the belief has the AAA structure, or it can be assessed from three aspects. So, what is the particular AAA structure of a belief? What is the aim of a belief? What is the adroitness of a belief? For Sosa, "[w]e can distinguish between a belief's accuracy, i.e., its truth; its adroitness, i.e., its manifesting epistemic virtue or competence; and its aptness, i.e., its being true *because* competent" (Sosa 2007: 23). As a belief, no matter in which order it is located, it has the AAA structure. Thus, an agent might have a first-order *apt* belief about a certain issue and a corresponding (second-order) *apt* belief about whether she should form or withhold the first-order belief. When the aptness of the former stems from the aptness of the latter, the first-order belief is not only apt but fully apt—it is not only animal knowledge but reflective knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.2 Intellectual Faculty Virtues

Epistemic competences or faculties play a crucial role in Sosa's epistemology. The core of Sosa's epistemology is the distinction between animal knowledge and reflective knowledge; both kinds of knowledge are defined in terms of aptness, and aptness *requires* a manifestation of a competence (cf. Sosa 2007: 29).

Sosa has provided a very detailed explanation of an intellectual virtue (Sosa 1991,

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<sup>5</sup> For a critical discussion of Sosa's account, see Pritchard (2009), where he argues that apt belief is neither necessary nor sufficient for knowledge.

Ch.16).<sup>6</sup> However, I ask readers to note that the instances of intellectual virtue in Sosa's epistemology include perception (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch), introspection, memory, and reasoning (deductive, inductive, and intuitive)<sup>7</sup> and to note further that the following discussion of intellectual virtues is limited to *perceptual* faculties, such as faculties of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Faculties of perception, memory, and reasoning are all *natural* faculties; that is, they are inborn rather than acquired. However, these faculties seem to have something different. It seems possible for an agent to cultivate his natural faculties of memory and reasoning (deductive and inductive) by training or learning some tricks.<sup>8</sup> However, it seems relatively difficult for one to cultivate his natural faculties of sight, hearing, smell, taste, or touch. Focusing on the intellectual faculty of *perception* sharpens the contrast between the faculty-based and the character-based virtue epistemologies.

But what is it that makes intellectual faculty of perception to be classified as something that cannot be cultivated? Inquiring into the *acquisition* of faculties is not helpful because some natural faculties can be cultivated. We can find a possible answer by understanding why Sosa calls an epistemic "faculty" an epistemic "virtue":

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<sup>6</sup> Here is Sosa's definition: "One has an intellectual virtue or faculty relative to an environment E if and only if one has an inner nature I in virtue of which one would mostly attain the truth and avoid error in a certain field of propositions F, when in certain conditions C" (1991: 284).

<sup>7</sup> These cognitive faculties, according to Sosa, can be classified into two broad sorts: "transmission" faculties and "generation" faculties. The former "lead[s] to beliefs from beliefs already formed", while the latter "lead[s] to beliefs but not from beliefs" (Sosa 1985: 225). For Sosa, intuition, perception, and introspection are generation faculties; memory and reasoning (deductive, inductive, and explanatory) are transmission faculties. In Sosa's bi-level virtue epistemology, all these faculties are first-order faculties, distinguished from the second-order faculty, i.e., the faculty of reflection.

<sup>8</sup> Jason Baehr distinguishes cognitive faculties (faculty virtues) from intellectual virtues (character virtues) in three ways, two of which concern us here. First, cognitive faculties are *natural* endowment, while character virtues are *cultivated* traits. Second, the "operation of cognitive faculties does not typically require an exercise of agency" (Baehr 2011: 23), while an "exercise of intellectual character virtues ... does characteristically involve agency" (Baehr 2011: 24). However, the two differences are not totally parallel. The two more general points about human qualities or dispositions that I want to emphasize are: (a) To say that a quality or disposition is cultivated implies that the quality or disposition characteristically involves agency because the cultivation of the quality or disposition requires an agent's exercise of active efforts and active control, directly or indirectly, over the exercise of the quality or disposition, i.e., over the formulation of a set of heterogeneous trigger-manifestation pairs. (b) To say that a quality or disposition is natural, however, does not imply that the quality or disposition must have nothing characteristically to do with agency. Baehr would acknowledge my point (b) since he adds a footnote to the second difference mentioned above: "The [natural] faculty of reason [such as deductive and inductive reasoning] may seem to be an exception here, since its operation is commonly tied to an exercise of the will" (Baehr 2011: 23). See also Zagzebski's *Virtues of the Mind*, where she argues that "the distinction between natural and acquired is somewhat vague since even natural qualities can often improve with training and practice" (1996: 103).

[P]erceptual ... beliefs are often acquired willy-nilly. And yet even where deliberate choice is thus absent, some mechanism may yet generate one's belief. For example, it may be one's faculty of sight operating in good light that generates one's belief in the whiteness and roundness of a facing snowball. Is possession of such a faculty a "virtue"? Not in the narrow Aristotelian sense, of course, since it is no disposition to make deliberate choices. But there is a broader sense of "virtue", still Greek, in which anything with a function—natural or artificial—does have virtues. The eye does, after all, have its virtues, and so does a knife. And if we include grasping the truth about one's environment among the proper ends of a human being, then the faculty of sight would seem in a broad sense a virtue in human beings; and if grasping the truth is an intellectual matter then that virtue is also in a straightforward sense an intellectual virtue. (Sosa 1991: 271)

I do not wish to quarrel about whether the term "virtue" can be applied to faculty. The point here is that unlike character virtues, the faculty virtues of perception do not involve agency such as an agent's deliberate choice or voluntary control over belief-forming mechanisms. When his faculty virtues or belief-generating mechanisms are triggered to exercise, an agent forms perceptual beliefs *willy-nilly*.<sup>9</sup> The inquiry into the exercise of the faculty or mechanism of perception suggests that if the faculty of perception has components, it has no component whose exercise characteristically involves agency (or, the will).

Let me summarize three points established in this section. First, virtue epistemology is distinctive because in the study of knowledge, it greatly emphasizes epistemic sources. Second, the intellectual virtues can be understood as faculty virtues or belief-generating mechanisms. Third, the faculty of perception has no component whose exercise characteristically involves agency. The third point makes Sosa's virtue epistemology difficult to be a regulative faculty-based virtue epistemology. In the following sections, I will show that Xunzi would agree with the first two points (which makes him a virtue epistemologist) but not with the third.

### 3. Xunzi's Faculty-Based Virtue Epistemology

#### 3.1 Early Chinese Epistemology and Virtue Epistemology

In what sense can we treat Xunzi's epistemology as virtue epistemology?

In his entry on "Xunzi" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Dan Robins (2007) explains a general feature of early Chinese epistemology that Xunzi's epistemology shares:

Early Chinese philosophers usually thought of knowledge in practical terms. They took it to consist in the mastery not of facts but of ways of acting (*dao*). Especially important was the *knowledge of how to* draw distinctions. Drawing distinctions was the

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<sup>9</sup> Here and hereafter, "faculty virtues" refer to "belief-generating faculties" rather than "transmission faculties", unless otherwise noted.



closest analog to conceptualization recognized by early Chinese philosophers, and they took it to be the fundamental cognitive operation. ... This takes knowledge to be a kind of *ability* rather than a sort of *representation of facts*, and it should come as no surprise that Xunzi did not explain cognitive errors by appealing to mistakes of representation. For Xunzi, we make mistakes not because we picture [or *represent*] *the facts* incorrectly but because we lack some *ability*; knowledge contrasts not with false belief but with confusion. Xunzi twice (in Books 6 and 21 of the *Xunzi*) provides lists of his philosophical opponents and diagnoses their errors, and in neither case does he accuse them of misrepresenting the facts, or of confusing appearance with reality. Instead, he charges that they placed too much emphasis on some part of the Way, and thus failed to understand the whole. (Robins 2007; emphasis mine)

Robins points out, though implicitly, a distinctive feature of early Chinese epistemology that aid the interpretation of Xunzi's thought as virtue epistemology. I formulate the feature as a conjunction of the following two claims:

(1) Early Chinese epistemology merely focuses on knowing-how, whereas contemporary Western epistemology merely focuses on knowing-that.

(2) The kind of knowing-how with which early Chinese epistemology is concerned is knowing how to draw distinctions or knowing how to differentiate/discriminate,<sup>10</sup> whereas Western epistemology is concerned with knowing that such and such is the case or knowing that a proposition *p* represents the facts.<sup>11</sup>

I agree with Robins' general observation but offer something new regarding the first claim. When philosophers discuss the distinction between knowing-how and knowing-that, they tend to understand it as a distinction between knowledge of how to do something and knowledge that such and such is the case, and they wonder whether the former is a species of the latter (cf. Stanley & Williamson 2001; see Author 2011a and b for discussion). However, there is a possible and plausible understanding of the distinction in the field of epistemology; that is, the distinction concerns the distinction between epistemic competence (or sources)

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<sup>10</sup> There might be other kinds of intellectual know-how, such as knowing how to ask good questions. But such kind of know-how is not what early Chinese epistemologists are interested in.

<sup>11</sup> Chris Fraser also claims that "early Chinese thinkers understand mind and knowledge mainly in terms of competence or ability, not representation. For them, the major function of the *xin* 心, or 'heart', is to guide action by discriminating different kinds (*lei* 類) of things, thus triggering skilled responses to them" (Fraser 2011: 128). An interesting side-issue here is that, based on the above claim, Fraser argues that skepticism about the external world (supported by the argument from illusion) cannot get off the ground in Chinese philosophy because Chinese epistemologists focus on competence or ability rather than on representation which is required for constructing the argument from illusion. With regard to the issue whether skepticism cannot get off the ground in Chinese philosophy, see Author 2006 for discussion.

and epistemic performance (or products), between an agent's *ability to know* and *what is known* by an agent. So construed, it would be misguided to ask whether epistemic know-how is a species of know-that for they are two aspects of knowledge. It would also be wrong to derive, from the distinction, the view that early Chinese epistemology does not have the concept of propositional knowledge just because it focuses on the concept of knowledge-how.

This understanding sheds light on the true difference between the two epistemologies; that is, contemporary Western epistemology (virtue epistemology excluded) is concerned with belief or knowledge *per se*, whereas early Chinese epistemology is concerned with cognitive abilities that generate belief or knowledge. Some scholars have indicated that the salient feature of virtue epistemology in general is the *change in the direction of analysis* (cf. Axtell 2000, xiii): virtue epistemology primarily focuses on the properties of epistemic agents or sources (properties such as character traits or reliability), whereas non-virtue epistemology merely focuses on the properties of belief or knowledge, which are the *states* or *products* of an agent or epistemic sources. With regard to the primary object of inquiry, early Chinese epistemology, including Xunzi's epistemology, is close to virtue epistemology in its broadest sense.<sup>12</sup>

### 3.2 The Faculty of Perception as a Combination of the Sense Organs and *Xin*

More interesting than merely treating Xunzi as a virtue epistemologist are the questions of what kind of virtue epistemology Xunzi implicitly proposes, and more important, why and how Xunzi's version is distinctive among contemporary virtue epistemology. We pursue these questions from the idea of intellectual faculty in Xunzi's work.

The instances of intellectual faculty in Xunzi's thought include the five sense organs and *xin* (the mind-heart). *Xin* itself is an organ,<sup>13</sup> but it has a supervisory role over the five sense organs:

The eye, ear, nose, mouth, and body each have the capacity to provide sense contact,

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<sup>12</sup> In their entry on "Virtue Epistemology" in the *Oxford Bibliographies Online*, Turri and Sosa (2010) treat historical figures such as Descartes, Hume, Reid, Peirce, and Russell as precursors of contemporary virtue epistemology. Hume is included because he thinks that "natural instincts' or innate mental 'mechanical tendencies' enable us to gain knowledge beyond the 'narrow sphere of our memory and senses.'" (Turri and Sosa 2010). Additionally, Reid is included because he thinks that "our knowledge derives from the exercise of our reliable intellectual powers and other dispositions that form part of our natural constitution" (Turri and Sosa 2010). Besides the historical features, contemporary philosopher John McDowell is included because he "explains central epistemological concepts—explicitly *empirical knowledge* and *justification*—in terms of the 'exercise' of 'capacities' " (Turri and Sosa 2010). I believe that Xunzi can be regarded as a precursor of virtue epistemology in part for the same reason, although the point requires further elaboration.

<sup>13</sup> In *Xunzi*, *xin* is treated as an organ or at least hard to be distinguished from the sense organs. See Geaney (2002: 97), Lee (2004: 33-4), and Hagen (2007: 160).

but their capacities are not interchangeable—these are termed “the faculties given us by nature”. *Xin* that dwells within the central cavity is used to control the five faculties—it is called “the lord provided by nature”. (*Xunzi*, “Tianlun”; tr. Knoblock, 17.3a)

耳、目、鼻、口、形，能各有接而不相能也，夫是之謂天官。心居中虛，以治五官，夫是之謂天君。((天論))

This passage contains two important claims: First, the five senses or perceptual faculties are not interchangeable. Second, the five senses are governed by *xin*. Let us start with the first claim and ask: What are the five senses (or the specific functions of the five sense organs)?

According to *Xunzi*,

The eye differentiates white from black, the beautiful from the ugly. The ear differentiates sounds and tones as to their shrillness or sonority. The mouth differentiates the sour and salty, the sweet and bitter. The nose differentiates perfumes and fragrances, rancid and fetid odors. The bones, flesh, and skin-lines differentiate hot and cold, pain and itching. These ... are part of the nature that man is born possessing, that he does not have to acquire. (*Xunzi*, “Rongru”; tr. Knoblock, 4.9; modified)

目辨白黑美惡，耳辨音聲清濁，口辨酸鹹甘苦，鼻辨芬芳腥臊，骨體膚理辨寒暑疾養，是又人之所常生而有也，是無待而然者也。((榮辱))

The five senses or perceptual faculties are not interchangeable because they are individuated by means of the functions of their respective organs (the eye, the ear, the nose, the mouth [or the tongue], and the body [or the skin]).<sup>14</sup> *Xunzi* characterizes the functions of the five sense organs as the power of differentiating or discriminating. I propose that *Xunzi*’s use of the term “*bian* 辨” (differentiating or recognizing) must be taken seriously because the term indicates that *Xunzi* understands the faculty of perception (or the five senses as a whole) as the faculty of *recognitional* perception. There are two main ways that one might understand the expression “S perceives O” (where “S” is a subject and “O” is an object or a thing): as “S perceives O non-epistemically” and as “S perceives O epistemically”. The former says that S perceives O without possessing any concepts about O. The latter says that S perceives O with possessing and applying the concepts about O; that is, S epistemically perceives O in such a way that he perceives O *as* O.<sup>15</sup> Corresponding to the two understandings of perception, as non-epistemic perceiving and as epistemic perceiving, there are two understandings of the

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<sup>14</sup> In contemporary philosophy of perception, it is still a problem that how different senses are individuated. *Xunzi*’s view might be classified as the “sense organ view”, which “individuate[s] sense modalities by appeal to their respective organs” (Fish 2010: 150). With regard to other approaches to individuating the senses, see, e.g., Fish (2010: Ch. 9).

<sup>15</sup> See especially Fred Dretske (1969: Ch. 2; 2000: Essay 6) where he distinguishes “epistemic seeing” and “non-epistemic seeing”.

faculty of perception, as the faculty of *experiencing perception* and as the faculty of *recognitional perception*. It seems that Xunzi does not understand the functions of the five sense organs merely as the power of simply perceiving a thing but rather as the power of perceiving a thing as belonging to a certain kind or as possessing certain defining characteristics, or as the power of recognizing the things as what they are and what they are not.

Further, as stated above, the power of the five senses or faculties is “given by nature” or inborn. Although, as explained in the previous section (§2.2), to state that the nature of a faculty is inborn does not imply that the exercise of the faculty must have nothing characteristically to do with human agency, this statement is not applicable to the faculty of perception. The faculties of memory and reasoning are inborn while their exercise can be controlled and improved by agency (that is, an agent can have active control over the transmission of beliefs formed or held); the faculties of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch are inborn and their exercise is out of the agent’s control (that is, the agent has no voluntary control over the generating of beliefs from non-doxastic sensory inputs), let alone that they can be cultivated in practice. However, the idea that the exercise of the faculty of perception is out of agent’s control and cannot be cultivated would not be accepted by Xunzi. Now let us turn to the second claim made above.

The second claim is that the five senses are governed by *xin*. I shall explain this by focusing on the components of the faculty of perception.

In the previous passages I explain what the faculty of perception (or the five senses as a whole) is in *Xunzi* without explaining what the components of the faculty of perception are and how they are related to each other. In *Xunzi*, the faculty of perception is composed of *xin* (the mind-heart) and the five sense organs because the exercise of the former is explained in terms of the co-exercise of the latter two. First, Xunzi asserts that the exercise of *xin* requires the exercise of the five sense organs:

[The basis upon which we judge that things are the same or different is] the awareness that *xin* has of the defining characteristics that distinguish things. Only when it rests on the data provided by the ear is it possible for this awareness of the defining characteristics to know sound, and only when it rests on the data provided by the eye is it possible to know shape. This being so, *xin*’s awareness of defining characteristics necessarily requires that the sense organ be impressed by the type of thing to which that sense organ [is sensitive]. (*Xunzi*, “Zhengming”; tr. Knoblock, 22.2e)

心有徵知。徵知，則緣耳而知聲可也，緣目而知形可也。然而徵知必將待天官之當簿其類然後可也。((正名))

Xunzi’s notion of *xin* (in the context of discussing the epistemology of perception) is understood as a mental faculty that has the power of being aware of the defining characteristics of a thing, or as I shall call it, the power of conceptual recognition. Its exercise

“requires”, among other things, the exercise of the sense organs, and here the term “require” refers to the enabling condition rather than the constitutive condition for the exercise of *xin*. The power of *xin in itself* is not defined in terms of the function of sense organs.

Second, Xunzi asserts that the exercise of the faculty of perception requires the exercise of *xin*. There are two main passages that support my attributing the assertion to Xunzi. Here is the first passage (P1):

When *xin* is not employed (*xinbushiyen*), then although black and white are in front of a person’s own eyes, he will not see them, or although the thunder drums are sounding on either side of him, his ears will not hear them. (*Xunzi*, “Jiebi”; tr. Knoblock, 21.1)

心不使焉，則白黑在前而目不見，雷鼓在側而耳不聞。(《解蔽》)

Does Xunzi mean in P1 that when *xin* is not employed, then although black and white are in front of a subject’s own eyes the subject does not “see” anything at all as if his eyes are closed? This seems to be, phenomenologically speaking, absurd. The term “see” in P1 must be understood as “epistemic seeing”. That is, the subject in question still non-epistemically sees the object in front of his eye but has no epistemic seeing of the object; the subject does not *recognize* the object in front of his eyes as the black object or as the white object. Thus, what P1 suggests is that without the exercise of *xin* there is no (recognitional) perception. This reading of P1, especially Xunzi’s use of the term such as “see”, can be supported by another passage (P2) in *Xunzi*:

If the five senses come into contact with a thing and you do not become aware of it, or if *xin* notes its defining characteristics and you can offer no explanation, then everyone will agree that there is “no knowing.” (*Xunzi*, “Zhengming”; tr. Knoblock, 22.2e)

五官簿之而不知，心徵之而無說，則人莫不然謂之不知。(《正名》)

P2 contains two conditionals. The first conditional says that if the five sense organs come into contact with an object while the subject in question does not become aware of it (that is, his *xin* is not employed), then everyone will agree that there is “no knowing”. This conditional can be used to support my reading of P1 since Xunzi does not use the expression such as “no (non-epistemic) seeing” or “no experiencing” to describe the result of exercising the five sense organs but not exercising *xin*. Thus, again, without the exercise of *xin* there is “no knowing” (which, in this case, had better be understood as “no recognitional perception”). The claim that the five senses are governed by *xin* amounts to the claim that it is *xin* that determines the (conceptual) content of recognitional perception.

The above two assertions—that the exercise of the faculty of perception requires the exercise of *xin* as its content determinant, and that the exercise of *xin* requires the exercise of the sense organs as its enabling condition—suggest that in Xunzi’s thought the faculty of perception is a combination of *xin* and the five sense organs. Thus, expressed in a more

contemporary vein, a perception can be conceived as an output of a dual process: The five sense organs issue sensations as an output, and the output, in turn, becomes the input of *xin* which issues awareness of defining characteristics that distinguish things as the output (i.e., *the* recognitional perception). Here we should note that to say that a perception requires awareness which is constitutive of the perception does not imply that one must be aware of what he is aware of. One can have a second-order reflective awareness of what he is aware of, but this second-order awareness is not a requisite constituent of perception, which requires only first-order constitutive awareness.

The idea that the faculty of perception is a combination of *xin* and the five sense organs makes Xunzi's notion of faculty virtue have *a potential* to be distinguished from the purely mechanical notion of faculty virtue because *xin*, when acting as the power of conceptual recognition, is something that involves agency (or the will) and can be cultivated in practice. Here I use the expression "have a potential to be distinguished from" rather than the expression "is distinguished from" because if I used the latter someone would object as follows: that the faculty of perception has *xin* as its component does not mean that the faculty is thus a cultivated faculty because *xin* might be something whose exercise is mechanical like that of sense organs. I admit the thrust of this objection. Thus I shall show later in the next section why Xunzi thinks that *xin* is a cultivated faculty.

So far I have shown that in Xunzi's epistemology the faculty of perception as a whole is constituted by *xin* and the sense organs from Xunzi's thought that the formation of (recognitional) perception or perceptual beliefs requires the co-exercise of *xin* and the sense organs. The idea that *xin* is a component of the faculty of perception creates a potential for a faculty-based virtue epistemology to be regulative, because the faculty virtue of perception, thus properly understood, is not as mechanical as originally thought, but can be cultivated to a greater or lesser degree as the character virtues can. In what follows I turn to the issue of why and how to cultivate *xin*.

### 3.3 The Cultivation of *Xin*

Why does *xin*, when acting as the power of conceptual recognition, need to be cultivated? This is because, to put in Xunzi's term, *xin* might be "blinded" in exercise, or to put it in the Sosaian terminology, *xin* might be maladroit. Why does Xunzi choose the term "blindness" to characterize the maladroitness of the exercise of *xin*? *Xin*'s power is not merely to be aware of something, but to recognize something as belonging to a certain kind or as possessing certain defining characteristics. Assume that the nature of an object or a thing O can be represented by its possessing the defining characteristics C1, C2, C3, C4 and C5. A subject S's perceiving of O requires the exercise of S's *xin* to recognize C1 to C5 of O, ideally speaking. But it is possible that *xin*'s act of recognizing is performed worse, that is, S recognizes C1 as O's mere defining characteristic. In such a case, S's *xin* is blinded in the sense that it does not recognize

C2 to C5 as O's defining characteristics. Xunzi, however, does not think that *xin* has no power to recognize C2 to C5 as O's defining characteristics; for him, *xin*'s being blinded can be dispelled by self-cultivation.

In exercising the faculty of perception (or in the co-exercising of *xin* and the sense organs), there are some cases in which *xin* is blinded or maladroit:

As a general rule, when examining things about which there are doubts, if *xin* is not inwardly settled, then external things will not be clear. If my deliberations are not clear, then I will never be able to settle what is so of a thing and what is not so of it. [1] Someone walking along a road in the dark may see a fallen stone and think it a tiger crouching in ambush, or he may see an upright tree and think it a standing man. The darkness has beclouded the clarity of his vision. [2] A drunk may jump across a ditch a hundred paces wide, thinking it a drain half a pace wide, or may stoop down to go out the city gate, thinking it a small doorway. The drink has disordered his spirit. [3] Pressing against the eye while looking at an object will make it appear double; covering the ears when listening will make silence seem like a clamor. The force applied to the sense organs has disordered them. (*Xunzi*, "Jiebi"; tr. Knoblock, 21.8)

凡觀物有疑，中心不定，則外物不清；吾慮不清，則未可定然否也。[1] 冥冥而行者，見寢石以為伏虎也，見植林以為後人也；冥冥蔽其明也。[2] 醉者越百步之溝，以為躡步之澮也，俯而出城門，以為小之闔也；酒亂其神也。[3] 厭目而視者，視一以為兩；掩耳而聽者，聽漠漠而以為啁啾；執亂其官也。((解蔽))

In case [1], *xin* is blinded because of its environment; in case [2], *xin* is blinded because of its neurological condition; in case [3], *xin* is blinded because of its co-operators (the sense organs).

Beyond the field of perceptual knowledge, *xin* might be blinded in the fields of political and philosophical knowledge. Xunzi mentions several philosophers whose *xins* are blinded:

Mo Di was blinded by utility and was insensible to the value of good form. Song Xing was blinded by desire and was insensible to satisfaction. Shen Dao was blinded by law and was insensible to worth. Shen Buhai was blinded by technique and was insensible to knowledge. Hui Shi was blinded by propositions and was insensible to realities. Zhuang Zhou was blinded by Nature and was insensible to men. (*Xunzi*, "Jiebi"; tr. Knoblock, 21.4)

墨子蔽於用而不知文。宋子蔽於欲而不知得。慎子蔽於法而不知賢。申子蔽於執而不知知。惠子蔽於辭而不知實。莊子蔽於天而不知人。((解蔽))

Without regard to a particular field, the blindness or the maladroitness of *xin*'s operation can be characterized as follows:

What makes for blindness? One can be blinded by desire or aversion, by the beginnings

of things or their end, by what is remote or what is near, by broadness or shallowness, by antiquity or modernity. Since each of the myriad things evokes a different reaction, there is none that could not obsess *xin*. This is the universal flaw of the operation of *xin*. (Xunzi, “Jiebi”; tr. Knoblock, 21.2)

故為蔽：欲為蔽，惡為蔽，始為蔽，終為蔽，遠為蔽，近為蔽，博為蔽，淺為蔽，古為蔽，今為蔽。凡萬物異則莫不相為蔽，此心術之公患也。（《解蔽》）

The above statements exemplify the blindness of *xin*'s operation in various fields (such as perception, politics, and philosophy). Xunzi attempts to teach us how to dispel such blindness. However, Xunzi does not offer different prescriptions for different fields. He deals with blindness as a whole. Nonetheless, I assume that Xunzi's formula for dispelling blindness can apply to all fields, including perception.

For Xunzi, the achievement of dispelling blindness can be found in a sage:

The sage knows the flaws of *xin*'s operation and perceives the misfortunes of blindness and being closed to the truth. This is why he is without desires and aversions, without beginnings and ends of things, without the remote or near, without broadness or shallowness, without antiquity or modernity. He lays out all the myriad things and causes himself to exactly match how each settles on the suspended balance. This is why for the sage, the multitude of different reactions to things cannot produce obsession by one thing's beclouding another and so disturbing their proper position. (Xunzi, “Jiebi”; tr. Knoblock, 21.5a)

聖人知心術之患，見蔽塞之禍，故無欲，無惡，無始，無終，無近，無遠，無博，無淺，無古，無今，兼陳萬物而中懸衡焉。是故眾異不得相蔽以亂其倫也。（《解蔽》）

The sage always has a comprehensive view, rather than a partial view, of a thing. The question is how can the sage achieve such a state, that is, “to be without merely focusing on X or on its contrary”? According to Xunzi, “the critical factor necessary to put things in order consists in understanding *dao*” (Xunzi, “Jiebi”; tr. Knoblock, 21.5c). This is because “*Dao* itself is constant in its form yet completely changeable; one corner is an insufficient basis for drawing conclusions about it [夫道者，體常而盡變，一隅不足以舉之]” (Xunzi, “Jiebi”; tr. Knoblock, 21.4). So the question now is: How can an ordinary agent, in order to become a sage whose *xin* is not blinded, understand or know *dao*?

What do men use to know *dao*? I say that it is *xin*. How does *xin* know? I say by its emptiness, unity, and stillness. *Xin* never stops storing; nonetheless it possesses what is called emptiness (*xu* 虛). *Xin* never lacks duality; nonetheless it possesses what is called unity (*yi* 壹). *Xin* never stops moving; nonetheless it possesses what is called stillness (*jing* 靜). (Xunzi, “Jiebi”; tr. Knoblock, 21.5d)

人何以知道？曰：心。心何以知？曰：虛壹而靜。心未嘗不臧也，然而有所謂虛；心未嘗不滿



[兩]也，然而有所謂壹；心未嘗不動也，然而有所謂靜。(《解蔽》)

To know *dao* (or to have a comprehensive view of all things), *xin* must be empty, united, and still. These three qualities or powers can be possessed by *xin* through self-cultivation. The three qualities or powers are explained in what follows in turn:

[1] Men from birth have awareness. Having awareness, there is memory. Memories are what is stored, yet *xin* has the property called emptiness. Not allowing what has previously been stored to interfere with what is being received in *xin* is called emptiness. (*Xunzi*, “Jiebi”; tr. Knoblock, 21.5d)

人生而有知，知而有志；志也者，臧也；然而有所謂虛；不以所已臧害所將受，謂之虛。(《解蔽》)

[2] *Xin* from birth has awareness. Having awareness, there is perception of difference. Perception of difference consists in awareness of two aspects of things at the same time. Awareness of two aspects of things all at the same time entails duality; nonetheless *xin* has the quality called unity. Not allowing the one thing to interfere with the other is called unity. (*Xunzi*, “Jiebi”; tr. Knoblock, 21.5d)

心生而有知，知而有異；異也者，同時兼知之；同時兼知之，兩也；然而有所謂一；不以夫一害此一謂之壹。(《解蔽》)

[3] When *xin* is asleep, it dreams. When it relaxes, it moves of its own accord. When it is employed in a task, it plans. Thus *xin* never stops moving; nonetheless it possesses the quality called stillness. Not allowing dreams and fantasies to bring disorder to awareness is called stillness. (*Xunzi*, “Jiebi”; tr. Knoblock, 21.5d)

心臥則夢，偷則自行，使之則謀；故心未嘗不動也；然而有所謂靜；不以夢劇亂知，謂之靜。(《解蔽》)

I will explain these three notions in the case of recognitional perception. Let us assume that the defining characteristics of an object *O* are *C*<sub>1</sub>, *C*<sub>2</sub>, *C*<sub>3</sub>, *C*<sub>4</sub> and *C*<sub>5</sub>. When a subject *S* perceptually encounters *O* (which he has never encountered before) and exercises his *xin* (together with his faculty of memory) to recognize *O*, it is probable that *S*, whose memory contains *no* concepts of *C*<sub>1</sub> to *C*<sub>5</sub>, is disposed to recognize *O* as possessing certain defining characteristics that *he already possessed*. To avoid such an epistemically obstructive scenario, *xin* must cultivate itself to have the power of being “empty”, i.e., the power of “not allowing what has previously been stored to interfere with what is being received in *xin*”.

Let us consider the second scenario. Assume that *S*'s memory contains the concepts of *C*<sub>1</sub> to *C*<sub>5</sub>. When *S* perceptually encounters *O* and exercises his *xin* to recognize *O* as possessing *C*<sub>1</sub> and as possessing *C*<sub>2</sub>, it is probable that *S* is disposed to recognize *O* as either possessing *C*<sub>1</sub> or as possessing *C*<sub>2</sub> *but not both*. To avoid such an epistemically obstructive

scenario, *xin* must cultivate itself to have the power of being “united”, i.e., the power of “not allowing the one thing to interfere with the other” and of synthesizing the two into a unity.

Finally, when S perceptually encounters O and exercises his *xin* (together with his faculty of memory) to recognize O, it is probable that S, whose memory does *contain* the concepts of C1 to C5, is disposed to recognize O as possessing C6 to C10, none of which presents the true nature of O. To avoid such an epistemically obstructive scenario, *xin* must cultivate itself to have the power of being “still”, i.e., the power of “not allowing dreams and fantasies to bring disorder to awareness”, or the power of making itself effective.

I will not elaborate these qualities or powers further. My aim is to show that *xin* can be cultivated. In my interpretation of Xunzi’s epistemology of perception, a perceptual belief is something derived from the exercise of the faculty virtue of perception, or to put it more clearly, from the co-exercise of *xin* and the relevant sense organs. The faculty virtue of perception can be cultivated because its essential component, *xin*, can be cultivated. Why does the cultivation of *xin* imply the cultivation of the faculty virtue of perception as a whole? It is because *xin* is superior to the five sense organs in the sense that it actively recognizes sensory information issued from the sense organs and determines the content of perception. Recognize more adroitly, perceive more accurately. The faculty virtue of perception, in which *xin* plays the pivotal role, is the faculty of perceptual recognition, which is inborn and cultivated in character..

#### 4. Conclusion

Three tasks are achieved in this paper. First, I have shown that a regulative faculty-based virtue epistemology is possible through a (re)construction of Xunzi’s epistemology. Second, I have shown that we can achieve a slightly but significantly different understanding of the faculty virtue of perception—that is, a combination of *xin* and the sense organs. Third, I have shown why and in what manner Xunzi’s epistemology can be understood as a regulative faculty-based virtue epistemology.

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# 荀子與德性知識論\*

蔡政宏

東吳大學哲學系副教授

**內容摘要：**調控智德知識論主張智識之德可以調整與指引認知者的知態行動，並且提高知態行動的品質。對調控智德知識論者而言，智識之德可加以培養，且當智識之德的品質愈高，所產出的知態行動的品質也會愈高。調控智德知識論者所說的智識之德一般是指「品格之德」（例如智識上的勇氣與開放心靈）而非「官能之德」（例如視覺與聽覺），因為他們認為官能之德是無法培養的。本文試圖以荀子哲學為範例，闡釋以官能之德為核心概念的調控智德知識論如何可能。若此闡釋成功，則一方面為當代智德知識論顯示出可隸屬於其中的新支派，另一方面也為荀子的知識觀點建立起一清晰理論架構並進而突顯出其知識觀點的特徵。

**關鍵詞：**智識之德、Ernest Sosa、天君、天官、解蔽

## 壹、導論

德性知識論（virtue epistemology；或譯「智德知識論」）試圖以智識德性（intellectual virtue；或譯「智識之德」）說明人類的知態實踐或行動。但針對智識德性的本質為何，德性知識論者之間並無一致看法。有些德性知識論者——特別是 Ernest Sosa（1991, 2007）為代表——將智識德性理解為認知官能（cognitive

\* 本文初稿曾以英文或中文於以下學術會議中宣讀：美國哲學學會太平洋分會年會（西雅圖，2012年4月）、國科會哲學學門年輕學者培育計畫研究成果發表會（臺北，2012年5月）、東吳大學哲學系德性工作坊（臺北，2012年5月）、第二十三屆世界哲學大會（雅典，2013年8月）、臺灣哲學學會年會（新竹，2013年10月）。筆者感謝在這些會議場合以及其他談話場合中，多位專家學者的提問、批評以及建議，特別是成中英、林正弘、方萬全、鄧育仁、陳瑞麟、黎輝傑、劉紀璐、李瑞全、王華、米建國、沈享民、蔡龍九、馬愷之、Ernest Sosa、Peter Graham、Sor-hoon Tan 等教授。另外，筆者也感謝兩位匿名審查人的細心閱讀與建設性批評。本文之研究承國科會（NSC 98-2410-H-031-002-MY3）與蔣經國基金會（RG003-D-08；計畫名稱「知識、德性與直覺：德性知識論與中國哲學」）之補助，特此致謝。

faculty)，像是知覺、記憶、內省、推理等等官能；有些德性知識論者——特別是 Lind Zagzebski (1996, 2009) 為代表——將智識德性理解為品格特徵 (character trait)，像是智識上的勇氣、誠實、謙虛、開放心靈等等。儘管 Sosa 與 Zagzebski 等德性知識論者對智識德性沒有一致看法，但他們對於「知識論的研究目的為何」此一後設知識論問題卻有高度共識，亦即，他們都是以分析知識論 (analytic epistemology) 為其後設理論。

什麼是分析知識論呢？根據 Robert Roberts 與 Jay Wood (2007: 20-1) 的說法，知識論的研究目的可以是「分析式」或是「調控式」。<sup>1</sup>分析知識論主張知識論的研究目的是去建構出關於「知識」、「理性」、「證成」等知態概念的理論，而建構方式就是去給出「知識」、「理性」、「證成」等概念的充分與必要條件，並且在建構中必須去避免反對者所提出的各式反例 (例如層出不窮的葛棣爾式反例 (Gettier-style counterexamples) 或是去回應來自懷疑論的各式挑戰 (例如桶中腦論證)。相對於分析知識論，調控知識論 (regulative epistemology) 並不企圖對「知識」、「理性」或「證成」等知態概念給予充要條件式分析，<sup>2</sup>也不企圖去回應那與實際世界頗為遙遠的反例或是懷疑論。調控知識論主張知識論的主要目的是去調整或指引人們的知態實踐或行動，例如告訴人們應該如何形成「理解」(understanding) 或「信念」並據之以行動，或是告訴人們應該如何避免產生出缺陷的認知行動。

Roberts 與 Wood 認為當代知識論 (以 Sosa 和 Zagzebski 為主的德性知識論也包含在內) 都是分析知識論；亦即，當代知識論都是在為知態概念提供充要條件。德性知識論的特別之處只在於它是以智識德性來定義知態概念。然而，Roberts 與 Wood

<sup>1</sup> Roberts 與 Wood 在此處的「分析知識論」與「調控知識論」之區分又是源自於 Wolterstorff (1996)。

<sup>2</sup> 必須注意的是，不對知態概念進行充要條件式分析，不表示不對知態概念進行任何理論分析。調控知識論者還是必須對個別知態概念給出理論分析，否則知態行為的調控無法進行。亦即，若我們對於「知識」或「證成」毫無概念，我們就無從判斷某人的知態行動是否偏差 (所謂偏差即沒有達致知識或證成)，更遑論去提出規章，以建議人們該如何調控其知態行動以使其穩定獲致知識或證成。為清楚之故，我們可以將研究目的設定在給出知態概念之充要條件的分析知識論稱為「強分析知識論」，而研究目的不在給出知態概念之充要條件，但仍必須給予知態概念某種理論說明或闡釋的知識論稱為「弱分析知識論」。有了這樣的區分，我們可以清楚地瞭解，Roberts 與 Wood 反對的是強分析知識論；並且我們也將可以瞭解，為什麼 Roberts 與 Wood 在書中也曾提到，他們並不否認其「調控知識論」也可以是「分析的」(Roberts and Wood 2007: 27)——這裡的「分析」必須理解成「弱分析」。(Roberts 與 Wood 認為在調控知識論中對知態概念進行分析只是「權宜之計」。)

認為分析知識論是有無法成功的；<sup>3</sup>因此分析德性知識論（analytic virtue epistemology）也是無法成功的。但分析知識論的失敗並不代表整個知識論或是德性知識論也是失敗的。此處，調控德性知識論（regulative virtue epistemology；或譯「調控智德知識論」）可做為發展知識論事業的另一選項。但問題是，調控德性知識論中所談的智識德性是哪種呢？是官能德性（faculty virtue）還是品格德性（character virtue）呢？

Roberts 與 Wood 選擇以品格德性來建立調控德性知識論。他們探究的個別智識德性包括了對知識的愛好（love of knowledge），知態上的堅定、勇氣、小心、謙虛、自律、慷慨與實踐智慧等等。這些德性都後天取得的卓越（acquired excellences），而且可以加以培養以達更高等級。相對地，官能德性（像是視覺與聽覺）雖然也是智識上的卓越——因為這些德性的運作能使主體獲致真理——不過官能德性卻不是後天習得，而是天生俱有。如果某一知識論者所欲提供的是一種調控知識論，很自然地他會選擇以品格德性（而不是官能德性）作為其理論的核心概念，因為品格德性性能被培養，而官能德性則否。

若是根據智識德性的種類以及後設知識論的種類（特別是指針對「知識論的研究目的為何」所形成的後設知識論）這兩要素來考量德性知識論，我們可以區分出四種不同樣式的德性知識論：分析官能德性知識論（analytic faculty-based virtue epistemology）、分析品格德性知識論（analytic character-based virtue epistemology）、調控品格德性知識論（regulative character-based virtue epistemology），以及調控官能德性知識論（regulative faculty-based virtue epistemology）。表列如下：

後設知識論的種類 \ 智識德性的種類	官能德性	品格德性
分析式	分析官能德性知識論 （Sosa）	分析品格德性知識論 （Zagzebski）
調控式	調控官能德性知識論 （無此立場？）	調控品格德性知識論 （Roberts & Wood）

表一：德性知識論的四種樣式

<sup>3</sup> 根據 Roberts 與 Wood，對知識進行充要條件式的定義工作是無法成功的，因為知識概念具有相當的複雜性與多樣性；對他們而言，知識概念是一家族相似性概念（Roberts and Wood 2007: 19）。

分析官能德性知識論的代表人物是 Sosa (2007, 2009b, 2011)，分析品格德性知識論的代表人物是 Zagzebski (1996, 2009)，調控品格德性知識論的代表人物是 Roberts and Wood (2007)。本文並不評估 Roberts 與 Wood 對於分析知識論的批評是否成立，也不評估 Roberts 與 Wood 本身所採取的調控品格德性知識論是否成立。<sup>4</sup>本文所關心的問題是：調控官能德性知識論是否可能？如果調控官能德性知識論是可能的，那麼其中所涉及的「可培養之官能德性」應如何理解？本文試圖以荀子哲學為範例，闡釋以官能德性為核心概念的調控德性知識論如何可能。若此闡釋成功，則一方面為當代德性知識論顯示出可隸屬於其中的新支派，另一方面為荀子的知識觀點建立起一清晰的理論架構進而突顯出其知識觀點的特徵。

本文結構如下。在第參節，筆者將逐步說明：(i)為何荀子的知識論是德性知識論，(ii)為何荀子的德性知識論是官能德性知識論，以及(iii)為何荀子的官能德性知識論是調控官能德性知識論。但在說明這三點之前，筆者必須在第貳節中先引介 Sosa 的官能德性知識論，以此做為討論荀子知識論與分析官能德性知識論之異同的基礎。

## 貳、Sosa 的分析官能德性知識論

### 一、適切性

Sosa 的德性知識論中有兩個核心概念，分別是「動物知識」與「反思知識」(Sosa 運用這些概念來處理當代知識論中的重要議題，像是基礎論與融貫論之爭、價值難題等等)。這兩種知識具有某種的堆疊關係：

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<sup>4</sup> 分析知識論與調控知識論並不相斥。Roberts 與 Wood 支持調控知識論的理由，並不在於先假定分析知識論與調控知識論是相斥的，再藉由分析知識論不成立，進而主張調控知識論成立。他們僅是由「強」分析知識論的不成立，建議以調控知識論(配合上「弱」分析知識論)為替代的知識論方案(筆者所謂的「強」、「弱」分析知識論之分，請看註 2)。筆者認為，暫且不論分析知識論的成敗與否，我們可以用下列方式來看待分析知識論與調控知識論的各自特徵：分析知識論是關於知識性質的研究(強版本的分析知識論試圖去「定義」知識，而弱版本的分析知識論試圖去「理解」知識)，而調控知識論是關於知識取得的研究。將此一看待分析知識論與調控知識論的方式運用到德性知識論上，可有如此結果：分析品格德性知識論關心的是如何以品格智德來定義或理解知識；調控品格德性知識論關心的是如何取得或培養品格智德；分析官能德性知識論關心的是如何以官能智德來定義或理解知識；調控官能德性知識論關心的是如何取得或培養官能智德。這裡提到的最後一種德性知識論正是本文的焦點：官能智德能被培養嗎？

- (a)〔首先〕肯定知識蘊涵信念；
- (b)〔其次〕將「動物」知識（“animal” knowledge）理解為適切信念（apt belief），但其不是可辯護之適切信念（defensibly apt belief）……；
- (c)〔最後〕將「反思」知識（“reflective” knowledge）理解成要求不只是適切信念而且也是可辯護之適切信念。（Sosa 2007: 24）

我們可以由其中看到這兩類知識都是透過適切性（aptness）概念來說明。要理解適切性概念就必須去理解 Sosa 的「展演評估理論」（the account of performance assessment）。這理論包含了五個關鍵概念：完全適切性（full aptness）、後設適切性（meta-aptness）、適切性（aptness）、熟練性（adroitness）、準確性（accuracy）。第一個概念是透過第二、第三個概念來界定，第二、第三個概念分別是透過第四、第五個概念來界定。本文只需說明後三個概念就足以應付後續討論所需。<sup>5</sup>

根據 Sosa，在評估一個展演或表現（performance）時，至少可以從三個面向予以評估。這三個面向，他分別稱之為準確性（Accuracy）、熟練性（Adroitness）以及適切性（Aptness）。亦即，一個展演可以具有 Sosa 所謂的 AAA 結構。我們可以由 Sosa 所提供的例子來看，如此最能掌握住這結構：

當弓箭手選定目標並射出弓箭，此一射擊可以由三個方面來評估。[……] 第一、我們可以評估此一射擊是否成功達成目的，即是否成功擊中目標。儘管我們也可以評估此一射擊有多精準，即由其距離靶心的遠近來進行評估，但此處我們先不管程度上的問題，而只問有 / 無這樣的問題，亦即只問：此一射擊是「有」或「無」擊中目標。[……] 第二、我們可以評估此一射擊是否熟練，即是否來自於弓箭手所施展的技能。技能同樣也有程度之別，但我們一樣也只關注有 / 無這樣的問題，亦即只問：這射擊是「有」或「無」來自於相關能力的施展，是「有」或「無」熟練的。[……] 一個射擊可以是準確且熟練，但其成功擊中目標卻不歸功於弓箭手。當弓箭手射出一箭，在條件正常之下理應會擊中靶心，但卻刮起一陣反常強風，強到將行進中的箭吹偏離了原有軌道，而若順著後來軌道繼續行進下去箭是不會擊中靶心的。不過，之後的風勢卻緩緩地將箭帶回原有軌道進而擊

<sup>5</sup> 關於後設適切性與完全適切性的說明，除了可參考 Sosa（2007，2009a，2011），也可參考筆者在 Tsai（2011）中的說明與應用。



中靶心。此次射擊是準確的，也是熟練的，然而，其準確卻不是（完全）因為熟練之故。因此，此次射擊並不是適切的，且不能歸功於弓箭手。[……] 由上說明可知，一名弓箭手的射擊是個具備著 AAA 結構的展演；這 AAA 結構即是：準確性（accuracy）、熟練性（adroitness）以及適切性（aptness）。（Sosa 2007: 22）

對 Sosa 而言，面對任何具有目標或目的之展演或表現，我們都可以如此評估之：評估此展演是否成功達成所設定目標（準確性）、評估其是否展現了相關能力（熟練性）、評估其準確性是否是因其熟練性之故（適切性）。

Sosa 建議將信念視為是種具有目標的展演。如此一來，信念也具有 AAA 結構，亦即，信念可以從三個方面來被評估。此處，信念的 AAA 結構為何呢？換言之，Sosa 必須回答：什麼是信念的目標呢？什麼又是與信念相關的能力呢？對 Sosa 而言，信念的目標在於真；當某一信念是真的，那麼此信念就是準確的。與信念相關的能力即是智識德性（官能德性）；當某一信念之展現是由於施展相關的智識德性，那麼此信念是熟練的。最後，當一信念的確具有準確性也具有熟練性，而且準確性是因為熟練性之故，則此信念是適切的。適切信念即是動物知識。

由適切性概念的說明，我們除了看到 Sosa 對於動物知識的界定，更重要的是也可以看到「德性知識論」的理論特徵（這特徵在第參節中還會再提及）。為清楚指出這特徵，我們先將信念視為是種「知態產物」或「知態展演」，而將智識德性視為是種「知態來源」或「知態能力」。在 Sosa 對動物知識的界定中，其不只談到了知態產物本身的性質（即準確性和適切性），而且談到了知態來源的性質（即熟練性）。而且在這界定中，知態來源的性質會對知態產物本身的性質（即適切性）產生影響。此即德性知識論的重要特徵之一：知識此一知態產物的構成中，包含了知態來源之性質所提供的貢獻。

接下來我們討論 Sosa 的智識德性概念，此將有助於我們瞭解 Sosa 的「官能德性知識論」的特徵（亦即，Sosa 的官能德性知識論不是「調控式的」）。

## 二、官能智德

Sosa 針對智識德性提供了相當細節的說明與定義 (Sosa 1991, Ch.16)。<sup>6</sup>不過我們後續的討論並不必涉及他的定義，而只需注意智識德性的例子有哪些——其包括了知覺（視覺、聽覺、味覺、嗅覺、觸覺）、內省、記憶、推理（演繹、歸納、說明）。<sup>7</sup>這裡提到的知覺、記憶、推理等等都是自然官能 (natural faculties)，亦即，它們是與生俱來而非後天取得。不過，這些官能似乎還有著重要差別。<sup>8</sup>記憶與推理是主體可以透過訓練來加以培養的自然官能，而知覺是無法被培養的自然官能。在目前這個階段，為了讓官能德性知識論與品格德性知識論有著明顯差別，我們在討論官能德性知識論時，將聚焦在知覺官能。<sup>9</sup>

究竟是什麼因素使得知覺智識德性無法被歸類成能被培養之物？如果是以官能的「取得」這方向來找答案，恐怕是沒有助益的（如同前面所言，推理官能亦是天生而來，但其是可培養的）。一個回答可以從以下這段 Sosa 為何將知態「官能」視為知態「德性」的段落中看到端倪：

知覺與內省信念通常是非自主地獲得 (acquired willy-nilly)。甚至在沒有思慮抉擇之下，有的機制還是會〔自動運作而〕產生出信念。例如，人的

<sup>6</sup> Sosa 對於智識德性的定義：「主體在環境 E 下具有智識德性或官能，若且唯若，主體有內在性質 I，由於 I 之故，主體通常能在某一命題領域 F 中，在條件 C 下，得真而避假」（Sosa 1991: 284）。

<sup>7</sup> 根據 Sosa，這些認知官能又可以被分成兩大類：「傳遞官能」(transmission faculties) 與「產出官能」(generation faculties)。傳遞官能是「由已形成的信念導出信念」的官能或機制，而產出官能「不是由信念來導出信念」(Sosa 1991: 225)。對 Sosa 而言，直覺、知覺、內省是產出官能，而記憶與推理是傳遞官能。在 Sosa 的二階德性知識論 (bi-level virtue epistemology) 中，上述官能都是一階官能，而反思官能則是二階官能。

<sup>8</sup> 一般在理解 Sosa 的德性知識論時並不會注意到筆者在此要提到的差別。原因之一可能是 Sosa 在建構其德性知識論時，主要都是在談知覺知識。

<sup>9</sup> Jason Baehr 對於「認知官能」（即本文的「官能德性」）與「智識德性」（即本文的「品格德性」）的區分，其中有兩項是：第一、認知官能是天生而來的才能 (natural endowment)，而品格德性是培養而成的特徵 (cultivated traits)。第二、「認知官能的運作通常不需要主體能動性 (agency) 的運作」(Baehr 2011: 23)，但「智識品格智德的運作...以涉及主體能動性為特點」(Baehr 2011: 24)。不過，Baehr 的區分並不完全平行，意即，培養而來的特徵大部分都涉及主體能動性，但並不是天生而來的才能就一定不需要主體能動性。Baehr 也注意到此點；他在上述第二點區別的討論上加了註腳：「〔天生而來的〕推理官能〔像是演繹或歸納推理〕可能是例外，因為其運作通常會連結著意志的運作」(Baehr 2011: 23)。關於此點也可參閱 Zagzebski (1996: 103)。

視覺官能在良好光線下就會〔自動〕運作，人〔因而不由自主地〕就會去相信自己面前有個白色、圓形的雪球。擁有這樣的官能是種「德性」嗎？在狹義的亞里斯多德意思下當然不是，因為這樣的官能不是去思慮抉擇的傾向。但同樣也是在希臘文中，「德性」一詞還有廣義用法，即任何具有功能（不管是自然的還是人造的）的東西都具有德性。眼睛有其德性，刀子也有其德性。如果我們將掌握周遭環境真相視為是人類的正當目的，那麼視覺官能似乎就是廣義下的人類德性；而又如果掌握真相是智識事務，那麼上述德性直截了當地就是智識德性了。（Sosa 1991, p.271）

此處我們關心的並不是「德性」這字究竟可不可以用在官能上，而是在於指出知覺此種官能德性與品格德性之所以不同，關鍵是知覺官能之運作不涉及主體能動性（agency）。當知覺主體的知覺官能或信念產出機制被相關刺激觸發，主體就在不由自主的情況下形成了某些知覺信念；知覺主體無法對於信念形成機制進行干涉，例如以其思慮抉擇或意志控制進行干涉。此處我們對於知覺官能或機制的探討，展示出知覺官能的成份（如果有的話）不會有主體能動性或意志在其中。

在此節中，我們透過引介 Sosa 的德性知識論標示出三項重點。第一、德性知識論在當代知識論中具有突出特色，主要是因為其強調知態來源（epistemic sources）的角色。第二、智識德性可以被理解成官能德性。第三、知覺官能德性不包含主體能動性。第三點使得 Sosa 的德性知識論不會是一種調控官能德性知識論。在下一節裡，筆者將逐步展示荀子將會同意前兩點（因而也使得荀子可以被視為是官能德性知識論者），但不會同意第三點（因而使得荀子能是調控官能德性知識論者）。

## 參、荀子的調控官能德性知識論

### 一、早期中國知識論（並論「為何荀子是德性知識論者」）

就什麼意義而言我們可以將荀子的知識論視為是德性知識論？筆者認為可以由早期中國知識論的一般特徵來談。Dan Robins 在 *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*（2007）中的“Xunzi”條目中，提到荀子的知識論與早期中國知識論一樣，具有某種特徵：

早期中國哲學家通常以實踐字詞 (practical terms) 來談知識。這些哲學家將知識的根本視為是對行動方式 (道) 的掌握，而不在於對事實的掌握。其中特別重要的是那種辨別之知 (knowledge of how to draw distinctions)。辨別是早期中國哲學家所承認的最接近概念化的東西，且他們將辨別視為是基本的認知運作。其實，荀子曾經 (在第二篇〈修身〉中) 指出正確地辨別就是所謂的知識。這其實就是將知識視為是種能力 (ability) 而不是一種對事實的表徵 (representation of facts)，也因此我們並不訝異荀子並不訴諸表徵錯誤來解釋認知錯誤。對荀子而言，我們之所以犯錯並不是因為我們對事實的描繪不正確，而是因為我們缺乏了某種能力；知識並不是與假信念對比，而是與混淆 (confusion) 對比。荀子曾兩次 (在《荀子》第六篇〈非十二子〉與第二十一篇〈解蔽〉) 列舉出他的哲學對手並對他們所犯的錯誤進行診斷，但荀子都沒有指責他們是錯在錯誤表徵事實或是混淆表象與實在。荀子的指責都是在於他們太過強調道的某個面向，以致無法瞭解到整體。(Robins 2007)

Robins 強調早期中國知識論是以「辨別之知」(knowing how to draw distinctions) 或「能力」來理解知識，並且對比於以「對事實的表徵」來理解知識。為何 Robins 在刻畫早期中國知識論以及荀子知識論的特徵時，還要拿出另一套知識觀點來對比？這大抵是因為當代西方知識論在討論知識時，都隱含地預設知識就是命題知識或是對事實的表徵；而若不經批判地就以命題知識概念來理解古代中國哲學中的知識概念，就極可能產生無法理解或誤解的情況。此外，上述的對比還有助於解釋像是為何在古代中國哲學中沒有太多懷疑論的蹤跡 (參考 Hansen 1981, 1983、Berkeley 2002 以及筆者在 Tsai 2006 一文中的討論)。是以，Robins 所對比的不只是「能力之知 vs. 表徵之知」，而且還是「早期中國知識論 vs. 當代西方知識論」。這樣的對比可以幫助我們更瞭解早期中國知識論的特徵以及有助於將荀子詮釋成德性知識

論者。以下筆者以「知道如何 vs. 知道如此」<sup>10</sup>這樣詞彙再次表述上述對比：

早期中國知識論關注於「知道如何」，而當代西方知識論關注於「知道如此」。

更細節地說：

早期中國知識論所關注的「知道如何」是關於「知道如何辨別」的這樣的實踐知識，而當代西方知識論關注的「知道如此」是「知道某某命題為真」這樣的命題知識。

筆者在此處的對比上加上個但書：早期中國知識論關注於「知道如何」，但這並不表示中國知識論反對有「知道如此」。對「知道如何」與「知道如此」的區分與關係，我們可以有個可能且合理的理解（此處將借用上述第貳節中的幾個概念）：「知道如何」或知態能力（*competence*）皆屬於知態來源，而「知道如此」或知態展演（*performance*）皆屬於知態產物。<sup>11</sup>早期中國知識論關注於「知道如何」或「知態來源」，這並不表示其反對有所謂的「知道如此」或「知態產物」；「強調」知態來源的重要性並不蘊涵「否認」知態產物的存在。

早期中國知識論對於知態來源的重視，正好相合於當代德性知識論的基本想法。有學者指出，德性知識論與其它大部分當代西方知識論的不同，在於「分析方向的轉變」（*the change in the direction of analysis*）（Axtell 2000: xiii）：德性知識

<sup>10</sup> 在上述引文中，Robins 使用了「知道如何（辨別）」和「（辨別）能力」等詞；此處我們可以將「知道如何」、「能力」這些詞視為同義而互換使用。以下幾組區分常在不同學術領域（像是哲學、心理學、人工智能等）中出現，但其實是類似的區分：「知道如何 vs. 知道如此」、「能力之知 vs. 表徵之知」、「實踐知識 vs. 理論知識」、「程序知識（*procedural knowledge*） vs. 陳述知識（*declarative knowledge*）」、「隱含知識（*implicit knowledge*） vs. 明言知識（*explicit knowledge*）」；可參見 Sahdra and Thagard (2003)。在哲學中最常使用的詞彙是第一組區分，經典文獻為 Ryle (1949: Ch.2)。但這些區分並不是不可反駁；近年來 Jason Stanley 與 Timothy Williamson 在其合著“Knowing How” (2001) 一文中對 Ryle 的「知道如何 vs. 知道如此」區分有所反駁，並進一步主張所有的「知道如何」都是「知道如此」的一種。對 Ryle 之區分的辯護，可參見筆者的論文 Tsai (2011, 2014)。

<sup>11</sup> 另一個方便我們思考「知態來源」與「知態產物」之間關係的圖像，就是透過知識論中的可靠論（*reliabilism*）。根據可靠論，知識是來自於可靠認知機制運作下的產物。此處，可靠認知機制是「知態來源」，而知識是「知態產物」。所謂的「知道如何」、「知態能力」等概念，在不涉及更進一步的爭議時（例如「能力」與「機制」是否相同），其實是與可靠認知機制概念相近，皆屬知態來源之範疇。

論分析與關注的是認知主體或知態來源本身的相關性質（像是認知主體的品格特徵，或是信念產出機制的可靠性）；相對地，不是德性知識論的大部分當代西方知識論，僅僅只分析與關注於認知主體或知態來源所產之物（例如信念或知識）本身的性質。從知識論分析與關注的首要對象來看，早期中國知識論（荀子的知識論包括在內）與德性知識論是相近的，即它們關注的是知態來源。<sup>12</sup>

## 二、知覺官能為五官與心之結合體（並論「為何荀子是官能德性知識論者」）

在上述討論中，我們論證了（或提供了初步理由來宣稱）荀子知識論是德性知識論。接著而來的問題是：荀子會採取什麼類型的德性知識論？（如同在註 12 中，我們提到 Sosa 宣稱 Descartes 是德性知識論者；但 Sosa 另外還是花費了相當工夫說明 Descartes 所採取的是什麼類型的德性知識論。參見 Sosa 2012。）我們將由探究荀子的「天官」與「天君」概念來回答這問題。

荀子在論述知覺時提到的天官（五種天生的感覺器官）與天君（心）都是某種器官，<sup>13</sup>但兩者具有某種優位順序關係：<sup>14</sup>

耳、目、鼻、口、形，能各有接而不相能也，夫是之謂天官。心居中虛，以治五官，夫是之謂天君。〈天論〉

這段文字包含了兩個宣稱。第一、五種感覺器官各有其獨特功用；第二、心控

<sup>12</sup> John Turri 與 Ernest Sosa 在 *Oxford Bibliographies Online* (2010) 的“Virtue Epistemology”條目中，將歷史上著名哲學家 Descartes、Hume、Reid、Peirce 以及 Russell，以及當代哲學家 John McDowell 等人，視為是德性知識論的先驅或代表人物。他們之所以被視為先驅或代表人物，在於他們使用了知態來源——像是「自然本能」(natural instincts)、「心靈的機械傾向」(mental mechanical tendencies)、「可靠的智識力量」(reliable intellectual powers)、能力 (capacities) 等等——來說明知識概念。由 Turri 與 Sosa 所隱含採用的判準來看，荀子也可算是德性知識論的先驅或代表人物之一。當然，當我們說荀子是德性知識論者，並不是說荀子「自稱」他是德性知識論者，就像當 Sosa 說 Descartes 和 Hume 是德性知識論者，也不是說他們「自稱」他們是德性知識論者。此處重點並不在於這些哲學家是否「自稱」為德性知識論者，而是在於荀子、Descartes 或 Hume 等人的哲學著作中，是否的確包括德性知識論的元素或特徵。

<sup>13</sup> 心也是一種感覺器官。關於此點，請參閱 Lee (2004) 與 Geaney (2002: p.97)。

<sup>14</sup> 筆者在本文中所以援用的荀子文本以及在某些文本上的闡釋，參照的是王先謙 (1993)、王林忠 (2009) 以及 John Knoblock 的英譯本 *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*。

管五官。我們先由第一個宣稱來看。

荀子對五種感覺器官的說明是：

目辨白黑美惡，耳辨音聲清濁，口辨酸鹹甘苦，鼻辨芬芳腥臊，骨體膚理辨寒暑疾養，是又人之所常生而有也，是無待而然者也。〈榮辱〉

荀子對於某一官能之所以是某一官能的界定或個體化，部分是由器官，部分是由功用來界定。<sup>15</sup>五種感覺器官是目、耳、鼻、口、身（骨體膚理），而相應的獨特功用是見色（辨白黑美惡）、聞聲（辨音聲清濁）、辨香（辨芬芳腥臊）、別味（辨酸鹹甘苦）、覺觸（辨寒暑疾養）。<sup>16</sup>荀子在論述五種感覺器官的各自功用時都使用到「辨」（differentiating or recognizing）此一概念來加以刻畫，將五種感覺器官所具有的功用都理解成某種的辨別能力。這呼應上一節所言，早期中國知識論關注的是辨別此種實踐知識或能力。在此筆者建議在理解荀子的「知覺官能」概念時將其理解成「辨識知覺官能」（faculty of recognitional perception）以突顯其特色。什麼特色呢？當我們在談論知覺或「S 知覺到 O」時，其可以有兩種不同理解方式：一是「非知態的」（non-epistemic），一是「知態的」。當 S 是非知態地知覺到 O，指 S 知覺到 O 但並不涉及到相關於 O 的任何概念之運用。當 S 是知態地知覺到 O，指 S 知覺到 O 並且運用到相關於 O 的概念，或是將 O 知覺成某物或隸屬於某範疇。<sup>17</sup>相應於知覺的這兩種理解方式（一個是「非知態知覺」或「經驗知覺」，一個是「知態知覺」或「辨識知覺」），知覺官能也有兩種理解方式。一是將知覺官能理解成關於經驗知覺的官能，一是將知覺官能理解成關於辨識知覺的官能。從荀子對於知覺的描述來看，其關注的是辨識知覺；認知主體運用其知覺官能於某物時，其會辨識出該物的某些鮮明、重要或界定特徵（defining characteristics）。

在上述的第貳節中我們提到，儘管官能是與生俱來的，但這並不表示任何一種官能的運作一定與主體能動性（agency）或意志無關。記憶與推理等官能是天生的，但它們的運作可以由認知主體控制與改善；主體能夠發動意志，主動控管已形成信

<sup>15</sup> 在當代的知覺哲學中，要如何個體化不同感官仍是個問題。根據 Fish（2010），個體化感官的方式之一是採「感覺器官觀點」（the sense organ view），另一是採「特徵經驗觀點」（the characteristic experience view）。荀子的觀點比較接近第一種。

<sup>16</sup> 聯覺（synesthesia）現象可能會對荀子所說的「耳、目、鼻、口、形，能各有接而不相能也」造成挑戰。例如某些聯覺者在聽到某種聲音時會感受到某種顏色；此時他的耳朵不只有「聽」的作用，也伴隨著「看」的作用運作後會產生的結果。

<sup>17</sup> 參閱 Fred Dretske（1969: Ch. 2; 2000: Essay 6），其中對於「知態之視」（epistemic seeing）與「非知態之視」（non-epistemic seeing）的區分。

念的傳遞方式。至於視覺、聽覺、嗅覺、味覺、觸覺等知覺官能雖也是天生的，但它們的運作卻是超出認知主體的控管範圍，遑論它們是可透過實踐或練習予以培養。這是我們在第貳節獲致的結論，並據此判斷 Sosa 的官能德性知識論不是調控知識論。然而「知覺官能與主體能動性無關」這想法並不適用於荀子的知覺官能觀。為論證這點，我們轉向第二個宣稱來看。

第二個宣稱是說心能控管五官（「心居中虛，以治五官」）。上段指出五種感覺器官（目、耳、鼻、口、身）有相應的五種辨別能力（見色、聞聲、辨香、別味、覺觸）。但此處要注意的一個問題是：荀子是否認為單單只要有目（或耳、或鼻、或口、或身）這樣的器官就能有見色（或聞聲、或辨香、或別味、或覺觸）這樣的能力或官能？第二個宣稱建議的答案是否定的。針對荀子哲學中的知覺官能概念，一個更整全的看法應該是：心與目／耳／鼻／口／身共同運作，才会有見色／聞聲／辨香／別味／覺觸的能力。單單只有心或只有五官，辨識知覺是無法產生的。據此，知覺官能可界定為心與五官這兩類器官的結合體（combination）。以下分兩點闡述心與五官之間的關係。

首先，在辨識知覺中，單單只有心之運作仍不足，還需要五官之運作：

心有微知。微知，則緣耳而知聲可也，緣目而知形可也。然而微知必將待天官之當簿其類然後可也。〈正名〉

心能「微知」，可「知聲」、「知形」。「知聲」、「知形」是辨識知覺；但心在辨識知覺中的作用是什麼呢？用筆者的話來說，心可以對知覺對象進行概念化的工作，以概念掌握和表現出知覺對象的界定特徵（defining characteristics），例如指出某知覺對象具有某種聲響或某種形狀。但心在辨識知覺中的作用也僅止於此；它不是知覺官能的全部。荀子強調心的「微知必將待天官之當簿〔簿；接觸〕其類然後可也」。心要施展概念化作用之前，需要五官與相應的外物接觸。這裡的「需要」指的是知覺心的「能使條件」（enabling condition），而不是「構成條件」（constitutive condition），因為心本身的能力不是透過五官的功用來定義。

其次，在辨識知覺中，單單只有五官之運作是不足的，還需要有心之運作。筆者認為《荀子》中有兩個段落可以支持這個看法。第一個段落：

心不使焉，則白黑在前而目不見，雷鼓在側而耳不聞。〈解蔽〉

當荀子說「心不使焉，則白黑在前而目不見」，他說的是白黑在某人眼前時，此人



可以完全沒有「看」到顏色，如同一個人閉起眼睛般似的完全沒看到顏色？從經驗現象的角度來看，這說法是荒謬的。一個較為合理的說法是：在段落一中的「見」可理解或詮釋成「知態之見」(epistemic seeing)而不是「非知態之見」(non-epistemic seeing)，即主體仍有白、黑的感覺經驗，但由於他沒有運用上他的「白」或「黑」概念在這感覺經驗上，因此他並沒有白、黑的辨識知覺。筆者的這個詮釋（即荀子在使用「見」、「聞」、「知」等字詞時，大部分是以知態意涵使用之），可以用《荀子》裡的另一個段落（以下稱「段落二」）支持：

五官簿之而不知，心徵之而無說，則人莫不然謂之不知。〈正名〉

段落二包含了兩個條件句。第一個條件句是「五官簿之而不知，則人莫不然謂之不知」：如果主體 S 的五官與相應的外物接觸但 S 並沒有意識到外物，那麼人沒有不說 S 是「不知」。如果 S 的五官與相應外物接觸但 S 沒有意識到任何東西，亦即 S 沒有任何「非知態」知覺，那麼後件或許應使用「不（非知態之）視」或「不（非知態之）聽」而不是用「不知」來描繪這狀態。但段落二並不是用「不視」或「不聽」描繪之。一個可能解釋是：五官簿之時，主體還是有「（非知態之）視」或「（非知態之）聽」，只是沒有「（知態之）見」或「（知態之）聞」。亦即，五官所能提供的只是感覺經驗，仍不足以成為辨識知覺。

上述的兩個宣稱——在辨識知覺中，單單只有心之運作仍不足，還需要有五官（作為能使條件）之運作；在辨識知覺中，單單只有五官之運作仍不足，還需要有心（提供概念化）之運作——指出在荀子知識論中，知覺官能是心與五官的結合體。若用較為當代的話語來講，辨識知覺是雙重歷程運作下的結果：五官與心是知覺官能的兩個子系統，其中五官接觸到某物後進行運作，以感覺經驗作為輸出，心再以這感覺經驗為輸入，產生對某物之界定特徵的掌握。

「知覺官能是心與五官的結合體」此一想法使得荀子的官能德性概念具有潛力來與純然機械式的官能德性概念區別開來，並進而使得其官能德性知識論具有潛力成為調控知識論。關鍵在於荀子的「知覺官能」概念因為「心」之緣故而可涉及到主體能動性。此處筆者以「具有潛力」這個較為保守的用語，這是因為人們可能會有以下反駁意見：在荀子哲學中，知覺官能雖有「心」作為其構成要素，但這並不表示這樣的知覺官能就涉及主體能動性且因而可培養，因為「心」也可能是像五官一樣，不受意志影響而是如機械般進行運作。這是一個必須面對的反駁。

### 三、心與主體能動性（並論「為何荀子是調控官能德性知識論者」）

荀子是否認為心的運作是一機械式活動，無法有主體能動性的涉及？以〈解蔽〉篇為線索，荀子的答案會是否定的。

荀子認為心會有運作不良的情況；他以「蔽」來描述之。當我們或荀子說心的運作「不良」或「蔽」，表示我們或荀子已採取了一套規範，符合此規範的才是「良」或「無蔽」。對荀子而言，這套規範是「心必須知『道』」中的「道」。所謂「道」是指：「夫道者，體常而盡變，一隅不足以舉之」〈解蔽〉。以下稍做說明。之前已提到，心的作用是概念化，其有能力去掌握到被知覺對象的界定特徵。假定某物 O 的界定特徵有 C1、C2、C3、C4 與 C5 這五項。當主體 S 運作他的知覺官能（即五官與心的結合體）去知覺 O 時，最理想的狀態是 S 的確辨識到 O 的 C1-C5 這五項界定特徵；此時 S 是最佳地辨識知覺到 O，或是說，S 展示出他「知 O 之『道』」。但在理想狀態外的可能情況是：(1) S 並未辨識出任何 C1-C5；(2) S 不只未辨識出任何 C1-C5，還將不屬 O 之特徵（例如 C6）賦予 O；(3) S 並未辨識出 O 的所有界定特徵，而只辨識出其中一個（例如 C1）或數個（例如 C1 與 C2），並認為這一個或數個是 O 的所有界定特徵。這種心蔽的情況，可能出現在知覺、政治或哲學的領域中。

首先是在知覺領域中的心蔽情況：

凡觀物有疑，中心不定，則外物不清；吾慮不清，則未可定然否也。[1] 冥冥而行者，見寢石以為伏虎也，見植林以為後人也；冥冥蔽其明也。[2] 醉者越百步之溝，以為頭步之澮也，俯而出城門，以為小之閨也；酒亂其神也。[3] 厭目而視者，視一以為兩；掩耳而聽者，聽漠漠而以為啁啾；執亂其官也。〈解蔽〉

在情況[1]中，心蔽乃因環境之故；在情況[2]中，心蔽乃因神經條件之故；在情況[3]中，心蔽乃因其共同運作者（五官）之故。其次，再看政治或哲學思想領域中的心蔽情況：

墨子蔽於用而不知文。宋子蔽於欲而不知得。慎子蔽於法而不知賢。申子蔽於執而不知知。惠子蔽於辭而不知實。莊子蔽於天而不知人。〈解蔽〉

另外，若不談特定領域，心蔽的情況可包括：

故為蔽：欲為蔽，惡為蔽，始為蔽，終為蔽，遠為蔽，近為蔽，博為蔽，淺為蔽，古為蔽，今為蔽。凡萬物異則莫不相為蔽，此心術之公患也。〈解蔽〉

上述說明了心蔽可在眾多不同領域（知覺、政治、哲學）中發生。面對心蔽，荀子試圖提供解蔽法。不過就筆者看來，荀子並沒有針對不同領域提供不同解蔽法，而是統合式地提供解法。無論如何，我們假定荀子的解蔽法可適用於各個領域，包括知覺領域。

在談解蔽法之前，我們先看解蔽之後的成效會是如何。這點可由對聖人的觀察得知：

聖人知心術之患，見蔽塞之禍，故無欲，無惡，無始，無終，無近，無遠，無博，無淺，無古，無今，兼陳萬物而中懸衡焉。是故眾異不得相蔽以亂其倫也。〈解蔽〉

聖人對事物會有整全觀點（a comprehensive view）而非一隅之見。用荀子的話說，聖人知「道」。接下來的問題是：聖人是如何能達到這樣的狀態？（或是，就解蔽或知「道」而言，一般人如何能成為聖人？）以下這段就是荀子解蔽法的綱領：

人何以知道？曰：心。心何以知？曰：虛壹而靜。心未嘗不臧也，然而有所謂虛；心未嘗不滿[兩]也，然而有所謂壹；心未嘗不動也，然而有所謂靜。〈解蔽〉

針對「虛」、「壹」、「靜」，荀子再進一步解釋如下：

[1] 人生而有知，知而有志；志也者，臧也；然而有所謂虛；不以所已臧害所將受，謂之虛。〈解蔽〉

[2] 心生而有知，知而有異；異也者，同時兼知之；同時兼知之，兩也；然而有所謂一；不以夫一害此一謂之壹。〈解蔽〉

[3] 心臥則夢，偷則自行，使之則謀；故心未嘗不動也；然而有所謂靜；不以夢劇亂知，謂之靜。〈解蔽〉

以下我們針對[1]的「臧」和「虛」，[2]中的「兩」和「壹」，以及[3]中的「動」和

「靜」這六個重要概念加以說明。

「藏」、「兩」、「動」可視為是心的三種作為。但這三種作為有可能使得心在辨識事物時產生「蔽」，即對於待認識之事物無法有「整全」認識。為避免這結果，心的另外三種作為可以分別對治「藏」、「兩」、「動」所帶來的可能結果，即：「虛」、「壹」、「靜」。

「藏」、「兩」、「動」這三種心的作為本身並不總是有害的，而只有在某些情況下才會有害於心對於事物的認識。筆者藉由上述已用過的架構來說明。假定某物 O 的界定特徵有 C1, C2, C3, C4 與 C5 這五項。當主體 S 運作他的知覺官能（五官與心的結合體）去知覺 O 時，最理想的狀態是 S 的確辨識到 O 的 C1-C5 這五項特徵。但 S 有可能沒有達到這最理想狀態。

之所以沒有達到最理想狀態的可能性之一是：S 的概念記憶庫裡沒有 C1-C5，但 S 卻只打算使用他概念記憶庫中的既有概念（例如 C6-C10）賦予 O 作為其界定特徵。心有「藏」或「記憶」這樣的作為其本身並沒有不好，但在上述可能情況中，S 將無法認識到 O 的真正特徵。為避免這情況，心必須有「虛」的作為，即考慮 O 是否有可能具有 S 的記憶庫之外的特徵。心必須虛，即心必須考慮（對 S 而言是）未知概念的可能性。

沒有達到最理想狀態的可能性之二是：S 在認識 O 的過程中，辨識出 O 具有特徵 C1，且逐漸辨識出 O 具有 C2。但 S 卻認為 C1 與 C2 是不可並存，並欲排除其中一個作為 O 的界定特徵。心有「兩」（或是辨識出事物的不同特徵）這樣的作為其本身並沒有不好，但是在上述可能情況中，S 將無法認識到 O 的所有界定特徵。為避免這情況，心必須有「壹」的作為，這「壹」並不是「專一」，而是「不以夫一害此一」。心必須壹，即心必須考慮概念兼容的可能性（例如 C1 與 C2 於相同脈絡或基準點下不相容，但卻可在不同脈絡或基準點下各自成立）。

沒有達到最理想狀態的可能性之三是：S 在認識 O 的過程中，S 的概念記憶庫裡的確有 C1-C5，而且 S 也不認為 C1-C5 之中有任何不相容的可能組合，但 S 卻使用了與 C1-C5 不相干的概念賦予以 O。之所以如此，可能是心之官能並沒有完全運作，其處於——以隱喻的話語來說——「睡覺」或「鬆懈」的狀態（「心卧則夢，偷則自行」）。心有「動」這樣的作為其本身並不一定是好的，因為心之動也有「使之則謀」的一面。要避免的只是「心卧則夢，偷則自行」。為避免這情況，心必須有「靜」的作為，這「靜」並不是「寧靜」，而是「不以夢劇亂知」。心必須靜，指心必須完全運作。

值得注意的是，在筆者的詮釋中，心的虛 / 壹 / 靜並不是用以「相對」而是用

以「輔助」心的藏／兩／動。這點或許不同於某於文獻的解讀。但無論筆者的詮釋是否正確，筆者此處的目的是在突顯：在荀子哲學中，心之運作是可以有主體的涉入。認知主體可以在心進行藏／兩／動的作為時，考慮到是否有未知概念的可能性，考慮到是否有概念兼容的可能性，考慮到是否有完全啟動心之運作。若知覺官能是五官與心的結合體，而心之運作是有主體能動性的介入，那麼知覺官能就有培養成更好的可能。據此，荀子的官能德性知識論是一種調控知識論。

## 肆、結論

本文透過引介 Sosa 的德性知識論，突顯荀子知識論的三項特色。第一、荀子知識論是德性知識論。這是因為荀子知識論與大部分早期中國知識論一樣，著眼於知態來源。第二、荀子知識論是官能德性知識論，或至少含有高度官能德性知識論的成分。無論荀子有無談到品格智德，他至少有相當高程度地在談論一般所謂的官能智德（例如「天官」）。第三、荀子知識論是調控官能德性知識論。荀子知識論與 Sosa 的官能德性知識論不同，因為荀子哲學中的官能德性概念有著主體能動性（即天君）的涉入。

在此，筆者以本文之研究的未來研究前景做為結論。本文對於荀子知識論的建構，主要是安置在知覺知識（*perceptual knowledge*）的層面來進行。亦即，本文建構出的乃是一套荀子之知覺知識論。透過對於心蔽以及解蔽的討論，筆者主張荀子的知覺知識論是一種調控知識論。然而，如上述所提及，心蔽的情況不止出現在知覺領域，其也出現在政治、哲學等各式規範或價值領域中。據此，未來的可能探究方向是：荀子對於道德知識（*moral knowledge*）的觀點，是否能以本文為荀子哲學所建構出的德性知識論架構來理解？或者說，是否能將荀子的道德知識論（*moral epistemology*）視為是一種特殊型式的德性知識論？筆者認為，若回答是肯定的，一方面將突顯出荀子知識論的系統性（亦即，能以德性知識論的架構來同時說明知覺知識和道德知識），另一方面也將使我們對荀子哲學中的道德知識概念有一更加清晰的圖像（亦即，我們可透過知覺知識的結構、運作與養成，來設想道德知識的結構、運作與養成）。這些宣稱將有待日後研究來證實。

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作者簡介：

蔡政宏：

臺灣大學哲學博士

東吳大學哲學系副教授

通訊處：11102 臺北市士林區臨溪路 70 號東吳大學外雙溪校區

東吳大學哲學系

E-Mail：chtsai@scu.edu.tw



## Xunzi and Virtue Epistemology

Cheng-hung TSAI

Associate Professor, Soochow University, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

**Abstract:** Regulative virtue epistemology argues that intellectual virtues can adjust and guide one's epistemic actions as well as improve on the quality of the epistemic actions. For regulative virtue epistemologists, intellectual virtues can be cultivated to a higher degree; when the quality of intellectual virtue is better, the resulting quality of epistemic action is better. The intellectual virtues that regulative epistemologists talk about are character virtues (such as intellectual courage and open-mindedness) rather than faculty virtues (such as sight and hearing), since they don't think that faculty virtues could be cultivated. This article refers to Xunzi's philosophy, explaining how a regulative faculty-based virtue epistemology is possible. If this explanation works, on the one hand, a new branch of contemporary virtue epistemology is shown, and, on the other hand, a clear theoretical framework of Xunzi's epistemology is constructed.

**Key Terms:** Intellectual Virtue, Ernest Sosa, *Tian Jun* (The Lord Provided by Nature), *Tian Guan* (the Faculties Given Us by Nature), Dispelling Blindness