

Crafting the Self through Losing the Self: Exploring Xunzi's Ideal Self and the Role of Others^{*}

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Abstract

This paper explores Xunzi's account of the ideal self and self-transformation, as well as the roles the self and others play in this account. I first introduce two aspects of the Confucian self, the social aspect and what I call the "reflective agent" aspect, and an apparent tension between them. I then examine Tang (2012)'s account of the roles rituals and community play in self-transformation, and explore the possible tension between these two aspects of the self in this account by addressing the issue of autonomy. I argue that Xunzian autonomy should be understood as a kind of "substantive self-correction", which is different from "autonomy as the modern ideal" and from the form Tang developed (I call it "substantive self-control"). Moreover, I argue that the characteristics often emphasized in the idea of autonomy such as independence and self-control are not ultimate goals of the Xunzian self-transformation. Indeed, as we will see, even though Xunzi emphasizes the reflective capacity of the heartmind, his concern is not so much with the complete control of the self or one's life; rather, it is to craft the self into a beautiful and substantially (instead of merely normatively) other-related existence. I argue that, in this self-crafting process one unavoidably loses oneself in various senses. We can say that Xunzi's self-transformation is through self-loss and the connectedness to others. The tension between the self and others, between the two aspects of the self, is positive and necessary for self-transformation and the ideal self.

Keywords: Xunzi, rituals, moral transformation, autonomy, self

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道德轉化中的自我與他人： 初探《荀子》中的自我打造與自我喪失^{*}

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摘 要

本文探究荀子對理想自我和自我轉化的看法，以及自我與他人在這個看法中扮演的角色。筆者指出儒家自我「社會面向」與「反思行動者面向」兩者之間存在的緊張關係，並檢視鄧小虎 (2012) 對禮與社群在自我轉化中角色的論述，藉對其所牽涉到「自主」問題的探討，進一步發展筆者對《荀子》中理想自我與自我轉化的詮釋，以及自我兩個面向間的關係。《荀子》中理想自我涉及的自主並不在強調「獨立」與「自我控制」，而在於對自我加工，創造出一個美好的、與他人緊密相連的自我。筆者指出：自我轉化是透過個人在三個意義下失去自我而與他人連結而達成。

關鍵詞：荀子、禮、化性、自主、自我

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