



GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis

Volume 7, Issue 1, January -June, 2024

ISSN (Online): 2714-2485

Harmony and Existential Fulfillment: A Comparative Study of Wu-Wei Philosophy and Jean-Paul Sartre's Perspectives

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(Received: January-2024; Accepted: March-2024; Available Online: March-2024)



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ABSTRACT

Jean-Paul Sartre's existential philosophy has been the subject of extensive scholarly debate, which revolves around reflections on human existence, freedom, and responsibility. Yet, so little literature is recorded in academic discourse regarding a comparative analysis between Sartre's existential perspectives and the ancient Chinese Wu-Wei philosophy concerning life's fulfillment. This study address this void by examining the cultural contexts of France and China. The primary objective is to investigate the similarities and differences between Wu-Wei philosophy, Jean-Paul Sartre's existential fulfillment, and the concept of harmony from both a Western existentialist viewpoint and an Eastern philosophical tradition. Drawing on theoretical knowledge from cultural philosophy, existentialism, and comparative philosophy, this study aims to clarify how individuals in Chinese and French cultures navigate their existence and seek fulfillment. Preliminary findings unravel a captivating divergences and convergences between Wu-Wei and Sartre's perspectives. While Wu-Wei emphasizes alignment with the natural flow and spontaneity, Sartre's existentialism focuses on authentic choice and freedom. The study exposes a fresh worldview on universal philosophical themes that promotes intercultural dialogue, and sheds light on approaches to life's complexities. Ultimately, this study significantly adds to existing knowledge by highlighting the pivotal role of a comparative study between Wu-Wei philosophy and Sartrean perspectives.

Keywords: Jean-Paul Sartre; Cross-cultural Investigations; Theory of Existentialism; Wu-Wei Philosophy; Chinese and French.

INTRODUCTION

In the field of philosophical inquiry across the globe, the interaction between Wu-Wei philosophy from ancient China and Jean-Paul Sartre's existential perspectives rooted in French intellectual tradition remains an uncharted investigative terrain. Both embody deep reflections on the human condition to emphasise the pursuit of harmony and existential fulfillment. This study strives to navigate this uncharted territory to bridge the cultural and philosophical gap by engaging in a comparative analysis of Wu-Wei philosophy and Sartre's existential positions to unravel their similarities, differences, and

the sensitive ways in which individuals in Chinese and French cultures traverse the complications of existence.

The influence of French literary traditions on Sartre's existential philosophy is evident. French literature, particularly existentialist works by authors like Albert Camus and Simone de Beauvoir, contributed to Sartre's investigation of themes such as individual freedom, authenticity, and the search for meaning in an absurd world. Elikwu & Agwu (2023) affirms this notion thus:

French literary traditions have had a profound impact on the evolution of digital literature, shaping its themes, styles, and approaches. French literature has a rich history of experimental narrative forms, from Oulipo's constrained writing to the *nouveau roman's* narrative innovation (pp. 5-6).

Additionally, engagement with French philosophical traditions, including thinkers like René Descartes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, enriched Sartre's philosophical framework, informing his notions of radical freedom and the construction of personal identity (Dennis, 2018; Dennis, 2022). Through this interplay between literature, philosophy, and existential thought, Sartre's ideas resonate with broader existentialist themes while offering a unique perspective on the human condition

Wu-Wei, originating in ancient Chinese Taoist philosophy, embodies the paradoxical notion of “non-action” or “effortless action.” Grounded in the foundational text “Tao Te Ching,” attributed to the legendary figure Laozi, Wu-Wei advocates aligning one's actions with the natural way of things by navigating life's ebbs and flows with minimal resistance (Schneider, 2018). It emphasises spontaneity, flexibility, and a harmonious engagement with the inherent rhythms of the universe. Wu-Wei suggests that by relinquishing the need for excessive control and trusting in the natural flow of events, individuals can achieve a state of balance, peace, and effectiveness in their endeavors (Banner, 2018).

However, notable Chinese authors who have investigated the Wu-Wei philosophy include Chien-Hui Li, Youping Li, Chad Hansen, and Victor H. Mair (Li 2018). Li explores the cross-cultural influence of Wu-Wei, particularly in the area of economic thought, and examines its reception and adaptation in European contexts. Similarly, Li's work investigates Wu-Wei through the lens of conceptual metaphor and integration and provides a cognitive viewpoint on the understanding of this Daoist concept (Li 2011). Hansen, in his *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought: A Philosophical Interpretation*, also examines various aspects of Daoist philosophy, including Wu-Wei, and provides a philosophical interpretation of Chinese thought (Hansen, 1992). Mair provides a translation and analysis of the *Tao Te Ching*, the foundational text associated with Wu-Wei, yielding clarity into Taoist philosophy (Mair, 1990).

In contrast, Jean-Paul Sartre, a leading figure in 20th-century French existentialism, offers a philosophical framework centered on authenticity, freedom, and individual responsibility. Existentialism posits that “existence precedes essence” and asserts that individuals define themselves through their choices and actions (Bisong, et al., 2017). Sartre's existential perspectives underline the inherent absurdity of an indifferent universe and stress the importance of making authentic choices in navigating this absurdity. Freedom, for Sartre, is both a burden and a source of existential fulfilment, as individuals bear the weight of responsibility for their actions and the creation of their own meaning in life. Sartre's philosophy encourages a radical embrace of one's freedom and the conscious shaping of one's identity through personal choices (Bisong & Udo, 2014).

Some research done to enrich Sartre's philosophical ideas includes, but is not limited to, Cannon (2017), who analyses Sartre's famous lecture, “Existentialism is

Humanism,” while focusing on the themes of freedom and responsibility within Sartrean existentialism. Similarly, Gardner's (2009) article provides a comprehensive guide to Sartre's “Being and Nothingness” and expands understanding of the central ideas embedded in Sartre's philosophy of existentialism. In *Being and Nothingness*, translated in French as *L'Être et le Néant* (Sartre, 1943), Sartre's magnum opus in existentialist philosophy focuses on the nature of human existence, freedom, and consciousness. Furthermore, in *The Second Sex*, also known as *Le Deuxième Sexe* (De Beauvoir, 1949), while not specifically focused on existentialism, de Beauvoir, a key figure in existentialist circles, analyses feminist existentialism and the concept of women's “otherness” in this seminal work.

The cultural contexts of China and France have significantly influenced the development of these philosophical traditions, yet few attempts have been made to systematically compare the principles of Wu-Wei with Sartrean existentialism. Predicted on the above background, this research seeks to fill this void by unravelling the philosophical threads that bind these traditions, which will enhance a more holistic understanding of how distinct cultural contexts shape individuals' perceptions of harmony and existential fulfillment. Through this comparative analysis, the study aims to uncover unique knowledge that transcends cultural boundaries, fostering a richer dialogue between Eastern and Western philosophical traditions.

SYSTEMATIQUE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Jean-Paul Sartre's existential philosophy has been the subject of extensive scholarly debate and has stemmed from deep reflections on human existence, freedom, and responsibility (Thompson, 2008). This review examines seven key works, identifying research gaps that highlight the need for a comparative study with Chinese Wu-Wei philosophy. (Cooper's 2018) work reconstructs existentialist thought and examines its origins, development, and key concepts. He emphasises the diverse strands within existentialism, from its roots in Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to its later expressions in Sartre, Heidegger, Camus, and beyond. Cooper's comprehensive analysis primarily explores the Western trajectory of existentialism (Leffert, 2020). It becomes evident in the research on existentialist ideas in non-Western contexts, particularly their intersection with philosophies like Chinese Wu-Wei, calling for a more inclusive examination.

However, it is worthy of note that Jean-Paul Sartre's existential philosophy and Albert Camus' absurdism share a deep interconnectedness, despite some key differences in their approaches (Cummings, 2023). Both thinkers grapple with the fundamental questions of human existence, meaning, freedom, and the absurdity of the world, but they do so from slightly different perspectives. Both Sartre and Camus acknowledge the inherent absurdity of the human condition. For Camus, the absurd arises from the clash between humanity's search for meaning and the indifferent, irrational universe (Bellioti, 2019). Sartre, on the other hand, sees the absurd as stemming from the human quest for inherent meaning in a universe that offers none. More so, Sartre famously posits that “existence precedes essence,” meaning that humans first exist and then define themselves through their actions (Belanger, 2009). This existential freedom comes with great responsibility, as individuals are solely responsible for creating their own essence through their choices. Camus also emphasises human freedom, but he focuses more on the individual's response to the absurd. (Agwu & Abutu 2022) opines that: Camus establishes the futility of a search for meaning in an incomprehensible universe, devoid of God as religion could not offer humans any meaningful judgment. Man is driven to seek meaning by the

very bizarre complexities and contradictions of existence as a response to a meaningless universe in order to instil hope amidst absurdity (p. 134).

However, despite the inherent meaninglessness of the universe, individuals can still find meaning through their actions and their rebellion against the absurd. (Bakewell's 2016) work offers a historical analysis of existentialism and traces its roots from phenomenology to its prominent figures, including Sartre, Camus, and de Beauvoir. It provides a narrative that intertwines philosophy with the personal lives of existentialist thinkers. Though Bakewell provides a broad overview, the focus remains largely on Western existentialism. A research gap emerges concerning the comparative analysis of existentialist themes with Eastern philosophies like Chinese Wu-Wei, which prompts interrogations about potential convergences and divergences. Furthermore, in Sartre's *Existentialism and Early Buddhism*, Sharma's comparative analysis examines the intersections between Sartrean existentialism and early Buddhism, examining similarities and differences. The study, while insightful to existing bodies of knowledge, does not specifically address Chinese philosophical traditions, which has necessitated the comparative elements between Sartre's philosophy and Chinese Wu-Wei, which have their own unique variances.

Hagglund's (2008) study engages with existentialist themes, particularly through the lens of Jacques Derrida. It addresses the temporal dimensions of existence, mortality, and the implications for living a meaningful life. Hagglund undoubtedly points out a unique perspective but limits his focus on Derrida, which opens avenues for research on the intersections between existentialist temporality and Eastern notions of time, such as those found in Chinese Wu-Wei philosophy. Moreover, Wilkinson's (2007) work, *Sartre and Eastern Thought*, evaluates Sartre's engagement with Eastern thought, emphasising parallels between existentialism and Eastern philosophies. While acknowledging connections, the study lacks a specific focus on Chinese philosophy, particularly Wu-Wei. A research gap exists in a targeted investigation into the compatibility and contrasts between Sartre's ideas and Wu-Wei.

Fell (1996) analysis of freedom and determinism in Sartre's 'Being and Nothingness' draws attention to the themes of freedom and determinism in "Being and Nothingness" and mirrors Sartre's complex understanding of individual agency. The study prompts questions about how notions of freedom and determinism in Sartre's philosophy might align or diverge with non-Western philosophical traditions, especially those advocating concepts like Wu-Wei. De Beauvoir (1947) work titled *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, although not solely focused on Sartre, tackles existentialist ethics and emphasises the interconnectedness of individuals and the ethical implications of existentialist freedom. Even though the study complements Sartrean existentialism, there is a need for research that explicitly examines how Sartre's philosophy aligns or diverges with Eastern ethical frameworks like Wu-Wei.

This review highlights the wealth of existing research on Sartre's existentialism while underlining the research gaps that make a comparative study with Chinese philosophy both timely and essential. No doubt, filling this lacuna will advance knowledge on the cross-cultural implications of existential thought.

THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE

The study's theoretical knowledge is grounded in cultural philosophy, existentialism, and comparative philosophy to situate the analysis. Cultural philosophy examines the relationship between culture and philosophical ideas. It reveals how cultural beliefs, values, and practices influence or shape philosophical thought. This framework exposes the ways in which cultural contexts impact the development, interpretation, and

application of philosophical concepts. Cultural philosophers often investigate how different societies contribute to diverse philosophical notions.

Existentialism is a philosophical framework that emphasises individual existence, freedom, and choice (Okoko, et al., 2023). Rooted in 19th- and 20th-century European philosophy, particularly those associated with thinkers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, existentialism focuses on the subjective experience of individuals in navigating the complexities of existence. Key themes include personal responsibility, authenticity, and the individual's role in creating meaning in an apparently indifferent or absurd world.

Comparative philosophy involves the systematic analysis and comparison of philosophical ideas, concepts, and traditions across different cultural, historical, or geographical contexts. This framework seeks to identify similarities and differences between philosophical systems. Its aim is to enhance understanding and foster dialogue between diverse traditions. Comparative philosophy contributes to a more comprehensive appreciation of the global variety of philosophical thought as it explores connections and distinctions between various philosophical traditions.

In the context of this study, these frameworks are hinged on three theorists. The study draws on Appiah's cosmopolitanism to situate the analysis within a global context. Sartre's existential principles serve as the existentialist foundation, and Wiredu's approach to comparative philosophy guides the examination of both traditions and elaborates on the unique expressions of philosophy in Wu-Wei and Sartrean thought.

METHODOLOGY

This study conducted a meticulous examination of primary texts representing Wu-Wei philosophy and Sartrean existentialism. It will also extract key passages and concepts related to non-action, authenticity, freedom, and harmony. Sample texts of the study include *Tao Te Ching* as a foundational Taoist text to examine its philosophical principles and the applications of non-action in different life domains. Also, selected works by Jean-Paul Sartre, including *Being and Nothingness*, identify recurrent themes. Also, the study adopts close reading techniques to extract elaborate meanings. Identify recurrent themes such as natural alignment, spontaneity, and the path of least resistance. Similarly, the study investigates the themes of authenticity, freedom, and responsibility. It will highlight existential concepts and their implications. More so, the research will apply hermeneutic interpretation to reveal cultural specifics embedded in the texts. Uncover implicit meanings, cultural contexts, and the philosophical underpinnings that shape the expressions of Wu-Wei and Sartrean existentialism. The study will systematically synthesise findings to identify commonalities, divergences, and cultural influences within Wu-Wei philosophy and Sartrean existentialism.

KEY CONCEPTS OF THEORIES IN CONTEXT, INTERSECTIONS, AND DISPARITIES: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

To embark on a comparative journey between Wu-Wei philosophy and Sartrean existentialism, it is imperative to grasp the foundational concepts that define each tradition. Wu-Wei philosophy, on the other hand, is the concept of “non-action” or “effortless action.” It advocates aligning one's actions with the natural order. Also, Wu-Wei encourages individuals to flow with the rhythms of nature and recognises the futility of opposing larger forces. It calls for a harmonious existence by navigating life's challenges with minimal resistance. Wu-Wei involves cultivating a mindset of flexibility and receptiveness, akin to the flow of water. It seeks to dissolve barriers through minimal, strategic effort, reflecting the Taoist principles from which it originates.

Existentialism, on the other hand, as articulated by Sartre, posits that existence precedes essence. Individuals define their essence through choices and actions, which stresses the radical freedom to shape one's own identity. Existentialism places a premium on authenticity. It urges individuals to confront the absurdity of existence and make choices that align with their true selves. Authentic living entails taking responsibility for one's actions. Also central to existentialism is the concept of radical freedom coupled with the weight of individual responsibility. The existentialist individual faces the anguish of choosing in a world devoid of inherent meaning.

These essential concepts serve as the building blocks for the theoretical integration of Wu-Wei philosophy and Sartrean existentialism. Non-action in Wu-Wei finds resonance with Sartrean authenticity; both emphasise a mindful alignment with one's chosen path. Freedom in Sartrean thought connects with the notion of freedom within the strategic minimalism of Wu-Wei. Harmony in Wu-Wei complements the existential quest for authenticity, which creates a foundation that explores both traditions in a cohesive manner. These theories provide proper awareness of how different philosophical traditions address fundamental questions of human existence and fulfilment.

Wu-Wei, in the context of Chinese philosophy, translates to “non-action” or “effortless action.” It signifies aligning one's actions with the natural order, emphasising spontaneity, and allowing events to unfold organically. It involves aligning one's actions with the natural order and advocates for minimal strategic effort. Wu-Wei involves strategic minimal effort, akin to navigating a river's flow without unnecessary resistance. It embraces the idea of harmonising with the Tao, the natural way of things, and recognises the efficacy of gentle, unforced action. For instance, chapter 2 of *Tao Te Ching* illustrates the concept of Wu-Wei and presents the virtue of non-action and aligning with the inherent rhythms of existence.

Concerning alignment with nature, Wu-Wei encourages harmonisation with the Tao, the natural way of things. It involves recognising and adapting to the inherent principles and rhythms governing the universe. Textual evidence indicates that almost all the chapters in *Tao Te Ching* reserve a space to elucidate the alignment with nature that reinforces the wisdom of embracing the natural flow of events.

Spontaneity in Wu-Wei involves acting in the moment without overthinking, allowing actions to arise naturally from a cultivated mindset. Wu-Wei promotes spontaneity, as seen in chapters where it is likened to the uncarved block that stresses the pure and uncontrived nature of spontaneous action. Furthermore, in cultural context, Wu-Wei originates from ancient Chinese Taoist philosophy, particularly in the foundational text *Tao Te Ching*, attributed to Laozi. Taoism stresses living in harmony with the Tao, the fundamental principle underlying the universe. Wu-Wei's roots can be traced back to the 4th century BCE, with *Tao Te Ching* providing the foundational principles. Over time, Taoism evolved and has influenced various aspects of Chinese culture, including art, medicine, and governance.

Similarly, Wu-Wei's influence on Chinese culture extends beyond philosophy, permeating it. Wu-Wei influences traditional Chinese medicine, martial arts, and even the art of governance, advising leaders to follow the natural flow of events (Benson, 2020). Wu-Wei also intersects with Confucianism and Buddhism, which promote a holistic cultural worldview that values balance, virtue, and the interconnectedness of all things. In the purview of philosophical evolution, Wu-Wei has experienced continued philosophical development, with later Taoist thinkers expanding upon its principles. Neo-Confucianism, during the Song Dynasty, further integrated Wu-Wei concepts into a Confucian framework.

Summarily, Wu-Wei philosophy, rooted in Taoist principles, embodies the wisdom of non-action, alignment with nature, and spontaneity. Its historical development within the cultural context of ancient China has left a monumental imprint on various aspects of Chinese life and added to a holistic worldview that emphasises harmony, balance, and the art of “effortless action.”

EVALUATION OF SARTREAN EXISTENTIAL PERSPECTIVES

Authenticity, in Sartrean existentialism, refers to living in accordance with one's true self and taking responsibility for one's choices. It involves facing the existential anguish of creating one's essence through conscious decisions. In *Being and Nothingness* and *Nausea*, Sartre emphasises authenticity through examples like Antoine Roquentin, who grapples with the need for genuine existence. More so, Sartre's characters, such as Meursault in *The Stranger*, are confronted with the authenticity of their existence. Meursault's indifference and refusal to conform to societal expectations exemplify Sartrean authenticity. Sartre opines that “because, *man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does*” (1946, p. 13).

Sartre's concept of freedom, a core existential theme, signifies the radical freedom to make choices independently of external determinants. For example, in his essay titled *Existentialism is Humanism*, the author elucidates his stance on freedom, stressing that humans are condemned to be free and must take responsibility for their choices. Similarly, novels like *Nausea* portray characters confronting the weight of their freedom. Roquentin's existential crisis becomes a canvas for evaluating the existential anguish associated with limitless possibilities. According to Sartre, “*If I want to be free, I must be authentic, and to be authentic, I must be what I choose to be. But I cannot be what I choose to be unless I choose to be what I am*” (1943, p. 44). Individual responsibility in Sartrean existentialism involves acknowledging one's freedom and taking full responsibility for the consequences of one's actions. Sartre's (1946) *Existentialism is a humanism that* discusses how individuals are responsible for creating their essence through choices, implying an ongoing engagement with personal responsibility. Sartre's emphasis on individual responsibility is evident in characters like Roquentin and Meursault. Their actions and decisions reflect the existential burden of creating their essence and being responsible for their own existence.

In the domain of cultural context and historical development, Sartrean existentialism emerged in post-World War II Europe, particularly influenced by the despair and disillusionment of the time. It mirrors a Western cultural milieu struggling with the loss of traditional certainties. Sartre's philosophical ideas were developed during a period marked by massive social and political upheavals. Existentialism gained prominence in the mid-20th century, reflecting the existential angst of the post-war era. Sartrean existentialism has had a lasting impact on Western thought and has significantly influenced academic disciplines such as literature, psychology, and political theory, among several others. Its emphasis on individual freedom and responsibility resonates in various spheres of contemporary Western culture. Sartrean existential perspectives, as reflected in novels and philosophical works, delve into the realms of authenticity, freedom, and individual responsibility. These concepts are embedded in the cultural and historical context of post-World War II Europe, shaping a philosophical framework that resonates with the existential challenges of the time.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON THE PURSUITS OF HARMONY AND EXISTENTIAL FULFILMENT

Ancient Chinese Taoist philosophy, which reflects the cultural values of harmony, balance, and alignment with the natural order, deeply roots Wu-Wei, as previously

stated. Wu-Wei's cultural influences extend to its integration with Confucian and Buddhist traditions and contribute to an integrated outlook that values virtue, balance, and interconnectedness. Similarly, Sartrean existentialism emerged in post-World War II Europe, influenced by the cultural context of despair and the questioning of traditional certainties. Sartrean existentialism equally reflects Western cultural values of individualism, freedom, and the emphasis on personal responsibility for one's existence.

The comparative analysis reveals both convergences and divergences between Wu-Wei philosophy and Sartrean existentialism. Wu-Wei emphasises passive alignment with nature, while Sartrean existentialism promotes active engagement and the creation of one's essence through choices. Despite these differences, both philosophies converge in their recognition of the importance of harmonising with fundamental principles and the spontaneity inherent in authentic existence. Cultural influences play a significant role, with Wu-Wei deeply embedded in Chinese Taoist traditions and Sartrean existentialism that reflect the existential angst of post-War Europe and Western values of individualism and freedom.

Practical Implications for Individuals in Chinese and French Cultural Contexts

For individuals in Chinese cultural contexts (Wu-Wei), they can embrace Wu-Wei principles to foster harmonious workplaces. Managers can empower employees by creating conditions for success, promoting trust, and allowing natural talent to flourish. Applying Wu-Wei philosophy in daily life can reduce stress. People can develop a mindset that aligns with the Tao, trust in natural processes, and navigate challenges with minimal effort.

For people in French cultural contexts (Sartrean Existentialism), they can embrace Sartrean authenticity by making choices aligned with personal values. Also, they can recognise the responsibility to shape one's essence through conscious decisions and resist societal pressures that hinder authentic existence. More importantly, people can understand the empowering nature of freedom. Individuals can actively engage in creating their lives and take responsibility for their actions while finding fulfilment in the exercise of their freedom.

The purpose of the study is to help humanity appreciate the richness of cultural diversity in philosophical approaches. Wu-Wei and Sartrean existentialism represent distinct cultural and philosophical traditions that highlight the multifaceted ways societies engage with life's complexities. Also, acknowledge that different philosophical traditions offer complementary wisdom. While Wu-Wei emphasises alignment and trust in nature, Sartrean existentialism encourages active engagement and responsibility, providing diverse tools for navigating existence.

Nonetheless, when navigating life's complexities, individuals can benefit from integrating aspects of both Wu-Wei and Sartrean existentialism. They can cultivate a mindset that embraces both passive alignment and active engagement to allow for a sensitive and adaptable approach to challenges. More so, individuals can recognise the value of balancing effort and freedom. Wu-Wei's emphasis on minimal effort and alignment complements Sartrean existentialism's focus on active choice and individual responsibility and provides a unified philosophy for approaching life's complexities. The practical implications illuminate the potential benefits for individuals in Chinese and French cultural contexts and the rest of the world. Philosophically, to embrace diverse approaches to life's complexities becomes essential. The complementary wisdom of Wu-Wei and Sartrean existentialism highlights the richness of cultural diversity and provides individuals with a broader philosophical toolkit to navigate the delicate composition of existence.

FINDINGS: PRESENTATION OF COMPARATIVE RESULTS

CONVEGENCES:

1. Both philosophies advocate a form of non-action – Wu-Wei aligns with the natural order, and Sartrean authenticity involves genuine, uncontrived existence.
2. Both philosophies converge in their emphasis on aligning with fundamental principles – Wu-Wei with the Tao and Sartrean existentialism with individual freedom as an inherent principle.
3. Both philosophies recognize the importance of spontaneity – Wu-Wei in natural, unforced actions and Sartrean existentialism in authentic, spontaneously chosen actions.
4. Both emphasize the importance of aligning with fundamental principles – Wu-Wei with nature and Sartrean existentialism with individual freedom.
5. Both philosophies involve an element of spontaneity – Wu-Wei in the natural flow of actions and Sartrean existentialism in the authentic, self-chosen actions of individuals.

DIVERGENCES:

1. While Wu-Wei suggests a harmonious alignment with the Tao, Sartrean authenticity is often marked by the individual's existential anguish in navigating limitless possibilities.
2. Wu-Wei's non-action leans towards passive alignment, whereas Sartrean authenticity involves active engagement and decision-making.
3. Wu-Wei suggests flowing with the natural order, while Sartrean existentialism places emphasis on actively choosing and taking responsibility for one's freedom.
4. Wu-Wei implies a receptive alignment with the natural order, whereas Sartrean freedom involves actively choosing and creating one's essence.

Wu-Wei's spontaneity arises from a mindset of minimal effort, while Sartrean individual responsibility implies a conscious engagement with freedom and its consequences

CONCLUSION

This study has established that Wu-Wei philosophy embraces non-action, which aligns with the natural order. It advocates spontaneity, flexibility, and minimal effort. It is rooted in Chinese Taoist philosophy, which emphasizes harmony and alignment with the Tao. Similarly, the study posits that Sartrean existentialism centres on authenticity, individual freedom, and responsibility. It also involves active engagement in creating one's essence through choices. The philosophy emerged in post-World War II Europe, reflecting existential angst and a focus on individualism. Comparatively, the study identified convergences in spontaneity and alignment with fundamental principles of existence. And divergences in the nature of non-action, approaches to freedom. This study is significant in bridging Eastern and Western philosophical traditions. It promotes a more inclusive understanding of diverse philosophical approaches. By uncovering the cultural variations influencing these philosophies.

The study emphasises the importance of cultural sensitivity in existential thought and adds value to how cultural contexts shape philosophical frameworks. It suggests that

aspects of Wu-Wei and Sartrean existentialism can inform individuals' lives in various cultural settings. The study's gain is that it advances understanding not only of the philosophies in context but also of the cultural influences that have shaped these existential traditions. It emphasises the significance of recognising cultural influences in existential thought and reinforces the global relevance of these philosophies. Future research avenues can further tackle the diversity of cultural philosophies and analyse the practical and ethical dimensions of embracing existential principles in various contexts.

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