

Carter Wilson

Chris Goto-Jones

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### Wu-Wei Confucius Concept

One of the core pillars of thought within the Confucius tradition is the teachings of wu-wei. Meaning non-action, we-wei as a concept is over 2 millenia old which follows the consensus of the art of not trying. This paper will attempt to break down the wu-wei paradox by presenting common objections to the plausibility of the art of not trying, then counter-object to those problems with solutions. Some common objections may be that acting without preconceptions could be impossible because all actions are in some way premeditated. Two is the question of how far in time one must be prepared for action, as wu-wei is defined as action within spontaneous intent, does that mean 10 seconds or could that look like 1 hour? Wu-wei is a call from nature to submit action that one could use reason only if intuition is used in the former. When intuition senses nature's river, there is a call to action.

Preconceptions act as a blockade to playfulness and flexibility, according to Chung's essay on wu-wei. To cultivate that feeling of a 'flow state,' one must not enter a situation without any preconceived ideas in order to achieve a harmonious flow of events called on by nature. The problem with not having any preconceptions is that it promotes unpreparedness for the future. Are preconceptions not the defining feature of consciousness? Using ideas experienced from the past and applying that to the future? How could one take action in the world without having a preconception, regardless if it is preconceived an hour hitherto or 10 seconds? To think, one must preconceive, no? Every action must be meditated from the preconceived imagination to create a

drama in the world. The courthouse that is the world is the illusion imposed by human imagination and preconceived ideas. Meditations practiced by eastern traditions are meant to kick back against fate and render their attention in the moment - sway of trees in the breeze, birds chirping, patterns of breath and ongoing thoughts passing by. The main question within this argument objection is that are wu-wei practitioners complete passivists, are they vegetables until provoked, and when they are provoked, is that the only time they are allowed to manifest a preconception?

The second objection is time and how long can one wait to submit an action according to wu-wei? If one does not submit action when nature calls, would that result in Cheng's elaboration if the individual goes against the flow of nature, (ie. rigidity, projecting and cocksureness) say if nature calls to run a marathon, for some unbestowed reason, the individual does not do it, is that person automatically rigid, projecting and cocksure? Since wu-wei is defined as non-action, and not having an action when one *should* could be as worse as forcibly submitting an action when one *shouldn't*. Or if the individual is called on by nature to run the marathon today, but procrastinates it till tomorrow, that individual might be rigid. The individual follows the leading moral code of Confucianism and does not take action when wu-wei's nature tells them to take action; the individual is rigid, projecting and cocksure for being wu-wei and not taking action, which is self-contradictory in the way wu-wei suggests.

Similar to how a nose responds to a scent is the way in which Chung would describe using the senses to execute action. Even when action is taken, the individual is still not trying, because a nose smelling a flower takes no effort. Instead of the 'passive until provoked' paradox it is rather not being provoked nor passive but entering into the unwilling submission to flow in nature's river. Wu-wei is also described as desire free, which means only the will of the universe

is involved when taking action. Entering the flow of the universe is often referred to as the 'flow state', which is the effortless feeling of spontaneous playfulness in kicking back against fate and staying satisfactorily present. Passion in action, is the flow state, without having to think or force anything. On the contrary, when rejecting the flow state, the cynic's forcible tendencies render them rigid and disregarding and closed off. The best way to reject the flow state is to preconceive, even wu-wei may present contradictions such as preconceiving in order to think... but this indeed is a misunderstanding of wu-wei: preconceptions are not premeditations or preparations, rather they are expectations or assumptions about an event in the future, an individual or a topic of discussion. It is more of a speculation or a guess, which wu-wei considers knowledge based on ethos to be rigid, cocksure and possibly arrogant.

Entering the will of the universe at first glance may seem that wu-wei in Confucianism is a hard deterministic view, which means all events are predetermined by God's will, which rejects self control and free will entirely. Unlike the Abrahamic religions, Confucius followers are strictly libertarians, so they do have free will holding those accountable that choose to be cocksure, rigid etc. The will of the universe or nature's river in wu-wei is more like the godless ceaseless direction of chaotic events flowing infinitely with no concept of place or time. That is one of wu-wui's most prominent contradictions: preconceptions are forbidden even though they believe in freewill. A strange paradox indeed that wu-wei teachings are to not force, preconceive and try, but to throw oneself onto nature's river. In theory, wu-wei is said to make suitable decisions according to one's own will, and nonetheless not have a will simultaneously.

Now is not acting when one is supposed to act considered cocksure and rigid similar to how an individual acts when they are not supposed to? The best way to understand acting upon a call from nature, is the very essence of wu-wei itself: not trying to try. From the perspective of

wu-wei mother nature, surely she is not living up to her envisioned picture of a worst possible character who preconceived and forcing doings of the world, pointing a finger that the individual *should* do something. The will of nature's river will not tell the individual that they *should* or *shouldn't* run a marathon, rather they *could* have the potential to execute suitable action in accordance with proper discrimination. The use of the metaphor of the river mentioned in Chung's essay on wu-wei, he is not only using it to fictionalize the concept of wu-wei, like 'go with the flow,' instead he considered the malleability of water running down a stream, dodging roots and picking up the pace in the rapids. The water, or nature, has the potential that it *could* go in any which way imaginable that flows into its best path.

Chung states that discriminating what is right and suitable between what is not is the highest form of knowledge. Out of various battles of confrontation an individual faces in their life, they are given a multitude of choices to discriminate from, and according to wu-wei, there is always 'the way' in which is the best right and suitable decision. In order to choose, one has to use reason, and in order to use reason, one must discriminate distinctions. How to make proper distinctions in nature's chaotic river? By using intuition and sensing the right path... intuition also known as faith and in some way is the opposite to reason. Reason is defined as making distinctions while faith is hope, unity and Oneness in blurred distinctions. By using faith in the former to reason, by assuming nature is one, registers to the individual that there is a greater good beyond the mosaic of distinctions made. That the individual too, is a part of the blurred distinction oneness, but in order to make sense of the world, discrimination is necessary to make the suitable decision. Determining what is suitable is the highest form of knowledge in wu-wei for the reasons of making distinctions in a world of Oneness where nature is incapable of

distinguishing between climates. Where distinctions are made without the help of wu-wei, and nature's river Oneness, the individual is rendered cocksure, projecting and rigid.

The concept of wu-wei is all about conducting oneself in an organic manner. Unnatural projections that are not supposed to be: what is unsuitable for an individual. Usually when an individual must *try* to achieve their given desire, it is not meant for them. What is meant for them, will come to them... anything less puts the individual in a powerless position. The hopeless cause of chasing after something rather than it chasing after you erases desire, and promotes meaning and talent. Why must a person force themselves to try in the first place? Whether that be a new car, vacations, a title of a position in a job; a cynical inclination of materialism and vain and perhaps envy, but "how in the hell could a man enjoy being awakened at 6:30 a.m. by an alarm clock, leap out of bed, dress, force-feed, shit, piss, brush teeth and hair, and fight traffic to get to a place where essentially you made lots of money for somebody else and were asked to be grateful for the opportunity to do so?" Charles Bukowski famously advocated the wu-wei concept, probably without knowing about it, and praised the art of trying not to try. Written on his gravestone, 'don't try,' he meant not to chase after something but rather let that something chase after you, which as Chung says cultivates playfulness and flexibility because nature's river grants the individual happiness, as nothing was forced, when playing the right card with the limited cards at one's disposal.

Wu-wei is a call from nature to submit action that one could use reason only if intuition is used in the former. When intuition senses nature's river, there is a call to action. The action is taken in a hard-determinist world with a libertarian mind to make the proper distinctions, hopefully out of faith then let the tidal wave come in and respond, unforced and un-trying, which

will promote happiness and playfulness. Something that *could* be done, called from the senses and not a preconception, as Chung says, to alter one's reality in accordance with nature's river.