

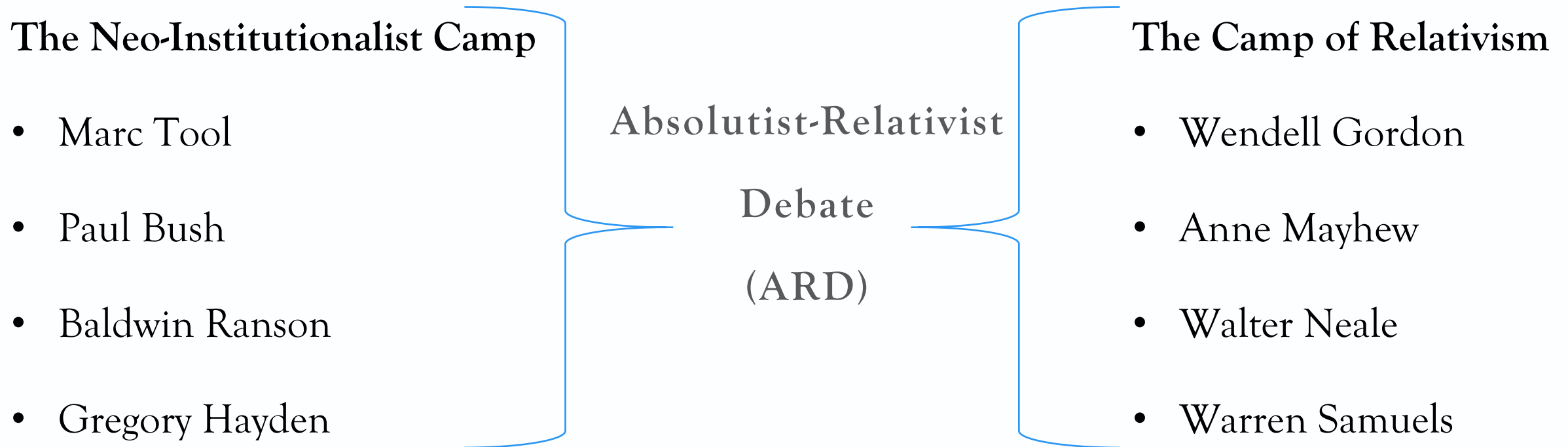
The Concept of Wei-Yu and Its Implications to the Absolutist-Relativist Debate of Institutionalism

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The Debate over Institutional Axiology



The Major Focus of ARD: whether and to what extent the theory and principle of instrumental (social) value (and the Veblenian dichotomy) are subjected to its internal cultural boundaries of institutionalism

The Following Progress on the Thesis of ARD

- Solutions attempted to restore coherence of institutionalist philosophical foundation, i.e. Discourses (Waller and Robertson 1991), Critical Realism (Miller 1998), Post-Modernism (Horsberg 1994), Nietzscheanizing (Ruccio and Amariglio 2003).
- Recent discussion: Xu (2022), Jacob Powell (2023).
- Shortage: Lack of support for direct empirical evidences, thereby:
 - a. leading the debate to an endless **philosophical controversy**;
 - b. emphasizing **the diversity of cultures** by using indirect empirical evidence (the ethnography of anthropologists);
 - c. projecting an **anti-colonial anxiety** into institutionalism;
 - d. covering up **the commonality** between institutionalism and the world.

The Main Point of This Paper

- **Purpose:** To demonstrate that it is incorrect to overlook the vast differences in thinking and lifestyles expressed by cultural differences; **equally wrong is to fail to recognize the commonality between a culture and the world**, for if this is done, that culture is effectively excluded from the entirety of humanity. As a kind of culture in a broad sense, the institutionalist axiology contains such commonality. **Refusing to recognize this commonality does not eradicate the risk of ethnocentrism; on the contrary, it is itself an expression of ethnocentrism.**
- **Method:** Reappearing institutionalist axiology in traditional Chinese Confucian culture to present its commonality, i.e., the conceptual schema of Wei-Yu.

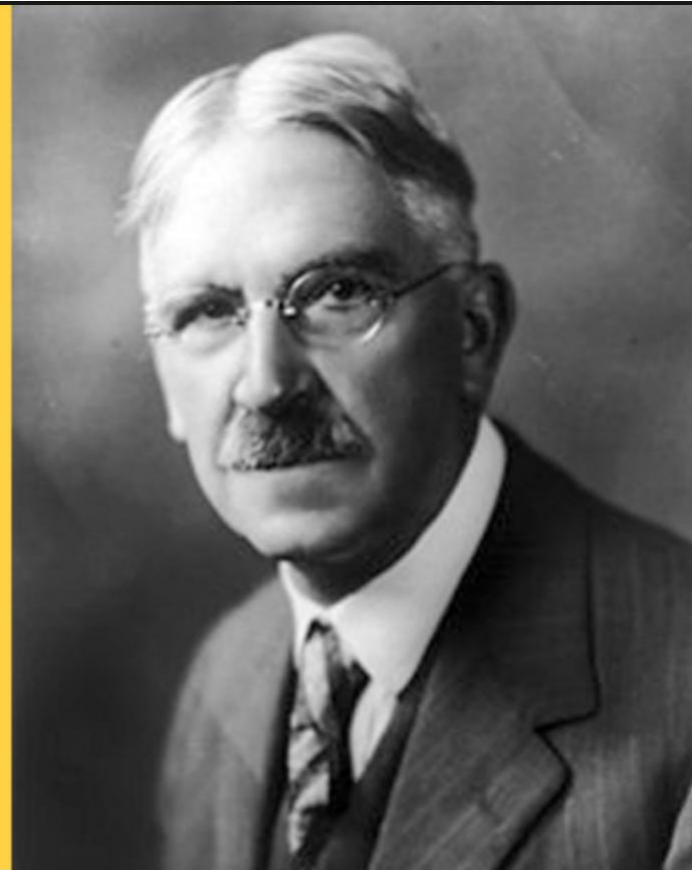
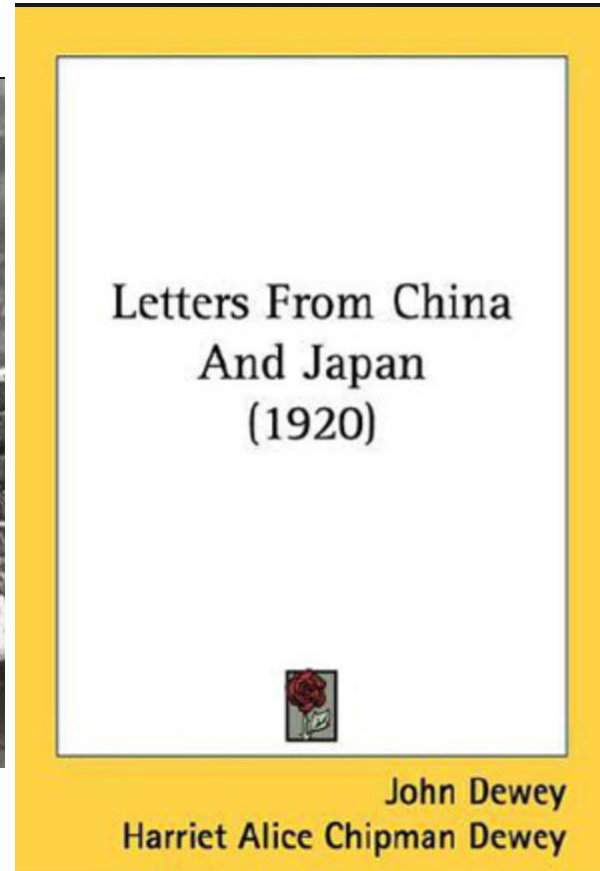
What is the Meaning of “Instrumentality”?

- **Type A:** an acknowledged desirable **value proposition**, temporarily.
 - e.g. Clarence Ayres’ theory of instrumental value; Marc Tool’s principle of social value.
- **Type B:** the validity **criterion of valiative judgment**.
 - e.g. John Dewey’s theory of valuation.

What is the Meaning of “Instrumentality”?

- The key conceptual problem causing ARD: whether Type A and B can be unified?
 - Neo-Institutionalism: since human experiences are unified, they can.
 - Dissenters: they can't, since it is the fallacy of composition (Mayhew 1987).
- To understand instrumentality as **practical rationality**
 - “Dewey’s treatment of the distinction between **valuing** and **valuation** lies at the philosophical heart of the distinction that institutionalists draw between **ceremonial** and **instrumental** valuation” (Bush 1993, 85)
 - Since the key to distinguish them is whether the **phronesis** intervenes or not it cannot be said that the meaning of "instrumentality" cannot be recognized once it goes beyond the cultural context of institutionalism. It is shared by all cultures.

A Piece of History



John Dewey in 1919, “the second Confucius”

The Conceptual Schema of Wei-Yu

喜怒哀乐之未发谓之中，发而皆中节谓之和。中也者，天下之大本也；和也者，天下之达道也。致中和，天地位焉，万物育焉。

——《中庸》 I:5-7

Before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are aroused, it is called centrality (Zhong); when the feelings are aroused and each and all attain due measure and degree, it is called harmony (He). Centrality is the great foundation of the world, and harmony is its universal path. To cultivate centrality and harmony with thoroughness is the way to bring heaven and earth to their proper place (Wei) and all things their proper nourishment (Yu).

——Zhong-Yong I:5-7

The Conceptual Schema of Wei-Yu



Zhong-He:

- A principle of centrality
- The way of being able to act in accordance with the best possible structure affairs in a given situation (Tu 1989)
- a significant manifestation of practical rationality (Cheung et al. 2003)

Wei-Yu:

- To rest in proper place and to complete creation and birth.
- The generic ends of life.

The Conceptual Schema of Wei-Yu

Ge-Wu (格物):
investigating things

Zhi-Zhi (致知):
extending knowledge to the limited

Xiu-Shen (修身):
self-cultivation

Zhong-He (中和):
practical rationality

Wei-Yu (位育):
generic ends of life



The continuum of means and ends
by the interpretation of the conceptual schema of Wei-Yu in classical Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism



A kind of (pre-)scientific inquiry procedure

The Conceptual Schema of Wei-Yu

➤ Pan Guangdan's Contribution:

- Wei-Yu = adaptation = order and progress = **maintaining continuity**
- To pursue Wei-Yu, holistic, dynamistic and pragmatic methodology are required (Wu-Shi 务实)
- e.g., On educational domain: **native education**; on national domain: **capability of creation**
- “To pursue Wei-Yu requires attention to the context and circumstances surrounding each event, object, and person. It necessitates an understanding of the relationship between the parts and the whole. Beyond the causes, one must also seek the outcomes; beyond the facts, one must also examine their significance and value.” (Pan 1946b, 105)

The Consistency of Conceptual Elements between Confucianism and Institutionalism

	Confucianist Concepts	(neo-) Institutional Concepts
Ge-Wu	Investigation	Process of Inquiry
Zhi-Zhi	Extending Knowledge	Growth in the Knowledge Fund
Xiu-Shen	Self-Cultivation/Learning	Acquire for the Reliable Knowledge
Zhong-He	Principle of Centrality/Practical Rationality	Instrumental Valuation/Instrumental Efficiency/Instrumentally Use of Knowledge/Problem-Solving...
Wei-Yu	Adaptation/Adjustment/Order and Progress/Generic Ends of Life	Continuity of Life-Process/Principles of Institutional Adjustment/Re-creation of Community...
Wu-Shi	To Be Pragmatic	Instrumentality/Matter of Fact/Holism...

Thank you!