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## Author's Reply to Referee's Review of E.H. Carr: Approaches to Understanding Experience and Knowledge

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First and foremost I wish to thank Dr. Seán Molloy for his comments and feedback for both drafts of this article. It is an honour to be in correspondence with an author so established in Carr scholarship and especially to have feedback regarding some of the central debates surrounding interpretations of Carr's work within IR.

The article is drawn from a chapter within a larger PhD dissertation, and as Dr. Molloy pointed out, it has been a struggle to get the right balance of information to turn the chapter into an article. To contextualize the research, the more general agenda of the dissertation and this article in particular has been to highlight and reflect upon the heuristic frameworks within which Carr's works are often considered, including the categorization of his work into either/or frames of reference. I am entirely in agreement with Seán Molloy's statement that Carr is not an 'either/or' thinker; he is a 'both/and' thinker. Moreover, the difference between 'either/or' and 'both/and' is one of assumed firmly dividing lines between theoretical approaches and what Steve Smith has referred to as a continuum of theorizing.<sup>2</sup> Reading Carr as a 'both/and' thinker is particularly pertinent when it comes to the central issue of concern in this article: an understanding of the ways in which Carr's interconnection between theorizing history and politics is vital to debates surrounding a discussion of the anti-foundational aspects of his epistemology. As Graham Evans did point out, Carr was not an inconsistent thinker<sup>3</sup>, and at the same time this need not assume that his theorizing is consistent with a foundational definition of knowledge. I agree that on this point the article needs a stronger engagement with the literature related to Carr's contribution to historiography, including Jonathan Haslam, Richard Evans, and Alun Munslow. Munslow especially notes that an area on which Michael Cox's 'Critical Appraisal' does not offer great detail is with regard to Carr's connection to the "anti-epistemology thinking about history from Kant through Hegel to Vaihinger, Croce, Collingwood, Oakshott, etc."<sup>4</sup>

It is also necessary to clarify what is meant in this article by dialectics, which reflects a duality said to exist in Marx's thought.<sup>5</sup> Such a duality refers to, on the one hand, a mode of understanding a relational sociology in which agents and structures constitute one another and in which theory and practice are intrinsically intertwined. This does not refer to any single progressive pinnacle as the ultimate outcome for

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<sup>2</sup> Steve Smith, Many Dirty Hands Make Light Work: Martin Hollis's Account of Social Action, *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 4(4), 2001:123-148.

<sup>3</sup> Graham Evans, 'E.H. Carr and International Relations,' *British Journal of International Studies*, 1(2), 1975: 77-97.

<sup>4</sup> Alun Munslow, 'Book Review: E.H. Carr a Critical Appraisal,' 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism*, Sussex, The Harvester Press, 1979: 39.

society, but to a dynamic and multi-causal way of understanding interconnected meanings in the world. Such a definition of dialectics refers to the mutual importance of theory and practice in perceiving reality and can be found in the writings of R.W. Cox.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand is Marx's theorizing of ontologically mechanistic processes of general laws that unfold similarly in both natural and social worlds.

It is the first, not the second, aspect of Marx's thought that is drawn upon in this article's discussion of dialectics. Moreover, it seems that the first definition of dialectical logic is consistent with Molloy's reading of William James's binary at work between realism and utopia and, indeed, between power and morality. It seems this definition is furthermore consistent with Andrew Linklater's discussion of the insight Carr drew from Marx's immanent critique, as well as Kubáľková's discussion of Carr's dialectics. Indeed, I wished to emphasize in the article and still hold that authors such as Molloy, Jones, Linklater, and Kubáľková build a strong foundation for further discussing this part of Carr's thought.

I am in agreement with the distinction advanced by Molloy in 'Dialectics and Transformation' and in *The Hidden History of Realism* of Carr's anti-positivism. I am also in full agreement that the distinction between positivistic and non-positivistic empiricism is one, for the sake of conceptual clarity, that must consistently be made. What is more, the issue of Carr and aspects of materialism seems to be related to the discussion of his non-positivistic empiricism, especially with regard to differentiating his inductive analysis from Deductive-Nomological explanation in terms of causes and effects. What is clear is that parts of Carr's theories of international politics offer materialistic explanations. This does not mean his theories subscribe wholly to a material causality. This is commonly acknowledged among the secondary authors discussed in the article and precisely what I wish to further emphasize with this line of inquiry. In light of recent discussions on an Aristotelean understanding of causality in IR it is necessary to consider what aspects of Carr's materialism mean for his theorizing of causes more generally.<sup>7</sup>

The issues of Carr's 'dialectics' and his inductive logic are related to a discussion of anti-foundational epistemology. In relation to anti-foundational epistemologies, there have been discussions of the epistemologically pragmatist aspects of Carr's work. This article wished, alternatively, to focus on the similarities between Carr's epistemology and the historical tradition emphasized by Munslow. I do not believe that Carr's epistemological position was that of epistemological pragmatism as has been said to characterize Richard Rorty's evolutionary epistemology, which holds that the viewpoint or truth that survives will be the one most practical and useful to a given social or cultural situation. Nor do I believe that Carr abandoned issues of justifying truth claims. As both Molloy and Tim Dunne have pointed out, Carr's epistemology strikes (or attempts to strike) a balance between inductive logic and truth/value justification.<sup>8</sup> It seems that framing a discussion of Carr in terms of 'relativism' implies a certain binary: Either there is an objective

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Cox, *Approaches to World Order*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996: 65-66

<sup>7</sup> Milja Kurki, 'Causes of a Divided Discipline: rethinking the concept of cause in International Relations Theory', *Review of International Studies* 32, 2006: 189-216.

<sup>8</sup> Timothy Dunne. 'Theories as Weapons: E.H. Carr and International Relations,' in *E.H. Carr A Critical Appraisal*, edited by Michael Cox, New York, Palgrave, 2000: 217-233.

Seán Molloy, 'Hans J. Morgenthau vs. E.H. Carr: Conflicting Conceptions of Ethical Realism,' in *Political Thought and International Relations: Variations on a Realist Theme* edited by Duncan Bell, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009: 83-104.

standard for truth and value OR there can be no adjudication between different truth and value claims. This does not account for the compromise (which again connects Carr with Collingwood) – that standards for adjudication arise from particular situations themselves, not from universal standards outside them.

To conclude, it would appear that Dr. Molloy and I stand on common ground in reading Carr as a ‘both/and’ thinker. It is a credit to the complexity of Carr’s thought that his work continues to provide such a rich basis for discussion.