

Gregory T. Papanikos

What is History?

An Assessment of Carr's Monograph

ATINER

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Summary

My thoughts on Edward Hallet Carr's (1892-1982) treatise on - 'What is History?'- are outlined in this small monograph. Carr's treatise was first published in 1961 and a second edition appeared posthumously in 1987 including only a new preface which was written in 1982. Carr adopted what I would like to call a quasi-inductive method of historical research without completely rejecting the deductive method. It seems to me that his approach is eclectic with a bias in favor of an -'interpretative'- approach to history.

His book is based on many historical cases including the Russian Revolution which was his most important research contribution to contemporary studies of history. It is very difficult to summarize my interpretation of Carr's argument because there is no one single argument. The best I can offer is to warn the reader that I read Carr's arguments using my economic glasses.

I do think he erred in his judgement of the role of historical facts and data. From an economist's perspective, his approach is a sacrilege. This theme, Carr thought, was the crux of his argument and thus his contribution-- he continuously makes the distinction of important and not important historical facts in almost all six of his lectures. This is unfair both to history as a science, and of course to all sciences which use historical facts and data such as in the economics discipline. As a matter of historical fact, economics thrive on the use of historical data.

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I organize my thoughts on Carr's treatment of history following his own structure of contents, chapter by chapter, or, more precisely, lecture by lecture. In conclusion, I include a separate chapter of an overall evaluation and summary of Carr's argument and I present my thoughts on his opinions using the pedagogical and research tools of economic science.

An epilogue looks at Carr's notes which were written in preparing a second edition, which critically discusses some of the reviews that Carr's book received right after its publication in 1961, and examines how Carr's book has been received by Elton (1967) and Evans (1997).

Preface

In writing these notes, I did not follow Carr's advice to read his biography first. I do not need to know the professional, or even the personal, life of a historian or any other scientist to read his book. This may be the result of my interest in Ancient Greek historians such as (in chronological order of appearance and in reverse order of importance) Hecataeus, Herodotus and Thucydides. We do not know much about their lives but this does not prevent me from reading and benefiting from their work. This is my objective historical fact. This trained me to look at the work and not at its creator. Personally, I never had such a curiosity which I always considered as an excuse for "gossiping."

I did not even read the reviews of Carr's book until I had made up my own thoughts. I did not look at them in the 1980s when I first read Carr's book for the reasons explained in the first chapter, and I did not read them in 2020 when I started transforming my old notes on Carr's book into this monograph. After I finished this monograph, I read all of the reviews of the book that I could find. I did not find them useful in the sense that they did not add anything to what I had thought about Carr's book. I do make some references to these reviews in my last concluding chapter. A plausible explanation is that my thoughts are based on an economic approach in reading books which might differ from how non-economists read and review books. I was not able to find a review of Carr's book made by an economist. After all, the epistemology of reading books

may not be the same for all scientists. Similarly, the process of writing history may not be the same. Carr mentioned in his book that he writes along with his reading. Others may prefer to read all their sources first before they start writing.

Over the years, I was able to accumulate some additional knowledge of history primarily because of my affiliation with the *Athens Institute for Education and Research* (ATINER), which, since 1995, has been organizing small academic gatherings imitating ancient Athenian Symposiums.

Naturally these events include many papers on history and philosophy. As a matter of fact, since 2003, ATINER has been organizing an annual conference on history (<https://www.atiner.gr/history>), and beginning in 2015 publishes an academic periodical, *The Athens Journal of History*.

I have had the privilege to meet and discuss with so many historians; too many to name all of them. My approach to learning history from them and distil useful historical knowledge has been very subtle. To borrow a phrase from Carr's book I used Adam Smith's hidden hand and Hegel's 'cunning of reason'. Without them knowing, I have benefited and I have learned a lot about history from innocent and trustworthy discussions with Jayoung Che, Steve Oberhelman, Nicholas Pappas, and David Wick. I would like to thank all of them because they honour me with their friendship throughout all these years that we have been collaborating at ATINER. For me they were an inspiration to rekindle my old interest in history which goes back to my elementary and secondary school years.

1

Prolegomena

This chapter is my apology and excuse of writing this monograph. I am not a historian, but yet I dare to write a review of one of the most important books on the philosophy of history in the second half of the twentieth century.

As an economist, I evaluate the book by its demand for it and not by its substance. After all, I know from Thucydides that some historians wrote history to please masses, even though I do not totally agree with Thucydides' slandering all those who wrote history to please the masses. Of course, we know that he was attacking Herodotus and not Carr, but nevertheless it shows that some children have no respect for their father.

I have a great respect for Carr's book and I am sure, based on his methodology, he would welcome my subjective reading of his book. As said in my preface, I read the book as an economist and the reader should always keep this in mind.

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In what follows in this chapter, I narrate my own little story of the circumstances (a historical accident) which made me read Carr's book and many others which deal with the philosophy of history.

My History of Reading Carr's Book

In 1961, Carr published a small treatise entitled "What Is History?" It received great attention right from the beginning, and many reviews appeared. It became popular history. Evans (1997, 1) reported that the book was used, "as an introduction to historical study by teachers and students since its first publication in 1961." With such publicity it was an unavoidable historical accident to read the book given the following objective circumstances.

I read the book in the 1980s (a graduate student, then) when I was assigned to teach a course on *European Economic History* at the University of Ottawa. I showed a personal interest in teaching the course which the Department had in its catalogue of elective courses, but was not offered because no teacher could be found. It was an undergraduate course offered by the Department of Economics. The majority of students who showed an interest (revealed their preferences, economists would say) came from other departments and some were outsiders who simply audited the course out of a personal interest in history.

To prepare for the course, I had to read. Carr's was not the only book I read. An early book that I also found useful was authored by Patrick Gardiner on *The Nature of Historical Explanation* which

was first published in 1952. Gardiner also edited a collection of classical readings and published in 1959 as *Theories of History*. It was a valuable resource. As a beginner in studying philosophy of history, I found it handy to say the least.

Gardiner's little monograph also received many reviews in the 1950s. Despite the reviews and its earlier appearance, it seems that it did not leave its mark on the philosophy of history as did Carr's book. Another book that I also read during this period was Geoffrey Elton's *The Practice of History* published in 1967. I will discuss this book in relation to Carr's book in the last chapter.

Since I mentioned Evan's book of "defense" another book was in my list of readings which had the word "Defense" in its title. Cohen's 1978 book on Karl Marx's *Theory of History: A Defense* provided a unique support of historical materialism. Cohen (1978, 29) stated that, "... we shall propound what is called a 'technological' interpretation of historical materialism". His approach has been called "technological determinism."

In addition to books, I read many articles published in history journals which by now I have forgotten. The mother of Clio, Mnemosyne, was sleeping when I was born. My memory betrays me at an increasing rate. The older I grow, the less I remember.

Coming back to my story, this process of my reading generated the following objective historical information, facts and data. Firstly, my class was full of students (this is a number, a datum). My hermeneutics of this historical fact was that the demand for history courses was extremely high. Economic history and economic thought courses offered by business and economics

departments is discussed in Bosshardt et al. (2013) and I will not expand here even though it is an extremely important issue.

Economists have shown a greater interest in the “thought” subject rather than the “economies” of the past. Many books have been written on the “history of economic thought” rather than on “economic history”. I suppose economists followed Carr’s advice by showing a greater interest in the lives and views of people, rather than in the past of actual economies.

My favored textbooks of this period were written by Schumpeter (1954) and Spiegel (1971/1983) on the history of economic thought, and Cameron (1989) and Clough & Rapp (1975) on economic history. The latter was the textbook I used. The more recently published ones by Heilbroner (1999), Nasar (1998, 2011) and Sandmo (2010) have their own merit and I want to mention them.

Secondly, the Department of History at the University of Ottawa did not offer such a course from what I remember; I guess because following Carr’s thought, that facts and data were not historically important. But they were wrong which I think reflects a general mistake that history departments are making, which I will explain later in this monograph. The demand for historical knowledge must be satisfied with or without the Department of Histories and the historians who staff them.

Thirdly, if a historian interprets the high demand for my course as a proof that I was a great teacher, this would be a very bad interpretation and a false reading of the signal sent out by the facts of the market. Please do not blame the fact, but your interpretation

of it. It is not subjective and biased, but simply incorrect. Such an interpretation would violate an important theoretical assumption that students had a previous knowledge of my teaching abilities in general, and my ability to teach an economic history course in particular.

Of course, given that I taught the course for the first time, and that very few students had taken courses with me before in other subjects, I safely inferred that their interest was an interest for history in general and not so much for economic history as I had the opportunity to find out later on during my teaching of the course.

I Did not Know History Then and I do not Imply that I Know Now

Fourthly, preparing for the course, I discovered to my surprise that I did not know history. Most scientists who I know have great interest in history because they think they know it. They think that history is to memorize the year of the Battle of Marathon. This is sufficient for them. If you ask the month of the battle and whether it was raining during the battle, they stumble. Carr was right when he wrote that envies his history colleagues who were ignorant of their subject. He was referring to ancient and medieval historians emphasizing the lacuna of historical facts and data. Despite that I had taken a number of courses in the History of Economic Thought and Economic History, my knowledge of history was also limited.

Furthermore, and to my surprise again (history is full of surprises), I realized that all my teachers who taught me economic history and history of economic thought did not know history

either, yet all of them were very happy teachers. My most important discovery was what I did not know. I summarized my ignorance in the areas of (a) philosophy of history, (b) epistemology and (c) historiography. I did not know that these words existed and a I felt very bad because with the exception of the “of”, all other four words had a Greek origin and all are used in modern Greek as well. Socrates, or whoever else said it, was right. I found out that I knew only one thing about history: I knew nothing.

I do not discuss these terms here in detail, but to be fair with my readers I should give my own handy interpretation of these terms. This has served me well all these years and I have avoided --so I think-- the insanity which Carr warned us about.

In brief, I identify philosophy of history as being conceptually identical with the nature (science or not), the meaning (definition and scientific borders vis-a-vis other sciences) and the purpose (explain the past, being a useful guide for future actions, entertaining the current generations etc.) of history.

Epistemology in history I take to mean that there is a process of acquiring scientific knowledge (gnosis), and therefore history as a science should follow these epistemological rules. How to build and test theories (hypotheses, laws and theorems) is also part of epistemology.

I interpret historiography to include methods and techniques of writing history. It includes the different ways (or styles) to report results of historical research, as well as how to write a universally objective world history textbook. Good narrations are preferred to bad narrations. Good myths are preferred to bad myths. Good

fictions are preferred to bad fictions. I do consider them as being an integral part of history studies, especially when they are used for pedagogical purposes with an objective to teach history as the science it is. Economic science teaching has flourished based on such parables.

My humble thought is that historians should separate the received view of history from its iconoclasts when they teach an introductory course to history. When you bombard the reader with too many different and controversial ideas, at the end you create confusion and nothing else. This is what Carr's book did to me, but more on this in the following chapters.

Coming back to my story, I realized that I cannot teach an economic history course properly without knowing the meaning and nature of history in the abstract, as philosophers would put it. Even though I had a good background in history from my high school years (I had the same background in math), I found out as I was preparing for the course that this would not be of great help if I did not study what is called (but never clearly defined) the philosophy of history, the epistemology and historiography.

During those years (1970s) in Greece if a student wanted to study economics at a university, he had to write an entrance exam in history and mathematics. So, some thought, to study economics you are required to have a top-knowledge in history and mathematics. I do not know who thought about it and for what purpose, but it was a wise choice and this brings me to the next issue I want to discuss: my learning experience of history during my high school years.

Learning History at the High School Level

Following Carr's approach, I would first request the permission of the reader to allow me to narrate a personal experience from my high school years. Despite what Carr said, and so many other historians have said after and before him, during my high school years the discussions over historical issues inside and outside the classroom were heated. We were sharing the same economic, social, political, cultural, religious environment. We were an ideal homogeneous group of people. This provided a setting for a natural experiment to test Carr's theory of history, which is that the social, political and cultural environment moulds the interpretations of historical facts.

Carr would have predicted that our ideas and our interpretations of historical events would be so close that the variability of our differences would measure zero using any metric of dispersion. Yet, I do not remember two students having the same opinion about a historical event. We were all living in the same society and used the same textbook, but our views were different. Completely different. Some views were influenced by their ideological preoccupations, e.g., Marxists. But even within the Marxist cult the debates were louder than those outside the group. And how would not be different? Greece fought the first ideological war between communists and non-communists in the so-called Western World immediately after the Second World War. The impact of the Greek Civil War in the 1940s was still felt in the 1970s. This was a big division but not the only one. On the right-hand side of the political

spectrum, there were divisions between royalists and non-royalists. The left-hand side was split between Stalinists and non-Stalinists, Maoists and non-Maoists, Trotskyists and non-Trotskyists, pro-Albanian and non-Albanian Communists, Eurocommunists and non-Eurocommunists, and Titoists and non-Titoists. I am not kidding. I had friends from all of these groups during my high school and later during my university years. History underpinned all political, economic and philosophical discussions.

Everything was questionable. Even the occurrence of a single event was questioned. I was one of them who, for the fun of the argumentation in history, questioned every important event that ever existed. My high school was 20 kilometres away from Marathon, Greece. What are the historical sources that assures us that the Battle really took place? How do we know that the tomb of those fought and died in Marathon is a real one? We know from Herodotus who wrote a detailed history of it says one answer, but Herodotus was a liar and mythomaniac. What would have prevented him from making up the Battle of Marathon if this commanded a high tuition fee? But even if the Battle of Marathon took place, who assures us that it was a war between Athens and Persia (Europe and Asia), and not a civil war between Miltiades and Hippias?

With this background, when I read Carr's book and those of other historians who share the same ideas (i.e., that my historical knowledge and interpretation is conditioned by my social environment), I nostalgically smiled remembering my history

debates in my teens. I thought, how wrong can a historian be? My nostalgia relates to my youth and not my history debates.

The last historical episode of my experience with “learning history” in my high school relates to the issue of using history as a propaganda (ideological) tool. In the last year of my high school, which coincided with the last year of the Greek dictatorship (1967-1974) --I do not relate the two in a causal deterministic relation--, some of the many idiots of the Greek junta thought and persuaded many that if they produced a history book on the recent Greek history praising the great achievement of the dictatorship, one of which was peace (or quietness) and order (or peace because of police and military order), then this would promote their cause. On the issue of quietness, we used to say that cemeteries are quiet. This book was a textbook for the last grade of the high school. All textbooks in the Greek education system are distributed free of any charge, but of course are funded by all those who pay taxes and in Greece, are few due to rampant tax evasion. By the way, I have looked and read the current history books which are distributed to primary and secondary history classes; what an improvement? Professional historians have produced masterpieces of textbooks. In just the seventh-grade, students have a 100-pages additional textbook which is solely devoted to Herodotus' *Ιστορίαις*. And, unlike Hesiod who thought was better to had been born earlier than in his time, I wish I was born later and I was now at high school. This same wish was also expressed by Hesiod which made him an optimist rather than a pessimist as many interpret from his masterpiece on *Works and Days*. The wish to be born earlier than

the present is not in contradiction with the wish to be born in a future generation.

I do not have a copy of the history book from which the Greek dictators produced, but I remember it being a light-blue book with a very sturdy cover. The propaganda book had exactly the opposite effect from what the dictators wanted. At some point, applying the conspiracy theory, I thought a communist spy (the favoured enemy of right-wing dictators) had penetrated the Greek junta and persuaded them to distribute the book.

It created havoc. Most of us were laughing. Without any intention to apply a deterministic model, the book was given to high school students in September of 1973, two months before a student uprising against the dictatorship on 17 November 1973. I do not directly connect the distribution of the textbook with the uprising, but if historical events (assuming that this event was important) are the result of one qualitative change that occurs as a result of the accumulation of myriads small quantitative changes, then it becomes a testable hypothesis, whether the book was not that marginal quantitative change that led to the qualitative change of the student uprising.

Since this allegation has a Marxist flavour, I do accept Marx's dictum that philosophers must aim at changing the world, but given the short length of life, it is more important to enjoy it as well. Marx did exactly this: changing by enjoyment. If you do not enjoy it, do not change it: do not force it on yourself. Humanity will progress without you. Students wanted to change the society by an uprising

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against the dictatorship, but it was part of a general mood of enjoying life as well.

The Historical Accident

Returning to my theme, I think all of us who are not trained to be historians, but are taught, and later teach subjects of history such as economic history and history of economic thought, must take one or more courses on the Philosophy of History, Epistemology and Historiography; whatever these terms mean. Taking such a course would not clarify the meaning of these terms, but it might offer an answer of why it is difficult to do so.

Fifthly, as a good economist, I found out that my lack of knowledge became a need which required satisfaction. It was at this stage of the sequence of events that the historical accident happened (actually and contrary to how Carr defined accidents) in a very deterministic way that I came across in Carr's short book. If you believe in God, then it was a divine providence that Carr's book collided with me.

In short, the book served me another purpose, or so I thought. My unconscious, subjective and relativist approach to reading correlates the time required to read a book positively with the number of pages of the book. I found out the hard way that this was not the case with Carr's book. I made many notes which I kept as a fact and data and I hoped that one day I would use it as historical data as defined by Carr. After forty years of doing many things, and creating more and more personal important facts, I thought the time

was ripe to write a book about Carr's philosophy of history based upon my notes from the 1980s. All of these historical facts about myself are important facts as I explain in another chapter.

Out of my stubbornness (egocentric was I to not accept my original negative thoughts of the book as a mistake of my youth), or because now as an objectively old man (subjectively, very young) looking again at these notes, I honestly still believe that my original critical views have not changed. I cannot wait another forty years before I make my thoughts public, lest by 2061, I would have to change my thoughts.

In Conclusion

Let me repeat that the process of starting to read such books was instigated by my objective need to teach a European Economic History course. I wanted to be a teacher with some knowledge. This motivation was not only pleasure from teaching, but the need for income as well. My intention was to become Protagoras and Herodotus rather than Socrates and Thucydides; I wanted to earn income from teaching and research. It seems that my subjective historical facts do not confirm Carr's paradigm of what is, or what should be, history. My motivations were purely material. I used my knowledge of history as an investment (making money), but now I use it as a consumption good (personal enjoyment in my leisure time).

In presenting my thoughts on the book, I follow Carr's outline. I start with his first chapter on historical facts which also provided a

discussion on the philosophy of history, which in my mind is the area where the book belongs. All other chapters of my monograph follow the sequence of chapters (six in total) of Carr's lectures. I add another chapter before the conclusions which provides an overall evaluation and an application of an economist's pedagogical tools to better clarify what Carr meant with historical facts and data, and where I think he erred.

Throughout, I use the Second Edition published by Penguin Books in 1987 (reprinted in 1990), edited by R.W. Davies, who provided at the end of the book *Notes* from Carr's files. Carr died in 1982. He never published an actual second edition but only a preface. Davies informs us that Carr planned drastic changes in the structure in order to address some of his critics as well as accounting for the development of his own thought.

However, Davies tell us, Carr was satisfied with the first chapter and he was not planning to revise it. I do believe that the first chapter is the backbone of Carr's contribution to the philosophy of history. My reading of this lecture is presented in the following chapter of my monograph.

2

Facts and Data

How important are facts and data in history? This question is posed early on in Carr's treatise. He considered this question as 'crucial' which demanded a closer look. To demonstrate his argument, he used the Battle of Hastings in 1066 C.E. and the Russian Revolution. Similarly, I will demonstrate my arguments here using the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C.E., and with all my respect to the importance of the Battle of Hastings, my choice is much better. My choice of the Battle of Marathon meets the requirements of "objectivity" implied by Carr as I will demonstrate in the eighth chapter.

Carr had this to say about the objectivity of facts, "Objectivity in history - if we are still to use the conventional term - cannot be an objectivity of fact, but only of relation, of the relation between fact and interpretation, between past, present, and future" (1987, 120). What about if for the same fact (e.g., The Battle of Marathon) nothing new can be added as an interpretation which would make it an objective fact. I will say more on Carr's objectivity later.

However, facts come first. Earlier on in his text he made a distinction between historical and non-historical facts: "...not all facts about the past are historical facts, or are treated as such by the historian" (Carr 1987, 10).

For some metaphysical reasons, which are not explained, some facts become historical facts and some not. What confuses me is the "or" of historians. At the end, historians decide what is an important fact and what is not. The answer is then embedded in the question itself-- it is an analytical truth which has no value.

This reminds me of the question asked when we were elementary students "who was the father of Zevedeos' children?" Who is the father of historian's children (facts)? Historians of course. They decide what is a historical fact.

I assume that history is what historians "do", which is a good tautology as well. Thus, Carr answered the question, 'What is history?' without realizing it. History is what historians do and what they do is to determine what is historical and what is not. Historical facts are only one facet of it.

Facts and Historical Facts

Some historical facts are important and some are non-important. But what Carr did not realize is that both, nevertheless, are historical facts. On p. 16 he clarified what he meant: "...If you find it in the documents, it is so. But what, when we get down to it, do these documents - the decrees, the treaties, the rent-rolls, the blue books, the official correspondence, the private letters and diaries -

tell us? No document can tell us more than what the author of the document thought - what he thought had happened, what he thought ought to happen or would happen, or perhaps only what he wanted others to think he thought, or even only what he himself thought he thought. None of this means anything until the historian has got to work on it and deciphered it. The facts, whether found in documents or not, have still to be processed by the historian before he can make any use of them: the use he makes of them is, if I may put it that way, the processing process.”

This is true. These documents may not be important, at least for Carr, but the historical facts do exist and this condition holds without any historian’s interpretation. Historians’ interpretation is neither necessary nor sufficient for these (historical) facts to become important. Other scientists may use these historical facts to test their own hypotheses. It is quite possible that non-historians, such as economists, use them to test their economic hypotheses, theorems, laws. Are these not then considered important historical facts? Yes, is the answer, and in some cases, if not in most cases, what economists value as important historical facts is more important than the assessment of historians of them. In any case, economists have ignored historians valuation of the importance of a historical fact. I am going to say more about this in chapter eight.

Carr was Wrong on (Historical) Facts

All facts of the past are by definition historical facts. History is the past. To use my economic jargon, what Carr actually meant was

that not all historical facts have the same demand. This is true. My family's historical facts are not important, but nevertheless they are historical facts.

A personal parenthesis (digression): I once organized a historical symposium about the area in my village which belongs to the historical but unimportant area of Akarnania, which nevertheless is mentioned by Homer and Thucydides among many others, and is very close and similar to Hesiod's village, Askra, which as he described it, "...was gold in the winter, hot in the summer never pleasurable."¹

Someone (a historian who echoed Carr's argument) asked me what was so important about my area that it deserved a historical analysis. My response was that the importance of the area is that I was born there. Thus, I created a demand and "paid" historians to investigate the history of Akarnania. By the way, I do not know many places around the world that are mentioned by Homer, Hesiod and Thucydides. This by itself constitutes an important fact, i.e., a historical fact.

As a matter of historical fact, the area of Akarnania has not been completely ignored by academics. Richardson (1901, 31) had written that, "Since I took my first hasty glimpse of Akarnania and Aetolia in 1894, that region has drawn me powerfully, and I have made four other visits there, more careful and of longer duration than the first, the peculiar charm which I felt at first strengthening its hold upon me with each fresh visit."

¹See Edwards (2004) for a discussion of Hesiod's village.

I myself have this non-data-based interpretation of my area. The Dorian migration to Peloponnesus and all over the Mediterranean started from my village. Carr would have never denied my subjective/ relativist/narrativist approach to this issue, but it is not as simple as that. From this unique and unimportant fact, I can build something general and important. For example, Thucydides mentioned by name the area of Akarnania as being the base of what we would call “social bandits,” primarily organized gangs who would rob the local population and travelers and, in some cases, extend their operations beyond their geographical boundaries. Of course, piracy was ubiquitous in Ancient and modern Greece until it was extinguished by the middle of the twentieth century C.E.

From the uniqueness of my family, I can examine why some members of my ancestors chose to be “social bandits” and some did not. For example, my grandfather was not a member of “social bandits,” but his brother was. There is a theory which determines the probability of joining these “social gangs,” and I can test its hypothesis. The reason I would choose my birthplace as a field of study is not only my personal interest, but the objective historical fact that I have a comparative advantage in doing research in my area, including lower opportunity material costs. Historians must face the objective historical fact of a budget constraint for their research. Historical facts are objectively produced at a material cost. Historians are not free to choose: facts are not a free good. (more on this in chapter eight). Therefore, I do not agree with Carr that, “The historian is not really interested in the unique, but what is general in the unique.” (1987, 63) As a historian, I would be

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interested in both. Thus, I agree with him when he stated that, "History is concerned with the relation between the unique and the general" (1987, 65).

This demand model explains why the historical facts of the Battle of Marathon are more important than the historical facts of the Battle of Hastings mentioned by Carr. Why does demand differ? Economists and social scientists have very good and empirically verifiable answers using objective historical facts. It can be called cliometrics which is the application of statistics in studying quantitative, and in some cases qualitative, historical facts. I would have much more to say on cliometrics in later chapters.

The Unbearable Lightness of Objective Facts

I took the liberty to paraphrase the title of a 1984 novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Czech author Milan Kundera. I think it relates. Carr confused the subjectivity of the collection of facts with the objective existence of a historical fact, which is an autophyte plant and not a parasite, that is fed by historians' interpretations.

For years now, the Battle of Marathon has been an objective data generation process which can be the subject of analysis. Of course, how many times these data will be used depends again on the demand for doing research on the Battle of Marathon. Currently, according to Rhodes (2013), the demand for new research on the Battle of Marathon has reached its highest possible level, i.e., it is satiated. It satisfies all of the appetites of an objective interpretation

of a historical event. The reader should not confuse the lack of data (and there are many that relate to the Battle of Marathon) with the objective analysis of the Battle of Marathon based on the existing evidence. The search for new evidence never stops, and the historical fact that we lack additional facts and data does not make our research non-objective. On the contrary, it provides the opportunity to think how might it have been, where one historian might give more than one interpretation. As an economist, I usually have more than one interpretation, which in many cases might be antithetical.

The demand for doing historical research on the Battle of Marathon may be motivated by an individual preference just like the preference for a specific car model. The human behavior of choice is the same and should be analyzed appropriately. But why do so many researchers demand “The Battle of Marathon” and not “The Navy Battle of Salamis” in 480 BCE?

Is this a subjective choice by a historian? Of course not. We know that the Marathon race as part of the Olympics gave a boost to this interest, but research can also be instigated through funding, as was the demand for the history of my village. For example, the City of Marathon decides to offer monetary prizes to the three best research works on the Battle of Marathon, or will directly promote the research on the Battle of Marathon by funding five master and ten doctoral theses on the Battle of the Marathon. Historical facts will be generated for everybody to use.

Thus, historical facts and data have their own objective existence vis-à-vis the historians’ preference. If they are used for

research, this depends on the preferences (utility function) of historians, subject to constraints. All preferences are subjective and all constraints are objective. Funding the research on the Battle of Marathon neither changes the preference structure of historians nor changes the historical facts. What it does is it changes the constraint, i.e., historians can spend time on the Battle of Marathon instead of on the Battle of Hastings. The constraint is always objective and this has been noted by Hesiod himself in the eighth century BCE and, thereafter, by many others.

These are choices all made by scientists. For example, I wanted to write a thesis on the theory of value. My ten-page proposal was accepted for a doctoral thesis, but my department would not give me funding for such a topic. Instead, they financed my thesis on applied econometrics. My subjectivity was terminated at the level of my preference to become a researcher, i.e., I could have chosen to become a practicing economist instead, but I did not.

The objective conditions of life forced me to do research on applied econometrics, or as Hesiod would have said, I was the victim of God's decision because He had hidden the material means of my living; not only from me, but from the entire human race after Prometheus stole the fire (technology) from the Gods. After the collapse of the Golden Race, humans must work -do one work after another- if they want to survive. Unfortunately, historians and other researchers have no choice but to accept the historical facts of life. Thus, it is the objective conditions of life to determine which historical facts are important (in demand) and which are left in obscurity.

The City of Marathon, by providing the means of subsistence to historians, can prompt more research on the Battle of Marathon. The reason the City of Marathon does this is not so “innocent”. They have done an objective cost-benefit analysis using objective historical data (facts) which showed that more research on the Battle of Marathon increases the city’s revenues by increasing tourism demand. The multiplier of this effect is higher if an onsite research takes place. Everything is so objectively done indeed!

My personal (Herodotean) experience with a number of Mayors of the City of Marathon has persuaded me that all Mayors were well-aware of these objective conditions of marketing and branding. Some historians may ignore, or choose to ignore, such objective historical facts. Contrary to what Thucydides advised historians to do, most of them are forced by the unbearable objective conditions of life to follow Herodotus’ example and write histories to please in order to make money and get well-paid positions. So many historians wrote the scenario of excellent historical movies. Masses must be pleased. Bread is necessary, but not sufficient to please the masses. In ancient Rome they offered gladiators, and in Ancient Greece, Olympic Games and cultural contests such as theater playwrights. From an ontological point of view, Ancient Rome and Ancient Greece satisfied the demand for pleasure. It becomes a value judgement (deontological issue) which one was better.

The objective conditions of life are such that I do not consider them a historical disaster if historians use objective facts (e.g., the Greek-Persian War) to insert beautiful stories about beautiful women who were abducted. It makes the story “sexy” and it

becomes very attractive to research. I am really surprised that the story of Io from Argos has not become a scenario for a Hollywood or a Bollywood movie. It is true that the abduction of Europe is well known than Io's story.

Of course, Herodotus was serving history as a science, and after narrating the lovely erotic story added that this could not be the true reasons of the historical odium of Greeks and Persians. If this type of history sells, then I do not see anything wrong with historians beautifying their stories. In my daydreams when I walk around the Acropolis Hill, I imagine Herodotus with his audience seated at one of many isolated little rocks and reading them his notes about all these fascinating stories about women. I would have loved to be in his audience. After Herodotus had finished his story, I am sure he would mention in front of his "clients" that. "no woman can be adducted if she did not want to," to the delight of his male audience. I am sure Herodotus did not say when he was reading aloud his stories that he did not believe in such explanations of historical facts, e.g., the Greek-Persian War. He left that for his written part of his story. Myth and reality at its best in writing history.

Furthermore, the funding of historical research usually includes a process which is called by economists a "data generation process" of historical facts. For example, scientists are hired by the City of Marathon to do DNA and similar tests on the skeletons of the 192 Athenian soldiers who were killed in the Battle of Marathon and are buried there. These historical facts are then freely available for everyone to use. Are the generation of such historical facts an

objective or a subjective process? Are these subject to interpretation or not?

Thus, despite what Carr stated, positivists are on the right side of history: objective facts come first and their interpretation follows. Both works can be done by well-trained (good) historians. Both subjects are and should be within the scope of what is included as an answer to the question, “what is history?”

Subjective interpretations must be based on objective facts. Then we may distinguish between good and bad interpretations and of course between bad (unreliable, invalid) and good (reliable and trustworthy) objective facts. The reason that facts (data) are bad is because of missing information and lack of money, and not because of lack of interpretations.

Searching for Facts is History's Task

Contrary to what Carr argued, searching for objective facts is an important task and must be exclusively undertaken by historians or other scientists with a good training in history.

Carr understands that his arguments are not persuasive. He invents a category of historical facts: basic historical facts. This category is never defined.

What about the non-basic historical facts? Do they belong to history? What are these? He stated that basic facts are the raw materials of history and these are provided by what he claimed, “...the ‘auxiliary sciences’ of history archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics, chronology, and so forth” (Carr 1987, 11).

I guess the most important ones are included in the so forth such as social and behavioral sciences. Later on, he mentioned explicitly the “so forth” sciences. These sciences can offer historians theoretical models to develop empirical hypotheses which can be verified using the tangible objective historical facts. Carr did claim that for the historian the existence of historical facts, “...is a necessary condition of his work, but not his essential function” (1987, 11).

I think Carr pays lip service to history: it restricts its subject so much that important areas of history become an easy prey for other scientists to grab. And so, they did. From my own subjective experience, I know that economists have ignored historians for a long time now (at least since the nineteenth century) by developing their own history, the “New Economic History,” or earlier, the New History concept developed by James Harvey Robinson for practical use in social sciences and pedagogy.

Economists know very well -Carr did not know- the concept of vertical integration. If historical facts are produced by other “auxiliary sciences,” as he called them, then the science of history has the legitimate right to integrate the production of such “raw materials” with what Carr called essential function. Thus, I would have stated it differently. Historical facts are necessary but not sufficient to produce good historical research.

He continued his attack on historical facts by stating that, “...every journalist knows today that the most effective way to influence opinion is by the selection and arrangement of the appropriate facts. It used to be said that facts speak for themselves.

This is, of course, untrue. The facts, speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give the door, and in what order or context” (Carr 1987, 11).

He got it all wrong. The purpose of good journalism is to select and arrange appropriate facts. Good journalism is based on facts. Bad journalism is based on making up news. But this is not a new historical fact. Carr could have cited Theophrastus (371-287 BCE), who, in his work on *Characters*, defined the act of “fake news” as making up “logos” (λογοποιία) by which the newsmaker or newsmonger (ὁ λογοποιῶν) provides a synthesis (σύνθεσις) of pseudo logos and praxis (ψευδῶν λόγων καὶ πράξεων) for whomever (ᾧν) was to believe it (πιστεῦεσθαι).¹

ᾧν says Theophrastus but the way he puts it has doubts on whether people easily accepted fake news. The public is made up of rational decision makers who exert a pressure on journalists to supply appropriate facts which maximize their utilities. This is the ontology of the matter and I have many deontological scorns about what people demand for news, but I am not going to make any value judgements. The historical facts of the internet inform us that human beings demand for news and information relate to sports, narcotics and sex. News is a commodity as are all others. This explains why we have as many news outlets as we have cars. The demand for news and cars is so differentiated. I see it as a positive human behavior. Humans love differentiation, and even though my value system disagrees with most of it, my ontological reasoning

¹In his own beautiful words “Ἡ δὲ λογοποιία ἐστὶ σύνθεσις ψευδῶν λόγων καὶ πράξεων, ᾧν <πιστεῦεσθαι> βούλεται ὁ λογοποιῶν” [8.1].

accepts all of it as long as I have the choice to refrain from consuming it.

Facts and Data Speak for Themselves

I do believe that historical facts speak for themselves. Some historians are not able to hear what they are saying. If this is a “hearing impairing problem”, it can be solved with the use of a “hearing aid device”. However, I am afraid is not a “hearing” problem that historians have, but a *language* problem. Most historians have not been trained to understand facts and data language. This might explain why Carr stated that this is not a historians’ role, but a task of others whom are “auxiliary” to history sciences. It is true that data speak a very difficult language which is called statistics. It is like ancient Greek. The “this is all Greek to me” becomes “this is all facts and data to me” in Carr’s mind. He is accurate when he pointed out that, “It is surely wrong that a candidate should be allowed to sit for an honours degree in history in a major university without an adequate knowledge of any modern language other than English” (1987, 150).

However, Carr asked historians to interpret historical facts and data without knowing their language. The language is statistics, which is more than collecting data, as any good textbook in statistics mentions. It includes the analysis of the facts and data and the derivation of conclusions as I will have the opportunity to further explain below. Historians lack this “language” skill; worse yet is that they have not realized it. They are in desperate need to be

fluent in this “language”. How can one interpret facts and data if he does not know their language? Good interpreters are those whom know both languages fluently. In our case: history and statistics.

It is interesting to note how Carr used the word data. He appeared to make a distinction between facts and data but he never mentioned that. He used the word “data” three times in his book. In one of them, he compared social scientists and historians. He wrote, “All that one can perhaps safely say about these complex relations is that interaction between the observer and what is observed, between the social scientist and his data, between the historian and his facts, is continuous, and continuously varies; and that this appears to be a distinctive feature of history and of the social sciences” (1987, 71).

He did not use the word “data” for historians, but he felt comfortable to use it for social scientists. Some critics (see chapter nine below) looked at his mistreatment of data and concluded that Carr did not like data. I disagree with this claim and will discuss further why in chapters eight and nine. Carr thrived on historical facts and data, he could not live without them.

I wonder how many history departments teach the “language” of statistics. An introduction to “historiostatistics” or “historiometrics” would have been a great skill for historians-to-be. I am inventing these terms because the term *statistics* on human bios has already been taken up, and is taught as biostatistics in sciences and medical schools.

I suppose that Carr and his followers would claim that obtaining facts and data is not part of historian’s work, and some of my

readers sympathetic to Carr's idea might say that I confuse historical data with historical facts. I do not. Historical data belong to the more general category of historical facts. There is a more general category which is called information. Data and facts belong to information and there is process by which scientists can extract information from data and facts.

I think Carr confused the two and this explains why he never defined what data is apart from who is using them, i.e., if natural sciences use them are data but if historians use exactly the same data become facts.

Actually, economics distinguishes historical data (being the hard evidence) from anecdotal evidence found in historical documents (soft evidence). The latter is of great use to economists in explaining historical data. It seems to me that something like this was implied by Carr himself when he stated that, "The facts, whether found in documents or not, have still to be processed by the historian before he can make any use of them: the use he makes of them is, if I may put it that way, the processing process" (1987, 16). The same is true for any economist who does empirical research.

I think at this point Carr understood that he reached a deadlock. He tried to escape using a historical example (fact) that he knew well: "Let me illustrate what I am trying to say by an example which I happen to know well" (1987, 16). By the end of it, he knew that he was not persuasive. After a long passage describing the historical fact he wrote: "But I want to carry the story one step further. Let us forget about Bernhard and Sutton, and be thankful that we can, if we choose, consult the authentic papers of a leading

participant in some important events of recent European history” (1987, 18).

He wrongly and unconvincingly concluded that the documents of the story do not “constitute history” because, “The documents do not tell us what happened, but only what Stresemann thought had happened, or what he wanted others to think, or perhaps what he wanted himself to think, had happened. It was not Sutton or Bernhard, but Stresemann himself, who started the process of selection” (1987, 19).

It is evident that Carr had a “hearing” and a “language” problem. Documents not only speak for themselves, but scream. Only “deaf” people (historians) do not hear them. After dismissing all these facts as not belonging to history, he posed the question again, *what is history?* Of course, documents are part of an objective history because the documents exist independently of who wrote them and who used them. Historians and other scientists (economists, for sure, and I guess also political scientists) would love to have as many of such documents as possible.

I agree with what Carr said about documents, but I conclude that this is a very valuable (historical) source for scientific inquiry. It is a true historical fact irrespectively of how one interprets it. The problem is not the documents, but the lack of them. We have very few historical documents.

Let me illustrate again with the Battle of Marathon. I want to research the economics of the Battle of Marathon. First, I would like to know how much it cost. Who spent more, the Athenians or the Persians? My theory of wars say that rich armies normally beat

poor armies. Was this the case? My theory of wars tells me that normally larger armies beat less numerous armies. Was this the case? We know since Homer, that a homogeneous army normally beats a heterogeneous army. Was this the case? We know from theory that a well-trained army normally beats a not-so-well trained army. Was this the case? In all cases I used the word “normally” as a statistical concept, i.e., a normal distribution. There is always a probability of one percent that the variations of answering these questions lie outside the range of plus-minus three standard deviations from an average answer. This is an objective analysis of historical facts, albeit a probabilistic one.

I am sure there were documents that would have helped me if they had survived. I am thankful to Herodotus who wrote about the Battle of Marathon, and we know at least something. The problem is not the subjectivity or the objectivity of Herodotus, but that he was only one.

I wish Xenophon had written an *Oeconomicus*—even a “subjective” one-- on the Battle of Marathon but he did not. Between nothing and a subjective one, I prefer the latter. A good historian could disentangle the subjective from the objective. Any subjective interpretation of history contains the seed of its objective interpretation. And all seeds require fertile land and a diligent farmer.

Final Words on Historical Facts and Data

Recapitulating, I found Carr's first chapter confusing. It is so confusing that the grand finale comes in the middle of the chapter. My feeling is that Carr believed he was an apostle of a divine mission and his theological duty made him to state the following unbelievable aphorism: "The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy, but one which it is very hard to eradicate" (1987, 12).

I am really happy that this "preposterous fallacy" has not been eradicated. On the contrary, if it is watered and fertilized with the appropriate historical facts, this approach will enhance not only the subject of history, but also its reliability. For all of us, the platonic lovers of Clio, we identify it with vividness, vitality and beauty.

So, what is history? I think the objective reader can distill an answer to this question from Carr's failed attempt to provide a persuasive answer to his own preconceptions of history. Carr convinced me that history is the use of whatever (historical) facts and data are available, including the hard and soft core in order to understand the past so that a better future of humanity arises taken into consideration the present. This is the history lesson I learned from reading the first chapter of Carr. His weakness to persuade me of the opposite reinforced my belief in the usefulness of historical facts and data.

This is an answer given by Thucydides. In his own magical phrase: "ὄσοι δὲ βουλήσονται τῶν τε γενομένων τὸ σαφὲς σκοπεῖν

What is History? An Assessment of Carr's Monograph

καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ποτὲ αὐθις κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον τοιούτων καὶ παραπλησίον ἔσεσθαι, ὠφέλιμα κρίνειν αὐτὰ ἀρκούντως ἔξει. κτῆμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν ξύγκειται” (*The Peloponnesian War*, 1.22).

This is the best ever answer to the question *what is history?* Carr failed to give a better answer. It is not a historical accident that avoided Thucydides approach all together. The *Peloponnesian War* is full of historical facts as they should be presented by historians. His approach was to survey interpretations of a historical fact which included his own. His treatment of the plague that struck Athens in 430-427 BCE is a good example. I have examined in detail this in Papanikos (2020). It suffices here to say that Thucydides informed all future generations with a series of historical facts. After stating the objective facts, and they were many, he offered his own interpretations for some of them. This is how history should be written.

Philosophy of History

The other theme which occupied the first chapter of Carr's book was the indifference of the nineteenth-century historians to the philosophy of history. It seems to me that Carr was not very sympathetic to the use of the term “Philosophy of History”-- he accepted it only as one possible answer to the question, *What is History?* (1987, 19).

One of the reasons for this is the close affinity of historians with nineteenth-century economics. He disapproved of the Prussian

historian Leopold von Ranke because he believed that the meaning of history is secondary to the collection of subjective historical facts. He scorned the laissez-faire economics by stating that, “Let everyone get on with his particular job, and the hidden hand would take care of the universal harmony. The facts of history were themselves a demonstration of the supreme fact of a beneficent and apparently infinite progress towards higher things” (1987, 20).

What is the alternative? Carr did not provide one. Let me speculate on one possible alternative: let anyone mess up with each other’s job, and chaos and anarchy will be created if not something even worse. He was mute on this important issue which can be summarized with the question, “can historical facts or history teach us how to achieve harmony or the way towards it?”

Thucydides believed that his history could help future generations avoid making the same mistake over again and again. There are many stages between harmony (the ideal) and the collapse of a society. A minimum accepted survival level would be a good start to thinking about this vital issue.

Carr continued his discussion of the philosophy of history, and after some quick and incomplete references to German and American scholars, he acknowledged Collingwood as, “...the only British thinker in the present century who has made a serious contribution to the philosophy of history” (1987, 21). Even from this he concluded that, “It follows that when we take up a work of history, our first concern should be not with the facts which it contains but with the historian who wrote it” (1987, 22).

Who writes history is a historical fact and should be treated as such? What about if the same facts are used by millions of historians? If we add up all of their opinions and calculate an average of opinions and compute all measures of dispersion, don't we get an objective interpretation of a historical fact? I think there is confusion here. In economics, historical records of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) exist. These have been developed by thousands of economists who specialized in developing the historical facts of GDP, which in the case of England, go back to 1209.¹ Should I read the bios of all cliometricians to understand the historical facts of the GDP? A rhetorical question.

His analysis gets worse and worse. Imagine that I want to do research on the Battle of Marathon with whatever evidence is available including my own onsite visit to the area. Carr would reject my thesis proposal because, "History cannot be written unless the historian can achieve some kind of contact with the mind of those about whom he is writing" (1987, 24).

Since Carr encouraged interpretation, I have the permission to interpret this statement. Am I told that I cannot write about the Battle of the Marathon unless I do not have a contact with the minds of Herodotus, Miltiades, Hippias, Darius, Datis, Artaphernes,

¹In Clark (2009) estimates are supplied for wages, land rents, interest rates, prices, factor shares, sectoral shares in output and employment, and real wages for England by decade between 1209 and 2008. Fouquet & Broadberry (2015, Figure 1, p. 230) present graphs of per capita GDP from 1300 to 1800 for six European countries: England, Holland, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. Ellison & Scott (2020) examined UK debt management using monthly (!) dataset for the period 1694-2018.

and many others who first wrote and created historical facts of the Battle of Marathon? Am I missing something here?

I agree with Carr when he stated that historians live in the present and it is only human to be influenced by social, political and economic surroundings. But if I know that, as Carr kindly revealed this divine secret, why can't I take this into consideration when I am writing my own history of the Battle of Marathon? Even better, starting with Herodotus why don't I make it, in line with Carr's suggestion, a testable historical hypothesis? I can have a chapter how views about the Battle of Marathon have changed over the centuries, or even millenniums, and then correlate these views with the social, political and economic conditions of each epoch. It can be done because we have the objective historical facts, i.e., the views of many historians across time. I explain this important issue in detail in chapter eight.

At this point, I think Carr contradicted himself. If the present shapes the views of historians, then the objective or subjective historical facts play no role. If his model of history is axiomatically deterministic then he cannot have it both ways. Either it is the use of historical facts to blame, or the present. You cannot have it both ways. His argument is very weak. He used the example of the word "democracy" by stating that its meaning has historically changed over centuries. But this is an objective fact, i.e., the meaning of democracy does not remain the same. For all of us Greek students we know from junior high school that the meaning of words changes over centuries. In Homeric years, one Greek word may have a different meaning from its meaning in classical years, in Hellenistic years, in Roman years, in Byzantine years, in Ottoman years, in the nineteenth century and in the late twentieth century

years. Why is this subjective? How does this influence my objective analysis of democracy?

In an ideal political system of democracy as this was conceived but never practiced in ancient Athens, five conditions must concurrently occur: isonomy, isegoria, isocracy, isoteleia and isopoliteia. I consider democracy an optimal stage of humanity and an eternal objective. Every epoch covers half of the remaining distance (mathematically we could never reach the end). This does not mean that the optimal does not exist and we should give up. There are many objective facts of my reading of history of human race: (a) humans are improvenists and not perfectionists; (b) progress towards a perfect society is non-Euclidean; (c) the shortening of humanity's distance from the optimal is what counts, and not the conquer of optimality itself which most probably would never happen and (d) in every century more and more people are born and live longer and longer which by itself constitutes a progressive objective historical fact which no historian's interpretation can alter. The purpose of history, as any other scientific discipline, is to make the future better than the past by working as hard as we can in the present.

School pupils know the difference between the democracy of Ancient Athens and the representative democracy of modern Greece. The history of democracy over the centuries demonstrates this. Herodotus in his Battle of Marathon gave yet another explanation what was at stake: tyranny vs democracy. Hippias was fighting on the side of Perses in the Battle of Marathon or his words, «... ἐξ τοῦτό σφι κατηγέετο Ἴππίης ὁ Πεισιστράτου» [6.102]. And when the ten *strategoí* of Athens were divided in half on fighting in Marathon or not, Miltiades in order to persuade the eleventh who could vote, the *Polemarchos Kallinikos*, told him that we fight Hippias because he is using the Persian Army to return as a

tyrant of Athens seeking to abolish democracy. In Miltiades words cited by Herodotus «...καὶ ἦν μὲν γε ὑποκύψωσι τοῖσι Μήδοισι, δέδοκται τὰ πείσονται παραδεδομένοι Ἴππῆη» [6.109]. We are not going to surrender to Medes, but to Hippias.

This view contradicts what Herodotus himself was telling us about a war between Europe and Asia. From the theories of the war, I do accept the explanation given by Miltiades. This is reinforced by Aeschylus' play *Perses* when he clearly stated the motivation for Athens to fight in the Battle of Marathon: “...καὶ παρῆν ὁμοῦ κλύειν πολλὴν βοήν, «ὦ παῖδες Ἑλλήνων ἴτε, ἐλευθεροῦτε πατρίδ’, ἐλευθεροῦτε δὲ παῖδας, γυναῖκας, θεῶν τέ πατρώων ἔδη, θήκας τε προγόνων· νῦν ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀγών» (*Perses*, 405). I do not see any European motivation here.

People fight for their own interests as the nineteenth-century defunct economists would put it. For their own homeland (read property), their children, their women and lastly their Gods. Does the order show importance? Who knows? Carr is vindicated because we cannot answer this question because we are unable to achieve some kind of contact with the mind of Aeschylus. By the way, Aeschylus and his brother Cynegirus fought in the Battle of Marathon. His brother lost his life in the Battle of Marathon. Aeschylus was an eyewitness.

Historical Facts May Not Be So Bad After All

The end of this first chapter is really surprising. I think the last 2-3 pages of this chapter are the essential part. What preceded was not necessary at all. The last 2-3 pages would have been sufficient. At the end of his long first lecture, Carr stated that he is not against facts. He raised another question: “How then, in the middle of the

twentieth century, are we to define the obligation of the historian to his facts?" (1987, 27).

He reported that he spent a lot of time collecting and using historical facts. And then he puts everything on the right place. Facts are important and historians should use them. Let me quote the entire two paragraphs (p. 29-30):

Our examination of the relation of the historian to the facts of history finds us, therefore, in an apparently precarious situation, navigating delicately between the Scylla of an untenable theory of history as an objective compilation of facts, of the unqualified primacy of fact over interpretation, and the Charybdis of an equally untenable theory of history as the subjective product of the mind of the historian who establishes the facts of history and masters them through the process of interpretation, between a view of history having the centre of gravity in the past and a view having the centre of gravity in the present. But our situation is less precarious than it seems. We shall encounter the same dichotomy of fact and interpretation again in these lectures in other guises - the particular and the general, the empirical and the theoretical, the objective and the subjective. The predicament of the historian is a reflexion of the nature of man. Man, except perhaps in earliest infancy and in extreme old age, is not totally involved in his environment and unconditionally subject to it. On the other hand, he is never totally independent of it and its unconditional master. The relation of man to his environment is the relation of the historian to his theme. The historian is neither the humble slave nor the tyrannical master of his facts. The relation between the historian and his facts is one of equality, of give-and-take. As any working historian knows, if he stops to reflect what he is doing as he thinks and writes, the historian is engaged on a continuous process of moulding his facts to his interpretation and his interpretation to his facts. It is impossible to assign primacy to one over the other.

The historian starts with a provisional selection of facts, and a provisional interpretation in the light of which that selection has

been made - by others as well as by himself. As he works, both the interpretation and the selection and ordering of facts undergo subtle and perhaps partly unconscious changes, through the reciprocal action of one or the other. And this reciprocal action also involves reciprocity between present and past, since the historian is part of the present and the facts belong to the past. The historian and the facts of history are necessary to one another. The historian without his facts is rootless and futile; the facts without their historian are dead and meaningless. My first answer therefore to the question 'What is history?' is that it is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past.

One only wonders what was the purpose of all of the previous discussion of this chapter. These two paragraphs would have been sufficient to state the obvious about his thesis, but here there is a twist. It seems to me that he accepted the independent existence of historical facts but his confusion about their role remained.

I think he confused the use of such words as “theory”, “facts” and “interpretation”. Carr did not realize that historians can use “auxiliary sciences” and borrow their theories to explain historical phenomena using objective historical facts.

Economics would have been a good example for him since he mentioned it two times in this first chapter. He made a good connection between historical facts as “inputs” and their interpretation as an “output” borrowing these terms from economics.

In his own words: “But I am convinced that, for any historian worth the name, the two processes of what economists call 'input'

and' output' go on simultaneously and are, in practice, parts of a single process” (1987, 28).

Unfortunately, he did not build on this important realization of how scientific research is done. As I will explain in chapter eight, analytical economics starts with a theory (e.g., consumer behaviour) which leads to hypotheses, continues with the collection of data, and goes on with testing the hypotheses using the statistical results along with anecdotal evidence available in order to interpret and conclude about the verification of the hypothesis.

If historical data or facts are missing, this is not a fault of the methodology but another manifestation of the objective fact of the objective limitations of scientific research. History is not an exception. More on this “input-output” relation of objective scientific research is discussed in chapter eight.

I do disagree with him when he stated that, “... the historian is engaged ... of moulding his facts to his interpretation.” If he had said that historians choose those objective facts which are more favourable to their ideological biases, I would have accepted it. But I do not accept that a historian can mould the historical data of English GDP which are available since the beginning of the thirteenth century. He can question the methodology of collecting data, but this again is a big part of good historical research worth pursuing. But these data cannot be moulded as easily as Carr wanted us to believe. Actually, they cannot be moulded at all. If they are moulded, it is a “criminal” offense against science and it cannot be tolerated.

On this issue, I found a passage from an article published in *The Journal of Economic Literature* of great interest. Field wrote: “Nor, given its norms, can science tolerate individuals who pull their punches by stating publicly that they believe things they do not believe privately, or cherry-picking evidence to make a case, or, even worse, falsifying evidence. Logic and evidence should prevail, and if evidence is falsified or logic abandoned, we expect the scientific community to sanction violators. These are fundamental Enlightenment principles, and are important to the sense of self and sense of purpose of most scientists and, indeed, most academics. Sometimes, of course, powerful interests wish to suppress data about how the world is because they fear it will threaten acceptance of their normative views and their ability to hold others to them. Galileo ran into trouble on this account. And sometimes, scientists themselves are guilty of inventing data that support their prior beliefs” (2017, 1550).

Economists write about how history should be written or more general how scientific research should be conducted. Historians should pay attention. They have nothing to lose but their chains of subjectivity.

All scientists face these problems. Charlatans and innocent amateurs have produced “research” which were a temporal hit, but sooner or later were ignored. This does not make scientific inquiry a worthless task to pursue. On the contrary, such “failures” reinforce the need for even better scientific inquiry. Agnosticism can never beat gnosis which is based on epistemology. Unlike bad money,

good science drives out bad science. Definitely this is true in the long run.

Some Concluding Remarks

In concluding this chapter, we are left with more confusion. Carr gave a different answer to “what is history?” from being simply the “philosophy of history.” Now it becomes a process which results from the interaction of historians with historical facts. This is history.

It is a dialogue between the past and the present. The present is represented by lived historians. It is so poetic, but writing history has nothing to do with writing poetry as Lucian of Samosata pointed out in the second century C.E.: “how should history be written” (Πῶς δεῖ ἱστορίαν συγγράφειν) which should not be confused with poetry.

Notwithstanding this, who does really represent the past? No answer is given. However, if I may risk one, I would say that the past is represented by (a) all books which can provide historical knowledge including books written by historians and by many other scientists, (b) all kinds of hard and soft data that have their own existence independently if they have been analysed or interpreted by historians and other scientists and (c) all scientific theories which can be used to interpret phenomena happened in the past.

These three areas can represent what I understand by (a) philosophy of history (b) epistemology which would include ‘historiometrics’ and (c) historiography. All of these serve only one

purpose which is given by Thucydides: to protect future generations from making the same mistakes again. How can history achieve this? By providing useful knowledge which is based on all facts, data and information available. Nothing is redundant in the pursuit of gnosis. It is gnosis which makes individuals and societies better. This is the theme of the next chapter.

3

Society and Individual

I was not able to discern the purpose of this second lecture. How does this relate to the question *what is history?* My interpretation is that Carr liked sociology and therefore “studies of societies.” He wanted to say something about this issue. Many of his arguments appeared in his first lecture as well. This is the reason my presentation of this chapter is very short.

Carr’s Determinism of Human Nature

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Carr acknowledged that individuals are the products of the social and cultural conditions of their societies. This is a trivial observation which states the obvious. It is a tautology. I am the son of my father, or more safely of my mother, Carr told me.

In support of his argument, he stated that, “...elusive entity 'human nature' has varied so much from country to country and from century to century that it is difficult not to regard it as a

historical phenomenon shaped by prevailing social conditions and conventions. There are many differences between, say, Americans, Russians, and Indians. But some, and perhaps the most important, of these differences take the form of different attitudes to social relations between individuals, or, in other words, to the way in which society should be constituted, so that the study of differences between American, Russian, and Indian society as a whole may well turn out to be the best way of studying differences between individual Americans, Russians, and Indians” (1987, 33).

I would like to see how this would have been applied to my classmates to disentangle our different interpretations of historical facts. He made an argument that this “... cult of the individual began with Renaissance,” and it was reinforced by the rise of capitalism and Protestantism (1987, 33). This is not true. This is unhistorical. First, many have repeated the same trivial (meaning non-important) fact that we are a reflection of our society, but it is a questionable observation. The ancient Greek society was heavily individualistic in all its forms of culture and especially in Athens. This was pointed out by Hegel in his *The Philosophy of History* published posthumously in 1837. Hegel wrote that, “This is the *elementary character* of the Spirit of the Greeks, implying the origination of their culture from independent individualities” (emphasis in the origin) (1837, 245).

However, this was also recognized in antiquity, especially by Athenians. Pseudo-Xenophon (circa 420 BCE) in *The Athenian Constitution* wrote “...and the other Greeks have pretty much the same dialect, lifestyle and dressing style, but the Athenians have an

amalgam of all Greeks and barbarians.”¹ And in Socrates own words, “... neither Greek nor Athenian, but Citizen of the world.”² In ancient times they at least recognized and (re)acted as if they did not want to be the products of their societies. They wanted to think and act beyond their narrow social and cultural environment. This has been slipped from Carr’s interpretation of the Ancient World and there is no excuse for a lacuna of historical facts.

Historians are Part of History

Later on, a pseudo-purpose of this second lecture is revealed. Carr argued that historians as human being are the products of their epoch and culture and there is nothing that can do because, “The historian is part of history. The point in the procession at which he finds himself determines his angle of vision over the past” (1987, 36).

A few paragraphs below, after a long and unnecessary digression, he extended what he said in the first chapter: “In my first lecture I said: Before you study the history study the historian. Now I would add: Before you study the historian, study his historical and social environment. The historian, being an individual, is also a product of history and of society; and it is in this twofold light that the student of history must learn to regard him” (1987, 44).

¹“...καὶ οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνες ἰδίᾳ μᾶλλον καὶ φωνῇ καὶ διαίτῃ καὶ σχήματι χρῶνται, Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ κεκραμένη ἐξ ἁπάντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων.”

²“...οὐκ Ἀθηναῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλληνας, ἀλλὰ Κόσμιος.”

What about if two historians live through the same history and society? Would they produce the same or similar interpretations? I do not think Carr himself believed that this was the only (deterministic) outcome of an interpretation. Two “identical” historians --in terms of history, society and culture-- may have two diametrically opposite opinions, e.g., the Battle of Marathon was a civil war or a war between Asia and Europe. Then, a third one may add that it was a war between Athens and Plataies against a mixture of Persian and other soldiers. Or it could have been all three.

The same story of the first lecture is repeated again. He used the nineteenth century Grote's *History of Greece*. According to Carr, “It may not be fanciful to suggest that Grote's neglect of the problem of slavery in Athens reflected the failure of the group to which he belonged to face the problem of the new English factory working class.”

This is also not true. Grote made an extensive discussion of slavery in Athens and in the rest of Greece, e.g., in Volumes III and IV. However, there is a qualitative difference between the Greek word *Doulos* and the English word Slave. They are different in meaning. The analysis and etymology of this difference goes beyond the scope of this monograph. They were many types of *Douloi* in Ancient Greece and its general meaning has always been in Greek language, “I Work” or provide a service for someone. This word survived the mid-19th Century C.E. in Greece. In-house maids were called *δουλικά*. For all practical purposes, this word cannot be translated as *slaves*, and the Greek language today uses the term

σκλάβος to capture the meaning of a slave as being different from *δούλος*.

Furthermore, Grote emphasized the individuality of scientific achievement of the ancient world. He wrote (1851, Vol. I, x), “The dignity and value of the Greeks from that time forward belong to them; only as individual philosophers, preceptors, astronomers, and mathematicians, literary men and critics, medical practitioners, etc”. Or further on: “A series of names, placed in filiation or fraternity, together with a certain number of family or personal adventures ascribed to some of the individuals among them, constitute the ante-historical past through which the Greek looks back to his gods” (1851, V. I, 80). The word “individuals” is more than obvious and I think Carr had chosen to ignore it.

To return to my case study of the Battle of Marathon, I do not see how my social conditions will determine where those who fought were buried: Athenians, Plataies and Persians. This has been a thorny issue in the history of this great battle. Why should I search for the social conditions of a historian who wrote about this issue? Why is this a necessary precondition for my reading of any work? How would that relate to the controversies around the burial of the dead from the Battle of Marathon? Difficult questions to answer if one accepts Carr’s interpretation that historians, and therefore their interpretations, are determined by the historical period from which they lived.

The Facts of History Once Again

Having failed to persuade the sane reader how all historians are influenced by their society, he abandoned the issue and moved to another one which he had supposedly solved it in the first chapter: the facts of history.

Here, and contrary to what he said about individualism, he recognized that “The ancient Greeks liked to label the achievements of the past with the names of eponymous heroes supposedly responsible for them, to attribute their epics to a bard called Homer, and their laws and institutions to a Lycurgus or a Solon. The same inclination reappears at the Renaissance, when Plutarch, the biographer- moralist, was much more popular and influential a figure in the classical revival than the historians of antiquity” (1987, 45).

He provided an absurd justification. Now, he separated the societies into simple and complex societies. Ancient societies were simple and individuals could play a dominant role. This is wrong when one reads Solon's history. It is well known that Solon would persuade his fellow Athenians for a military expedition where he pretended that he lost his sanities and wrote a poem which was read in front of all Athenians. This was the result of a complex legal system which did not allow anybody to talk about this issue again. To play it safe, Solon pretended that he lost his sanity. I guess then, as now, insane people have a different legal treatment. The history of ancient Athens was far from being a simple society. On the contrary, I have not found any other historical society to be such a

complex social and political entity. At the intellectual level, reading Plato's Dialogues reveals the complexity of ancient Athenian society.

There is nothing wrong to write a history of great men, which we can call biographies; actually, this is exactly what Plutarch wrote. He warned his readers that his *Παράλληλοι Βίοι* (Parallel Bios) are not history, but comparative biographies. I do not know any historian under any social and cultural system of any epoch who would dare saying that this has no historical value; it is a valuable historical resource full of so many important facts for future generations to cherish.

One interesting point that Carr made is that (1987, 50), "Numbers count in history" in connection with his argument of great men. These men lead followers and their numbers count. This is true. A few pages later he posed the question "What is the role of the great man in history?" (1987, 53).

I agree with Carr's warning: "The view which I would hope to discourage is the view which places great men outside history and sees them as imposing themselves on history in virtue of their greatness, as 'lack-in-the-boxes who emerge miraculously from the unknown to interrupt the real continuity of history'" (1987, 54). I would have put it differently. Firstly, all historical epochs have their "great" men or women. Secondly, the "greatness" of someone is determined by the importance of the historical facts associated (and not caused) by his/her reign. Thirdly, great men emerge only in great powers. But this is not the point. The issue is how historians use the historical facts.

I may decide to write a history of my family going back sixteen generations, copying Hecataeus of Miletus. As far as I know, none of my ancestors was a great man. However, if I am able to verify any important theoretical hypotheses using my family's past, then I would consider it a very useful history. My writing of history would not have pleased Carr because the choice of the subject is not determined by my social and cultural upbringings; many others had the same curiosity going back to Hecataeus of Miletus. I suppose what does not fit Carr's definition of history is automatically excluded from the kingdom of essential historical research. He ended this chapter by stating that (1987, 55): "To enable man to understand the society of the past, and to increase his mastery over the society of the present, is the dual function of history." This is another answer to his question *what is history?* or what is social history.

It seems to me that the problem he tried to tackle here is what in economics we call the "aggregation problem." Economists can study the individual demand for a product, then they sum up all demands of the same product to obtain the total demand for this particular product. If demands for goods and services are summed up, then a figure for the aggregate demand is obtained. From the individual to national. From the atom to society. I think historians may benefit by studying how economists have tried to solve this thorny problem. Economics can become once again an "auxiliary science" to history. I do not think economists would have any problem with this. On the contrary, they would welcome any

proposal to expand their horizons and become an encompassing science.

Summing Up

I do not think this lecture adds much to what one today would call social history, i.e., the study of the past in its relations to society. The historical fact that humans are products of their own histories is as old as the history of human beings. If one takes this literally, then we end up with a vicious cycle of reasoning. Carr was the product of his own historical conditions. Today we live in different historical conditions. If conditions determine interpretations, then Carr's interpretations cannot be applied today. Does this also include his universal law that conditions determine interpretations? If yes, then this universal law is not necessarily applicable to the modern historical epoch. This kind of reasoning troubles me with Carr's thesis on individuals and society.

4

History and Science

Carr's third lecture analyses the relationship between science and history. Are the laws used in social sciences, and in other sciences generally, applicable to history? Or even more generally, do scientific laws exist? Do natural sciences have laws? No, Carr said. Such laws do not exist.

He made a very presumptuous assertion by generalizing for all sciences that, "Newton's boast '*Hypotheses non fingo*' rings hollow today; and though scientists, and even social scientists, still sometimes speak of laws, so to speak, for old time's sake, they no longer believe in their existence in the sense in which scientists of the eighteenth and nineteenth century universally believed in them. It is recognized that scientists make discoveries and acquire fresh knowledge, not by establishing precise and comprehensive laws, but by enunciating hypotheses which open the way to flesh inquiry" (1987, 58-59).

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This is consistent with his views of historical conditions determining interpretations. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries these interpretations supported the existence of laws. However, in the twentieth century the interpretation has changed. However, we are left with a vacuum. What of the twenty-first century interpretation changes in favor of laws? This issue was not addressed by Carr. However, I think he should have.

Carr was wrong. Economic science did not vindicate him. The development of economics as a science in the twentieth century is a good example to be followed by history and historians. Since this is what I know best, i.e., the economics as a science, I will address this issue using economics and economists who, at an increasing rate, believe in the existence of theorems, hypotheses and laws. As a matter of coincidence, economics has been thriving after the publication of Carr's book.

Economics is a Science and so is History

I do not see how Carr's general views about sciences can be applied to economics either as a "natural" or a social science. Twenty-first and twentieth century economics never before in their history of thought developed so many laws. So much so, that this outstanding development and upsurge in the number of laws have led many to interpret it as the mechanization of economic science. The historical facts show, without any need of subjective interpretations, that even before the publication of Carr's book (e.g., in the 1870s or in the 1930s), economists had been developing their theoretical models.

These theories and models have been extensively used since then to shape economic and business policy.

Never before in the history of scientific inquiry, a theory about human behavior was not so close to practice. Never before had scientists been so lucky as to see their ideas adopted by societies and polities. Never before had a science received such universal recognition by other scientists and by the public at large as the science of economics in the second half of the twentieth century, which unabatedly continues if one evaluates it by the historical facts and data which this has generated. The research is increasing at an increasing rate; economists are in high demand in both the public and private sectors. This has been a historical fact and datum and no interpretation can change it. Ontologically speaking, there is no room for further discussion. Deontologically speaking, there is plenty to discuss and argue.

This new impetus of scientific development started with John Maynard Keynes' *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* published in February 1936. It set the background of the mechanization and model-building in the science of economics. Economics was always a science since Hesiod's *Works and Days* which for all practical and theoretical purposes can be considered as the first introductory textbook in economics and business.

In his *Preface*, John Maynard Keynes clarified that his target group of readers are economists without excluding others. He dealt with the difficult question of theory. Because he knew, as the practical man he was, that without theory you cannot be useful to

society. It is secondary, Keynes said, the application of this theory to practice.

Here is a great, practical economist who recognized the need of building a theory first and then applying it to practice. This is the epistemology of the science of economics. Over the years, social sciences have followed economics' example. History stands still far behind.

I think Keynes' *Preface* would have been of great help to Carr. Not only this, the first chapter of Keynes' book (only half page) is a masterpiece of how a book contributes to knowledge. Keynes did not reject the so-called *Classical School of Economics* by Marx, but he argued that it is a special case in his *General Theory*. In other words, Keynes used the classical approach to economics to generalize. He did not reject the past of economics, but built upon it. In his own words Keynes writes (1936, 3), "I shall argue that the postulates of the classical theory are applicable to a special case only and not to the general case, the situation which it assumes being a limiting point of the possible positions of equilibrium. Moreover, the characteristics of the special case assumed by the classical theory happen not to be those of the economic society in which we actually live, with the result that its teaching is misleading and disastrous if we attempt to apply it to the facts of experience." Theory and practice at its best.

Immediately, in 1937, these ideas became the iron laws of macroeconomics in the skillful hands of Sir John Richard Hicks, a Nobel Laureate. He published a scientific paper which became part of all textbooks in economics entitled *Mr. Keynes and the*

"Classics"; A Suggested Interpretation. Hicks, as Carr would have suggested, offered his own interpretation. Hicks masterfully integrated the economic thought of the nineteenth, and the first half of the twentieth century. History as a science needs papers of this type.

Carr, writing in 1961, did not find worth citing and commenting on either work-- Keynes' name is nowhere to be found in his work. As far as economics is concerned, his literature review ends with Adam Smith, and as Keynes would put it, with some defunct economists of the pre-1930s period.

I guess if Carr did not choose this historical fact of the appearance of Keynes, then this fact is not important. Keynes did not square well with his theory of history, i.e., individuals do not matter. Was Keynes the product of his society in the 1930s or the second half of the twentieth century history was his product? It is a difficult question to answer.

But the human race thought otherwise and did not take Carr seriously. The development of economics as a science shows that contrary to what Carr was writing in 1961, economists never before believed so intensely in economic laws. What followed vindicated Hicks; he said (1937, 159), "*The General Theory of Employment* is a useful book; but it is neither the beginning nor the end of Dynamic Economics." And it was not. An unprecedented research followed.

A well-known economist (and Nobel Laureate), Robert E. Lucas Jr., further developed this idea of dynamic economics establishing what he called "the mechanics of economics." In 1988,

he published a well-known historical paper which has been well-cited with the word “mechanics” in its title: see Lucas (1988) *On the Mechanics of Economic Development*. The first paragraph of his paper leaves nothing to imagination as of his approach, “By the problem of economic development I mean simply the problem of accounting for the observed pattern, across countries and across time, in levels and rates of growth of per capita income. This may seem too narrow a definition, and perhaps it is, but thinking about income patterns will necessarily involve us in thinking about many other aspects of societies too, so I would suggest that we withhold judgment on the scope of this definition until we have a clearer idea of where it leads us” (1988, 3).

Carr told us in 1961 that economists as social or natural scientists “no longer believe” in the existence of laws. Not only do they believe, but they made them universal “across countries and across times” as Lucas told us. Many economists follow him even though too many do not agree with his theory of rational expectations. In the short abstract of this long and influential paper, Lucas told us that, “This paper considers the prospects for constructing a neoclassical theory of growth and international trade that is consistent with some of the main features of economic development. Three models are considered and compared to evidence: a model emphasizing physical capital accumulation and technological change, a model emphasizing human capital accumulation through schooling and a model emphasizing specialized human capital accumulation through learning-by-doing”. Isn't that history? I can go on and on with economics

because “laws” have been increasing at historically unprecedented rate. Historians have ignored them and history has not been so kind to them either. The historical role of historians has been decreasing at an increasing rate. This is a law which can be tested using the historical facts of historians’ declining role in theory and practice.

Time and Place in History

Carr then proceeded by raising another issue very common in studying history and economics: periodization and geography. This is the time-space dimension of history studies. Carr interpreted these as hypotheses and distills a “...bias of the historian ... by the hypothesis which he adopts” (1987, 61).

However, this is not unique in history science. Economics have been tackling the issue of time-space as well, which is directly related to historical facts and data. In economics, historical data are called “time series” and geographical data are called “cross sectional” data. A combination of the two are called “panel” data. All are historical data. For example, the geographical data may show how societies look at different historical stages of human development. Economics as a science needs these data to test its theorems, hypotheses and laws. Time series data reflect the short term and cross sectional the long term. It is amazing how much history is embedded in these terms. Carr and other historians have chosen to reject or ignore them as unhistorical.

My interpretation of chronology and geography concepts in history are different from Carr’s. Time and space in history is not a

hypothesis, but an excellent pedagogical tool to teach history. Another such tool is the thematization of history, e.g., economic history, history of sciences, political history, social history, history of thought and so on. Carr interpreted them as hypotheses or questions, e.g., what do we mean by ancient Greek history? Or, can we generalize and talk about a Greek history? These are trivial questions and mean nothing to someone who wants to study history science.

These are not hypotheses, but a necessary organization tool to study history. All my textbooks on history had chapters and each chapter was different from each other. I did not consider them as different hypotheses. I think most probably by “hypotheses” Carr meant assumptions. For example, he used the example of Russia and the question of whether it is part of Europe. But this depends on the criteria one uses: geographical, social, political etc. For example, I may use the geographical definition if I am doing a study about the natural characteristics of Russia, i.e., it is European and Asian. I may use a political definition which makes Russia a global European power. An economic one puts Russia in the so-called developing countries. And so on.

I think the rest of this lecture is more important. Carr discussed the following issues: (a) the uniqueness of history; (b) lessons taught by history; (c) predictions; (d) subjectivity; and (e) issues of religion and morality. I discuss these issues in turn in the following sections of this chapter.

Uniqueness and Generality

Carr postulated that historians are interested in the unique as long as they can extract something which will permit them to generalize. It is these generalizations that are used to test historian's evidence (1987, 53).

There is an interlink between the unique and the general, and this link is so strong that it cannot be separated. It is like the fact and its interpretation. A fact exists for the historian as long as there exist an interpretation. But Carr correctly pointed out that if everything is unique then "... nothing that matters can be said about anything. The very use of language commits the historian, like the scientist, to generalization. The Peloponnesian War and the Second World War were very different, and both were unique. But the historian calls them both wars, and only the pedant will protest ... The historian is not really interested in the unique, but in what is general in the unique ... The historian constantly uses generalization to test his evidence" (1987, 63). And concludes that, "It is nonsense to say that generalization is foreign to history; history thrives on generalizations" (1987, 64).

Carr continued with a long passage drawing some parallels with sociology. He thought there was a danger of sociology falling into the two extremes of ultra-theoretical and ultra-empirical. He concluded his remarks on sociology with a suggestion for a possible collaboration between history and sociology. In his own words (1987, 66), "Sociology, if it is to become a fruitful field of study, must, like history, concern itself with the relation between the

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unique and the general. But it must also become dynamic - a study not of society at rest (for no such society exists), but of social change and development. For the rest, I would only say that the more sociological history becomes, and the more historical sociology becomes, the better for both. Let the frontier between them be kept wide open for two-way traffic.”

I am really puzzled why Carr did not build on this positive argument: this is how theorems and laws are tested. The unique provides the natural experiment to verify important hypotheses, theorems and laws which are ubiquitous in social sciences, history included. Business schools have used this as an important pedagogical tool. They use case studies to explain how the business world works. History can do the same.

Lessons of History

Why then generalization? Carr correctly pointed out that generalizations are needed to learn from history. Carr used his own experience with the British Foreign Office in the deliberations of the 1919 Paris Peace Agreement. He remembered using the century-old Vienna Congress as a case study. They drafted memos on the lessons taught which could be used in the negotiations of 1919.

I should note that this is not a lesson of history, but how history can be used for practical purposes. In any case, Carr remembered two lessons from his experience: (a) it is dangerous to neglect the principle of self-determination and (b) “the other was that it was

dangerous to throw secret documents into your waste-paper basket, the contents of which would certainly be bought by the secret service of some other delegation. These lessons of history were taken for gospel and influenced our behaviour” (1987, 67).

With all due respect, I do not think Carr and the others had learned their history lessons very well. From antiquity, deception was used as a tool in negotiations and wars. The British delegation could throw deceptive secret documents to the waste-paper basket. This is how a good student of history would act.

Carr was correct. History teaches us lessons through generalizations. In his own words (1987, 66): “Those who reject generalization and insist that history is concerned exclusively with the unique are, logically enough, those who deny that anything can be learned from history. But the assertion that men learn nothing from history is contradicted by a multitude of observable facts. No experience is more common.”

But he then, as he always does in his book, concludes the section of lessons from history with a contradictory statement about the present and the past. Now the lessons depend upon the interpretation using the lenses of the present. This subjectivism haunted Carr throughout his book. He wrote (1987, 68), “To learn about the present in the light of the past means also to learn about the past in the light of the present. The function of history is to promote a profounder understanding of both past and present through the interrelation between them.”

Predictions in History

The lessons of history are related to whether or not history can predict the future. I like the Greek word, prognosis, which means to have prior gnosis (knowledge) of an upcoming event.

He repeated, in the third sentence of this section, the same mistake by arguing that, "...scientists are no longer so eager as they used to be to talk about the laws of nature. The so-called laws of sciences which affect our ordinary life are in fact statements of tendency, statements of what will happen other things being equal or in laboratory conditions. They do not claim to predict what will happen in concrete cases" (1987, 68). And a few lines below he reversed his position by stating, "But this does not mean that these laws are worthless, or not in principle valid" (1987, 68).

From the non-existence of laws, we now moved to laws that have some worth. And later on, these laws become "...general guides for future actions" (1987, 69). He used the epidemic of measles to demonstrate how past experience shapes current and future actions.

I used the plague of ancient Athens as described by Thucydides to predict the individual, social and political effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.¹ From these and other studies about pandemics as a historical event (or phenomenon) one can make predictions, and all predictions are subject to probabilistic errors. Minimizing that error must be the herculean work of historians and of other scientists. It is

¹See Papanikos (2020).

this minimization (or reduction) which can be defined as progress in scientific (historical) research.

We know that countries that have learned the lesson of history and followed its guides out-perform other countries whose leaders ignored the lessons of history. As all scientific disciplines, history has good and not-so-good students. The relevant question here is not if there is a difference in the precision of predictions between natural and social sciences, but if the accumulated historical gnosis increases the precision of predictions. Do we make better predictions (know more) today about the Covid-19 than the ancient Athenians were capable of doing in the summer of 430 BCE? Are we better off in predicting? Have we increased our predictive precision? I think only a pedant would answer no to these questions.

Carr compared the predictions made by natural and social sciences and rightly concluded that there is a difference of quantitative precision and not of dissimilarity of aims and methods. This is a correct interpretation. He is also right when he emphasized the difficulty in predicting human behaviour as compared with the behaviour of nature.

Subjectivity

The issue of subjectivity constitutes a cornerstone in social sciences which includes economics. But economics and their “auxiliary sciences” have been able --under the auspices of such organizations as the United Nations, World Bank, OECD, European Union-- to

produce objective historical data. I consider quantitative and qualitative data as historical facts.

It is true what Carr postulated (1987, 70) “Human beings are not only the most complex and variable of natural entities, but they have to be studied by other human beings, not by independent observers of another species. Here man is no longer content, as in the biological sciences, to study his own physical make-up and physical reactions. The sociologist, the economist, or the historian needs to penetrate into forms of human behaviour in which the will is active, to ascertain why the human beings who are the object of his study willed to act as they did. This sets up a relation, which is peculiar to history and the social sciences, between the observer and what is observed.”

As an economist, I do observe human behaviour, but I can tell what would happen if prices go up as a result of aggregating the individual consuming behaviour. I can also predict, without observing my “subjects” if my government will double or triple its money supply tomorrow. I know it theoretically, and I have tested it empirically.

In a similar context, I may use airport arrivals (objective historical arrivals) to predict tourism revenues and I can plan accordingly. It is not true what Carr said (1987, 70) that, “It is also true that the process of observation affects and modifies what is being observed.” I do not observe my subjects in the way that an ornithologist observes his birds. Humans as “birds” have a part of their behaviour which cannot be predicted.

Carr made an interesting comment about economic predictions. He stated that (1987, 71) “The economist who, by a scientific analysis of existing economic conditions, predicts an approaching boom or slump may, if his authority is great and his arguments cogent, contribute by the very fact of his prediction to the occurrence of the phenomenon predicted.” He is wrong. In the history of economics, I cannot recall such an occasion but there are many historical examples of the opposite. On 22 October 1929, a headline in the *New York Times* cited a well-known economist as follows “[Irving] Fisher says prices of stocks are low.” Two days later, the stock market crashed.

In 1961, Carr should recalled this incident, but it was contrary to his interpretation of historical fact. As a matter of (historical) fact, I do not know any economist who had such a great influence unless it had a position of power such as the Director of Central Bank or the Ministry of National Bank. However, even in these cases, if the fundamental determinants are not conducive these impacts are short-lived. Economics has shown that subjectivity has little to do with how economies develop. On this issue, Carr has expressed a non-cogent argument.

Religion and Morality

These two issues are discussed in brief and Carr correctly pointed out that there is no divine rule in shaping historical events. However, this leaves the role of luck in historical outcomes unexplained; for example, the plague of 430 BCE just one year after

the Peloponnesian War, the plague hit Athenians hard even though this did not determine the outcome of this long war by itself. If we equate God with luck (bad or good) then we might have a relation between divine providence and history.

On the morality issue, Carr correctly pointed out that (1987, 75) “It is scarcely necessary today to argue that the historian is not required to pass moral judgements on the private life of the characters in his story. The standpoints of the historian and of the moralist are not identical.”

Carr's analysis here is at its best I believe, but again he missed an entire literature of welfare economics and social policies. The important issue he raised on moral or value judgements has been discussed in economics since the late nineteenth century. For example, the Pareto Principle (i.e., 80% of the events-effects come from 20% of the causes), Pareto Improvement and Pareto Optimality. Historical events can be analyzed as Pareto Improvements and Pareto Optimal situations. This is similar to Carr's discussions of the Industrial Revolution which left some better-off and some worse-off. This relates to the debate of social welfare and Carr had chosen to ignore it. As Carr noticed, historians and theologians make their calculations in terms “... of the lesser evil and the greater good” (1987, 81). So do social welfare economics, and with much better diligence.

Carr continued by drawing an example from economics. I think he has missed the point completely. He ignored important economic literature which was available at the time he was writing. Let me first cite this passage (1987, 82-83): “To take a slightly less popular

example, the attempt has been made to use the conception of 'economic rationality' as an objective and non-controversial criterion by which the desirability of economic policies can be tested and judged. The attempt at once breaks down. Theorists brought up on the laws of classical economics condemn planning in principle as an irrational intrusion into rational economic processes; for example, planners refuse in their price policy to be bound by the law of supply and demand, and prices under planning can have no rational basis. It may, of course, be true that planners often behave irrationally, and therefore foolishly. But the criterion by which they must be judged is not the old 'economic rationality' of classical economy. Personally, I have more sympathy with the converse argument that it was the uncontrolled unorganized laissez-faire economy which was essentially irrational, and that planning is an attempt to introduce 'economic rationality' into the process. But the only point which I wish to make at the moment is the impossibility of erecting an abstract and super-historical standard by which historical actions can be judged. Both sides inevitably read into such a standard the specific content appropriate to their own historical conditions and aspirations.”

During the entire the post war period (from the 1940s onwards), economic policies have become one of the most powerful tools in shaping society and economy. Not only did the attempt not break down as Carr so carelessly mentioned, but it flourished. The planning of economic policies as was suggested by the pioneering work of Nobel Laureate Jan Tinbergen has shaped the practice of economic policies of all the advanced world. Economic policy

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models such as the LINK model developed by Nobel Laureate Laurence Klein has had a tremendous influence on how economic policies were designed, implemented and evaluated. In a 1976 interview, Klein mentioned that even the USSR has shown an interest in his LINK econometric policy model (Klein, 1976). By stating that classical economics condemned planning, Carr was left one century behind. His “new” ideas were history by 1961. He made it worse by ending this chapter by comparing scientific subjects: “One impression which I hope to convey in these lectures is that history is a far more difficult subject than classics, and quite as serious as any science” (1987, 85).

I found classics the most difficult of all. This is not a value judgement, but an objective recognition that some people are better in math than in languages. Exams are designed to show which areas students have a comparative advantage. I love languages. I started learning five and ended up knowing none. Divine providence was not favourable to me when allocating language skills. It is not a matter of which subject is more serious; all subjects are serious if those who serve them are serious. Carr could have been more careful.

Is History a Science?

He was very critical about historians and non-historians who are busy discussing whether history is a science. He wrote (1987, 85-86) “Some historians - and more of those who write about history without being historians - belong to this category of ‘literary

intellectuals'. They are so busy telling us that history is not a science, and explaining what it cannot and should not be or do, that they have no time for its achievements and its potentialities." He left no doubt on what he thought about history but stating that (1987, 85), "One impression which I hope to convey in these lectures is that history is a far more difficult subject than classics, and quite as serious as any science."

So, is history a science? One may argue that Carr questioned whether disciplines which deal with human behaviour in the present or in the past can be called "sciences" and this is the reason some use the etiquette "social" to distinguish them from "sciences."

The others, the non-social sciences, are called "natural sciences" while the "social" can be called human sciences as well, i.e., the sciences which study human behaviour. The natural sciences study the behaviour of nature rather than human behaviour. Carr thought that history was a social science and was actually very close to sociology. He thought that history is the sociology of the past.

The opening sentence of his chapter on history and science is as follows (1976, 56) "When I was very young, I was suitably impressed to learn that, appearances notwithstanding, the whale is not a fish. Nowadays these questions of classification move me less; and it does not worry me unduly when I am assured that history is not a science." But then why did he devote an entire chapter discussing the issue of history and science?

He could suffice it to say, say that history is a science and historians should improve its epistemology, i.e., improve the

research methods and the techniques of analysing information, facts and data of the past. History needs a General Theory or a Universal History to use Hegel's terms.

A number of passages in his book show that Carr was a strong believer that history was a science. First, he blamed the misunderstanding of whether history is a science or not in the English language: "It clearly does not fit the more complex society of our times; and the birth in the nineteenth century of the new science of sociology was a response to this growing complexity. This terminological question is an eccentricity of the English language. In every other European language, the equivalent word to 'science' includes history without hesitation. But in the English-speaking world this question has a long past behind it, and the issues raised by it are a convenient introduction to the problems of method in history" (1987, 45).

But the scientification of history is a dynamic process, as is the case with any science. Economics has become more scientific over the years. Historians and Carr recognized that, "The historian has some excuse for feeling himself more at home in the world of science today than he could have done a hundred years ago" (1987, 57).

What about in 2061? If we assume that progress is becoming more scientific and is irreversible, then history has one way to go, i.e., to accumulate more scientific knowledge about the past.

5

Causality

Carr opens up his lecture on causality with a very important truism (1987, 87): “The study of history is a study of causes.” The issue of one or multiple causes is also discussed and then a distinction is made between the most important cause and not-so-important causes.

I would like to demonstrate in this chapter that Carr was very close to suggesting a theoretic-empirical model which would have enabled historians to distinguish between significant and non-significant causes. This would have required greater attention paid to statistical techniques.

Statistics and History

Carr made a remark that very few scientists would disagree with. He wrote (1987, 90), “The historian, by expanding and deepening his research, constantly accumulates more and more answers to the question, 'Why?' The proliferation in recent years of economic,

social, cultural, and legal history -not to mention fresh insights into the complexities of political history, and the new techniques of psychology and statistics- have enormously increased the number and range of our answers.”

This is the first and only time that statistics are mentioned in the entire book. This is surprising because a discipline such as history which collects, organizes, presents, interprets and analyses (historical) facts and data calls for an extensive use of statistics right from his first lecture. At last, now it is recognized that statistical techniques may help historians to find causalities. In statistics, sophisticated techniques have been developed which aim at testing for causalities using data which describe past human behaviour. Contrary to history, economics have greatly benefited from mathematical and statistical techniques.

To take this quarrel further, Carr's argument on the variety of causes can be solved easily if historical facts (quantitative and qualitative) exist. For example, there are many studies which have theorize the outbreak of a revolution and insurgencies. Since Carr was specializing in Russian history, Grossman (1991 & 1999) applied economic theory in two theoretical papers to explain the Russian and other revolutions.

In the last few decades, many empirical studies have tried to explain the causes of political and social changes (including revolutions) by letting the data speak for themselves, i.e., applying a sophisticated regression analysis. Thus, historians and economists must explain the causes of history in terms of statistical tests of significance and coefficients of determinations and not with their

subjective interpretation of historical facts. Thus, causation in history might be a statistical issue if the quality of historical facts permits the statistical test of the causes. I think Carr should have discussed this issue in detail.

There is no need for the historian to work as Carr suggested, "...through the simplification, as well as through the multiplication, of causes" (1987, 91). Theories and statistics have done the work for historians. Statistical analysis could have been of great help to Carr in his discussion of determinism and accidents in history.

Empirical Models Explain Causality

As any good economist knows, and good historians-to-be should learn, economic empirical models do exist which can be used to explain revolutions and many other historical events or phenomena. These models are made of two parts: one part is deterministic and the other is stochastic. The latter accounts for random changes in time. I do not think that I am far off if I use this to define what Carr meant with the use of accidents in history.

The deterministic part of an empirical economic model of human behaviour does precisely what Carr assumed that, "Everyday life would be impossible unless one assumed that human behaviour was determined by causes which are in principle ascertainable" (1987, 94).

A statistical model does exactly this, i.e., it ascertains (discovers) causes, but it also does more than that. It can take into consideration all possible causes and weighs them in terms of

(statistical) significance. This takes care of Carr's historical determinism.

The empirical model also takes care of Carr's historical accidents. I think Carr was completely off track on this issue. He quoted Marx in a letter he wrote and then succinctly summarized it as follows (1987, 101): "First, it was not very important; it could 'accelerate' or 'retard' but not, by implication, radically alter, the course of events. Second, one chance was compensated by another, so that in the end chance cancelled itself out. Third, chance was illustrated in the character of individuals." He concluded (1987, 102): "I confess that I find this theory unsatisfying and unconvincing." And it made even worse when a few lines below in the same page he stated, "Equally inadequate is the view that accident in history is merely the measure of our ignorance - simply a name for some- thing which we fail to understand."

Statistically speaking Marx was correct and Carr was wrong. An empirical model has two parts: deterministic and stochastic. The latter is called an error term. This error term on average is zero, or as Marx said, chances (errors) cancel themselves out. The deterministic part of an empirical model measures our knowledge of a particular issue and the error term -contrary to what Carr alleged- measures our ignorance. This is exactly what the coefficient of determination measures. For example, the determinants of a model which aims at explaining revolutions may explain 88.8% of the world revolutions but it fails to explain (or account for) 11.2% of world revolutions.

This can simply be explained as a historical accident. However, it is quite possible that as our knowledge increases along with an accumulation of new historical facts and data, and our empirical model can reduce the percentage of historical revolutions which are left unexplained. Contrary to what Carr repeated in this lecture, this is achieved by the use of all facts of the past because all such facts are by definition historical facts.

The fact that some facts have not been discerned as significant is not to blame the facts, but the limitation of our knowledge (extend of our ignorance). I have more to say on this issue in the last section of my discourse when I endeavour to offer an overall evaluation of Carr's book *What is History?*

Carr Came Close in Suggesting a Statistical Model of History

At this point, the reader of Carr's book is almost half way through and a convincing answer has not been given. Carr twiddled around the same issue because he himself recognized the internal contradictions of his arguments on causality. In his notes found in preparation of a second revision (more in the last chapter) Carr wrote something which comes very close to an empirical statistical model. He noted that (1987, 166) "...history is in fact subject to sufficient regularities to make it a serious study, though these regularities are from time to time upset by extraneous events."

This is exactly the definition of an empirical statistical model consisting of the part of "sufficient regularities" and the part of "extraneous events." I think Carr was very close to finding a

solution to his problem of causality and objectivity. He would have made much progress in his historical thinking if he had taken into account the “auxiliary science” of statistics. Then he would have understood that history is the development of axiom-based theories which can be used to derive theoretical hypotheses which can then be tested against historical facts and data. He did not, and many historians have followed his example. The objective outcome of denying the use of statistical (empirical) models is that the subject-matter of history is reduced to the point of extinction. It reminds me of ancient Spartans. For the sake of purity, at the end nobody was left to be called a Spartan. If historical research moves along this path, then nobody would be left to be called a historian. Other names will be invented. For example, economic history is called cliometrics and those who practice will be called cliometricians.

Concluding on Causality

History is full of causalities. It is up to historians and their science to discover them. Causality does not imply total determinism. A statistical model has a deterministic part and a “historical accident” part. Historians, with the help of what Carr has called “auxiliary sciences” should aim at reducing the number of “historical accidents,” and incorporate them into the deterministic part of an empirical model.

However, the issue of causality in history cannot be solved within the context of a subjective/relativist theory of knowledge.

Causality progresses and thrives on objective theoretical modelling and history cannot progress if this is not taken into account.

Progress is the next lecture of Carr's six lecture series on *What is History?*

6

Progress

Carr opened up the lecture on progress with two extreme views about the meaning of history: mysticism and cynicism. The former places the meaning of history outside history and the latter dismisses altogether that history has any meaning. The latter has received a lot of attention in the second half of the previous century because of the popularization of postmodern and poststructural criticisms of the meaning, and therefore the usefulness, and furthermore the necessity of history.

Carr dismissed both explanations. He started developing his own interpretation, as it called it, with a reference to Herodotus and Thucydides. He wrote (1987, 109), “Herodotus as the father of history had few children; and the writers of classical antiquity were on the whole as little concerned with the future as with the past. Thucydides believed that nothing significant had happened in time before the events which he described, and that nothing significant was likely to happen thereafter.” This is second and last time Carr

mentioned the two historians who according to Hegel wrote “original history.” To say the least this is unfair. Both historians wrote their history having the future in mind. Thucydides himself was one of the attendees in the reading sessions of Herodotus when he came to Athens circa 445 BCE. My reading of both historians is completely the opposite.

Just a comment on Thucydides which relates to my own reading: Thucydides stated that the Peloponnesian War was more significant than what happened before. One reason is subjective: he wanted to show that, contrary to Herodotus and presumably Hecataeus, he was writing something more important than them. And it turned out he was right. Self-confidence never harmed someone with the abilities and gnosis of Thucydides. Nobody today, after 2500 years, would dare to say that Thucydides’ scientific writing of history is not superior. Second, Thucydides gave a historical fact that does depend upon interpretation. The Peloponnesian War lasted many years and included many battles from Asia Minor to Italy. The Persian Wars did not last as long and their outcome was determined in a few battles. Third, Thucydides wrote about the future generation and not to please his own generation. The fact that history academics and practitioners still learn from Thucydides today is a kind of non-rejection of his hypothesis about his history. I have in mind the well-known Thucydides Trap developed this century by Graham Allison.

Carr made a reference to the “Golden Age” a concept which was clearly mentioned -if not for the first time in history- by Hesiod in his *Works and Days* in the 8th Century BCE. Carr never made a

reference to Hesiod. He wrote that (1987, 110), “Poetic visions of a brighter future took the form of visions of a return to a golden age of the past - a cyclical view which assimilated the processes of history to the processes of nature. History was not going anywhere: because there was no sense of the past, there was equally no sense of the future. Only Virgil, who in his fourth eclogue had given the classical picture of a return to the golden age, was inspired in the *Aeneid* momentarily to break through the cyclical conception: *‘Imperium sine fine dedi’* was a most unclassical thought, which later earned Virgil recognition as a quasi-Christian prophet.”

The first poet to write about this was Hesiod and Carr should have mentioned him; not only because he is so important to western and ecumenical literature but because what Carr claimed is not true. It is true the “concept” of progress is missing in ancient Greek writing, but its practical implications are everywhere. Hesiod’s beautiful parable of Prometheus and the Pandora’s Jar exemplified it. Not only that, my interpretation of Hesiod is that in any society and historical period there is a struggle between those who are represented (inspired) by Prometheus and those who are inspired by his brother, Epimetheus. It is a fight between progress and hysteresis. Furthermore, the five or six ages or races of Hesiod integrated the concept of historical stages and the idea that that historical changes (progress) comes with pain. I think Carr should have been more careful on this issue.

Carr continued by clarifying the concept of progress in history of human beings by distinguishing it from the biological evolution. He put it nicely when he stated (1987, 113), “The distinction is

familiar and obvious. Put a European infant in a Chinese family, and the child will grow up with a white skin, but speaking Chinese.” He made another interesting comment which has been extensively used in the economic theory as human capital to explain economic progress: “The essence of man as a rational being is that he develops his potential capacities by accumulating the experience of past generations ... History is progress through the transmission of acquired skills from one generation to another” (1987, 114).

I think Carr is at his best in the following paragraphs when he critically reviewed all those who were predicting what today would call it the “end of history.” He stated that the (1987, 114) “... hypothesis of a finite end of progress has led to more serious misapprehension.” And furthermore, he postulated, “... but the presumption of an end of history has an eschatological ring more appropriate to the theologian than to the historian, and reverts to the fallacy of a goal outside history. No doubt a finite end has attractions for the human mind” (1987, 115).

Carr claimed that (1987, 116) “...no sane person ever believed in a kind of progress which advanced in an unbroken straight line without reverses and deviations and breaks in continuity, so that even the sharpest reverse is not necessarily fatal to the belief. Clearly there are periods of regression as well as periods of progress. Moreover, it would be rash to assume that, after a retreat, the advance will be resumed from the same point or along the same line.”

There are many important points made here. First, progress is not linear, but non-Euclidean. Second, my understanding is that this

suggested a type of cyclicity by stating that there exists historical periods of regression and progress. If we join the two, do they form a cycle? Yes, in a static framework; no, in a dynamic framework as explained in chapter eight of this monograph. The next sentence shows that he had in mind a sort of a dynamic progress. And he concluded, "... so that whatever progress we can observe in history is certainly not continuous either in time or in place" (1987, 116).

In the next paragraph he came up with an interpretation of progress which he would dare to call it law as he said, "Indeed, if I were addicted to formulating laws of history, one such law would be to the effect that the group - call it a class, a nation, a continent, a civilisation, what you will - which plays the leading role in the advance of civilisation in one period is unlikely to play a similar role in the next period, and this for the good reason that it will be too deeply imbued with the traditions, interests, and ideologies of the earlier period to be able to adapt itself to the demands and conditions of the next period. Thus it may very well happen that what seems for one group a period of decline may seem to another the birth of a new advance. Progress does not and cannot mean equal and simultaneous progress for all. It is significant that almost all our latter-day prophets of decline, our sceptics who see no meaning in history and assume that progress is dead, belong to that sector of the world and to that class of society which have triumphantly played a leading and predominant part in the advance of civilisation for several generations. It is no consolation to them to be told that the role which their group has played in the past will now pass to others. Clearly a history which has played so scurvy a

trick on them cannot be a meaningful or rational process. But, if we are to retain the hypothesis of progress, we must, I think, accept the condition of the broken line” (1987, 116).

Here, many comments can be made. First, I think Carr's law is not a law, but an interpretation of historical facts. The rise (progress) and fall (regression) of empires has been analyzed in economics literature. It seems what instigates progress is Prometheus, i.e., technology. If I may paraphrase Marx: The history (progress) of all hitherto existing society is the history of technology struggles. Of course, it is historians' task to discover “why was England first?” Or, what gave rise to classical antiquity?

Technology and institutions which promote it are to “blame.” They change the destiny of the human race. It is not an accident that Hesiod related the human development with the development of the technology to use metals. With the exception of the heroic race, all other races are related to the use of metals: gold, silver, bronze and iron.

On the issue of progress for all, this has been demonstrated in economics with the so-called Simon Kuznets Curve developed in the 1950s and 1960s. In a nutshell, this curve says that economic progress is related to an increase in inequality in the beginning before all groups of society benefit. I think Carr's, as I have noticed many times in the previous chapters, knowledge of the literature was restricted to 19th century economics. Since then, economics has made a lot of progress.

At this point and in the middle of his chapter of progress, Carr returned to the issue of facts and objectivity in history. He

constantly repeats that there is no such thing as objective historical fact and the latter exists as long as there are processes established by the historian. The reader should keep in mind that this was the subject of his first lecture. My impression is that he himself was not satisfied with his stand on the historical fact. He saw the logical inconsistency of a subject judging an object as not being objective. Let me cite a characteristic and many times repeated with words phrase: “The facts of history cannot be purely objective, since they become facts of history only in virtue of the significance attached to them by the historian. Objectivity in history - if we are still to use the conventional term - cannot be an objectivity of fact, but only of relation, of the relation between fact and interpretation, between past, present, and future. I need not revert to the reasons which led me to reject as unhistorical the attempt to judge historical events by erecting an absolute standard of value outside history and independent of it” (1987, 120).

He again created further confusion when talking about “significant” versus “accidental”. He identified this antithesis in terms of determinism and accidental in history. Historical accidents are very significant, but they cannot be determined a priori using a model as I will have the chance to explain in chapter eight.

At least here he clarified a misconception which has underpinned the opinion of many non-professional (academic and partitioning) historians. If history’s interpretation is relativist then any interpretation is as good as any other else. He wrote (1987, 121-122) “Our criterion is not an absolute in the static sense of something that is the same yesterday, today, and for ever: such an

absolute is incompatible with the nature of history. But it is an absolute in respect of our interpretation of the past. It rejects the relativist view that one interpretation is as good as another, or that every interpretation is true in its own time and place, and it provides the touchstone by which our interpretation of the past will ultimately be judged. It is this sense of direction in history which alone enables us to order and interpret the events of the past- the task of the historian - and to liberate and organise human energies in the present with a view to the future - the task of the statesman, the economist, and the social reformer. But the process itself remains progressive and dynamic. Our sense of direction, and our interpretation of the past, are subject to constant modification and evolution as we proceed.”

Thus, the relativist approach to history does not leave room for any fool to play around with historical events and their interpretations. History is an intelligent discipline, and to master its deeds the historian-to-be must work very hard indeed. If it is true as Marx said in the preface of the French publication of *Capital* in 1872 that, “There is no royal road to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits, then its most luminous application is in the area of history science.”

What confuses me is that even though he rejected the idea of objectivity in historical research, he argued that an historian can be objective. This meant two things: “When we call a historian objective, we mean I think two things. First of all, we mean that he has a capacity to rise above the limited vision of his own situation

in society and in history - a capacity which, as I suggested in an earlier lecture, is partly dependent on his capacity to recognise the extent of his involvement in that situation, to recognise, that is to say, the impossibility of total objectivity. Secondly, we mean that he has the capacity to project his vision into the future in such a way as to give him a more profound and more lasting insight into the past than can be attained by those historians whose outlook is entirely bounded by their own immediate situation. No historian today will echo Acton's confidence in the prospect of 'ultimate history'. But some historians write history which is more durable, and has more of this ultimate and objective character, than others; and these are the historians who have what I may call a long-term vision over the past and over the future. The historian of the past can make an approach towards objectivity only as he approaches towards the understanding of the future" (1987, 123).

It is here that I base my impression that Carr was an eclectic in terms of his historical methodology: subjectivism versus objectivism. He rejected objectivism (and the deductive method) in favor of subjectivism (and the inductive method), but here he tells us that is against "total objectivity." I guess he would favor a partial objectivity, whatever that means.

He separated historians according to their long-term and short-term vision. He did not reject the existence of the idea of objectivity, but it is not achievable or it is hard to achieve. How else can the reader interpret in the above long passage "an approach towards objectivity?"

It appears that there are thematic stages to this approach towards objectivity. He wrote that (1987, 124) "... since the preoccupation with economic and social ends represents a broader and more advanced stage in human development than the preoccupation with political and constitutional ends, so the economic and social interpretation of history may be said to represent a more advanced stage in history than the exclusively political interpretation. The old interpretation is not rejected, but is both included and superseded in the new. Historiography is a progressive science, in the sense that it seeks to provide constantly expanding and deepening insights into a course of events which is itself progressive."

This is a very interesting point, a twist. Now we do not have the subjective interpretations of an individual historian but the (objective?) economic interpretation of the same historical facts. Somehow with a magic stick, the historian disappears from the process of historical interpretation. It might be as well the same historian who provides an economic, a social, a political interpretation using the same historical facts.

He was very optimistic about the future of objectivity in history. He wrote (1987, 130) "What I would say is that the historian of the 1920s was nearer to objective judgement than the historian of the 1880s, and that the historian of today is nearer than the historian of the 1920s; the historian of the year 2000 may be nearer still. This illustrates my thesis that objectivity in history does not and cannot rest on some fixed and immovable standard of judgement existing here and now, but only on a standard which is laid up in the future and is evolved as the course of history advances. History acquires

meaning and objectivity only when it establishes a coherent relation between past and future.”

What is a more coherent relation between the past and the future than the one that statistical models can provide us using historical data (facts) with an objective significance that Carr so much desired. Carr then proceeded to discuss the relation between values and facts. They are interdependent. However, my understanding is that he accepted the existence of objective facts but which one a historian chooses is determined -if I may use this word- by his values. Not only that, but this determines progress in history. He wrote (1987, 131) “Progress in history is achieved through the interdependence and interaction of facts and values. The objective historian is the historian who penetrates most deeply into this reciprocal process.”

This chapter ends by echoing Carr’s optimism: “I now come back to my starting-point by declaring my faith in the future of society and in the future of history” (1987, 132).

7

Horizon

This is Carr's last chapter and one he called a, "... concluding reflection on the position of history and of the historian in our time" (1987, 133). Carr, as many before him, interpreted his historical period as being very significant.

Such periods of "big" changes require transitions and it is up to historians like Carr to discern their main trends. Changes and transitions require technological progress which comes with education or investment in human capital. These are the issues discussed in this chapter.

Carr Lived through Historical Times

As all scholars and citizens of the world throughout time and place think that they live in unprecedented times, so did Carr. He was not an exception. At least Carr was modest enough to restrict the time dimension of it since the middle ages. It is something. A concession made for the sake of ancient civilizations. It is true that

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there were outstanding changes which occurred during his times (mid-twentieth century). Carr's justification was that these changes were deep and span over a large geographical area.

In terms of its depth, the Modern Age, Carr wrote, is the most historically-minded of all ages. The "since the Middle Ages" disappeared in this argument. It all started with Descartes who was the first to establish that a man is not only thinking, but he is thinking about his own thinking. I think Carr is lost in the history of philosophy. I guess Socrates and Aristotle did not think about their own thinking. Plato and Aristotle would have been a good start for Carr. Apart from Descartes, Carr, in this chapter, discussed contributions by Smith, Hegel, Marx, Lenin, Freud. His main theme of this part of the lecture was that their scientific analyses could explain the conscious of an individual, his actions and his role in society.

Great Historical Periods Require Transitions

You cannot live in exciting historical times if there is not a transition process from the old to a new which by definition is what is meant by a change in historical terms.

Now, declared Carr, we are living in a period of transition. And this transition has challenged economic laws. He wrote with certainty (remember the decade of his writing is the 1950s) that, "Today economics has become either a series of theoretical mathematical equations, or a practical study of how some people push others around" (1987, 140). The developments since 1950s, or

even worse for his argument, since 1930s have proved him wrong. In general, his reading of economics was limited. His interpretation of the facts of economic thought did not stand the test of time; he made overall aphorisms without providing any historical fact.

He wrote that (1987, 140), “Everyone knows today that the price of oil or soap does not vary in response to some objective law of supply and demand.” He got it all wrong. It is exactly the opposite. Prices do vary according to an objective law of demand and supply. Sometimes it does not work because of institutional constraints, i.e., government intervention.

Actually, the supply depends on the technology of production which shifts the supply curve in a mechanical way. Writing that men control their own economic destiny without taking into consideration the budget constraint they face and the tradeoff between leisure and work, he missed to take into consideration important historical facts about human economic behaviour.

Since Hesiod’s era, there is an iron economic law: men must work if they want to control their own destiny. Men have so much economic freedom as much as is their income and wealth. Men can change the composition of their consumption as long as they respect their budget constraint. They cannot consume above their income and wealth.

This is the destiny of human beings when it comes to economics. This is an objective, theoretical and mathematical law. Aggregating over all individual members of societies, we then obtain an iron law of society; a country/nation/society cannot consume more than what it produces. The burden of future

generations created by the excess debts of the current generation has its limits.

Carr's aphorisms continued to bring Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus into picture. He concluded that (1987, 142), "At the end of the eighteenth-century Malthus, in an epoch-making work, attempted to establish objective laws of population, working, like Adam Smith's laws of the market, without anyone being conscious of the process. Today nobody believes in such objective laws; but the control of population has become a matter of rational and conscious social policy."

Again, I found that Carr was not reading and not learning his historical lesson well. I think he is unfair to Malthus. Malthus in his book *An Essay on the Principle of Population* talked about preventive and positive checks of population. He also gave a historical dimension writing that (1798, 254). "In a review of the checks to population in the different states of modern Europe, it appears that the positive checks to population have prevailed less, and the preventive checks more, than in ancient times, and in the more uncultivated parts of the world."

Prometheus and Education is at the End of a Historical Horizon

The point Carr made about social changing is as old as written human history itself. He praised technology as changing human behaviour, but so did the discovery of fire (the story of Prometheus). Prometheus, acting on his own and in a conscious

way, discovered fire for the entire human race. Technology is produced by education or investment in human capital.

On the issue on education policy, Carr was wrong. It is true that in ancient Athens the state did not provide for the education of the Athenian children, but as so elegantly Plato informed us in *Protagoras* (325c-326c) families oversaw their children's education. Even in modern Greece with a free public provision of education at all levels, Greek families, as in ancient Athens, spend a great portion of their private income and time to educate their children.

Apart from Prometheus, nothing has changed in human behavior contrary to what Carr so unsuccessfully tried to persuade the readers of his book. There is nothing revolutionary in the provision of education in the mid-twentieth century CE compared with the fifth century BCE in Ancient Athens. The only difference is the extent of it. Today, technology and the higher income and wealth permits the provision of education to an ever-increasing number of people all over the world. It is not "reason" that permitted that, as Carr said, but the increase in income and wealth. The reason was always there. It was hidden. A small increase in income and wealth will make it appear at all its glory.

Individualization Always Existed

What Carr called "individualization" in his lecture is ahistorical in the sense that it has always existed along with the need of people to feed and propagate themselves. Why? Because of scarcity of the

means to satisfy these needs. These means can increase only with hard work. The hardness of human labor decreases with every new invention which result from "Prometheus". This is recognized by Carr as speeding up the process, but actually this generates the process itself. He wrote (1947, 143), "... the pace has everywhere been speeded up by technological change."

Carr made a cost benefit analysis of discovering. Anything new has costs which must be born by someone including the society at large. However, there are benefits, and in discussing this he made a cause-effect relation between technology and reason: "...at a time when the increasing use of reason at all levels of society is being forced on us by our technological and scientific revolution. Like every other great advance in history, this advance has its costs and its losses, which have to be paid, and its dangers, which have to be faced. Yet, in spite of sceptics, and cynics, and prophets of disaster, especially among the intellectuals of countries whose former privileged position has been undermined, I shall not be ashamed to treat it as a signal example of progress in history. It is perhaps the most striking and revolutionary phenomenon of our time" (1987, 146).

Carr's second point is the change in world affairs. He discussed the role of non-European and non-English speaking countries such as Russia, Japan, China, India and the two big continents, Asia and Africa. He correctly observed that the first group of countries experienced a relative decline, but, "... relative decline is not absolute decline; and what disturbs and alarms me is not the march of progress in Asia and Africa, but the tendency of dominant groups

in this country - and perhaps elsewhere - to turn a blind or uncomprehending eye on these developments, to adapt towards them an attitude oscillating between mistrustful disdain and affable condescension, and to sink back into a paralyzing nostalgia for the past” (1987, 148).

This is true and an observable historical fact. The so-called world always has and in so-far, for centuries to come the absolute advantage. The rest of the world can benefit from what so accurately has been called the “advantage of backwardness.”

Modern China and many other smaller countries possess and use this advantage to obtain comparative advantage. In the near future it would never provide them the impetus to obtain an absolute advantage over somewhere like the USA. They would forever lag behind as long as they rely on their backwardness.

8

Evaluation

In all preceding chapters, I gave my own critical thoughts on Carr's arguments following a chapter-by-chapter approach of his six lectures. Alternatively, I could have chosen a theme-by-theme approach. As a matter of fact, this would not have changed much. However, some themes would have made a difference, e.g., on the theme of historical facts and data. Nevertheless, the format I have chosen has allowed me to present Carr's main ideas chapter-by-chapter along with my detailed comments and thoughts.

I did not want to be tedious because Carr was repetitive. On his part, this was justifiable. The book was part of a series of lectures and his audience would benefit if some important points were repeated at every lecture. This is clear from reading the book. After all, repetition is the mother of knowledge. The father is reading (studying).

In this chapter, I attempt to summarize Carr's arguments along the lines of basic themes. I glance at the book horizontally instead

of vertically; the latter was my approach in the previous chapters. My aim, in this chapter, is to provide a concise summary of what I think were Carr's main points-- at least my reading of them—by using the techniques and tools of my economics profession to divulge my received view of Carr's position. I use selected examples from economics to demonstrate that history (research, teaching and writing) has a great future with or without historians.

This great future is shown using specific examples of economic research which use historical facts and data to test their theorems, hypotheses and laws. These research achievements in using history to tackle thorny economic issues has been fully recognized as a highly-respected scientific research approach and two of its pioneers were awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1993, as I will discuss in detail in the last section of this chapter. Actually, I consider it as a Prize given to history.

I would like to use my economics language to depict Carr's models and ideas. For this purpose, I develop three analytical models which may shed light on Carr's thesis on historical facts/data, on the objectivity/subjectivity debate and on the process of scientific inquiry. I do consider these issues as being the pillars of Carr's philosophy of history, epistemology and historiography.

In all cases, I use graphs to demonstrate my points, but Carr's models cry out for mathematical modelling, which can be used to derive statistical (empirical) models. Then, the main hypotheses can be tested using historical facts/data. Of course, all these despite his despise of empiricism. There is nothing wrong with being empirical when you are guided by theory. The theory is the light and

empiricism is the road on which a scientist must walk to “see God,” i.e., to acquire more gnosis and through this promote scientific objectivity. In the case of objectivity, I develop a sort of model of how I understand objectivity in history using a mathematical formula inspired by the time-dependent level of objectivity which Carr seemed to propose. In other words, I use a well-established economic methodology with all its advantages and disadvantages as these are surveyed and discussed in Blaug (1992).

Carr supported a subjective approach to historical research, but his analysis leads to exactly the opposite, i.e., to a dynamic approach of objectivity. This might explain why, in writing history, he used, as many claimed, an objective approach, in contra distinction with his alleged subjective approach in his book on the philosophy of history. I have my doubts that Carr was certain about his own subjective/relativist method which has been the source of many misunderstandings. It is of no surprise that he wanted to reconsider it as I demonstrate in the next chapter.

A Summary of Carr's Main Points

My reading of Carr's short book is that it can be considered as a contribution to philosophy of history, epistemology of history and historiography, however these terms are defined. I have previously explained my own understating of these terms. For the sake of brevity, I organize his main arguments as follows:

1. Carr considered facts (including statistical data) as important to historians. From the ocean of facts, historians and only historians, decide the magnitude and the type of fish that they want to pick from the ocean. Then, almost by definition, these facts are separated into historical (important) and non-historical (unimportant) facts. Historians in an *ad hoc* way decide what is a historical fact and what is not. Historical facts exist as long as historians use them. If they do not use them, they cease to be historical facts; they become simply fact and return to their obscurity. This is a tantamount-process; facts become historical facts. Only historians decide which fish to cook; the rest are thrown again into the ocean until other historians catch them again and deem that they are worth of cooking and eating.
2. Use of facts implies interpretation by historians. It is not clear to me if Carr's approach allows non-historians to use facts. This privilege belongs *ex officio* to historians only. From historical facts, the process of epistemology in history moves to interpretation; without the latter there is no history; there is no past; there is no present; there is no future.
3. Based on the above, history is a dynamic concept because it connects the past with the instantaneous present and the infinite future; assuming that the human race does not totally disappear. The latter assumption is not new. Hesiod made the same assumption in the eighth century BCE.
4. As individuals in society, so historians are not alone on planet earth and may be beyond to include the entire cosmos. As

individuals, historians are writing history within the context of a specific society defined in the dimensions of time and space. Consequently, historians must take into consideration their relation with other sciences. But “Is history a science?” This is a controversial question. Carr recognized that this is a thorny issue concerning only the Anglo-Saxon world because in other countries history is conceived as a science. However, as a serious science, history should collaborate and use other sciences, Carr inappropriately coined “auxiliary.” Others are treated as equal. Carr put an emphasis on sociology, and less so on politics. It seems to me that this claim considered economics as useless and without any future. My interpretation is that Carr was not aware of the economics literature and if he were, he had opted to completely ignore all of the developments in economic science from the 1870s onward. Obviously, the developments (historical facts) after his first publication of the book in 1961 proved him wrong. Economics has dominated social sciences and is now widening its horizons to other sciences as discussed below.

5. Carr discussed a number of important methodological issues of causation and objectivity in history. The two are interconnected and Carr did not emphasize this as much as it deserved. Causation is very important in all sciences. If preceding events are somehow associated (correlated) with current events, then one may test whether there is a cause-effect relationship between the two. For example, using Carr’s favored example of revolutions, if preceding poverty

and acute inequality of income and wealth leads to revolution (even in most of the cases), then one may conclude that there is a casual relation and a model can explain how important this relation is using statistical techniques.¹ The latter, which is so important in history, are mentioned only once in Carr's book which alternately devoted so much space in discussing facts and data. Causation is related to objectivity. If there are statistical (probabilistic is true) causal models in history --as I do believe that they exist--, then the discovery of such relationships is an objective process and independent of how a historian might interpret such (statistical) findings.

6. History deals with progress, Carr told us, and he was right. He was not the first to say this. Hesiod is the first written source, and contrary to what Carr said in his book, this is as old as the existence of human race itself.
7. Finally, Carr approached history in an eclectic way. In his book on "*what is history?*", it seems to me that he is adopting a mixture of a subjective (relativist, inductivist) approach with some elements of objectivity and deductive reasoning. His approach is of interest to a relativist historian and to an objective historian. A masterpiece of confusion.

In what follows in this chapter, I will attempt to provide a model of Carr's ideas based on the above seven points. In doing so,

¹An excellent example of building such a theoretical framework has been given by Grossman (1999 & 1991) as I have already mentioned. He narrated his theoretical model of revolutions and uprisings using the Russian revolution.

I provide a summary that may lead to a generalization which eventually can become a building block of a general theory of history. I think the most important issue in Carr's book is his treatment of (historical) facts and data and I start with this in the next section of this chapter.

A Graphical Presentation of Facts/Data

Carr told us that we can be good historians if we take history seriously; as serious as sciences. History is a difficult subject and requires meticulous work. Why? Historical facts do not speak for themselves and demand interpretation. This is an inductive approach to history. According to Carr, in answering the question *what is history?*, we cannot avoid the conditions imposed by the specific society in which we live. It is this important constraint which separates historical from non-historical facts.

Facts become historical (important) facts and data only when historians decide that they have reached the status to be called historical; otherwise, they are of no significance and Carr called them unhistorical. Therefore, it is historians' herculean "...task of discovering the few significant facts and turning them into facts of history, and of discarding the many insignificant facts as unhistorical" (1987, 14-15).

However, historians' decision are not objective, but subject to the conditions imposed by the society of which they live. It is this interpretation which is the most important concept in Carr's book. Without interpretation, historical facts do not exist and remain mere

facts. The more historians use specific facts, the higher their historical value (importance).

In what follows, I would like to use a diagram (a kind of a picture) to present Carr's idea of facts. I must repeat that Carr did not reject the idea of facts or data. History uses the past or uses the data which the past continuously generates. These data can be qualitative or quantitative. To give an example. I consider a qualitative fact (data) the probability of an outbreak of a revolution in the next decade in Europe. Based on experiences (the past) and asking the Oracle of Delphi, i.e., all those (Marx and Marxists included) who have a foresight about revolutions, we can have a prognosis of the forthcoming revolution.

The Delphi Method is objective if opinions are independent of each other. But as Carr correctly pointed out, data are probabilistic. The fact that they are probabilistic does not make them subjective. Data exist without historians' interpretations. Their probabilistic nature is not related to the subjective interpretations of historians.

Data is a rare commodity and require scarce resources to be produced (e.g., historians and other scientists valuable time). This important point was not taken into consideration by Carr. Thus, the first distinction about historical facts is whether they have been produced or not; whether they are available to be consumed by historians and other scientists.

A century ago, economists and historians knew that all societies produced goods and services. For the historian and the economist, data on the value of all the final goods and services produced in one country or geographical area in a specific period of time is of great

value, and their search for them is inexorable. It is called Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The demand for GDP data is high and the human race is willing to pay a price (euro, pounds, dollars, yen, yuan, ancient drachma, etc.) in order to get them. Like gold and other metals, historical data are a goldmine and exist even if we do not know where they exist; historians and other stakeholders must work very hard to unearth them.

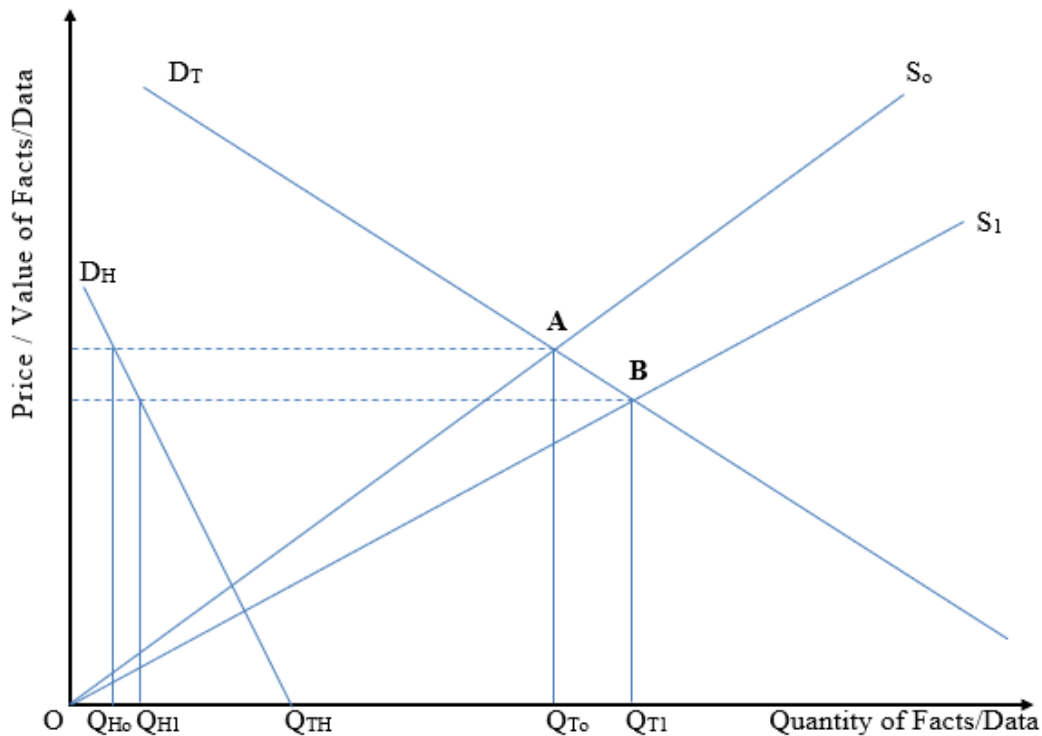
Thus is the case with GDP. The last century has seen a dramatic investment in unearthing historical data on GDP. The United Nations considered them so important that it developed a standardized methodology, called National Accounts, in order to homogenise the methodology of collecting such important historical facts across countries and times as these are defined by Carr. For some countries, such as England, as I have already mentioned, data now go back to thirteenth century. I call them objective data irrespectively how individual researchers from history and other sciences are using them. Their interpretations count as long as they contribute to new knowledge. The accumulation of new knowledge leads to what Carr would call objectivity in history. I will say more on this in this chapter below.

I summarize the above discussion using a graph which is common in economics. In Graph I, Carr's Model of Historical Facts is shown incorporating the above discussion as well as my own expansion of it.

I keep the graph as simple as possible, e.g., linear relationships. The horizontal axis measures the quantity of historical facts. This is a snapshot picture because historical facts are continuously

produced. Every day new data about the past enter the scene of history, but the availability of data of previous time periods and geographies are unabatedly and meticulously unearthed just like archaeological evidence.

Graph I. *Carr's Model of Historical Facts/Data*



The vertical axis measures the value (price) of existing facts for scientists as well as the cost of unearthing historical facts. Contrary to what Carr said about the inexistence of the objective law of demand and supply, this is not more apparent than in the market of historical facts as Carr himself pointed out without realizing that he was describing the indestructible objective law of demand and supply.

The supply curve of historical facts in Graph I is upward sloping, i.e., more facts can be produced if the value (price) of the facts increases. How? There are private and public companies which produce data, e.g., through surveys which may include historical (time) variation. Doctoral history students produce data at a cost, e.g., scholarships. Notice that at zero price/value nobody supplies facts and data. The curves are linear to facilitate the exposition, but a supply curve cannot be linear unless it describes small changes. In this case the linearity is a good first order approximation of the supply of data. The analysis applies to non-linearities, but the analysis becomes more cumbersome.

The demand is downward sloping and is depicted linear for the simplicity of exposition. Demand curves are non-linear but our analysis applies equally well to non-linear demand curves. The lower the price (value) of historical facts, the higher the demand. Just think in terms of technology which has reduced the price of historical facts: most facts not only are freely available (we used to pay to get data), but the time required to collect them has been drastically reduced. I am now staying in my Hesiodic village and I can access unprecedented quantities of historical facts (data) at almost zero cost.

I keep the model (graph) as simple as possible to simplify what Carr said about facts and data and how this model can be extended in respecting Carr's spirit which I find very useful. In order to avoid disturbing the graph, I do not specify the value or price of historical facts at any point discussed. The reader can see and draw them easily. It is the quantity of facts that interests me the most.

In economics we know that if the price of a commodity becomes zero (a free good), then the demand is set at the quantity level where the marginal utility of an extra unit of data is equal to zero. In the case of historical facts and data, I consider this socially optimal as this has been defined by Vilfredo Pareto.

This equilibrium is at the point where the demand curve intersects with the horizontal axis (not shown in the Graph). However, at this point, historians' demand for data is only Q_{TH} . From all available facts and data, historians who follow Carr's advice of what is important find the ocean of facts and data as unhistorical and therefore non-important. Fortunately for the rest of the facts which are all available facts minus Q_{TH} other scientists demand them because they found them useful, e.g., economists who are heavily dependent on facts and data. In economics, they call them historical facts and are placed in a special important category of "stylized" facts. So, economics uses both terms, facts and data.

Q_{TH} is the demand when data and facts are free, but there is a cost in supplying facts and data as shown by the upward sloping supply curve. The intersection of supply and demand equates the quantities of data demanded by all with the supply of data provided by all. This is depicted as point A in the graph. The total quantities of facts and data demanded at point A is Q_{T_0} made up of two parts. Historians demand Q_{H_0} and non-historians demand $Q_{H_0}Q_{T_0}$. The latter is not important to historians.

As Carr mentioned, progress does exist. New discoveries, innovations and technical methods are used. He was very optimistic about the future. The same applies to the production technology of

historical facts and data. This would shift the supply curve of historical facts and data to the right from S_0 to S_1 in Graph I when a new equilibrium is reached at point B. Because of this new technology, the quantity of data used (consumed) by scientists - historians included- increase from D_{T0} to D_{T1} and the potential total supply also increase (not shown in the graph). Historians also increase their demand from Q_{H0} to Q_{H1} .

In summary, and irrespectively of what historians are saying, historical data have a high demand and for this reason they command a high price (have both high private and social value). The objective historical facts, which historians like Carr do not like to use, harm themselves as historians and as a consequence, their discipline.

There is a demand for the quantification of history and it is up to the historians to play a role in supplying what the society needs. This is progress. However, historians and history are on the other side of progress, and books like Carr's and many others move history further away from the trajectory of progress.

Unless this process is reversed, historians have no future. However, history does have a bright future even though it may be called cliometrics. Carr defined all these data unimportant. A new sub-field of history --that of economic history-- has been thriving using historical facts and data.

The last section of this chapter examines how economics have been deepening and expanding their science using historical facts and data consistently and unabashedly. Even anecdotal evidence becomes a marble of analysis in the skilful hands of economists.

What is History? An Assessment of Carr's Monograph

Nothing is left which is not used. All facts of the past are useful facts for economists. All are used to test economists' theorems, hypotheses and laws, whatever one wishes to call them. This contributes to objectivity which is considered in the next section of this chapter.

A Model of Carr's Dynamic Definition of Objectivity: The Battle of Marathon

Carr's position on objectivity/subjectivity was ambivalent. He suggested that we need a new model to address objectivity. In this model, "The historian of the past can make an approach towards objectivity only as he approaches towards the understanding of the future" (1987, 123).

Thus, objectivity is approachable. Carr has a dynamic definition of objectivity which I think can be used to build a theory of objectivity in history. This is a significant contribution to history irrespectively if Carr had realized its importance. I develop this theory and then I demonstrate how it can be tested using the empirical evidence of the Battle of Marathon.

A characteristic passage in Carr's book stated that (1987, 130) "What I would say is that the historian of the 1920s was nearer to objective judgement than the historian of the 1880s, and that the historian of today is nearer than the historian of the 1920s; the historian of the year 2000 may be nearer still. This illustrates my thesis that objectivity in history does not and cannot rest on some fixed and immovable standard of judgement existing here and now,

but only on a standard which is laid up in the future and is evolved as the course of history advances. History acquires meaning and objectivity only when it establishes a coherent relation between past and future.”

I would like to repeat what he said, or at least my understanding of it. Firstly, objectivity is time-dependent. Secondly, objectivity is not “fixed and immovable,” but it evolves as our knowledge of history advances. Thirdly, I interpret the word “advances” to mean non-decreasing in time. Therefore, the stock of knowledge does not depreciate like the stock of physical capital. At last, we found something which is immortal. The existence of immortality troubled the participants in the famous Plato’s *Symposium* which took place in downtown Athens one night of February of 416 BCE. Now we know. Knowledge is immortal.

This is the essence of Carr’s theory of dynamic objectivity, i.e., it increases in time because new knowledge is produced as time passes by. If we accept the existence of dynamic objectivity and we make some realistic assumptions about its mathematical properties, then Carr’s rejection of total objectivity cannot be sustained within his own theoretical framework (logic). Dynamic objectivity is related to the accumulation of knowledge using all available sources. The objectivity cannot come from one historian, but by the masses of historians. All of them, past, present and future historians, have contributed, or currently contribute, to the accumulation of historical knowledge. Eventually, a point will be reached when a historian or any other scientist declares that they have nothing new to add.

I would like to continue with my example of the Battle of Marathon. If Carr's theory of dynamic objectivity is correct, then the historian of the fifth century BCE was lagging behind in objectivity relative to a historian of the fourth century BCE, who in turn was lagging behind relative to a third century BCE historian, and so on. After 26 centuries, one may say that as far as the Battle of Marathon is concerned, no additional (objective) knowledge can be added.

Within this context, I was not surprised at all to read in a paper written by an ancient history professor who stated that, "So much has been written about the battle of Marathon, from so wide a range of viewpoints, that I was probably not the only contributor to this volume to have thought despairingly that it would be difficult to say anything worthwhile about Marathon which has not been said already by somebody somewhere. In the end that provided me with the subject for my paper, and I should like to look at the wide range of scholarly investigations which has been prompted by the battle of Marathon" (Rhodes, 2013, 3).

Many other historical issues may have reached the same level of objectivity but none has the longevity of twenty-six centuries. For example, another satiated topic seems to be the Industrial Revolution. So much so, that Hobsbawm (1969) has declared in his *Preface* exactly the same thing as Rhodes did for the Battle of Marathon. Hobsbawm wrote (1969, 10), "... the historian has no choice but to accept what his predecessors have written, or to leave a blank. ... This is a work of synthesis, rather than original research, and therefore rests on the labours of a great many other

scholars. Even its judgments are sometimes those of others.” Hobsbawm himself was unable to add anything new in the theme of the Industrial Revolution, or so he claimed because in economics I was trained not to trust such humility. I do not know where I read it, but Newton said something similar, i.e., he had nothing new to add, or he would not be able to do it without relying on “giants” of the past.

At such a stage of development of knowledge on the Battle of Marathon (call it K), or any other topic, one may assume that a Total Objectivity in History (TOH) has been reached. This is the natural extension of Carr’s model of dynamic objectivity in history. In his theory the variable total objectivity is a cumulative variable of all the knowledge of the past. This new knowledge depends on all information, facts, data, documents, etc., available which scientists can use to produce subjective new knowledge which is added to existing knowledge to produce more objectivity.

The careful reader may point out that objective knowledge may not imply true knowledge. This is true. When total objectivity is reached it means that nothing new in historical knowledge can be added by interpreting the existing historical facts and data. All these interpretations are part of what we may call total objectivity. Is this the truth? Of course not. New historical evidence coming from all possible sources may shed new light which may force historians to revise their interpretations of the Battle of Marathon. This does not challenge our Total Objectivity, but our “Total Truth”. The new truth is embedded in our new version of total objectivity and there is nothing that can be more objective than that.

Graph II depicts Carr's model of dynamic objectivity. Additions to knowledge are time-dependent. The vertical axis measures the accumulation of historical knowledge, which according to Carr, is associated with an increase in historical objectivity. This theory is applied to the Battle of Marathon.

From what we know, the first production of historical knowledge came out in the second half of the fifth century BCE by Herodotus. The objectivity of historical research was historically low. Herodotus was criticized as being biased (favoured Athens) and mythomaniac. His motivation could have been either ideological because he admired Athenian Democracy,¹ or, quite possibly, he was serving his own personal economic interests. Herodotus was making money by reading his histories to an Athenian clientele. One of them was Thucydides. Of course, the Athenian city-state recognized his service as a propagandist of the Athenian cause. Pericles sent him with Protagoras to Italy to help promote Athenian expansionism.

I do not have the historical facts to support it, but my economic theory tells me that their expenses and salaries were paid by the Athenian public budget. This is similar to the personal history of

¹Aeschylus in his masterpiece, *Perses*, praised democracy as well. In his playwright made fighting for democracy the motivation to fight in the Battle of Marathon. Aeschylus himself fought in the Battle of Marathon where his brother was killed. However, as is the case with Herodotus, Aeschylus may not have been so ideological his motives. These playwrights were played in front of an Athenian audience and the sponsors-*choregoi* (those who paid Aeschylus) wanted to please the public. *Perses* was sponsored by a rich fellow Athenian named Pericles that won the first prize in Athens' City Dionysia festival in 472 BCE. Of course, this preceded Herodotus account of the Battle of Marathon but cannot be considered an historical account. Nevertheless, historians should not ignore it in their interpretation of the Battle of Marathon.

Carr who himself served in the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I guess for a salary. Of course, there are many scientists who did not deny to serve their country if the price (salary and other material benefits) was appropriate. After all, the father of economic theory and protagonist of the market economy, abandoned his students for a tutoring job with the Duke of Buccleuch at a salary. This argument about Herodotus' objectivity must be included in the set of the dynamic objectivity and let other historians and the wider public assess it. However, it automatically belongs to knowledge. True or not, the issue has been raised.

Up to the nineteenth century CE, the criticism of Herodotus accounts of the Battle of Marathon continued. Bury wrote (1896, 95), "Anyone who reads critically the Herodotean account must see that Herodotus had not the smallest idea why the battle was fought, and had a very inadequate notion of how it was fought. He has collected a number of details, some true, others absurd; which, as he relates them, are without any inner connexion."

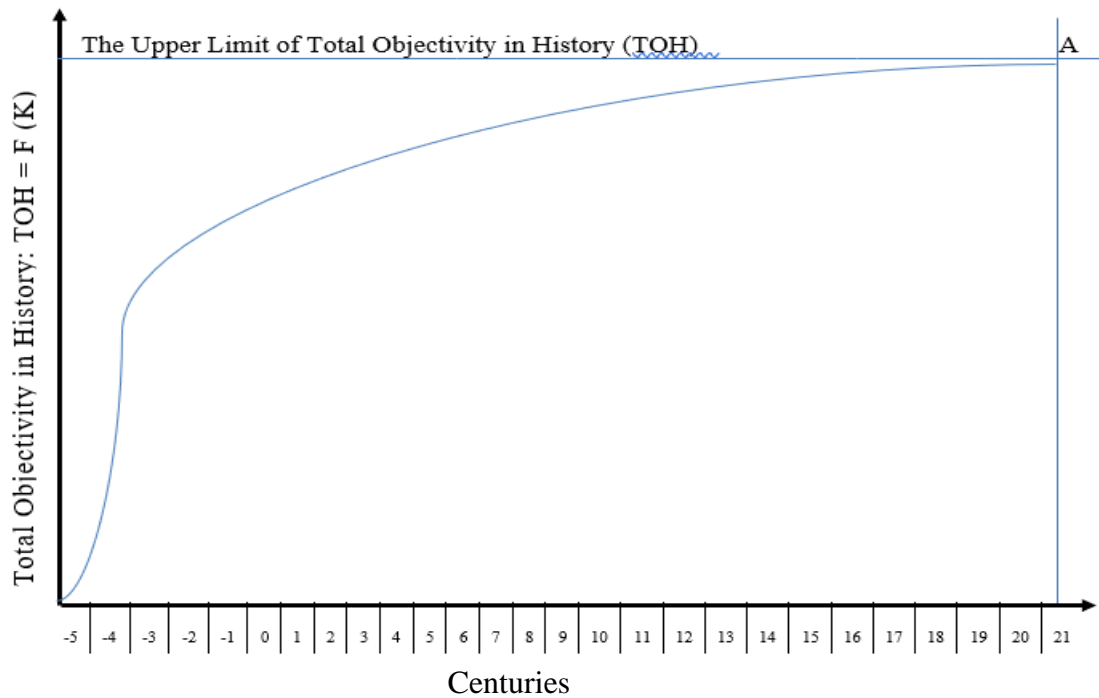
This is also included in the portfolio of accumulated historical knowledge of the Battle of Marathon in Carr's theory. About the same time, another historian had a different view about the Battle of Marathon. Lloyd wrote (1881, 380), "Military history proper must begin Marathon; it is the first battle of which us even a moderately detailed account in numbers and equipments of the contending situation and local peculiarities of the conflict, the armies before the battle, the circumstances collision, and the decisiveness of the result."

We may as well include this subjective interpretation in the portfolio of accumulated historical knowledge of the Battle of Marathon. Earlier, in the nineteenth century CE, Hegel had a more neutral approach to the Battle of Marathon. Hegel wrote (1837, 275) “With its vastly superior force the Athenians and Plataeans, without aid from their compatriots, contended at Marathon under Miltiades, and gained the victory.” This is an admirable summary of the received view of the Battle of Marathon’s history.

Of course, there are many such examples. However, beginning the twenty-first century CE, historians’ demands for objective research on the Battle of Marathon have been satiated. So much so that Rhodes (2013) had nothing to write except of presenting an amalgam of views. When a stage like this is reached, then we may say that the historical knowledge cannot produce any more objective new knowledge.

In Graph II, point A shows this satiation point. Along with the line, this determines the maximum objectivity of the event “Battle of Marathon.” Knowledge can be produced and will be useful, but it would not add to total objectivity. It would not be a new knowledge. The excellent paper by Rhodes (2013) is informative, synthetic, analytic, and well-balanced, but it does not offer any new knowledge. It does not add to the objectivity because it does not add to knowledge.

Graph II. Carr's Model of Dynamic Objectivity in History: The Battle of Marathon



Carr's dynamic definition of objectivity is a good contribution. The idea that objectivity is time dependent, i.e., a positive function of time (Euclidean or Non-Euclidean matters little), can become a testable hypothesis. All we need is to construct an index of objectivity. This can be done very easily with the new technologies of Internet and search machines. This dynamic definition of objectivity has only one happy ending. The upper limit of this time-dependent objectivity is total objectivity. Total objectivity is rejected by Carr, but this contradicts the logic of his dynamic definition of objectivity.

Carr's theory of historical objectivity is that by historians producing more knowledge, it increases the objectivity of a

historical event. This can be expressed as a mathematical model. One possibility is as follows:

$$\text{TOH} = F(K) \text{ and } K = A \sum_{t=-5}^{21} \sum_{s=1}^S \sum_{i=1}^N K_{tsi}$$

Where:

- TOH: A measure of total objectivity of the history of the Battle of Marathon which is a function F of accumulated new knowledge.
- K: New knowledge of the Battle of Marathon.
- A: A measure of efficiency of producing objectivity from the accumulated knowledge (K) of all past and current historians who have done research on the Battle of Marathon. Economists call it Total Factor Productivity.
- t: The century that the research on the Battle of Marathon was done. It started the 5th Century BCE (-5) and continues unabatedly until today in the 21st Century (+21)
- s: The society (s) of a historian who has done research on the Battle of Marathon
- S: The total number of societies whose historians have done research on the Battle of Marathon.
- i: The historian (i) who did research on the Battle of Marathon. From what we know so far i=1 for Herodotus.
- N: The total number of historians who have done research on the Battle of Marathon.

Let me illustrate with an example. In the mid of fifth century BCE the knowledge about the Battle of Marathon was supplied by Herodotus and therefore we may write $K = X_{1,1,-5}$ where Herodotus (i=1) wrote a history of the Battle of Marathon influenced by his society s=1 and his century t= -5. $X_{2,1,-5}$ will represent the knowledge that Thucydides added, so is the second historian (i=2) who lived in the same society (s=1) and the same period (t= -5) as

Herodotus. Thus, the accumulated knowledge of the fifth century BCE was equal to:

$$K = X_{1,1,-5} + X_{2,1,-5}$$

Please note that Thucydides (X) includes the additional knowledge. What has already been included in Herodotus' knowledge is not included, i.e., the year of the Battle of Marathon. For those who are curious what is the new which Thucydides brought in, I would say that he added that (a) the Battle of Marathon was a big war but the Peloponnesian War was bigger and (b) Herodotus' history was not authentic; he was writing to please the crowds in order to make money because he knew from an embryonic theory of human behaviour that people liked myths. There is nothing wrong with myths and these were praised by Plato as a useful pedagogical tool, as long as these have been approved by the "guardians" of an ideal politeia. This might explain why, in order to please the Athenian audience, Herodotus underrepresented the Athenian army and overrepresented the number of Persian fighters. I am sure he would have said the opposite if he was in the Persian king's courtyard. Carr, as a practical and honest historian, would have done the same if instead of the British kingdom was serving the Greek kingdom in 1919.

The above mathematical exposition is based on Carr's Theory of Objectivity in History. In light of this mathematical expression, let me recapitulate what Carr has said or implied. All can be tested because these are hypotheses derived from Carr's theory of objectivity in history. All variables are measurable albeit at a huge

monetary cost. The technology of data mining and big data have reduced the cost of measuring the theoretical variables considerably of Carr's theory of total objectivity in history.

Firstly, Carr told us that objectivity is a non-decreasing function of time. This is obvious because the knowledge of historical events is a storable good and it does not perish by the passage of time. For example, Herodotus produced knowledge on the Battle of Marathon which has not perished. Thucydides added some, and so-on among all historians who followed him over the centuries and geographical areas in discussing and researching the Battle of Marathon. Thus, we establish a Law in History inspired by Carr's writings: the law of non-declining total knowledge of a historical event. This law is a testable hypothesis. It is trivial but important to keep in mind because it is a determining variable of objectivity in history. Below, I offer one way of measuring this variable for empirical purposes.

Secondly, the law that historical knowledge increases at a decreasing rate. Carr did not explicitly mentioned that, but I get the impression from his writings that he had something like that in mind. So much so, that in Graph II above, I have designed the curve of objectivity in history in such a way that the rate of decline is steep after the third century BCE. This is also a testable hypothesis. The question is, how much new knowledge historians and other scientists (e.g., archaeologists) have added to the Battle of Marathon after the first three centuries of the Battle of Marathon?

I cannot resist the temptation and I will produce a statistical simulation just to show how important is Carr's idea. I will keep it

very simple. I will use a Cobb-Douglas production function of “knowledge on the history of the Battle of Marathon”:

$$\text{TOH}_t = AK_t^\beta$$

The above simple production function shows that Total Objectivity in History (TOH) in period (t) is a function of a total factor productivity parameter (A) which can be interpreted by how efficient and effective historians are in transforming accumulated knowledge (K) in period (t) into TOH. The higher the A, the higher the TOH, per given accumulated knowledge of history. On the other hand, the coefficient (β) is less than one and higher than zero. Small β s show that the marginal contribution of new knowledge to TOH is smaller. Of course, these parameters can be estimated, but we need data for K and TOH which can be found as I explained above and further demonstrate below. After all, this would not have disturbed Carr at all because the collection of data and facts is not the task of history as a science and of historians as serious scientists. I hold exactly the opposite view. History and historians must make this their essential task. It is the big start, and as ancient Greeks said, *Αρχή ἡμῖσιν παντός*, the beginning is half of everything or, “Well begun is half done.” Historians must take the “well begun” by collecting and analysing historical facts and data.

How can one measure TOH and K? A crude measurement of K could be the number of pages written on the Battle of Marathon, weighted by the citations they have received. TOH can be measured

as an index of total number of alternative answers given to all questions asked in relation to the Battle of Marathon. This is a huge research project, but given today's technology of data mining and algorithms it becomes relatively easy. Of course, it requires resources and these are not freely available. Thousands of historians must be employed as thousands of economists are employed to collect data on National Accounts. This is another research project and here I want to demonstrate how this can be easily done with a simulation.

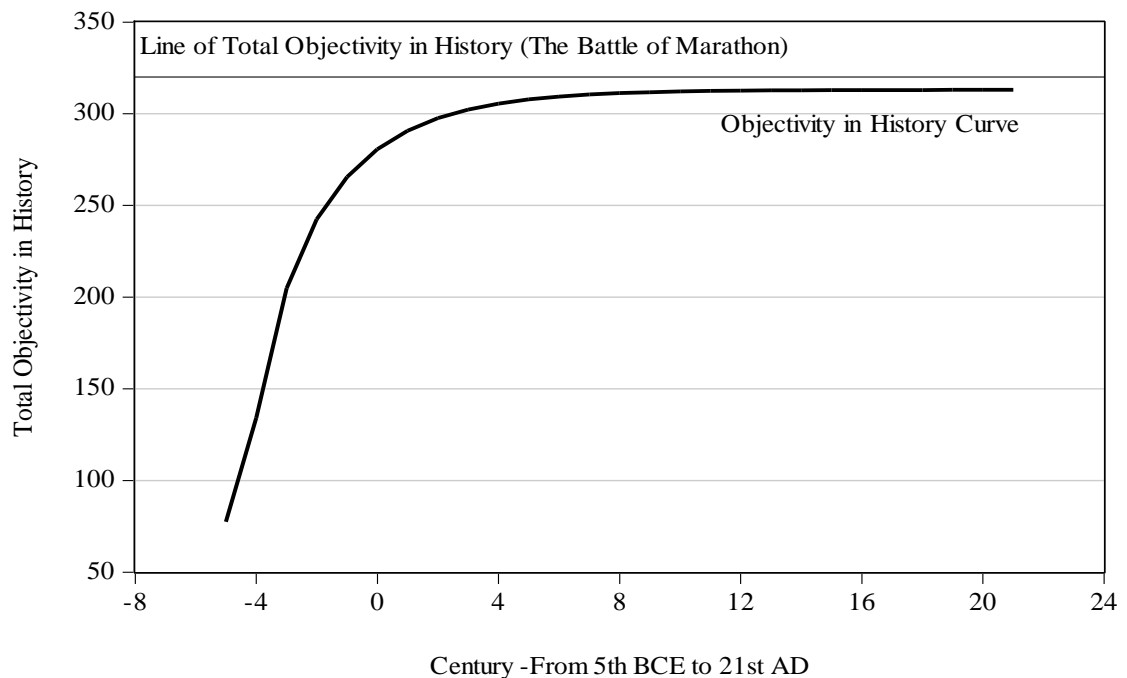
I simulate the equation of the production function using the information Rhodes (2013) provided that nothing new can be added to our knowledge of the Battle of Marathon. In this case, the parameters A and β must be such that in the twenty-first century TOH reached its maximum. It does not really matter from where one starts, the result must be that by the twenty-first century the additional knowledge must be zero. I simulated the following specification:

$$TOH_{21} = 2K_t^{0.6}$$

The results are depicted in Diagram III assuming that $A=2$ and $\beta=0.6$. First, the results do not change if we change the parameters, pending that by twenty-first century the selection of parameters must be such that little can be added to the knowledge of the Battle of Marathon. Note that this comprises new questions about the Battle as well as unanswered old questions and puzzles which are

included in the accumulated knowledge of the past. To know that some questions cannot be answered given the information or facts or data of the present does increase the objectivity of the knowledge of the history of the Battle of Marathon. We know what we do not know. Not knowing something does not imply non-objective knowledge. On the contrary, the information, facts and data that we do not know belong to the set of objective knowledge.

Graph III. *Objectivity in the History of the Battle of Marathon*



What does Graph III show? Firstly, new knowledge is always produced, i.e., the curve is upward sloping. Secondly, the rate of increase is declining. Third, it is quite possible that a new management of the data technology (an objective process) may increase historians' ability, e.g., A from 2 becomes 3. This happened with economics by the discovery of powerful

econometric software. This will increase current and future TOH. There will be a breaking point.

Thirdly, Carr's theory of objectivity suggests that TOH is an increasing function of the number of societies represented by historians who studied the Battle of Marathon. The number of societies is given by S . To control for time, let us assume that we look at all historians of the twentieth century who wrote about the Battle of Marathon, or in the last decade of the twentieth century.

Carr's theory predicts that an individual Russian historian of the Battle of Marathon would write differently from an English historian and both will be different from a Chinese historian. This is a testable hypothesis. We can break down all the issues concerning the Battle of Marathon and then ask all Russian, English and Chinese historians who published at least one scientific paper or book on the Battle of Marathon and test Carr's theory that historians' society does matter. Of course, we can include all the historians of the world. Then, their answers if they add new knowledge can be included in the portfolio of accumulated knowledge. From dead historians we can exert their opinion from their writings.

Fourthly, historians' views differ not only according to the society they live in, but the time. This is very tricky because society changes over time. There are econometric techniques that can separate the effects. But let us assume that what is critical here is not the society that changes, but the century (time). Athens has changed a lot since Herodotus who first wrote about the Battle of Marathon. Carr's theory of objectivity tells us that the views of all

historians who lived in Athens and wrote about the Battle of Marathon will differ according to the century in which they live. By writing this piece here, I belong to all Athenians who wrote something about the Battle of Marathon. I live in the same city, Athens, as Thucydides and Herodotus with a difference of only 25 centuries. Actually, from my office, I have the same view as they had (the Acropolis and the Lycabettus Hill). I walk on the same streets as they did, but I have a cleaner environment and better housing conditions. Also, I can read their work and many others who wrote about the Battle of Marathon, thus profiting from what economists call the advantage of my backwardness. Hundreds of other Athenians wrote about the Battle of Marathon over the centuries. Carr's sophisticated theory predicts that our writing will be different because even though we are in the same city and we are all Athenians, we have lived in different periods of time. The reader should notice that there is a societal dimension in this variable, but reading Carr and the example he used of the individual Americans, Russians and Indians, I think he would not disapprove of my approach. I can apply this to all Athenians and see if time matters. Did Athenians over the centuries write a different history about the Battle of Marathon than London's historians?

We can add all those Athenian views from Herodotus and Thucydides who first wrote in the fifth century BCE up to the twenty-first century, until my work here. Then, I can use time as an explanatory variable to estimate (a) if our opinions differ and (b) if they differ, and by how much do they differ? It can be done and all

variables are measurable. Of course, I can test the non-linearity of the time-effect.

Finally, Carr's theory of objectivity can benefit from the new statistical techniques developed in the last decades of estimating panel data. Panel data are mixed data. In a matrix form, Carr's theory can be expressed as a matrix of $S \times T$ dimension. S is the number of societies and T the number of years or centuries. Statistical techniques permit the estimations of parameters of the so-called time-fixed effects. Carr's theory can be developed into an empirical model to test all his interesting hypotheses. This is the type of research which historians should undertake. History is a serious hard science and must be served by serious servants.

Summing up this section, I would like to make a few comments on my *apodeixis* with historians and non-historians alike; it relates to the accumulation of new knowledge. Historians-to-be-scientists of history should make a distinction between *gnome* (opinion), *gnosis* (knowledge) and above all never to forget what was said by Herodotus Halicarnassus (Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησσεύος) in his first sentence that *ἱστορίης* (history) *ἀπόδειξις* (apodeixis) *ἤδε* (direct).

All these beautiful three English words (*gnome*, *gnosis* and *history*) which have a Greek origin, relate to objectivity in general and to history in particular given that Herodotus used the third one as his epistemology of history, i.e., how one should research (*ἱστορίης*) on past events.

First, *gnomes* do not belong to history as a science. This takes care of Carr's arguments about history. My *gnome* about the Battle of Marathon does not count. It is respected, but it is not history. All

the pseudo-debate of postmodernism and poststructuralism is based on gnomes, and as such are welcomed, but cannot be considered as part of the science of history. There are good gnomes and bad gnomes. Gnomes with good narration (story-telling) and gnomes without good narration. In the Greek and English language, this type of “history” starts first with a permission *let me tell you a story*, and second with a time dimension of a beautiful expression, *once upon a time*. Since all children grow up with these stories, and given that I was good in telling such stories to my children, once I was asked a very important question: *When did that happen?* And then I realized the beauty of this opening statement, and later on in the 1980s, how right Carr was on generalizations in history. All these stories take place in the past (once upon a time), but it does not really matter when and where. The story is “true” irrespectively of time, society and geography. Of course, the story itself will reveal the era but you can take care of that if you are good at telling such stories. You can always say that air controllers were on strike and/or there was a lockdown due to a pandemic and Odysseus could not take the next plane to Ithaca. By the way, for some Greeks who were locked out of the country because of Covid-19, they described their “story” as an odyssey. This is the time effect of history, even if it is a story only. A good joke about Odysseus runs as follows: after twenty years he returns to his wife, Penelope, and the first thing he tells her is: “Guess what has happened to me!”

I think the greatest of all gnomes has been expressed by postmodernists and poststructuralists. They are the best given their linguistic and language articulation. How beautiful are their myths

and fictions on the science of history? Many historians have almost believed them! Their material is good for storytelling in an introductory history class at the elementary level. I consider these gnomes as part of a very good teaching material in distinguishing what Hecataeus said in his opening sentence of his own research of the past: “Ἐκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὧδε μυθεῖται· τάδε γράφω, ὡς μοι ἀληθέα δοκέει εἶναι· οἱ γὰρ τῶν Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὡς ἐμοὶ φαίνεται, εἰσίν.”

Firstly, Hecataeus was the grandfather of history if Herodotus is the father. It is alleged that Herodotus knew Hecataeus' work and he had stolen many from him. Those years plagiarism in scientific works was not a serious offense and, in any case, nobody could have detected it because Prometheus had not invented the software to check for originality (a politically correct word instead of plagiarism). The first two words of Herodotus' history is a copy-and-paste from Hecataeus. Thucydides starts exactly with the same two words: “Θουκυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος.” No originality what-so-ever!

Secondly, the third word of Hecataeus' opening is about his method, how (ὧδε) it will be said (μυθεῖται¹); these (τάδε) I write (γράφω) which I believe (δοκέει) as true (ἀληθέα). Immediately he revealed his knowledge not of subjectivity, but his concern that he might not write the truth. As Carr, 2,500 years after Hecataeus, knew that the truth is something different from subjectivity. What follows in his definition relates to gnomes. Hecataeus told us that he will try to do that because it seemed to him that Greeks said many

¹The word *μυθεῖται* has a common root with a myth, but here means I express myself. “I say what I am thinking” is how I would translate it.

logos which are ridiculous. Millions of Athenians alive and dead have and had a gnome about the Battle of Marathon. It is an excellent research project to ask the question, *what are the gnomes of Athenians on the Battle of Marathon?* But gnomes must be ignored by the scientists of history, because as Hecataeus told us, are many and ridiculous.

I turn now to the second word of gnosis. Gnosis of history is necessary, but not sufficient to produce new knowledge which must be the aim of a historian. It is not an accident that gnosis and gnome have the same root. Gnome is the perception that something is right or wrong. This perception does not require a priori knowledge. Therefore, everybody has a perception, i.e., a gnome. Perception relies on senses. Similarly, gnosis relies on senses, but now it becomes a process of nous, which through the logic (reason), interprets the perceptions. Gnosis may be the result of the experience of repeated phenomena. Many survivors of the Greek Civil War of the 1940s wrote books which call them historical. They have a gnome as anybody else would have about anything and gnosis because they experienced the civil war. Both are not sufficient to write a scientific book on the history of the Greek Civil War. Even reading all this literature does not constitute what I mean here as accumulated knowledge of history. All these belong to fictions, myths and/or whatever emotional or material peculiar benefits authors wanted to derive from writing such a novel.

History is not gnomes and not gnosis. History is *apodeixis*; this is the term that Herodotus used. He said neither I am going to give to my readers my opinion (gnome) nor my gnosis (knowledge), but

I would provide direct evidence based on logic: ἱστορίας ἀπόδειξις ἦδε (direct apodeixis of history). These three words follow the first two words of the opening sentence of his introduction with his name and his birthplace: Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέως. Herodotus, having foreseen Carr's suggestion that historians must inform the reader about their whereabouts, told us that he was raised in Halicarnassus in Asia Minor. His name has its own meaning. Herodotus was a present to his mother *Ἀρτώ* from Goddess Hera.

What does *apodeixis* mean? It is a noun. It means hard evidence; something, “that is unquestionably true by virtue of demonstration.”¹ It relates to logic. Another dictionary defines the adjective of the word (apodictic) as “incontestable because of having been demonstrated or proved to be demonstrable; Logic (of a proposition) necessarily true or logically certain.”²

What is history, then? *Apodeixis* about events happened in the past. I do not state that it should be based on logical inferences because this is exactly the meaning of the word *apodeixis*. Herodotus knew very well its meaning as all ancient and modern Greeks knew and know. In modern Greek the word has been used as in ancient Greek, but it has additional found very useful and practical meanings, e.g., a receipt. When you pay, you must get a receipt because it is your proof that you paid and you did not steal it. You can show to all and persuade them that you paid for the book you bought. Similarly, when you do your history research,

¹See the Collins Dictionary at <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/apodeictic>.

²See <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/apodictic>.

you must provide receipts that your research was scientifically based on theory and logic and not stolen from your perceptions and experiences. The word *ἱστορίης* means theorize, do research, examine, learn.¹ Thus, another way to decipher what Herodotus told us is that he had a theory which was directly used along with *apodeixis* to examine the works of the past of both Greeks and Persians.

Herodotus made a distinction between important and non-important events. Not all works of the past, Herodotus told us, but those which were great and admirable. This also took into account another concern that Carr had. Herodotus was the first to make a distinction of important and unimportant facts of the past. Herodotus applied his *ἱστορίης ἀπόδειξις ἦδε* to important facts of the past, but I can apply the same epistemology to write my family's history as Hecataeus did for his family. And by the way, Herodotus' history approach is similar to Hecataeus'.

All three words have their own different objective existence. I always had an opinion (gnome) about the Battle of Marathon, but this should not matter to a historian unless it becomes a "document," i.e., I write something about it. Once it is a document then it might become gnosis, new gnosis. If it becomes new gnosis then my "X" appears in the above equation and therefore, I increase the knowledge. This additional knowledge adds to the total objectivity of the Battle of Marathon. When Rhodes (2013) said

¹In ancient Greek apart from the noun and the adjective, the verb existed as well (*ἱστορέω*) which my dictionary translates as (a) I research (*ερευνώ*), I examine something (*εξετάζω κάτι*), and I learn through research (*μαθαίνω μέσω ερευνας*).

nothing new can be produced he meant that $dK/dt = 0$ which implies that $dTOH/dK = 0$, i.e., total objectivity reached a maximum.

Causality, Determinism and Accidents

I have already mentioned that Carr was very close to solving this puzzle of causality but he had to break the fetters of his subjective/relativist philosophy of history. Carr had recognized all the elements of an empirical model by explaining historical events:

1. Variables enter into a functional relation between each other. Many variables (determinants or explanatory) can account (determine) for a historical event (effect, outcome, phenomenon), but not all casual variables are of equal (statistical) significance. Carr thought that historians could do the job in ordering the significance using historical facts and data. However, statistics can do the same job objectively and accurately. This does not mean that statistics are not misused. But statistics never lie; people lie using statistics. Of course, the art of statistical analysis is constantly improving. New statistical techniques are discovered which improve the information which can be extracted from statistical data.
2. The total number of significant variables constitutes the deterministic part of the model. Their variations can explain variations of the dependent variable which is the event that historians want to explain. Not all the variations, but most of

them. Statistics have developed an index which measures the percentage of variability that can be explained by the deterministic part of the empirical model. It is the coefficient of determination.

3. A portion of the variability of the historical events cannot be explained by the deterministic part. They are the “accidents” in Carr’s terminology. These effects are random, and historically, one may cancel the other. As Davies pointed out in his notes in Carr’s book of the second edition, “Carr returned again and again to this issue” (1987, 166).

Historians need specialization. Some historians should develop good theories to account for historical phenomena such as a revolution or a global war. These theoretical models must suggest hypotheses regarding the relationships of the important theoretical variables. Other historians should specialize in developing the empirical part of a theoretical model by taking into consideration the availability of historical facts and data. A third group of historians should be trained in “producing” reliable historical facts and data following a well-developed and objective processes. A good example is the National Accounts developed by the United Nations which all of the governments are using now to compile their own national statistics. A fourth group of historians should use these data to empirically verify theoretical hypotheses of history or any other science. And finally, historians are needed who are good in interpreting these findings. It is only then that history will become a serious science and flourish. All of the training and skills

acquired should become part of an undergraduate course in history. At the postgraduate level, students can do research in the above five areas.

As many economists know who model human behaviour using historical facts and data, the effect of the determinist part of a model and the “accident,” or random part, is different in the short-run from the long-run. In economics, the short-run is accounted for by the lagged values of the dependent variables. Also, cross-sectional data (e.g., the society variable as explained above) show long-term associations.

Davies, the editor of the second edition of Carr's book, told us that in his notes Carr reconsidered this notion of the effect of accidents in history, “... while Lenin's death was due to causes extraneous to history, it affected its course. He (Carr) went on to add that ‘even if you maintain that in the long run everything would have turned out much the same, there is a short run which is important, and makes a great deal of difference to a great many people.’ There is here a marked shift in emphasis as compared with his discussion of historical accident in *What is History?*” (1987, 169).

I found this extremely interesting. Carr told us what economists have been telling us since the 1930s. Compare this with the economic policy debate between Keynesian and monetarists. Keynes in 1923 said that “in the long-run we are all dead” and we must do something in the short-run. But in the long-run we find ourselves in another short-run. A vicious cycle. This distinction is very important. I interpret it to mean that no matter what happens in

the short-run, history will run its course in the long-run. In other words, extraneous (a word used by Carr and is not used by economists, but I like it) variables have little effect on the long view of history, but they can be very important in explaining short-run phenomena. This squares very well with a quantitative (statistical) approach to history and Carr was very close to discovering it. As in economics, historians can specialize in researching short-run phenomena and some others might look at long-term phenomena and effects. For example, the progress of humanity is a long-run phenomenon.

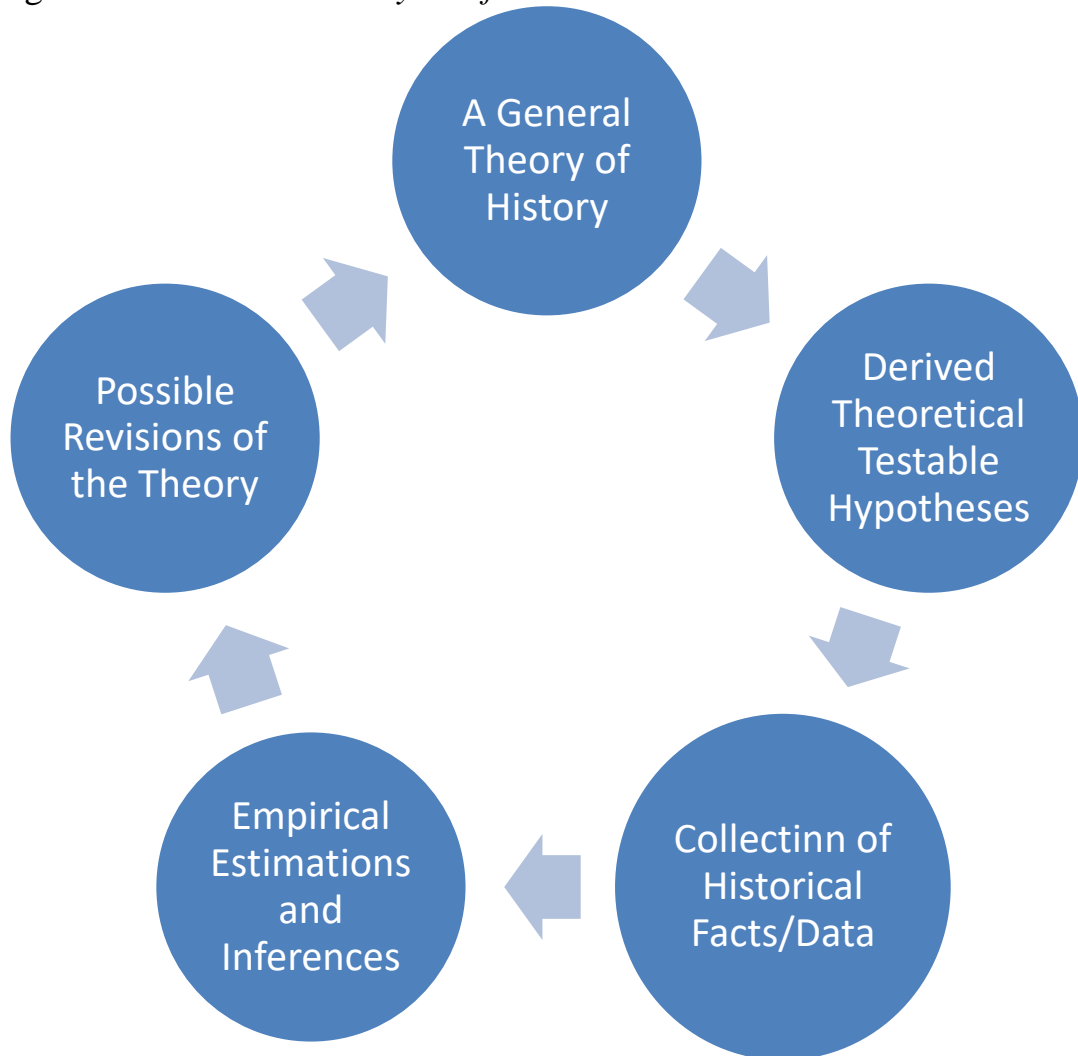
Above all is theory. An empirical model is built on theory. Davies cited Carr's notes which admitted that, "...many present-day historians are dead because they have no theory. But the theory which they lack is a theory of history, not one delivered from outside. ... The historian must learn from economic ... specialists ... but the economist ... will also die unless he works within a broader historical pattern which only the 'general' historian can provide" (1987, 172).

I agree with one objection. Until now economics is thriving and historians are dying. Carr used the term "general," which is the term John Maynard Keynes used in his 1936 influential book. Keynes wanted to build a general theory of economics. Who is going to do the same thing for history? Who is going to build a general theory of history?

Summing up this model, it might be helpful if we put everything on a circular diagram (see Diagram IV). I think Carr had such an underlying model in his mind. If he was not so obsessed

with the impact of social conditions and subjectivism, he would have developed this model into a general theory of history.

Diagram IV. *The Virtuous Cycle of Historical Research*



I would like to spend some space to explain this diagram which is so common in social sciences, and especially economics. I draw from economics because I think I know it better, but I have seen it applied to sociology and psychology as well. I agree with Carr that history should not import theories from other disciplines and should aim at developing its own general theory of history which will be

accepted by 95% of historians and respected by 100% of all other scientists.

All serious scientists respect economics as a science. Their theories are considered so important that other sciences are using them to give answers to their questions and solve their puzzles. History can benefit by looking at how economics is doing it and apply it to their own discipline. Keynes' *General Theory* was not built outside the social and political context. On the contrary, his theory was built and was inspired by the conditions of the economic crash and the resulted huge unemployment rates of the 1930s. Keynes did not interpret this, and did not provide a narrative. He built a theory to explain and mitigate the problem. Based on these theories, many testable hypotheses were derived which allowed future generations of economists to collect data and test them. The data are historical facts and they are freely available to anyone who would want to use them. These are hard objective data and only the defunct economists --as Keynes called them-- would question their validity for theoretical and policy-oriented applications. Modern capitalism is thriving on data. New disciplines have been developed to handle big data. Data mining has become a buzz word. Nothing is hidden anymore and all these objective data have a historical dimension. It is up to historians to build appropriate theories which will take advantage of such a plethora of historical facts and data.

And of course, this process which looks like the cyclical theory of history, never run its course; it is perpetual. New historians can detect weaknesses and cracks within the building block of "The General Theory of History". They would support existing theories

and if needed, propose repairs. The theory will be amended to meet these new requests based on findings. The General Theory of History will serve what Thucydides wanted, and Carr accepted. It will serve the future. History is a social science. As in all sciences (natural and social), they serve the future of the human race. This is what Hesiod did 2,800 years ago, and this is what I am trying to do with this monograph. The historical fact that my contribution is negligible does not make my effort worthless. After all, learning is primarily a consumption good for all those who like the luxury of studying and researching.

However, history can benefit by looking at the progress of economic science. As shown above, Carr devoted an entire chapter (lecture) on progress. He was optimistic for both the human progress and the progress in the science of history. Economics might show the way of how to do it.

This section relates very much to a long comment made by Evans "These beliefs reached their most extreme form, perhaps, in the United States in the late 1960s and 1970s with the rise of "social science history" (1997/1999, 33). One of its principal exponents, the econometric historian Robert Fogel, drew a sharp distinction between 'scientific' and 'traditional' history. Scientific history made possible above all by the computer, rested not on vague, incomplete, implicit, and inconsistent sets of assumptions about human behavior in the way that traditional history did, but on explicitly elaborated, sometimes mathematical models that could be rigorously tested by quantitative means. It applied not to individuals but to groups, and sought to develop not particular explanations but

general hypotheses which could be statistically tested. It assumed that there were systematic relationships among events, structures, and processes in history. It was, he argued, neutral and nonideological. It tended to be carried out by teams of scholars, just as experimental programs in the natural sciences did, rather than by the individual scholars who were the norm for the researcher in traditional history. It also addressed itself not to a wider public but to a specialist readership of fellow scientists, just as the natural sciences did” (1997/1999, 33).

Economics: An Expansionist Hard Science

No serious scholar will ever doubt that economics is a hard science. In 1969, the choice of economics to be the only discipline from all social sciences to be honoured with Nobel Prize awards was a recognition of this achievement. As a matter of fact, the first two to be rewarded the Noble Prize -Ragnar Frisch from Norway and Jan Tinbergen from the Netherlands- were recognized for their work which used historical facts and data to test economic theories and recommend policies. In the words of the Nobel committee, “for having developed and applied dynamic models for the analysis of economic processes.”

Economics understood early on that their future in the sphere of scientific inquiry relies on its capacity to expand and integrate the achievements of other sciences. The first such recognition at the Nobel level came when two representatives of this new fruitful approach were awarded the Nobel Prize in (economic) history in

1993. The new field was called cliometrics. The reasoning of the Nobel Committee was, “for having renewed research in economic history by applying economic theory and quantitative methods in order to explain economic and institutional change.”

This happened at a historical time -the 1990s- when according to Evans (1997/1999, 3): “The result has been that in place of the optimistic belief in the progress of the discipline held in different ways by both Carr, who saw it in the expansion of historical scholarship, and Elton, who saw it in the accumulation of historical knowledge, historians at the end of the twentieth century are haunted by a growing, fin-de-siècle sense of gloom.”

History as a science was declining, but the economic history was booming. The difference or the reason is how they treated facts and data. Things became worse for historians and history as a science when they started debating along the lines of postmodernism and poststructuralist criticism who deny the existence of historical facts altogether. The past does not exist but only as a narration. So, I do not exist, but I am the narration of some postmodernist historian. Nonsense at its best. Historians have only one choice: ignore stupidities no matter how attractive their narration is. For them, the objective use of these data is an illusion. Only interpretations and language exist. History is another discourse and nothing can make it a science.

Speaking of language, the term economic history in all languages that I know of, consists of an adjective and a noun. The adjective says something about the noun. Without the noun, the adjective does not have a meaning. My reading of language is that

the term economic history implies that this field is first history and then economics. It is part of history. And this part has been growing and thriving and nobody in the economic profession, or to that extent any other scientists, dare to doubt the scientific nature of economic inquiry. Postmodernist thought cannot penetrate economics which might be an explanation of why economics as science and the economies (practice) are thriving as never before. The never before is a historical hypothesis which has been tested using very hard data. Economic history cannot be a science if history is not a science. A wooden table is first of all a table. A war -to make a reference to an example given by Carr- is mostly a war and then becomes a Peloponnesian War. If historians develop a theory of wars, this should apply to all wars and therefore to the Peloponnesian War. However, this requires a shift in the treatment of history. History is a hard-core science and historians must behave accordingly; otherwise other sciences will take over as is the case with economics. But this shift must start with the treatment of historical facts and data. All data of the past have value. All are historical facts and data. Nothing of the past is unhistorical. What has value will be determined by the demand and supply model and not by interpretation. I have paid for historical facts and data many times in the past because they had value to me. I did not ask for historians' permission, and worse of all I did not have the time to wait for their interpretation.

Economists call them historical data. Another term used is "stylized facts." A stylized fact prompted John Maynard Keynes to develop his theory of consumption, i.e., consumption increases with

community's income and employment at a decreasing rate. He used these stylized historical facts to develop his theory of government intervention due to ineffective aggregate demand. Keynes did play an active historical role in the first half of the twentieth century. It was his laws of economics that guided him to shape the post-second war economic and political environment with the establishment of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) after the Bretton Woods agreement in 1944. World Bank and IMF became powerhouses of historical data production.

Economists have tested Keynes' theory and its extensions using historical facts and data which Carr and other historians considered unimportant and not a task worth pursuing. The demand and supply model has shown that these facts are very valuable for many other scientists who can use them happily, completely ignoring Carr's recommendations; unless these facts are interpreted by historians for at least one decade, they have no value. It appears that there is life for historical facts and data without historians' interpretations. And since there are no empty spaces in the sciences, whatever is left by one science is picked up by others. In our case, economists have developed their own (quantitative) history and they have done it so well within their discipline that two of its pioneers -already mentioned- were awarded the Nobel Prize in economics after the recommendations of their fellow economists from all fields of economic sciences. In 1993, Robert Fogel and Douglass North became Nobel Laureates for their work in quantitative history (cliometrics).

An excellent concise summary of how well history has served economics on the occasion of the Nobel Award is given by Goldin (1995, 191): “History serves economics in various ways. Most importantly, history is essential because it is risky to base conclusions on transient phenomena. The past, many economic theorists have discovered, is a giant experiment station for economic ideas. And empiricists have learned that historical data are often better (for example, because of less litigious environments) and provide larger samples (that is, longer time series). The histories of the developed world are backdrops, and often provide advice, for current developing countries. Finally, remnants of the past, which shape the realm of the possible today, are always with us as laws, norms, structures, institutions, and even people. In short, only the oblivious can ignore history in modern economics, and only the unenlightened would choose to do so. Given the large domain of economic history, it should not be surprising that Robert Fogel and Douglass North are not the first Nobel Prize winners in economics to study and use history. Milton Friedman used the past to understand the role of money; John Hicks studied economic history to understand economic growth; W. Arthur Lewis explored economic history as a backdrop for the problems of development; and Theodore Schultz examined it to learn about human capital. Robert Fogel's mentor, Simon Kuznets, was an economic historian in all these ways.”

How better can one put it! What were historians’ reactions to this? None. Cliometrics is a tool which historians can use to test their hypotheses. An example is the hypothesis, “... that there was a

period of Smithian growth between 1300 and 1800 which preceded the Industrial Revolution.”¹ Clark (2009), as I have already mentioned, compiled macroeconomic data aggregate for England from 1209. This enables all economists, any economist irrespectively of time and geography, to use these historical data to test a number of theoretical hypotheses along the lines of the virtuous cycle of historical research outline above in this chapter.

Cliometrics (economic or quantitative history) and the history of economic thought have been widening their horizon and examining other issues which belong to other fields of study. Mokyr (2006, 1005) stated that, “Economic science has always had symbiotic relationships with other disciplines. From the fruitful marriage with classical physics in the works of Leon Walras and Alfred Marshall, to the adoption of formal techniques from mathematics and engineering, to the growing interest in experimental methods borrowed from psychology, interdisciplinary spillovers and recombinations of economics with other disciplines have been common. Economics has exported as much as it has imported, enriching sister social sciences and history with its insights.”

One of the two Nobel Laureates of economic history, two years before the Nobel award, was writing that, “Throughout history, institutions have been devised by human beings to create order and reduce uncertainty in exchange. Together with the standard constraints of economics they define the choice set and therefore

¹See Clark (2009). Smithian growth occurs with a falling rate of profit due to capital accumulation.

determine transaction and production costs and hence the profitability and feasibility of engaging in economic activity. They evolve incrementally, connecting the past with the present and the future; history in consequence is largely a story of institutional evolution in which the historical performance of economies can only be understood as a part of a sequential story. Institutions provide the incentive structure of an economy; as that structure evolves, it shapes the direction of economic change towards growth, stagnation, or decline” (North, 1991, 97).

North is saying here that history connects the past with the present and the future. This is similar to what Carr stated in his book, but North did not cite or discuss it. No cross-fertilization between the two subjects. Economics went ahead with their history research ignoring pure historians. Historians are still fighting over language and linguistics issues. History progresses in a dynamic way without the historians, or may-be because of this.

The link between biology and history has been encouraged as well. Not only economics can benefit from biology, but as Vermeij (2004) argued in his book with the characteristic title, *Nature: An Economic History*, biology can find the economic methodology and arguments useful. Once upon a time economics were importing “epistemology” from natural sciences they now export. This idea of the link between economics and natural sciences, and especially physics, goes back to the nineteenth century. Carr mentioned this link by emphasising that it reached a deadlock. Contrary to what Carr said, many economists found the fertilization of economics with physics and philosophy very fruitful.

This has been part of the philosophy of economics and a review of this literature is provided by Blaug (1992, 1980). In 1985 a new academic journal appeared which aimed at discussing issues of economics and philosophy. Since Carr was arguing along with the inexistence of laws in economics and those accepted them in the nineteenth century, nobody believes in them anymore. In the 1980s, Blaug (1992, 139) will declare that, "... whatever are the linguistic habits of economists, it is difficult to deny the famous law of demand the status of scientific law." The linguistic part refers to whether one may call it "theorem" or "laws." Such laws or theorems abound in economics such as Gresham's Law; Say's Law; Engel's Law; the Law of Demand and Supply; the Law of Diminishing Returns; the Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility and many others.

Many papers appeared in the beginning of the twentieth century which provided empirical verifications of many economic laws. Some papers of this period appeared in a book edited by Mansfield (1980). The book served the purpose of supplementary readings to an undergraduate statistic for a business and economics course (this was to accompany his popular textbook of statistics). In his preface Mansfield (1980, p. ix) mentioned that, "The study of statistics is at the heart of modern education in business and economics. It provides tools and techniques for both research and practical decision-making. The popular conception of statistics as the collection and presentation of large masses of data touches only a part of the field. More broadly, modern courses in statistics are concerned with the ways in which one can derive valid conclusions

from empirical evidence. The emphasis is analysis, not simple description.” A student of business and economics learns early on of the role of using historical data for analysis.

The use of economics (and statistics) to study world’s problems has been expanding. Gráda (2007) examined the history of famine in an article that was published in the well-established periodical *The Journal of Economic Literature*. As he stated in his abstract, his paper “... provides a context for the history of famine in the twentieth century, which is unique.”

Relative to famine history is the important historical topic of the distribution of world’s income. The theoretical hypothesis is that countries with less-than-average per-capita income will tend to converge to countries with higher-than-average per-capita income. Using data that go back to the middle of the nineteenth century, Pritchett (1997, 13) concluded that, “The data on growth in less developed countries show a variety of experiences, but divergence is not a thing of the past. Some countries are "catching up" with very explosive but sustained bursts of growth, some countries continue to experience slower growth than the richest countries, and others have recently taken nosedives.”

Carr has argued that history deals with progress, with the development of humanity, and with the factors that affect it. Economics, using historical facts and data, has done a lot of research which Carr would call history. Moser (2013, 25) has observed that, “In 1474, the Venetian Republic began to offer exclusive rights to inventors and entrepreneurs who had invented or brought new technologies to Venice. Intended entrepreneurs who

had invented or brought new technologies to Venice. Intended to attract skilled artisans, the Republic's rudimentary patent system was copied by other European rulers to promote economic development and, more frequently, to reward political and financial support."

I am citing this passage to show how economists use history to satisfy their research interests. Many other issues can be cited but I would like to end this section by emphasizing an area of historical research which has not received much attention: this is the history of enterprises. Chandler (1990 & 1992), a historian, has been one of the pioneers in this area of research. Chandler (1992, 80) wrote that "A new type of industrial enterprise appeared suddenly in the last two decades of the 19th century. Throughout the 20th century, these firms were created and continued to grow in much the same manner, and they continued to cluster in industries with the same characteristics. These industrial firms first appeared as modern transportation and communication networks were completed—networks that themselves were built, operated, enlarged and coordinated by large hierarchical firms. By the 1880s, the new railroad, telegraph, steamship and cable systems made possible the steady and regularly scheduled flow of goods and information, at unprecedented high volume, through the national and international economies. Never before could manufacturers order large amounts of supplies and expect their delivery within, say, a week; nor could they promise their customers comparable large-scale deliveries on

some specific date. The potential for greatly increased speed and volume of production of goods generated a wave of technological innovations that swept through western Europe and the United States during the last decades of the 19th century, creating what historians have properly called the Second Industrial Revolution (to differentiate it from the "first" that occurred in Britain at the end of the 18th century, through the application of coal produced steam powered machinery to mining and the production of textiles, metals and metal products).” He credited historians as coined the term “Second Industrial Revolution.”

In concluding this section, I think *Carr's* book on *What is History?* can provide the impetus for a new start and direction in historical studies. My thoughts on Carr's book had the purpose to underline this and offer a suggestion. It is up to historians to realize that if they do not do something, their discipline will be integrated by other disciplines as shown with the above examples from economic history. History would eventually become the auxiliary science of other sciences. This is definitely the case with economics. Even the word history and historians would not be used anymore because serious scientists would want to distance themselves from modern history and historians. Economists must also differentiate themselves from history and historians and instead use a historical Greek word from Greek mythology: They named their new subfield cliometrics and those who practice it cliometricians. Not economic historians, but cliometricians. In just a few decades they got the recognition of all economists and other scientists: an area which belongs to history was not stolen from

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history, but it was developed from scratch and blossomed to where it found fertile land and conducive climate conditions. History has entered its glacial era and unless the ice melts fields, like cliometrics, will grow in other warm lands.

9

Epilogue

In this last chapter, I would like to present some of the reviews of Carr's book. According to R.W. Davies, editor of the second edition of Carr's book in 1987, Carr was preparing a second edition but he died in 1982, leaving only an introduction for the second edition and many notes which have been presented by Davies appended to the second edition. In his introduction (written in 1982), Carr maintained, after two decades, his optimism about the future of humanity.

Davies' presentation of Carr's notes and of course his thoughts, is a kind-of review and an evaluation. However, many other reviews appear right after Carr's publication and I do have some comments related to them. They showed what other historians thought about the meaning and nature of history. I read all of these reviews after I wrote my own notes. In the 1980s, I was not reading much of book reviews, and my academic and professional priorities were not into reading reviews of books on the philosophy of

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history. Philosophy readings increase with age. This is the reason that I left the epilogue to present some of these reviews; I wanted to depict my own chronology of readings about Carr's book.

I organize this chapter into three main sections. In the following section, I present and discuss Davies' comments and notes. Then, in what follows, I have selected a few reviews of Carr's work for discussion and comments. Finally, in the last section, I present Evans' (1997) treatment of Carr's book. Evans wrote an influential book in which Carr is thoroughly discussed.

Davies' Comments and Notes

Davies wrote that Carr intended to provide a full revision with new sections and chapters. However, according to Davies, Carr saw little reason to revise his first two chapters. Actually, as I demonstrated in previous chapters, I think his discussion on historical facts is the most important part of the entire book. All the other ideas follow from his position on historical facts and data. It is in his treatment of the facts of the past that Carr showed his scientific "stubbornness," and I am not surprised that he did not want to change his mind; it is the crux of his philosophy of history. Facts and data do not speak for themselves, Carr said. Both become important (historical) only if they are moulded by historians for a long period of time, e.g., at least ten years. This approach shaped his position on objectivism and science as was shown in chapter eight of this monograph.

Davies pointed out that Carr did not accept empiricism because it was anti-historical. Carr's approach to answering the question, "what is history?" was to emphasise the influence of social and environmental variables on historians' choices and interpretations of facts and data. The role of civilization is also stressed. I found his note on Europe really interesting. Europe, Carr argued, has nothing to fear from the "barbarians," because in order to conquer Europe, they must become civilized first. I read it as follows: all those civilizations which benefit from the advantage of backwardness can never "conquer" Europe as long as they lack behind in technology, economy, society and culture. They must first surpass Europe in these areas and then "conquer" it as a natural process or even with the use of military force. I think the historical fact of Rome conquering Greece is of interest here, but it goes beyond my subject matter in this book.

Davies remarked that Carr's thesis on objectivity (history is always subjective, but historians can be objective) was strongly objected. This issue was raised in this monograph as well, but I did not reject it because I saw in it a dynamic theory of objectivity. The facts and data are always objective, albeit not all of them are of good quality. However, it is up to historians and other scientists to use them.

Carr's notes struggled with the concept of objectivity. Apparently, he knew that his position was contradictory and wanted to qualify what he said in the first edition. His explanation in the notes did not enlighten us. Like it or not, objectivity requires the separation of the subject from the object. The object must be free

from any interpretation-- if it is not, then it cannot be objective and therefore it cannot be fact and data. For example, the time series of per-capita GDP of England cannot be a matter of interpretation. My use of it and my interpretation can be biased, naïve, smart, unique, etc., and of course in all cases, subjective. I take the objective facts and data, process it and add knowledge. This is the way to do (historical) research. Even duplicating other people's research is to test its validity and correctness which is a task worth taking.

I think Carr demanded too much from historians. He defined them as subjects whose behaviors depend on the social conditions of their era, and then criticizing them of not producing objective research. How can one explain the existence of such antithetical positions on the Battle of Marathon from two historians who both lived in the same era and had access to the same facts and data? Thus, their interpretations of these two historians are not time-(era)-dependent and the sum total of their views increases the objectivity of history. Historians can be, and are, subjective by definition but the sum of their historical research is objective. In addition, as this sum accumulates, a time is reached when one may conclude that nothing more can be added. At this point, I define that total objectivity has been reached. The Battle of Marathon is a good example.

Two personal anecdotes are at stake here following Carr's approach of writing history. Once upon a time, when I was delivering an opening speech at one of ATINER's Annual International Conferences on History, I was narrating a dream I usually have. Almost every day, I take a short walk in downtown

Athens where my office is located. Where I go is a historical accident-- it is not determined a priori-- it is a random walk as economists would call it. Sometimes I just happen to be in the mood to follow a stroll starting from Aristotle's Lyceum, moving to Panathenaic Stadium (an ancient site, but was renovated to host the first modern Olympic Games), then facing the south foot of the Acropolis Hill I go around seeing all the remnants of the ancient Athenian glory (Parthenon, Theaters, Pnyx etc.). Suddenly, I found myself daydreaming about this glory. I am hearing voices of the past which are actually similar to the ones I have read in the ancient documents. Unfortunately, my daydream is continuously disturbed and interrupted by the uncivilized behavior of modern Athenians and the many visitors of Athens coming from all over the world. Naturally, I compare myself with this ochlocracy. I consider myself an Athenian of the good (classical) old times! I can compare with them. I feel so proud of myself. I have nothing to do with the current mob which visits the ancient remnants of an unsurpassed society.

However, during the night this beautiful daydream becomes a nightmare. All past Athenians get out from their graves and they laugh at me asking "Who do you think you are? You and your civilization. You are nothing. We left you with marbles and 'marbles' and you destroyed all of them. It took you two thousand years to appreciate our work-- whatever was left of it because you burned most of it to ashes. We produced so many historical facts and data and you destroyed them. Not all by a historical accident (such as an unintentional fire), but you allowed all the arsonists to

burn books. But what do you expect from a European civilization, which 1500 years after our masterpieces, you burn people alive because of their beliefs?" I wake up sweating and ashamed.

I was narrating my daydream nightmare (trying to copy unsuccessfully though Herodotus) in one of my opening remarks of the history conference. During the break, a professor of history from New Zealand, I think, came and told me that I should go to New Zealand and nobody from the dead there will disturb my sleep. She meant that they had no history; actually, written history.

Based on this dream, I catch myself daydreaming of the day when the technology will be so advanced that we can hear and record voices of the past. What a beautiful historical data generation process that would be. Until then we must work with whatever facts and data humanity has produced, or rather, did not destroy. Fortunately, the supply of historical facts and data is increasing at an increasing rate, I might add. For example, technology permits us to read papyrus that has been used many times before, writing one document upon another. Technology enables the ability to read what was under the current unimportant writing. Similar with the voices. One day we might be able to recover the voices of the past. The past is the raw material of history. I am sure Carr would have shared my optimism. What I share with Carr's book is that the human race does have a future and along with this history, does have an even greater future.

Carr had his own dreams. The last paragraph of Davies' editing of Carr's notes revealed that Carr had a different idea of the future of capitalism and the USSR. He thought that the world revolution is

coming and the first stage was the Russian revolution which will, “... complete the downfall of capitalism, will prove to be the revolt of the colonial peoples against capitalism in the guise of imperialism” (1987, 182).

What happened is history. The USSR collapsed and Carr did not live to see it and reinterpret his own past interpretations. This is what happens when you rely so much on your own personal evaluations of world history.

Some Reviews of Carr's Book

Carr's book has had great influence. Many historians and other scientist wrote reviews. However, I could not find one written by an economist. I have selected a few that I liked for their critical arguments and I left out those which were written to promote either the book or its author. I am not against such practices. Books must sell, or otherwise would not be published. And if a review helps in selling more copies, I consider them very valuable contributions in promoting objectivity in the sciences. More books, more objectivity.

The first review that I want to start with was written by Professor Patrick Gardiner from the University of Oxford. One decade earlier, Gardiner had published his own contribution to the philosophy of history.¹ Gardiner's review appeared in *The*

¹See Gardiner (1952) on *The Nature of Historical Explanation*. This book is not mentioned by Carr. Also, Gardiner in 1959 produced an excellent collection of excerpts which was called *Theories of History*. He included

Philosophical Review in 1964. He opened up his review by emphasizing the theorizing in history. Historians, mentioned Gardiner, are subjected to complaints that do not pay attention to their theoretical implications. This task, claimed Gardiner, was left to philosophers. And concluded that, "In consequence, models are presented of historical reasoning which are naive or distorting (or both), and which leave untouched the major issues raised by contemporary historiography" (1964, 557).

It is within this context that welcomed Carr's book. The issues discussed by Carr, Gardiner continued, are difficult and daunting to many. Gardiner emphasized Carr's attempt to bridge the gap between sciences and history at least at the level of aims, but it is so broad that becomes unassailable. Gardiner closed his review by raising serious criticisms on two issues: Carr's handling of determinism and objectivity.

A graduate of Oxford wrote the next review I examine. Gardiner was also affiliated with Oxford University. His review is not favorable at all. Ritcheson (1962, 382) stated "The style pleases; the argument- polemical, repetitive, tendentious- does not convince

contributions by Giambattista Vico, Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottfried Herder, Antoine-Nicolas de Condorcet, G. W. F. Hegel, Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill, Henry Thomas Buckle, Karl Marx, Georgi Plekhanov, Leo Tolstoy, Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee, Wilhelm Dilthey, Benedetto Croce, Karl Mannheim, R. G. Collingwood, Karl R. Popper, Bertrand Russell, W. H. Walsh, Pieter Geyl, Isaiah Berlin, Christopher Blake, Carl G. Hempel, Morton White, Ernest Nagel, W. B. Gallie, William Dray, Charles Frankel, Alan Donagan, Michael Scriven, Maurice Mandelbaum, Ernest Gellner, and J.W.N. Watkins.

... What is certain, however, is that Mr. Carr has confused history with politics and, conceivably, sociology.”

I agree that Carr’s argument is repetitive, and I have made a note of that, but to be fair this is not a book but a series of lectures that Ritcheson failed to acknowledge. On the second note, I do not think Carr confused the subjects. On the contrary, he thought that history and sociology have a lot to benefit if they leave the doors of communication open. But what I liked in Ritcheson’s review were his closing remarks. He wrote that (1962, 383), “... the reviewer wishes it clearly understood that his remarks are directed not to Mr. Carr but to the society which produced him.”

This is the price someone (in this case Carr) pays when he generalizes on the effect of social conditions. If this is true, then Carr himself fell victim to his own historical social circumstances. This is exactly the point I made about the contradictory nature of subjectivism and relativism. If everything is subjective and relative then this statement is also subjective and relative, and therefore does not prove that objectivity cannot be achieved. However, this is an objective statement because I do not think subjectivism and relativism make sense. If by this they mean biased or false interpretations, then I can live with this.

Following this, another reviewer, Jensen (1964), pointed out that Carr himself was advocating subjectivism by default (meaning that objective history is not possible), contrary to his historical writing. Jensen wrote (1964, 133) “Professor Carr is clearly not one of the "relativists" in his interpretation of history.” I raised the same issue. Carr, I think, has a theory of history which is based on a

dynamic objectivity, i.e., it increases overtime as historical knowledge accumulates. At a certain point in time and after many years or centuries, a particular historical event may reach an interpretation of total objectivity. I used the example of the Battle of Marathon to demonstrate this.

In another review, Smith (1962) provided a summary of Carr's main contribution but what I found of interest is his accurate reading of what Carr thought about history as a science. Smith wrote (1962, 627), "... history is not a science, at least as that word was understood in the nineteenth century, but it shares a good many principle of analysis and investigation with science as it actually operates in the twentieth century."

My thoughts on this issue were outlined in previous chapters. Firstly, history is a science because it is recognized as such by the academic world community. Universities have full-fledged independent departments and programs of history studies, there are many historical associations, and most importantly there are many academic journals which are "History." Secondly, from an epistemological point of view, history's methodology is a scientific one or has the potential to become one as any other social and natural science. Each science faces its own unique uncertainties and constraints. This is the reason why history as a science is studied in separate academic departments. Thus, the first proof reinforces the second.

The last review I want to present in this section is a long one, about ten pages. Price (1963) offered an encompassing review of Carr's book. I would like to make an indirect comparison with what

I said in my monograph here. Price spends more than half of his review to the first chapter and the rest are squeezed in four and a half pages. I think his choice is justified.

Price praised Carr's work but nevertheless he accused him of subjectivity, bias and intolerance to different views. He wrote (1963, 136): "Yet, many would hesitate to give them to students as an introduction to that thought, not so much because his viewpoint is unfashionable or even eccentric, but rather because his method is on occasion less than lucid or candid in tight corners, and seldom charitable or even fair to those other aspects of modern historical thought with which Carr finds himself in disagreement ... the book is unfortunately personal and parochial."

Apart from these general aphorisms, I think Price raised some real good points. I have already mentioned that Carr has either ignored, or was ignorant of, a huge literature which could help him to clarify some basic issues which confused him. The example of economics is a characteristic one. Nothing is mentioned of the tremendous developments in economic science since 1920s. Carr criticized the economics of nineteenth century without taking into account Keynes own attack in 1936.

Price (1963, 137) suggested that "Carr did not really like facts" but I do not agree with him. The key issue is the process by which facts of the past become important historical facts. Carr liked facts and data that are important to historians. His problem is the use of the raw material of the facts of the past and making them important historical facts of the present. Actually, Carr suggested that some facts can become important even though they previously were

considered unhistorical. He was too restrictive when assigning this important role of managing the production of historical facts to historians alone. Economists are much better equipped and well-trained in supervising this important production process of historical data. This is the problem with Carr's mishandling of historical data. He imposed a tremendous burden on historians' shoulders. Even if all titans of history were drafted, they could not carry out such a herculean task. At least with the current level of training.

Another interesting point made by Price is that Carr's "... objectivity is relative and functional, in effect an extension of his concept of significance" (1963, 140). My reading of Carr is the same but Price interprets it as being static, i.e., every epoch has its own "objectivity" about a historical event. I read it differently. Carr's objectivity is dynamic. Objectivity accumulates and the upper limit is total objectivity as shown in the previous chapter.

I found the same as Price that, "Everything that Carr does not like in historiography is blamed upon the temporal-cultural-social limitations of historians" (1963, 141). As mentioned, Carr did not do a favor to history or historians. And Price when he concluded that, "But Carr apparently finds it hard to imagine in an historian that purely intellectual commitment that one would take for granted in a mathematician," is right (1963, 142). And this is, I think, the anti-historian part of Carr's work. Mathematicians work with the same epistemology (method of scientific analysis), but face different epistemological constraints than historians. Thus, it may appear that historians are different in their epistemology but they

are not. Carr looked at appearances and not at the hidden constraints that compel all scientists.

Price rightly pointed out the confusion Carr has generated with his explanation of history as a science. Carr's answer: "Yes, but ..." or "No, but ..." satisfies nobody. It does not serve historians and history. Nobody questions that economic history is a science, and this implies that history is a science with all its problems and constraints. It is up to historians to work towards a more "scientification" of history science.

Elton on Carr's 'What is History?'

I have already mentioned in the previous chapter that Evans (1997) considered Carr (1961) and Elton (1967) as producing two books which were the pillars of historiography in the second half of the twentieth century. Evans gave us many critical thoughts on Carr's philosophy of history. A summary of these comments is discussed in this section.

Elton discussed the different kinds of history. On p. 12 he stated that, "Thucydides, for instance, opened the story of debates among historians by questioning the possibility of any history except contemporary history." And using Carr as an example, Elton (1967, 13) stated "In truth, historians, like other people, tend to judge their world from their own experiences and practice, and it is distressing to see how narrow in their sympathies even eminent men can be. E. H. Carr, for instance, has spent a great part of his life writing the history of Russia in the twentieth century; fundamentally, he has

worked on a narrative account in very recent history. But does this entitle him to judge the state of our knowledge of fifth-century Greece from the fifty-year-old memories of an Oxford undergraduate, or to write off a great part of medieval studies because he mistakenly thinks that the bulk of evidence surviving from the middle ages was produced by monastic chroniclers?"

And further Elton (1967, 14-15) provided an explanation "The reason for Mr Carr's somewhat philistine judgment is obvious enough: he himself has specialized in the production of narrative history on the grand scale. ... the more obvious and more common danger is that exemplified by Mr Carr: to write off certain forms of historical study and to reserve approval for those to which one happens to incline oneself."

Here it is not only subjectivism or relativism but ignorance and bias. Furthermore, Elton accused Carr for separating the kind of research as being historical and unhistorical. I have already mentioned all facts and data and that all research is history and must be included in the accumulated knowledge of history. If it is new, they add. If they are not new, they still can be useful for teaching history. Carr had a different opinion and Elton (1967, 20) scorned it: "It may be objected that in confining distinctions between historians to this single point I have ignored too much, and in particular that I have wilfully misunderstood the distinction between history and compilation which Mr Carr made in his comment on Mommsen. Is all work in history to be judged only by the amateur or professional status of the historian? Are there no basic differences in the kind of work attempted? Is the editing of a

chronicle on a level with the writing of an imaginative narrative, the analysis of an institution equal to the unravelling of social relationships? Answers to these questions will depend on the ground upon which the enquirer takes his stand. This present enquiry turns on the intellectual worth of historical studies, and from that point of view there are no differences that do not arise from the historian's basic attitude to his materials. An honest professional job of any kind deserves equal respect; an honest amateur job merits a different and less searching appraisal. We hear today a good deal about the absurdities of minute research, especially in Ph.D. theses.”

Elton (1967, 22) wrote: “... let Mr Carr try his hand at compiling trade statistics for English cloth exports in the sixteenth century and see how far he can get without a full use of a true professional equipment. And in applying that equipment to the establishing and recording of reliable figures, he would be writing history.”

This a very important issue. Throughout this monograph I made the same comments. It is historians’ task to produce facts and data, and here Elton gave an economic example. I do not know the reason but I would like to interpret that Elton understood the importance and the objectivity of historical economic statistics. His collaboration with Fogel might be the reason. Compiling economic data and facts of the past is a tedious job and commands high value and good salaries for historians, I must add.

Elton continued (1967, 39-40): “Is there a purpose in history? Mr Carr grows very scornful at the expense of an honest man like

H. A. L. Fisher, who in a famous sentence explained that he could see none. Mr Carr is surely right to denounce the theory of the pure accident, the theory that history is just one damn thing after another. Though in a sense, of course, the sequence of events is just that, it becomes history only when marshalled by the interpretative human intelligence. This is not to overlook the importance of accidents, which do happen (though Mr Carr would seem to suppose that they can be written out of history), but to stress that in the understanding of the past the accident is just another point to be explained, considered and accommodated. Accidents may affect the course of events, but the historian, in his analysis, must not be accident prone. No historian, including Fisher, has in fact ever treated his subject as though it were entirely without meaning; if he had, he would have been unable to write. What is really at issue is whether one may discern a larger purpose, whether things produce effects that are continuous and, up to a point, predictable.”

Elton should have been clearer in his comments on Carr. I gave my own interpretation of Carr's idea on accidents and I think his distinction between short- and long-term impacts is very important and makes good statistical sense when accidents are treated as the error term in a regression analysis.

Elton raised another criticism is general to any subjective interpretation of the past. Are any “objective” criteria which can judge Carr's interpretations of the past superior? Elton (1967, 45) wrote: “In Mr Carr's attitude to the Russian Revolution ... there is not only doctrine but also much sound historical learning” where he

erred is in his "... propaganda, ... insistence that only" his "...kind of interpretation will do."

This is the general problem of subjectivity: its meaningfulness depends on the existence of objective criteria, and once found, ceases to be subjective. Thus, only meaningless subjectivity can exist. In all sciences, *meaningless* implies uselessness, and therefore a waste of researchers' time and efforts.

My criticism of Carr's treatment of facts and facts of history seems in accordance with Elton's point of view on this issue. Elton wrote (1967, 56): "This is really an extraordinary way of looking at history; worse, it is an extraordinarily arrogant attitude both to the past and to the place of the historian in studying it. A man was kicked to death in 1850: that is a fact, an event, which took place and which nothing now can either make or unmake. It is quite immaterial whether the fact is known to an historian or used by him in analysing a problem. If the event were unknowable—if no evidence of it had survived at all it would certainly be neither fact about the past nor historical fact—it would have ceased to exist and that piece of potential history would never have materialized—but it would still, of course, have occurred, independent of any historian. However, the event can be known, and that is all that is required to make it a 'fact of history'. Interpretation, or general acceptance of a thesis, has nothing whatsoever to do with its independent existence. The point matters so much because Mr Carr, and others who like him think that history is what historians write, not what happened, come dangerously close to suggesting either that it does not much matter what one says because (interpretation

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being everything) there are always several reasonably convincing interpretations of any given set of events, or that history is altogether unknowable, being merely what happens to be said by a given historian at a given moment.”

And Elton continued (1967, 57): “Mr Carr's own work, and his reaction to criticism of it, prove conclusively that he does not in fact hold so whimsical a view of his profession. Yet his curious distinction between facts of the past and facts of history betrays two common failings: a lack of humility in the face of the past, and a confusion between the event and the meaning it acquires in the reconstruction attempted by the historian.”

My note here is that we know that many facts existed in the past that we do not know. They are still facts. Historians' task is to discover these facts, making as all sciences do, some reasonable assumptions. For example, if we assume that the human race has a continuous existence since they first appeared on earth (Hesiod made a different assumption, i.e., a prior human race disappeared completely and a new one was created from scratch on earth), then knowing the current number of people and making various assumptions about its growth (assuming a long term –more than a millennium-- Euclidean growth), I can create (simulate) the facts of the past numbers of population. They are objective facts of the past.

Evans on Carr's 'What is History?'

Evans' book is another important book on the philosophy of history, most probably the last good book published in the previous

century. I have already mentioned Evans' position on Carr's book in chapter one. Actually, this is the reason why I have chosen to shape up my old notes on Carr's book. Evans told me that Carr's book had a great demand, and as a good economist, I chose to satisfy this demand by writing an essay on Carr's book.

This section presents briefly what Evans had to say about Carr's book. I selected those comments which I think relate to what I emphasized in this monograph. Elton's book is a defence against the attacks of postmodernism. I ignore it because I do not take these attacks seriously. The enemy is inside and not outside.

I agree with Evans (1997, 7) that, "... the theory and history of history have become a separate branch of learning in itself since Carr and Elton wrote, and in the process, it has developed its own concepts and its own jargon, which have made it often rather impenetrable to outsiders". He credited this, and rightly so, to both Carr and Elton. I think their works are complementary.

Chapter two of Evans' book is devoted to history, science and morality which is the same as in Carr's book. He started by praising Carr but he added (1997, 40), "... Carr would have been more correct in concluding that in no subject could there be an entirely clear separation between the researcher and the object of research."

I do not understand why historians feel obliged to apologize about the distinction between the subject and the object of their scientific inquiry. My interpretation of a historical fact may be incorrect, biased and subjective, but my knowledge, based on the law of large numbers, is always objective in the sense that it is separated from the subject. Me, the subject, studies the Battle of

Marathon. I read all interpretations. This is my objective knowledge of the Battle of Marathon. Then, I decide whether I have to offer something new using my own subjective interpretation of either the Battle itself, or of the interpretations of it offered by other scholars. Then, I add to new knowledge, if it is new, and this accumulated knowledge follows its own historical trajectory. This is objective history. It might not be true, but it is not subjective. It might not be true because we do not know all the facts. It is not a matter of subjective or objective interpretation, but the lack of it as I have demonstrated in previous chapters.

On the issue of moral judgements, an issue which I did not discuss, because I thought that Carr was on the right side of history. This is mentioned by Evans as well. On p. 42 he said, "Another reason for distinguishing between history and science is the argument that the former must necessarily involve an element of moral judgment, while the latter does not. E. H. Carr met this assertion with a flat denial. Historians, according to Carr, should not judge the past in moral terms; their purpose was rather to understand how the past had contributed to human progress. It was pointless, for example, to condemn slavery in the ancient world as immoral; the point was to understand how it came about, how it functioned, and why it declined, opening the way to another form of social organization."

However, I should make a comment. I have found the distinction between "ought" and "is" very useful; between value judgments (the deontology) and non-value judgement (the ontology). This issue has been thoroughly discussed in economics

and the level of argumentation has reached a satisfactory level with important practical implications. As an economist, I can tell what “is” and what can happen especially in policy issues. Then, it is up to society and their representatives to make a value judgement and decide on a specific course of action. I have in mind the trade-off between inflation and unemployment.

Evans continued in discussing Carr’s argument that history is not a science because it cannot make predictions such as predicting a revolution. I think this specific example has been dealt with adequately by the burgeoning theoretical and empirical literature on wars, civil wars, and armed revolutions as discussed in chapter five in this essay. I think Evans should have referred to this literature.

Evans has a long passage on historical facts criticizing, correctly, Carr’s views on this subject. Evans (1997, 66) wrote that, “There is a semantic confusion here which has caused endless trouble ever since Carr fell into it, and it needs clearing up before the discussion can proceed. A historical fact is something that happened in history and can be verified as such through the traces history has left behind. 'Whether or not a historian has actually carried out the act of verification is irrelevant to its factuality; it really is there entirely independent of the historian. This is why historians commonly speak of "discovering" facts about the past, for instance, in coming across a source which tells them of this previously unknown incident at the Stalybridge Wakes. Where theory and interpretation come in is where facts are converted into evidence (that is, facts used in support of an argument), and here theory and interpretation do indeed play a constitutive role. For

historians are seldom, if ever, interested in discrete facts entirely for their own sake; they have almost always been concerned with what Ranke called the "interconnectedness" of these facts. Thus the fact of the gingerbread salesman's death can be used as evidence in a number of different ways, according to the historian's purpose: as an aspect of crowd behavior in this period, for example, as part of a study of food supplies, as an example of festivals and leisure pursuits, as an element in a history of the Manchester area, and so on. Nevertheless, while it is multifaceted as evidence, the gingerbread salesman's death is singular as fact. Facts thus precede interpretation conceptually, while interpretation precedes evidence."

I totally agree with Evans and his writing clarifies the confusion of Carr's treatment of facts. All along in this essay I was struggling to state the same thing, i.e., facts have their own independent existence.

Evans in chapter five looks at causality in history. This chapter also starts with Carr's book. Evans correctly pointed that this issue stumbles on subjectivism and interpretation. Evans (1997, 114) stated that, "... Carr went on to argue that causality is a matter of interpretation and therefore inevitably bound up with value judgment. History must serve the present, and so, too, must our view of the causes of historical events." I have already provided a critical and extended comment on this issue in the previous chapter. Causality is a statistical issue and not a matter of interpretation.

Evans (1997, 146-148) discussed the question 'What is history?'. He stated that Carr's answer "... was both clear and coherent and applied to all kinds of Society and Individuals. ... A

quarter of a century later, when the editor of the magazine *History Today* came to ask the same question of a number of its contributors ... she found it impossible to elicit a single answer. ... Carr deplored the fragmentation of knowledge ... ascribed the growth of specialization to a failure to distinguish between what was important and what was not in the past, yet his own ideas of what was important were in fact quite narrow ... and excluded the history of the vast majority of the human race throughout recorded time. It may not have been surprising therefore that he dismissed as unimportant the new wave of social historical studies which was just making its presence felt as he was writing at the beginning of the 1960s. ... The historical profession, and with it the generation and further specialization of historical knowledge, have undergone a vast expansion since the early 1960s, when Carr was writing.”

In chapter eight, Evans looked at objectivity and he started with comments on Carr’s approach. The argument first examined the historian and then his interpretation is raised as I did in this monograph as well. This issue then relates to progress. Evans (1997, 198) concluded that “Both Carr’s and Elton’s definitions of objectivity are clearly unsatisfactory as they stand.”

It is obvious why Carr’s book received such attention. Evans devoted all of his analysis in defence of history in presenting long passages from Carr’s book. This is an objective historical fact.

Last but not Least

My last words are in order here. I like and respect Carr's book. I do not accept his arguments. I think he was incorrect in treating the issue of facts. All other arguments are conditioned by his wrong position on the non-existence of independent, and therefore objective, facts of the past. It is this error which did not permit him to go one step forward and provide a "total history" or a "general history."

The book's contribution is that a good and non-biased historian would see very clearly that Carr posed his narrative very eloquently, but it is not persuasive. It is a beautiful story, and as such belongs to history studies but it did not achieve its objective of rendering history as non-objective. On the contrary, if someone as eloquent as Carr cannot do, then one wonders who could do. The reason is simple and a good answer to Carr's question "What is History?". History is a very serious hard science and Carr did not take it as much serious as it deserves.

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