FROM A BOOKSHOP IN RIGA:
EDWARD HALLETT CARR'S DEBT TO FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY
by
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ABSTRACT

This thesis uncovers and analyzes E.H. Carr's debt to the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky. Carr's first book, *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881* (1931), is shown to be a crucial primer to Carr's later and most enduring books on international politics and the nature of history, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (1939) and *What is History?* (1962). Through Dostoevsky, Carr came to embrace the 'Russian Mind' as the means to a radical critique of Western Europe's 'narrow rationalism' in the years following the First World War, and he made the analyses and ideals he derived from Dostoevsky the cornerstones of his prescriptions for international politics and historiography. Only through *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881* can we appreciate the basis for and significance of Carr's hypotheses about realism, progress, international morality, hegemony, and tragedy. Understanding Carr's debt to Dostoevsky reveals Carr's over-project: an ethical revolution in international affairs and the pragmatic reorientation of Victorian concepts to serve the needs of the twentieth century.

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for my Grandmothers, Marie Sunstrum and Beverly Lauer

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From a Bookshop in Riga:

An Introduction

Sometime in the latter half of the 1920s, a young, bored, British diplomat was wandering, window-shopping perhaps, along the streets of the Baltic capital Riga.¹ Perhaps it was February and the storefronts would not reveal their holdings so easily behind thick ice and frost. Or maybe it was June and our diplomat was looking forward to watching the half-set sun slowly circle back over the course of a coral night to its eastern horizon. Perhaps he is wandering late, to avoid the opera, to avoid another dignified gathering of the politely self-important.

Along a narrow side-street our diplomat turns into one of the bookstores he has visited many times since arriving in Latvia. Perhaps the stacks he is drawn to this evening are up a narrow staircase that begins just inside the door. He climbs the steps with his body turned slightly outwards towards the banister; the steps too steep and narrow to face straight-on. Upstairs, one spine catches his eye. Our diplomat pulls it from the shelf; an omnibus of works by Fyodor Dostoevsky. He has heard the name before, of course. He glances down the titles. *Memoirs from Underground*. *The Idiot*. *The Brothers Karamazov*. He opens it at random and begins to read,

the first category is always the man of the present, the second the man of the future. The first preserve the world and people in it, the second move the world and lead it to its goal. Each class has an equal right to exist. In fact, all have equal rights with me - and vive la guerre éternelle - till the New Jerusalem, of course!

-Raskolnikov, *Crime and Punishment*

¹ Fictionalized from Carr's 'An Autobiography', in Michael Cox (ed.) *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*, p.xvi.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that Edward Hallett Carr's first published book, *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*, is an essential primer to his later and most enduring works on international politics and the nature of history, *The Twenty Years' Crisis: 1919-1939* and *What is History?* As a primer, *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881* introduces us to themes that remained central to Carr's particular approach to problems of knowledge, method, and morality. Engaging with Dostoevsky, Carr began to generate a durable and vital framework, amenable to his own creativity and applicable to literature, politics, and history. An implicit purpose of this thesis is to encourage academics to engage other literary figures, perhaps Joseph Conrad² or John le Carré, for fresh perspectives on the dilemmas of social life.

2 Robert Kaplan writes: '...our elites *just don't get it*. The problem is further compounded by the separation of literature from history and of both from political science in this age of academic specialization, creating policy makers ignorant of the very books that explain places like Haiti and Somalia far better than any social science "methodology." While the usefulness of history is accepted and needs no elaboration, the usefulness of literature is less so among policy elites, even as Marco Diani...writes that, "The anguish of any society can be found in its literature, often earlier and more clearly revealed than in its social sciences." That is because the future lies inside the silences, inside the very uncomfortably sensitive issues that people are afraid to discuss at dinner parties for fear of what others might think of them. And yet it is a principal function of social science to accumulate information precisely on what people are not afraid to talk about in front of a researcher's tape recorder (which is also why conventional journalism is often the most deceptive form of reporting on a society). Literature, alas, may be the only salvation for the policy elite, because in the guise of fiction a writer can more easily tell the truth. And in literature's vast canon there is no book of which I am aware that both defines and dissects the problems with the world just beyond our own as well as Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard*'; Robert Kaplan, 'Conrad's *Nostromo* and the Third World', *The Coming Anarchy*, pp.158-159. Regarding Conrad's insights into the politics of the early twentieth century, Paul Johnson writes: 'From the perspective of sixty years later it must be said that Conrad is the only substantial writer of the time whose vision remains clear and true in every particular. He dismissed Marxism as malevolent nonsense, certain to generate monstrous tyranny; Freud's ideas were nothing more than a "kind of magic show." The war had demonstrated human frailty but

Departure Points

Since 1998, there have been at least six large-scale publications that deal exclusively with Carr,³ as well as a vast number of articles in the past half-century.⁴ However, there has not yet been an analysis of the fundamental influence Dostoevsky had on Carr. This thesis responds to what is a clear need for an appraisal of Carr's debt to Dostoevsky. Robert Cox hints at his estimation of Dostoevsky's centrality in the work of Carr and urges that Carr be approached through Dostoevsky,⁵ but as yet there have been no studies of this debt. Jonathan Haslam, Carr's biographer asserts that the 'greatest impact' that Dostoevsky made on Carr was in his *dilemmas* - ethical, philosophical, and psychological.⁶ But Haslam does not provide any account of this impact or the content of these dilemmas. This thesis will supply this account and show that by a careful, synoptic reading of *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, and *What is History?*, it is possible to unearth the 'shattering impact' of Dostoevsky on Carr, which Haslam states cannot be gleaned from a reading of *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881* alone. This thesis is also a first contribution to answering Charles Jones' speculation in his *A Duty To Lie* that, 'the

otherwise would resolve nothing, generate nothing. Giant plans of reform, panaceas, all "solutions", were illusory...At the onset of the war, Conrad's scepticism had been rare in the Anglo-Saxon world. *The war itself was seen by some as a form of progress*, H.G. Wells marking its declaration with a catchy volume entitled *The War That Will End War*.' Paul Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp.12-13. (italics added)

3 These include: David Cannadine (ed.), *What is History Now?*; the re-issue of Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, Michael Cox (ed.), which includes over 90 pages of new introductory material; Michael Cox (ed.), *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*; Tim Dunne, Michael Cox, Ken Booth (eds.), *The Eighty Years Crisis: International Relations 1919-1999*; Jonathan Haslam, *The Vices of Integrity: E.H. Carr, 1892-1982*; and, Charles Jones, *E.H. Carr and International Relations*.

4 See 'A Guide to the Secondary Literature on E.H. Carr' in Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, Michael Cox (ed.), pp.lxiv-lxxi.

5 Robert Cox, 'Influences and Commitments', *Approaches to World Order*; and Cox's 'Review of E.H. Carr: A Critical Reappraisal', in *International Affairs*, October 2000.

6 Haslam, *The Vices of Integrity*, p.44.

key to Carr's view of international relations may be found as much in the reader of Dostoevsky, Herzen, Marx, and Bakunin as in the professional diplomat, and rather more in the biographer than the later academic historian',⁷ and in the 'engagement [with] what happens at the end of the romantic conversation'.⁸ This thesis is a first step towards cutting the 'key' to Carr's view.

On the theme of romanticism, Fred Halliday's chapter 'Reason and Romance: the Place of Revolution in the Works of E.H. Carr'⁹ is another departure point for this thesis. I share the basic objective of Halliday's analysis, but differ on content. Like this thesis, Halliday is concerned with the weave of romantic themes through Carr's work. However, Halliday chooses revolution as his central category of analysis, whereas I will use tragedy and progress. This thesis will implicitly show that Halliday's incredulity that Carr's view of the 'romance of revolution' could be held by 'the same man who wrote *The Twenty Years' Crisis*', stems from a mistaken sense of Carr's consistency.¹⁰

The use I make of Carr's critics will superficially contribute to the work done by Peter Wilson.¹¹ I suggest that Carr could have responded, and if not confound his critics, at least force them to engage with him at a higher level, had he revealed the Dostoevskian

7 Charles Jones, *A Duty to Lie*, p.161.

8 Charles Jones, *A Duty to Lie*, p.163.

9 Fred Halliday, 'Reason and Romance: the Place of Revolution in the Works of E.H. Carr', in Michael Cox (ed.), *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*.

10 Halliday, 'Reason and Romance', p.264. Halliday identifies two passages from Carr that best capture this romance: The opening of the second chapter of *The Romantic Exiles* and the first sentence in Carr's introduction to his edited edition of *The ABCs of Communism*.

11 Peter Wilson, 'The Myth of "The First Great Debate"', *Review of International Studies*, (1998), 24, pp.1-15; and 'Carr and his Early Critics: Responses to *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, 1939-46', in Michael Cox (ed.) *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*, pp.165-197.

lineage of his thought. This thesis, however, leaves unanswered the important question of why did Carr not make this response. I find this an intriguing biographical question.

Statement of Thesis

In this thesis I will argue and demonstrate that Carr, in *The Twenty Years' Crisis: 1919-1939* and *What is History?*, organized his thought around an interpretation of what he called in *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881* the central ethical and metaphysical problem, that is, the relation of the ego to its environment, of the individual to society. Carr interprets this problem according to the dualism of determinism and freedom. This, I suggest, is the central dualism in Carr's work, fundamental to the other dualisms more commonly identified in Carr's work such as power and morality, or reality and utopia. I will demonstrate that *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881* reveals the fundamental importance of this dualism in Carr's work which, in turn, reveals a unique, profound, and previously hidden coherence and meaning in Carr's work.

Structure of Thesis

Chapter One, 'Finding the Muse', introduces Carr's engagement with Dostoevsky as found in *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*. This chapter will show how Carr's disillusioned Victorian mind embraced the novelty of Dostoevsky. It will also show how Carr understood what he called the 'Russian Mind', as well as introduce the significance of Raskolnikov, dualism, and Dostoevsky's counter-rationalist project. This chapter sets the stage to show that by recognizing *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881* as a crucial primer to Carr's

later works, we can navigate Carr's thought more accurately and avoid much superficial fog.

Chapter Two, 'Ethics of Dissatisfaction', prepares the concepts found in Chapter One for their use in the remainder of the thesis. This chapter illustrates how Carr linked together the 'Russian Mind' with a motif of movement and the 'central problem of ethics' in a way that served his particular normative project. This chapter will also introduce the concepts of 'tragedy' and 'progress', both of which are at the core of this thesis.

Chapter Three, 'The Structure of Tragedy', is essentially an interpretation of *The Twenty Years' Crisis* according to Carr's conception of 'tragedy'. This chapter shows the relationship between Carr's 'central ethical problem' and concepts such as realism, freedom, suffering and transcendence. It also shows how Carr's specific prescription for international politics derived to a large degree from Dostoevskian themes.

Chapter Four, 'To Build and Destroy', deals with that last moment of tragedy: transcendence. This chapter shows how Carr conceived 'progress' and how he saw man overcoming the disillusionment and hopelessness that plagued the intellectual and political environment of his time.

The conclusion reiterates the conclusions of the thesis through a contrast with some of Carr's early critics, it contributes to the question of whether Carr was a 'realist', and suggests directions for further study.

Other Influences

Something I read before I began this thesis, and which remained in my memory, now seems significant, if only as an anecdote which hints at Dostoevsky's wider currency

among an earlier generation of political scholars. In an article on Samuel Huntington, Henry Kissinger is quoted describing their shared PhD supervisor, William Yandell Elliott:

"Elliott was no great theorist," Kissinger [said], "but a good teacher is someone who sees talent in you that you didn't know you had. After I had written a paper on Kant, Elliott told me, 'You have a fine mind, but now you have to read novelists, like Dostoevsky.' And so I read Dostoevsky. This is how he helped his students grow."¹²

Also, 'tragedy' has been, and remains, a much used concept for engaging political issues. Arnold Wolfers is credited with the articulation of the modern and most common sense of the term. In his *Discords and Collaboration* he juxtaposes evil against tragedy as counterparts to the human quest for power and security.¹³ But Wolfers' is a different tragedy than Carr's. For Wolfers, tragedy in human life is the consequence of forces rushing at each other silently, without forewarning to those actors exposed on stage, and all too obvious to those watching from the orchestra. Two recent publications adopt this ironic conception of tragedy: John Mearsheimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, and Michael Spirtas' essay 'A House Divided: Tragedy and Evil in Realist Theory'.¹⁴ These authors exemplify the positive and productive presence of the concept of tragedy in the international politics literature, but they also provide a contrast to the tragedy examined in this thesis.

In his article 'Euphorias of Hatred', Robert Kaplan argues that '[i]f realism is to be truly realistic, it must acknowledge human beings' romantic and heroic impulses, in all

12 Robert Kaplan, 'Looking the World in the Eye', *The Atlantic Monthly*, December 2001, p.72.

13 See Arnold Wolfers', 'The Pole of Power and the Pole of Indifference', *Discord and Collaboration*, chp.6.

14 Spirtas' essay appears in Benjamin Frankel's (ed.), *Realism: Restatements and Renewal*, pp.405-423.

their healthy and perverse forms'.¹⁵ This, Kaplan argues, is best accomplished through an appreciation of the art of tragedy, which 'shows that human feelings are far too intense and varied to be contained by the narrow strictures of rational self-interest. Explosions of passion - romantic and destructive, cruel and self-sacrificing, among nations as among individuals - not only are to be expected but are central to the human spirit.'¹⁶ He quotes the haunting idea that 'tragedy is the beauty of intolerable truths.'¹⁷ Kaplan makes these arguments in the context of a commentary on the short story *Taras Bulba* by Nikolai Gogol, who was, incidentally, Dostoevsky's formative influence.¹⁸ Kaplan says that through the study of works such as *Taras Bulba* students of international politics will be better *emotionally* and *imaginatively* educated so as to understand the 'raw, even delusional, passion' which animates so much of international politics at the start of the twenty-first century. I intend this thesis to contribute to Kaplan's project. This thesis seeks the type of understanding Kaplan calls for, and it is with this sense of tragedy, as opposed to Wolfers' or Mearsheimer's, that this thesis is aligned.

And finally, Martin Wight, in his *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, recommends a particular course of apprenticeship to would-be students of international politics. An approach 'more akin to literary criticism' than it is to 'scientific analysis', this

15 Robert Kaplan, 'Euphorias of Hatred', *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 2003. pp.44-45.

16 Robert Kaplan, 'Euphorias of Hatred'.

17 Robert Kaplan, 'Euphorias of Hatred'. Here Kaplan is quoting Edith Hamilton. This thesis will use Hamilton's thoughts on tragedy to more fully draw out its significance. There is as well an incidental yet enthralling resonance between Hamilton's 'Tragedy is the beauty of intolerable truths', and Dmitri Karamazov's utterance in *The Brothers Karamazov*: 'Beauty is not only a terrible thing, it is a mysterious thing. There God and the devil strive for mastery, and the battleground is the heart of men.' Quoted by Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.229.

18 Carr, *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*, p.22. The significance of Gogol for subsequent Russian literature is summed when Carr writes: 'It was currently said that all Russian writers of fiction out of the [1840s], "came out of Gogol's *Cloak*.'" Ibid., p.32.

course requires 'developing a sensitive awareness of the intractability of all political situations, and the moral quandary in which all statecraft operates. It requires a sympathetic perception which offers an insight into moral tensions, and it is to be obtained by cultivating the acquaintance of politicians and statesmen...' ¹⁹ Wight directs would-be apprentices to, among others, Thucydides, Hardy, Swift, Tolstoy, Conrad, Koestler, Orwell, and Dostoevsky. I write in this spirit of apprenticeship.

Commitments and Limitations

This thesis is a limited study. First, and most obviously, this thesis deals primarily with only three of Carr's texts, a fraction of his total output, although at times, references will be made to, and evidence drawn from, some of his other works. Further, this thesis deals with a specific thread which runs through these texts. To deny Carr major influences other than Dostoevsky would be ridiculous; Marx, Mannheim, Niebuhr, Herzen, Bakunin, and Nietzsche all have their place and deserve their own study. This thesis does not attempt to supplant Dostoevsky for these influences. And, it must be made clear that it is Carr's *own* interpretation of Dostoevsky that is dealt with here; this thesis does not interpret Dostoevsky outside of Carr's engagement.

This thesis, although it deals with a major figure in the academic discipline International Relations, does not exclusively address itself to an International Relations audience. It is interdisciplinary in scope and its findings are not easily rendered to one discipline or another. It is, simply put, an analysis of how a nineteenth-century Russian

19 Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, p.258.

novelist influenced a twentieth-century British historian; an analysis with implications for a number of disciplines such as literary studies, intellectual history, and political theory.

I encourage readers to dwell for a moment over the many substantive footnotes I have placed throughout the text. As some material may be unfamiliar to the reader, I have used the footnotes to provide context that I thought would be helpful, along with some fun and speculation, while attempting to keep the main argument to as tight a focus as possible.

Chapter One:

Finding the Muse

E.H. Carr's first book, *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*, was a biography of the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky. It narrates the life of the Russian novelist, his formative experiences with radicalism, his near execution, his exile to Omsk, his epilepsy, his marriages, his gambling, and his debt. Carr's biography of Dostoevsky also excavates and interprets the sources and ideas that informed Dostoevsky's major novels, devoting a third of the biography to the examination of Dostoevsky's most significant novels according to their central philosophical or narrative problems. For example, *Crime and Punishment* is analysed in a chapter titled 'The Ethical Problem', and *The Idiot* in a chapter titled 'The Ethical Ideal'. Jonathan Haslam has argued that *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881* does not show the full impact Dostoevsky had on Carr.²⁰ This is only superficially true. We can, through Carr's control of the biographical and critical material, begin to hear a clear voice in the biography, a voice full of appreciation for the novelty and distinctiveness of Dostoevsky's Russian thought, especially as it compared to the western European tradition against which Carr was reacting. Following his own advice to 'listen out for the buzzing',²¹ we can hear in Carr's later books *The Twenty Years' Crisis* and *What is History?* this same voice rendering clearly Dostoevsky's influence.

This chapter will introduce Carr's encounter with Dostoevsky and will emphasize four important aspects of Carr's 'debt' to Dostoevsky: the 'Russian Mind'; a non-liberal

20 Jonathan Haslam, *The Vices of Integrity*, p.44.

21 'When you read a work of history, always listen out for the buzzing. If you can detect none, either you are tone deaf or your historian is a dull dog...By and large, the historian will get the kind of facts he wants.' Carr, *What is History?*, p.18.

conception of human nature; the central significance of the relationship between the ego and society; and the importance of dualism in human and social affairs.

The Russian Mind

In his preface to Carr's *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*, the Russian émigré and literary figure, D.S. Mirsky, wrote:

I am far from sharing all the judgements of Mr. Carr, far indeed from sharing his general point of view. I find little to attract me in either Prince Myshkin or in Dmitri Karamazov, I do not know what spiritual values transcending human significance are, and I deplore Mr. Carr's indulging in generalisations on the Russian mind and character, which often sound as if he actually believed in the existence of such a thing as an abstract Russian divorced from circumstances of time and class.²²

From the outset, then, Carr's insights were controversial, even to critics otherwise friendly to his cause.²³ What is most significant about this passage is that it is the first, and I would say an accidental, identification of both the mentality and the motif that this chapter seeks to identify. By 'accidental' I mean that Mirsky did not, and probably could not have thought that there was any durability to Carr's idiosyncratic views, or any significance to them other than being simply wrong. However, those things which Mirsky found so unacceptable happen to be a highly accurate itemization of what Carr would carry from writing Dostoevsky's biography and apply to his own analysis of politics and history, namely, the 'Russian Mind', transcendent movement, and the idea of

22 Dimitry Svyatopolk Mirsky, Preface to first edition of Carr's *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*, omitted from the 1962 edition.

23 In the paragraph immediately following the passage quoted above, Mirsky writes, 'On the other side there are many things in the book that seem to me wholly admirable, so many in fact that I cannot speak of them in any detail.' See Ibid.

transformative character. The irony of Mirsky's critique may be the most enduring aspect of his preface.

When posted to the Latvian capital of Riga from 1925 until the middle of 1929 as the Second Secretary to the British Legation, Carr began to learn Russian.²⁴ Despite the importance of Riga as the hub of diplomatic and intelligence activity directed at Russia during this time, Carr writes that '[p]robably the main significance for me of my stay in Riga was that, having light official duties and time to spare, I began to read a lot of Russian nineteenth-century literature. The authors who influenced me most deeply were (in that order) Dostoevsky and Herzen'.²⁵ Carr describes the watershed impact these writers had on his political worldview:

I now perceived for the first time that the liberal moralistic ideology in which I had been brought up was not, as I had always assumed, an Absolute taken for granted by the modern world, but was sharply and convincingly attacked by very intelligent people living outside the charmed circle, who looked at the world through very different eyes.²⁶

Facilitated by his growing contempt for Western society,²⁷ Carr's 'secure'²⁸ and insular Victorian upbringing seems to have amplified the novelty and alien tenor of this Russian attack on Western ideals. From then on, Carr would consistently contrast the importance

24 Cox (ed.), 'Appendix 1', *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*, p.339.

25 Carr, 'An Autobiography', in Michael Cox (ed.), *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*, p.xvi. Carr also describes this period as the 'easiest and most carefree of [his] life.' Ibid.

26 Carr, 'An Autobiography', p.xvi.

27 Regarding the Bolshevik revolution: 'But I certainly regarded the western reaction to it as narrow, blind and stupid.', Carr, 'An Autobiography', p.xv; regarding his ideological development: 'My progress during the next few years was haphazard, but always towards more sweeping criticism of western liberalism.', Ibid, p.xvii; regarding his biographical interests: 'After exhausting Dostoevsky and Herzen (i.e. writing books about them), I became fascinated by Bakunin, probably as the figure embodying the most total rejection of western society.' Ibid.

28 "'Security" is the first word which occurs to me if I look back on my youth - security not only in family relations, but in a sense scarcely imaginable since 1914.' The first line of Carr's 'An Autobiography', p.xiii.

of what he learned from these Russians against the backdrop of a rational European mindset, a contrast embodied in Carr's own experience:

This left me [Carr wrote] in a very confused state of mind: I reacted more sharply against the western ideology, but still from a point somehow within it. (Perhaps I've never quite escaped from this dilemma.) This confusion is very apparent in my first book, the biography of Dostoevsky. Mirsky wrote a preface which puzzled a lot of people, and was omitted from the later paperback edition, but which I now perfectly understand.²⁹

Demonstrating his own later claim that '[e]very biographer, however consciously and deliberately self-effacing, enters side by side with his subject into the biography which he writes,'³⁰ Carr's disillusionment with Western society, his discovery of an exotic and novel way of thinking, and the dichotomous tension he felt between his own Victorian sensibility and a perceived Russian vitality, resonated with him and thus became for Carr the most resonant themes of Dostoevsky's life and art. This resonance perhaps first suggested to Carr the significance of the 'Russian Mind', and counselled the indulgence Mirsky found so deplorable.³¹

29 Carr, 'An Autobiography', p.xvii.

30 Carr, *From Napoleon to Stalin*, p.184, cited from Jonathan Haslam's *The Vices of Integrity*, p.46.

31 Some details of Mirsky's life should be included, so as to alleviate the superficial treatment he has received here. He was born in 1890, was a Russian army officer in WWI and in the Russian Civil War. He emigrated to Western Europe, and later became an associate of the Bloomsbury group and a friend of the Woolfs. Originally an anti-Bolshevik he was later influenced by, among others, Maurice Dobb (who many believe recruited Kim Philby, Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess). Mirsky converted to Marxist-Leninism, returned to the Soviet Union in 1932, was arrested in 1937, and died in the Gulag in 1939. See G.S. Smith, *D.S. Mirsky: A Russian-English Life, 1890-1939*. Jonathan Haslam relates a haunting story that completely alters one's sense of the relationship between Carr and Mirsky. During a trip Carr made to Russia in 1937, Carr 'unexpectedly encountered' Mirsky outside the hotel where Carr was staying. As the Stalinist purges of all real or imagined opposition were well under way, Mirsky, not wanting to bring disaster upon himself by associating with a known British diplomat and potential spy, pretended not to know Carr and ignored him. Carr, ludicrously, continued to follow Mirsky along the street and insist on having a conversation. A conversation that Haslam speculates, 'may well have cost Mirsky his life'. Haslam, *Vices*, p.76. That Carr's

Carr's presentation of the Russian Mind, as found primarily³² in *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*, can be roughly divided into two hemispheres, the extrinsic and the intrinsic. Extrinsically, the Russian Mind corresponds to Carr's initial experience of the Russian way of thinking, which he found to be a radical critique of the common European outlook. It embodied, for Carr, a foreign and superior way of thinking, and seemed an ideal teacher and role model for the European Mind. Intrinsically, Carr understood the Russian Mind as uniquely able to handle a dichotomous, dualistic, and contradictory reality. This ability, as will be shown, had serious implications for 'European' ideas about ethics, politics, and historiography. Below is a brief indication, in Carr's own words, of how he understood this concept so germinal to his system of thought.

actions were ludicrous is emphasized more still by an article Carr wrote while on that visit to the Soviet Union. In it Carr writes, 'The silent reign of terror which set in after Kirov's murder at the end of 1934 shows no signs of abating. The net sweeps wide.' 'May in Moscow', *The Spectator*, 4 June 1937. Maurice Dobb's 'facilitation' of Mirsky's conversion to communism, along with Dobb's association with the 'Cambridge Spies', heightens my interest in Carr's relationship with Dobb: '...in addition to these, Mr. Maurice Dobb kindly lent me from his library some books which would otherwise have been inaccessible to me...' Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution: 1917-1923, Vol.2*, p.6. In another connection, Guy Burgess hired and supervised Carr when the latter participated in a discussion show on the BBC, although the two were not, apparently, on friendly terms. Haslam, *Vices*, pp.66-67. *The Mitrokhin Archives* seem to put to rest my speculation, although the following passage is a tantalizing read: 'Some of Besedovsky's fabrications, which included two books about Stalin by a non-existent nephew, were sophisticated enough to deceive even such a celebrated Soviet scholar as E.H. Carr, who in 1955 contributed a foreword to *Notes for a Journal*, fraudulently attributed to the former foreign commissar Maksim Litvinov.' *The Mitrokhin Archives*, p.602. Carr himself wrote about his growing awareness of real conditions inside the Soviet Union: 'I became very hostile to the USSR, and was never in the least attracted by the flood of recruits from the Left into the CPGB.' Carr, 'An Autobiography', p.xviii; but, 'Looking back on the 1930s, I came to feel that my preoccupation with the purges and brutalities of Stalinism had distorted my perspective...I became intensely interested in what the Russians had done, and how far this had any lessons for western society; and this tied up with my interest in the Marxist critique of capitalism and the bourgeoisie.' *Ibid.*, p.xx. 32 But also implied in a number of pieces that Carr published around the same time as he was writing *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*, often under the pseudonym John Hallett. These will be cited as appropriate. See bibliography for full details.

Extrinsically, Carr found the Russian Mind an effective guide in the resistance against a shrinking conception of human nature, something that had become, Carr felt, endemic to English, and Western European, thought:

We have [Carr writes] clothed and organized and confined ourselves in a multitude of traditions which have become part of our nature, and from which we cannot escape even if we would; and it was only in a country so unorganised as Russia, and so untrammelled by rationalising convention, that the nineteenth century could hope to recapture something of the starkness and the mobility of a more primitive epoch in the evolution of civilization.³³

Carr expanded this point and argued that Dostoevsky brought to life a 'naked, inchoate human nature', absent in Europe since Shakespeare wrote his tragedies.³⁴ Dostoevsky, in the nineteenth century, recalled a kindred cast '[conceiving] his characters in the same aspect, at once so profound and so incoherent.'³⁵ Dostoevsky denied Carr's European Mind its comfortable and constrained assumptions about human behaviour, such as those provided by rational liberalism, and confronted him with what rational liberal society could not acknowledge: the will to do evil, the urge to destroy, and the dominance of self-assertion over self-interest. Far from the world where man increasingly controls nature, and increasingly controls himself, and where the world's natural hostility is attenuated in degrees according to the application of reason, Dostoevsky's vision guides us through an untamed landscape, not yet colonized by reason, bringing us to what Carr describes as the edge of a 'small clearing in a forest of dark forces which man can neither control nor understand.'³⁶ Carr places Dostoevsky's worldview in an era 'before the orderly blight of rationalism had descended and before human nature had been obscured beneath a

33 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, pp.245-246.

34 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.245.

35 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.245.

36 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.246.

specious surface of coherence and consistency.³⁷ And finally, Carr notes, with sympathy, Dostoevsky's claim about the Russian "'all-man"...who alone is capable of understanding, assimilating and teaching the purely national and therefore narrow European...The Russian must not allow himself to be Europeanized; but he is, and must remain, the super-European and the teacher of Europe'.³⁸ Clearly, as he appraised Dostoevsky's vision, Carr acutely perceived limitations to his own Victorian, European orientation, and was dazzled by his idea of how the Russian Mind transcended these limitations.

The intrinsic value of the Russian Mind is its ability to handle a dichotomous, dualistic, and contradictory reality. In contrast to European rationalism, which Carr felt could not admit any contradiction or paradox into the heart of reality, the dualism apprehended by the Russian Mind was celebrated as a vital and *human* truth about reality. Duality expresses and indicates the wholeness of the human experience, and without it, any conception of human life is reduced to a caricature. Carr writes that 'as duality is necessary to the complete man, so does the Russian, in virtue of his duality, offer to the world a unique example of complete humanity and universal comprehension'.³⁹ Duality is not only a feature of human life, but it also connects man to the divine: 'The Russian who, by reason of the duality of his nature [Carr argues], had the experience of sin in his inmost soul, may fall behind the European in the mechanical practice of virtue; but he alone can know the meaning of true holiness'.⁴⁰ In both these passages Carr emphasizes not only the didactic value of the Russian Mind, but that its mastery of dualism constitutes its qualification to teach. Far from the Enlightenment assumption that man

37 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.245.

38 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.211.

39 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.204.

40 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.205.

was essentially good, and that reason could make him perfect, the Russian Mind which Carr presents to us is animated and made vital by the experience of sin and contradiction. Carr cites *The Brothers Karamazov* in which Dostoevsky has the prosecutor at Dmitri's trial describe the Russian soul as 'an astonishing blend of good and evil...capable of accommodating every possible contradiction and of contemplating simultaneously the two infinities, the infinity above us, the infinity of lofty ideals, and the infinity below, the infinity of the lowest and most repulsive degradation...' ⁴¹ And there is also, from *A Raw Youth*, the protagonist's reflection: 'I have always marvelled at this capacity of man - and it seems the Russian man *par excellence* - to nurture in his soul the loftiest ideal side by side with the meanest baseness, and both in perfect sincerity.' ⁴²

Understanding the sources and inspirations for Carr's Russian Mind is the first step in tracing the impact Dostoevsky had on Carr's subsequent system of thought. The idea that there was a particular mentality, or attitude, or an intuition that could stand as a teacher and role-model to Europeans becomes a central and consistent feature of Carr's system of thought.

Memoirs from Underground

Clearly inspired by the idea of a Russian Mind and its contrast to the failures he perceived in the rational European Mind, Carr introduces and analyses Dostoevsky's particular conception of human nature. The fundamental significance of what was, for Carr, a re-conception of human nature, was that it required a re-conception of how the individual, possessed of such a radical human nature, was to relate to the society around

41 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.204.

42 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.204.

him; Dostoevsky's human nature made necessary a new social ethic. It was Dostoevsky's *Memoirs from Underground*, published in 1864, that Carr found occupied a crucial position in Dostoevsky's social and human re-imagining.

Carr argues that, despite a harshness attenuated in his later works, 'in their queer way the Memoirs are as original as anything Dostoevsky ever wrote...and forms in a certain sense an introduction to the series of his great novels'.⁴³ The Memoirs 'mark...a stage in the growth of Dostoevsky's thought,'⁴⁴ where he begins to seed the clouds of his works' 'prevailing atmosphere', an atmosphere which Carr describes as a 'dark fatality', upon which Dostoevsky asserts the necessity of independent choice and free will, what Carr calls the hard core and 'burden' of his philosophy.⁴⁵ For Carr, this clash between fatalism and free will was to become fundamental.

Dostoevsky felt the most dangerous distortion of the relation between fatalism, or determinism, and free will was the rational ethic promoted by social philosophers such as J.S. Mill and his popularizers. Thus, Dostoevsky aimed *Memoirs* at a book titled *What is*

43 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.93.

44 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.94.

45 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.246. Compare this sentiment with Carr's understanding of Dostoevsky's addiction to roulette: 'The notion that he was pitting himself, in a trial of skill and endurance, against the blind forces of chance formed one of the irresistible attractions of Dostoevsky's gambling mania.' Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.127. Carr develops his analysis of Dostoevsky's understanding of the fertile relationship between fatalism and will as a type of *urge*: 'The principal, though often subconscious, impulse which drove Dostoevsky to the gaming rooms was not a reasoned calculation of financial profit, but a craving for strong emotions and abnormal excitements, perhaps even the longing, which he often attributes to his characters, to plumb the depths of moral degradation (Ibid., p.128); and, 'It was the drug which deadened his senses to the acute misery of his situation and kept his mind still alive and active; to renounce roulette was to renounce the one remaining hope without which existence became morally impossible.' (Ibid., pp.129-130). This last statement regarding the necessity of 'hope' for the moral possibility of existence may be productively compared with Prince Myshkin's arguments in *The Idiot* regarding the immorality of capital punishment. It is the elimination of hope that marks capital punishment as infinitely more immoral than a simple act of murder.

to be Done? by Nikolai Chernyshevsky, a 'picture of a Utopian state of society,'⁴⁶ published one year earlier. Carr summarizes *What is to be Done?* as a classic statement of rationalist ethics, where social happiness, an end which provides a basis for morality, is the product of the pursuit of rational self-interest.⁴⁷ Evil is simply an error, the product of faulty knowledge or reason; no rational person would knowingly commit evil, being so self-evidently against self-interest.⁴⁸ Dostoevsky responds to Chernyshevsky not with a counter-Utopia, nor by criticising his logic, but by presenting a human nature radically different than the rationalist conception found in *What is to be Done?* Dostoevsky's radical human nature denies that happiness is the ultimate end towards which it strives. Therefore, the rational pursuit of self-interest cannot be considered the ultimate means by which man should act; the ends and means relationship between happiness and rational self-interest can no longer be considered an ultimate guide to morality.

In the *Memoirs* Dostoevsky articulates what Carr calls 'the philosophy of malice'.⁴⁹ This philosophy champions *independence* as a more basic impulse than self-interest, and thus maliciousness, or spitefulness,⁵⁰ can be more rewarding than happiness.

46 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.93. Martin Amis writes: 'It fills you with extraordinary torpor to learn that Lenin read Nikolai Chernyshevsky's insuperably talentless novel *What is to be Done?* (1863) *five times* in one summer. To read this book once in five summers would defeat most of us; but Lenin persisted. "It completely reshaped me," he said in 1904.

"This is a book that changes one for a whole lifetime." Its greatest merit, he stressed, was that it showed you "what a revolutionary *must be like*." Humiliating though it may feel, we are obliged to conclude that *What is to be Done?* is the most influential novel of all time.' Amis, *Koba the Dread*, p.27 (original italics). Lenin marked this debt by naming his own book *What is to be Done?* after Chernyshevsky's. See also Carr, 'Editor's Introduction', in Bukharin and Preobrazhensky's *The ABC of Communism*, p.16.

47 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.93.

48 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.93.

49 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.93.

50 Carr, *Dostoevsky* p.93. A note on translations: Carr's 'malice' has been alternatively translated as 'spite', thus the opening line of Carr's translation of *Memoirs*, which reads: 'I

Dostoevsky's anguished narrator, the man from Underground, passionately describes the fallacy of rationally calculating a happy society. These theories, which we can identify as Bentham's utilitarianism, Adam Smith's 'invisible hand', or the 'harmony of interests', the man from Underground reduces to what he calls 'mere logical exercises'.⁵¹ And these exercises, like any proposal to govern human behaviour by reason, mathematical precision, by 'table' or tabulation, assume that free independent choice can be eliminated and that man can be conditioned to desire only what is calculable.⁵² The man from Underground rejects this assumption that man can become a slave to a fraction of his personality, the rational faculty, and will accept becoming alienated from that all-encompassing thing that makes him human: his will.⁵³ Any proposal for governance which ignores the desire for independence is doomed. No amount of liberal education can convince human will and the desire for independence to stand down in the face of reason. It will always assert itself, and this assertion, says the man from Underground,

am a sick man. I am a malicious man' reads instead: 'I am a sick man...I am a spiteful man.' Also this translation titles the work '*Notes from Underground*'. This particular translation, by Ralph Matlaw, was completed thirty years after Carr's *Dostoevsky* was published, and in which Matlaw indicates he has 'thoroughly revised' the Constance Garnett translation, which is the translation Carr cites as the standard. See Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground* and *The Grand Inquisitor*, Ralph E. Matlaw (trans.), esp. pp.xxiii, 3; also, Carr, *Dostoevsky*, pp.8, 92.

51 Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, pp.20-21. 'But man is so fond of systems and abstract deductions that he is ready to distort the truth intentionally, he is ready to deny what he can see and hear just to justify his logic.' Ibid., p.21.

52 Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, pp.23-25. 'For who would want to choose by rule? Besides, he will at once be transformed from a human being into an organ stop or something of the sort; for what is a man without desire, without free will and without choice, if not a stop in an organ?' Ibid., p.24.

53 'You see gentlemen, reason, gentlemen, is an excellent thing, there is no disputing that, but reason is only reason and can only satisfy man's rational faculty, while will is a manifestation of all life, that is, of all human life including reason as well as all impulses...I, for instance, quite naturally want to live, in order to satisfy all my faculties for life, and not simply my rational faculty, that is, not simply one-twentieth of all my faculties for life.' Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, p.25.

'breaks down our classifications...shatters our systems designed by lovers of mankind for the happiness of mankind'⁵⁴ and 'sends all systems and theories to the devil.'⁵⁵

The view that the line defining morality follows rational means to a happy end is an imperial inflation of a too thin equation. Rationalist ethics make the mistake of ballooning mere *aspects* of human personality (reason), and ends (happiness), into *synonyms* for personality and ends. This pushes phenomena that impact on human behaviour, most importantly, the will to do evil and human irrationality, past the edge of sight.⁵⁶ Carr argues that in writing *Memoirs*, Dostoevsky was expressing 'one of his strongest convictions that human nature is not, as optimistic utilitarians of Chernyshevsky's kidney [*sic*] believed, fundamentally and essentially good; [but]...man, in virtue of one side of his nature, may desire and choose evil, knowing it to be evil.'⁵⁷

Summarizing this point Carr writes:

The whole history of mankind, argues Dostoevsky...is a record of human irrationality. Man may love to build, like the ants in his ant-hill; but he also loves to destroy. He loves to indulge his caprice, to sin deliberately against his own interests merely in order to free himself from the tyranny of reason, of "twice two are four".⁵⁸

54 Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, pp.20-21.

55 Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, p.23. Rubashov, the protagonist of Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, alludes to this notion, seemingly mixing *Notes from Underground* and *Crime and Punishment*: '...the equation collapses in any case, because Raskolnikov discovers that twice two are not four when mathematical units are human beings....', *Darkness at Noon*, p.127. Koestler would write later: 'man is a reality, mankind an abstraction; that men cannot be treated as units in operations of political arithmetic because they behave like the symbols for zero and the infinite, which dislocate all mathematical operations' in *The God That Failed*, p.68.

56 An interesting study might investigate the prevalence of 'Ockham's Razor' as a methodological principle of moral inquiry during the Enlightenment.

57 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.94.

58 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.94. The phrase 'twice two are four' is arresting. It immediately takes the contemporary reader into the heart of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, although Dostoevsky's arithmetic pre-dates Orwell's by eighty years. For Dostoevsky, 'two times two make four' represented, as Carr says, a tyranny. '[It] is a formula, and after

In the same paragraph as the above quote, Carr indicates why Dostoevsky's *Memoirs from Underground* is so striking to his biographer writing *circa* 1930, a decade after the Great War, and at the beginning of the Great Depression:

The age of optimism, of faith in a morality established by science and reason, has now long passed away. The irrational chaos of human nature has become a platitude, and we no longer require a subterranean philosopher to put out his tongue at us in order to compel belief in it. It is one of the most important points on which Dostoevsky anticipated modern psychology.⁵⁹

all, two times two makes four is no longer life, gentlemen, but is the beginning of death.' Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, p.30. Asserting that man will not live 'by the calendar', and that free will does not conform to mathematics, Dostoevsky's narrator writes that 'two times two make five' is a statement of liberation, 'a very charming little thing'. Ibid., p.30. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, '2+2=5' is also a statement of liberation, yet it is a pathological liberation. Winston Smith's main argument of resistance is that no matter what the Party does, there is a place where reality is *remembered* in an uncorrupted form, that human consciousness cannot wholly escape the 'tyranny of reason'. Otherwise, Orwell writes, the implication is 'a nightmare world in which the Leader, or some ruling clique, controls not only the future but the *past*. If the Leader says of such and such an event, "It never happened" - well, it never happened. If he says that two and two are five - well, two and two are five.' 'Looking Back on the Spanish War', *CEJL Vol.2*, p.297. Regarding 'so-many Soviet reshapings of the past in the interest of the present...a student of history complained, "You never know what's going to happen yesterday."' Piers Brendon, *The Dark Valley*, p.10. Timothy Garton Ash writes that Orwell's '2+2=5' was a reference to a Soviet propaganda poster which suggested that the five-year plan could be fulfilled in four. 'Remembering George Orwell', *New York Review of Books*, 22 October 1998. This seems to be supported in Carr's earlier observation, writing under the pseudonym John Hallett, that '[t]he important question for Europe at the present time is not *whether the Five-Year Plan will be completed in four years*, whether the steel production of the Soviet Union will overtake that of Great Britain and France, or whether the output of Soviet factories is up to western standards; but whether Europe can discover in herself a driving force, an intensity of faith, comparable to that now being generated in Russia.' Review of 'Moscow has a Plan: A Soviet Primer', *Fortnightly*, September 1931, pp.400-401 (italics added). Was Orwell aware of both the Soviet and Dostoevskian ancestors of his equation? Were the Soviets invoking the authority of Dostoevsky? It would be an important historical study to write the genealogy of this equation, so central to the atmospherics of the 20th century.

⁵⁹ Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.94. However, Carr indicates that this is detrimental to appreciating Dostoevsky's *artistic* merit: 'The modern acceptance of Dostoevsky's psychology impedes, rather than assists, the artistic appreciation of his work. If we regard Dostoevsky the psychologist as more important than Dostoevsky the creative artist, we are faced with the absurdity of having to rate *A Raw Youth* above *The Idiot* or *The Brothers*

How then, Carr asks, are we to conceive of the relationship between an irrational, self-assertive, free-willingly destructive individual and society? This will become the central question at the core of Carr's system of thought.

Beyond Good and Evil

In 1849, at the age of twenty-eight, Dostoevsky was sentenced to four years of 'penal servitude' in a Siberian labour camp.⁶⁰ Arrested as part of a philosophical 'circle', the specific charge against him was that he had, at a meeting of this circle, read out-loud a black-listed letter written by Vissarion Belinsky to Nikolai Gogol, which berates the latter for his newly-acquired orthodox views. Originally, Dostoevsky was sentenced to death for this subversive oration, but this was commuted. However, whether to exaggerate the act of clemency, or to emphasize the lesson, a mock execution was set-up, complete with priest, last rites, and the first would-be victims tied in front of the firing squad, before the pardon 'arrived'. Carr describes the effect of this moment, appropriately, as 'soul shattering'.⁶¹

Karamazov...posterity, removed from the controversies of the early twentieth century, will once more be able to regard [his work] as an artistic whole.' Ibid, p.249.

60 Details of this episode are paraphrased and summarized from Carr's chapter, 'Catastrophe', *Dostoevsky*, pp.38-45.

61 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.44. The impact of this event must be the source of Prince Myshkin's (*The Idiot*) views on the immorality of capital punishment. 'To kill for murder is an immeasurably greater evil than the crime itself...A man who is murdered by brigands is killed at night in a forest or somewhere else, and up to the last moment he still *hopes that he will be saved*...this last hope, which makes it ten times easier to die, is taken away *for certain*; here you have been sentenced to death, and the whole terrible agony lies in the fact that you will most certainly not escape, and there is no agony greater than that. Take a soldier and put him in front of a cannon in battle and fire at him and he will still hope, but read the same soldier his death sentence *for certain*, and he will go mad or burst out crying. Who says that human nature is capable of bearing this without madness?...Possibly there are men who have sentences of death read out to them and

The four-year sentence Dostoevsky served at the prison camp at Omsk was to be no less significant. As a result of these experiences, Dostoevsky became convinced that traditional and conventional categories of right (whether ethical, moral, or legal), such as crime and sin, virtue and vice, the individual versus humanity, divine versus human law, and love and hate, were untenable. Conventional opposites, such as virtue and vice, or conventional identities, such as crime and sin, did not balance in the gravity of Dostoevsky's new world.⁶²

A man who has undergone such a punishment for such an offence is unlikely to retain any belief in a relation between crime and sin or between human and divine law...[Dostoevsky] met in Siberia men who had been sentenced for offences condemned not merely, like his, by the state, but by the generally accepted sanctions of moral law, for crimes of murder, lust or theft; and these men not only felt no conventional repentance or remorse for their deeds, but displayed, in the ordinary commerce of life, as many qualities of courage, generosity and loving-kindness as their fellows, and enjoyed as large a share of the general esteem. The prison overthrew every standard of morality of which Dostoevsky had ever heard. The conventional categories of virtue and vice no longer seemed to be placed at opposite poles of the moral horizon; indeed it was clear they were not even mutually exclusive. It was in [the prison at Omsk] that Dostoevsky first learned to perceive the inadequacy not merely of human law, but of the ordinarily accepted code of moral values, and to ponder on the quest for a remoter truth beyond the frontiers of good and evil as ordinarily defined.⁶³

Pondering this quest for a remoter truth, Dostoevsky created the conditions for Raskolnikov's genesis. Raskolnikov, a poor student, is the protagonist, anti-hero perhaps, of *Crime and Punishment*, whom we meet just before he deliberately murders an old woman pawn-broker, as well as murdering, in the second-degree, the old woman's

have been given time to go through this torture, and have been told, You can go now, you've been reprieved. Such men could perhaps tell us. It was agony like this and of such horror that Christ spoke. No, you can't treat a man like that!' Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, pp.47-48.

62 '...it was a world transfigured for him for ever...' Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.55; see also *Ibid.*, pp.51,54,87.

63 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.54.

dependent sister. *Crime and Punishment* tells the story and the psychological aftermath of this strangely conceived crime. Carr points out that the substance of *Crime and Punishment* is not an account of Raskolnikov's guilty conscience,⁶⁴ but something much more profound. Consider Raskolnikov's following utterances as he tries to justify the murders to Sonia:

Well, would [Napoleon] have brought himself to [murder an old woman for money] if there had been no other means? Wouldn't he have felt a pang at its being so far from monumental and...and sinful, too? ...it would not have given him the least pang, that it would not even have struck him that it was not monumental...he would have strangled her in a minute.⁶⁵

So I resolved to gain possession of the old woman's money...so as to build up a completely new career and enter a new life of independence...⁶⁶

I've only killed a louse, Sonia, a useless, loathsome, harmful creature.⁶⁷

And I know now, Sonia, that whoever is strong in mind and spirit will have power over [men]. Anyone who is greatly daring is right in their eyes...[P]ower is only vouchsafed to the man who dares to stoop and pick it up. There is only one thing, one thing needful: one has only to dare...I wanted *to have the daring*...and I killed her. I only wanted to have the daring, Sonia! That was the whole cause of it!⁶⁸

I wanted to murder without casuistry, to murder for my own sake, for myself alone! I didn't want to lie about it even to myself. It wasn't to help my mother I did the murder - that's nonsense - I didn't do the murder to gain wealth and power and to become a benefactor of mankind. Nonsense! I simply did it; I did the murder for myself, for myself alone, and whether I became a benefactor to others, or spent my life like a spider catching men in my web and sucking the life out of them, I couldn't have cared at that moment... ...I wanted to find out then and quickly: whether I was a louse like everyone else or a man. Whether I can step over barriers or not, whether I dare stoop to pick up or not, whether I am a

64 '(which [Carr writes] a less subtle writer would have given us).' Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.152.

65 Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, pp.349-350.

66 Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, p.350.

67 Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, p.351.

68 Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, p.352.

trembling creature or whether I have the *right*...⁶⁹

Carr calls *Crime and Punishment* a story of murder committed on principle.⁷⁰

Raskolnikov's words, cited above, show us how desperate is his urge, his agonizing *need*, to establish *the* principle that will justify his actions. Not only is this crucial to the plot and theme of the novel, it also embodies, for Carr, an essential trait of the Russian Mind:

The assertion of a principle is of infinitely more importance to the Russian mind than any practical results which may flow from it (a point generally overlooked by foreign critics of the present regime in Russia); and if we find in Dostoevsky's novels people who murder for a principle, live on bread and water for a principle or commit suicide for a principle, we should remember that such types are far less unfamiliar and fantastic to the Russian than to the English reader...⁷¹

This Russian sensitivity to principles Carr will later advocate as a crucial skill for students of politics.

However, Raskolnikov, in his attempts to find and maintain a principle for his action, is tortured by seductive contradictions. Carr argues that this is a particular portrayal of a more fundamental issue. He writes: 'The theme of [*Crime and Punishment*] is the analysis of the motives of the murder and of its reactions on the murderer; and in this theme Dostoevsky embodies the whole problem of the relations of the *ego* to the surrounding world, of the individual to society, which is, in effect, the central problem of both ethics and metaphysics.'⁷² Here Carr continues his presentation of the problem begun in his treatment of *Memoirs from Underground*. If man is not an exclusively rational being, which Dostoevsky shows us, how must we change our ideas of how the individual ego should relate to society? If asserting one's will, even against one's own interests, is characteristic of human nature, and not a deviant anomaly, then

69 Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, p.353; also, Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.151.

70 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.149

71 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.148.

72 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.149.

any system of social thought which posits an identity between the interests of the individual and society must be re-thought. Raskolnikov's quest, regardless of motive, is to elevate his ego above this identity to the apex of a social pyramid. What would ethics consist of if it no longer derived from the fulcrum point between the individual and society, but instead from the apex of a pyramid? What happens to ethics when a *type* of individual is legitimately superior in a society which not only supports this new type, but which this type commands?

Apart from Dostoevsky's own experience, this question had its philosophical roots in the Romantic movement, whose emblematic personas include Rousseau, Byron, and Napoleon. The Romantics believed that man's individual 'native goodness' was obscured and oppressed by what Carr calls the 'fixed mould of ethical and social convention'.⁷³ This implies that the 'good' attained by men who free themselves from these 'social chains', whether by the 'self-assertion of the proud' or the 'vindication of the downtrodden',⁷⁴ will entirely displace the 'good' we think of as synonymous with social norms. The prison camp at Omsk, to which Dostoevsky was sentenced, was, Carr argues, one 'society' where Dostoevsky caught a glimpse of this new ethic and the archetype of the ego that would command it. Orlov, a fellow prisoner, of whom Dostoevsky said there was '[never] a stronger, more iron character', who had attained a 'complete victory over the flesh [and]...unlimited self-control',⁷⁵ became, through Dostoevsky's mind,

Raskolnikov's dream:

In short, I maintain that all great men or even men a little out of the common, that is to say capable of giving some new word, must from their very nature be

⁷³ Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.149.

⁷⁴ Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.149.

⁷⁵ Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.150.

criminals - more or less, of course. Otherwise it's hard for them to get out of the common rut; and to remain in the common rut is what they can't submit to, from their very nature, and to my mind they ought not, indeed, to submit to it.⁷⁶

However, Raskolnikov fails. He cannot hold out in his quest; he turns himself in to the police. *Why* he fails, as opposed to *that* he fails, is for Carr, the 'fundamental ethical question of *Crime and Punishment*'.⁷⁷ In particular, Carr asks: 'Does Raskolnikov fail merely because he is weak? or because of some spiritual essence in mankind which makes it impossible for him to find ultimate satisfaction in the position of the amoral superman?'⁷⁸ Either it is a *particular* failure of the *individual* character Raskolnikov or it is a *general* feature of the quest itself.⁷⁹ The answer tells us whether a viable ethic can be built upon idealized Orlovs and Napoleons, the 'amoral superman'. If Raskolnikov *is* simply a weak individual, then perhaps a stronger individual could have 'held out'⁸⁰ and found 'ultimate satisfaction'; then the 'theory'⁸¹ would have been confirmed: man can find a new ultimate good beyond the norms of society.⁸² Thus a new system of ethics could be

76 From Raskolnikov's fictional article 'On Crime', Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, p.222. Also Carr cites a letter Dostoevsky wrote to his brother: 'Even in prison among robbers I have in four years ended by discovering human beings...There are here profound, strong, beautiful natures; and how joyous it is to find gold beneath the coarse crust! Not one, not two, but many. Some you cannot help respecting, others are downright beautiful.' F. Dostoevsky, letter to Michael Dostoevsky, cited in Carr, *Dostoevsky*, pp.51-52.

77 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.150.

78 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.150.

79 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.150.

80 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.149. This is Carr's phrase to describe Raskolnikov's sentiment that 'he, Raskolnikov, had so hopelessly, stupidly come to grief through some decree of blind fate, and must humble himself and submit to 'the idiocy' of a sentence, if he were anyhow to be at peace'. Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, p.456 (Epilogue, chp.1).

81 "'In what way," he asked himself, "was my theory stupider than others that have swarmed and clashed from the beginning of the world?"' Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, p.456 (Epilogue, chp.1).

82 It is important to clarify that the mere existence of a Napoleon or an Orlov does not prove anything in the way Raskolnikov's success would have. We have access to the real workings of his inner mind, in a way we can never have with a Napoleon or Orlov.

constructed: men who are strong enough, and willing enough, would have the 'right' to claim 'ultimate satisfaction', and those not capable would have to live without the protection of that right or entitlement to that claim.

However, Raskolnikov's failure indicates another possibility. Raskolnikov may have been strong enough to carry through the assertions of his ego, but relented as he began to perceive, consciously or not, that the 'position of the amoral superman' was, in the end, unsatisfying; the quest failed *generally*, as Carr hypothesised above, due to 'some spiritual essence of mankind.' Raskolnikov's failure may show us that the superman is simply unnatural and thus unsustainable. Because we are allowed access to Raskolnikov's mind and can witness the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual machinations he endures, we are in a position, unlike observing an opaque Napoleon or Orlov, to judge whether Raskolnikov's 'theory' is truly commensurate with the needs and aspirations of humanity in general. As his torturous declarations to Sonia show, Raskolnikov felt compelled at points to justify his actions in rational humanist terms, i.e., defending them on the grounds that they benefit all humanity, not just himself. Raskolnikov implies that because his victim was 'only a louse' he has not only benefited humanity by eliminating her, but also that the 'redistribution' of her wealth to him, so as to 'enter a new life of independence', was right because his potential for greatness, and thus benefit to the world, infinitely outstripped that of the 'vampire'⁸³ pawnbroker. This rational humanism is previously explained in Raskolnikov's fictional article 'On Crime', with which he is confronted by the police investigator trying to solve the murder Raskolnikov has committed:

83 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.151.

I maintain [Raskolnikov reiterates] that if the discoveries of Kepler and Newton could not have been made known except by sacrificing the lives of one, a dozen, a hundred, or more men, Newton would have had the right, would indeed have been in duty bound...to *eliminate* the dozen or the hundred men for the sake of making his discoveries known to the whole of humanity.⁸⁴

These 'benefactors and leaders of humanity', Raskolnikov says, have 'claimed and used the right to shed blood.'⁸⁵ But as Carr notes:

If Raskolnikov were a pure egoist, these arguments based on the benefit to humanity of the crime would be irrelevant. We may, if we please, dismiss them as the excuses of a mind bent on acting egoistically but anxious to cover its egoism with a veneer of altruism. But even this theory disposes of Raskolnikov's claim to be deemed a convinced and consistent egoist; for such a person, if he existed,

84 From Raskolnikov's description of his argument 'On Crime'. Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, p.222. Carr also notes this passage, *Dostoevsky*, p.151. In *Darkness at Noon* Koestler writes: 'Every year several million people are killed quite pointlessly by epidemics and other natural catastrophes. And we should shrink from sacrificing a few hundred thousand for the most promising experiment in history? Not to mention the legions of those who die of undernourishment and tuberculosis in coal and quicksilver mines, rice-fields and cotton plantations. No one takes any notice of them; nobody asks why or what for; but if here we shoot a few thousand objectively harmful people, the humanitarians all over the world foam at the mouth. Yes, we liquidated the parasitic part of the peasantry and let it die of starvation. It was a surgical operation which had to be done once and for all; but in the good old days before the Revolution just as many died in any dry year – only senselessly and pointlessly. The victims of the Yellow River floods in China amount sometimes to hundreds of thousands. Nature is generous in her senseless experiments on mankind. Why should mankind not have the right to experiment on itself?', Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, p.131.

85 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.151. In Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, Rubashov, the prisoner, is subjected to an interrogation by his warden, Ivanov, which at one point takes the form of a critique of this aspect of Raskolnikov's dilemma. See Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, pp.126-133. In Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, the leader of the 'One State' holds the title of 'The Great Benefactor' and sheds blood for the benefit of his subjects. The 'Great Benefactor' is perhaps *the* antagonist of 20th century political literature. Along with Zamyatin's 'Great Benefactor' are Huxley's 'World Controllers', Koestler's 'No.1', and Orwell's 'Big Brother'. An excellent study would be the 'biography' of this character as he appears and re-appears throughout 20th century political literature. Perhaps not coincidentally, Carr discusses the necessity of ascribing a persona to the state: 'Thus the personification of the state, which began as a liberal and progressive device, came to be associated with the assertion of unlimited rights of the state over the individual and is now commonly denounced as reactionary and authoritarian. Modern utopian thinkers reject it with fervour...' Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.137. It would seem that dystopian thinkers embraced it with equal fervour.

would not feel the need to disguise himself in the sham colours of altruism.⁸⁶

Romantic individualist and rational humanist justifications thus torture Raskolnikov. It is not, however, through the eventual trump of one set of justifications by the other that we are taught the lesson of Raskolnikov; indeed, a trump never occurs. It is in his indecision, the flip-flopping, in the play of assertion and contradiction that Carr finds the essence of Raskolnikov's significance; neither the self-made moral code of the superman who murders for his own sake, nor the utilitarian removal of 'vermin' for the sake of humanity, is satisfactory.⁸⁷ When either theory is taken to its logical conclusion, to its fullest extension, it becomes something unhuman. Humans do not 'work' in conditions of 'abstract perfection'. This reveals to us the 'hollowness of [each] theory' and 'the tragic and fruitless struggle of a powerful intellect to maintain a conviction which is incompatible with the essential nature of man'; carrying each to their logical conclusion ends in nihilism.⁸⁸ Thus Carr, returning to his initial description of *Crime and Punishment*, concludes, '[t]he tragedy for Raskolnikov is the collapse of the principle on which he has acted.'⁸⁹ In this crucial conclusion we see an embryonic expression of what will become a central tenet of Carr's system of thought, the beginnings of his theory of tragedy. Tragedy becomes, for Carr, an entire movement, or process, born out of the collapse of incompatible dualities, such as between Raskolnikov's 'theory' and the 'essence' of man, and the nihilism that waits where logic is extended too far. As we begin to understand and piece together Carr's theory of tragedy,

86 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.152. This analysis bears an significant resemblance to Carr's later claim: 'The necessity, recognized by all politicians, both in domestic and in international affairs, for cloaking interests in a guise of moral principles is itself a symptom of the inadequacy of realism.' Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.86.

87 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.152.

88 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.152.

89 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.152.

we must continue to track the central importance of dualisms, which was begun above in the analysis of Carr's idea of the Russian Mind.

Dualism and the 'Double'

Raskolnikov is a 'human being and not a lay person,'⁹⁰ Carr argues, because of the duality that consumes him. His dichotomous psyche, his uncertainty about his own motives indicates, for Carr, authenticity. Carr returns many times to this lesson that he finds in Dostoevsky's work: dichotomous positions held in tension by a person point to that person's humanity; exclusive, purely logical positions always signal caricature. Dostoevsky had used a literary device he called the 'double' to portray this. However, long after an eponymous short story, Dostoevsky continued to apply a more general conception of duality to human nature.⁹¹ Carr acknowledges both Hegel's and Romanticism's influence, but credits Dostoevsky with the innovation of matching the 'double' with the subconscious underside, the sinfulness, of the psyche.⁹²

90 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.152.

91 'The magical machinery which had pleased him in those early days had long been forgotten; but the idea of the duality of human nature had taken an even firmer root in his mind.' Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.198.

92 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.198. Upon his release from the prison camp at Omsk, Dostoevsky wrote his brother: 'Send me Hegel, my whole life depends on it.' Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.148. Also important is Carr's estimation of the universal influence Hegel had during this period: 'In the form in which the idea [i.e., duality] eventually reached Dostoevsky, there are clear traces of Hegel, whose influence on nearly ever [sic] branch of thought during the middle years of last century has never been fully assessed.' Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.198. Further, Carr indicates a formative part of his own education occurred in a Hegelian atmosphere: 'At Cambridge I wasn't much interested in politics. The period of the great controversies was over. I had a friend who was reading philosophy. We discussed the meaning of life, and I first heard the name of Hegel, on whose behalf McTaggart was conducting a popular rear-guard action against Russell and Moore.' Carr, 'An Autobiography', p.xiv. And Isaiah Berlin wrote that Carr was 'deeply affected by the

Thus, a duality between sublime and profane tendencies and the rejection of logical nihilism is a first-order identifier of a genuine human mind. For Carr, this 'remains an essential element in every fully developed character. It is part of life itself.'⁹³ And in negative formulation: 'Consistency is not a common human virtue, if indeed it be a virtue at all.'⁹⁴ Each of us is composed of higher and lower impulses; each of us aspires to, and is contemptuous of, virtue; we simultaneously reject and embrace vice. Every human, in so far as they are humans, exist as composites. This was the Romantic 'revolt against rationalism' which aimed to release the idea of human nature from the grip of calculated self-interest.⁹⁵ Elsewhere, Carr argues that Dostoevsky's dualistic refraction of characters made him the 'most subtle and powerful enemy' of the nineteenth century belief that 'the novelist's ideal is the perfection of a type', a type that was realised by the 'multiplication of similarities.'⁹⁶ Instead, Carr sees Dostoevsky's 'most characteristic method of creation' to be the 'multiplication of dissimilarities.'⁹⁷ And further, that '[t]his resolution of human character into its component elements, which has become the stock-in-trade of modern fiction, is Dostoevsky's most important contribution to the technique of the novel'.⁹⁸

This dichotomous tension is not only a static description of the human psyche. It is a dynamic condition; the double is productive. 'Remove the antithesis, and you can

contempt for liberalism made fashionable in the last century by Hegel'. Haslam, *Vices of Integrity*, p.196.

93 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.200.

94 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.202.

95 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.198.

96 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.245.

97 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, pp.244-245.

98 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.245.

never arrive at the perfect synthesis,⁹⁹ Carr writes, indicating that the dualism at the heart of the human psyche is dialectic, i.e., characterized by the synthesis of thesis and antithesis, and moves, by virtue of this, towards a higher order of awareness or personality 'by which alone humanity could achieve true unity'.¹⁰⁰

Morally, the sinful or base characteristic of the 'double' allows for redemption. The presence of the evil impulse in man enables him to be a moral creature. 'Do away with the sense of sin, and you cannot have salvation,'¹⁰¹ Carr explains, which recalls his previously cited estimation: 'The Russian who, by reason of the duality of his nature, had the experience of sin in his inmost soul, may fall behind the European in the mechanical practice of virtue; but he alone can know the meaning of true holiness.'¹⁰² Thus, despite the presence of sin, evil, and base impulses, dualism was, for Dostoevsky, a beneficent, not pathological, aspect of human nature. This is, Carr says, Dostoevsky's 'doctrine', 'that the sense of sin, an awareness of the lower instincts of one's own nature, was the key to salvation, and that it was through the antithesis of good and evil within him that man arrived at the divine synthesis.'¹⁰³ Even 'good' requires the presence of its opposite to develop.

Carr expresses his own personal appraisal of this dualism in three key statements. In two of these statements Carr defines the probable scope of Dostoevsky's dualistic psychology: 'The theories of psychology with which Dostoevsky confronts us would lose

99 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.200.

100 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.198. Below I will intimate that Carr moved beyond this classic Hegelian formulation. Carr would conclude that Hegel's faith in the dialectic was unjustified in the modern, self-conscious age.

101 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.200.

102 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.205.

103 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.227.

much of their interest if we did not believe them to be of universal, or at least general, application."¹⁰⁴ Echoing this, Carr writes 'the opposition between high ideal and low action...is a commoner and less abstruse phenomenon than Dostoevsky seems sometimes to suggest.'¹⁰⁵ The third statement, especially as we look forward to *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, is one of Carr's most pregnant statements in *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*: 'The "double", then, in its relation to Dostoevsky's own nature, is a literary theme *invoked first to diagnose a disease, and then to point a moral*.'¹⁰⁶

Dualism, or inconsistency, of mind, motive, and personality signals humanity in Carr's analysis of Dostoevsky's characters. Yet certain of Dostoevsky's characters, by virtue of being purely consistent, make the same point as caricatures. Carr indicates the significance of these 'caricatures of the logical extreme' in his analysis of Svidrigailov, the apparition-like tormentor of Raskolnikov and Raskolnikov's sister. Svidrigailov symbolizes the logical conclusion of Raskolnikov's aspirations; he is a 'more consistent, more successful, and infinitely meaner Raskolnikov'.¹⁰⁷ In this role Svidrigailov takes to their identical and indulgent terminus the two poles of Raskolnikov's justifications: 'The philosophy of the superman and the rationalistic ethics of the utilitarian end alike in pure hedonism.'¹⁰⁸ And thus having demonstrated the self-gratifying end of Raskolnikov's moral experiment, Svidrigailov thrusts an infected stiletto from an angle slightly subtended from Raskolnikov's own more agonizing demonstration, and 'pierces the

104 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.202.

105 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.203.

106 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.203. (italics added)

107 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, pp.153, 220.

108 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.153.

hollowness of the attempt to base ethics either on egoism or on rational altruism'.¹⁰⁹

Svidrigailov symbolizes and functions as a cartoon counterfoil to the human

Raskolnikov, a 'puppet' whose role is to make 'our flesh creep and our gorge rise'.¹¹⁰ Also,

within the story itself, Carr identifies the crystallizing effect Svidrigailov has on

Raskolnikov: 'The clear-headed and acute wit of Svidrigailov plunges a searchlight into

the muddled obscurity of Raskolnikov's distracted mind.'¹¹¹ Thus, the presentation of a

caricature is not only important for the reader to bring into relief Raskolnikov's contours,

but also for Raskolnikov himself to experience, within the narrative, a pure and pathetic

type of the ideal he is flirting with.

As we leave this initial account of Carr's engagement with Dostoevsky it is

helpful to recall the significant highlights:

- Carr perceived in his encounter with Dostoevsky that 'Russian' thought had a didactic potential *vis-a-vis* the western European *Zeitgeist*.
- In Dostoevsky Carr saw the significance of free-will in human personality. Ethics, especially as seen in the problem of Raskolnikov, posed the problem of how to conceive the relation between a free-willed ego and society. Also, that the human personality will often act according to its free will rather than according to the dictates of reason. To do otherwise would reduce human personality to a logical caricature.
- In his analysis of Raskolnikov Carr begins to make the case that the superman is ultimately an unsatisfying position, and that the proud, if they are to sustain themselves, must humble themselves, they must, in a sense, subordinate themselves to society, ego's ethical counterpart.
- Any system, even rationalist ethics, when taken to its logical extreme, ceases to be reflective of human existence.

109 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.154.

110 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.154.

111 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.153.

The next chapter operationalizes the themes of Carr's engagement with Dostoevsky for use in the remainder of the thesis. It will demonstrate how Carr linked his appreciation of the 'Russian Mind' with a motif of movement and the 'central problem of ethics' in a way that served his particular normative project. Chapter Two will also introduce the core concepts of 'tragedy' and 'progress'.

Chapter Two:

Ethics of Dissatisfaction

This chapter 'operationalizes' Carr's idea of the 'Russian Mind' as found in *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*. This chapter prepares the idea so that we can hold its image before us and identify its progeny in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* and *What is History?*; there is such continuity in form, content, and theme that we cannot deny that the idea made a central impact on these later texts. Despite that I have privileged the irony of Mirsky's preface to *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*, his trouble with Carr's 'generalisations on the Russian Mind and character' is not misplaced; essentializing any ethnic or cultural 'mind' is problematic. However, this does not in itself negate the value or diminish the importance of assessing Carr's subjective creation, his characteristic technique of adapting a concept to his own purposes. The 'Russian Mind' is more profitably understood as the unique product of Carr's shattered Victorian mind which pieced together and embraced an image that promised metaphysical utility, a totem by which Carr could analyse, criticize, and create. Less a thesis on a national character, the 'Russian Mind' became a general 'mentality' that was useful to Carr's ethical, political, and historiographical projects; the Russian Mind was what Carr was looking for, and having found it, he kept it, used it, and made it his.

There are no *explicit* sightings of the 'Russian Mind' in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* or *What is History?* but as its presence is undeniable, we must assume that Carr has camouflaged it, generalized it, outfitted it to blend into a variety of habitats such as

international politics, historiography, and ethics. Thus, what we find *in utero* should be tagged and tracked.

In *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881* Carr calls the 'central problem of both ethics and metaphysics' the 'whole problem of the relations of the ego to the surrounding world, of the individual to society'.¹¹² As one becomes familiar with Carr's approach to literature, politics, and historiography, one finds that everything returns to this problem, that everything orbits around it; it is the centre of gravity of Carr's system. It is by way of his solution to this 'central problem' that Carr smuggles the Russian Mind into so much of his work. As will be fully explained below, Carr consistently treated concepts such as 'ego' as both 'essential categories of thought' and *empty* categories of thought. Ego was a useful and necessary concept or 'form' but its *content* was not defined *a priori*. These empty forms had to be defined by those that used them, to be 'filled' with specific pragmatic content. Carr insisted that the form and content of these 'essential categories of thought' were not identical but dualistic: one part, the form, necessary, 'essential', and, *determined*, and the second part, the content, *free*.

By investing the ego with a particular 'personality', Carr, consistent with his general method, accepts what is determined, that is the existence of ego and its position in the ethical problem, and addressed himself to what we are free to change, to what we can influence, that is, the content. Carr consistently and implicitly prescribed the Russian Mind as the ideal content for the ego, and that the Russian Mind could be generalized to provide a useful and beneficial content to the concept of ego.

112 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.149.

The generalized 'Russian Mind' is what I have called a 'mentality'. This is also a problematic term. It has been used by the *Annales* school of historiography to describe the objective of the historian: strive to inhabit the mind of those people of the past of whom he writes.¹¹³ To attain the mentality of an historical era the historian must attempt to shed the trappings and subjectiveness of his own present mentality and try to understand the people of the past as they understood themselves. I use mentality to mean something of the inverse of this. It is not, as in the *Annales* school, like the essence of freediving, descending into the depths of the ocean, free of scuba gear and other surface affectations, to become as close as possible to the natural state of the sea. Mentality, as I mean it here, is closer to dredged-up sunken gold, as able to be spent today as it was when it was lost under the waves; melted down into modern coins and measured into modern weights, it is the same precious metal, the same store of wealth, just as useful for modern transactions and exchange as it was in its original time. The Russian Mind is a treasure that Carr recovered, and instead of treating it as a relic, or like a specimen from an alien country, Carr taps its value for *use*, he deposits this treasure in a container labelled 'ego'.

The Muse of Dissatisfaction

It is clear that Carr felt that dualism, this 'Russian' ability to perceive the highs and lows, the good and the evil, the fatal and the free, was superior to the polar, linear, and singular European mindset he saw seizing his age in a static sterility. In stark contrast, Carr saw the clashing dualisms of the Russian Mind, Raskolnikov's

¹¹³ For a description of the *Annales* project see Peter Watson, *A Terrible Beauty*, p.558.

contradictions and inability to intuitively accept either logical extreme, and the concept of the double all generate energy, not static or potential, but a dynamic, kinetic energy, an energy that wanted to *move*. Movement, Carr argues, is the hope of the *dissatisfied*; they will read dynamism and fluidity into reality. For example, regarding the popularity of Henri Bergson's 'creative evolution' in pre-1914 France, Carr writes that, '[i]n a world tormented by uneasy half-conscious discontent, the revolt against reason and against the fixity of things enjoyed an extraordinary popularity'.¹¹⁴ Satisfied groups, meanwhile, react against this movement in favour of the 'real' or the 'stable', such as Carr found in France *after* the conclusion of the favourable terms of Versailles:

The exaltation of the emotions, the rejection of conventional standards, the quest of obscure ideals above or below the plane of reason...these things have ceased to interest a nation well content as a whole with existing realities...The French thinker of to-day has looked on the world of reality and pronounced it good; it remains only to organize, to stabilise and to maintain it.¹¹⁵

Carr explicitly laments the 'English mind's' lack of dynamism, possessed instead by a general conservatism, defined by its 'loss of the pervading sense of a world in perpetual motion', a 'singular blindness' rooted only in fear and a dim nostalgia.¹¹⁶

Against those who would deny the significance of this 'loss', Carr concludes *What is History?* by exclaiming, 'I shall look out on *a world in tumult and a world in travail*, and shall answer in the well-worn words of a great scientist: "And yet - it moves".'¹¹⁷ This is a moral plea: complacency and complicity towards the status quo *normalizes* the 'tumult' and 'travail' the world was enduring in the crisis years of the twentieth century. Thus,

114 Carr (writing as John Hallett) 'What France Thinks', *Fortnightly*, July 1930.

115 Carr, 'What France Thinks'

116 Carr, *What is History?*, p.151.

117 Carr, *What is History?*, p.151. (italics added)

Carr's dualist and dynamic worldview was one part ontological conclusion and one part normative principle.

As ontological conclusion, that is, as a statement about reality, a dynamic world propelled by clashing dualisms was, for Carr, the most accurate and convincing way to imagine reality. It meant absolutes were impossible, and absolutism was precisely the ontology Carr rejected. As one of many examples, Carr argued that although a separation between fact and interpretation may be possible in a static reality, in a dynamic world each *affects* the other, that is, when facts are interpreted, and the availability and nature of facts limit interpretation, the idea of a separation becomes meaningless.¹¹⁸ This *interaction* was one of the most important elements in Carr's worldview. As we will see, modern man's *awareness* of his own role in what he observes, of his subjectivity, was a new and distinguishing insight of modern life. Because of the awareness of this interaction a static conception of reality was untenable; such would be utopian wishful thinking. Also, as we will see below, this awareness arises from an antecedent awareness that man's destiny is not determined, but that free will and choice exist along side determinism. The recognition of dynamism and freedom leads man to the realization that he can profitably seek to 'master his environment' and enjoy *progress*, which is, very significantly, the positive outcome of dissatisfaction. In other words, men that seek progress do so from a fundamental dissatisfaction to be remedied in a dynamic and dualistic world, in a world where there is the possibility of *change*.

We can also see that Carr derived a normative principle from this worldview: static singularism is selfish; selfishness is anti-human. This normative principle formed a

¹¹⁸ Carr, *What is History?*, p.126.

canopy over a constellation of radicalisms: an alliance with the dissatisfied, a desanctification of the status quo and vested interests, humility instead of pride, self-sacrifice instead of self-assertion, and hopefulness about, not fear of, change. Thus, Carr formulates the ethical problem in a way appropriate to the ethics of dissatisfaction in an environment of change; Carr took the form of the ethical problem and invested in it the content appropriate to the crisis years of the twentieth century. Carr saw in the Russian Mind a dynamism and natural rebellion that could be enlisted to lead the *dissatisfied*, that its nature made it sympathetic to the *creative*, and that a generalized mentality derived from the Russian Mind could have unique insights into *change*: precisely the Muse Carr was seeking. The Russian Mind fit perfectly into the ethical problem; it was ideal pragmatic content for his time.

The Beauty of Motion

Carr places his 'Russian' ego in an environment whose oxygen is *movement*. I find two types of movement to make-up this environmental or social motif: tragic collapse and reconciliation. Raskolnikov, for example, personifies tragic collapse. From his initial act of 'murder committed on principle', through his failure to resolve his egoist and altruist justifications, his confession, and his final 'resignation' to Sonia, we follow Raskolnikov as his 'theory' is confounded by reality, what Carr called above 'the collapse of the principle on which he has acted'.¹¹⁹ Again, in this way, Carr writes that *Crime and Punishment* illustrates the 'tragic and fruitless struggle of a powerful intellect to maintain

¹¹⁹ Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.152.

a conviction which is incompatible with the essential nature of man'.¹²⁰ 'Incompatibility' is the key component to tragic collapse: Raskolnikov's egoist and altruist justifications were incompatible, and also his 'quest' was ultimately incompatible with human nature.¹²¹

Tragic collapse is also similar to drowning, it is an issue of 'survivability': Raskolnikov's 'conviction' was dropped into something in which it could not survive, in this case, 'the essential nature of man'. This theme is found throughout Carr's work. For example, we will see below that Carr found *laissez-faire* was a principle that *could* survive in the environment of the nineteenth century, but when dropped into the fundamentally different environment of the twentieth century it died of exposure.¹²² The bird could survive in the sky, but suffocated in space. This theme also appears in Carr's historiography in a slightly different form. History, Carr argues, can only be written by a man *conscious* of how he uses the past, of how he is dependent on the past for his understanding of the present and how he is dependent on the present for his understanding of the past and how both allow him to imagine the future. History can only be written based on the same relationship as ego to environment: The ego imposes on society the same way that the present imposes on the past, and the ego submits to his environment just as the present submits to the past. When man assumes he is independent of his environment (social or ecological), that his survival does not depend on his environment, that he can breathe water just as well as air or hold his breath

120 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.152.

121 Carr's fundamentally *social* conception of human nature will be discussed in more detail below. As a brief indication of this conception it is worth noting here that the opening sentence of Carr's chapter 'The Nature of Politics' reads: 'Man has always lived in groups.' The paragraph concludes: 'Aristotle laid the foundation of all sound thinking about politics when he declared that man was by nature a political animal.' *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.91.

122 See chapters 3 & 4 of *The Twenty Years' Crisis*.

indefinitely in a vacuum, the history he writes will be as animated and useful as a drowned pelican floating lifelessly through space. This history is precisely as durable as Raskolnikov's ethical theory. The superman who is independent yet commander of society is the ethical version of the historian who conceives himself independent of, yet the commander of time.

Tragic collapse also describes the fate of any ethic or policy based in *one* element of human life, such as ego, power, or reason. As has been indicated above, Carr shared Dostoevsky's belief that positive movement could not happen without the *coeval* duality of thesis and antithesis. 'Pure' pillars and theories pursued to their logical conclusions are never sturdy or substantial enough to bear the load demanded of them. Having none of the variety, diversity, and duality of human life, they are inadequate foundations for sound thought or action. Such is the symbol of Svidrigailov for Carr. Svidrigailov is a 'pure' ego who demonstrated Dostoevsky's belief that a 'consistent', non-dualistic position is simply unsustainable when it comes into contact with reality; Svidrigailov's suicide embodies this end. We can hear the same appraisal when Carr writes about the numerous democracies created after 1919 according to Woodrow Wilson's 'purely intellectual' and '*a priori*' liberal democratic theory: As 'the product of abstract theory, [they] stuck no roots in the soil, and quickly shrivelled away'.¹²³

However, dualities do not always break down in tragic collapse. They can move towards *reconciliation*, achieved in varying degrees, and of two forms: *synthesis* and *compromise*. Above, we have read Carr's classical expression of the first form of

123 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.29.

reconciliation, synthesis, when he described the 'necessity' of the 'double' to Dostoevsky's worldview. It is, Carr writes, an 'essential element', 'part of life itself'; without 'the antithesis, and you can never arrive at the perfect synthesis'.¹²⁴ Carr sees synthesis obtain, for example, in the pre-modern relationship between fact and interpretation and between purpose and analysis, where 'one role shades imperceptibly into the other...[becoming] part and parcel of a single process'.¹²⁵ Also, Carr describes the secular Utopianisms of the Renaissance, Marxism, and nineteenth century liberalism, each as a 'synthesis' between a particular Utopian ideal and rational science.¹²⁶ Another example, regarding the general dynamic of revolutions, Carr writes, 'the elements of change and continuity fight side by side, now conflicting and coalescing, until a new and stable synthesis is established'.¹²⁷ The common characteristic of these syntheses is that they are a function of *unconscious* agents. Or perhaps better put, synthesis depends on the inability of actors or agents to perceive the subjective nature of knowledge and reality. Where there is unconsciousness, there is the potential for synthesis, a form of reconciliation closer to oblivion. Synthesis is characteristic of an unconscious age; syntheses seem to be 'objective' or 'determined' coincidences. Synthesis describes the interdependence of dualities such as purpose and analysis as it is experienced by 'unhistorical' or 'unconscious' agents.

The synthetic 'attitude' is the belief that a *particular* ego is both representative of egos in *general*, and that an ego's environment is simply an extension of itself, just as the rationalist believes that reason represents thought. This is the basic structure of *laissez-faire* ethics, which Carr viewed as the archetypal synthesis. *Laissez-faire* ethics held that

124 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.200.

125 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.5.

126 Carr, 'Editor's Introduction', *The ABCs of Communism*, pp.13-15.

127 Carr, *Socialism in One Country: I*, p.14.

society was simply the sum of self-interested, rational individuals, and as long as the individual acted such there could be, by definition, no harm done to society. Thus, synthesis is based on a particular ego imperialism. Synthesis ruptures as this imperialism becomes unsustainable. Ego imperialism becomes unsustainable when *other* egos challenge the notion that one particular ego-type is representative of all egos, which in turn makes it impossible to conceive of society as the simple extension, or sum, of one ego-type. This mirrors how rational imperialism is unsustainable in the presence of human will, and thus the unsustainability to conceive of human personality as the simple extension, or sum, of reason. Again, as we will see below, this was how the ethics of *laissez-faire* became untenable; workers began to challenge the idea that they shared a basic identity with capitalists. The easy integration between *laissez-faire* ego and society became less a self-evident truth and more an ideology of a particular class. Thus, at the moment that synthesis becomes unsustainable we are forced to recognize both sides of a bitter coin: that society is not simply the sum of one ideal ego-type but is instead the site where *groups* of egos compete, and because competing egos force us to reconsider the ethical problem of how the ego is to relate to his environment, in this reconsideration we are forced to recognize the conditioned nature of thought, that particular solutions to Carr's 'central ethical and metaphysical problem' will inevitably reflect the interests of different groups of egos. Synthesis is no longer possible because consciousness has arisen, we are aware of conflict.¹²⁸ This collapse and impossibility of synthesis is, for Carr, both the essence of tragedy and its fundamental condition.

128 We can begin to see here how Carr moved beyond Hegel who is famously quoted: 'what is rational is real, and what is real is rational', Carr, *What is History?*, p.100; and

Only 'historical people', Carr argues, are truly 'conscious'. 'Modern man is beyond all precedent "history conscious"',¹²⁹ Carr writes, '...we have lost [the] capacity to isolate ourselves in time; we have become incorrigibly historical in our outlook.'¹³⁰ 'Man now seeks to understand, and to act on, not only his environment, but himself; and this has added, so to speak, a new dimension to reason, and a new dimension to history. The present age is the most historically minded of all ages. Modern man is to an unprecedented degree self-conscious and therefore conscious of history.'¹³¹ Groups, whether nation, class, or tribe become historical as they become aware of the subjective or undetermined aspects of things like facts (values), knowledge (wish), science (purpose), and history (interpretation). An historical, conscious age, such as our own, is discomfitted by the lack of synthesis between fact and interpretation, or purpose and analysis. Subjective and undetermined elements such as interpretation and purpose are too conspicuous, their vagaries are too obvious to us; we are simply too aware of our ability to influence what were once thought to be objective processes and things *separate* from us. Thus the second form of reconciliation, compromise, results from *agency*. This is a crucial deminsion of Carr's thought. In the historical age, when men are conscious of their effect on their reality, a new synthesis cannot be expected to come about naturally. Self-conscious agents must bring about *man-made* syntheses, artificial syntheses.

Thus, the death of synthesis and the birth of consciousness leads to the necessity of compromise; if the answer to how men should relate to one another does not naturally

'philosophy transfigures the real which appears unjust into the rational', in Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.64.

129 Carr, *The New Society*, p.1.

130 Carr, *The New Society*, p.2.

131 Carr, *What is History?*, p.129.

and automatically present itself, we must, through compromise, create an answer. But in between the death of synthesis and in the imperative of compromise there is a path that one can find Carr followed that truly makes his call for compromise an ethical *and* metaphysical solution. Surveying the topography of this 'path' is, in one way, the answer to how Dostoevsky influenced Carr. Explained fully in chapters three and four, a brief statement of this path can be provided here. With the death of synthesis, this waking from an 'unconscious' condition, comes the awareness of conflict between the ego and society, an awareness that society is not simply an extension of an ideal ego-type. Likewise, as we become aware of the significance of free-will we become aware of the conflict between reason and human personality; the latter is no longer simply the extension of the former. The imperatives of this new awareness cause man to *suffer*; gone are the easy assumptions about man's place in the world, his ethical and metaphysical anchors have slipped their hawser. Whereas man before felt grounded, he is now adrift. As we will see, for Carr the fundamental imperative of this awareness is that what were once proud, whether a particular ego-type or reason, be humbled; this imperative will be extended to other entities such as the 'personified state'. This humility, this voluntary submission, is the proper response to suffering, and is a central theme of Dostoevsky's thought hand-in-hand with his theory of consciousness; only through suffering does man become truly aware of his condition. True consciousness, Carr will argue, reveals to man a fundamental dualism in the world between what is determined and what is free. Man acts properly when he acts in accordance with this dualism, accepting what is determined and *working* what is free. This is the double

condition of agency, being 'both free and not free'. And by this agency man creates compromise.

It is by *free will* and imagination that we consciously compromise dualities such as purpose and analysis, morality and power, utopia and reality. This is, for Carr, the fundamental task of social thinkers and practical politicians. We *choose* how to define the relationships, they are not pre-determined; the categories themselves and that they interact *are* pre-determined, but *how* they are made to interact is up to us. Carr repeatedly insists on variations of this point, referring to it throughout *The Twenty Years' Crisis* as the basis of 'sound political thinking'.¹³² Because the 'fatal dualisms' of life are unavoidable, we must, Carr argues, attain the most *effective* balance within each duality, whether power and morality, or reality and utopia.

Writing on dualist tension between the 'satisfied realism' of France and the dissatisfaction of Germany after Versailles, Carr writes: 'It is difficult to conciliate views so fundamentally divergent; but the first step towards conciliation is that they should be mutually understood'.¹³³ This mutual understanding, the 'essential part of any compromise that both factors shall be taken into account'¹³⁴ is the essential mission of the first chapters of *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, which are a taxonomy of political dualisms: utopia and reality, free will and determinism, theory and practice, the intellectual and the bureaucrat, the left and the right, the radical and the conservative, morality and power, and ethics and politics. These first chapters also teach the same lesson Carr learned from Dostoevsky: any pole of a duality that becomes uncoupled, and is thought to be sufficient

132 See for examples *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.10, 87, 91, 149.

133 Carr (writing as John Hallett), 'What France Thinks', *Fortnightly*, p.83.

134 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.95.

in itself as the basis for thought or policy, whether power, utopia, or conservatism, will obtain the same salience as the caricatures of the logical extreme, that is, nihilism and sterility.

Tragic collapse and reconciliation do not describe the end points of the movement begun by clashing dualisms. They are penultimate stages that prepare the ground for much more profound movements: transcendence and progress. Transcendence, and thus progress, are the positive conclusion of the movement begun by tragic collapse, they are the 'purpose' and value of tragedy. As transcendence and progress are the subjects of chapters three and four respectively I will conclude here with a final statement about the connection between transcendence and Carr's mentality and motif. The mentality championed by Carr, his generalized Russian Mind, sees clearly the dualism at the heart of human nature and the human experience; it 'thinks' in a way that corresponds to a world of clashing dynamic dualisms and movement. In philosophical language, the mentality of the 'Russian Mind' and the motif of movement, an ego and its environment, constitute a perfectly coupled epistemology and ontology, a marriage which begets a normative project and a contrapuntal interplay of opposites, dualities, and transcendence; is the architecture through which Carr scores his debt to Dostoevsky.

Absolutes, whether pure egoism, as in the case of Svidrigailov, or the inflation of reason to encompass thought, as in utilitarianism, or power or utopia on their own, generate no movement and can thus do not admit to any challenge or change; such static singularisms become the dogma of those who have a vested interest in the status quo. These particular vested interests in preventing change are not only sterile and static, but

are, as we have seen, non-human. Only by understanding the Dostoevskian roots of these ideas can we see the extreme and central moral assertion Carr makes consistently in his work: privileging your own interests at the expense of change is to renounce your humanity. To be for yourself is to be non-human. When Carr writes that the first fact of politics is that man has always lived in groups,¹³⁵ and answers in various ways his own question that Raskolnikov failed because the idea of the superman is *socially* impossible, he is not only listing premises, he is setting up a negative criterion for what it means to be human.

Carr casts the generalized Russian Mind for the role of the ego, the protagonist in the central problem of ethics, politics, and historiography, in a plot of tragedy and transcendence. This fundamentally undergirds Carr's structure of thought, and significantly, it is a relationship Carr first examined in his analysis of Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* and Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*.

135 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.91.

Chapter Three:

The Structure of Tragedy

The landmark to orient our reading of *The Twenty Years' Crisis* is its dedication: 'To the makers of the coming peace.'¹³⁶ Nothing else in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* reveals so clearly its pragmatic moral purpose, the spirit in which Carr wrote his book,¹³⁷ and it is refreshing to realize *The Twenty Years' Crisis* was a peace manifesto. Reading *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881* as a primer to *The Twenty Years' Crisis* we sense that Carr structured *The Twenty Years' Crisis* in the same way as he conceived the relationship between *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*, as the former, in its story of tragic collapse, supplied the negative argument to the latter's transcendent 'positive complement'.¹³⁸

In *The Twenty Years' Crisis* Carr explains that it was not only the international crises of the 1930s *per se* that demanded a peace manifesto, but that relations among

¹³⁶ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.ci.

¹³⁷ 'The *roman à thèse*, now so unpopular that the phrase has become a hackneyed term of abuse in literary criticism, was in the middle of the last century [i.e., the nineteenth] a respected and recognized form of literature...Practically every great Russian novel of the classical period was more or less definitely a *roman à thèse*...the moral purpose is almost as clearly marked in Turgenev or Tolstoy as in Dostoevsky...It would not have occurred to Dostoevsky to deny that his novels were written with a purpose. One of the unrealized ambitions of his later years was to write a 'Russian *Candide*'; and if ever a story deserved to be branded as a *roman à thèse*, it is Voltaire's masterpiece.' Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.147.

¹³⁸ '...in presenting us with an ideal of pure self-sacrifice Dostoevsky continues his warfare, begun in *Crime and Punishment*, against the apostles of "enlightened self-interest". *The Idiot* thus provides the positive complement to the negative argument of *Crime and Punishment*, and is in a spiritual sense the sequel promised in the concluding pages of the earlier novel.' Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.164. 'But that is the beginning of a new story - the story of the gradual renewal of a man, the story of his gradual regeneration, of his passing from one world into another, of his initiation into a new unknown life. That might be the subject of a new story, but our present story is ended.' Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, concluding paragraph, p.462.

nations in the twentieth century had become *the* arena for the perennial conflict between privilege and under-privilege. This conflict between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' had evolved in modern history from a conflict about the status of *individuals*, which was the essence of the French Revolution, to the conflict between *classes*, illustrated in the rise of socialism and culminating in the Russian Revolution, to the post-Versailles Treaty conflict between *nations* or national groups.¹³⁹ 'The nation,' Carr writes, 'became, more than ever before, the supreme unit round which centred human demands for equality and human ambition for predominance...The inequality which threatened a world upheaval was not inequality between individuals, nor inequality between classes, but inequality between nations.'¹⁴⁰ *The Twenty Years' Crisis* is essentially the tragic story of this inter-war conflict between the have and have-nots of international politics. It is a tragic story of collapsed principles, no different really than the tragedy of Raskolnikov. But for both Raskolnikov and his saintly reflection Prince Myshkin, tragedy brought transcendence, it paradoxically suggested hope and elevation, provided that a sensitive enough mind or soul took centre stage of the drama. That the right 'mentality' could divine transcendence from tragedy was, on the eve of the Second World War, the fundamental message Carr had for the 'Makers of the Coming Peace'.

This chapter is quite long and involves a number a concepts. It may benefit the reader to keep in mind that this chapter is simply an interpretation of *The Twenty Years' Crisis* that argues Carr structured his history to reflect his conception of tragedy as it is found in *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*.

139 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.210.

140 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.210.

The Structure of Tragedy I: The Calm

Harmony precedes tragedy. Syntheses, utopias, the 'paradise of *laissez-faire*',¹⁴¹ each exhibit harmonic calm. The most significant 'calm' for Carr was the nineteenth century 'harmony of interests', the theory that individual interests would 'naturally coincide' with those of the community.¹⁴² When this doctrine was first articulated there was a real correspondence between its theory and its reality. This doctrine *assumed* specific economic conditions such as, Carr writes, small-scale producers and light, adaptable merchants who wanted to maximize production and exchange, and who were unconcerned with the distribution of wealth. These conditions Carr found 'substantially fulfilled' when production was unspecialized and capital had not yet taken the form of heavy plant, and, perhaps most importantly, the wage class was, as Carr describes, 'insignificant and without influence'.¹⁴³ Theoretical assumptions fit empirical reality. As these small-scale merchants and producers pursued their own self-interest and competed for market share, the competition, the tension of supply and demand, and what Adam Smith called the 'invisible hand', seemed to conspire for the benefit of all society: goods and wealth were produced and consumed efficiently. The economy seemed a pointillist infinity, where the dots alone made the picture.

The defining feature of this utopia was the idea that the individual did not not expect to have to sacrifice any of their own interests to the interests of the community. It was a moment of synthesis; ego and environment, the individual and society, were one and the same. The ethical problem was solved: 'It is curious to observe how, through the

141 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* p.43.

142 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.43.

143 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.44.

wise and beneficent arrangement of Providence, men thus do the greatest service to the public when they are thinking of nothing but their own gain.¹⁴⁴ The harmony of interests established the egoist pursuit of self-interest as the most ethical way to relate to one's society; to re-write Carr: loving yourself was a thoroughly enlightened way of loving your neighbours.¹⁴⁵ It was however, a particular 'self' that was doing the loving, that is, the idealized liberal individual. This synthesis or utopia championed this specific individual, idealized by Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill, who would arrange his affairs, as described by Dostoevsky, by calendar, table, and tabulation; human personality was simply an extension of reason, likewise society was simply the extension of this individual, a gathering of these ideal dots. But Carr believed, as he had found in Dostoevsky, that human personality and human society were not exclusively rational. Just as the human will would 'shatter the systems of the lovers of mankind', some similar force was latent in society and would not tolerate its 'colonization' by this ideal ego-type any more than the human personality could be colonized by reason.

Thus, with the industrialization of production, with heavy plant, fixed capital, and specialization, the empirical reality changed, the pointillist society morphed into a cubist image of large class blocks challenging perspective and creating a tension in the theoretical assumptions of *laissez-faire*. As production became more and more industrialized only the 'unparalleled expansion of production, population and prosperity' was able to sustain the plausibility of a harmony of interests.¹⁴⁶ To maintain the

144 Carr quoting the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.44.

145 'To love one's neighbours turned out to be a thoroughly enlightened way of loving oneself.' Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.44.

146 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.44.

conclusion of the doctrine of harmony of interests, that the individual's interests were the same as the community's, another set of theoretical assumptions were found to fit another empirical reality. This tension was lessened, Carr points out, by recourse to a new set of assumptions, from an 'infinite' society to 'infinite' markets.

In calm conditions of harmony and synthesis man not only solves the ethical problem but also solves what Carr called the 'fundamental problem' of political philosophy: why people should submit to certain rules of conduct.¹⁴⁷ Any durable answer to this problem, Carr argues, must be both *intuitive* and *rational*.¹⁴⁸ Man will intuitively subordinate his interests to those of the group; man praises duty, obligation, loyalty, sacrifice, and the 'greater good'.¹⁴⁹ But man will also demand that one's submission to rules of conduct be *rational* justified; reason dictates submission should *make sense*. The oldest and most common example of this type of rational justification is 'the ruler rules because he is stronger, and the ruled submit because they are weaker'.¹⁵⁰ This is a version of the position held famously by Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic* to which Carr alludes later in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*.¹⁵¹ In this case people calculate that submitting

147 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.42.

148 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.42-43.

149 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.42.

150 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.42.

151 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.62. In my copy of *The Twenty Years' Crisis* this statement contains a funny typo: 'The thesis that "justice was the right of the *stranger*" was, indeed, familiar in the Hellenic world.' Could this be some sort of publishing Freudian slip indicating Carr's existentialist debt?: 'I had been right, I was still right, I was always right. I had lived my life one way and I could have just as well lived it another. I had done this and I hadn't done that. I hadn't done this thing but I had done another. And so? It was as if I had waited all this time for this moment and for the first light of dawn to be vindicated. Nothing, nothing mattered, and I knew why.' Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, p.121. Also, Carr quotes Bertrand Russell: 'If orderly government is to command general assent...some way must be found of persuading a majority of

is a rationally better choice than defying the stronger power, whether a tyrant, the state, or the democratic majority.¹⁵² Thus it is something of a special case when an effective and *satisfying* synthesis or compromise between reason and intuition is achieved.¹⁵³

Otherwise, whichever is *unsatisfied*, whether reason or intuition, will inspire a revolt; reason may counsel submission to the rules of conduct in a police state, but man's intuitive demand that his submission have some moral meaning will soon demand that he revolt against the oppression. Likewise, man's intuition may urge heroic defiance, but the famous white flag is a potent symbol of the power of reason. Carr, echoing *Memoirs from Underground*, argues that during the Enlightenment and in its surviving outposts, reason so effectively 'colonized' thought that intuitive concepts such as duty, obligation, or loyalty were confused to be *expressions* of reason;¹⁵⁴ romance lay buried under the Enlightenment's rational totalitarianism.

mankind to agree upon some doctrine other than that of Thrasymachus.' In Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.200.

152 'The majority rules because it is stronger, the minority submits because it is weaker. Democracy, it has often been said, substitutes the counting of heads for the breaking of heads...[man] should submit because otherwise the stronger will compel him; and the results of compulsion are more disagreeable than those of voluntary submission.

Obligation is thus derived from a sort of spurious ethic based on the reasonableness of recognizing that might is right.' Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.42-43.

153 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.43. I have highlighted 'satisfying' to draw attention to the importance Carr attaches to 'satisfaction' as a fundamental criteria for long-term success in both theory and practice. See for examples *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.19,37,43,84,86,87,94,95, 130,144,216; and *Dostoevsky*, p.152,156. In using the term satisfying, we should conclude here that Carr is indicating that he feels that the ethical ideal is something durable and acceptable over the long-term, in other words, not totally devoid of the potential for a future in the real world. Most of Carr's observations on the potential for long-term satisfaction can be read as his answer to the reason Raskolnikov fails.

154 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.43.

The lesson of the 'calm' is that when circumstances are generally unproblematic, when the creation of wealth seems natural, when knowledge advances as expected and conforms to prediction, a doctrine of a harmony of interests is plausible. The flip side of this lesson is that prosperity and 'success' make it easy to miss the *purpose* that steers science, the *interpretation* that guides historiography, and the *interests* served by progress. In other words, the subjective element of seemingly objective reality is obscured when things go right; when things 'work' it is easy to think that their 'working' is a natural condition. 'Objective' laws are easy to believe in when they never seem to be disobeyed.

Thus, in a period of calm the subjective, independent, non-determined elements of human life are obscured. This is the lesson of *Memoirs from Underground*, that man can only participate in this partial, calculated, and predictable world if his will, the independent element of his personality, is denied, suppressed, or lulled. The man from Underground lists the 'self-interests' of *rational* man as 'prosperity, wealth, freedom, [and] peace'.¹⁵⁵ These 'advantages' clearly, he argues, should be the goal of every rational man, but, the logic by which these advantages are calculated is precisely the same logic that ultimately negates man's free will and independent choice, offering him nothing but this pre-determined life, pre-scripted according to 'table and tabulation'. Thus, the embrace of rationally determined self-interests and the enjoyment of its 'advantages' are intimately linked, in both Dostoevsky and Carr, with a fundamental *unconsciousness*, a coma of the will, a suppression of the one element of human personality that can stand-up to the tyranny of reason. The calm is such because man is lulled by the logic of reason.

155 Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, p.19.

The Structure of Tragedy II: The Tension

When this harmony becomes dissonant, when things stop 'working', when absolute gains begin to decrease or refract into relative gains, the plausibility of 'objective' laws, the sustainability of the solutions to the ethical and political problems, the security of the synthesis, all become tenuous; focus is sharpened and we begin to see clearly the cracks. Man begins to be aware of an existential suffering, he begins to sense the agony of freedom. This suffering is, for Dostoevsky, the source of consciousness.

In the nineteenth century, as the ethical and political sanction of pursuing self-interest clearly began to favour capital over labour, workers could no longer intuitively or rationally accept the difference between the wages received for their labour and those profits derived by capital, neither could they accept the 'logic' of self-interest which dictated they prefer to sell their labour so as only to avoid unemployment; this logic blatantly conflicted with the interests of the community. Just as man will not accept the superman's pyramid or submit to murder for their 'own benefit', these workers could not accept the ethics of capitalism and *laissez-faire*, that is, that men should relate to one another by way of dominant and exploited classes. Nor could they accept the corresponding politics, that they should submit to rules of conduct designed to protect the interests of capital. As this tension became conspicuous, those who had most benefitted *in particular* by liberal, *laissez-faire* politics and ethics had a vested interest in maintaining its legitimacy. The harmony of interests was no longer a seemingly natural solution to the problems of ethics and politics, but became the ideology of the satisfied class.

Similar to this growing consciousness of the working class, Carr argues that 'have-not' and marginal nations of the twentieth century rejected the 'logic' that their position relative to the Great Powers was a morally sanctioned hierarchy. When the Great Powers professed peace and stability as the interests of all nations, the 'have-not' nations heard instead a moral sanctioning of their inferior status; peace, Carr argued, is the vested interest of those in possession.¹⁵⁶ Again, both the *ethics* by which 'have-not' nations were asked to relate to others in the community of nations, and the international *politics* to which they were asked to submit were intuitively rejected.

The postulate of a harmony of interests, of *laissez-faire* politics and ethics, which had flourished in eighteenth century conditions, and was maintained in the nineteenth by the social power of capital, began to flounder in the changing chemical composition of its environment, and when introduced into the fundamentally different environment of twentieth century international politics and economics it could only hold its breath so long. This is a question of survivability: can a particular ego-type maintain that the general environment is nothing but an extension of itself even as other ego-types begin asserting themselves. For example, *laissez-faire* survived in an environment where community interests were defined by capitalists who gained the most by pursuing their self-interest, but it began to flounder and ultimately died when this *monopoly* was challenged by the growing consciousness of the working masses. Definitions of 'community interests' began, in effect, to be traded on the black market, the official price was no longer legitimate. Workers, and later 'have-not' nations, could not accept their subordination for the good of the community. The emerging consciousnesses in this

¹⁵⁶ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.51.

second environment could not rationally or intuitively accept that a pyramid of rewards, profits for the few over wages for the many, or stability for the few in possession over change for the many dispossessed, reflected the true interests of the community. When the interests of such qualitatively different nations, such as France and Germany, or England and Nicaragua,¹⁵⁷ were said to be identical, and that the community of nations' interests coincided with those of its members, it took only the belligerency of the 1930s to expose the harmony of interests as not only fantasy, but a fantasy that served particular, not universal interests. Thus, a significant revelation in any breakdown of a harmony of interests is of the *relative* nature of interests, that the political world, and to a significant extent, the ethical world, are worlds of relations between *groups*. When these groups are suppressed and are unrecognized (even by themselves) and 'unconscious' it is easy to smother their interests under those of the dominant group. But as these groups 'emerge' into history, that is, become conscious of their own particular interests, any assumed participation in a 'harmony' becomes condescension, it is, in Carr's words, a 'mockery'; there can be no real natural harmony.¹⁵⁸

Ethics and politics based on the imperialism of a particular ego-type, whether the rational individual, the capitalist, or the Great Power, could not survive in a social

157 'A political issue arising between Great Britain and Japan is something quite different from what may be formally the same issue between Great Britain and Nicaragua.' Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.97; 'The settlement of a conflict of interest between the United States and Nicaragua will depend, in greater part...on the relative strength of the two countries.' (Ibid., p.187); 'The grievances of Albania and Nicaragua, whatever their moral basis, will never be effective unless they are endorsed, for interested reasons, by some Great Power or Powers.' (Ibid., p.192); 'The only reason why it would seem absurd for Nicaragua or Lithuania to aspire to world leadership is that, according to any reasonable prognostication, these countries will never be strong enough to have the slightest hope of attaining such an ambition.' (Ibid., p.216). Why Nicaragua Edward?

158 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.76.

environment of conscious and competing groups; thus any code for relating to other humans or submitting to political rules could not be based on the *laissez-faire* model. Carr found forms of this same tension at the heart of *Crime and Punishment* and at the League of Nations. Raskolnikov's dual claim that he killed as the superman and as a benefactor were not only incompatible with each other, but the logical conclusion of each was incommensurable with the 'essential nature of mankind'.¹⁵⁹ Recall Raskolnikov's utterances: 'I've killed only a louse...a useless, loathsome, harmful creature...[however, Raskolnikov says] power is only vouchsafed to the man who dares to stoop and pick it up...I didn't do the murder to gain wealth and power and to become a benefactor of mankind. Nonsense!'¹⁶⁰ Such 'linguistic contortions', Carr writes, are both symptom and facilitator of the 'failure to distinguish between the world of abstract reason and the world of political reality'.¹⁶¹ It is also an attempt to disguise and prop up one's vested interests, to defend what one wants. Raskolnikov's theory, and his attempts to defend it, are logically anti-social, and thus will necessarily fail. No matter that egoism coexists with sociability *in* human groups, both the superman, imagining the individual 'in *isolation*', and the implications of *murder as a logical benefit* to humanity,¹⁶² can never be accepted by man, a species fundamentally social; this is the 'essence' of Carr's 'essential nature of mankind'. The superman is impossible. Raskolnikov, like the ego in general, cannot, as he wants to, escape society. Raskolnikov cannot escape sociability. He cannot escape what his intuition demands, that relations among men have a moral dimension. Raskolnikov must then, in his soul, intuitively reject the *absolute logic* of his second

159 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.152.

160 Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, pp.351-353.

161 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.31.

162 This is the same implication Issac Asimov explores with his '3 Laws of Robotics'.

claim to have murdered for the benefit of humanity. No one can deny the *reason* that murder may benefit society, but no one can *intuitively* accept it. No matter how rational or logical or linguistically elegant, man will not intuitively accept a cull of the species.¹⁶³

At the League of Nations Carr found that, '[a]bstract rationalism gained the upper hand', as politicians with the wisdom to appreciate the virtue of abstract *imperfection* 'neglected' the League as it was being established.¹⁶⁴ 'The fact [Carr writes] that the utopian dishes prepared during these years at Geneva proved unpalatable to most of the principal governments concerned was a symptom of the growing divorce between theory and practice.'¹⁶⁵ Just as Raskolnikov deluded himself that the articulation and maintenance of a theory could justify a crime, the 'metaphysicians of Geneva' believed that 'accumulation of ingenious texts' could be, in themselves, sufficient in preventing war.¹⁶⁶ A similar tension can be discerned in Carr's description of the Franco-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance, an arrangement he argued clearly benefited the two countries against Germany, yet was presented by the signatories, Carr writes, 'as a shining example of the principle of "collective security"'.¹⁶⁷ When *asserting* a harmony

163 See Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.91.

164 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.30.

165 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.31.

166 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.31. 'Though he had failed to 'hold out' and had given himself up to justice, [Raskolnikov] went to Siberia unrepentant, still convinced of the rightness of his premises and regretting only his failure to live up to them.' Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.156.

167 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* p.31. Article IV of the treaty reads: 'The undertakings stipulated above being consonant with the obligations of the High Contracting Parties as Members of the League of Nations, *nothing in the present Treaty shall be interpreted as restricting the duty of the latter to take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world* or as restricting the obligations resulting for the High Contracting Parties from the Covenant of the League of Nations.' *Basic Documents of International Relations*, p.120. (italics added)

against such dissonance as in the examples above, when a principle begins to gasp for breath, when a postulate begins to buckle in a new gravity field, collapse is imminent.

The Structure of Tragedy III: The Crest and the Trough

Unable to sling the growing dislocation between theory and practice, principle and action, or utopia and reality, a tragic break is inevitable. And as these poles fall apart the taut and fragile solutions to ethics and politics that balanced between them crash and shatter. Both *Crime and Punishment* and *The Twenty Years' Crisis* are, in essence, stories of this collapse. Tragedy is not simply the refutation of an idea, or the failure of an action. Tragedy is the corruption and negation of the relationship between theory and practice, principle and action, utopia and reality, to such a degree that they no longer provide, as did the theory and practice of *laissez-faire*, rational and intuitive solutions to the fundamental problems of ethics and politics. In a static world, tragedy could not exist; tragedy obtains in *interaction*.

'Every failure...of the reality to comply with the utopia,' Carr quotes, 'supposes a traitor.'¹⁶⁸ Even Raskolnikov felt he had betrayed himself: 'Raskolnikov...went to Siberia unrepentant, still convinced of the rightness of his premises and regretting only *his* failure to live up to them.'¹⁶⁹ However, Carr's answer to the 'fundamental ethical question' of *Crime and Punishment* is not that Raskolnikov fails due to *personal weakness*, as Raskolnikov himself believes, but because the 'postulates' upon which he based his actions were 'bankrupt'. Raskolnikov's consciousness, his dualism, his intuition and reason, his *humaness*, corrupted and negated the logic of his theory. Again, it is useful to

¹⁶⁸ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* p.37.

¹⁶⁹ Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.156. (italics added)

contrast the fundamentally *unconscious* Svidrigailov who suffers none of Raskolnikov's uncertainty or confusion. Svidrigailov could, where Raskolnikov could not, impose an imperialistic, minority, superman consciousness on society.

Carr denies Raskolnikov the self-indulgent belief that his failure was an act of treason against himself. Just as why Raskolnikov failed is the fundamental ethical question of *Crime and Punishment*, the fundamental ethical question of *The Twenty Years' Crisis* is whether the interwar attempts at world order failed due to human weakness or due to the bankruptcy of the postulates upon which those attempts were made. And in the same way, Carr denies self-flagellation to the mourners of the League of Nations; their postulates were confirmed bankrupt when their postulates could not breathe the air of the nineteen-thirties. Regarding the sequence of events begun by the Japanese invasion of China in 1931 that caused a crisis of faith in the utopian premises of the League of Nations and led to the general belief that man was either 'too wicked' or 'too stupid' to achieve international peace, Carr writes, '[i]t is a meaningless evasion to pretend that we have witnessed, not the failure of the League of Nations, but only the failure of those who refused to make it work. The breakdown of the nineteen-thirties was too overwhelming to be explained merely in terms of individual action or inaction. Its downfall involved the bankruptcy of the postulates on which it was based'.¹⁷⁰ This is the bankruptcy of the imperial 'individualistic' postulate in an age of conscious, competing groups. Just as the doctrine of a harmony of interests could not survive the emergence of the proletariat as a collective, conscious, and competitive force, the doctrine of harmony

170 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.38-39.

of interests could not survive in international politics if this doctrine was seen likewise to sanctify a minority position and promote its self-interests as collective interests.

After the tragic collapse, there is no basis for ethics, for how the ego should relate to society, or how the 'national' ego should relate to the society of nations. Neither is there a basis for politics; why *should* an individual, class, or nation submit to rules of conduct? The moment man begins to ask urgently, 'On what basis, then, can we act?', a tragic period has begun.¹⁷¹ Action, practice, and reality are the oceans on which ideas, theory, and utopias try to sail. The tragic period is the chapter of failed attempts. It is of increased tragedy when an entire supertanker sinks, so apparently solid that in its hold it carried the foundations of ethics and politics. After such a tragedy man is left aimless in dilapidated liferafts, without hope. Such crises are long and drawn-out drownings; while gasping there is too much arguing about fault. It is not a question of poor seamanship or incorrect navigation, the tragic period makes clear it is an issue of survivability. This prompted Carr to urge man to become *pragmatic*. Carr thought he could help those in the liferafts. Finding the correct and appropriate postulates was urgent; there *was* still hope.

Carr writes:

What confronts us in international politics today is, therefore, nothing less than *the complete bankruptcy of the conception of morality* which has dominated political and economic thought for a century and a half...The inner meaning of the modern international crisis is the collapse of the whole structure of utopianism based on the concept of the harmony of interests. The present generation will have to rebuild from the foundations.¹⁷²

'Civilized' man, between the Napoleonic and Great Wars, was able, Carr argues, to believe that reason had taken hold in relations between nations, and that conflict was

¹⁷¹ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*.

¹⁷² Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.58. (italics added)

something that was natural only between the civilized and the uncivilized.¹⁷³ In stark contrast to the first half of the twentieth century, during these ninety-nine years there were no major wars between Great Powers. The twentieth century's crisis years confronted man with the power, conflict, and destruction of international political life; 'The men of the nineteen-thirties,' Carr writes, after a century of believing it was possible to rationalize international politics, 'returned shocked and bewildered to the world of nature'.¹⁷⁴ Yet man still yearned for some application of reason to international affairs. Carr describes two 'equally dubious' efforts to rationally moralize international relations after 1919 which 'necessarily failed': Fascist and Nazi Darwinism built upon the right of the stronger, and that of the 'Western countries' built upon the 'vested interests' and right of those in possession.¹⁷⁵ Compare Carr's explanation of these failures with his explanation of Raskolnikov's ethical significance:

We can accept neither the Darwinian doctrine, which identifies the good of the whole with the good of the fittest and contemplates without repugnance the elimination of the unfit, nor the doctrine of a natural harmony of interests which has lost such foundation in reality it once had, and which inevitably becomes a cloak for the vested interests of the privileged. Both these doctrines have become untenable as the basis of international morality. Their breakdown has left us with no ready solution of the problem of reconciling the good of the nation with the good of the world community; and international morality is in the melting pot.¹⁷⁶

...Raskolnikov is never quite sure whether he had committed murder for his own sake or for the sake of humanity. But whether he has acted on the theory that, being a superman, he makes his own moral laws and is subject to no external code, or on the theory that, ethics being purely rational and utilitarian, the killing of 'a vile and loathsome vermin' is an act of virtue, the hollowness of the theory is exhibited in the result. The sequel reveals...the tragic and fruitless struggle of a powerful intellect to maintain a conviction which is incompatible with the

173 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.207.

174 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.207.

175 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.208.

176 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.208.

essential nature of man. The tragedy for Raskolnikov is the collapse of the principle on which he has acted.¹⁷⁷

Like Raskolnikov, the Facist and Nazi Darwinist 'survival of the fittest' doctrines confused something done for its own sake or for the sake of humanity. But just as neither of Raskolnikov's justifications could survive the 'essential nature of man', man could not accept the survival of the fittest as a basis for ethics or politics, for the relations among men or the submission to rules according to a hierarchy of 'fitness'; other 'consciousnesses' would not abide and did not abide the lethal imposition.¹⁷⁸ The western powers who attempted to manage the shipwreck according to the rights of those 'in possession' made the same mistake as the capitalists who tried to maintain the doctrine of *laissez-faire* in the face of glaring asymmetries. The dissatisfied 'have-not' nations could not accept ethics or politics based on who stood in possession of things after a catastrophe. Just as the workers began to demand the distribution of wealth not just its reproduction, the 'have-not' nations began to demand the distribution of power not just its reproduction. Thus the tragic period, the breaking of the wave and the descent into its trough, the disappearance, the dissolution, the sinking, and drowning of seemingly sound platforms for ethics and politics, is characterized by grasping, tyranny, and mutiny.

177 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.152.

178 In a review of *Mein Kampf*, George Orwell writes, '[Hitler] has grasped the falsity of the hedonistic attitude to life. Nearly all western thought since the last war, certainly all 'progressive' thought, has assumed tacitly that human beings desire nothing beyond ease, security and avoidance of pain...Hitler, because in his own joyless mind he feels it with exceptional strength, knows that human beings *don't* only want comfort, safety, short working-hours, hygiene, birth-control and, in general, common-sense; they also, at least intermittently, want struggle and self-sacrifice, not to mention drums, flags and loyalty parades. However they may be as economic theories, Fascism and Nazism are psychologically far sounder than any hedonistic conception of life.' *CEJL*, vol.2, p.

The Structure of Tragedy IV: The Realist Opportunity

In a crisis or tragic period, such as in international politics between 1919 and 1939, when ideas and theories were drowning in reality and became gasps of vested interest, a realistic appraisal of the situation is crucial. It is crucial to understand that the realist opportunity is a *narrow* window. Realist 'activity' is a brief affair for Carr. It is a particular measure called in to serve a particular function at a particular time. Unlike the caricatures to which Carr in particular and realism in general have been reduced, the realist critique, for Carr, is not an ideological position one maintains. Realism has one role in a tragedy, that is to identify what consciousnesses are *really* in play. Realism is a searchlight that illuminates a scene of tragedy.

Raskolnikov refuses to accept that his theory was wrong, even as he is transported to Siberia to serve his sentence. However, in one of Raskolnikov's explanations to Sonia, we can taste the germ of Carr's realist critique. Raskolnikov, as we have seen, agonizes between egoist and altruist justifications, insisting that no matter which ultimately stood, both were in the interests of advancement and progress, either by the creation of a new ethic or as a cull. However, seemingly at the end of his endurance, Raskolnikov, quoted above in full, admits that he 'wanted to murder without casuistry, to murder for my own sake, for myself alone!'.¹⁷⁹ This admission is the key to the realist critique.

The 'most damning and most convincing' aspect of the realist critique, Carr says, is the 'exposure of the real basis of...professedly abstract principles'.¹⁸⁰ The 'real basis' illuminated by the realist critique is exactly that contained in Raskolnikov's admission, that the thing was done, not because of any 'abstract principles', but that these were, as

¹⁷⁹ Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, p.353; also, Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.151.

¹⁸⁰ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.80.

Carr writes about the 1930s, 'transparent disguises of selfish vested interests'.¹⁸¹ The thing was done for 'myself alone!' Thus, if we are to think clearly about politics, and move beyond simple recourse to betrayal or human fallibility to explain why certain political and ethical principles fail to reform political and ethical practice, why certain political and ethical principles cannot survive in certain political and ethical environments, we must depend on the realist critique as a doctor depends on the X-ray. The realist critique transfixes Raskolnikov in its spotlight and sees, before he admitted as much in his exhaustion, that he murdered not as an enlightened superman nor as a benefactor to humanity, but that he murdered for purely selfish interests. The realist critique would likewise throw the switch on those brownshirts who exclaimed the survival of the fittest and show their doctrine to be neither a radical ethic or a 'natural good' for humanity but a doctrine that identified the fittest with the believer.

The realist must accept the task, Carr writes, of bringing 'down the whole cardboard structure of utopian thought by exposing the hollowness of the material out of which it is built [and] demolish the utopian concept of a fixed and absolute standard by which policies and actions can be judged'.¹⁸² In an antecedent formulation of this thought Carr implies that in Russian literature, and Dostoevsky in particular, one could find 'training' in this task. We should not be surprised, Carr writes, by Dostoevsky's emphasis on 'principles', at such 'people who murder for principle, live on bread and water for a principle, commit suicide for a principle'.¹⁸³ The analysis of principles in Russian literature, was, as it is in the realist critique, a 'vital element' of any serious reflection of

181 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.80.

182 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.71.

183 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.148.

life.¹⁸⁴ Carr writes: 'The Russian will accept no principle and no convention until he has explored its very foundations; and if he finds the first stone has not been well and truly laid he will recklessly pull down the whole edifice about his ears'.¹⁸⁵ The realist critique strives to judge principles for what they are, and is as concerned with them as was the Russian. For example, Carr writes that '[n]o serious student of politics will entertain [the] belief', that a 'clash' of ethical first principles obtained between Woodrow Wilson's statement that, 'The right is more precious than peace', and Aristide Briand's claim that, 'Peace comes before all, peace comes even before justice'.¹⁸⁶ Carr describes how the realist critique exposes the 'hollowness' of these appeals to seemingly universal abstract moral principles, and reveals that they are not asserted to inspire specific policies, but that specific interests and policies called for contradictory absolute principles; Wilson had decided to enter WWI so peace could not be pre-eminent, and Briand was engaged in preventing any disruption to the terms of the Versailles Treaty, thus the preservation of peace was paramount.¹⁸⁷ Similarly, while at the League of Nations, Carr heard a delegate make the argument that free trade was 'the doctrine of economically powerful states which flourished without protection, but would be fatal to weak states', a revelation, Carr admitted, of much significance, as free-trade had been something of a first principle in what he called his 'intellectual upbringing'.¹⁸⁸ 'If free trade went,' Carr writes, 'the whole liberal outlook went with it.'¹⁸⁹ In language that evokes the suppression of other egos or

184 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.148.

185 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.148.

186 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.69.

187 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.69.

188 Carr, 'An Autobiography', p.xvii.

189 Carr, 'An Autobiography', p.xvii.

consciousnesses, Carr interprets the collapse of the professed universalism of the 'liberal outlook' thus:

Theories of social morality are always the product of a dominant group which identifies itself with the community as a whole, and which possesses facilities denied to subordinate groups or individuals for imposing its view of life on the community. Theories of international morality are, for the same reason and in virtue of the same process, the product of dominant nations or groups of nations...In virtue of this identification, any assailant of the interests of the dominant group is made to incur the odium of assailing the alleged common interest of the whole community, and is told that in making this assault he is attacking his own higher interests. The doctrine of the harmony of interests thus serves as an ingenious moral device invoked, in perfect sincerity, by privileged groups in order to maintain their dominant position.¹⁹⁰

Bertrand Russell emphasizes the point: 'Ethical notions are very seldom a cause, but almost always an effect, a means of claiming universal legislative authority for our own preference, not, as we fondly imagine, the actual ground of those preferences.'¹⁹¹

Characteristically, for Carr this is not an entirely negative indictment. Although the realist must bleach these 'sham colours of altruism',¹⁹² Carr does not discount the potential *benefit* that theories of morality can be produced *at all*. This is a key portal that Carr leaves open for his later attempts to provide the basis for a new international morality. The problem, as will become clear below, is *not* that the dominant group is the productive force behind theories of morality. The problem is that these theories are selfish and self-serving; common among them is a rational self-interestedness, postulates put forward to bolster one's own case *against* others. The essence of the moral theory that Carr proposes for international politics is a shift from pure rational self-interest towards the incorporation of intuitive self-sacrifice. This is an extrapolation of the

190 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.74-75.

191 In Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.65.

192 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.152. '...for such a person, if he existed, would not feel the need to disguise himself in the sham colours of altruism.'

Dostoevskian idea that suffering and the voluntary resignation of self-interest on the part of the powerful is the only true path to 'salvation' or, in terms of *The Twenty Years' Crisis* project, peaceful change.¹⁹³ That a dominant group's hegemony *can* produce moral theories allows the possibility that they *may* produce moral theories based on their own voluntary resignation, submission, and self-sacrifice. This is Carr's fundamental Dostoevskian argument, the case for humility.

Discussing the 'uplifting nature' of tragedy in Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot*, Carr writes:

the property of tragic art is to transfigure and transmute, to lift us through the human plane of pity to a new plane of consciousness, where the death of Cordelia and the agony of Lear, the humiliation of Aglaya and the recurrent insanity of Myshkin, lose their human significance in a world of higher spiritual values.¹⁹⁴

Tragedy gives crisis somewhere to go. This 'property' of tragedy is due to its relationship with consciousness and suffering. Carr quotes Novalis, writing that suffering is the 'prerogative which distinguishes man from the brute; it is "the token of his high estate"'.¹⁹⁵ Likewise Edith Hamilton writes: 'It is by our power to suffer, above all, that we are of more value than the sparrows.'¹⁹⁶ Suffering, for Dostoevsky, is 'the sole origin of consciousness'.¹⁹⁷ If the 'preoccupation' of tragedy is suffering, then the *ability* to suffer is

193 'The problem of "peaceful change" is, in national politics, how to effect necessary and desirable changes without revolution and, in international politics, how to effect such changes without war...Every solution of the problem of political change, whether national or international, must be based on a compromise between morality and power.' Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.191-192.

194 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.162.

195 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.224.

196 Edith Hamilton, *The Great Age of Greek Literature*, p.233.

197 'And why are you so firmly, so triumphantly convinced that only the normal and the positive - in short, only prosperity - is to the advantage of man? Is not reason mistaken

the central prerequisite of a tragic figure.¹⁹⁸ As psychological suffering is self-evidently worse than physical suffering, it must follow that this ability to suffer must be found in the mind or soul. 'The suffering of a great soul that can suffer greatly - that and only that, is tragedy.'¹⁹⁹ Thus, a particular awareness, sensitivity, consciousness, or mentality is at the root of tragedy, and herein lies the ability of tragedy to *elevate* an audience, not simply depress them. Through our observation of, and exposure to, a 'great soul' subjected to the extremes of suffering, we can, because of the intimate connection between suffering and consciousness, observe, experience and appreciate the highest and most intense manifestation of human consciousness. Observing 'the suffering of a great soul' is a direct line to the core of human consciousness. Thus, tragedy invigorates man's sentience. As Edith Hamilton writes: 'The great soul in pain and in death *transforms* pain and death. Through it we catch a glimpse...of a deeper and more ultimate reality than that in which our lives are lived.'²⁰⁰ 'For tragedy,' Hamilton writes, 'is nothing less than pain transmuted into exaltation.'²⁰¹ This is the same appreciation Carr has for the key tragic figures in Dostoevsky's *oeuvre*: Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot* and Dmitri Karamazov in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Carr calls Dmitri not only the greatest of Dostoevsky's

about advantage? After all, perhaps man likes suffering just as much? Perhaps suffering is just as great an advantage to him as prosperity? Man is sometimes fearfully, passionately in love with suffering and that is a fact...Whether it's good or bad, it is sometimes very pleasant to smash things, too...I am sure man will never renounce real suffering, that is, destruction and chaos. Why, after all, suffering is the sole origin of consciousness. Though I stated at the beginning that consciousness, in my opinion, is the greatest misfortune for man, yet I know man loves it and would not give it up for any satisfaction.' Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, p.31.

198 Edith Hamilton, *The Great Age*, p.234.

199 Edith Hamilton, *The Great Age*, p.235.

200 Edith Hamilton, *The Great Age*, p.238. (italics added)

201 Edith Hamilton, *The Great Age*, p.229.

characters, but also one of the greatest tragic figures in all literature.²⁰² These two characters, embody, for Carr, transmutation; it was perhaps this appreciation of transformative character that Mirsky did not share with Carr. Carr argues that during the scene of Dmitri's trial 'we can look at the world through no other eyes than his. We attain, as we attained in *The Idiot*, to a spiritual sense of transmuted values. Dmitri Karamazov, like Myshkin, has ceased to belong to the world in which he moves'.²⁰³ It is this ability to 'create a new world', Carr asserts, that gives Dostoevsky his 'permanent place among the great writers of all time'.²⁰⁴ This ability is expressed concretely in the theme of *The Idiot*, which Carr identifies as the 'clash' between 'the world of reality and the world of the ideal' which leads to a new world of transmuted values.²⁰⁵

Carr said that the 'impossibility of being a consistent and thorough-going realist [is the] most certain and most curious lesson of political science'.²⁰⁶ Digging into the 'curiosity' of this lesson reveals to us the metaphysical foundation of consciousness, suffering, and tragedy underneath Carr's politics, ethics, and historiography. While the analytic power of reason is so intoxicating, there is something deeply unsatisfying about it; this was the lesson of *Memoirs from Underground*. The true significance of realism is that it contains within it the motive force to transcend it. Realism pulls the curtains back on principles that profess universalism, and expose their vested interests. Realism lights up the *purpose* of analysis, it showcases the 'wish' that is 'father to the thought'.²⁰⁷

Realism throws off the covers to show reason in the bed of human will. As long as we

202 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.229.

203 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.229.

204 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.159.

205 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.161.

206 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.84.

207 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.8.

accept the apparent judgement of realism, that all principles, analysis, and thought are biased 'shams', we are paralyzed; realism denies us hope. But we *are not* paralyzed; this is the key. We *do not* believe that our principles, analysis, and thought are biased shams.²⁰⁸ In this apparent contradiction realism subtly and 'curiously' suggests to us the crucial factors of self-consciousness, namely, the recognition of our will's inextricable involvement in the creation of knowledge, our will's capacity to transform our environment, the illusion of separating subject from object or interpretation from fact. By deconstructing others' delusions, realism confronts us with a blueprint of our own consciousness; within the realist critique is a fractal of the crystal of consciousness. Just as the entire structure of a crystal can be discerned in one facet of its matrix, the 'most curious lesson of politics' is a window into the entire structure of man's self-consciousness. This is because, as argued above, self-consciousness, for Carr, is awoken by an awareness of the indeterminacy of life. When man becomes conscious of the purpose to which he can put analysis, or how his wish drives his thought, man becomes conscious of himself, of the effect his *independent will* has on his reality. Modern man's historical consciousness consists of exactly this awareness: that man does not objectively inquire into the past, into what has been determined and determines the present, but rather he participates within a process through which history helps him to understand and *create* the present, master the future, master his environment, and master himself. Thus, the more aware man is of the role his will plays, the more aware he is of indeterminacy in social life, of his own freedom, and thus the more conscious he becomes. Realism's curious spotlight shows that so many seemingly detached, disinterested concepts such as

208 '...even if it uses realist weapons to dissolve other values, [every age] still believes in the absolute character of its own.' Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.86.

analysis, objectivity, reason, and thought each have in their heart a cockpit reserved for free human will.

But it is by this freedom that humans suffer. The awareness of free will, of how it drives seemingly objective processes such as analysis, thought, science, and history is the same awareness that caused the man from *Underground* so much suffering. Compared to the 'straight-forward men of action', who *can* act precisely because they bow prostrate to what is determined, the 'hyperconscious' man from *Underground* is appalled at any blind acceptance of what is determined, of the 'laws of nature and mathematics'. Men of action will simply accept that a stone wall cannot be breached; the man from *Underground*, so fundamentally animated by his own demand for independence and his disdain for such 'stone walls' exclaims:

'But really,' they will shout at you, 'there is no use protesting; it is a case of two times two makes four! Nature does not ask your permission, your wishes, and whether you like or dislike her laws does not concern her. You are bound to accept her as she is, and consequently also all her conclusions. A wall, you see, is a wall - etc. etc.' Good God! but what do I care about the laws of nature and arithmetic, when, for some reason, I dislike those laws and the fact that two times two makes four? Of course I cannot break through a wall by battering my head against it if I really do not have the strength to break through it, but I am not going to resign myself to it simply because it is a stone wall and I am not strong enough.²⁰⁹

From our free will, from this awareness of the indeterminacy in life, we suffer; our freedom, our assertion of independence, our choices, are so often exhausting and so often futile.

Yet, for Dostoevsky, suffering under freedom is ultimately positive. In Ivan Karamazov's 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor', Dostoevsky has the Grand Inquisitor (a Spanish Cardinal leading the Inquisition) confront Jesus with the 'pride' that compelled

209 Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, p.12.

Jesus to leave man free so He could enjoy the worship of free men as opposed to the worship of men who had no choice. 'Man is born a rebel,' the bishop says to Jesus, 'and can rebels be happy?'²¹⁰ That Jesus had come to Earth to 'make men free', the bishop rebuts by saying, 'You want to go into the world and you are going empty handed, with some promise of freedom, which men in their simplicity and their innate lawlessness cannot even comprehend, which they fear and dread - for nothing has ever been more unendurable to man and to human society than freedom!'²¹¹ This diagnosis is the basis of the Grand Inquisitor's prescription for humanity, that is, making men happy requires taking away their freedom. The Catholic Church, an institution Dostoevsky hated,²¹² will, the bishop argues, 'correct the work of Christ', who had 'proudly and selfishly desired the worship of free men'.²¹³ The Catholic Church, by dogma, doctrine, decree, 'miracle, mystery, and authority' will take away man's freedom and replace it with what man truly desires, happiness.²¹⁴ The bishop concludes that by doing so man will rejoice 'that they were once more led like sheep, and that the terrible gift of freedom, which had brought them so much suffering, had been at last removed from their hearts'.²¹⁵ With the Catholic

210 Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, p.295.

211 Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, p.296.

212 Carr wrote, "'The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor' enables Dostoevsky to air his hatred, the time-honoured Russian hatred, of the Roman Catholic church by putting the condemnation of Christ into the mouth of one of its principle agents. In more than one passage of his earlier works he had compared Catholicism with Socialism: *both strive to make a man happy by relieving him of his personal responsibility.*' Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.226. (italics added)

213 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.226.

214 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.226.

215 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.226.

Church, the bishop says, 'all will be happy and will no longer rise in rebellion nor exterminate one another, as they do everywhere under your freedom'.²¹⁶

However, an implication of Ivan Karamazov's 'legend' is that this totalitarian altruism is not sanctioned by God, it is against God, and is really the program of the Devil. 'We are not with you,' the bishop spits at Jesus, 'but with *him*: that is our secret! It's a long time - eight centuries - since we left you and went over to *him*.'²¹⁷ For Dostoevsky, man is free not due to the conceit of Christ, but for the *sake* of suffering itself. Through our freedom we suffer and only by suffering can man truly attain salvation; the freedom we suffer is not a punishment by God, but an affront to Satan.

Man's freedom, his free will, and indeterminacy are then intimately linked to the suffering and consciousness of man. So although realism is a useful means of analysis, to remain a realist caricature, or to follow it to its logical conclusion, is paralysing, and its determinism is unhuman. Just as Dostoevsky's caricatures of the logical extreme, such as Svidrigailov in *Crime and Punishment*, could not, due to being entirely logically determined, convey or embody anything significantly human, the logical realist will think as if in a coma. Carr writes that if we accept that thought is 'irrevocably conditioned by our status and our interests, then both action and thought become devoid of purpose',²¹⁸

216 Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, p.303. Compare this with what Orwell writes about Zamyatin's *We*: 'The guiding principle of the State is that happiness and freedom are incompatible. In the Garden of Eden man was happy, but in his folly he demanded freedom and was driven out into the wilderness. Now the Single State has restored his happiness by removing his freedom.' George Orwell, 'Review of *We* by E.I. Zamyatin', *CEJL*, vol.4, pp.72-75. Orwell also writes in 1940, 'Human types supposedly extinct for centuries, the dancing dervish, the robber chieftain, the Grand Inquisitor, have suddenly reappeared, not as inmates of lunatic asylums, but as the masters of the world', 'Notes on the Way', *CEJL*, vol.2, p.31.

217 Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, p.302.

218 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.86.

something he describes as 'repugnant to the most deep-seated belief of man about himself. To reject the idea that humans can effect free independent choices, directions, and modifications to the content of their lives 'seems scarcely compatible with existence as a human being'.²¹⁹ Although our thought is thoroughly conditioned, we still retain, Carr argues, as does every group or 'age', the 'right to create [our] own values', and humans are 'ultimately compelled to believe not only that there is something which man ought to think and do, but that there is something which he can think and do, and that his thought and action are neither mechanical nor meaningless'.²²⁰ Realism's 'curious lesson' teaches that so many seemingly objective processes are in fact driven by subjective impulses, and reveals through something of a paradox, that the *conditioned* nature of all thought means there is *freedom* of thought, a freedom to direct thought to our own ends. This is perhaps the real reason behind Carr's observation that the most significant 'realists' have never been so 'consistent', and were not mired in the paralysis of pure logical realism, having perceived this lesson of freedom.²²¹

The triad of freedom, suffering, and consciousness, we find possessed *par excellence* in Carr's historically conscious modern man. I argue that this qualifies modern man as the 'great soul' that stars in its own tragedy. We can be uplifted, elevated,

219 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.87.

220 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.87.

221 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.84-85,87. 'That human affairs can be directed and modified by human action and human thought is a postulate so fundamental that its rejection seems scarcely compatible with existence as a human being. Nor is it in fact rejected by those realists who have left their mark on history...Every realist, what ever his profession, is ultimately compelled to believe not only that there is something which man ought to think and do, but that there is something which he can think and do, and that his thought and action are neither mechanical nor meaningless.' *Ibid.*, p.87.

'glimpse a deeper and more ultimate reality', by our own experience of the great soul of modern man, as we suffer the tragedy of the twentieth century.

The Structure of Tragedy V: Transcendence

It is futile, Carr argues, to imagine the future in obsolete terms; a 'reconstitution' of the old order is a 'naive fantasy'.²²² The true 'crisis' of the interwar years was, for Carr, the 'final and irrevocable breakdown' of conditions which warranted the idea of an international harmony of interests and the Utopian order of the nineteenth century.²²³ 'The old world is dead', Carr writes elsewhere, '[t]he future lies with those who can resolutely turn their back on it and face the new world with understanding, courage and imagination.'²²⁴ The possibility of understanding, courage and imagination is, in essence, the 'transfiguration' and 'transmutation' at the heart of tragedy, the resolution afforded by tragedy to free, suffering, and conscious humans. To prompt the imagination, Carr recommends studying class relations which was, he argues, the antecedent realm of the struggle for human social justice.²²⁵ 'Few people', Carr claims, 'are yet willing to recognize that the conflict between classes cannot be resolved without real sacrifices...[the frank] acceptance of the subordination of economic advantage to social ends, and the recognition that what is economically good is not always morally good, must be extended from the national to the international sphere.'²²⁶ Carr foresaw a 'recognition' that the 'sacrifice' of economic advantage in favour of social ends may carry

222 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.217.

223 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.217.

224 Carr, *Conditions of Peace*, p.275.

225 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.217.

226 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.218-219.

with it a 'broadening' view which could blur the distinction between national good and international good, a hope that 'self-sacrifice is not a wholly impossible prospect in international relations'.²²⁷

Thus as he concludes his arguments in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* Carr makes a case for world order in language fundamentally similar to how he described Prince Myshkin and Dmitri Karamazov, that is, in the language of self-sacrifice. Myshkin simultaneously combines passivity and dominance; he does not, Carr finds, perform any 'act of importance' except in compliance with another character, yet all feel 'the force of his commanding personality'.²²⁸ Although passive, Myshkin is not negative, Carr argues, but embodies a 'supreme Christian virtue', captured by a Russian word Carr anglicizes as '*Smirenje*', which he translates into a type of humility that includes 'renunciation' and 'spiritual peace', a 'passive virtue', attained 'through humiliation and suffering'.²²⁹ Carr describes Dmitri in similar terms:

[He] bears witness against himself; he declines to pursue, is not even interested in, facts which speak for his innocence. He recklessly disregards his interests, because he no longer sees those interests with the eyes of other men. He never swerves from his conviction that his sufferings are just. He suffers, if not for the death of his father, then for his other sins; or if not for his own sins, then for the sins of others. And since he accepts his suffering as a just expiation for sin, it becomes his path to salvation.²³⁰

Transcendence, or what is in Dmitri Karamazov's mind 'salvation', does not come, Carr claims, by way of the western *active* ideal, but through the voluntary resignation to and acceptance of suffering and sacrifice.²³¹ This is the essence of Carr's vision for

227 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.219.

228 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, pp.162-163.

229 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, pp.162-163.

230 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.229.

231 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.156.

international morality between states; this is the fundamental identity between Carr's interpretation of Prince Myshkin and Carr's hope for international politics. This is the significance of the theme of self-sacrifice in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*.

The fundamental difference, for Carr, between national and international conceptions of morality is that there is in national societies a consensus that the good of the nation takes precedence over the good of the citizen. In contrast, that a nation should think first of the world and second of itself is as disconcerting as Dmitri Karamazov's total submission in the face of prosecution. However, Carr argues, *all* durable codes of morality involve the acceptance that the part may have to be sacrificed for the sake of the group, that is, all durable codes of morality must satisfy man's reason *and* his intuition.²³²

The national society had, Carr saw, achieved a group identity where both reason and intuition, and both egoism and altruism formed the basis of ethics and politics; intuitive and altruistic qualities such as sacrifice and obligation co-existed with rational and egoist qualities such as self-preservation and the recognition of power. Where there is no group consensus, as in the international sphere, these intuitive and altruistic elements cannot 'gain a foothold', as Carr says below. The 'constant intrusion' of power is so much more pronounced in relations between nations that more 'national' techniques for achieving this sense of necessary sacrifice, such as law, are inapplicable.²³³ The notion of 'equality', Carr demonstrates, best illustrates this difference. It is easy to posit the equality of an 'anonymous mass of citizens' subject to and 'equalized' by coercive law. It is difficult to posit the equality of nations *not* subject to nor equalized by coercive law.

²³² Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.151.

²³³ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.149.

Differences in the relative power of nations, which theoretically do not arise between citizens under law, are real factors in international relations.²³⁴

Because notions of equality and the sacrifice of the part for the sake of the whole are rendered inapplicable to international morality by the lack of group identity and the predominance of overt power, Carr turns to 'hegemony' as the way that morality will 'find its surest foothold' in international morality.²³⁵ Because the idea of hegemony, by definition, admits to unequal power relations, and its existence is a 'challenge' to those who are dominated by it,²³⁶ a morality built on hegemony will explicitly admit the reality of power and conflict.

Carr suggests the only way hegemony can legitimately retain power is through a process of 'give and take', of 'self-sacrifice'.²³⁷ Against the one-sided assumption that self-sacrifice and give and take be made for the benefit of *maintaining* a particular order, Carr writes:

The process of give and take must apply to *challenges* to the existing order. Those who profit most from that order can in the long run only hope to maintain it by making sufficient concessions to make it tolerable to those who profit by it least; and the responsibility for seeing that these changes take place as far as possible in an orderly way rests as much on the defenders as on the challengers.²³⁸

That those who benefit from the status quo have a responsibility to see to its peaceful change is not only a theoretical proposition. Carr explicitly argues that appealing directly to the 'need of self-sacrifice' and the 'extension' of this principle from the national to the

234 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.149.

235 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.152.

236 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.152.

237 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.152.

238 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.152-153. (italics added)

international, may find a sympathetic audience among ordinary man.²³⁹ Thus Carr insists that state behaviour is not totally determined; presuming the 'self-help state' in an anarchic world is misleading. The 'personified state', the 'convenient fiction'²⁴⁰ that the state possesses an individualistic identity, such as when we think of relations between Germany and France, as opposed to relations between Germans and French,²⁴¹ is the second of three bricks on which Carr builds his edifice of international morality. Like hegemony, and realist law (explained below), the personification of the state is, as Carr writes, an effective *hypothesis* which allows us to ascribe to the state rights *and* duties, egoism *and* sociability, reason *and* intuition; the personified state displays the dualism that Dostoevsky and Carr found at the heart of human nature. This 'hypothesis' saves the state from being a caricature of the logical extreme. The state no longer resembles Svidrigailov; the state is no longer a realist cartoon, but is invested with the same potential for freedom, suffering, and consciousness as any personality. The personified state can voluntarily submit.

'So long as statesmen, and others who influence the conduct of international affairs,' Carr writes, '*agree in thinking that the state has duties, and allow this view to guide their actions, the hypothesis remains effective.*'²⁴² The (a)moral behaviour of a state is not predictable, it is not pre-determined, but is an agreement, a convention. As such, its content can be supplied through man's capacity for free will and independent choice. Dostoevsky argued in *Memoirs from Underground* that man is no more good than he is rational, and that his free will will always assert itself, even if it means preferring

239 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.152.

240 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.139.

241 See Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.145.

242 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.139. (italics added)

independence to one's own interests, and that a will to do evil, this ability to assert independence over interests means that sacrifice, suffering, and the subordination of interests are a natural revolt of an independent personality against determinism.²⁴³ Thus the *personified* state enjoys the same freedoms, the same will to independence, the same rejection of 'life by the calendar' as any personality and can sacrifice its interests and yearn for the reward of voluntary self-sacrifice, suffering, and the sweet agony of consciousness. The state is no more logically determined than Raskolnikov is like Svidrigailov.

Once we see that self-help, self-assertion, and a tendency to identify the well-being of one's nation with the well-being of the world is actually convention, we see that another convention can pair 'free will' to the determinism of *raison d'état*, and that, through Carr's Dostoevskian lens, a nation's self-sacrifice is neither a nihilistic nor fantastic prospect, it does not conflict with its personified nature, nor is it alien to human or social nature, it is a more *realistic*²⁴⁴ and *satisfying*²⁴⁵ foundation upon which to build an international morality. Carr writes: 'For the Russian, salvation must come not through action, but through suffering, and through suffering voluntarily accepted...' ²⁴⁶ But it does require first an ethical revolution along the lines of Carr's reformulation of the central problem of ethics: the Russian Mind cast in the role of the ego in its relation to an environment of change.

243 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.227.

244 Implying realism's subtle and paradoxical suggestion of freedom.

245 Implying the dual criteria of reason and intuition.

246 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.156.

The Idiot transports us, Carr writes, from a real world of self-interest to an ideal world of 'pure self-sacrifice'.²⁴⁷ Thus, Prince Myshkin is made implicitly the ideal by which the 'Makers of the Coming Peace' should act. In *The Twenty Years' Crisis* Carr transferred the onus of sacrifice from the 'unfit', the dispossessed, or subordinate groups, and placed it on the dominant, egoist, and hegemonic group. While egoist and hegemonic will to power and self-assertion are the norm, Carr argues in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* for a radical substitution by the new norms of humility and self-sacrifice. Carr calls for abandoning self-interested individualist norms, and their replacement with self-sacrificing and collective norms. The dualism of free will and determinism makes this radical substitution possible. The realist position, which in its logical form is purely determinist, necessarily and helpfully reveals that all thought, no matter how seemingly enlightened and benevolent, is conditioned to serve the interest of the group that formulates it. But as shown above, this illuminates the freedom in thought, and confronts us with the truth that we do not occupy a privileged position. Ego and hegemons are free to be humble, they are free to practice *Smirenje*. Realism reveals that no matter how natural it may seem, our group's destiny is not the expression of the cosmic order, our group's fate is not objectively more privileged than the fate of others. This is the same realization that realism affords the utopian: the 'obvious' or natural individual which seems, by pointillist extension, to reflect its own image into the whole, does not constitute the whole. Thus, the unfit or dispossessed are not *inherently* morally wrong in asserting themselves, or 'upsetting the peace', and the decline of the dominant group is

247 Through this theme, Carr writes that Dostoevsky 'continued his war' against rationalist ethics and 'enlightened self-interest', a continuation of *Notes from Underground* and *Crime and Punishment*. Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.164.

not synonymous with a collapse of the moral order. The submission of the dominant group can be instead conceived as the height of a moral order based on humility and voluntary subordination, the key to 'salvation'.

These two bricks, hegemony, the personified state, together with a third, realist law (described below) are the foundation stones of the edifice of international morality that will house nations in a *group*. This group is, for Carr, the foundation of politics. By establishing hypotheses that allow us to think of the international world in terms effectively similar to that primal social unit, the group, international ethics and politics are infused with the same potential for social justice as are group ethics and politics, and are rescued from the conceptual and moral desiccation of self-help and power politics. In Carr's tragic terms, our old values are transfigured, and we attain a new plane of consciousness by way of suffering, by voluntary self-sacrifice. By voluntary self-sacrifice, suffering, and consciousness, our old interests are transfigured, the ultimate and positive culmination of tragedy.

Chapter Four:

To Build and Destroy

Tragedy's sublime relation to freedom and suffering resonated with the modern age Carr saw, an age he described as an 'abyss', an age of 'crisis', 'tumult and travail'. But above all, tragedy, as with a 'great soul', resonated with the modern age's historical consciousness.²⁴⁸ 'Men emerge into history,' says Carr, 'when they become aware of themselves as having a past, and consciously use the achievements of the past as a starting point for future achievements. The unhistorical peoples are those who have no aspirations, those who do not look backwards because they do not look forwards.'²⁴⁹ This insight, that germ of historical consciousness gained by the 'looking back' is two-fold: we gain an insight into suffering, and an insight into freedom. 'Suffering is indigenous in history,' Carr writes;²⁵⁰ as our gaze becomes historical we become aware of the nature of our suffering, the conditions that fracture into 'crisis' and plunge us into the 'abyss'. It is this discontent that dictates our aspirations for the future; it is by this dissatisfaction that we seek to 'master our environment'.

248 Previously quoted material is worth citing again: 'Modern man is beyond all precedent "history conscious".' Carr, *The New Society*, p.1. 'We have lost [the] capacity to isolate ourselves in time; we have become incorrigibly historical in our outlook.' (Ibid., p.2.); 'Modern history begins when history becomes concerned with the future as well as with the past...No consciousness of the future, no history.' (Ibid.); 'All analogies between history and science, all cyclical theories of history, are tainted with the fundamental error of neglecting human consciousness of the past.' (Ibid., p.6.); '...the modern period has broadened the struggle in a revolutionary way. Man now seeks to understand, and to act on, not only his environment, but himself; and this has added, so to speak, a new dimension to reason, and a new dimension to history. The present age is the most historically minded of all ages. Modern man is to an unprecedented degree self-conscious and therefore conscious of history.' Carr, *What is History?*, p.129.

249 Carr, *The New Society*, p.118.

250 Carr, *What is History?*, p.73.

But beneath the flowers and foliage of our suffering, we also find its root, freedom. Just as the realist critique exposes the conditioned nature of thought yet reveals to us freedom, suffering in history teaches this same lesson of freedom. 'No valuable political activity,' Carr writes, 'can be carried on without that knowledge of conditions and possibilities which history affords. No history, no freedom: and, conversely, no freedom, no history.'²⁵¹ History is the inquiry into man's freedom and suffering by way of his consciousness.

When Carr sought to transcend an obsolete international morality, he also sought to transcend the paucity of broken Victorian conceptions of progress, reason, objectivity. Carr's panoramic of 'moral anarchy' and his lamentation of Europe's lack of faith, adds significance to his appropriation of Bertrand Russell's comment: 'I grew up in the full flood of Victorian optimism, and...something remains with me of the hopefulness that then was easy.'²⁵² Also, of the Victorian ruins Carr writes, 'I believe that the future will take these foundations and build fresh achievements on them'.²⁵³ This chapter examines the edifice Carr imagined could be built upon the remains of that hopefulness.

Faith

The force that allows the self-sacrifice at the heart of tragedy, the force that made hope possible, was for Carr, just as it was for Dostoevsky, *faith*. Faith is the most empowering and defiant expression of free will. As cited above, Dostoevsky argued that man will assert his free will, his free independent choice, against the 'tyranny of reason',

²⁵¹ Carr, *The New Society*, p.118.

²⁵² Bertrand Russell quoted by Carr, *What is History?*, p.106.

²⁵³ Carr, *The New Society*, p.116.

even if this meant acting against his own rational interests.²⁵⁴ Although this revolt may be ultimately destructive, it is the necessary condition for transcendence. That such a *positive* 'revolt', as opposed to its destructive counterpart, was possible, is the real significance, for both Dostoevsky and Carr, of man's instinct to impose free independent choice onto any apparent determinism. This was a great lesson Carr found in Dostoevsky's transcendent vision, what Carr has called his ability to show us 'a new plane of existence, where our old standards, hopes, fears, ideals lose their meaning and are transfigured for us in a new light'.²⁵⁵ Faith is the current to this 'new light' and is the most fundamental expression of free will; faith is the insistence that there is a meaning to existence, or that meaning can be created in an otherwise meaningless existence. Faith exclaims this positive revolt; it is a declaration of independence.

Imagining utopias is the cousin of faith. Utopias are, to the social imagination, what salvation is to the religious imagination. Both utopias and salvation drive, power, and beckon man's efforts to transcend present suffering. Both are idealizations. 'No society', Carr writes, 'entirely devoid of utopian aspirations will escape stagnation.'²⁵⁶ Utopia and salvation are how we *manage* the potentially destructive nature of free will. By them we organize our ambitions and direct our will. Carr thought history, the activity of imagining the past as a means to imagining the future, was the modern equivalent of theology, and could thus not do without its own utopia.²⁵⁷

254 See also for other examples Carr, *The New Society*, pp.103-104.

255 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.159.

256 Carr, 'Editor's Introduction', *The ABCs of Communism*, p.51.

257 Carr cites the striking example of Condorcet, who 'rejected the consolations of religion in favour of those of history', and wrote, while waiting to be executed in the aftermath of the French Revolution, his history of the 'human spirit' as a movement towards utopia. Carr, *The New Society*, p.2.

Utopias, salvation, and faith each inspire humans to direct their energy, their free will, to future ends, and give *meaning* to necessary sacrifices, to 'transfigure' these hardships 'in a new light'. Compared to the Soviet Union and her Five-Year Plans, Carr writes in 1931 that Europe 'has lost faith in herself...[it] is aimlessly drifting, refusing to face unpalatable facts, and looking for external remedies for her difficulties...[if Europe cannot] discover in herself a driving force, an intensity of faith, comparable to that now being generated in Russia...her chances of recovery seem slender'.²⁵⁸ 'No movement,' Carr writes, 'that sets out to change the world can do without its Utopia, its vision of a future which will reward the exertions, and outweigh the sufferings, of the present.'²⁵⁹ Carr attributes to this power of utopia and faith the Soviet citizen's ability to 'exert and suffer' through the Five-Year Plan's radical transformation of society: 'You feel that these people have faith, and that it is this faith which, implanted in the masses, forces them to undergo the many privations which the Five-Year Plan entails...They have discovered a new religion of the Kilowatt and the Machine, which may well prove to be the creed for which modern civilisation is waiting.'²⁶⁰

The 'proper function', Carr writes, of a utopia is to '[proclaim] an ideal to be aimed at, though not wholly attainable'.²⁶¹ Carr quotes Tolstoy who wrote: 'An ideal is an idea when its accomplishment is possible only in *idea*, in thought, when it appears

258 Carr (writing as John Hallett), 'Moscow has a Plan', *Fortnightly*, September 1931, p.401. This passage is also cited in Haslam, *Vices of Integrity*, p.48.

259 Opening line of Carr's 'Editor's Introduction' to *The ABCs of Communism*, p.13.

260 Carr, 'Moscow has a Plan', *Fortnightly*, September 1931, p.400. This passage is also cited in Haslam, *Vices of Integrity*, p.48. Arthur Koestler, writing on his conversion to communism writes: 'I became converted because I was ripe for it and lived in a disintegrating society thirsting for faith.' In *The God That Failed*, p.17; and, 'Faith is a wondrous thing; it is not only capable of moving mountains, but also of making you believe that a herring is a race horse.' *Ibid.*, p.45.

261 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.202.

attainable only in infinity and when the possibility of approaching it is therefore infinite. If the ideal were attainable, or if we could even picture its attainment by mankind, it would cease to be an ideal.¹²⁶² This is exactly how Carr understands Prince Myshkin of *The Idiot*: '...lest the reader should be tempted once more to see in Myshkin not the apotheosis, but the *reductio ad absurdum*, of the ethical ideal, we must insist that *The Idiot* is not a representation of the real world, and still less a sermon purporting to offer us counsels of perfection for our conduct, but the vision of an imaginary world of embodied ideals...'¹²⁶³ Carr articulates his own sense of faith when he writes: 'Perhaps the world is divided between cynics, who find no sense in anything, and Utopians, who make sense of things on the basis of some magnificent unverifiable assumption about the future. I prefer the latter.'¹²⁶⁴

This 'unashamed pragmatism' Carr found also to be the basis of Dostoevsky's faith. Without faith, significantly a Russian nationalist faith, Dostoevsky thought earthly existence would be 'intolerable'.²⁶⁵ Dostoevsky's resembled something of the *rationalist* belief that faith, however demonstrably dubious in itself, 'held together' civilization.²⁶⁶ For example, Dostoevsky not only intended *Memoirs from Underground* to portray the reality of 'malice', humanity's love of evil, wilful destruction, and human irrationality, but also to deduce from this apparent nihilism the '*necessity of belief in Christ*'.²⁶⁷ This 'deduction', apparently part of the original *Memoirs from Underground*, was (oddly) cut

262 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.166. (original italics)

263 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.166.

264 Carr, *An Autobiography*, p.xxi.

265 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.219.

266 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.219.

267 Dostoevsky in a letter to his brother Michael, cited in Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.95. (italics added)

by censors.²⁶⁸ Dostoevsky felt that the *entire point* of the *Memoirs* was corrupted because the censors had removed his crucial conclusion: that man, in his irrationality, yearns for the rationality of God. Humans cannot live with the idea implied in the published *Memoirs from Underground* that irrationality and spitefulness are the *terminal* properties of the world. However, as irrationality and spite are *real* properties of the world, as man *will* act irrationally and maliciously to free himself from the 'tyranny of reason', man's *reason* will likewise assert the 'necessity of faith' in order to free himself from the tyranny of nihilism. As Carr would later write, just 'because reason has turned out to be less powerful or less self-sufficient than we thought',²⁶⁹ it would lead only to sterility and nihilism to abandon it all together. In a way, the publishing history of *Memoirs from Underground* reflects the 'negative proof' Carr attributes to Nietzsche, that 'man, when he cuts adrift from reason, denies his own nature and is lost'.²⁷⁰ The concept of reason must be reclaimed, reconceptualized from an objective set of commands, and considered a subjective, consciously applied tool.

This lesson that man will reject logical sterility is the basis of Carr's critique of realism in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. Each of his four 'limitations' of realism can be read as an interpretation of, perhaps even as an epilogue to, *Memoirs from Underground*; Carr outfits *The Twenty Years' Crisis* with a secular version of the crucial conclusion the censors denied Dostoevsky. 'Consistent realism,' Carr writes, 'excludes four things which appear to be essential ingredients of all effective political thinking: a finite goal, an

268 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.95.

269 Carr, *The New Society*, p.106.

270 Carr, *The New Society*, p.105.

emotional appeal, a right of moral judgement and a ground for action.²⁷¹ The paralysis suffered by the man from *Underground*, a result of his 'hyperconsciousness', is the same paralysis afforded by 'pure' realism.²⁷² Just as Dostoevsky's man yearns for the rationality of God in the face of his own irrationality and demands independence in the face of a life lived 'by the calendar',²⁷³ man will likewise, Carr writes, refuse to 'accept the implication of realism that the word "ought" is meaningless'.²⁷⁴ He will reject the implication that everything is determined, that he cannot act as an independent agent. Man will always

271 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.84. Some sense of the unappealing emotional, relativistic, and stagnant mood of *Memoirs from Underground* can be gleaned in the following excerpts: 'Now I want to tell you, gentlemen, whether you care to hear it or not, why I could not even become an insect. I tell you solemnly that I wanted to become an insect many times. But I was not even worthy of that. I swear to you, gentlemen, that to be hyperconscious is a disease, a real positive disease...It would have been quite enough, for instance, to have the consciousness by which so-called straightforward persons and men of action live.' Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, p.6. 'I reached the point of feeling a sort of secret abnormal, despicable enjoyment in returning home to my corner on some disgusting Petersburg night...the enjoyment here consisted precisely in the hyperconsciousness of one's own degradation...that it could not be otherwise; that you no longer had an escape; that you could never become a different person...' Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, p.7. '...the root of it all, was that it all proceeded according to the normal and fundamental laws of hyperconsciousness, and with the inertia that was the direct result of those laws, and that one could not only not change but one could do absolutely nothing. Ibid., p.8. '*l'homme de la nature et de la vérité* through his innate stupidity looks upon his revenge as justice pure and simple; while in consequence of his hyperconsciousness the mouse does not believe in the justice of it.' Ibid., p.10.

272 'After all, the direct, legitimate, immediate fruit of consciousness is inertia, that is conscious thumb twidling.' Dostoevsky, *Notes From Underground*, p.15.

273 '...we have only to discover these laws of nature, and man will no longer be responsible for his actions and life will become exceedingly easy for him. All human actions will then, of course, be tabulated according to these laws, like tables of logarithms up to 108,000, and entered into a table; or, better still, there would be published certain edifying works like the present encyclopedic lexicons, in which everything will be so clearly calculated and designated that there will be no more incidents or adventures in the world.' Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, p.22.

274 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.86. '...man everywhere and always, whoever he may be, has preferred to act as he wished and not in the least as his reason and advantage dictated. Why, one may choose what is contrary to one's own interests, and sometimes one *positively ought* (that is my idea).' Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, p.23. (original italics)

reject hopelessness, he will always believe something can be done despite the apparently determined facts of existence. Man will insert himself within the duality of 'is' and 'ought', and will believe and hope *against* any 'logically overwhelming' paralysis, whether the paralysis of hyperconsciousness, the sterility of realism, or the nihilism of irrationality.²⁷⁵ For Carr, here is the *real* potential of man's *reason*: making coherent and 'operationalizing' hope, faith, aspiration, and creativity. This is the embryo of Carr's over-project, the reclamation of concepts he watched sink under the waves of the twentieth century, the salvaging and refurbishing of nineteenth-century concepts, particularly progress, objectivity, and reason.

In a key passage of Carr's conclusion to *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*, he writes: 'The modern world has accepted Dostoevsky's premise, but denies his conclusion. By his religion, he belongs to the old order, by his psychology to the new'.²⁷⁶ In other words, Dostoevsky's insight into human nature and the 'world of phenomena' matched what Carr saw in his own world; irrationality and human love of destruction seemed, in 1930, to be the essence of recent history, which for Carr was nothing more than 'moral anarchy, sterility and pessimism'.²⁷⁷ However, Dostoevsky's solution, *religious* faith, Carr knew could not take hold in the twentieth century. To make a positive revolt, to transcend nihilism and to attain a 'new plane of existence', Carr saw that an appeal had to be made to something other than an anachronistic religion, which he called 'a rickety fence of

275 It should be noted here that, for Dostoevsky, it is precisely because of capital punishment's absolute *denial of hope* that it is more evil than murder itself. One would even be tempted to say more *unnatural* than murder. See Chapter One.

276 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, pp.247-248.

277 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.248.

ancient half-rotten timber'.²⁷⁸ However, we can extrapolate from Carr's understanding of Dostoevsky's religious experience certain salient features upon which Carr appears to have modelled his own conclusion: the necessity of a secular, pragmatic faith.

Nationalizing Catholic Concepts

In 'progress' Carr found his God. Carr wrote that 'no society can live and function under the constant obsession of its own impending dissolution: the *hypothesis of survival* must be accepted, faith in the possibility of survival must exist, in order that society may be able to live and work for it.'²⁷⁹ This 'hypothesis of survival' is faith in progress.

The collapse of the old order destroyed faith in progress and reason. Humanity, in the twentieth century, lamented the loss of these ideals to a past age. But Carr argued that they could once again play a role in our worldview and approach to knowledge. Instead of being 'self-evident' axioms, as they had been for the confident nineteenth century, they must be modified to the pragmatic needs of a self-conscious age. Progress, reason, along with objectivity and international morality, must be resurrected and rehabilitated, not as absolute truths or jaunty jingoist catchwords, but as cautious and subdued '*hypotheses of survival*'. What the modern age needed was a 'national' pragmatic faith, not the *catholic* universal faith of the nineteenth century.

Dostoevsky: 1821-1881 suggests the Russian Orthodox Church was something of a model, in its contrast to the Roman Catholic Church, for how Carr conceived this rehabilitation, in which the 'catholicism', that is, the universalism of the Roman Church

²⁷⁸ Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.248.

²⁷⁹ Carr, *The New Society*, p.100. (italics added)

is *attenuated* into a *nationalist* faith, and becomes the faith of a *particular* project.²⁸⁰ Carr writes:

It is not therefore in any way singular that the foundation of the faith which Dostoevsky held in his later years was pragmatic and empirical. He followed the tradition of his age and class. He believed in, and recommended others to believe in, the doctrine of the Orthodox church because - to put the matter crudely - *it worked*, and because without it morality became impossible and life on earth intolerable. His was a reasoned, not an intuitive faith.²⁸¹

Carr traces these 'traditions' to French rationalism, of which he writes: 'Their intellectual capacities and training predisposed them to unbelief. But reason showed them that the state of civilization in which they lived was held together by faith, and that faith was, pragmatically speaking, a necessity.'²⁸² Carr finds Dostoevsky's own view expressed by one of his characters: 'I believe in Russia, I believe in Orthodoxy...I believe in the body of Christ...I believe that Christ will come again in Russia...And in God?...I...I shall believe in God.'²⁸³ It is crucial to notice both the order in which this creed itemizes its beliefs and the final hesitation. Here, Dostoevsky's profession of faith begins with a particular *human* value: Russia, a project into which can be invested particular interests

280 Some examples of Carr's understanding of the Roman Catholic Church included: 'The doctrine of a single world-state, propagated by the Roman Empire and later by the Catholic Church, was the symbol of a claim to universal dominion.' Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.78. 'Under the supremacy of the Roman Empire, and later of the Catholic Church, the problem could hardly arise; for the political good, first of the empire, then of the church, could be regarded as identical with moral good.' Ibid., p.62. 'The Catholic church in the Middle Ages was - and has, within the limits of its power, remained - an institution for diffusing certain opinions and extirpating other opinions contrary to them: it created the first censorship and the first propaganda organization. There is much point in the remark of a recent historian [G.G. Coulton] that the mediaeval church was the first totalitarian state.' Ibid., p.120.

281 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.219. (italics added)

282 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.219.

283 Shatov in Dostoevsky's *The Devils*, quoted by Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.219.

of a time and place *and* an image of the future. *Then* Dostoevsky's profession proceeds, as necessary, towards more ultimate concepts such as the Second Coming and God.

Echoing the contrast he perceived between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, Carr suggests we rely, when adjudicating history, not on some 'principle claiming universal validity', but instead on the 'criterion' of '*what works best*'.²⁸⁴ We should, in other words, de-catholicize 'progress' and *nationalize* it, make it our own, make it work for us. This de-catholicized progress is what Carr calls 'mastery over our environment' for our own purposes using 'what works best'.²⁸⁵ Our attempts at 'mastery' are what makes history a 'record of progress'.²⁸⁶ In other words, mastery of our environment according to *our own ends* is the true manifestation of *rational* history, that is, the story of subjective, consciously applied tools.²⁸⁷ It is implicit that this rational pragmatism be faith-like, reflective of man's *hopefulness*, his ability to *aspire* and be motivated by a vision of the future or according to a 'standard...laid up in the future [evolving] as the course of history advances'.²⁸⁸ Thus, 'what works best' is dually pragmatic; it is determined as seen from the present, and 'free' as it is reflected back from the future, it serves man's needs and man's faith.

As progress is the pragmatic mastering of our environment by pragmatic means to subjective ends, progress is also the articulation of our *values*. To progress and master our international political environment,²⁸⁹ we must address our values because these

284 Carr, *What is History?*, p.122. (italics added)

285 Carr, *What is History?*, pp.20,26,112,125.

286 Carr, *What is History?*, p.125.

287 Carr, *What is History?*, p.100.

288 Carr, *What is History?*, p.124.

289 'What is questioned is whether there has been in the twentieth century any progress in our ordering of society, in our mastery of the social environment, national or

constitute our 'capacity' to adapt ourselves and our environment to each other;²⁹⁰ while *facts* about us and our environment may be more determined, our values are founded on our free will. Because facts and values affect each other so profoundly, Carr argues that a period of dramatic change in historical facts is an opportune and necessary time to re-evaluate our values.²⁹¹ The 'historical facts' of the twentieth century, Carr saw, were at a 'turning point' and in a period of 'revolutionary change',²⁹² 'where the leadership and initiative has passed from one group, from one sector of the world, to another'.²⁹³ The 'strain' this transition put on our intellectual capacities and 'moral qualities' 'limited and frustrated their *effectiveness* for positive achievement'.²⁹⁴ Because the 'facts' were changing so significantly, our values, our capacity to reconcile ourselves to our environment, were stretched and torqued. Rehauling our values, Carr saw, was necessary to repair this strain. Significantly, Carr's sentiment here echoes his appraisal of Machiavelli:

Writing at what appeared to be one of the crises of civilization, Machiavelli perceived - as men have perceived at other moments of crisis - that "he who neglects what is done for what ought to be done sooner effects his ruin than his preservation"; and he hammered into the consciousness of his contemporaries, in what was perhaps a deliberately shocking and provocative way, the unwelcome

international, whether indeed there has not been a marked regression.' Carr, *What is History?*, p.112.

290 Carr, *What is History?*, p.125.

291 'Contrast the values of primitive Christianity with those of the mediaeval papacy, or the values of the mediaeval papacy with those of the Protestant churches of the nineteenth century. Or contrast the values promulgated today by, say, the Christian church in Spain with the values promulgated by the Christian churches in the United States. These differences in values spring from differences of historical fact.' Carr, *What is History?*, pp.124-125. These 'values' changed in less or more historically *unconscious* eras. Carr argues that, now, in the age of historical consciousness without precedent, we are best able to *effect deliberately* a transformation of values in the light of new facts.

292 Carr, *What is History?*, p.135.

293 Carr, *What is History?*, p.112.

294 Carr, *What is History?*, pp.112-113. (italics added)

truth that at such moments ruthlessness is more effective than pious sentiments.²⁹⁵

Machiavelli lived in a period of 'disjuncture' similar to the twentieth century, in which the 'historical facts' were such that his insight could be so profound. 'It *was only with the break-up of the mediaeval system*,' Carr wrote, 'that the divergence between political theory and political practice became acute and challenging.'²⁹⁶ Into this rupture of facts Machiavelli's insight penetrated, insights that made him, in Carr's view, 'the first important political realist.'²⁹⁷ Like Machiavelli before him, Carr called for a 'new model' to match his new reality,²⁹⁸ the 'break-up' of Victorian optimism and the collapse of its premises against the reality of the twentieth century. The new model arranged into a coherent whole Carr's reconception of the ethical problem, his nationalizing of catholic concepts, and the fundamental dualism between determinism and freedom. This 'new model' was the science Carr recommended to the 'makers of the coming peace' in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, the same science that Carr, in the first line of this book famously claimed was 'in its infancy'.²⁹⁹ In *What is History?* only a new model could 'do justice' to

295 Carr, 'Is Machiavelli a Modern?', *The Spectator*, 28 June 1940, p.868. (italics added) 'Effectiveness' is a central Machiavellian concept. However, in the translation Carr employs of its most important articulation, 'it appears to me more appropriate to follow up the [effective] truth of a matter than the imagination of it', 'real' replaces 'effective'. See Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.62. For comparison, and notes on Machiavelli see *The Portable Machiavelli*, Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa (trans.&ed.). Carr's article concludes with this critical insight: 'The greatness of Machiavelli is that he saw a part, though not the whole, of the truth about politics with unrivalled penetration. His tragedy is that those who least need to learn from him make him their bible, and that *those who need him most can seldom stomach a doctrine so pungent and so merciless*.' Carr, 'Is Machiavelli a Modern?' (italics added)

296 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.62.

297 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.62. (italics added)

298 Carr, *What is History?*, p.114.

299 'The science of international politics is in its infancy.' Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.3.

the dualism of fact and value, and of object and subject.³⁰⁰ This 'new model' consolidated Carr's generalized Russian Mind, it could handle the dichotomies of life, it recognized the fallacy of the superman, the impossibility of imagining the individual can exist outside of society,³⁰¹ and the 'non-survivability' of any pure pillar, whether ego, power, or reason. This 'new model' would rehabilitate historiography to survive the conditions of the twentieth century, just as it rehabilitated international morality to serve the perennial struggle of the under-privileged; it would refit sunken concepts to float again. It would be as Simon the Cyrene,³⁰² taking up the 'strain', so that the *end* sought, i.e., social justice in man's environment, could be reached.

The Idiot

Carr found in *The Idiot* an ethical ideal, personified by Prince Myshkin, 'distinctly enough a Russian, not a western, ideal', that could fill his reconception of the ethical problem. Thus, where *Crime and Punishment* presented the problem, *The Idiot* supplied an answer.³⁰³ The 'ethical ideal' of Prince Myshkin was Russian, Carr claimed, in its

300 Carr, *What is History?*, p.114.

301 This 'impossibility' illustrates an example of the changed historical facts which required this new model. As has been noted above already, this particular change follows the French Revolution, which established the precedence of the individual, through the advent of socialism, which sought to replace the individual with the class, to the Russian Revolution which established and institutionalized the ideology of the collective, an ideology reflected in the *national* identities of the post-Versailles world and in the belief that if diplomacy was taken from the secret hands of diplomats and put in the hands of 'the people', war could be avoided. (Ibid., pp.3-4)In this age of collectivism, previously conceived *a priori* concepts, such as the individual, must be conceived in their *interaction*.(Carr, *What is History?*, p.28.)

302 'The soldiers led Jesus away, and as they were going, they met a man from Cyrene named Simon who was coming into the city from the country. They seized him, put the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.' Luke XXIII, xxvi.

303 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.162.

emphasis on *feeling over action*,³⁰⁴ an ideal that retained something of the original Christian ethic, in contrast to western forms of Christianity that see action as the root of both sin and virtue.³⁰⁵ In the Russian ethical ideal personified by Myshkin, '[t]he moral and psychological relation between man and man is all-important; the action which proceeds from it relatively indifferent'.³⁰⁶ Sin for the Russian is a *state of mind*, not 'inherent' in action.³⁰⁷ Carr writes:

The woman taken in adultery (at that time one of the cardinal sins) escapes with no more than a formal condemnation; *the Pharisees and the rich, whose actions may be unimpeachable but whose mind and feelings are corrupted, are denounced in terms of unmeasured bitterness.* It is in the same spirit that Dostoevsky pours out his wrath upon nihilists and atheists, but reserves his infinite tolerance for thieves, liars and drunkards...Many commentators...have denounced the Russian ideal depicted in Myshkin as hostile and dangerous to western civilization; but these commentators generally fail to note that it is the Russian ideal which has retained, in something like its original form, the spirit of primitive Christianity which, rightly or wrongly, has been rejected or profoundly modified by western civilization. The moral outlook of Western Europe has become affected with notions proper to the police court and the criminal code; we are tolerant of feelings and opinions and intolerant of actions. We fail to understand why the debauchery of the prodigal son, driven by hunger to a tardy repentance, is more venial than the envy of the elder brother...The Russian, insistent on feeling and indifferent to action, understands, and Myshkin is the very embodiment of this spirit; we, by precept if not by practice men of action, live in a world of different values.³⁰⁸

304 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.163.

305 See quote below.

306 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.163. Given the importance this essay has placed on Carr's dedication in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* 'To the Makers of the Coming Peace', it is, for the sake of texture, worth noting Carr's thoughts on the relationship found in the beatitudes between action and feeling: 'In only one of the eight ("the peacemakers") does Jesus affirm the blessedness of any form of action; and even this is action of a rather negative kind.' Ibid.

307 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.163.

308 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.164. (italics added) Robert Kaplan offers another take on the difference between western and eastern manifestations of Christianity: 'While Western religions emphasize ideas and deeds, Eastern religions emphasize beauty and magic. The Eastern church service is almost a physical re-creation of heaven on earth. Even Catholicism, the most baroque of western religions, is, by the standards of Eastern

This is the essence of the understructure supporting Carr's proposed 'hegemonic' morality for international politics. Both the 'Pharisee' and the hegemonic power personify a 'realist' morality, that is, morality as a function of power. Although by virtue of this personification they seem to be paragons of morality,³⁰⁹ whether temple or international, they are actually *corrupted*; their professions are no more than lyrics disguising their own vested interests. Thus, just as the parable places the onus on the Pharisee to *reform*, Carr likewise places this onus on the hegemon. Because the hegemon is most morally *culpable*, like the Pharisee, and most *able*, by virtue of their relative power and the dynamic of granting concessions, a modification of *their* state of mind is required to effect moral progress. The 'have-not' nation, while responsible *with* the hegemon for any upset of peace,³¹⁰ is in Carr's presentation, like the sinner at the back of the temple, afforded 'infinite tolerance'. Progress in the mastery of our international political environment was demonstrably unattainable by the mere (western, Catholic) censuring of actions in the 1930s,³¹¹ and Carr puts his hope in, and makes the basis of his project, a

Orthodoxy, austere and intellectual. Catholic monks (Franciscans, Jesuits, and so on) live industriously, participating in worldly endeavours as teaching, writing, and community work. In contrast, Orthodox monks tend to be contemplatives, for whom work is almost a distraction, since it keeps them from the worship of a heavenly beauty.' Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts*, p.25.

309 Carr gives us many examples of Pharisaic thought as conceived here, such as when Theodore Roosevelt was asked how he knew that 'substantial justice' was done in a particular instance, to which Roosevelt replied, 'Because I did it, because...I was doing my best.' Asked to clarify whether he meant his actions necessarily meant justice was done, Roosevelt responded, 'I do. When I do a thing, I do it so as to do substantial justice. I mean just that.' Cited in Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.73.

310 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.152-153.

311 Compare Carr's description of the Kellogg-Briand Pact: '...the plan to incorporate the Kellogg-Briand pact in to Covenant...were dangerous milestones on the path to rationalization...the metaphysicians of Geneva found it difficult to believe that an accumulation of ingenious texts prohibiting war was not a barrier against war itself...such presumption could only provoke nemesis.' Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*,

revolution of feeling, a revolution in the state of mind, of ego, of mentality. This is the same recommendation Carr had for the 'makers of the coming peace': the project of peace in the twentieth century required an ethical revolution, a reformulation of the ethical problem away from that of an imperial ego that simply makes its environment an extension of itself, away from the 'pride and presumption', the hubris that Carr contrasts with the virtue *Smirenje*, that 'supreme virtue' Carr found expressed by Prince Myshkin.³¹²

Humility recognizes that a period of decline for one group may be the beginnings of ascendancy for another group, and that progress, like power, is relative, shared unequally, according to a ratio subject to change. 'Progress does not and cannot mean equal and simultaneous progress for all,' Carr argues.³¹³ History, he says, is a 'struggle with results achieved by groups at the expense of others...[t]he losers pay.'³¹⁴ Also, to those groups being displaced there is 'no consolation to them to be told that the role which their group has played in the past will now pass to others'.³¹⁵ In *What is History?* Carr calls this the 'condition of the broken line',³¹⁶ that the line along which a civilization develops is never synonymous with the trajectory of *one* of the groups within that civilization, whether 'class, nation, or continent'.³¹⁷ Instead, it is something of an historical 'law', Carr argues, that whichever of these groups is the *avant-garde* in one period will find itself displaced in the next period. This is precisely the same process as

p.31. Also this description is also apt: 'As one contemporary observer put it "to a much greater degree than is true of most treaties, it is a scrap of paper binding no one to anything."'', *Penguin Dictionary of International Relations*, p.292.

312 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.163.

313 Carr, *What is History?*, p.111.

314 Carr, *What is History?*, p.73.

315 Carr, *What is History?*, p.111.

316 Carr, *What is History?*, p.111.

317 Carr, *What is History?*, p.110.

any ideal which is institutionalized becomes the expression of particular vested interests, and thus develops an interest in maintaining the present condition.³¹⁸ However, humility does not seek 'consolation' in loss, humility accepts the *value* of loss.

The Village Idiot

The trajectory of catholic axiom to nationalist hypothesis follows another trajectory: the 'cult of the individual'³¹⁹ to that of the collective, and both trajectories parallel Carr's reformulation of the ethical problem. Man's historical consciousness, his awareness of interaction between past, present, and future, his recognition of the significance of the observed observing, makes clear the mistake of conceiving an individual that exists *a priori* to society or as an imperial ego that makes society an extension of itself. In an article written at the same time as he was writing *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*, Carr describes that in English literature this trajectory had overshot its mark. The 'most fundamental symptom' of the end of Victorian literature was what Carr called the 'disintegration of the human personality'.³²⁰ Carr originates this literary development with 'the Russians' (specifically naming Dostoevsky), and describes how they began to 'convince the world that human personality was a mere bundle of conflicting sensations common to humanity at large, and not in the least the individual coherent whole in which,

318 'There is no greater barrier to clear political thinking than failure to distinguish between ideals, which are utopia, and institutions, which are reality...The ideal, once it is embodied in an institution, ceases to be an ideal and becomes the expression of a selfish interest, which must be destroyed in the name of a new ideal. This constant interaction of irreconcilable forces is the stuff of politics.' Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.87-88.

319 Carr, *What is History?*, p.27.

320 Carr, 'The Age of Unreason', *The Spectator*, 26 April 1930, p.698.

for three centuries or more, we had so firmly believed'.³²¹ Carr expresses a similar sentiment when he claims that Dostoevsky's most important contribution to literature was his technique of creating characters as composites of divergent tendencies as opposed to the 'types' of Victorian literature.³²² Individuals had become in the 'age of unreason' less discrete units, but rather concentrated locales of humanity in general, the nebulous whole focused into contradictory concentrations. This signalled again to Carr the break in the 'historical facts' inaugurated by the Renaissance, a period which at its beginning found Hamlet's exclamation 'What a piece of work is man!' to be a radical novelty as opposed to the commonplace it became.³²³ This was another facet of the 'revolution' taking place at the start of the twentieth century, shifting from the imperial ego towards the imperial environment, an imperial nebula:

It is obvious that the new scheme of things allows no place for individual greatness. We have banished the great man from history as we have banished the character from modern fiction. Where the Victorian biography was sculptural, contemporary biography is chemical; it dissolves the apparently solid mass of personal achievement into an undifferentiated fluid of universal emotions. We have discovered group psychology...[the individual] has ceased to be even a unit; he is merely a component part of the multitude of sensations which we call humanity.³²⁴

Sculptural and chemical approaches to the individual were, for Carr, both mistakes; it was as much an error to assume an imperial environment as an imperial ego. Only an *ecological* conception could capture the essence of the individual as a negotiator and interlocutor. This 'ecology' was to be most fully expressed in Carr's philosophy of history, which is another version of the ethical problem: 'The relation of man to his

321 Carr, 'The Age of Unreason'.

322 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.245.

323 Carr, 'The Age of Unreason'.

324 Carr, 'The Age of Unreason'.

environment is the relation of the historian to his theme.³²⁵ Man is neither 'unconditionally subject' to his environment, nor is he ever 'totally independent of it' or its 'unconditional master'.³²⁶ This 'predicament', Carr argues, reflects the general nature of man,³²⁷ our inescapable dilemma: 'We are both free and not free'.³²⁸ We are neither as the Grand Inquisitor *imagined* us to be nor how he *wanted* us to be.

Raskolnikov fails, not because he is weak but because the superman cannot survive. Carr argues that the idea of an 'individual in revolt' assumes the impossible: that the individual can survive outside society.³²⁹ Although the night bird, flying through the air may imagine itself able, and entitled, to soar towards the stars, it will experience its mistake as asphyxiation in the sterility of space. When the 'great man' is no longer a tenable character in history, the superman an obvious fallacy, and when the most urgent pursuit of human social justice takes place between nations rather than between individuals, a basis for new ideas must be articulated to match and work in this new historical era of conflicting, conscious interests. Thus the significance of the fallacy of the superman in the early twentieth century is its ability to throw into relief Carr's link between the advent of collectivism and historical consciousness. The basis of village life, of life at close-quarters, is negotiation, that is, ideas conceived as hypotheses, ideas

325 Carr, *What is History?*, p.24.

326 Carr, *What is History?*, p.24.

327 Carr, *What is History?*, p.24.

328 Carr, *The New Society*, p.106.

329 The fallacy of the superman can also symbolize the fallacies of conceiving progress outside history, fact independent of interpretation, the individual independent of society. The basic similarity is an arrogance of isolation and a presumption that a basic unit of a system can exist unsullied by the system of which it is a part. For examples see Carr, *What is History?* pp.26-28,39,46-47,75-76,78,109.

presented in negotiable and re-negotiable form, not as axioms. 'The western ideal,' Carr writes, 'based largely on tradition, has about it something mechanical and material. For the Russian, [capturing this spirit of tentativeness] virtue is not a matter of tradition, it is a *perpetual* individual achievement.'³³⁰ In other words, each of us is responsible not for the assertion of eternal axioms, but for the perpetual negotiation and re-negotiation of hypotheses with our fellow man.

Blank Cheques

Axioms and all 'catholic' concepts are thus as suspect as Svidrigailov. The faith that past ages had in axiomatic social laws may be tempting, even enviable, Carr writes, but they do not add up in the 'tormenting ambiguities' of the modern age.³³¹ The happy, unreflective faith of the Victorians, who believed in laws thought to reflect the singular truth of reality, had become, Carr writes, not only 'shocking' to the modern historical mind, but had also become the essence of the 'totalitarian doctrine'.³³² The universalism and the absolutism of Victorian beliefs, as well as twentieth century totalitarianism, could not contain the fundamental insight of a historical consciousness: All knowledge is conditioned so all knowledge is relative.

Victorian, 'catholic', and totalitarian modes of thought provide the content, or meaning, of all varieties of concepts and present that content as identical with a universal and absolute truth in the same way as the imperialistic ego makes reality an extension of itself. The success of this practice obscured that concepts and 'categories of thought'

³³⁰ Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.204.

³³¹ Carr, 'Victorian History', *Times Literary Supplement*, 19 June 1953.

³³² Carr, 'Victorian History'.

consist, Carr argued, of two parts.³³³ The first are essential categories which symbolize something much like abstractions in mathematics. These symbolic categories, such as 'freedom', 'liberty', 'equality', 'justice', 'democracy', 'progress', or even 'the church', act just as algebraic substitutions, an x which symbolizes something. But just as x may equal three, x might instead equal seven. Thus a second part is required, the 'specific content' given to the symbol. Carr argues that while categories of thought such as justice and progress are 'indispensable', they are meaningless until we supply them with specific content; *we* must give x a value.³³⁴ Carr uses bank cheques as a metaphor to describe this. Cheques already have pre-printed categories, but until we ourselves *write* into those categories specific values and amounts the cheque is worthless. 'The way in which we fill in the cheque from time to time is a matter of history,' Carr writes, '...how much liberty we propose to allocate to whom, whom we recognize as our equals and up to what amount?'³³⁵

Carr's moral project depends on this dualism. When Carr writes, '...if the historian is to save his hypothesis of progress, I think he must be prepared to treat it as a process into which the demands and conditions of successive periods will put their own specific content',³³⁶ he is expressing as historiography the international political theory he earlier expressed in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. Justice and equality, undetermined in content, can

333 The following is from Carr, *What is History?*, p.76.

334 Carr writes: 'Herzen's description of Hegel's doctrines as "the algebra of revolution" was singularly apt. Hegel provided the notation, but gave it no practical content. It was left for Marx to write the arithmetic into Hegel's algebraic equations.' *What is History?*, p.131.

335 Carr, *What is History?*, p.76. This quotation is arranged in the reverse order for clarity. Elsewhere Carr uses another metaphor: 'A compass is a valuable and indeed indispensable guide. But it is not the chart of the route. The content of history can be realized only as we experience it.' *What is History?*, p.110.

336 Carr, *What is History?*, p.109.

be defined *as necessary*, defined by what works, defined to work for us. Possessed of free will, and cognizant of the conditioned, relative nature of thought, we can supply what we determine to be the appropriate content for these categories. Just as Keynes demonstrated that economic 'laws' were not objective overlords demanding submission, but instead, by way of *policy* humans could direct their economies,³³⁷ Carr is arguing that other seemingly 'objective' categories and concepts are one part symbol and one part *undefined*. It is the 'right of every age', Carr argues, to supply the content of these indispensable concepts.³³⁸ By separating concepts such as justice, progress, and the personified state into two parts: one part determined, one part free, Carr indicates how we can construct a comprehensive worldview built out of hypotheses, discard axioms, and properly apply reason to human affairs. This aspect of Carr's project relates to the larger issue of the emergence of consciousness. Utopianism is a totalitarianism of a particular over the whole. Utopianism is, whether inadvertently or not, the ignorance of conditioned thought, the ignorance of the fallacy of the imperial ego imagining reality as itself. As other 'particulars' become conscious, and with the assistance of the realist midwife, this totalitarianism is revealed for what it is: the suppression of relativity. Carr's dualism positively and constructively releases this relativity.

337 Carr, *What is History?*, pp.136-137. This notion is given a more moral expression in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* where Carr argues that the underprivileged would have felt it a 'mockery' that their inferior position be codified in objective law, and that a certain aspect of their 'victory' over this notion can be found in their forcing the abandonment of *laissez-faire* for the 'social service state' which Carr argues 'implicitly denies the natural harmony of interests and sets out to create a new harmony of interests by artificial means'. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.75-76. 'Artificial' in this case indicates that welfare policies, etc., do not derive from any objective economic law, but are made by man to serve a particular purpose, in a sense, 'artificial' denotes efforts towards the 'mastery of man's environment', the ultimate benefit of man's self-consciousness and historical awareness. See Carr, *What is History?*, pp.98,125,136.

338 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.86.

In Carr's analysis of 'law and change',³³⁹ we again see that the key to his prescriptions is the idea that the content of moral ideas is undetermined and can be modified or reformulated by the group that uses them, plus, his insistence that the dominant group, the powerful group, the hegemon, must assume the humility and sacrifice necessary to allow for change without recourse to war.³⁴⁰ Natural law displays the same dualist structure as justice and progress, that is, one part determined, one part free. It is determined that natural law issues from a sense that ethics should precede politics, and also that its content is binding because it comes from a place more fundamental than any set of particular vested interests. However, this is not true in practice; natural law serves whoever espouses it. Natural law can be conservative or radical. It can uphold a particular order or challenge it. Natural law can maintain the status quo, such as in the concept of the divine right of kings, or it can be subversive, as it was when John Paul II made his 'Be not afraid' and 'Solidarity' speeches in Poland.³⁴¹ This 'dual-use' potential is its weakness; natural law betrays no bias as to its use. Thus, Carr argues, the necessity of realist law. Realist law, by definition, admits differences of power, and puts legal responsibility in the hands of the stronger. Thus, with hegemony and the personified state, realist law is the third brick on which Carr founds his 'new' conception of international morality.

The *content* which we invest into hegemony, the personified state, and realist law, the *personality* of the protagonist, the 'great soul' which will play the lead in the tragedy, all share an essential identity with the Russian ethical ideal that Carr found in

339 Part Four of *The Twenty Years' Crisis*.

340 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.152-153,191-192.

341 These speeches were pivotal in the end of communism in Europe. See Timothy Garton Ash, 'Be Not Afraid!', *History of the Present*, pp.311-316.

Dostoevsky, Carr's appeal to voluntary hegemonic self-sacrifice in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, and the historical 'law' Carr articulates in *What is History?* which reads:

...the group - call it a class, a nation, a continent, a civilization, what you will - which plays the leading role in the advance of civilization 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.³⁴²

This identity contains, again, an ontological statement and a normative imperative. Ontologically, these three elements express an identical essence of change. In each element, change is a summit pushed down its own slope, while an upward slope, from another face, piles up into a new summit. As a normative imperative these three elements cry out that this seismic movement be *made* meaningful by the summit itself. Carr demands that we *accept* change and make it mean something positive; this is Carr's demand for faith in the form of applied reason. The hegemon who submits to 'give and take'³⁴³ is not only accepting a 'law', and thus accepting what is determined, but is also investing this reality with a particular moral meaning, just like filling in a cheque; 'change' is invested with the *value* of humility and self-sacrifice. This satisfies Carr's criterion that any durable answer to the fundamental problem of political philosophy (why submit to rules of conduct) must satisfy both man's reason and his intuition. Reason dictates that bucking any such 'law' is futile, while man's intuition demands that submitting to such a law, or rules of conduct, allows for moral reward and

342 Carr, *What is History?*, p.110.

343 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.200.

meaning. This is the same hypothetical supply of content to essential categories of thought such as progress, justice, and the state.

To 'operationalize' the normative imperative, to make the moral action possible, requires a reconceptualization of what constitutes the *group*. As a member of a group, Carr asserts that, alongside egoism, man will display sociability, 'the desire to co-operate with others, to enter into reciprocal relations of good will and friendship with them, and even to subordinate himself to them'.³⁴⁴ In other words, once man, or a personified entity like the state, conceives of his or its membership in a group, self-sacrifice becomes both possible and *morally attractive*.

The traditional identity of the state as 'pure ego' prevents the hegemon from developing a sense of membership in a community. But as Carr insists, this is only a convention, another 'convenient fiction' that masquerades as eternal truth, and the assertion that things cannot change often reveals a vested interest that things do not change.³⁴⁵ 'Personality', whether individual or of a 'group-person', is a duality of egoism and sociability,³⁴⁶ and by operating by the other convenient fiction that the state is something of a 'person', we are investing it with the capacity to display both.

Here we see again the salience of the Russian ethical ideal, described by Carr above as a 'state of mind' where 'the moral and psychological *relation between man and*

344 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.91.

345 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.84.

346 'The fiction of the group-person, having moral rights and obligations and consequently capable of moral behaviour, is an indispensable instrument of modern society; and the most indispensable of these fictitious group-persons is the state. In particular, it does not seem possible to discuss international politics in other terms.' Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.137. 'The necessity, recognized by all politicians, both in domestic and in international affairs, for cloaking interests in a guise of moral principles is itself is in itself a symptom of the inadequacy of realism.' Ibid., p.86.

man is all-important'.³⁴⁷ Carr's description of the Russian feeling of 'communism in sin' is a fascinating and suggestive example of membership.³⁴⁸ Contrasted with Protestant 'personal sin', Carr finds here a sense of 'individual participation in the general guilt', a manifestation of the 'infinite tolerance' which Carr finds often regarded as the 'most characteristic Russian quality'. Carr provides an example in the 'irresistible impulse to acquit' of early Russian juries; 'instead of censuring your fellow-man you recognize your share in his guilt'.³⁴⁹ The hegemon, facilitated by the convenient fiction of the personified state and thus possessed of a capacity for moral behaviour, can, Carr implies, become conscious of a secular communism of sin and its participation in the 'general guilt' of its international fellows.

The historian's capacity for objectivity is a version of the same capacities required of the hegemon: imagine the extent of its involvement in its environment, enlarge one's imagination of membership, recognize the 'fallacy of the superman' (into which I have folded, as above, the fallacies of the 'individual in revolt' and objective facts), and make a *future vision* the basis of one's standard of significance.³⁵⁰ To be 'objective', Carr argues, the historian must have the 'capacity to rise above the limited vision of his own situation in society and in history', to 'recognize the extent of his involvement in that situation'.³⁵¹ Thus, between the historian and his craft bloom 'historical facts'. These are not the 'facts

347 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.163. (italics added)

348 This example is from Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.227-229. Carr attributes, somewhat romantically, the facility with which the Russian Mind trades in this concept 'presumably' to what he calls the 'deep-rooted communistic instincts' of the Russian character.

349 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.228

350 '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...' Carr, *What is History?*, p.117.

351 Carr, *What is History?*, p.117.

about the past' as commonly thought of, but are again hypotheses; 'objective facts', like the objective individual, are denied the superman's fantasy. Facts cannot be understood *a priori* but must be understood in their interaction. As the historian, no less than the political thinker, 'adjusts' his thought to meet his purpose, it is this 'adjustment' that makes a fact 'historical'. An 'historical fact' is one that is selected by the historian for its significance; *that* a fact is significant is *hypothetical*, to be tested in the interactive process of historiography. 'It is only,' Carr writes, 'the decision of the historian to use them, the conviction of the historian that they are significant for his purpose, which makes them into "facts of history"'.³⁵² 'A fact,' Carr quotes, 'is like a sack - it won't stand up till you've put something in it.'³⁵³

Renunciation and self-sacrifice suddenly seem possible, probable, and positive, as Carr suggests. Carr's 'historical law' of rolling leadership in the advance of civilization, what he called the 'condition of the broken-line' becomes less a zero-sum dilemma, and more a rationally and intuitively satisfying political project, a durable solution to the fundamental problem of political philosophy. Submission becomes rewarding.

A Most Ungrateful Creature

Each shift described above, for example, from catholic to national, from axiom to hypothesis, from singular absolutes to dualist blank cheques, the humbling of the Pharisee, all constitute a necessary shift in *allegiance* from the status quo; like Carr's archetypal Russian Mind, the Muse of Dissatisfaction, the imperative is to *enlist on behalf of change*. The historian's task, then, is to investigate the essence of change. Like

³⁵² Carr, *The New Society*, p.9.

³⁵³ Carr, *What is History?*, p.5.

the theologian before him, the historian must elucidate and explain. And like the theologian, the historian's explanation, as it is with Carr, is soothing, reassuring, discomfiting, terrifying, and agonising. Although Carr's explanation is secular and subjective, it is still fundamentally a story of salvation, it is Carr's quest for justice in human affairs.

Dostoevsky's *Memoirs from Underground* captures this core theme of Carr's work: Man loves to create, but he also loves to destroy. The relationship between utopia and reality is one of *rolling* creation and destruction. When Carr writes that 'any sound political thought must be based on elements of both utopia and reality',³⁵⁴ he does not mean some facile 'realistic utopianism' or 'utopian realism',³⁵⁵ but that utopia and reality roll with each other, locked in an eternal somersault, an expression of man's dual love of creation and destruction; this is the meaning of the 'fatal dualism' between utopia and reality.³⁵⁶

Dostoevsky writes: '...perhaps the only goal on earth to which mankind is striving lies in this incessant process of attaining, or in other words, in life itself, and not particularly in the goal which of course must always be two times two makes four, that is a formula, and after all, two times two makes four is no longer life, gentlemen, but is the beginning of death'.³⁵⁷ The attainment that Dostoevsky imagines to be so unbearable, the deterministic 'two times two makes four', in which attainment ends, Carr expresses as an

354 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.87.

355 For example, see Ken Booth, 'Security in Anarchy: Utopian Realism in Theory and Practice', *International Affairs*, July 1991; Paul Howe, 'The Utopian Realism of E.H. Carr', *Review of International Studies*, July 1994; and Michael Nicholson, 'Realism and Utopianism revisited', *Review of International Studies*, July 1994.

356 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.216.

357 Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, p.30.

imperative. The institutionalisation of an ideal bears resemblance to a 'logical consequence' and becomes a 'disguise for the interests of the privileged', 'tainted with self-interest and hypocrisy',³⁵⁸ in short, a 'fop standing with arms akimbo barring your path and spitting'.³⁵⁹ Utopia and realism thus express the same dynamic as perpetual re-negotiations, they reflect and satisfy man's creative and destructive demands. Carr writes: 'Having demolished the current utopia with the weapons of realism, we still need to build a new utopia of our own, which will one day fall to the same weapons. The human will will continue to seek an escape from the logical consequences of realism.'³⁶⁰ In other words, the human will will assert its independence, its freedom from logical determinism first by destruction and then by creation.

358 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.87.

359 Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, p.30. A 'fop' is best defined here as a man 'devoted to or about his own appearance or dress', in other words, self-interested. 'Akimbo' is a stance where the hands are held on the hips with the elbows turned outwards. From *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*.

360 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.87.

Conclusion:

Tickling Sisyphus

This thesis is only a first step towards many possible projects. Obviously a Dostoevskian appraisal of Carr's entire work would be valuable, especially as Carr's *magnum opus* was his ten-volume *History of Soviet Russia*. Studies similar to this thesis should explore Carr's debt to Alexander Herzen, whom Carr makes the subject of his *The Romantic Exiles* and cites as an influence second only to Dostoevsky.³⁶¹ Also a study should be made of Carr's debt to Michael Bakunin.³⁶² In a number of footnotes I have suggested what I find to be exciting links and connections that could be followed out into the wider context of Carr's intellectual contribution to the twentieth century. Also, a re-evaluation of Carr's critics and expositors should be made that incorporates an understanding of Carr's debt to Dostoevsky. As well, given Carr's debt to Dostoevsky, and Hans Morgenthau's debt to Nietzsche (discussed below), it would seem that International Relations, as a twentieth century academic discipline built to a significant degree on the shoulders of Carr and Morgenthau, should re-examine the Pavlovian caricaturing of Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes in the roles of primary literary antecedents of the realist tradition.

Some early appraisals of Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis* did hint at an awareness of the Dostoevskian themes present in Carr's work, but these were never explicitly addressed, and their full meaning was, understandably, missed. To have it otherwise would have meant that Carr made some effort to demonstrate the Dostoevskian themes

361 Carr, 'An Autobiography', p.xvi.

362 See Carr's *Michael Bakunin*, 1937.

underpinning his work, something he did not do. As I mentioned in my introduction, why this was so is an intriguing biographical question.

Examples of this include an early review of *The Twenty Years' Crisis* in the *Times Literary Supplement* which reads: 'The real international crisis, the argument may be summarized, is "the final and irrevocable breakdown of the conditions which made the nineteenth-century order possible"', and it acknowledges that Carr insisted that Utopianism 'had its uses and will still have its achievements'.³⁶³ However, the review fails to identify the full moral imperative with which Carr charged the powerful, it misses the new role Carr had drafted for the international ego. The review does hint at an understanding of Carr's emphasis on submission when it identifies that Carr used an analogy with capital and labour to illustrate the potential for 'peaceful change'; however, it reads a traditional conception of power into this dynamic. The review quotes Carr: 'the party which is able to bring most power to bear normally emerges successful from operations of peaceful change, we shall do our best to make ourselves as powerful as we can.' However, the review does not print what Carr wrote immediately following: 'This is one side of the picture; and since it is the side which is ignored in most modern writing about international politics, it has been deliberately emphasized here.'³⁶⁴

Nevertheless [Carr goes on to say], it is clear that there is another aspect of peaceful change which occupies men's thoughts, and that it is no more possible to discuss peaceful change than to discuss any other kind of political procedure in terms of power alone...if an orderly procedure of peaceful change is ever to be established in international relations, some way must be found of basing its operation not on power alone, but on that uneasy compromise between power and morality which is the foundation of all political life.³⁶⁵

³⁶³ *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 November 1939, p.650.

³⁶⁴ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.199.

³⁶⁵ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.199-200.

Change does not, Carr argues, lack for a world-state or 'world legislature' but rather it is the 'embryonic character' of a 'spirit of give and take and even of potential self-sacrifice' between nations that is the 'real obstacle in the way of an international procedure of peaceful change'.³⁶⁶ Power *compensated* for the lack of communal feelings by placing the responsibility and onus on the powerful to effect sacrifice, thus making an effective morality in international politics possible. This was to be something of the norm for Carr, to have the imperative with which he charged the powerful to be mistaken for nothing but power-worship.

This is the fundamental mistake of Hans Morgenthau, who charged Carr with the 'surrender to the immanence of power'.³⁶⁷ In his 1948 review of Carr's work, Morgenthau asks: 'What are the reasons for the failure of a work undertaken with so singular an equipment of mind, learning, and honest purpose?'³⁶⁸ Despite that Morgenthau's verdict of failure is based on a misreading that Carr's purpose was to provide a new *synthesis* of realism and utopia,³⁶⁹ Morgenthau's answer to his own question is profitably engaged. Morgenthau misses Carr's argument that will and agency make synthesis impossible and pragmatic compromise necessary. Morgenthau argues that Carr's lack of a 'clear notion of what morality is' ultimately trips up Carr's search for

366 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.200.

367 Hans Morgenthau, 'Surrender to the Immanence of Power', *Dilemmas of Politics*.

368 Hans Morgenthau, 'The Political Science of E.H. Carr', *World Politics*, October 1948, p.133.

369 '...it was Mr. Carr's purpose not only to give a critical analysis of the Western tradition of political thought, but also to replace the old and obsolete with a new synthesis of realism and utopianism, theory and practice, ethics and politics, and the main bulk of Mr. Carr's work is dedicated to that purpose.' Morgenthau, 'The Political Science of E.H. Carr', p.133.

a new morality.³⁷⁰ Morality is not a 'fact' to be classified, but, for Carr, a 'category of thought' to be defined as necessary to the pragmatic needs of the time. Morgenthau reveals perfectly his misreading when he laments that Carr, having failed to show us the new synthesis of morality and power, 'has nothing better to offer than a "compromise" between the two.'³⁷¹ Morgenthau writes that Carr's quest for a new utopia is 'the Odyssey of the mind which has discovered the phenomenon of power and *longs to transcend it*. That search for principles which can give moral meaning, and set normative limits, to the struggle for power on the international scene brings Mr. Carr back to where he started from: to power itself'.³⁷² This is, in a sense, exactly right. Carr did propose to piggyback the Russian ethical ideal into international politics by way of the efficacy of power. But, in Morgenthau's judgement, Carr fails, and achieves no such transcendence; instead 'the political moralist transforms himself into a utopian of power'.³⁷³ Here Morgenthau's interpretation misses that Carr had in mind *specific content* to his utopia of power; Morgenthau charges Carr with relativism, writing: 'Whoever holds seeming superiority of power becomes of necessity the repository of superior morality as well.'³⁷⁴ If Morgenthau had the benefit of understanding Carr's Dostoevskian roots he may have written the statement more accurately: Whoever holds superiority of power is the *potential* repository of *effective* morality. Carr did not 'surrender to the immanence of power' as Morgenthau's later title of the same article implies; Morgenthau's review allows us to see

370 Morgenthau, 'The Political Science of E.H. Carr', p.134.

371 Morgenthau, 'The Political Science of E.H. Carr', p.134.

372 Morgenthau, 'The Political Science of E.H. Carr', pp.129-130. (italics added)

373 Morgenthau, 'The Political Science of E.H. Carr', p.134.

374 Morgenthau, 'The Political Science of E.H. Carr', p.134.

that Carr's reliance on power was not a license to supply *whatever* morality, but that Carr had a particular morality in mind, the Russian ethical ideal.

I am almost certain that Morgenthau was unaware of Carr's Dostoevskian roots. I say this because *had* Morgenthau known, I think the temptation to engage Carr on this level would have been too great not to. This is because what Dostoevsky was to Carr, Friedrich Nietzsche was to Morgenthau,³⁷⁵ and thus there is a much deeper connection between Morgenthau and Carr than just as academics of International Relations, they descend from fundamentally 'kindred souls'. Morgenthau, I expect, would have found it hard not to engage Carr at this proto-existentialist level. Walter Kaufmann writes:

Nietzsche read *Notes from Underground* in 1887 and wrote: "I did not even know the name of Dostoevsky just a few weeks ago...An accidental reach of the arm in a bookstore brought to my attention *L'esprit souterrain*, a work just translated into French...The instinct of kinship (or how should I name it?) spoke up immediately; my joy was extraordinary."³⁷⁶

There is a much richer thread connecting Carr and Morgenthau, the two grandfathers of International Relations.

375 'Can any person be identified as Morgenthau's foremost intellectual authority? The answer is *yes*...an author whose traces can be found throughout Morgenthau's early writings and who remained an important source of confirmation up until the final years - for the *realist* in Morgenthau. His name is Friedrich Nietzsche...Of all the authors who have investigated Morgenthau's intellectual development...not one has ever even mentioned Nietzsche's name...Morgenthau is not all together innocent in this matter. He consciously covered his tracks...Henceforth, however, attention was focused on the wrong man: Nietzsche remained relegated to obscurity.' Christopher Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: An Intellectual Biography*, pp.94-95. This is almost, with different characters, the point of this present thesis.

376 Walter Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, p.52. I would seem Dostoevsky enters people's lives in a particular way. Morgenthau's kinship with Carr is attested by Morgenthau's submission to a journal of the ten books that 'meant the most to him'. Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis* shared the list with Plato's *Symposium*, Aristotle's *Politics*, and *The Collected Works of Friedrich Nietzsche* (among others). Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, p.113.

However much early reviews may have felt the Dostoevskian tickle of Carr's work, the overwhelming constant is the issue of Carr's realism, whether it was justified, whether he was one, and whether he was persuasive. Perhaps Alfred Zimmern's review 'A Realist in Search of Utopia'³⁷⁷ senses best the Dostoevskian flavour in Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, but because (perhaps) Zimmern was without *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*, he did not grasp its full dimension. Of Carr's critique of Woodrow Wilson (who is, according to Zimmern, Carr's "utopian" *par excellence*) Zimmern summarizes: 'Where exactly, according to Professor Carr, did Woodrow Wilson go wrong? Firstly, he was a bad psychologist. He regarded man as primarily an intellectual being. This ensnared him in a double fallacy - the belief that men form their opinions on politics rationally, and the belief that when they have formed them they will act on them.'

Zimmern lauds Carr's critique of 'blindness to "human nature in politics"', but says that Carr's 'thorough-going realism - not to say scepticism - here revealed undermines the force of his expert criticism'. To which Zimmern adds:

if there are no such permanent values, if justice and liberty, courage and self-sacrifice, mercy and decency, right and wrong, are only matters of ephemeral convention, the student of international relations is left with a sense of blank frustration. For how can he nerve himself to the effort of building up what is no more than a temporarily plausible illusion?

Zimmern's point is that if there are no absolute values, then how do we 'beat the Utopians at their own discredited game', for he is aware that Carr is not only a realist critic but also a utopian advocate. It is that Zimmern does not recognize that Carr's understanding of 'convention' is much more subtle. Also, in Zimmern's phrase 'temporarily plausible illusion', we sense that he had come up against the importance Carr attributes to

³⁷⁷ All quotes from Alfred Zimmern, 'A Realist in Search of Utopia', *The Spectator*, 24 November 1939.

hypotheses, but sees in it a self-defeating relativism. A Dostoevskian reading of Carr allows us to see clearly the positive and constructive basis of the pragmatism Carr advocates. And, of course, it becomes clear that the means by which man can 'nerve himself to the effort' is Carr's secularized version of Dostoevsky's nationalist, pragmatic faith.

Norman Angell notes immediately that Carr argues for the dual necessity of realism and utopianism. However, Angell states, 'we are left in the dark as to the manner in which, and the proportions in which, we are to mix our utopianism and realism in order to escape the strictures so freely levelled in this book'.³⁷⁸ This thesis has made clear that 'mixing' is not an accurate conception for how Carr perceived the relation between any of his dualisms in a conscious age; realism and utopianism do not 'mix'. Realism and utopianism are manifestations of more profound dilemmas of human existence, most importantly the dualism of determinism and free will, and also man's dual urge to destroy and create. These can't be synthesized or made to mix. The urge to interpret Carr's presentation of dualisms such as realism and utopia, or power and morality as an imperative to mix them has proven particularly strong, and which, I feel, must be abandoned.³⁷⁹ It is clear in *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881*, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, and *What is History?* that Carr did not advocate, nor believe possible, a 'mix' of life's dualities, but only a tense compromise held together by will.

378 All quotes Norman Angell, 'Who are the Utopians and who the Realists?', *Headway*, January 1940, pp.4-5.

379 See for example Ken Booth, 'Security in anarchy: utopian realism in theory and practice'; Paul Howe, 'The utopian realism of E.H. Carr'; Michael Nicholson, 'Realism and utopianism revisited'.

Angell accuses Carr of 'turning the truth upside down' in arguing that the utopian's 'chief offence' is the application 'to Twentieth Century conditions the principles of the Nineteenth Century *laissez-faire* philosophy with its belief in a natural harmony of interests'.³⁸⁰ Having the benefit of a Dostoevskian reading shows us the crux of Angell's misreading of Carr's charge. Angell understandably describes *laissez-faire* as 'the absence of government in economic relations; the assumption that individual economic relationships will work out to the common good if left to themselves without control, rules, authority; that, economically, anarchy and individualism can be made to work'. Angell then logically extends this understanding to argue that this was exactly the opposite objective of projects of world order challenged by Carr. Angell is, of course, correct on his own terms. Because of the gap between Angell's critique and Carr's point we see better Carr's more subtle analysis of *laissez-faire*, that *laissez-faire* was a solution to the 'central problem' of ethics and metaphysics, that is, how men should relate to their environments. *Laissez-faire* posited an ideal ego-type to be representative of the whole and was ultimately significant *not* because of its restrictions on government involvement in economic life, but because it assumed rationality was synonymous with human personality and that the liberal individual was synonymous with society. The League of Nations may have been a move towards rules of behaviour in international politics, a move that would seem to contradict *laissez-faire*, but Carr saw that it *was* the application of *laissez-faire*'s fundamental assumption, that the whole community could be modelled by the multiplication of one ideal ego-type and that the interests of the world coincided with the interests of the 'have' nations.

380 This is Angell quoting Carr.

This thesis also suggests how Angell misread Carr's argument for self-sacrifice. Angell correctly identifies that Carr advocated the need for self-sacrifice but misses Carr's central point. Angell asserts that Carr should expect support for the need of self-sacrifice from 'utopians' aligned with the League of Nations, and thus Carr's realist critique of the League of Nations was misplaced and a contradiction. Carr does in fact rely on utopianism to generate the capacity for self-sacrifice, but it is the pragmatic utopianism of Carr's secular faith, the utopianism he associated with the 'great unverifiable principle', the ideal of Prince Myshkin, that allowed self-sacrifice, not the catholic utopianism that functioned on the absolutization of an ego-type he found at the League.

This brings up the problem of equivocation in Carr's work: 'utopian' projects such as the League of Nations are doomed, 'realism' ends in nihilism, while 'utopian' ideals such as Myshkin are indispensable, and 'realism' has its 'crowning achievements'. This is simply a consistent feature of Carr's method and overall project: reclaiming concepts. Just as he did with 'progress' and 'reason', so does Carr with 'utopia'; he rescues its desiccated form from the imperial cathedral where it presided as an absolute, and places it at the disposal of man.

Was, then, Carr a Realist?

Carr argues in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* that realism addresses the 'puzzle' of why and how political theory and political practice 'diverge'.³⁸¹ As noted above, Carr cites Machiavelli as the 'first important political realist' because Machiavelli successfully

381 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.62.

applied his insights into the 'break-up of the mediaeval system' as the 'divergence between political theory and political practice became acute and challenging'.³⁸² It is clear that Carr perceived his own position in the same way.

Carr writes, 'The three essential tenets implicit in Machiavelli's doctrine are the foundation-stones of the realist philosophy. In the first place, history is a sequence of cause and effect, whose course can be analysed and understood by intellectual effort, but not (as the utopians believe) directed by 'imagination'.³⁸³ By this criterion Carr is clearly not a realist. Denying that history is directed by 'imagination' clearly contradicts Carr's insistence that human will directs reason in the properly ordered modern human personality. It is precisely the imaginative capacities of man, whether the pragmatic application of reason to *future* ends, imagining utopias, or the maintenance of faith, that Carr places at the base of his project. 'Secondly,' Carr writes, 'theory does not (as the utopians assume) create practice, but practice theory. In Machiavelli's words, "good counsels, whencesoever they come, are born of the wisdom of the prince, and not the wisdom of the prince from good counsels."' Again, Carr clearly does not qualify as a realist; practice and theory interact as do any dualisms.

'Thirdly, politics are not (as the utopians pretend) a function of ethics, but ethics of politics. Men "are kept honest by constraint". Machiavelli recognized the importance of morality, but thought that there could be no effective morality where there was no effective authority. Morality is the product of power.'³⁸⁴ This third criterion, regarding the genealogy of ethics and politics, is more complicated and more interesting.

382 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.62.

383 The following from Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.62.

384 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.62-63.

Although it becomes clear that Carr is a Machiavellain *critic* he is not a Machiavellian realist. In *Dostoevsky: 1821-1881* and *The Twenty Years' Crisis* Carr supplies two crucial starting points for our inquiry into the genealogy of ethics and politics, their respective 'fundamental problems', which have been central to this thesis. First, and a fundamental clue should be that 'the central problem of ethics *and metaphysics* [is] the whole problem of the relations of the ego to the surrounding world, of the individual to society'.³⁸⁵ And the fundamental problem of politics, Carr writes, is why people should submit to certain rules of conduct.³⁸⁶ At first glance it seems obvious that ethics comes 'first', and that the issue of politics is derivative; at the least, the ethical problem is more 'fundamental' than that of politics; the question of how individuals should relate to society seems a more general and preliminary question than the question why submit to rules of behaviour, which presumes the existence of the society.

However, implicit in the political problem is an assumption that is solvable only with recourse to an axiom; it cannot be wholly derived from the ethical problem. The political problem asks why submit to rules of behaviour, but also it begs the question why submit at all? This would seem more fundamental than the ethical problem which presumes the natural participation of the ego in its environment. This issue points directly to Carr's fundamental axiom. The first sentences of Carr's chapter 'The Nature of Politics' reads:

Man has always lived in groups...*one of the functions of such a group has been to regulate relations between its members. Politics deals with the behaviour of men in such organized permanent or semi-permanent groups.* All attempts to deduce the nature of society from the supposed behaviour of man in isolation are purely

385 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.149. (italics added)

386 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.42.

theoretical, since there is no reason to assume that such a man ever existed.³⁸⁷

And in *What is History?* Carr wrote:

The question which comes first - society or the individual - is like the question about the hen and the egg. Whether you treat it as a logical or as an historical question, you can make no statement about it, one way or the other, which does not have to be corrected by an opposite, and equally one-sided, statement. Society and the individual are inseparable; they are necessary and complementary to each other, not opposites.³⁸⁸

Thus, for Carr, man has never existed 'outside' the ethical problem; an ego in an environment, an individual in society is the first condition of existence. Thus, the ethical problem would seem to precede the political problem, which is how to 'regulate' behaviour under *organized* conditions. Carr clearly is not a Machiavellian realist.

However, Carr's normative project for international politics makes ethics a function of politics, morality a function of power. Morality only 'gains a foothold' in international politics by way of three political and powerful means: hegemony, the personified state, and realist law. What could be *more* Machiavellian?

One of the most pregnant early reviews of Carr was from Richard Crossman who correctly understood Carr's conception of the relation between realism and utopia. In his essay 'Illusions of Power - E.H. Carr', Crossman writes:

[Carr] sees clearly that to substitute 'the realism of power politics' for the fantasies of Utopia is to move from one mythology to another. It is no more realistic to deny the place of morality in international affairs than to affirm its supremacy. Realism and Utopianism are two complementary movements in the dialectic of world history and of the individual mind. No one can solve their fundamental contradiction, but the great statesman holds them in the equilibrium of action. It is the absence of this equilibrium in British policy and thought that Professor Carr laments.³⁸⁹

387 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.91. (italics added)

388 Carr, *What is History?*, p.25.

389 Richard Crossman, 'Illusions of Power - E.H. Carr', *The Charm of Politics*.

But what is most provocative about Crossman's critique of Carr is in his final paragraph:

...the paramount fact of our age of transition is *the transformation not only of nineteenth-century ideologies but of nineteenth-century power*. In Germany and Russia we see, not the creation of new States on the old model, but of new forms of political and economic organization which threaten to supersede the old order of national sovereignty. We are witnessing the birth-pangs of a new world, and in order to take part in its shaping we must get rid not only of our old Utopias but of our old realism. Professor Carr has shown the entire inadequacy of Professors Zimmern and Toynbee. Who will demonstrate the entire inadequacy of Professor Carr?³⁹⁰

George Orwell

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as Winston Smith is being 'cured' by O'Brien, the

following (abridged) exchange occurs:

'You understand well enough *how* the Party maintains itself in power. Now tell me *why* we cling to power. What is our motive? Why should we want power?'

[Winston] knew what O'Brien would say. That the Party did not seek power for its own ends, but only for the good of the majority. That it sought power because men in the mass were frail cowardly creatures who could not endure liberty or face truth, and must be ruled over and systematically deceived by others who were stronger than themselves. That the choice for mankind lay between freedom and happiness, and that, for the great bulk of mankind, happiness was better. That the Party was the eternal gaurdian of the weak, a dedicated sect doing evil that good might come, sacrificing its own happiness to that of others...

'You are ruling over us for our own good,' he said feebly.

A pang of pain had shot through his body.

'Now [O'Brien said] I will tell you the answer to my question. It is this. The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power. We are different from all the oligarchies of the past...The German Nazis and the Russian Communists... pretended... that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just around the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means, it is an end...The object of power is power...How does one man assert his power over another, Winston?'

Winston thought. 'By making him suffer,' he said.

'Exactly...Power is in inflicting pain and humiliation. Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing.

390 Richard Crossman, 'Illusions of Power – E.H. Carr', *The Charm of Politics*. (italics added)

Do you begin to see, then, what kind of world we are creating? It is the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined. A world of fear and treachery and torment, a world of trampling and being trampled upon...Progress in our world will be progress towards more pain...If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face - for ever.¹³⁹¹

In this passage alone there are so many points of connection between the concerns of Carr and those of Orwell. A study contrasting Carr's and Orwell's treatment of various issues would be highly provocative, such as in the passage above, where not only is Carr's hope for hegemonic and egoist voluntary self-sacrifice smothered by the weight of Orwell's nightmare prediction of twentieth century pathological power for its own sake. We also hear echoes of the Grand Inquisitor and of realism and utopia. And in stark opposition to Carr, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* dramatizes power as the antithesis of progress. Power in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not, as it is for Carr, attributed to the Pharisee or the hegemon or the ego, so that by virtue of their possession of power they may submit and be the protagonists of progress. Orwell challenges us with a picture of power as the negation of progress.

When Carr writes, 'The past is intelligible to us only in the light of the present; and we can fully understand the present only in light of the past. 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';³⁹² and, 'History is itself the pattern into which the historian weaves his material; without pattern there can be no history. Pattern can only be the product of mind - the mind of the historian working on the events of the past.'³⁹³ Carr is brushing up against the famous Party slogan in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: 'Who

391 George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, pp.274-280.

392 Carr, *What is History?*, p.49.

393 Carr, *The New Society*, p.11.

controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.³⁹⁴ When Winston, the protagonist of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, argues back that the Party can never control the past because it cannot control the human mind, that the Party has not controlled *his* mind, O'Brien replies in language that brushes back up against Carr:

'On the contrary...*you* have not controlled it...you have failed in humility, in self-discipline. You would not make the act of submission which is the price of sanity...Only the disciplined mind can see reality, Winston. You believe that the nature of reality is self-evident. When you delude yourself into thinking that you see something, you assume that everyone else sees the same thing as you. But I tell you, Winston, that reality is not external. Reality exists in the human mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind...only in the mind of the Party, which is collective...that is the fact that you have got to re-learn, Winston. It needs an act of self-destruction, an effort of the will. You must humble yourself before you become sane'.³⁹⁵

Again, here, there are so many links of theme that not to conduct a full study contrasting Orwell and Carr would be a loss. Compare below Orwell's thoughts on facts and history with what we have read above of Carr's insistence that historical facts have no significance until they are selected by the historian for their utility. Note the concern for the 'neutral' facts as a bulwark against totalitarianism, and remember Carr's dismissal of 'unhistorical facts', those not deemed significant by the historian *for his purposes*. Orwell writes on the propaganda history of the Spanish Civil War:

This kind of thing is frightening to me, because it often gives me the feeling that the very concept of objective truth is fading out of the world. After all, the chances are that those lies, or at any rate similar lies, will pass into history. How will the history of the Spanish war be written?...Yet, after all, *some* kind of history will be written, and after those who actually remember the war are dead, it will be universally accepted. So for all practical purposes the lie will have become the truth...but what is peculiar to our own age is the abandonment of the idea that history *could* be truthfully written...A British and a German historian would disagree deeply on many things, even on fundamentals, but there would still be that body of, as it were, neutral fact on which neither would seriously challenge

394 Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p.260.

395 Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p.261.

the other. It is just this common basis of agreement...that totalitarianism destroys.³⁹⁶

A final passage from Orwell speaks to Carr's central ethical problem, the collapse of *laissez-faire*, and the 'dialogue between the events of the past and progressively emerging future ends'.³⁹⁷

Politics - politics in the most general sense - have invaded literature, to an extent that does not normally happen, and this has brought to the surface of our consciousness the struggle that always goes on between the individual and the community...We live in an age in which the autonomous individual is ceasing to exist...The whole of modern European literature is built on the concept of intellectual honesty...The first thing that we ask of a writer is that he shall not tell lies, that he shall say what he really thinks, what he really feels...It was never fully realized that the disappearance of economic liberty would have any effect on intellectual liberty. Socialism was usually thought of as a sort of moralized liberalism. The state would take charge of your economic life and set you free of poverty, unemployment and so forth, but it would have no need to interfere with your private intellectual life. Art could flourish just as it had done in the liberal-capitalist age, only a little more so, because the artist would not any longer be under economic compulsions. Now, on the existing evidence, one must admit that these ideas have been falsified...The peculiarity of the totalitarian state is that though it controls thought, it does not fix it. It sets up unquestionable dogmas, and it alters them from day to day. It needs the dogmas, because it needs absolute obedience from its subjects, but it cannot avoid the changes, which are dictated by the needs of power politics. It declares itself infallible, and at the same time it attacks the very concept of objective truth.³⁹⁸

The beauty of contrasting Carr with Orwell is that they do not directly address the precise points of the other. Their positions, although fundamentally opposite, bring out more fully what is really interesting in each of them. Their dialogue, because it was never explicit, avoids the tedium of battling over fine points, and in the contrasts, of which the above is a small sample, our minds are *stimulated* precisely because we are not forced to choose, we are treated to an intellectual, imaginative and contrapuntal performance. This, and what follows below, are my strongest recommendation for further study.

396 George Orwell, 'Looking Back on the Spanish War', *CEJL*, v.2, pp.295-296.

397 Carr, *What is History?*, p.118.

398 Orwell, 'Literature and Totalitarianism', *CEJL*, v.2, pp.161-164.

E.H. Carr: Existential Analyst

Walter Kaufmann describes Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* as 'one of the most revolutionary and original works of world literature',³⁹⁹ and although Kaufmann does not identify Dostoevsky as an existentialist *per se*, he writes, 'that Part One of *Notes from Underground* is the best overture for existentialism ever written. With inimitable vigor and finesse the major themes are stated here that we can recognize when reading all the other so-called existentialists from Kierkegaard to Camus'.⁴⁰⁰ Kaufmann writes:

...the existentialist and the analytical philosopher are each only half a Socrates. The existentialist has taken up the passionate concern with questions that arise from life, the moral pathos, and the firm belief that, to be serious, a philosophy has to be lived. The analytical philosophers, on the other hand, insist - as Socrates did, too - that no moral pathos, no tradition, and no views, however elevated, justify unanalyzed ideas, murky arguments, or a touch of confusion...if the feat of Socrates is really to be repeated and philosophy is to have a future outside the academies, there will have to be philosophers who think in the tension between analysis and existentialism.⁴⁰¹

I will bring this thesis to a close with the speculation that Carr *was* thinking in the tension between analysis and existentialism, and that provocative insights would be generated by placing Carr in the company of his contemporaries Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Carr returns again and again in his work to the saving grace of what he calls 'life'. When he writes that Dostoevsky, 'had shown the bankruptcy of an intellectual faith in self struggling in vain against the saving weaknesses of human nature',⁴⁰² he captures in a sentence that logic and life do not coincide, that the logical conclusions of realism contradict human nature, that Svidrigailov, as the logical extension of Raskolnikov's

399 Walter Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, p.13.

400 Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, p.14. When Kaufmann writes 'so-called existentialists' he is admitting the problematic nature of the label. I use the term here as it is understood 'conventionally' and by Kaufmann.

401 Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, pp.50-51.

402 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.157.

theory of the superman contradicts human nature, and that even rational altruism, seemingly so beneficial to humanity, when pursued to its logical end counsels killing off the losers, something 'repugnant', as Carr would say, to human nature. Thus it is not the construction of brilliant social equations that will best guide the 'lovers of mankind' in their quest for the means to man's salvation; instead, this quest must be made, not by following logic, but by investigating *life*. This is the same 'life' that is the object of existentialist investigation. It is clear that Carr saw that he had begun this investigation (probably by a different name) through his biography of Dostoevsky. 'In all of these works [*Crime and Punishment, The Idiot, The Devils, A Raw Youth, The Brothers Karamazov*],' Carr writes, '...Dostoevsky dramatizes the problems of life and philosophy.'⁴⁰³ When Raskolnikov finally, after months of imprisonment and labour, extracts himself from the logic of his 'theory', Carr quotes Dostoevsky's description of this moment: 'Instead of dialectic, life had dawned'.⁴⁰⁴ Raskolnikov had escaped the confines of his artificial theoretical structure and had been 'resurrected' into real life.⁴⁰⁵ When Carr writes in *What is History?* that 'the *logical* dilemma about free will and determinism does not arise in real life',⁴⁰⁶ he is reiterating a point made earlier in *The New Society* that '*life* rejects these logical dilemmas', life 'permits of two contradictory answers, both equally valid.'⁴⁰⁷ Real life, as it is lived by real humans, does not operate solely by the rules of logic, and the imposition of the rules of logic onto life will fail. As Carr would say elsewhere: 'This procedure may puzzle and shock philosophers, and even

403 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.147.

404 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.156.

405 Carr, *Dostoevsky*, p.156.

406 Carr, *What is History?*, p.89. (italics added)

407 Carr, *The New Society*, pp.101-102.

some historians. But it is perfectly familiar to ordinary people going about the practical business of life.⁴⁰⁸ We have seen how much of Carr's criteria for durability or sustainability in the realm of politics and ethics are derived from their accordance with 'living' reality, being 'satisfying', conforming to the 'essential nature of man' will, and intuition. Carr discusses 'Morality in International Politics' by first distinguishing between the moral 'code' of the philosopher, the moral 'code' of the ordinary man, and the moral *behaviour* of the ordinary man.⁴⁰⁹ Carr writes that in discussions of morality in international politics between the two world wars there

was no discussion at all of the assumptions of the ordinary man about international morality. This was particularly unfortunate at a period in which the popularization of politics for the first time made the assumptions of the ordinary man a matter of primary importance; and the ever-widening rift between the international utopia and international reality might have been described in terms of this divergence between the theory of the philosopher and practice based on the unexpressed and often unconscious assumptions of the ordinary man.⁴¹⁰

Edith Hamilton again lends her support to this point and articulates a link between the object of tragedy and Carr's focus on 'life'. She writes, 'To answer the question what makes a tragedy is to answer the question wherein lies the essential significance of life, what the dignity of humanity depends upon in the last analysis'.⁴¹¹ 'Other poets may, the tragedian must, seek for the significance of life.'⁴¹² 'The dignity and the significance of life - of these, and of these alone, tragedy will never let go.'⁴¹³

Consider the following description of existentialism:

To existentialists themselves, one of the strongest reasons for accepting this new standpoint is its honest attempt to meet the needs of the age. This way of thinking tries to

408 Carr, *What is History?*, p.98.

409 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p.135.

410 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp.135-136.

411 Edith Hamilton, *The Great Age*, p.233.

412 Edith Hamilton, *The Great Age*, p.232.

413 Edith Hamilton, *The Great Age*, p.233.

be responsive to the predicament of contemporary man and to supply an interpretation of his anguish and his aspirations. It pays heed to the moods, catastrophes, and projects which are usually passed over by academic philosophies. Instead of retreating to a realm of eternal verities or of scientific methodology, it hugs close to the terrain of ordinary living. Its modishness should not distract from the fact that it has given articulate form to the sense of crisis in belief and of a need for radical reconstruction of intellectual and moral patterns.⁴¹⁴

I find this to be a very precise description of Carr's project, and an apt description of my view of his motivation. By beginning where Carr began, with Dostoevsky, we can follow not only where this motivation and this project led Carr, but where Carr can lead us, out of the narrow confines of International Relations theory and out into the larger fields of literature, politics, and the problems of life.

This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.

-Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*

414 James Collins, *The Existentialists*, p.1.

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