

March 6, 2011

Foundations and Expansion of the International Relations Discipline

In only a succinct period of time, the formation of Political Science, there of specifically International Relations formed. Not only did scholars from across the world contribute, but conversation between Liberal and Realist thought transgressed in a mere 40 years between the 1940's and the 1970's. Although these numerous contributions can not be fully distinguished from one another, the creativity exemplified in but two pieces provided in the first case, a foundation for further study and development of the discipline, and in the second, a clear realignment and breakage into two major schools of thoughts. The first example, presented by Edward Hallett Carr in his piece, "*The Realist Critique*," in Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* defines a clear base for the International Relations field. The second example, offered by Kenneth Waltz in his work, "*Systemic Approaches and Theories*," in Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* repositions International Relations allows for two different camps of scholars based upon Liberal and Realist notions. The purpose of this essay is to argue that without these two creative milestones, understanding International Relations would be understood in an entirely different manner and fashion.

Edward Carr initially wrote his book in 1939, but later revised for minor clarification of specific concepts in 1946. Carr was specific to include an analysis of the

events that unfolded between 1919 and 1939. While Edward Carr had no knowledge of the further development which did occur after the publication of this book, Carr was able to recognize potential trends distinguishing that hegemonies exist, and moreover that a hegemony frequently is challenged by build up of military power based on the formation of state driven interests. Carr frequently also recognized in "*The Beginnings of a Science*," that both Liberal thought, which is referred to as Utopianism, and Realist thought both bring valuable insight to International Relations. Writing in the period of the Cold War, Carr witnessed the role that actors other than states have, and thus conceded in "*The Realist Critique*" that those other actors were important to spotlight. Edward Carr foreshadowed much of the International Relations discipline in his book. As the final and most important insight, Carr provided an analysis which creates a stance dictating war is not inevitable, and as such, can be prevented. Carr does not claim a specific prevention method to war, but does suggest "[t]he most cursory examination shews that the principles [of policymakers] were deduced from the policies, not the policies from the principles" (Carr 73). A vast array of academic work focuses on building upon the foundation which Edward Carr creates, but before this essay examines Carr, Kenneth Waltz and Waltz' contribution should be examined.

In *Theory of International Politics*, Kenneth Waltz specifically examines the relationship between units, which are primarily states, and the system, which is defined in an environment of anarchy. "*System Approaches and Theories*" elegantly describes, in the third point by Waltz "[a] systems approach is required only if the structure of the system and its interacting units mutually affect each other" (Waltz 58). Clearly defining

the difference between a 'systems approach' and the 'analytical method,' Kenneth Waltz does not favor one over the other, but rather distinguishes that each method is a special tool to solve a different problem. Written in 1979, Waltz had the privilege of utilizing the thoughts of Edward Carr before him, and was therefore able to develop a concise and eloquent examination of the Realism and further separated the International Relations discipline into Liberal and Realist thought processes. Overall, Waltz not only clarified the overall field, but provided the capacity to create thesis and antithesis, initially established by Edward Carr. Waltz instituted pragmatic arenas able to form synthesis of vastly different perceptions. Not only did this link the International Relations discipline, but also expansions developed since 1979 as a primary result.

Robert Jervis builds upon the foundation which Edward Carr established. In *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* written in 1976, Jervis clearly defines that the interactions in International Politics can be examined on a multitude of levels, and shows that any level from the state to the individual can be examined for clarification of situational circumstances. "*Perception and the Levels of Analysis Problem*" depicts the aspects that Jervis describes, and although in this piece Jervis portrays the bureaucracy as one level, Robert Jervis does this simply "to fill in the sequence" between Wolfers, Waltz and Rosenau (Jervis 15). Not only could Jervis' examination not have been formulated without the contribution of Edward Carr, but also it brings to light fascinating developments that grew the advance of International Relations and creatively expanded the notion of perception.

Like Robert Jervis, Hedley Bull, in 1969, also has an attributed foundation from Edward Carr in Bull's *Contenting Approaches to International Politics*. The English School background is very much similar to the Utopianism or Liberal conceptions that are initially presented in the work of Edward Carr. Without a synthesis being generated from a thesis, arguably Realism, and the antithesis which is presented by Bull in "*International Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach*," Hedley Bull logically could not argue for the 'classical approach' against the 'scientific approach' (Bull 20-21). Simply put, Edward Carr acknowledged the existence of a multitude of approaches, and this allowed Hedley Bull to argue the superior value of the classical approach over the flaws of the scientific approach.

Kenneth Waltz continued the conversation in *Theory of International Politics*, by not only redefining Realism as stated earlier in this essay, but specifically by addressing the counter argument in "*Laws and Theories*." Understood practically by Waltz, "[s]tatistics are simply descriptions in numerical form" (Waltz 3). Kenneth Waltz also describes that laws and theories are two separate concepts, and that confusing the two is similar to confusing inductive and deductive reasoning. Waltz notes "correlation is neither spurious nor genuine, but the relation that we infer from it may be either," and the overarching message in "*Laws and Theories*" is directed squarely against the Liberal paradigm (Waltz 3).

Simultaneously, during the overall discussion and formation of the two schools of thought, Peter Gourevitch wrote his article in 1978 titled "*The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics*." Gourevitch not only lays a foundation

for Waltz in "*Systemic Approaches and Theories*" by showing that the domestic level on analysis has causality on the international system, but also furthers the argument of Robert Jervis by representing the validity of the second level of analysis. The entire article discusses the nature of industrialization and domestic policies in turn having impact on the system, but it is even more insightful to distinguish this article as a groundbreaking and dividing lens between the different Liberal and Realist schools.

Edward Hallett Carr undoubtedly condensed an immense body of historical knowledge and produced the foundation for International Relations in 1946. Carr began the conversation and intellectual discourse to create a fundamental understanding of the discipline. Yet, International Relations on the whole would still be unrefined and crude until 1979. Kenneth Waltz provided the ability for the field to grow by dividing Realism from Liberalism, thus creating the opportunity for future synthesis of these two different perspectives. While Waltz did not forge the same synthesis that Carr established, Kenneth Waltz was able to redefine the trajectory of International Relations in a hopeful direction.

Both Edward Hallett Carr and Kenneth Waltz not only identified weaknesses in prior theory, but also attempted to advance International Relations Theory. Successfully they were at the absolute minimum able to create milestones which have forever shaped the understanding that our society has on the international system, states, and the world.