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Objectivity of Fact and Objectivity of Relation

—A Critique on the Philosophy of History of E. H. Carr.

Shirō KōYAMA

Prof. Carr says, "objectivity in history cannot be an objectivity of fact, but only of relation". It is correct so far as this term "relation" indicates the relation between historian and facts, but in this case we cannot find specific reason for using the term "relation." Moreover, Prof. Carr lays special emphasis on the relation between past, present and future. We do not support the theory from a logical point of view that there is an unique form of knowledge appropriated for history between past and present, much less the theory of Prof. Carr with his annexing *future* to past and present. He then goes astray, I suppose, out of the right path of his scientific argument. He asserts that only the future can afford the key to the past; that only the historian who has a prospective insight into the future can attain the *objective* understanding of the past; and that every historian, therefore, has to project his vision into the future. His is, it seems to me, a sort of intuitionism or illumination theory. And he speaks of an *ultimate objectivity* to which we can find ourselves approaching and in which pursuit he finds a historical progress. Doesn't this way of thinking sound somewhat idealistic? And he makes an optimistic prediction as to a future progress of human history; "the historian of the 1920s was nearer to objective judgment than the historian of the 1880s, and the historian of today is nearer than the historian of the 1920s: the historian of the year 2000 may be nearer still". This prediction is, though convictional, not scientific.

After all, Prof. Carr gives good advice for all historians to have "the sense of direction in history", "the pervading sense of a world in perpetual motion" and "the bold readiness to present fundamental challenges" to the *status quo*. But, by his careless introduction of some *senses* and *attitudes* into his generally accepted theories, he loses logical consistency in the course of his argument and fails in providing a well-regulated form for his discussion; though his attitude itself, as of an "Ideolog", is rightly worthy of respect.