CRITICAL REALISM

RESOURCE PAPER

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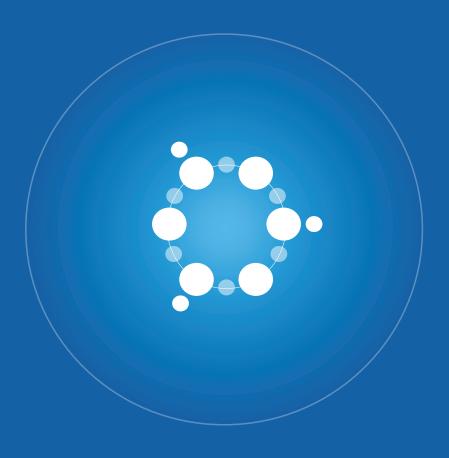## *A Synoptic Overview and Resource Guide for Integral Scholars*

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Critical Realism (CR) is an integrative metatheory founded in the 1970s by the British philosopher Roy Bhaskar with the publication of seminal works in the philosophy of science and social science, such as *A Realist Theory of Science, The Possibility of Naturalism,* and *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation.* Many integral scholars now regard CR, alongside Integral Theory (IT), as among the most comprehensive and sophisticated integrative metatheories developed to date. Numerous concepts and distinctions within CR share an uncanny resemblance to ideas within IT. For example, Bhaskar's notion of "four-planar social being" and his emergent levels or strata clearly echo IT's own all-quadrants, all-levels approach. Thus, viewed through the lens of IT, CR develops a robust approach that in some sense accounts for all quadrants and all levels of reality but arguably does so with a level of academic rigor unparalleled in IT as it is currently articulated. As such, CR is a sphere of theory and practice that can be deeply instructive for Integral Theory as it continues to develop into a compelling academic field, particularly with respect to key ontological and epistemic considerations as well as other important distinctions and integral principles.

For example, CR has developed a sophisticated depth ontology as part of its philosophy of science called "transcendental realism," which goes beyond positivism and constructivism alike. CR, like IT, identifies itself as an emergent intellectual formation arising in the wake of postmodernism—and it claims to do so by sublating (transcending and synthesizing) the partial truths of modernism and postmodernism.[1] CR and IT are also resonant in that they are both imbued with a dialectical logic, and both include a spiritual dimension. Furthermore, CR is a kind of panoptic or comprehensive metatheory that has been applied to a wide range of disciplines in a similar way to Integral Theory.[2] With all of the aforementioned resonance in mind, leading integral scholar-practitioner Sean Esbjörn-Hargens has stated that "Critical Realism is a viable integral alternative to Integral Theory and as such integral scholar-practitioners will benefit from a more direct engagement with its distinctions and applications."[3] However, while CR and IT share many points of convergence or common ground, there are also a number of points of divergence. Yet, as was the predominant view emerging from the 2011 Critical Realism & Integral Theory four-day symposium at John F. Kennedy University (which was attended by Roy Bhaskar), the strengths of each often seem to coincide with the deficiencies, or areas in need of further theoretical reflection and development, in the other. This feature thus suggests the possibility of a mutually enriching engagement between these approaches—and highlights the potential for a rich and generative dialogical encounter.

As Esbjörn-Hargens wrote reflecting on his experience at the Critical Realism & Integral Theory Symposium:

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[1] See, e.g., J. Lopez & G. Potter. (2001). *After postmodernism: An introduction to critical realism.* London: Athlone Press. However, it should be noted that for Bhaskar, postmodernism is not understood as a fundamentally novel intellectual formation, but rather as merely one of five phases in the development of the philosophical discourse of modernity. These stages are as follows: 1) classical modernism; 2) high modernism; 3) modernization; 4) postmodernism; and 5) bourgeois triumphalism and endism/renascent fundamentalism. For an overview of this conception of postmodernism as a sub-movement within the philosophical discourse of modernity, see, e.g., M. Hartwig. (2011). Bhaskar's critique of the philosophical discourse of modernity. *Journal of Critical Realism,* M. 10(4), 485-510.

[2] See, e.g., J. Cruickshank. (Ed.) (2003). *Critical realism: The difference it makes.* London: Routledge.

[3] S. Esbjörn-Hargens. (2010). An ontology of climate change: Integral pluralism and the enactment of multiple objects. *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*, 5(1), 143-174.

It was a very engaging four days and I think it is fair to say that both meta-approaches will never be the same. The similarities between the meta-philosophy of Bhaskar and the meta-theory of Wilber is simply stunning. Furthermore, the ways they complement each other via their unique combination of strengths and limitations is remarkable. For example, Integral Theory excels at articulating a sophisticated and nuanced theory of epistemology whereas Critical Realism is unsurpassed in presenting a multilayered and complex theory of ontology. Integral Theory has a primary focus on individuals and their growth and development all the way till nondual realization. Critical Realism has a primary focus on society and the injustices therein which must be addressed for collective emancipation.

The main area of divergence that emerged occurred around Integral Theory's post-metaphysical notion of enactment and Critical Realism's critique of neo-Kantianism and their notion of the Real. While the complexities of the exchanges around this are too complex to get into here, I will just say that I felt more alive in those moments than I ever have before. It was just thrilling to be at the intersection between Critical Realism and Integral Theory and watching both approaches having to confront some deep epistemological and ontological issues; issues that likely will have a major impact on both schools of thought as they continue to unpack the implications of what the other school was pointing out to them.

In short, there were a number of deep exchanges between the two groups. Integral Theory has a lot to learn from Critical Realism and vice versa. The Critical Realists raised some good critiques and identified areas of underdevelopment within Integral Theory and we did the same for them. I feel that Integral Theory has found a soul mate in Critical Realism (and Bhaskar's philosophy of meta-Reality). I learned as much about Integral Theory over these last four days as I did about Critical Realism. Thus, this four-day encounter served both schools of thought in helping each one to make their own approach an object of their collective awareness. Therein lies the subject to object principle, which is the driver of growth and transformation. I honestly feel that Integral Theory will never be the same now—it has and will continue to be transformed by its encounter with the Critical Realism "other." In fact, there are already a variety of ongoing exchanges, collaborations, and engagements between the members of the symposium from both communities of discourse. For Integral Theory to mature into its post-formal potential as a meta-framework for theory and practices, ongoing events such as this will be essential and I believe are now inevitable.[4]

As is highlighted in the above passage, the symposium filled Esbjörn-Hargens (and others) with tremendous vitality and creative inspiration, catalyzing the re-visioning of Integral Theory in important ways that seem to be fashioning a whole new evolutionary trajectory for the field—and that we will be hearing much more about at the Integral Theory Conference (ITC) 2013. And Critical Realism has been impacted as well. There have already been a variety of meaningful collaborative outcomes and engagements between the symposium participants from both communities, and the momentum seems to be only building. For example:

- Roy Bhaskar, Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, and Nicholas Hedlund-de Witt are currently editing a book (to be published by Routledge in 2014), tentatively titled *Metatheory*

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[4] Esbjörn-Hargens, S. (2011). Editorial introduction. *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*, *6*(3), v.

for the 21st Century: Critical Realism and Integral Theory in Dialogue. The book will explore the emergent potentials at the interface between CR and IT, highlighting the ways in which these two metatheories are joining forces to transform scholarship and address the most pressing global challenges of the 21st-century—from climate change to the economic crisis to terrorism and emergent geo-political relations

- The *Journal of Critical Realism* published three articles inspired by the symposium: Paul Marshall's "The Meeting of Two Integrative Metatheories", Timothy Routzou's "Integral Theory: A Poisoned Chalice?", and Hans Despain's "Integral Theory: The Salubrious Chalice?"
  - Marshall's article offers an excellent overview of the points of connection and divergence between CR and IT and a constructive vision of how the two approaches might interact in mutually enhancing ways.
  - Rutzou's more polemical article makes a number of important points articulating some of the difficulties and drawbacks Critical Realists might experience in an engagment with IT. However, it should be noted that it relies at times on a somewhat questionable understanding of aspects of IT.
  - Despain's article analyses the potential theoretical benefits offered by Integral Theory. While appreciating some of Rutzou's points, it constructively argues that, integral theory offers much to dialectical critical realism in the form of developmental theories, cultural anthropology, and transpersonal psychology.
- A strategic partnership has been established between the recently founded International Center for Critical Realism at the University of London and the San Francisco–based MetaIntegral Foundation in general, as well as with the Integral Research Center in particular
- A group of participants from New England, including the Critical Realist Hans Despain, Integral Theory scholars Zak Stein & Lauren Tenney, and metatheorist Bonnie Roy, have formed an ongoing dialogue group
- A daylong event exploring Critical Realism and Integral Theory was held following the 2012 International Association of Critical Realism Conference, "Global Challenges & Critical Realism Debates," at Rhodes University in South Africa
- The 2013 Integral Theory Conference (ITC) in San Francisco will be largely devoted to the exploration of the relationship between Integral Theory and Critical Realism. Roy Bhaskar will deliver a keynote address, and numerous presentations at the conference will be devoted to exploring points of contact between these two metatheories.
- At ITC 2013 there will be a daylong international symposium, "Metatheory for the 21st-Century," which will be held for invited Critical Realists and Integral Theorists to converge once again and advance the conversation.
- The 2013 International Association for Critical Realism (IACR) conference in Nottingham, U.K., will feature a post-conference day devoted to Meta-Reality, including its relationship to other resonant metatheories such as IT.
- The 2014 IACR conference, likely to take place in London, will take up the spirit of ITC 2013, particularly the engagement between CR and IT, and build on it.
  - The conference will likely include a pre-conference symposium, co-organized by the Integral Research Center, exploring the ways in which CR and IT can work together to address the challenges of global climate change.

In short, exciting things are happening and energy is building as CR and IT continue to interface and impact each other in ways that are accelerating the theoretical development and application of both. This document aims to serve as a high-level synoptic overview (and resource guide) of CR for integral scholars, briefly addressing:

- Its ontology and epistemology
- Its three developmental phases
- Its key concepts
- Its key organizations
- Some key readings
- Roy Bhaskar's biography

Ontology and Epistemology

As a metatheory, CR has developed a robust philosophical foundation that many see as instructive for IT, which arguably stands on more shaky ground, particularly with respect to the domains of ontology and epistemology. In contrast to IT, CR has an explicit philosophical ontology, deploying a variation on the Kantian transcendental mode of argument[5] vis-à-vis experimental science to arrive at a definitively non-Kantian (object-oriented), transcendental realist position. This position argues for a world composed of objects (generative mechanisms) existing *independently* of human interpretation, knowledge, enactment, or discourse.[6] As such, CR thoroughly de-couples and disambiguates ontology from epistemology, while making epistemology secondary to ontology, since knowledge of the world (in some domain) depends evidently on the nature of the world (i.e., what the world is like in that domain). This stands in stark contrast to IT's neo-Kantian position that leads with epistemology and developmental levels to make sense of "enacted objects." Bhaskar arrives at CR's basic ontology by asking an (inverted) Kantian-transcendental question: not "What must the mind be like for science to be possible?," but rather "What must the *world* be like for science to be possible?"[7] And as Bhaskar highlights through rigorous deductive logic, it is the ontological reality and existence of a mind-independent object-world that must be presupposed, on an *a priori* philosophical level, if *a posteriori* science is to be intelligible at all—it is a necessary condition for the possibility and intelligibility of experimental science.[8] (This premise of human experimental practice is later generalized to include all forms of human practice.) More precisely, Bhaskar claims that a necessary condition for the possibility of science is the existence of "intransitive objects," by which he does not mean simple gross-material entities, but rather real structures, generative

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[5] A transcendental mode of argument, or transcendental argument, is generally understood to be a philosophical argument that takes some manifest phenomenon or aspect of expirence as given, and then deduces the necessary conditions for the possibility of that phenomenon— that which must be the case for it to be possible or intelligible.

[6] One of Bhaskar's innovations is to propose a decoupling of transcendental modes of argumentation from their characteristically Kantian orientation toward subjective and intersubjective structures. As Bhaskar writes in *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences* (1998, Routledge), "If philosophy is to be possible (and I want to contend that it is in practice indispensable) then it must follow the Kantian road. But in doing so it must both avoid any commitment to the content of specific theories and recognize the conditional nature of all its results. Moreover, it must reject two presuppositions which were central to Kant's own philosophical project, viz that in any inquiry of the form 'what must be the case for Φ to be possible?' the conclusion, X, would be a fact about us and that Φ must invariably stand for some universal operation of the mind. That is to say, it must reject the idealist and individualist cast into which Kant pressed his own inquiries" (p. 5).

[7] Bhaskar, R. (1975/2008). *A Realist Theory of Science*. New York: Routledge.

[8] *Ibid*.

mechanisms, and powers that exist autonomously of human minds and can be "out of phase" with actual patterns of events or empirical observations.[9] Thus, according to CR, all socially produced scientific theories or interpretive knowledge (the *transitive* dimension) are concerned with an absolutely (most natural mechanisms) or relatively (most social mechanisms) theory-independent object-world (the *intransitive* dimension),[10] whether they explicitly acknowledge it or not. Referring to this notion that "knowledge" has both a constructivist (transitive) as well as realist (intransitive) element, Bhaskar writes:

> Any adequate philosophy of science must find a way of grappling with this central paradox of science: that men in their social activity produce knowledge which is a social product much like any other, which is no more independent of its production and the men who produce it than motor cars, armchairs or books, which has its own craftsmen, technicians, publicists, standards and skills and which is no less subject to change than any other commodity. This is one side of 'knowledge'. The other is that knowledge is '*of*' things which are not produced by men at all: the specific gravity of mercury, the process of electrolysis, the mechanism of light propagation. None of these 'objects of knowledge' depend on human activity. If men ceased to exist sound would continue to travel and heavy bodies fall to the earth in exactly the same way, though *ex hypothesi* there would be no-one to know it.[11]

Thus, as Bhaskar suggests in this passage, CR holds that the world is characterized by a kind of duality in which (intransitive) objects (in a general categorical and dispositional sense) have their own existence (and agency) outside of human knowledge and interpretation, but can only be known in their specific contents, rich textures, and nuances in and through (transitive) scientific inquiry and human interpretation/construction.

The proposition that intransitive objects can be (and often are) "out of phase" with actual patterns of events means that certain aspects of an object's generative powers may either act or lie dormant depending on various conditions. Thus, an intransitive object will not produce the same actual events in all contexts. Bhaskar justifies his proposition that intransitive objects are the necessarily presupposed condition for science by transcendental analysis of the social practice of scientific experiment:

> …an experiment is necessary precisely to the extent that the pattern of events forthcoming under experimental conditions would not be forthcoming without it. Thus in an experiment we are a causal agent of the sequence of events, but not of the causal law which the sequence of events, because it has been produced under experimental conditions, enables us to identify.[12]

Thus, as Bhaskar elucidates, the experimental conditions draw out or disclose a particular pattern of events that would not otherwise have manifested—the experiment brings the real and the actual into phase. In the extraordinary circumstance of an experimentally closed systemic context, objects tend to "obtain" or disclose

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[9] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[10] By "intransitive" Bhaskar does not mean to suggest that objects are somehow static, but rather that, they are either relatively or absolutely independent of human knowledge and practices in relation to them. In the social world, objects are existentially independent in the sense that, once constituted, nothing can then alter the reasons for this, while the generative structures of the natural world are also causally independent.

[11] Bhaskar, R. (1975/2008). *A Realist Theory of Science* (p. 21). New York, NY: Routledge.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Stratum in Critical Realism's Depth Ontology	Referent
The Real	Underlying generative (causal) mechanisms or structures that co-produce the flux of phenomena (events). These are themselves depth-stratified or layered (e.g., mechanisms of the inorganic world, the biosphere, and the sociosphere)
The Actual	Events (whether observed or not) (e.g., Big Bang, the French Revolution, a human action)
The Empirical	Experiences, empirical observations (e.g., what you see through microscopes or in historical documents)

Figure 1. Three levels of depth in Critical Realism's ontology. *Note*: The levels overlap: the real > the actual > the empirical, where > means co-includes or constellationally overreaches.

unique (linear, causal) patterns of events, or aspects of their potential event horizon. But in the nearly ubiquitous (ordinary) context of open systems, objects/generative mechanisms can be either dormant or occluded by the complexity ("multi-mechanicity") of other causes within a network of mechanisms. Furthermore, the experience of particular patterns of events can also be "out of phase" with the events themselves. It is on this basis that CR posits that the world is structured or stratified in terms of three overlapping but distinct domains: the *real* (generative mechanisms; tendencies; powers), the *actual* (events), and the *empirical* (experiences) (see Fig. 1). Moreover, as the intelligibility of scientific change and development shows, the domain of the real is itself depth-stratified or ontologically deep.

In noting the differential expression of objects in open and closed systemic contexts (i.e., what Bhaskar refers to as their "transfactuality") and distinguishing between objects/generative mechanisms (level of the real), events/actualities (level of the actual), and the experiential and semiotic (level of the empirical), CR is, in effect, espousing a profoundly anti-reductionistic notion of *withdrawal*. That is, for CR, the being of an object is "withdrawn" from or always beyond its manifestation on the level of the actual and empirical (or even the sum of those actual and empirical qualities). For example, taking a human social actor as an 'object,' the being of that human is always beyond the particular ways it is expressing in form and being experienced/enacted by other actors—it cannot reduced to the pattern of its manifestation and/or interpretation in any context. As such, CR lends a powerful blow to all forms of (post)positivism, empirical verificationism, and the like—even in their most expanded forms that are inclusive of interiority (e.g., James' "radical empiricism" and Wilber's "deep/broad empiricism"). In short, CR's ontology posits the existence of a real richly differentiated and depth-stratified world, independent of human epistemology and methodology, in which the domains of the real, actual, and empirical are categorically distinct. At the level of the real, objects have an undeniable, but often somewhat opaque and elusively withdrawn, existence. At the level of the actual and the empirical, aspects of the real can be known through human inquiry, and rich knowledge of the nuances, contours, and textures of objects' contextual manifestations can be obtained, despite the fallibility and inevitable partiality of human knowledge production.

Thus, CR offers a compelling ontology that shares positivism's interest in the objective world and identifying causes, yet it diverges radically from it in claiming that the study of the empirical, in-and-of-itself, is too superficial, since it disregards the unobservable generative mechanisms that produce the actual events and

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empirical phenomena that positivists seek to measure and explain.[13] CR thus argues simultaneously for a weak constructivism and (critical) ontological realism—that is, an epistemological relativism that simultaneously acknowledges a universal, intransitive ontological dimension to reality. And just in virtue of ontological realism and epistemic relativity, it espouses judgmental rationality—the possibility of arriving at non-arbitrary views about the world. CR is therefore a higher-order sublation (transcendence and inclusion) of naturalistic positivism and constructivist hermeneutics that articulates an ontology and epistemology honoring not only the creative agency of the human subject, but also the reality (and agency) of objects in the world.[14]

CR argues persuasively against the reduction of ontology to epistemology (referred to as the "epistemic fallacy"), and against the reduction or conflation of the domain of the real to the domain of the actual (that is, it argues for the irreducibility of the reality of causal structures and generative mechanisms to the patterns of events that they produce).[15] From a critical realist standpoint, IT's post-metaphysical coupling of ontology and epistemology (and methodology), constitutes a form of neo-Kantian reductionism that CR refers to as the 'epistemic fallacy,' a philosophical stance that harkens back to the ancient Greek philosophy of Protagoras and has arguably been dominant in Western thinking since the 17th century. According to Bhaskar, the epistemic fallacy,

> consists in the in the view that statements about being can be reduced to or analysed in terms of statements about knowledge; i.e., that ontological questions can always be transposed into epistemological terms. The idea that being can always be analysed in terms of our knowledge of being, that it is sufficient for philosophy to 'treat only of the network, and not what the network describes', results in the systematic dissolution of the idea of a world (which I shall here metaphorically characterize as an ontological realm) independent of but investigated by science. (p. 36-37)[16]

In short, the epistemic fallacy refers to the conflation of ontology and epistemology—the reduction of being as such to our knowledge being. To be sure, ITs post-metaphysical approach commits the epistemic fallacy in claiming that the being of ontological objects is constituted through a subject's epistemic structures (e.g., 'developmental levels of consciousness) and methodological injunctions in the process of enactment. It appears that IT therefore transposes or reduces questions of the ontological status of being as such to epistemological questions of being as it is brought forth in known in actual events and (broad) empirical experience. The status of ontological objects outside of the process of enactment "CANNOT BE KNOWN," and thus the next move is to posit that the object has no existence, ontic status, or reality outside of the epistemic and methodological process of enactment.

In short hand, it appears that IT is essentially saying: the concept of knowing has now lost its cachet, since there is no given thing or object to be known. Hence, being and knowing implode into the notion of enactment—knowing is constitutive of being, ontology is constituted by epistemology (and methodology), "the meaning of a statement is the injunction of its enactment". The claim here is that the ontological status or being of an object is brought forth through the consciousness (epistemic structures) and behavior (methodological injunctions) of the knowing subject—the being engaged in the enactment. But what then, a critical realist might ask, is the ontological status of the one who enacts? This appears to be overlooked by IT as it has

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[13] Alvesson, M., & Sköldberg, K. (2000/2009). *Reflexive methodology. New vistas for qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Ibid*.

[16] Bhaskar, R. (1975/2008). *A Realist Theory of Science*. New York: Routledge.

been explicitly articulated to date, yet there appears to be an implicit presupposition and thus concession of the ontological existence or reality of at least one object—that is, the being engaged in the process of enactment—since in order for that being to enact anything at all, it must first exist as an real entity or object. Thus, IT and its post-metaphysical theory of enactment seems to necessarily presuppose the ontological existence or 'givenness' of at least one intransitive object. How can the being of an object be constituted through the process of enactment, if the process of enactment is inexorably driven by—and contingent on—a being that is itself an object? In this way, from the vantage point of CR, in order to begin the process of enacting or knowing anything, one must presuppose some kind of philosophical ontology—some kind of 'metaphysics' if you will. And following Bhaskar's transcendental argument, such an ontology or metaphysical proposition must presuppose the existence of an enactment-independent or pregiven world. Therefore, when Wilber claims that "post-metaphysical thinking does not rely on the existence of a pregiven world," he appears to be unaware of the tautological and self-contradictory logic undergirding this so-called post-metaphysical position, as a pregiven or mind-independent world is precisely what it relies on. And this is not unique to IT, but is the inevitable outcome of any philosophy or theory that commits the epistemic fallacy, which as we can see now is indeed a fallacy in the proper sense. Some integral scholars therefore believe that Integral Theory can be strengthened by employing CR's transcendental ontology, jettisoning, augmenting, or tempering Integral Theory's post-Kantian, post-metaphysical commitment to the epistemic fallacy as well as the characteristically modern Humean ontology in which it is thereby (implicitly) rooted.

Three Phases of Critical Realism

Similar to Integral Theory's five phases, Critical Realism also has gone through a number of phases since its inception. Generally, there are three recognized phases:

1. *Basic Critical Realism*: CR's transcendental realist ontology and philosophy of science (transcendental realism), arrived at by a method combining transcendental argument and immanent critique; philosophy of social science (critical naturalism); and the theory of explanatory critique.

   Key Texts: *A Realist Theory of Science* (1975), *The Possibility of Naturalism* (1979), and *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation* (1986)

2. *Dialectical Critical Realism*: the further development of transcendental realist ontology through the development of its theory of dialectics; critique of Western philosophy (including the philosophical discourse of modernity).

   Key Texts: *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom* (1993) and *Plato Etc.* (1994).

3. *MetaReality*: CR's spiritual philosophy, which followed the "spiritual turn" (inaugurated by Bhaskar's *From East to West*). In this way it builds on the foundational ontology of basic CR and the further deepening of ontology in dialectical CR, so as to add to this a further three levels, culminating in the prioritization of identity over difference and unity over split, and the thematization of nonduality.

   Key Texts: *The Philosophy of MetaReality* (2002)*, From Science to Emancipation* (2002), and *Reflections on MetaReality* (2002)*.

Key Concepts

Similar to Integral Theory, CR has a vast lexicon of key terms and neologisms. This landscape of new and specialized terms is part of what makes CR somewhat arduous to penetrate and understand at first, and it has been criticized for being too opaque and inaccessible. In an effort to redress this problem and support scholars to more readily enter into the discourse of CR, there has been an entire book, *A Dictionary of Critical Realism,* edited by Mervyn Hartwig, that thoroughly explains all the key concepts. Here I will offer very concise definitions of just a few of these key concepts (particularly those that seem most relevant for integral scholars):

- *Four-planar social being*: human social existence has four planes: material transactions with nature, interpersonal relations, social structure, and the stratification of the embodied personality.
  - There is a general correspondence to Integral Theory's four quadrants: CR's "stratified embodied personality" with the Upper-Left and Upper-Right quadrants; "interpersonal relations" with the Lower-Left quadrant; "social structures and institutions" with the Lower-Right quadrant; and material transactions with nature with the Right-Hand quadrants.
- *Seven scalar social being*: the hierarchy of levels of scale (or span) at which social phenomena can be studied, ranging from the sub- or intra-individual to the planetary and cosmic.
- *The epistemic fallacy*: the reduction of being to human knowledge of being (i.e., of ontology to epistemology).
- *Actualism*: the reduction of the domain of the real to the domain of the actual.
- *Ontological monovalence*: the notion that being is purely positive, that negativity or absence is not real. This has been the dominant view in Western philosophy from Parmenides on. Absence, not just presence, affects reality.
- *Retroduction*: the move from a manifest phenomenon to an idea of a generative mechanism, which if it were real would account for the phenomenon in question. A new concept beyond induction and deduction. (Creatively moving from an actual event to the possible underlying causal mechanisms.)
- *Transformational model of social activity*: a model of the relation between people and society on which people neither create society nor are wholly constituted by it; rather, they reproduce and/or change that which is always already given.
- *Explanatory critique*: the theory of the move, via ontological explanation, from facts to values; values are not science-free. It involves showing, by providing a better explanation (and greater empirical adequacy), that a belief is false. It also discloses the underlying structural causes that sustained the false belief. From there it 1) criticizes the false belief, actions that stem from it and the underlying causes, and 2) positively evaluates (all things being equal) action aimed at removing the underlying causes. In this way the fact/value dichotomy dissolves. The one value judgment retained is that truth is good, that it is better to believe something that is true than something that is false. But this is valid, argues Bhaskar, since believing that truth is a good is a condition of all discourse. It makes no sense to believe something that you know is false—or refuse to believe something that you know is true.
- *Concrete universal and singular* (as opposed to the abstract universality of the discourse of modernity): every object has the following dimensions, corresponding to MELD: universality, processuality, particular mediations, and concrete singularity.

- *Constellationality*: the coincidence of real distinctions and connections in the world, the co-presence of non-identities within an overarching identity or unity (e.g., the constellational containment of epistemology within ontology, and of the empirical and the actual within the real).
- *Immanent critique*: a philosophical method associated with Hegel, Marx, and the Frankfurt school of critical theory that employs the logic within a given theoretical or sociological system with the aim of revealing a system's own internal contradictions.
- *MELD*: the self-structuration of being as apprehended in dialectical CR—*1M* non-identity; *2E* process; *3L* totality; *4D* transformative praxis.
- *MELDARA or MELDARZ*: MELD plus three further levels—*5A* reflexive spirituality; *6R* (re-)enchantment; and *7A* or *Z* non-duality or underlying identity and unity.
- *Concrete utopianism*: imagining alternative uses of resources or alternative ways of doing things subject to constraint. It articulates the rational directionality of history and reflects the gap between actually existing morality and the eudaimonistic society (which is "universal concretely singularized human flourishing in nature").
- *Laminated system*: any system in which a number of distinct mechanisms at different potentially emergent levels combine to produce a novel result. These levels are generally ontologically stratified and include physical, biological, psychological, socioeconomic, and cultural and are clearly related to Integral Theory's levels and quadrants.
- *Alethic truth*: the truth of things as distinct from propositions (propositional truth presupposes alethic truth).
- *Ground-state*: the transcendentally real self, as opposed to the illusory ego and different from the embodied personality. In humanity, it includes the qualities of consciousness, intentionality, creativity, love, and the capacity for right action. These qualities underpin and sustain our actions (although they are filtered through heteronomous elements within our embodied personalities that distort their expression).
- *Cosmic envelope*: the string of all ground-states; that which connects all ground-states.
- *Seriousness*: a term Bhaskar borrows from Hegel to signify a theory's pragmatic efficacy in empowering and improving real world practice; in short, theory-practice consistency ("walking the talk").
- *Eudemonistic society*: an emancipated planetary society in which all are free to flourish. Universal free flourishing where Marx's "free flourishing of each is the condition for the free flourishing of all." In metaReality terms, eudaimonia and the eudaimonistic society are always already here, in the nondual ground state qualities that not only exist already within us, but underpin and sustain the relative world of duality. Marx's maxim is paralleled by the Bodhisattva vow of Mahayana Buddhism, where others' self-realization is as important as our own, being in fact a condition for it.

Key Organizations

Since its inception, a number of institutions have formed around the world to support CR, both academically as well as in terms of application and praxis. What follows is a general list of some of the most important institutions in the world connected to CR.

The International Association for Critical Realism

The International Association for Critical Realism (IACR) was established in 1997 with the basic objective

to serve as a networking or otherwise facilitating resource for anyone broadly sympathetic to, or concerned with, realist philosophy and social theory. Given the current crises in the social sciences and philosophy, it was widely felt that such a resource is urgently needed. To this end IACR intends, among other things, to facilitate annual conferences (both within Europe and in other parts of the world) and to organize or help coordinate and publicize lectures, seminars, workshops, summer schools, and related events concerned in any way with realist philosophy and social theory. It also hopes to facilitate related research projects.

IACR has staged annual conferences since 1998. Previous IACR conferences have been held at the University of Essex, U.K. (1998), the University of Örebro, Sweden (1999), the University of Lancaster, U.K. (2000), Roskilde University, Denmark (2001), the University of Bradford, U.K. (2002), the University of Amsterdam, Netherlands (2003), the University of Cambridge, U.K. (2004), the University of Western Sydney, Australia (2005), University of Tromsø, Norway (2006), Drexel University, U.S.A. (2007), University of London, Kings College, U.K. (2008), Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil (2009), University of Padua, Italy (2010), Oslo University College, Norway (2011), and Rhodes University, South Africa (2012).

The website of IACR: http://criticalrealismblog.blogspot.com/.

Journal of Critical Realism

The IACR's official journal is *Journal of Critical Realism* (JCR). Established in 1997, the JCR is edited by Mervyn Hartwig and a team of other scholars. It is peer-reviewed and is currently indexed in *International Bibliography of the Social Sciences*, *ProQuest Academic Research Library, ProQuest Central, ProQuest Social Sciences*, and *PhilPapers*. JCR provides a forum for scholars wishing to promote realist emancipatory philosophy, social theory, and science on an interdisciplinary and international basis, and for those who wish to engage with such an approach. It publishes articles, review essays, review symposia, book reviews, debates, and postgraduate interventions that relate in some significant way to CR approaches to understanding and changing the world. It is released quarterly with 6 to 8 articles and is available both electronically and in print.

Commencing in 2010, IACR awards an annual *Cheryl Frank Memorial Prize* for a book or article that constitutes, motivates, or exemplifies the best and/or most innovative new writing in or about the tradition of CR, including the philosophy of metaReality, in the previous year. The winner is invited to give the annual Cheryl Frank Memorial Lecture at the IACR Annual Conference or some other suitable venue, in addition to having the lecture is published in JCR.

The website for JCR is: http://www.equinoxjournals.com/index.php/JCR/.

The International Centre for Critical Realism

The International Centre for Critical Realism was established in October 2011 at the University of London, Institute of Education, with Roy Bhaskar as its Director. It is dedicated to teaching, research, and consultancy for CR.

The Centre for Critical Realism

This center was established as a registered charity in 1995 and negotiated the book series with Routledge in 1997. Its founding members were Roy Bhaskar, Margaret Archer, Andrew Collier, Tony Lawson, and Alan Norrie. Roy Bhaskar is no longer a trustee, but is its patron. Its current trustees include Margaret Archer, Andrew Collier, Alan Norrie, Tony Lawson, Nick Hostettler, Sean Vertigan, Kathryn Dean, Bob Carter, Dave Elder-Vass, Lee Martin, and Nick Wilson.

Key Readings and Publications

The following list of introductory readings is taken from all three parts of what one could call the critical realist canon, namely: basic critical realism, dialectical critical realism, and the philosophy of metaReality, together with one from the field of applied critical realism. A number of the best introductory overviews are also listed.

Basic Critical Realism
- Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science* (particularly Chapter 1, Sections 3-5)
- Roy Bhaskar*, The Possibility of Naturalism* (particularly pp. 31-54)
- Roy Bhaskar, *Philosophy and the Idea of Freedom* (particularly Appendix 1)

Dialectical Critical Realism
- Roy Bhaskar, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom,* (particularly Chapter 2, Sections 1-2)
- Alan Norrie, *Dialectic and Difference: Dialectical Critical Realism and the Grounds of Justice*

The Philosophy of metaReality
- Roy Bhaskar, *From Science to Emancipation* (particularly Preface, pp vi-xv, Chapter 11-12)
- Roy Bhaskar, *Reflections on metaReality,* (particularly Chapter 2)
- Mervyn Hartwig, Introduction to *Reflections on metaReality*
- Mervyn Hartwig, 'Bhaskar's critique of the philosophical discourse of modernity'. JCR 10.4 (2011) 485-510.

Applied Critical Realism
- Roy Bhaskar, *Interdisciplinarity and Climate Change* (particularly Chapter 1)

Overviews
- *The Formation of Critical Realism: A Personal Perspective* (Routledge, 2010).
  - This accessible book is in the form of interviews by Mervyn Hartwig of Roy Bhaskar and covers the writings during the three main phases mentioned above.
- Bhaskar's "General Introduction" to the anthology *Critical Realism: Essential* Readings, edited by M.S. Archer and colleagues
  - This is the best essay-length overview of basic and dialectical critical realism.
- Andrew Collier's *Critical Realism: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy* (Verso, 1994)
  - This covers basic critical realism only

Critical Realist Book Series
There are four active CR book series with Routledge:[17]

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[17] All four series have taken over from *Critical Realism: Interventions* and *Routledge Studies in Critical Realism,* the second of which published hardback books only.

1. *Ontological Explorations*. This is the main series for new books.
   - Roy Bhaskar with Mervyn Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism*
   - Roy Bhaskar et al. *Interdisciplinarity and Climate Change*
   - Roy Bhaskar et al., *Ecophilosophy in a World of Crisis*
   - Alan Norrie, *Dialectic and Difference*
   - Roy Bhaskar et al., *Metatheory for the 21st Century* (Forthcoming, 2013)

2. *Classical Texts in Critical Realism*. So far this has been confined to books by Roy Bhaskar but contains his main works in basic critical realism, dialectical critical realism and the philosophy of metaReality.
   - Roy Bhaskar, *Reflections on MetaReality*
   - Roy Bhaskar, *From Science to Emancipation*
   - Roy Bhaskar, *The Philosophy of MetaReality*

3. *New Studies in Critical Realism and Education*
   - Chris Sarra, *Strong and Smart—Towards a Pedagogy for Emancipation: Education for First Peoples*

4. *New Studies in Critical Realism and Spirituality*
   - Mervyn Hartwig and Jamie Morgan (Eds.), *Critical Realism and Spirituality*

Critical Realism: Interventions includes:

- Margaret Archer et al. *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*
- Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism*
- Mervyn Hartwig (Ed.), *Dictionary of Critical Realism*

Select Bibliography and Biography of Roy Bhaskar

1975a   'Feyerabend and Bachelard: two philosophies of science', *New Left Review* 94

1975b   'Forms of realism', *Philosophica* 15 (1) 99127.

1975c   *A Realist Theory of Science*, 1st edition, Leeds: Leeds Books.

1977   Review of R.J. Ackermann, 'The Philosophy of Karl Popper', *Philosophical Books* 1977

1978a   'On the possibility of social scientific knowledge and the limits of naturalism'. Journal *for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 8(1) 1-28. Reprinted in *Reclaming Reality* and *Issues in Marxist Philosophy*, Vol III, eds J. Mepham & D. Hillel-Ruben. *Oxford:* Basil Blackwell (1979).

1978b   *A Realist Theory of Science*, 2nd edn. Brighton, Sussex/New Jersey: Harvester/Humanities.

1979a   *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*, 1st edition, Brighton, Sussex: Harvester.

1979b   Review of D. Sayer, ' Marx's Method', *Radical Philosophy* 25

*1980*a   'Realism in the Natural Sciences', *Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science VI,* ed. L.J. Cohen, Amsterdam

1980b   'Scientific explanation and human emancipation', *Radical Phlosophy* 26: 16-28; reprinted in *Reclaiming Reality* (1989).

1981a   'The consequences of socio-evolutionary concepts for naturalism in sociology: commentaries on Harré and Toulmin', in U. J. Jensen & R. Harré (eds), *The Philosophy of Evolution*, Brighton, Sussex: Harvester.

1981b   Entries on Aristotle's theory of causes, determinism, dialectic, empiricism, epistemology, experiment, idealism, Kant's theory of knowledge, laws, materialism, matter and form, metaphysics, models,

naturalism, ontology, open texture, Plato's theory of forms, positivism, pragmatism, prediction, rationalism, realism, simplicity, tacit knowledge in B. Bynum & R. Porter (eds), *Dictionary of the History of Science*, London: Macmillan.

1981c   Review of M. Rader, 'Marx's Interpretation of History', *Philosophical Books* 1981

1982a   'Emergence, explanation, and emancipation', in P. F. Secord (ed) *Explaining Human Behaviour: Consciousness, Human Action and Social Structure*, Beverly Hills, London and New Delhi: Sage.

1982b   Review of C. Dilworth, 'Scientific Progress', *Isis* 1982

1982c   Review of A. Wood, ' Karl Marx', *Philosophical Books* 1982

1983a   'Beef, structure and place', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 13 (1) 81-96.

1983b   Entries on contradiction, determinism, dialectics (reprinted with corrections in 1989b), empiricism, idealism, theory of knowledge (reprinted with corrections in 1989b), materialism (reprinted with corrections in 1989b), realism, science, and truth in T. Bottomore (ed) *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, Oxford: Blackwell. (2nd Ed. 1991)

1983c   Entries on dialectic and ideology in R. Harré & R. Lamb (eds), *The Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Psychology*, Oxford: Blackwell.

1986   Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation, London: Verso.

1987   Review of D. Oldroyd, 'The Arch of Science', *Metascience* (1987/88)

1988   'Philosophical Underlabouring' (with C, Arthur et al), *Interlink 7*

1989a   *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*, 2n edn., with a Postscript, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

1989b   *Reclaiming Reality*, London & New York: Verso.

1989c   'Rorty, Realism and the Idea of Freedom', *Reading Rorty,* ed. A. Malachowski, Blackwell, Oxford 1989

1990   (ed.), *Harré and His Critics*: *Essays in Honour of Rom Harré with his Commentary on Them*, Oxford Blackwell.

1991a   *Philosophy and the Idea of Freedom*, Oxford, UK & Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell.

1991b   'Social theory and moral philosophy', Appendix 1 in 1991a.

1991c   'Marxist philosophy from Marx to Althusser', Appendix 2 in 1991a.

1991d   *A Meeting of Minds,* (with C. Arthur et al), Oxford 1991

1992   Review of T. Eagleton, 'Ideology: an introduction', *Philosophical Books* 1992

1993a   *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, London & New York: Verso.

1993b   Entries on determinism, dialectic, empiricism, theory of knowledge, materialism, model, naturalism, ontology, paradigm, philosophy of science, philosophy of social science, realism, truth in T. Bottomore & W. Outhwaite (eds), *The Blackwell Dictionary of Modern Social Thought*, Oxford: Blackwell.

1993c   Postscript to J. Shotter, *Conversational Realities: Constructing Life through Language,* Sage, London

1994   *Plato Etc.: The Problems of Philosophy and their Resolution*, London & New York: Verso

1997a   'On the ontological status of ideas', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 27 (2/3): 135–47.

1997b   *A Realist Theory of Science*, 3rd edition, London & New York: Verso.

1998a   *Critical Realism: Essential Readings,* edited with Margaret Archer, Andrew Collier, Tony Lawson and Alan Norrie

1998a   'General introduction', in M. Archer et al. (eds), *Critical Realism: Essential   Readings*.

1998b   (with Tony Lawson) 'Introduction: basic texts and developments', in M. Archer et al. (eds), *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, Part I.

1998c   (with Andrew Collier) 'Introduction: explanatory critiques', in M. Archer et al. (eds), *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, Part III.

1998d   (with Alan Norrie) 'Introduction: dialectic and dialectical critical realism', in M. Archer et al. (eds),

Critical Realism: Essential Readings, Part IV.

1998e *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*, third edition, London & New York: Routledge.

1998f (with Ernesto Laclau) 'Discourse theory vs. critical realism', *Alethia* 1 (2): 9–14; reprinted in 2002a and in A. Brown et al. (eds), (2002) *Critical Realism and Marxism*.

1999 (with Christopher Norris) 'Interview', *The Philosophers' Magazine Online* (http://www.philosophers. co.uk/ current/bhaskar.htm), also available in the Bhaskar Archive: http://www.raggedclaws.com criticalrealism/ archive/rbhaskar_rbi.html; excerpt published in *The Philosophers Magazine* 8, Autumn 1999.

2000a *From East to West: Odyssey of a Soul*, London & New York: Routledge.

2000b 'Introducing transcendental dialectical critical realism', *Alethia* 3 (1): 15–21; reprinted in 2002a.

2001 'How to change reality: story vs. structure – a debate between Rom Harré & Roy Bhaskar', in J. López & G. Potter (eds), *After Postmodernism*.

2002a *From Science to Emancipation: Alienation and Enlightenment*, New Delhi: Thousand Oaks & London: Sage.

2002b *Reflections on Meta-Reality: Transcendence, Emancipation and Everyday Life*, New Delhi: Thousand Oaks & London: Sage

2002c *The Philosophy of Meta-Reality, Volume I: Meta-Reality: Creativity, Love and Freedom*, New Delhi: Thousand Oaks & London: Sage.

2002d (with Rom Harré) 'Critical Realism and Ethnomethodology' in *From Science to Emancipation: Alienation and Enlightenment*, by R. Bhaskar, 96-124. New Delhi: Thousand Oaks & London: Sage.

2002e (with Mervyn Hartwig) 'The philosophy of meta-reality, part 1: identity, spirituality, system' (interview), *Journal of Critical Realism* (incorporating *Alethia*), 5 (1): 21–34; reprinted in 2002a.

2002f (with Mervyn Hartwig) 'The philosophy of meta-reality, part 2: agency, perfectibility, novelty' (interview), *Journal of Critical Realism* (new series) 1 (1): 67–94.

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2008a *A Realist Theory of Science*, 4th edn. London: Routledge.

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2009a *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, 2nd edn. London: Routledge.

2009b *Plato Etc.: The Problems of Philosophy and their Resolution*, 2nd edn. London: Routledge.

2010a (with Mervyn Hartwig) *The Formation of Critical Realism: a personal perspective*, Routledge.

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2010c 'Contexts of Interdisciplinarity' in *Interdisciplinarity and Climate Change*, pp. 1-34.

2010d *Reclaiming Reality*, 2nd edn, Routledge.

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2013a 'The consequences of the revindication of philosophical ontology for philosophy and social theory'. "Prolegomenon" to Engaging with the World: Agency, Institutions, Historical Formations, eds M. Archer and A. Maccarini, Routledge

2013b Foreword to *Studying Organisations Using Critical Realism: A Practical Guide,* edited by Paul Edwards, Joe O'Mahoney and Steve Vincent, Cambridge University Press (forthcoming)

2013c Preface to paperback edition of Chris Sarra, *Strong and Smart- Towards a Pedagogy for Emancipation,* Routledge

2013d *Critical Realism in a Nutshell: a brief introduction to critical realism*, Routledge.

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2014a *A Brief Introduction to metaReality*, Routledge.

2014b (with Berth Danermark and Leigh Price) *Interdisciplinarity and Well-being: an essay in applied critical realism*, Routledge.

2014c (with Sean Esbjorn-Hargens and Nick Hedlund) *Metatheory in the 21st Century: Critical Realism and Integral Theory- an anthology*, Routledge.

2014d (with P. Næss) *Crisis System: a critical realist and environmental critique of contemporary economics*, Routledge.

2015 (with Savita Singh) *Fathoming the Depths of Reality: Roy Bhaskar in conversation*, Routledge.

ROY BHASKAR is a philosopher who is best known as the originator of the philosophy of Critical Realism and metaReality. He is currently World Scholar at the Institute of Education, University of London and Director of the International Centre of Critical Realism located there. A good account of his life and work so far is contained in his *The Formation of Critical Realism* (with Mervyn Harwig).What follows is a brief overview.

Ram Roy Bhaskar was born in London on May 15, 1944. His father was an Indian doctor who had come to London at the beginning of the Second World War to do his FRCS, i.e. his specialist qualification as a surgeon. His mother was English but had spent most of her childhood in South Africa. He had, in many respects, an unhappy childhood, experiencing an intense struggle to come into his *dharma* or vocation. He went to school in London and then on to university at Balliol College, Oxford, where he obtained a first class honours degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics in 1966. Of these three subjects, he plumped for further work in economics, feeling that it dealt with the most urgent problems facing humanity, becoming a lecturer in economics at Pembroke College, Oxford and starting work on a DPhil thesis on "the relevance of economic theory for underdeveloped countries" at Nuffield College, Oxford. However he soon grew disillusioned with the difficulty of making reference to the real world in this thesis, and this led to him switching back to his first love, philosophy. He now began work, as a research fellow at Linacre College, Oxford on the project of at once revindicating ontology (the philosophical study of being) and establishing a new non-empiricist ontology characterised by structure, difference and change. This work eventually culminated in his first book, *A Realist Theory of Science* published in 1975 to great acclaim while he was a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Edinburgh.

Since then he has published many other important and influential works, and he has lectured in universities throughout the world. *A Realist Theory of Science* was soon followed by a path -breaking work on the philosophy of the social sciences, *The Possibility of Naturalism* (1979). The theories put forward in these books, called transcendental realism and critical naturalism, came to be combined as 'critical realism' as a new distinctive position in the philosophy of science and social science. Shortly after, a third book, *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, appeared articulating a strong programme combining ethical naturalism and ideology-critique, known as the theory of explanatory critique. Together these three books lay the basis for what is now known as 'basic (or original) critical realism', which has begun to change our understanding of both science (or knowledge) and the world it studies. Bhaskar's contribution to the original corpus of basic critical realism was completed by a highly acclaimed book of essays, *Reclaiming Reality* (1989) and *Philosophy and the Idea of Freedom* (1991), which incorporated a devastating critique of the pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty.

In 1993 a new phase in critical realism, known as dialectical critical realism, was initiated by the publication of Bhaskar's *Dialectic: the pulse of freedom* and, a year later, by that of his *Plato etc*. These books further developed the ontology and conceptual framework of critical realism, while at the same time mounting a riveting critique of the whole sweep of Western philosophy. Like *A Realist Theory of Science* and *The Possibility of Naturalism* these books are now widely regarded as classics of contemporary philosophy.

In 2000 Bhaskar inaugurated a new, initially very contentious, phase of critical realist philosophy in what has become known as the 'spiritual turn' with the publication of *From East to West*. This was quickly followed in 2002 by *Reflections on metaReality*, *From Science to Emancipation* and *The Philosophy of metaReality*, which together securely established a third phase of critical realist philosophy known as the philosophy of metaReality, a phase which incorporates a trenchant critique of modernity, and its philosophical discourses, and radically new and sublime accounts of the self, social structure and the cosmos, oriented like dialectical and basic critical realism to the survival of the planet and universal wellbeing and flourishing.

Meanwhile In 1995 he had co- founded with colleagues the London-based charity the Centre for Critical Realism and became its first chair. The CCR entered into a publishing agreement with Routledge for the series Critical Realism:Interventions. The first book in this series (which he co-edited) was *Critical Realism: essential readings*, containing extracts from and commentaries on his canonical works. The CCR went on to establish an international membership body, the International Association of Critical Realism, and the peer reviewed Journal of Critical Realism. There are now four CCR book series with Routledge (for which Roy Bhaskar acts as commissioning editor):Ontological Explorations, Classical Texts in Critical Realism, New Studies in Critical Realism and Education and New Studies in Critical Realism and Spirituality. The JCR is published four times a year, and IACR has had annual conferences in Europe (Norway, Sweden, Holland and Italy), America (Philadelphia, Rio de Janeiro) Africa (Grahamstown) and Australia (Sydney), as well as in the UK. At the same time IACR has spawned various regional (alongside disciplinary) bodies such as the Nordic Network for Critical Realism (in Scandinavia) and the Australian Association of Critical Realism. Bhaskar has played a key role in their formation and is currently working towards the development of similar bodies in North America and the Indian sub-continent.

In recent years Roy Bhaskar has combined development and clarification of his philosophical interests, including work on the further elaboration of basic and dialectical critical realism and metaReality, with a renewed interest in its practical application, in the field of what we may call 'applied critical realism', publishing innovative work on topics such as interdisciplinarity and conflict resolution. He is a co-editor of *Interdisciplinarity and Climate Change* and *Ecophilosophy in a World of Crisis* and is currently working on a book on *Interdisciplinarity and Wellbeing,* and on another *Crisis System,* engaging a critical realist and environmental critique of economics

Since 2007 Professor Roy Bhaskar has been World Scholar at the University of London, Institute of Education. In 2011 the International Centre for Critical Realism was established and he was appointed its first director. He sees it as having the potential to become a hive of creative critical realist activity and a major international hub for critical realism. He is currently in the process of establishing an MA in Critical Realism

and Education, with further courses in Critical Realism and Social Theory and Critical Realism and Philosophy pencilled in for the future. He is also engaged in sustained dialogues with other integrative metatheories, such as Ken Wilber's 'integral theory', and is planning to run a series of seminars next year on aspects of the current global crisis. In terms of writing, he is currently working on accessible introductions to critical realism and metaReality.

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NICHOLAS H. HEDLUND-DE WITT, M.A., is executive director of the Integral Research Center at the MetaIntegral Foundation and a Ph.D. researcher at the University of London Institute of Education. Nick's work explores the intersections of metatheory and the cultural and psychological dimensions of global sustainability. In his dissertation he is synthesizing Critical Realism and Integral Theory into a new metatheoretical framework for integrative knowledge production and emancipatory social research, while applying it to address global climate change. Nick has served as adjunct professor at John F. Kennedy University, associate director of the Integral Ecology Center, associate organizer of the biennial Integral Theory Conference, and co-organizer of the International Critical Realism & Integral Theory Symposium. His articles have appeared in publications such as the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*, where he was guest editor of a special issue on Integral Research in 2010. He is currently editing a book with Roy Bhaskar and Sean Esbjörn-Hargens entitled *Metatheory for the 21st-Century: Critical Realism and Integral Theory in Dialogue* (Routledge). Nick holds a bachelor's degree (summa cum laude) in Culture, Ecology, and Consciousness from the University of Colorado, Boulder, a master's degree in Integral Psychology from John F. Kennedy University, and a (second) master's degree in Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness from the California Institute of Integral Studies. Through the course of his studies, he has received several academic honors including the Jacob Van Ek Scholar Award and the Honors Graduating Senior Scholarship Award for his undergraduate thesis. He currently lives in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, with his wife and research collaborator Annick Hedlund-de Witt. Nick can be reached at: nickhedlunddewitt@metaintegral.org.

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