Pre-Conference Workshop on Critical Realism

Objective: The purpose of this workshop is to provide a basic introduction to the various phases of critical realism – first wave, dialectical, and meta-reality – to those new to it or who otherwise desire a refresher. For people new to IACR meetings, it is also an opportunity to go into the conference with some new friends. The pre-conference can be attended both face-to-face or online and postgraduate students can register to present their work in progress within an informal roundtable format (no power points) with mentors at each table to provide feedback.

Location: Wolfson Research Exchange, Level 3, University of Warwick Library (interactive campus map available here: https://warwick.ac.uk/about/campus-journey/interactive-map/)

Monday 29 July

8:30 Tea / Coffee

9:00 Session 1 Overview with Johnny Go (Online)

In this session we will be discussing the main themes introduced in A Realist Theory of Science (RTS) which remain fundamental to critical realism. We will begin by noting regularity theories of causal laws and the attempted avoidance of ontology as the orthodoxy against which RTS is positioned. Then we will consider Bhaskar's conception of the transcendental method as the way in which critical realist ontology is justified. Here we will discuss the similarities and differences between Kant's and Bhaskar's respective conceptions of transcendental arguments and some common objections to the latter. Finally, we will discuss the 'transcendental analysis of experimental activity' as the initial basis for critical realism's ontology of tendencies and the way this relates to the distinctions between: the transitive and intransitive dimensions; the domains of the empirical, the actual, and the real; epistemic relativism, ontological realism, and judgemental rationalism.

10:30 Morning Tea Break

11:00 Session 2 First Wave CR with Doug Porpora (In-person)

In this session, we will review how critical realism (CR) has typically been applied to the social sciences. We will begin with the positivist, hermeneutic, and post-structuralist approaches and how CR differs. That topic will take us through CR's "holy trinity" (ontological realism; epistemic relativism; and judgmental rationality); the *transitive* and *intransitive* dimensions of analysis; and truth and relativism. Next, we will talk about the distinctions between structure, culture, and agency and the *morphogenetic*/*morphostatic* (M/M) model and CR's stand on methodological pluralism.

12:30 Lunch

14:00 – 16.00 Roundtable Presentations of Student Work

4.15-5.45pm 'Reading Bhaskar' Focus Group – Optional but all welcome (in person only)

The Centre for Critical Realism is in the early stages of producing an accessible introduction to the work of Roy Bhaskar. Our intention is to make it easier for students and researchers to engage with Bhaskar's original texts and to make productive use of them through the production of this 'Reading Bhaskar' guide.

As part of our development of this book we are running a number of focus groups. The purpose of these focus groups is to assist us in understanding the needs of the future readership by

widening our understanding of what potential readers would find useful in such a book. Information gained from the focus groups will be used to shape aspects of the book's content and structure. We are particularly interested in ensuring that we engage with the views of people from a variety of different disciplines/backgrounds and those for whom English is not their first language.

This evening session will be an in person only focus group. It is intended to be a relaxed session where our aim is to hear your views. The session will be facilitated by members of the editorial committee for 'Reading Bhaskar'.

We hope that all pre-conference participants will consider being part of the focus group. We have all had different experiences of reading Bhaskar and learning critical realist concepts through engagement with his work. Your reflections and contributions will help us deliver a valuable resource for the next generation of new readers and members of the critical realist community.

Tuesday 30 July

8:30 Tea / Coffee

9:00 Session 3 Dialectical Critical Realism with Priscilla Alderson

This session is on Dialectical Critical Realism (DCR) as a development of the dialectical tradition, and as a development of critical realism. DCR is understood as: a way of understanding human being in an historical world; a theory of ethics; and as metacritique of philosophy. The four stages of DCR (the first moment of real ontology (1M); the second edge of negativity/ absence (2E); the third level of totality (3L); and the fourth dimension of moral practice (4D)) are outlined. Specific topics include: Absence and human being; four planar being; alethia and morality; ethics and society; metacritique of philosophy from the Greeks to the present, and the role of ontological monovalence (a purely positive worldview).

10:30 Morning Tea Break

11:00 Session 4 MetaReality with Onur Ozmen

In this session on metaReality we will begin with a brief overview of the development of critical realism up to metaReality. We will also consider identity and self; transcendental identification, self-realisation and freedom; the axial revolution and modernity; comparative religion and spirituality; how to unfold the enfolded (creativity, learning and education); unconditional love, peace and conflict resolution; 'unthinking' and the limits of thought, spontaneous right action and re-enchanting reality. Finally, we will discuss "being being".

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Developing Critical Realist Empirical Research with Catherine Hastings (In-person)

This session will show how critical realism may be used in empirical social scientific research. It will illustrate the importance of an explicit alignment between the researchers' assumptions about reality and knowledge on the one hand and their research methodology, and how critical realism's conceptual toolbox can inform and improve one's research project.

15:30 – 17.00 Roundtable Presentations of Student Work.

17:00 Pre-conference ends