Special issue: *IOE@120: critical engagement with educational and social thought, practice and development*

Review article

Berry Mayall and Roy Bhaskar: critical thinkers

Priscilla Alderson[1],*🔾

[1] Emerita Professor, IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society, London, UK
* Correspondence: p.alderson@ucl.ac.uk

How to cite
Alderson, P. (2022) 'Berry Mayall and Roy Bhaskar: critical thinkers'. *London Review of Education*, 20 (1), 24. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14324/LRE.20.1.24.

Peer review
This article has been peer-reviewed through the journal's standard double-anonymous peer review, where both the reviewers and authors are anonymised during review.

Open access
London Review of Education is a peer-reviewed open-access journal.

Abstract

Exchanges between the great range of disciplines and experts within IOE (Institute of Education), UCL's Faculty of Education and Society (University College London, UK), can be very productive. This article celebrates two professors who, in markedly different ways, have transformed interdisciplinary understanding of their chosen specialties. Some of their ideas are summarised here to encourage readers who could benefit from their publications and are not yet familiar with them to be keen to study and gain from them. Berry Mayall and Roy Bhaskar might seem too dissimilar to fit into one article. Berry worked here for nearly fifty years, Roy for only seven. One was a sociologist, working mainly on empirical research, the other a philosopher developing extremely advanced theories. Yet they both developed critical new ideas and were under-recognised within IOE despite their international influence. Roy is such a prestigious philosopher, many may wonder why a whole article is not dedicated to him. My aims include recording some benefits of the interdisciplinary thinking he promoted. This article briefly considers some of the ideas that each developed and why these are important; their collaborative work;

memories from colleagues they have influenced; and their contribution to IOE's history and, potentially, to its future.

Keywords childhood studies; critical realism; interdisciplinarity; qualitative and quantitative research; reality; rights; social construction

Introduction

For its size, IOE (Institute of Education), UCL's Faculty of Education and Society (University College London, UK), involves a great range of specialties. Over its 120 years, there have been countless inspiring exchanges between IOE staff and students, as well as between the staff working in and across diverse disciplines. These exchanges involve knowledge and theories, which literally mean ways of seeing and understanding. This article celebrates two professors who have worked to transform interdisciplinary understanding of their chosen specialties. They greatly changed my work, and this experience of change was rather like working in a dimly lit room when someone switches on a bright light: everything can be seen more clearly and fully and more connected to other things in ways that increase their meaning.

At first, Berry Mayall and Roy Bhaskar might seem too dissimilar to fit into one paper. Berry worked here from 1973 to 2021, nearly fifty years. Roy was here only between 2007 and 2014. One was a sociologist, the other, a philosopher. Berry worked mainly on empirical and theoretical research with children, and Roy on extremely advanced theories.

Yet there are also similarities. They both worked on developing new ideas and new sub-disciplines through international networks: childhood studies and critical realism. As critical thinkers, they challenged mainstream traditions. They set up centres and courses, and wrote books that have great international and interdisciplinary influence. In some ways, they were outsiders and are still under-recognised within IOE, to its great loss.

Roy is regarded by many people as such a prestigious philosopher that they may wonder why a whole article is not dedicated to him. One reason is that his part in IOE's 120-year history is rather brief and peripheral. Another is that he is already lauded in many publications. The main reason is to show a little of how useful and flexible his work is for creative interdisciplinary developments and networks. My aims here are to present Roy's and Berry's lives and works in the IOE context and to record some of the benefits of the critical thinking they promoted. After short biographical notes, this article considers some of the original ideas that each developed and why these are important, their leading colleagues and some of the collaborative work they achieved while at IOE. There will be a few memories from colleagues and others whom they have influenced, ending with thoughts on how they have contributed to IOE's history and could contribute to its future.

Berry Mayall (1936–2021)

Berry Mayall was the youngest of the three children of George Standing, a headteacher, and Dorothy Standing, a homemaker. Her father moved between schools in North-West England and the home counties, so that Berry attended six different schools. She won a state scholarship to Newnham College, University of Cambridge, to study English. Berry taught in secondary schools in England and the USA and was later a social worker. In 1964, Berry married James Mayall, now Professor Emeritus of International Relations at the University of Cambridge. They had one daughter, and eventually had four grandchildren. In 1973, Berry gained an MSc in social work at the London School of Economics.

Professor Jack Tizard at IOE set up the Thomas Coram Research Unit (TCRU) in 1973, when Berry joined the team and became a research sociologist, working on how parents and professionals shared the care of young children. Berry recalled TCRU methods in the 1970s and 1980s as being positivist, objective and much influenced by TCRU's statistician. Her PhD, completed in 1981, compared how childminders and day nurseries in London met the needs of working mothers and their children aged under 2 years. The critical approach, mindful of the best standards, is typical of Berry's work. She found childminding to be a poor service in terms of availability, stability, consistency with the child's care at home, physical conditions and minders' varied childcare practices and attitudes. Families from ethnic

minority backgrounds were likely to get a poorer service, although day nurseries were more accountable and better regulated. Berry discussed difficulties of improving childminding services, as well as possible and desirable future trends in policy. The welfare of children was central to her work.

During the 1980s, Berry made international contacts with researchers in the new childhood studies. Judith Ennew, a social anthropologist who had researched child workers, 'street children' and child sexual exploitation saw the need for better theories and methods of studying them. The first international meeting in 1986 discussed methods for researching different social and cultural influences on the institution of childhood, using children as the units of analysis and producing statistics to complement existing medical, psychological and educational models. Further meetings were held in various countries. Childhood studies researchers fell broadly into two groups – those influenced by quantitative research and those influenced by anthropology – and Berry respected them both.

The Danish sociologist Jens Qvortrup worked on European-wide economic surveys of general populations. He noticed that, on every topic in the adult-centric surveys, children were missing from most public national records, statistics and debates. In the surveys, children were seen as their parents' private costs, whereas Jens considered that children should be recognised as workers who contribute to society at home, at school and at work. In the 1980s, many schoolchildren in Europe also did paid and unpaid work, such as newspaper rounds or helping on the family farm or with the family's shop. (In most countries they still do this, as working children's websites report; see Children and Work Network, 2021.) During the 1980s, Jens set up the Childhood as a Social Phenomenon project across Europe, including the USA and Canada. There were workshops and reports from 14 countries. Each report showed how the child was reduced in national and local records to a 'not-yet person', a human-becoming, not a human-being. There was therefore ignorance about how children were specifically affected by many kinds of social conditions, household income, for instance, and how this was distributed between adults and children. Jens argued for researching the social, economic and political state of childhood as a single category, a minority group, mainly through quantitative analysis, to make children much more visible, recognised and valued. Project members also wrote scientific chapters for the *Childhood as a Social Phenomenon* book (Qvortrup et al., 1994). In the political critical Marxist tradition, Jens analysed structures as well as agency, protest and challenge. Since the 1980s, he has criticised childhood studies for not being critical enough, attending too much to the personal rather than the political.

In the second group, sociologists influenced by anthropology researched and theorised the diversity of childhoods through detailed local studies. Allison James and Alan Prout and colleagues researched childhood not just as a fact or a biological stage, but as a social, political and economic construction (James and Prout, 1990/1997). Child development psychology, dominant then and now at IOE, tends to position children as immature, dependent, incompetent, ignorant and foolish, whereas adults are seen as mature, autonomous, competent, informed and wise. The many exceptions tended to be overlooked and this child–adult dichotomy has served to validate and reinforce many unfortunate research reports, policies and systems. However, concepts of childhood, which involve ideas about what children and adult–child relations are like or ought to be like, can be seen as social constructions contingent to their time and place. This potentially emancipates children and adults from oppressive traditions and frees them to seek alternatives. Postmodern research about childhood does some of this important deconstructive work. Yet interpretive paradigms can be relativist: if some childhood routines are highly valued in one place but not at all in another, then do they really matter anywhere?

With Jens, Berry and her Finnish colleague Leena Alanen argued for more critical childhood studies, ethically and politically committed to reporting knowledge that could help to benefit children (work later published, for example, in Alanen and Mayall, 2001). Berry's work was confirmed and extended by the international sociology of childhood and interdisciplinary childhood studies meetings, documented in her history of childhood studies (Mayall, 2013). She recorded how the new ideas were important socially and politically, to give due recognition to children as important members of society, not pre-social objects of socialisation, but contributing agents to the welfare of society. Berry later recalled that the work was important in 'being critical not only of our own research practices but the very practices and social arrangements that we study in the "real" world of children and childhood' (Mayall, 2013: 10–11).

During the 1980s, Berry's work on child health took the then unusual approach of recognising children as agents in how they understood and experienced their ability to maintain, promote and restore their own health at home and at school. She did so through a series of studies funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). These studies included work on children's and parents' understanding of risk in their homes and neighbourhoods.

Also during the 1980s, Ann Oakley became Deputy Director of TCRU. Yet Ann wanted to direct her own research unit, which, among other aims, would promote more respect for women researchers. The Social Science Research Unit (SSRU) opened in 1990. At first, there were four SSRU members 'and a stapler' as Ann said, to note the lack of resources and support. TCRU and SSRU stood out from the rest of IOE in being wholly research-based, mainly funded by grants raised by the researchers on short-term contracts, and concerned with much more than education. SSRU researchers conducted 'social and cultural analyses of policy and practice in the fields of education and health' and social change, and the work of central and local government. An SSRU brochure in 1991 noted the 'strong commitment to the development of theory and analysis that explores social class, gender, ethnicity and language' using a range of qualitative and quantitative methods. SSRU has always been very successful. As of 2022, there are about forty staff and the world-leading EPPI Centre (Evidence for Policy and Practice Information), besides other work, including a range of childhood research and teaching projects.

In 1990, Berry was the first Assistant Director, and Ann recalls that she was very loyal. 'As a colleague she was supportive and intellectually engaging – collegiate in the true sense of that word. She was never afraid to say what she thought, and what she thought was always worth listening to' (Oakley, 2021).

I joined SSRU in 1991, after researching parents' and then children's consent to surgery. I had been amazed at the maturity, wisdom and competence of the young patients' aged 8 to 15 whom I met, and I was writing a book about my research (Alderson, 1993). Berry's information about childhood studies theories lit up my research in important new ways, and shaped all my future work. Berry helped me to understand my small study in far larger theoretical and practical contexts.

Conditions at SSRU in the 1990s supported our work, especially in five ways. First, Ann encouraged everyone to follow their own research interests. Second, we could apply for funds from national and local government departments, and from charitable trusts and foundations much more freely than is possible today, when most grants have to be raised from government agencies that grant up to 100 per cent overheads for administration. We needed to spend less time writing grant proposals and had higher success rates. Third, we could choose our own research topics, questions and methods, whereas current research is far more designed by the funders who invite tenders, and reject most applicants. We could raise critical and theoretical questions that tend to be discouraged today. Fourth, administration generally was much more researcher-friendly in the 1990s and far less onerous. Sandra Stone assisted by Jackie Lee, whose offices were in our SSRU house in Woburn Square, seemed to manage all the administration, finance, budgets and accounts, meticulous records and office diaries, printing and sales of our reports, and many other tasks and questions we raised. In contrast today, all these bureaucratic matters, and many more new ones, seem to have to go to many unknown people in different distant departments, and arcane systems which create more work and rules and delays for researchers (although many individuals are kind and helpful). Fifth, we were free from today's Research Excellence Framework (REF). Talking about ideas in this paper, Ann Oakley said:

> Today it's horrible battles. You feel you have no control over what you can do intellectually and administratively. There's the absurd REF ... The 1990s were pioneering days ... and Berry really was part of that and we had fun. We were all united in the cause of research that had to be useful, and had to make sense to people outside universities, and somehow or other had to improve their welfare ... You get good work done by encouraging people who are passionate about their work.

The REF rewards publication in 'top journals'. Some have quite short word counts for empirical research reports, with rules about very detailed long method sections, and conservative peer reviewers. The system rewards papers that simply add one more brick to the wall of successful publications about received ideas. They often exclude critical innovative researchers who need more space to explain errors and problems in the consensus wall of received ideas, to deconstruct that wall and start building a better one.

Berry convened the Childhood Study Group workshops, and she edited collected papers from them in her book *Children's Childhoods: Observed and experienced* (Mayall, 1994). Chapter topics ranged from childhood and feminism, children's rights and integrity, the family, and television, to children's responsibilities at home, at school and in employed work, ending with papers on children's shrinking freedom to roam in their neighbourhoods, and childhood as a means of production. The chapters illustrated the range of topics, theories and methods we could use for researching childhood while emphasising children's own views and experiences.

The ESRC recognised the importance of childhood and childhood studies by sponsoring the large Children 5–16 Programme: Growing into the 21st Century of 22 projects during the mid-1990s, with regular interdisciplinary meetings for all the grant holders. Berry's project explored children's understandings and experiences of their childhood.

Berry very much enjoyed working with colleagues in Britain and abroad. In 1997, we set up the Childhood Research and Policy Centre (CRPC) as a forum and network for children and adults to exchange ideas. The CRPC promoted childhood studies research and its connections to child rights-based policy and practice, to coordinate collaborative and critical work about childhood and youth. We aimed to attend to children as social actors and contributors, not as passive, often invisible, recipients of services in an adult world, and to involve children as researchers. Besides detailed studies of individuals in small groups, we were also concerned with the social and political contexts of childhood, fair shares for children, and closer international links between researchers, practitioners, policymakers, children and their advocates. The rapidly developing internet services enlarged these international and intergenerational connections, and publicised the new books and papers and multidisciplinary meetings. We held seminars on children's rights and citizenship from 2002 onwards.

When in 1991 the UK government ratified the UN 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, it undertook to implement the Convention in law, policy and practice (not yet wholly fulfilled). In most countries, this work involves a Children's Commissioner. To prompt the tardy English government, the Children's Rights Alliance for England funded a Children's Commissioner for London, as a model for a future English Commissioner. With Suzanne Hood, we were involved in advising, supporting and critically evaluating the project in 2001–4, and working with the Greater London Assembly (GLA). The GLA commissioned us to write reports on *The State of London's Children*, a model for a national commissioner's annual report. Among the innovations, young people officially attended GLA meetings, prepared with clear summaries of the Assembly Members' papers. The project succeeded, in that the English Commissioner was appointed in 2005, the final one of four in the UK and Northern Ireland to be installed. However, unlike other Children's Commissioners around the world, the English Commissioner does not meet the Paris Principles, because they do not provide a rights-based service, are not independent, do not actively monitor progress on implementing the UN Convention and do not support individual children's complaints.

With Leena Alanen, Berry planned a book about empirical studies in both majority and minority world societies, collected with children about their everyday lives. As editors, they collaborated with the authors, through emails and meetings, to develop theories about conceptualising child–adult relations (Alanen and Mayall, 2001). They were concerned with understanding redistributive justice through studying inter-generational relations at micro and macro levels. This work is even more relevant today for studying the actual and potential effects of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic on different generations. We liaised with our colleague Helen Penn, then at SSRU, who was working on globalisation and childhood (Penn, 2002). Berry aimed to promote respect and partnership between adults and children of all ages and in all countries.

Berry worked to promote children's rights through all her social research, also writing a series of papers on rights, giving lectures in the UK and abroad and supervising child rights-based doctoral research. She worked particularly with Leena Alanen and Helga Zeihar (Berlin) while they were teaching at the University of Linköping, Sweden. They developed theories of childhood, starting with real examples and children's own accounts to show how we can only understand society when we take account of children, one-third of the people in the world. Berry also theorised with European colleagues about how feminism might inform childhood research and childhood as a relational process. Just as gender relations can involve power and oppression, so too can generational adult–child relations. Visions of society that ignore children are as skewed as those that used to ignore women.

These and many other ideas resulted in her still highly relevant joint books with Leena, and also in her book, *Towards a Sociology for Childhood: Thinking from children's lives* (Mayall, 2002). This emphasises how childhood, adulthood and society all need to be understood in relation to one another. Berry adapted feminist work on women's individual and group standpoints (which include personal perspectives and experiential knowledge) to develop her work on children's own standpoints and views in their relations with others, and in their complex underestimated moral status (Mayall, 2002).

Berry's love of the theatre informed her work with colleagues to evaluate the National Theatre's Education and Training Programme with schoolchildren and the role of creativity in schools. Another

small study examined generation relations and feminist influences, by interviewing 12-year-old girls and then asking them to invite their mothers and grandmothers to take part.

When she was appointed Professor of Childhood Studies in 2000, Berry's inaugural professorial lecture argued for a rethink in educational policy and practice based on respect for children as competent rational social agents with rights (Mayall, 2003).

Berry and I started the international MA in the Sociology of Childhood and Children's Rights in 2003. There are modules on research methods, on theories, and a week-long module on 'Children's rights in practice' attended by the students and practitioners from around the world, with a wide range of expert visiting speakers. Ginny Morrow led the MA between 2004 and 2010. With Berry, she critiqued a UNICEF report published in 2007. This placed UK children last in a league table of children's happiness and well-being in rich countries, and led to the front cover of *Time* magazine claiming 'Unhappy, unloved and out of control: An epidemic of violence, crime and drunkenness has made Britain scared of its young' (Morrow and Mayall, 2009). They criticised attempts to measure children's well-being using secondary data sets and contrasted this deficit negative model of children's lives, presented as measurable scientific 'fact', with more positive childhood research.

Exploring close connections between sociology and history, Berry and Ginny wrote, *You Can Help Your Country: English children's work during the Second World War* (Mayall and Morrow, 2011/2020). They drew on Ginny's earlier work as well as on oral history interviews and school histories in the IOE library. Their book shows children's great contribution to the nation's survival while so many adults were away fighting, such as with potato harvesting.

A History of the Sociology of Childhood (Mayall, 2013) reviews over a century of research about children, and how and why interdisciplinary childhood studies developed. Berry's social and political aim was to recognise children as important members of society, not pre-social objects of teaching and socialisation, but contributors to the welfare of society. This involves theories that 'lift' children and childhood out of family studies to see them as a social group, with their own interests, and their own interactions with social, political, economic and historic structures. This should help to increase respect for children's rights, including their rights to distributive justice. Berry's history critiques psychology traditions that have justified adult dominance over children by denying them personhood, and by contrasting children's supposed deficits with adults' supposed competencies. The history also questions how feminists have tended to define children as adversaries and burdens, instead of realising how they can be women's allies.

Another new development was an international conference and edited collection of nine papers that connected childhood theory to Bourdieu's work on field, habitus and capital. Authors from Europe and India reflected on the social status of childhood, tensions between school and work, child–adult relations, pressures of globalisation and the discourses of adults who try to help children with these problems (Alanen et al., 2015).

In her final book, *Visionary Women and Visible Children* (Mayall, 2018), Berry looked at the interlinked lives and fortunes, experiences and status of children and women at home, school and work in England between 1900 and 1920. The impact on childhood of the women's suffrage movement and of feminism and socialism is discussed. Using published histories, autobiographies and interviews, Berry argued that many children were women's allies during their early-twentieth-century learning and politics.

Berry retired in 2019 and later became a professor emerita. She still spent most days in her easy chair in her room at IOE, ready to advise colleagues, and reading and referring to her books, journals and papers, collected over half a century. Many were precious rare items from the pre-digital era. In November 2019, an administrator told Berry to empty her room for someone else to use, and to 'hot-desk'. We moved out Berry's collection with difficulty and trauma; her home was too full of books to take any more. Some items are stored in IOE's archives library. Then COVID-19 arrived, and Berry's cancer grew worse. She died in October 2021, cared for at home by her family.

On Berry's influence and legacy, the Childhood Studies MA continues, and among the spin-offs, Rachel Rosen, for a time tutor of the MA, started the Critical Childhood Studies international network. Ann Oakley (2021) commented:

> Berry was a pioneer ... She worked meticulously and passionately on the rights of children as a social minority group to have their views heard and their lives and labours appreciated by adult society. Her research, writing and teaching were foundational to the IOE's own enterprise to situate education fully in its social context ...

> She held many research grants designed to contribute to our understanding of children's position in society, and to illuminate the ways in which the perspectives of adults, and especially of policymakers, have failed to comprehend children's autonomy, competence, and civic rights. As a scholar in these fields she was unmatched, and rightly unrelenting, though gentle, in her criticism of those within and outside academia who refused to envisage children as independent social actors.

Berry's legacy has greater influence internationally than within IOE. For example, Nicola Taylor, Director of the Children's Issues Centre at the University of Otago, New Zealand, wrote that the centre has always 'prioritised children's rights, agency and participation and was strongly influenced by the research and publications of people like Berry Mayall. It led to research commencing in New Zealand on children's perspectives on aspects of their everyday lives, including research "with" rather than "on" children'. Members of the centre felt 'very privileged' to have worked with Berry. 'Berry is an icon in the field. The generous sharing of her wisdom certainly helped [us] to generate a wave of research amongst scholars and students that continues to flourish here today' across New Zealand (personal communication, 10 October 2021).

Just one from numerous grateful students is Dr Utsa Mukherjee, who was inspired in India by Berry's writings to study childhood and eventually 'did my PhD on middle-class British Indian children's everyday leisure through the relational lens that Mayall and Alanen developed. I have since built on Mayall's work on the generational order, especially the idea of 'childing' that she coined, in my recent papers. I am truly indebted to her scholarship' (personal communication, 10 October 2021).

Unfortunately, the individualising child development psychology that emphasises childhood as a journey towards adulthood, not a time in its own right, still dominates many IOE courses, research projects and policies. Age-based classes, streaming, phonics, revision for repeated tests, and zero-tolerance discipline, punishments and exclusions dominate in many schools, often to the detriment of children and society. IOE's large research income from government agencies suggests that the government controls IOE's research agenda, rather than that IOE's innovative critical research, promoted by a few researchers, might influence government policy. This will only happen when IOE learns far more from work such as Berry Mayall's scholarly analysis of childhood and society, and her advocacy of children as competent co-workers with adults.

Learning from colleagues

With Berry Mayall's help, I came to understand childhood in much deeper, broader and more complex ways. Yet while doing empirical research at IOE, between 1991 and 2009, I became increasingly puzzled about key questions in social research:

- What actually exists and occurs? And how can we be sure we observe and report that accurately? Social scientists are divided in their uncertainties. Many researchers hope that, even if their research has some inaccuracies, their large amounts of factual data still validate general claims and reliable predictions, and mirror the world. Others do not attempt to examine actual reality. Some believe there is no universal reality, and we can only research how people interpret or construct it subjectively and contingently.
- Some researchers consider that one or two very detailed case studies can support general conclusions. Others are suspicious of 'anecdotes' and 'bias' and believe that only large samples are reliable. Who is right?
- Empirical researchers tend to assume 'objective' research is free of value. Is it and should it be? Can research reports be 'true', or is there no universal truth, only varying truths that are agreed in different contexts?
- Some researchers assume people have free choice and are responsible for their own welfare. Others see people as fairly powerless and overcome by circumstances and strong structures. Which views about structure and agency are accurate?

How can we overcome these disagreements, which not only erode respect among social scientists when they disagree, but also, given these splits, undermine the trust of policymakers and the general public in social science. Sociologists were notably missing in leading academic public advice on the COVID-19

pandemic, whereas economists and psychologists, each with their agreed dominant 'scientific' paradigm, command more public respect.

Around 2000, Berry and I attended a lecture session about critical realism given by a large man with long black hair, Roy Bhaskar, and a small man with short white hair, Rom Harré, Roy's former PhD supervisor. We were very impressed, but we wondered if we would ever be able to understand this complex philosophy of science, although, as I have mentioned, Berry developed some work on critical realist theories of structure and agency (Mayall, 2002). The next part of this paper reviews a few of the many ways in which Roy Bhaskar's work answered my questions.

Roy Bhaskar (1944–2014)

Roy Bhaskar was appointed World Scholar at IOE in 2007. Every year he convened his fortnightly series of 15 reading seminars for PhD students. The sessions were free and open to everyone, and Roy's eminent friends from around the world would visit. I joined the series in 2009 and quickly found that Roy turned on new light that helped me to understand and clarify my research, and to answer the questions just noted, in radically new ways.

Roy, or Raj, was born in London, the elder son of an Indian GP father, Dr Raju Nath Bhaskar, and an English mother, Kumla, an administrator. He was educated at St Paul's School, and then read philosophy, politics and economics (PPE) at Balliol College, Oxford. In 1971, he married another Oxford graduate who was critical about the PPE course, Hilary Wainwright, the sociologist, author, feminist and socialist activist. Roy was later to teach at universities in the UK and Scandinavia, until he worked at IOE between 2007 and 2014. He co-founded the International Association for Critical Realism (IACR) and influenced scholars around the world through his books and visiting lectures, at the annual IACR conferences, and in the *Journal of Critical Realism*.

To continue with Roy's early life, he began a PhD at Oxford in 1965 about the relevance of economic theory to low-income countries. He soon found that economics models, theories and statistics (epistemology) cannot answer questions about real living and being (ontology), about poverty, inequality and social change. Therefore, he turned to philosophy and began to develop critical realism, a new philosophy of the natural and social sciences. First, he studied reality in the natural sciences, reported in *A Realist Theory of Science* (Bhaskar, 1975/2008b) and later in the social sciences, in *The Possibility of Naturalism* (Bhaskar, 1979/1998). 'Realism' refers to recognition of reality, and 'critical' denotes the Marxist tradition of criticising injustice and oppression, and working to change the world as well as to interpret it. Roy emphasised that the actual world itself should never be confused with our empirical knowledge of it. In *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation* (Bhaskar, 1986/2009) he argued for a programme of 'explanatory critique', which critically analyses both scientific errors and social and moral ills. He concluded that for two and a half thousand years, Western science and social theory have mistakenly created false dichotomies, such as between science and morality.

Conversely, researchers tend to blur together independent existence with our thoughts about it. Researchers are mainly divided into two groups. Although positivists/realists study the independent world, and some believe we can gain exact, predictive and replicable knowledge about it, they tend to condense the world into their statistics. For example, the birth cohorts collective findings are presented are real facts. Yet these records have a very different status and kind of reality from each of the actual 19,000 young adults, including my granddaughter, who are recorded within them.

Interpretivists/postmodernists believe we cannot have exact knowledge of the world because there is no unmediated reality. Roy concluded that both groups fail to recognise fully that (1) independent reality does exist and (2) that we can never fully know or predict it because it is too vast and complex, and our insights are fallible. To assume that we can comprehend and represent the actual world, such as in statistics, or that our comprehension is more valid than the original reality, is to collapse reality (and ontology) into our thinking (epistemology) in the 'epistemic fallacy'.

Positivist predictive research assumes closed systems of single causes in controlled settings with consistent unchanging objects. Reactions in controlled physics and chemistry experiments can be predictable: all things being equal, water boils at 100 °C, striking a match lights a flame. Yet in social research, unpredictable changeable human agents live in open settings of countless influences, so that precise replicable predictions are not possible.

Research with a class of children illustrates these insights. The school and the children really exist, but we can never know more than a fraction of the open systems of their histories, daily activities and futures. They are also constantly changing and interacting in unexpected ways. To pick out one influence, such as to compare teaching phonics with an alternative method in a randomised controlled trial (RCT), ignores how each teacher's methods of teaching and each student's ways of learning, as well as countless other social and economic influences, affect the process in ways that researchers cannot control.

Positivists recognise some of the many influences when they try to isolate and identify these as 'variables' and to measure their influence through multivariate analysis. Yet each variable (diet, happiness, parents) is not a simple factor, common to every child, but a complex maze of varying experiences in varying contexts. Following the philosopher David Hume's precepts, positivist scientists track 'constant conjunctions' of events, and implicitly delete from the world and from this version of science everything that they do not obviously observe during the experimental activity. This reduces questions about what exists (ontology) to questions about what we can know (epistemology), in the previously mentioned epistemic fallacy, as if 'statements about being can always be transposed into statements about our knowledge of being' (Bhaskar, 1993/2008a: 16).

Of many useful critical realist concepts, one is the three levels of reality. Reality tends to be seen as flat; it either does or does not exist. In critical realism, depth reality in both the natural and social sciences has three layers: empirical, actual and real (see Table 1).

Table 1. Three levels of reality (Source: author)

Critical realism concepts	Example in physics	Example in social research
Empirical thinking and experiencing	Observing and analysing many falling objects	Reports and statistics of child poverty, children's anxiety, shame
Actual being and doing ↑	Actual falling objects	Hunger, cold damp housing, poor health, school failure
Real causal mechanisms often unseen ↑	Gravity	Political economy, distribution of wealth and resources

Positivists/realists and interpretivists/postmodernists frequently point out problems in each other's work. Table 1 shows that they both provide necessary information: facts about the actual world and our subjective empirical responses to it. Yet neither is sufficient. Instead of being seen each as independent and complete, they need to be seen together as part of the larger three-level reality. Many researchers combine quantitative/positivist data with qualitative/interpretive data in valuable reports, but they have to gloss over unresolved problems, such as whether the data are facts or opinions, and which are more reliable.

However, both approaches tend to avoid examining causal generative mechanisms. These may seem too large for small qualitative studies. They also involve politics and values, which researchers assume they must avoid if they are to be objective and value-free. Because the mechanisms are mainly invisible, they are excluded from research that collects proof in evidence-based research, and which therefore has to concentrate on visible effects in the empirical and actual levels.

Researchers who concentrate only on the first two levels examine effects but not causes. This is like describing falling objects without seeing the cause of the falling – gravity. It is like a doctor treating pain but not checking if it is caused by a tumour or a broken bone. Billions of pounds spent on describing and measuring child poverty or school failure cannot support really effective policies when they trace influences only in the actual or empirical effects (symptoms), but ignore real causal mechanisms. Causal mechanisms such as the political economy, for example, have to be addressed if there is to be real change.

Roy also stressed the importance of investigating another type of the unseen: absence. There is the monsoon that never arrives, so the crops fail, animals die and people migrate. Human rights matter most as claims for absent resources, such as clean water or justice. Libraries are most active when their books are taken away to be used elsewhere. Absence is also vital because a world packed with presence would have no room for movement or change. Absence includes all potential and what might have been,

all that is elsewhere, all the past, and the future that constantly draws us into its vacuum. Compared with absence, presence is 'a tiny but important ripple on a sea of negativity' (Bhaskar, 1993/2008a: 5). Critical realism looks below the surface of that sea, whereas inductive and deductive research that insist on examining only evidence stays at the visible surface.

One advantage of the three levels of reality concept is that it shows common ground between the natural and social sciences, and a strong basis for the interdisciplinary research that is vital, for example, about the climate crisis (Bhaskar and Danermark, 2006; Bhaskar et al., 2017).

In the 1980s, Roy worked with policymakers on the need to address and transform unseen underlying structures and generative mechanisms, such as working conditions or property ownership. They criticised politics that ignore these (Bhaskar, 1989, 2002a). Objective research involves being open and fair, but it cannot be value-free when social life is so value-laden. Researchers who deny the relevance of values and injustice to their work cannot be neutral, and they align with the powerful, whereas Roy established that researching philosophical knowledge necessarily involves social transformation (Graeber, 2017).

Another problem in much research is uncertainty about relations between social structures and human agents. These ideas were also analysed by Roy's friends who developed critical realism with him, such as Margaret Archer (2003) and Douglas Porpora (2015: Chapters 4 and 5; and see Archer et al., 1998). In Table 2, Column 1, positivist RCTs tend to present weak agents compelled by strong structures or variables. In Column 2, interpretivists tend to report strong agents choosing and drawing on weaker structures as resources. In Column 3, for example, Giddens's (1984) structuration theory, realist evaluation's CMO (context, mechanisms, outcomes) and actor network theory, all merge and conflate structures with agents. However, in Column 4, to critical realists, inanimate structures and conscious agents are interdependent but completely different. Strong structures such as schools, families or the criminal justice system long precede and outlast agents. Yet they can only exist through agents maintaining and changing them. Schools are empty buildings until adults and children turn them into centres of learning. Distinctly different agents and structures are like a river and a landscape, constantly shaping and reshaping one another when the water (agency) floods surrounding land or drains away. Research on childhood dialectically analyses how children and adults divide or share competencies and responsibilities.

Table 2. Structures and agents (Source: author)

1. Strong structures	2. Strong agents	3. Mixed structures and agents	4. Interaction of structure and agency
Weak agents	Weak structures		

Structures and agents are central to critical research that is intended to reduce suffering and promote flourishing, as defined and experienced by agents, preferably working with them to remove structural social ills (Bhaskar, 2017). One alternative is functionalist research, which supports the smooth functioning of current social structures, aiming only to make them more efficient and cost-effective (Porpora, 2015). This may involve seeing agents as the main problem, and evaluating ways to get them to learn more quickly or to adopt more healthy habits. In RCTs, people can be randomised and compared in alternative groups, but the largest single power structures cannot (such as the neoliberal economy or the Big Food industry). RCTs then inevitably assign responsibility for change to agents, testing, for instance, how they alter their calorie intake to lose weight. The multibillion advertising and sugar industries are not addressed.

A helpful way to cover all aspects of being human, and to organise a wide range of research data, is the four planes of social being (Bhaskar, 1993/2008a):

1. bodies in relation to nature
2. interpersonal relations
3. larger social relations and structures and contexts
4. inner human being in the mental-social-embodied personality.

In researching children's learning at school for example, their bodies might seem irrelevant, although they are actually central. Are the children too hungry or tired to learn? Are they naturally restless or uncomfortable from sitting too long? Do they have enough space? Can they see and hear the teacher? Active learning preferably involves bodily engagement when working together with others, as the inferior online alternative during the COVID-19 pandemic showed. *Verstehen* research, which 'understands' others' viewpoints and perspectives, metaphorically stands in their embodied, as well as their mental, position. The four planes can helpfully open up new perspectives for researchers, and alert them to areas they might have overlooked. The four planes of social being are useful bases for interdisciplinary research, and for organising and combining large- and small-scale data sets, such as by 'nesting' a researcher's own study into very wide-ranging literature reviews. The four planes are also useful bases for the four main chapters in doctoral theses.

The semiotic triangle moves beyond two-way relations between the signified and the signifier to include the third angle, the referent, the real actual original being (Bhaskar, 1993/2008a). The signified is the concept which is invoked by the signifier, to which Saussure referred as the sound/image, such as a spoken or written word or an image. Once relayed, the image or sound, such as 'the child' signifies in the mind a concept of the thing to which it refers. The referent is the real thing, or child, in the world. Bhaskar considered that poststructuralists, interpretivists and postmodernists have all elided the referent and deny the real. Like the positivists and the scientists, they reduce the real to the actual and the empirical. Their conclusion that what we see is what we know, and what we know is the extent of the real, is the epistemic fallacy.

David Graeber (2017: n.p.), the late professor of anthropology at LSE, said:

> Roy Bhaskar was a great inspiration to me because I felt no one else was really taking on the big philosophical questions in a way that was simultaneously radical and commonsensical, but at a profoundly high theoretical level ... [In the twentieth century he] was one of the most important thinkers in the philosophy of science and social science – in philosophy. He would come up with one profound high-level idea, one grand theory that would be worth a lifetime's work for any other major thinker and then expand and change his ideas more than once.

In 1994, with *Plato Etc: The problems of philosophy and their resolution*, Roy critically analysed two and a half thousand years of Western philosophy, and he proposed alternatives (Bhaskar, 1994/2010). In 1993, Roy published *Dialectic: The pulse of freedom.* He introduced dialectical critical realism, a 'process of conceptual or social ... conflict, interconnection and change' (Bhaskar, 1993/2008a: 32). The aim is to promote real human flourishing by removing obstacles and absences, and by promoting freedom. The older three-part dialectic – thesis, antithesis, synthesis – is replaced by a four-stage dialectic. To give a basic example that demonstrates the value of the four-stage dialectic by omission: starting and ending at Stage 2, politicians aim to reduce crime by increasing punishment. This does not work, so they stick at Stage 2 and add to the punishments. Most short-term policy starts and stops disastrously at this single stage. To solve the problem requires the four-stage dialectic. There are countless potential applications, and an example is given in Box 1.

Box 1. Four-stage dialectic and crime.

1 Question: What absences and negations are causing crime?
2 Intervene: How might these negative causal mechanisms be reduced or removed and negated?
3 Assess: How does the intervention affect, and how is this affected by, larger social contexts and structures, and by our partial, fallible understanding?
4 Reflect: What can we learn from this process of potential personal and political transformative change, and how can we apply the new insights during the next four-stage cycle?

This may seem rather basic and obvious, but when all four stages are recognised, and when they work as continuing, emergent, developing, interactive processes, this can broaden and deepen analysis. A wealth of other basic critical realist concepts are explained in Roy's and his colleagues' work. Roy commissioned me to write two books on critical realism (Alderson, 2013, 2016), and writing them and a more recent book (Alderson, 2021) helped me to digest, rethink and apply more of his ideas.

Roy developed a third version of critical realism that moved beyond the limits of Western philosophy to learn from Eastern traditions. This involved valuing everyday spirituality and non-duality, as explained, for example, in *From East to West* (Bhaskar, 2000) and *The Philosophy of MetaReality: Creativity, love and freedom* (Bhaskar, 2012, 2002b). Meta-reality gives more emphasis to being and becoming, ethics and emancipation.

In reply to the research questions posed earlier under the heading 'Learning from colleagues', I found that critical realism answered them, and many more. Douglas Porpora considers that there is much good social research, but that it can be even better with help from critical realism. He posed seven commitments for all research, and his book on critical realism (Porpora, 2015) is devoted to explaining how they can be fulfilled through primary research, and by drawing on secondary research and related literature. They are:

- the conscious intentional agency of the people concerned, their experiences, motives, views and interests
- human relations and interactions with social structures including competition, power and inequality
- intensive methods (ethnography, narrative, history and case studies)
- extensive or macro methods (surveys, trials)
- metatheory – be explicit regarding the underlying theories and assumptions about the nature of reality, existence, belief, proof and accuracy, knowledge, perspectives and methods
- truth – accept that it exists
- values – recognise the inherent values in social reality; objectivity involves being fair, open and impartial, but not value-free or amoral.

Porpora (2015) advised less trust in explanations and predictors offered by extensive surveys and statistics. He advocated greater trust in intensive research methods, such as ethnographic case studies and histories, believing that these can support valid causal explanations.

While at IOE, Roy became increasingly ill and disabled. He was pressured to raise research grants and to write for the REF, and his salary was reduced. He died of heart failure in November 2014.

In these few pages, I can hardly begin to do justice to Roy's work, his innovative imaginative thinking, and the ways he has immensely helped me and very many others with our work. Mervyn Hartwig's interviews with Roy (Bhaskar and Hartwig, 2010) tell the history of critical realism and its main architect in detail, and how critical realism is (or has the potential to be) a lived practice. It is 'serious' in that researchers aim to live by its standards by ensuring theory–practice consistency. This involves treating research participants with the same respect they would show to their colleagues or hope for themselves, such as by not deceiving them with covert research. Mervyn also wrote introductions to new editions of all Roy's books, besides editing the *Dictionary of Critical Realism* of over five hundred pages (Hartwig, 2007) and being the first editor of the *Journal of Critical Realism.*

Colleagues who appreciated Roy's work include Gary Hawke, the drama therapist. He helped to continue the reading group from 2014 onwards, and recorded interviews with Roy for YouTube (edited into Bhaskar, 2017). Gary considers:

> Roy's own real activism was the realisation of the eudaimonic [flourishing] society. Although his activism at times isolated him, he would not stop being an activist and through writing and speaking share the seriousness of his activism. In my work as a psychotherapist, I am still inspired by Roy's activism to make it my activism.

Chris Yates at IOE's Centre for Education and International Development (EID) recalls, 'I met Roy when he first came to the IOE in 2007. He was very warm, open and welcoming'. Chris attended Roy's first reading group in 2007, and continues to support and teach the group:

> I have long worked to make closed, often elitist organisations more open. I have occasionally met 'outsiders' who make it into the university space and who sometimes make incredible contributions to others' learning. Roy recognised this in Gary, and invited him to the CR [critical realism] seminar series and other events, to the enrichment of all who met Gary, quite an exceptional person as are many who struggle to understand and use CR ideas to make our world better ... Hardly a day goes by without my consulting or referring to Roy's and his CR colleagues' marvellous corpus.

Maybe it was the international focus on lower income countries and work with marginalised peoples that helped us to connect. Both of us were deeply interested in how educational opportunity might further social justice. As World Scholar, Roy was interested in all things cosmopolitan. This both impressed and energised me. At first, I found his books hard-going. When I was working on the Education Reform Programme in Amman, Jordan, in 2010–11, I had tried to analyse the consultancy experience using my noviciate understanding of some of his basic CR ideas, which he encouraged me to develop. Over the years, I met many CR speakers and it was all deeply stimulating but intellectually hard for me.

Nonetheless the CR ideas stayed with me, acting like some lighthouse that both attracted and engaged me. I think my CR study has improved my ability to better analyse and perhaps see and explain things more clearly … through personal reading and attending courses. Some of my colleagues in EID invited me to add basic CR ideas to their MA modules. In this way I shared my joy and understanding of CR with those who were interested. I encourage my international MA students to use it in their own research studies. I'm working with one student on teacher well-being during COVID-19 in Brazil, using *Interdisciplinarity and Wellbeing.* (Bhaskar et al., 2017)

The rich corpus of CR and particularly its use is a legacy that will help us respond to the many ongoing global challenges, not least the 4e (environment, ecology, economy and ethics) poly-crisis that Roy and other CR people warned us about. If CR can be used to address the poly-crisis, Roy's legacy will be well served. His work is unique and original, even though it is not so well known or appreciated. It needs to be much better understood, used, developed and celebrated. Roy was very exceptional and a great mind. But above all he was a kind soul. One who treated fellow humans with respect and much sensitivity.

In his book *A Theory of Education* (Scott and Bhaskar, 2015) David Scott, IOE Emeritus Professor of Education, offers original material by 'one of the most important philosophers of the past hundred years'. He presents his discussions with Roy on being and knowing, learning, a theory of education, enlightenment and universal self-realisation. In *On Learning: A general theory of objects and object-relations* (Scott, 2021) David uses work by Roy and other philosophers to make detailed critical analyses of problems in theories and methods in much education philosophy and research. He examines intentionality, learning and the formation of the self, and identifies five types of objects.

In notes for this paper, David gave examples of how critical realism clarifies his thoughts, and this is one example, which illustrates how David analyses critical realist concepts in careful detail and in ways to guide future researchers:

Researchers therefore need to gather data on those relations between different structures and those perceived relations between different structures at each time point by the relevant social actors. This is a necessary part of the research process for two reasons. First, it provides access for the researcher to those real relations and mechanisms. Second, social actors' perceptions of those relations constitute a part of them. By examining their intentions, it is possible to make a judgement about how much they know and how this impacts decisions they make.

David considers that Roy's philosophy:

has implications for the way we can understand how the world is structured and in turn how we can transform it to accommodate a desire for a better arrangement of resources for human well-being. It is thus both a theory of mind and world and, in addition, a theory of education.

John O'Regan, IOE Professor of Critical Applied Linguistics, illustrates critical realism's flexible range when he applies it to critical discourse analysis. John recalls teaching on Roy's doctoral seminar series, and rigorously debating his work with Roy before, after and, to the students' delight, during the seminars (O'Regan, 2021b). Roy summarised their discussions in these words:

A discourse is a collection of texts which have been pressed into service by an individual, group or institution for a particular purpose or end. Critical discourse analysis is a method of analysis that examines the meaning-making (or semiosis) and the circulation of systems of meaning (discourses) and their imbrication in relations of power (especially power$_2$) and ideology. (Bhaskar, 2016: 103)

Roy distinguished between power$_2$, domination or oppression, and power$_1$, the transformative power of oppressed people to recognise and change oppressive structures. 'Fighting a war, or homelessness, or hunger' also involves, more than concepts, 'material states of being' and 'social reality, [which] though concept-dependent, is not exhausted by conceptuality' (Bhaskar, 2016: 105). Critical realists also apply immanent critique, the method of criticising concepts, claims and problems by analysing their internal incoherence and illogic.

John applied these ideas in his analysis, which traces the worldwide dominance of the English language to the endless accumulation of capital in a capitalist world-system (O'Regan, 2021a). His interdisciplinary Marxist history of imperialism shows the 'free riding' of English upon the global networks of the capitalist world-system. John's retroduction aims to show why the standard form of English remains dominant, despite all the current linguistic diversity in English (celebrated by linguistics scholars who object to the dominance of traditional models and forms). He traces this dominance to the endless accumulation of capital in a capitalist world-system, governed for the past four hundred years by the hegemonic powers of Britain and the United States. Capital and capitalism as configured by Britain and the USA are the causal mechanisms which these other scholars overlook. They see great diversity, they see that the dominance of the standard form is unjust, but they do not see that it is caused by capitalism. Neither do they see that their activity as expert practitioners of this form contributes to this system, because of their uncritical self-enmeshment in processes of capitalist knowledge production in the standard form.

In a further example of fruitful interdisciplinary exchanges at IOE, John's doctoral student Rob Faure Walker applied critical realism and critical discourse analysis to study the British government's 'war on terror' and violent extremism. As a teacher in a secondary school with 95 per cent Muslim students, Rob enjoyed discussing Islamophobia and extremism with his students, while they gradually moderated some of their own and their peers' extreme ideas. When the government Prevent policy was introduced, the students were silenced and afraid of being reported to the police. Rob left teaching, and his PhD thesis analysed the generative mechanisms when the language of Prevent and counter-extremism actually promotes violence. 'Understanding the potentially oppressive properties of language can help us transcend them through an immanent critique of the most pernicious aspects of the global War on Terror' (Faure Walker, 2021).

Some of my PhD students have applied critical realism, combined with Berry Mayall's influence, to analyse: physical punishment in schools in Tanzania (Tamaki Yoshida), neonatal units in Mexico (Rosa Mendizabal), young people in psychiatric wards (Kate Martin) and inclusive education in China (Xiao Qu).

Michael Reiss, IOE Professor of Science Education, commented:

> Roy was an extraordinary person and I feel very fortunate to have known him. While a towering intellect, with a charismatic personality who could inspire colleagues, students and the general public, he did not easily fit into the twenty-first-century university. Roy succeeded in helping many students realise that ontology and epistemology are live issues that affect one's whole approach to research design, data collection and analysis. It has also been nice to see how many students continue to move on to Roy's later work where he addressed issues of central importance to the social sciences. A handful of IOE academics truly are or have been world scholars. Roy, indeed, was one of them. (Personal communication, 15 November 2021)

It is generally agreed that Roy Bhaskar's work has been more influential outside IOE than inside it. Leigh Price and colleagues have set up critical realism centres in South Africa and Norway. People around the world are joining critical realism meetings, courses and conferences, in person and now online. The IOE doctoral reading group was restarted on Zoom in Spring 2022, and over three hundred people internationally quickly registered with recordings on YouTube (Rob faure walker, n.d.).

I often read and hear discussions that illustrate the value of Roy's work, either by drawing on his work or because his ideas are missing and would so much improve the discussion. This applies to crucial urgent matters, and one recent example is by Adam Tooze (2022), a professor of history in the UK and the USA. He reviewed the third book in a trilogy about the European Union by Luuk Van Middelaar (2022). Tooze praises the trilogy, but he is amazed that the climate crisis is not mentioned. He summarises Van Middelaar's analysis of two types of European politics, either rule-bound or event-driven. Tooze (2022: 44) argues that neither model fits the work needed to react, for example, to a financial crash or to future disasters caused by the climate crisis or to Europe's relations with China:

> Between [Van Middelaar's] polar extremes of history as law-like automatism and history as unpredictable event, what is missing … is a notion of history as process: qualitative, one-off, irreversible change, governed by a complex and at times opaque but nevertheless undeniable causality. This is the missing piece in his image of European politics. The counterpart to reviewing history as process is a conception of politics not as rule-making or ad hoc improvisation, but as project – concerted action organised around a long-term goal, a historical vision and a set of social interests.

Critical realist theory offers the analytical concepts and frameworks to help create these much-needed future-oriented macro visions and projects. They should include analysis of how the youngest generations need to be educated and can take part in them. For this, micro research is also necessary to understand individuals, not treat them all as an anonymous mass. In all kinds of research, Roy's ideas can help clarify, extend and enrich the analysis and connect seemingly disparate ideas. Berry Mayall's and Roy Bhaskar's work provide rich resources for this kind of innovative and vital work.

Declarations and conflicts of interest

Research ethics statement

Not applicable to this article.

Consent for publication statement

Not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of interest statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest with this work. All efforts to sufficiently anonymise the author during peer review of this article have been made. The author declares no further conflicts with this article.

References

Alanen, L., Brooker, L. and Mayall, B. (eds) (2015) *Childhood with Bourdieu*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Alanen, L. and Mayall, B. (eds) (2001) *Conceptualizing Child–Adult Relations*. London: Routledge Falmer.
Alderson, P. (1993) *Children's Consent to Surgery*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
Alderson, P. (2013) *Childhoods Real and Imagined: Volume 1: An introduction to critical realism and childhood studies*. London: Routledge.
Alderson, P. (2016) *The Politics of Childhoods Real and Imagined: Volume 2: Practical application of critical realism and childhood studies*. London: Routledge.
Alderson, P. (2021) *Critical Realism for Health and Illness Research*. Bristol: Policy Press.
Archer, M. (2003) *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Archer, M., Bhaskar, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T. and Norrie, A. (eds) (1998) *Critical Realism: Essential readings*. London: Routledge.
Bhaskar, R. (1989) *Reclaiming Reality*. London: Verso.
Bhaskar, R. (1998) *The Possibility of Naturalism: A philosophical critique of the contemporary human sciences*. London: Routledge. (Original work published 1979)
Bhaskar, R. (2000) *From East to West*. London: Routledge.
Bhaskar, R. (2002a). *From Science to Emancipation: Alienation and enlightenment*. London: Routledge.
Bhaskar, R. (2002b). *Reflection on Meta-Reality: Transcendence, emancipation and everyday life*. London: Routledge.
Bhaskar, R. (2008a). *Dialectic: The pulse of freedom*. London: Routledge. (Original work published 1993)
Bhaskar, R. (2008b). *A Realist Theory of Science*. London: Routledge. (Original work published 1975)
Bhaskar, R. (2009) *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*. London: Routledge. (Original work published 1986)

Bhaskar, R. (2010) *Plato Etc: The problems of philosophy and their resolution.* London: Routledge. (Original work published 1994)

Bhaskar, R. (2012) *The Philosophy of MetaReality: Creativity, love and freedom.* London: Routledge.

Bhaskar, R. (2016) *Enlightened Common Sense: The philosophy of critical realism*, ed. with a preface by M. Hartwig. London: Routledge.

Bhaskar, R. (2017) *The Order of Natural Necessity: A kind of introduction to critical realism.* G. Hawke (ed.) Scotts Valley: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Bhaskar, R. and Danermark, B. (2006) 'Metatheory, interdisciplinarity and disability research: A critical realist perspective'. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 8 (4), 278–97. [CrossRef]

Bhaskar, R., Danermark, B. and Price, L. (eds) (2017) *Interdisciplinarity and Wellbeing: A critical realist general theory of interdisciplinarity.* London: Routledge.

Bhaskar, R. and Hartwig, M. (2010) *The Formation of Critical Realism: A personal perspective.* London: Routledge.

Children and Work Network. (2021) Accessed 25 May 2022. https://www.childrenandwork.net/.

Faure Walker, R. (2021) *The Emergence of 'Extremism': Exposing the violent discourse and language of 'radicalization'.* London: Bloomsbury.

Giddens, A. (1984) *The Constitution of Society.* Oxford: Polity Press.

Graeber, D. (2017) 'David Graeber, speaking about the importance of Bhaskar's work'. Accessed 25 May 2022. https://heterodox.economicblogs.org/lars-p-syll/2021/syll-david-graeber-roy-bhaskar-work.

Hartwig, M. (ed) (2007) *Dictionary of Critical Realism.* London: Routledge.

James, A. and Prout, A. (eds) (1997) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood.* London: RoutledgeFalmer. (Original work published 1990)

Mayall, B. (1994) *Children's Childhoods: Observed and experienced.* London: Falmer Press.

Mayall, B. (2002) *Towards a Sociology for Childhood: Thinking from children's lives.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Mayall, B. (2003) *Sociologies of Childhood and Educational Thinking.* London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Mayall, B. (2013) *A History of the Sociology of Childhood.* London: IOE Press.

Mayall, B. (2018) *Visionary Women and Visible Children, England 1900–1920: Childhood and the Women's Movement.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mayall, B. and Morrow, V. (2020) *You Can Help Your Country: English children's work during the Second World War.* London: UCL Press. (Original work published 2011)

Morrow, V. and Mayall, B. (2009) 'What is wrong with children's well-being in the UK? Questions of meaning and measurement'. *Journal of Social Welfare & Family Law*, 31 (3), 213–25. [CrossRef]

O'Regan, J. (2021a). *Global English and the Political Economy.* London: Routledge.

O'Regan, J. (2021b). 'Between Marxism, poststructuralism and critical realism: A personal odyssey in CDA'. In I. Fairclough, J. Mulderrig and K. Zotzmann (eds), *Language and Power: Essays in honour of Norman Fairclough.* Online: Independently published, 136–46.

Oakley, A. (2021) 'In memory: Professor Berry Mayall (1936-2021)'. UCL IOE blog. Accessed 31 May 2022. https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/2022/01/24/in-memory-professor-berry-mayall-1936-2021/.

Penn, H. (2002) 'The World Bank's view of early childhood'. *Childhood*, 9 (1), 119–32. [CrossRef]

Porpora, D. (2015) *Reconstructing Sociology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Qvortrup, J., Bardy, M., Sgritta, G. and Wintersberger, H. (eds) (1994) *Childhood Matters: Social theory, practice and politics.* Avebury: Aldershot.

Rob faure walker (n.d.) UCL Critical Realism Reading Group Session [YouTube channel]. Accessed 30 June 2022. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeod4lGHw8s18DVo7t-w5KQ.

Scott, D. (2021) *On Learning: A general theory of objects and object-relations.* London: UCL Press.

Scott, D. and Bhaskar, R. (2015) *A Theory of Education.* Cham: Springer.

Tooze, A. 2022. 'Can Europe tame pandemonium?'. *New Statesman*, 4 February, 42–4.

Van Middelaar, L. (2022) *Pandemonium: Saving Europe.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Agenda Publishing.