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Margaret Archer (1943-2023) on Critical Realism and Morphogenesis: Linking Critical Realist Research Models from East and West

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Abstract:

Critical Realism is a philosophical approach to social science research, social action, and social change activism. It provides a framework for social scientists whose value commitments lead them to view the construction of social phenomena in critical ways, which identify the often hidden oppressive elements in social structures. This understanding of a 'new' reality underlies the advocacy of change strategies, and the initiation of dialogue between members of disadvantaged and oppressed groups through the process of 'morphogenesis'. This model of dialogues enabling change and the 'unmasking of alienation' stems from the work of Roy Bhaskar, and has been developed by Margaret Archer and other European scholars. An important feature of CR has been the application by the emergence of shared understanding, by social scientists from different value traditions (e.g. Christianity, Secular Humanism, and Islam). The JOCRISE in taking CR understandings of oppressive social forces into new fields, and with fresh CR models, is welcomed. In appraising the new model from JOCRISE, we offer both Cartesian dualism and Popper's World 3 model as elements of a new, dynamic focus on social change advocacy.

Keywords: *Critical Realism, Roy Bhaskar, Margaret Archer, Karl Popper, Renee Descartes.*

Introduction

Margaret Archer's death in May of 2023 allows us to reflect on an inspirational scholar, social activist, and exponent of Critical Realism. Writing a tribute to her scholarship offers an opportunity to comment on the welcome surge of Critical Realism (CR) scholarship and research exemplified in the papers published in the recently-founded journal: Journal of Critical Realism in Socio-

Economics from an Indonesian academic foundation, which offers scholars the opportunity to develop CR themes with radical critiques of socioeconomic issues, including what Priels (2023) calls “the pathological ruling class” - which has resonance with our criticism of ruling class hegemony based on a humanized Marxist approach (Adam-Bagley, 2022)

What is powerful about the CR approach pioneered by Roy Bhaskar (in his key works published 1986-2016) and which Margaret Archer built on is that of spirituality, combined with economic radicalism and the energy of the humanist psychology movement – a combination that offers a powerful new mode of critiquing and potentially reforming world institutions from a spiritually-informed intellectual base (Abubaker et al., 2022)

A powerful element of Critical Realism is that it unites radical scholars from different traditions (e.g. Christianity, Islam, and Marxist Humanism) in dialogue concerning shared intellectual and political approaches to common concerns. Margaret Archer’s scholarship (1995-2020) demonstrates the intellectual and moral unity, as well as the epistemological challenges of the radical scholarly ideas and actions that CR engenders. Archer added to Bhaskar’s analysis the crucial idea of morphogenesis, through which critical realist analysis ‘unmasks’ the alienating ideologies that cloak the nature of social oppression, in ways that enable social actors to create new dialogue, with ideas for identifying, understanding, and changing oppressive social structure.

Literature Review

Margaret Archer (Born 1943, Died 2023)

Archer’s doctorate (awarded by the London School of Economics in 1964) was on the topic of social class in the English education system, and how its hidden curricula obscured and diverted consciousness of class exploitation. She held the Chair of Sociology at the UK’s University of Warwick, embarking on a program of research and writing that involved the development of radical social theory, combined with programs of social action, based on her concerns for social justice. This latter motivation stemmed from her Roman Catholic faith. Her scholarly prestige was such that she became the Advisor on Women’s Issues to Pope Francis, head of the

Roman Catholic Church. In an interview conducted with Archer by Morgan, Margaret Archer observed that:

"I have just finished my five-year term of office as President of PASS [Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences]. Pope Francis, who appointed me in 2014, pursues a humanitarian social agenda, ecumenical in outreach, which I have no problem at all in promoting. I often say that he has turned the Church into a social movement; despite internal opposition and external indifference. For example, his first initiative was to move against human trafficking and this was infectious. Thus, I edited books, wrote chapters – no different from what you are all used to – and ended up starting a small charity in my hometown for trafficked women and their children (Archer & Morgan, 2020) My role was to field questions on social implications. Take advantage of our publications – they are free to download, and not pious. As one Cardinal advised me, 'Write about global social problems but don't tangle with theology'. As for my more recent work on CSO [RC funded] projects, these too broadly align with a lifetime interest in emancipatory and explanatory social science, and my curiosity remains unabated concerning a world that continues to intrigue." (Archer & Morgan, 2020, p. 199)

Margaret Archer's work on critical realism and morphogenesis (radical social change through consciousness-raising) grew out of her concerns with the struggles of working-class children to achieve upward social mobility through the UK's comprehensive school system, and her early publications were in the field of educational sociology (Archer, 2007). Her work in education expanded its moral compass to possess a more complete ethical domain. Like other critical realists (e.g. Bhaskar and Wilkinson) she was radical in a political sense (Scambler, 2020), but was also strongly influenced by "the ontology of God".

Although Archer did not make her theological position explicit. However, we detect elements of the Vincentian will in her position: each human being, however wretched their situation (e.g. as a slave, or a prisoner) has moral challenges each day, possibilities of kindness and mercy to others which they may act upon, reflect upon, and recreate themselves in, despite their wretched situation: their spiritually at least, as Archer would put it, one of 'upward mobility.

Reflecting on one's past, on the events of yesterday, and the events of childhood are a core part of Roy Bhaskar's dialectical interchange in which the passive past ("the absence") is pondered and recreated in a new present (Alderson, 2013 & 2016). In this model we recreate in our new "story" not merely ourselves, but we also acknowledge the ethic that childhood is the primary social institution from which accounts of civilization are developed. This self-reflective pathway in seeking ethical behaviors is grounded psychologically, in Mead's (1964) idea of the reflexive self, modified and extended by Archer (2003), and carried forward in the ideas of stories for creative self-hood by Plummer (2020).

Archer is in our reading, the most impressive of the sociologists who have been inspired by Bhaskar's critical realism, and its unfolding from and through Marxism and Hegel into dialectical critical realism, and then into realms of theology. We learn too how in critical realist theory we may understand and apprehend notions of the divine (Archer, M S., Collier, A. & Porpora, 2004)

Archer's fullest and most eloquent account of "The Internal Conversation" is her 2003 volume *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*. Her arguments concern "structure" (which has variable meaning in philosophy and sociology, but is seen as an enduring form), and "agency" (with similar debates about its meaning, but intuitively, how individuals relate, subjectively, to structure). Both structure and agency exist independently (i.e. have ontological reality), and causal relations between them remain to be investigated. Structure and agency " ... are two distinctive and irreducible properties and powers, and ... human reflexive deliberations play a crucial role in mediating between them." (Archer, 2003, p. 14) Thus reflexivity is central to Margaret Archer's sociology:

"Were we humans, not reflexive beings there could be no such thing as society. This is because any form of social interaction, from the dyad to the global system, requires that subjects know themselves to be themselves. Otherwise, they could not acknowledge that their words were their own, nor that their intentions, undertakings, and reactions belonged to them ... not one social obligation, expectation or norm could be owned by a single 'member' of society." (Archer, 2003, p. 19)

Moreover, the reflexive, internal conversations and self-appraisals of individuals in their interactions with others have,

in Archer's model, causal power in modifying structures: these "extrinsic effects ... mediating cultural and social properties of their societies ... and the private lives of social subjects, are indispensable to the very existence and working of society." (Archer, 2003, p. 52)

Archer draws ideas and insights on the social psychology of the self, described in the writings of the forerunners of humanist psychology, William James (1983) and George H. Mead (1964), whose ideas of 'self-other', and 'I-myself' she analyses in detail. She is critical however of their ideas of "personal reflexivity": their idea of the "inner world" lacks autonomy about the individual's "outer world" – a crucial shortcoming, in Archer's goal to "reclaim the internal conversation" as talking "to" society, not merely "about" society.

Only then, Archer proposes " ... we are in a position from which properly to consider the potentialities of our reflexive deliberations as the process which mediates between 'structure and agency'." (p. 129) Archer illustrates her thesis by analyzing the "internal conversations" of twenty adults, making each a unique case study, in showing inter alia, "How the different individual modes of reflexivity, which mediate constraints and enablements in quite distinctive ways, are also related to collective action." (Archer, 2003, p. 166)

Reflexivity does not usually lead to structural change, of course, and Archer illustrates why this is so in her analysis of types of reflexivity. But, reflections upon reflections, refined, shared, and polished reflexivities:

"... 'meta-reflexives' ... are such because they pursue cultural ideals that cannot be accommodated by the current social structure and the array of contexts it defines ... By personifying their ideals of truth and goodness, the meta-reflexives awaken them and re-present them to society. In so doing they re-stock the pool of societal values, by displaying alternatives to the aridity of third-way thinking – and its repressive consensus ... "
(Archer, 2003, p. 361)

A useful critique of Archer's "reflexivity and conduct of the self" has been offered by Akram & Hogan (2015), who examine how Archer's idea of self-reflection may challenge ideas of the "taken-for-granted" everyday events in the lives of individuals which form part of Bourdieu's (1989) account of habitus. Bourdieu downplays ideas of freely willed choice in making decisions, focusing instead on how powerful social and economic classes create reserves of social capital,

through socializing those below them into “unconscious acceptance” of everyday lifestyles.

Archer’s idea of morphogenesis, as part of a self-reflexive change in self-concept, a path to “social mobility” seems a light year away from the rather depressing portraits of everyday social life that come from detailed ethnographic portraits of working-class life which students of Bourdieu paint. For Akram & Hogan (2015) Archer proposes “... a seismic shift [from Bourdieu’s account] in how people form and conduct themselves in everyday life, a process that would result in the realization of extremely high levels of ethical autonomy ... she goes beyond Giddens’ and Bourdieu’s notions of everyday, routinized taken-for-granted actions ... offering an entirely new view of how people form, manage and understand themselves in everyday life.” (Archer, 2011, p. 610).

Archer does not reject Bourdieu’s account of “everyday habitus”, but offers instead a novel form of the social psychology of everyday life. What is novel (among other things) is Archer’s idea of agency, which is developed within the framework of Bhaskar’s dialectical critical realism. Personal reflexivity (renewing one’s thoughts, feelings, and actions about those of others) is shared, according to Archer, by all people who find themselves in similar social situations.

Akram & and Hogan (2015) sum up their understanding of Archer’s position:

“Reflexivity is the regular ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves about their social contexts and vice versa ... Reflexivity in modern society means a transition from a morphostatic to a morphogenetic society of constant change. Reflexivity is also linked to our emotional commitments and our moral concerns ... all of which help to maintain ‘the internal conversation’ that reflects ongoing conversations in agents about who they are, and how they see their lives progressing. Archer’s work raises the idea that individuals think about who they are (in the sense of personal and social identity) and modify their identity in the course of everyday being. Central to such a practice of the self is a deep sense of awareness of who one is, how one became who they are, and the benefits of pursuing such new performative

aspects of identity.” (Akram & Hogan, 2015, p. 620).

In this new world (for it seems to be too exciting to be like the old world which we all remember):

“Reflexivity emerges from a new social and cultural order, which creates novel situational contexts, and which they must negotiate ... In such a scenario, agents draw upon their socially dependent, but personal powers of reflexivity to define their courses of action ... Reflexivity is not necessarily positive, because it can also have negative outcomes ... some will be taking the best course, but may make mistakes ... not all reflection is successful, but all are crucially trying to be reflexive.” (Archer, 1995, p. 110).

In *Making Our Way through the World* (1995) Archer argues that there is movement between modes of reflexivity, taking the agent through the various levels of Bhaskar’s model of social change. Archer identifies four types of reflexivity in this model of social change:

“Communicative Reflexivity (conversations with others, before they can lead to action); Autonomous Reflexivity (internal conversations that are self-contained, leading directly to action); Meta-Reflexivity (internal conversations about critical actions within society); Fractured Reflexivity (broken or negative conversations). Reflexivity can assume crucial importance in times of stress and change. Progress and change are not inevitable.” (Archer, 2013, p. 15).

Akram & Hogan (2015) are impressed by Archer’s thesis, and comment:

“Archer’s work raises the idea that individuals think about the way they are (in the sense of personal social identity) modifying their identity in the course of everyday being ... But what does it mean when she says that agents regularly rethink and evaluate their everyday being? ... Central to such a practice of self-reflection is a deep sense of awareness of who one is, how one became who they are, and the benefits of pursuing such new performative aspects of identity.” (Akram & Hogan, 2015, p. 621).

Akram & Hogan raise important questions about how different Archer's idea of self-reflexion is from Bourdieu's notion of habitus. This is a fascinating area for qualitative research, for eliciting extended accounts of how people in specific communities, or with shared pasts (e.g. ethnicities, childhood experiences) construe themselves through their intellectual, moral, and emotional histories, their reactions to others, how they share thoughts, feelings and opinions.

Margaret Archer (2014) replaced the idea of postmodernism with that of "late modernity", enabling a "trajectory towards a morphogenetic society". That, in Marxist terms, would be a society liberated from oppression which forms alienation. There is a lyrical parallel to the morphogenetic insights that Archer writes about, in the model of "wonder" which Ahmed (2004) derives from writing of Descartes (on the body's first passionate response to 'cognitive surprise'), and the "sensuous certainty" which Marx describes in his first dawning of consciousness concerning the unmasking of alienation:

"The body opens as the world opens up before it; the body unfolds into the unfolding of a world that becomes approached as another body. This opening is not without its risks: wonder can be closed down if what we approach is unwelcome ... But wonder is a passion that motivates the desire to keep looking; it keeps alive the possibility of freshness, and vitality of living that can live as if for the first time ... wonder involves the radicalization of our relation to the past, which is transformed into that which lives and breathes in the present." (Ahmed, 2014, p. 180).

The sense of awe, awakening awareness of possibilities of doing good deeds, of enhancing the social contract between individuals, groups, institutions, and religions is a central part of the humanistic endeavor (Schneider et al., 2014). Indeed, Schneider (2017) writes of "the spirituality of awe" in how human experience can transcend base materialism.

This 'awe' implies that critical realism should also like Marxism, be concerned with alienation, the separation of the individual from the 'natural' status implied by their relationship to the social equity required by 'labour'. This alienation, a form of habitus, is an "enslaving ideology" transmitted between generations: Dialectic

Critical Realism's task is to 'unmask' this alienation, and replace 'false consciousness' with reflexive knowledge which enables social structures, and individuals interacting within those structures morphogenetically, to achieve freedom within the commonwealth of humanity.

Critical Realism and Religion: Approaches from Christianity and Islam

Bhaskar extended his critique beyond the methodologies of social science (Bhaskar, 1986), attempting to find a way forward from what he saw as the stultification and confusion of "phenomenology", "post-modernism", and "social constructionism". Critical realism has been attractive to social researchers, and theorists who are committed to a firm ideological basis for viewing human action in asserting that structures within society are real and although their influence may be debated, their being or ontology (e.g. class exploitation, alienation, the nature of spiritual being) is not in doubt.

It is of course possible that Marxists and Catholics will disagree profoundly on what is or should be salient (Creaven, 2015) but CR nevertheless also lays the way open for dialogue and compromise between seemingly incompatible systems through the process of dialectical critical realism (Bhaskar, 1986). Bhaskar adapts the Hegelian model of dialectical debate (traditionally: thesis, antithesis, synthesis) and goes beyond this model in positing a fourth level in the dialectical process which leads to action for advocacy of change. Moreover, this process of dialectical critical realism (DCR) is a continuous process in the lives of social systems, dyads, and individuals, and there is continuous feedback between the 'agents' (the actors or individuals in DCR). Through these reflexive dialogues, organizations are in a process of continuous change and adjustment following new feedback, with the potential for changing social structures.

What one finds in CR writing is an absence of dogma, and a willingness to engage in debate (the essence of Dialectical Critical Realism) to reach a compromise. Thus, in Collier's (1994) analysis of Marx's writing on Capital, most wage earners are mystified by the nature of capitalism that exploits them: their alienation remains unmasked. But in the Dialectical Critical Realist model, they are capable of understanding and changing both their modes of thought and their social actions, their necessary "underlabouring" (using a term borrowed from Locke) in addressing capitalist exploitation. The

worker who fails to grasp the nature of his or her exploitation remains in a state of “non-realism”, asserts Collier (Archer, M S., Collier, A. & Porpora, 2004, p. 12).

In response to critics of this Marxian approach, Collier (1994) says: “ ... modern non-realists often accuse realists of dogmatism because we defend objectivity. They accuse us of arrogance in claiming truth for our theories ...[but] ... To claim objective truth for one’s statements is to lay one’s cards on the table, to expose oneself to the possibility of refutation.” (Archer, M S., Collier, A. & Porpora, 2004, p. 13).

This bold claim to recognize “reality” (which is, of course, initially an intuitional process) rejects postmodern ideas of the relativity of knowledge and the impossibility of constructing linear models of basic cause; and also involves the rejection of social constructivist ideas that knowledge and values are relative, and are generated through unique sets of social interactions. Critical Realism’s appraisal of Marxian ideas accepts Islamic ideals that individuals should be free to acquire and own property engage in private enterprise, and practice zakat welfare principles which are a foundation of Islamic socialism (Creaven, 2015; Fogg, 2019).

Matthew Wilkinson: Dialectical Critical Realism and Islam

One understands why CR has proved attractive to the Muslim scholar Matthew Wilkinson (2015). In “making sense” of his experience of teaching in a Muslim school he says:

“ ... this book draws upon the tradition of dialectical European philosophy, epitomized by Hegel ... Most recently, this tradition has been brought with great energy and conceptual sophistication into the contemporary academy by the founding figure of the philosophy of critical realism, Roy Bhaskar, as well as others following his lead, such as Alan Norrie, Andrew Wright, and Margaret Archer. Critical realism is exceptional in its coherent articulation of contemporary philosophy of being, of knowing and real personal, ethical, and social change, and its refusal to reduce being of all types, including spiritual being, to socially constructed epistemology or merely psychological or semantic meaning. This makes the philosophy of critical realism at its original, dialectical, and spiritual moments an ideal vehicle for the development of a

systematic rationale to interpret Islam and Islam-in-education in a multi-faith world." (M. L. N. Wilkinson, 2015, p. 10).

Wilkinson draws on both Islamic and critical realist thinking in arguing that Muslim education should be "a philosophy for success", or empowerment. Success is seen by Wilkinson as embedded in the multidimensional development and self-realization of human social interaction within and between the four planes of society being defined by Critical Realist (CR) theorists. These planes are:

The Real: material transactions with nature (eg "the ground of being", "the essence of humans", "the uniqueness of each human being" counterpoised with forces of nature, polity, and economy which impose themselves on humans; and the divine revelations of various world religions);

The Actual: Inter-subjective (interpersonal) transactions between individuals or 'human agents' in different settings, including socialization and social control, the imposition of racialized identities; economic deprivation; forced migration et alia: and the understandings which humans have of these controlling forces, in dialogue, in writing, in protest, in political movements;

The Empirical: Social relations at the non-reducible level of structures, institutions, and forms;

The Transcendent: The embodied personality's liberation through mutual tolerance, the shedding of false consciousness, spiritual fulfilment; awareness of self-potential, and self-actualization.

Wilkinson focuses his analysis on "the embodied personality" and his or her spiritual, intellectual, affective-cultural, civic, and instrumental dimensions. Each of these dimensions has distinct and interrelated or "articulated" ontologies. "Ontological realism" concerns the philosophical study of being (the first level of being in CR theory), and is a central concept within DCR:

"A basic understanding of critical realist ontology, the philosophical study of being is ... that being exists independently of our knowledge of it and in particular, our ability to describe it so that it cannot be reduced to discourse, nor is it merely contained or constructed in the semiotics of our speech." (M. L. N. Wilkinson, 2015, p. 50).

The generosity of the shared dialectical process also flows from Wilkinson's (2015a) analysis of Islam. He uses Bhaskar's

MELD hierarchy (explained in Sawyerr & Adam-Bagley, 2017), and concludes his 1E analysis:

“The Islamic Critical Realism (ICR) fulcrum offers the philosophical possibility that God may have granted genuine spiritual insight to those who fall outside one’s religious tradition and this can enrich rather than threaten one’s commitment to faith and facilitate a genuinely respectful engagement with the ‘other’.” (p. 64)

Moving to 2E, Wilkinson observes how Bhaskar (1993/2008) adapted Hegel:

“He radically alters the phases of dialectic into non-identity, to absence, to totality to transformative praxis in an extension of the ‘revindication’ of ontology and the positing of a new ontology of original critical realism.” (Bhaskar, 2013, p. 66).

Further, on absence, Wilkinson observes:

“According to critical realist thinkers, absence, negativity, and change are essential parts of the duality of presence and absence in being (Norrie, 2010). For example, silence is the precondition of speech, rests are indispensable to musical sound, and as we know from natural science, space is a necessary condition of solid objects. In the experience of selfhood, a sense/knowledge/belief that ‘I am this’ necessarily entails a sense/knowledge/belief that ‘I am not that.’” (M. L. N. Wilkinson, 2015, p. 66).

In DCR absence is, crucially, transformative. “Indeed, dialectical change is understood by critical realists as the process ... of remedying or removing absence” (Bhaskar, 2008). For Bhaskar, positive change is often the removal of, or progression from, something negative. The archetype of this movement is the process of abolishing (i.e. absenting) the conditions of slavery – and on the meaning of the “master-slave” relationship, Bhaskar has much to say.

In Wilkinson’s (2015a) account of the journey towards combining British and Islamic citizenship in Muslim adolescents, he first paints the 2E picture of absence, and the ‘absence’ of seriousness’ in the UK National Curriculum goals concerning citizenship education. As his research progressed, Wilkinson moved to 3L, the level of ‘seriousness’. As an example, he cites Lovelock’s (2016) idea

of Gaia, the self-regulating, self-healing universe, which he relates to the Qur'anic idea of kalifa or stewardship of the earth, the first stewards being Adam and Hawwa, in their divinely-instructed project of "naming all things in nature". At this level, Critical Realist concepts allowed Wilkinson to focus on transformative ideas, on the notion of the primacy of structure over individual agency. At the 4D level, the meaning (and pedagogy) of citizenship education was taken outside of the classroom into 'the world, so that

" ... unity-in-diversity is the bedrock of society, in which institutional structure both predominates over individual agency and can be transformed by it. This task of linking agency with structure means that more than any other subject at the level of 4D (Fourth Dimension – transformative praxis), citizenship education needs to be carried outside of the classroom into the community."(M. L. N. Wilkinson, 2015, p. 246).

1. Reflections on Critical Realism

Roy Bhaskar was intellectually active for 30 years of a brief life, but with each new book, he continued to surprise us, adding to our intellectual awe. For the spiritually inclined, the development of his earlier mysticism was startling, but pleasing, and increased our interfaith understanding and enterprise. In illustration, we offer this quotation from one of his final writings:

Now, the principle of universal solidarity is grounded transcendently in the fact that we could have been someone other than ourselves. But the philosophy of Meta Reality also grounds our capacity to empathize or transcendently identify with the other more radically through the idea of co-presence. This involves the notion that the other is not just something I could have been, but rather that the other is indeed a part of oneself. This involves a radical displacement of the subject of the philosophical discourse of modernity ... we approach the thought embodied in some southern African languages by the notion of 'ubuntu' which means roughly 'I am because you are'.(Bhaskar, 2015, p. 211).

Bhaskar was an intellectual with a free spirit which allowed him to transcend the impasse into which sociology had fallen, by developing a liberated mode of thought that allowed value-based scholars such as the Catholic Margaret Archer, and the Muslim Matthew Wilkinson to develop new modes of research in which their

value positions have not been compromised. The present writers, Muslims by birth and by choosing have found Critical Realism to be a powerful stimulus to our research on women's survival in Gaza, using the research model of autoethnography which enables us to give a picture of both the nature of oppression, and of the basis for a non-violent liberation (Abubaker et al., 2022).

2. Child-Centred Humanism (CCH): A Guiding or Underlabouring Principal

Bhaskar (2008) advocates the idea of "under laboring", derived from Hobbes, in clearing the intellectual debris that clutters the modern epistemology of social research. How much labor is construed and designed is a matter for the individual researcher: thus the Islamic scholar Matthew Wilkinson deploys the idea of fulfillment through performing "good deeds", an important principle of Islamic social action (Wilkinson et al 2012 to 2022). This involves the principle of zakat, of giving to others according to their needs, an important principle of Islamic socialism (Fogg, 2019).

We have advocated in particular the ideal of child-centred humanism as the principle through which all human actions (including social analysis, such as critical realism) should be judged. Within Critical Realism, what underlabouring is concerned with is a general ethical model, the working model through which ethical principles and practices are weighed and performed. The underlabourers are the everyday workers, of good-will who according to Collier (1994):

" ... aim to remove the idols (Bacon), obstacles (Locke) or ideologies (Marx) that stand in the way of, new knowledge to be produced by the [social] sciences." (Collier, 1994, p. 19).

Every person is their philosopher in Critical Realism, not just the professor in her ivory tower. Alderson observed that critics of modern social research methods must not "... overlook how philosophy is integral to everyday and research thinking, and that a main task of philosophy is to be an under-laborer, clearing away rubbish, and laying foundations" (Alderson, 2016).

For the Muslim Critical Realist (M. L. N. Wilkinson, 2015), underlabouring is both literally and figuratively, doing good deeds like clearing the highway of rubbish, and effectively implementing the Sunnah, the life and teaching of Prophet Muhammad. In Hadith

26 of Imam Nawawi's collection of Muhammad's advice, for example: "Every joint of a person must perform a charity each day that the sun rises ... every good word is a charity ... and removing a harmful object from the road is a charity." Every step, and every action, must serve others, and in our Child Centred Humanism (CCH) every action, thought, deed, and intention must 'underlabour' the principle: Children First (Sawyerr, A. A. A., & Adam-Bagley, 2017).

CCH is passionately concerned with the unmasking of the alienation that clouds the consciousness of oppressed families and their children. As Scambler (2013) writes of Margaret Archer's view of Marxian theory: "To introduce the concept of ideology is necessarily to introduce that of false consciousness." And dialectic critical materialism's reflexive model can in its reflexive, morphogenetic mode, help those with "fractured reflexivities" to grasp "true consciousness", sharing with those in oppressed social conditions, a fuller realization of the ideologies which have bound them.

Everyone, in Margaret Archer's model of social action, may achieve upward mobility. In Wilkinson's Islamic Critical Realist (CR) model, it is the journey on the Straight Path (the focus on a self-disciplined journey, recited in each of the five daily prayers) that ensures that the faithful imitate Prophet Muhammad's peaceful example when encountering oppression. For Muslims, the soul given by God resides in each human being, not merely in Muslims, and the Muslim's task is to seek out, serve, and acknowledge the soul of everyone. Again CCH's model of reciprocal love and CR's reflexive morphogenesis seem to converge in this social contract.

Matthew Wilkinson and his fellow scholars in Cardiff and Manchester (M. Wilkinson et al., 2021, 2022) in their work on Muslim prisoners in England and Wales are probably the most active scholars applying Critical Realism in addressing and solving crucial social issues, and their influential work will be modeled and replicated by others.

David Pilgrim (2019) in a textbook exploring and applying Critical Realism to the development of transdisciplinary psychological research concludes with a broad, but justified claim for DCR:

" ... given the current existential threat to our species from ecocide and the remaining chance of nuclear annihilation, Bhaskar's teaching on seriousness has a wider pertinence. For psychology and other disciplines, the overarching question relates to the wider

contribution it makes not only to human flourishing but also to its survival. Critical Realism provides a holistic philosophical framework to explore some answers. (Pilgrim, 2019, p. 179).

3. Conclusion and Recommendation

Given his Indian origins, Roy Bhaskar wrote of spirituality “East and West” (Bhaskar, 2015), and it is appropriate that new thinking on Critical Realism is emerging from an Indonesian intellectual base, which will stimulate and complement the activities of CR scholars in Europe.

Choudhury (2023) elaborates on an extremely interesting challenge in formulating a new model of Critical Realism which includes the statement:

“ ... The indivisible conscious continuum between the search for Critical Realism (CR) and the Socio-Scientific Core (SC) regenerates. The ever more of the same endogenous circular causation of knowledge-induced enabled by the formalism of unity of knowledge in Being and Becoming continues across the non-Cartesian evolutionary conscious continuum.” (Choudhury, 2006, p. 2).

Arif (2023) in an article on the JOCRISE intellectual initiative cites the work of the well-known methodologist Karl Popper in developing his arguments on the search for a new basis for economic interchange, including that practised by Islam for many centuries:

“The growing realization of interdependence of human societies and the recognition of the constant interplay between the religious and the secular only means that one cannot ignore the fact that religion has a significant impact on economic thought and behavior, just as secular ideas and agents have so much influence on the religious actors and institutions.” (Arif, 2023, p. 390).

This perspective on an ethical mode of economic activity is both ancient and well-established and also has significant implications for what Popper (1976) termed a “World 3 solution” to challenges faced by human civilizations, in which the creativity of the spirit moves beyond (but acknowledges) data gathered through canons of scientific logic. In making these arguments Popper acknowledged his debt to Renee Descartes. In Popper’s model (and perhaps in that

of Arif) scientific endeavor begins empirically and moves beyond mundane data (“things”) into value-based models, including those which are spiritually informed.

We propose that the JOCRISE model can be strengthened by including Cartesian dualism in its framework and exegesis, based on the model of the duality of mind and body elaborated in the work of Karl Popper. Popper’s writing, not only on the philosophy of scientific endeavor, but also on the spirituality of scientific endeavor, is based on the model of “the self and its brain” (Eccles, 2005; K. . E. J. C. Popper, 1977) and offers, offers, in our opinion (Abubaker et al., 2022) an important concept through which CR can harness scientific endeavor towards goals of moral enlightenment, and spirituality.

It is worth noting that Islamic philosophy may also incorporate the idea of Cartesian dualism (that the mind has spiritual self-direction that is not based on or determined by somatic function). A brief review of this literature is contained in the Appendix to this article.

4. Popper, Descartes and Critical Realism

Towards the end of his autobiography, Karl Popper observed:

“I think that I was always a Cartesian dualist ... and if not a dualist I was certainly more inclined to pluralism than to monism.”(K. Popper, 1976, p. 187).

Popper is best known for his model of “falsifiability” in formulating and testing scientific hypotheses, and his work on spirituality and the brain is less well-known. While he had left behind the Judaic spirituality of his youth, he remained a spiritual person. His collaborative work with the neuropsychologist John Eccles offered a spirituality which whilst grounded in empirical logic, opened the vision of what Popper (1976) termed World 3, not the Third World, but a new world in which spiritual logic could lead to new dimensions of thinking about and reforming human cultures. Popper’s fascination with spirit-driven consciousness led him to argue that the human frontal lobes were the physiological center of ‘the spirit’ which interacts with ‘the body’ in decision-making and action.

Popper and Eccles reformulated and refined Descartes’ ideas on mind-body dualism proposing that “the mind”, which contained the spiritual brain, was located in the cortex of the brain. This mind, the engine of the soul allows “the self” to act freely:

“We owe to the interaction with World 3 our rationality, the practice of our critical and self-critical thinking and acting. We owe it to our mental growth. And we owe it to our task, labor, and work, and its repercussions upon ourselves.” (K. Popper, 1976, p. 196).

We would add to this quotation that Archer’s model of morphogenesis when applied to Popper’s World 3 approach, implies that our “intellectual development, labor, and work” must be engaged in through a continuous dialogue or moral conversation, together with the exchange of ideas through which individuals and groups understand and liberate one another. Archer explores Popper’s idea of World 3 and Cartesian dualism in seeking to apprehend a new world of epistemology and moral endeavor.

Popper and Eccles (1977) introduced their book by observing:

“The scientific aim of ‘The Self and Its Brain: An Argument for Interactionism’ is to add to our understanding of minds. Its moral aim is to defend the concept of human values against the perceived dehumanizing effects of materialism, reductionism, and behaviorism. The danger of a mechanistic explanation of the mind is that the complete reduction of the mental mind to the physical brain must devalue the mind. The authors essentially agree with Rene Descartes’ dualistic solution to the body-mind problem, arguing that the mind interacts with the body at some place in the brain ...”. (K. . E. J. C. Popper, 1977, p. 3).

5. Margaret Archer and Popper’s World 3: A New Direction for CR?

Margaret Archer (2003) has offered insight into how Popperian philosophy (including the incorporation of Cartesian dualism) has contributed to a potential understanding of humanity’s progress, through the discipline of Critical Realism. Rather than giving an exposition of her arguments, we leave others to study her work, and offer the following quotation from her *Structure, Agency and The Internal Conversation* (2003):

“It is now more than 30 years since Popper advanced his statement about the ‘three worlds’. These are ontologically distinct subworlds, the first being the physical world or world of physical states; the second being the mental world or world of mental states; and the

third being the world of intelligible or world of objective ideas. The three share objective reality, they are equally real but utterly different and variously related ... I underline here ... Popper's thesis that a subjective world of personal experiences exists ... Popper has formulated the genuine oddity about World 2: it is both objectively real and subjective in nature ... whilst World 3 is what I have called the cultural system, that is theories or beliefs which are part of ... 'the universal library of humankind' ... Popper has given us a good example of the 'inner conversation' and its abode in the 'universal library'." (Archer, 2003, p. 36).

The Bhaskarian model, of liberating individuals from oppressive cultural and social systems is a fourth level of understanding and interacting with the cultural world in the direction of social change through shared dialogue within and between oppressed and disadvantaged groups as a means of achieving liberation, both subjective and objective. We may term this ideal state as World 4. This is well illustrated in Alderson's (2013 & 2016) critical realist work on behalf of children.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The purpose of this article has been to introduce concepts of Critical Realism from mainly European scholarly sources, to students of the JOCRISE initiative (Choudhury, 2023) which offers interesting and indeed exciting new developments in the theory and practice of CR scholarship and social understanding of society, in ways which may inform enlightened social change, as well as consolidating traditional religious and value-based initiatives, including those based on Islamic thought. This work can build on the Islamic CR models of Wilkinson and his colleagues (2013 to 2022) in Britain.

We take the opportunity in this review to summarise some of the scholarship and contribution to CR of Margaret Archer, an eminent Christian critical realist scholar and policy advocate. We stress the point that CR provides a viable intellectual framework for value-based scholars of Islamic, Christian, and Humanist affiliations, including the children's advocate Priscilla Alderson (2013, 2016, 2021) who draws on Protestant (Quaker) values. The power of evolving CR scholarship is such that it offers ethical enablement and co-operation of academics and activists co-operating together in programs of

understanding and social concern (e.g. education, child welfare, economic justice) which share common epistemologies.

We welcome Choudhury's (2023) contribution to the CR debate and the new model he has proposed. We take issue however with the model's stress on "non-cartesian" understanding. We elaborate on some of Archer's work, drawing on Karl Popper's Cartesian dualism of mind and spirit (a concept that fits well with Islamic models of freedom of action). Popper's work on World 3 is in itself a valuable contribution to CR thinking and the development of action research. We look forward to rejoinders and further debate.

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