

## Forms of realism and their emancipatory potential

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Re-engaging with 'tourism experience' through a realist lens

**Presenter/s:** Li Li

**Organisation:** Bath Spa University

**Abstract**

This conceptual paper seeks to develop a realist conceptualization of tourism experience. Sitting within Bhaskar's (1986) critical realism, a realist conceptual framework for explaining tourism experience is proposed drawing heavily from Archer's (1995, 2000) work. The paper advocates a stratified and emergent view of tourism experience so as to allow a systematic identification of its constitutive components and a holistic analysis of how things work to generate a tourism experience.

## Realism and the mental: A call for reform for Scientific Realism and development for Critical Realism

**Presenter/s:** Ricardo Restrepo

**Organisation:** Technical University of Manabí, Ecuador

### **Abstract:**

Critical and scientific realism have key advantages over relevant contenders. Over subjectivism, both types of realism distinguish appearance from reality, allow for the possibility of error and thus for critical thought, correction and learning about the world. No matter what one thinks at the top of the 100 floor skyscraper, gravity will operate. Over positivism, realism allow us to speak meaningfully of things we might otherwise class as unverifiable in the positivist sense, such as God, various areas of serious metaphysics, mental phenomena and ethics, whatever one's position in their internal debates. On both positivist and constructive empiricism both types of realism are superior in that they expand our realm of possible and actual knowledge of unobservables like atoms, bacteria and viruses. On falsificationism, realism allows for knowledge of the truth of solid theories like that of the structure of the solar system and that truly refuted general theories will continue to be refuted in the future. However, scientific realism's current mind-independent metaphysics, unlike critical realism's analogous thesis, suffers from fundamental problems, that scientific realism must adapt to or be eliminated. Particularly, current scientific realism is incompatible (1) with the substance of its own underpinnings: science, including physical science, with its scientists, thinkers, theorists, observers, collaborators, readers and writers; (2) is incompatible with psychology and all the social sciences; (3) is incompatible with large and essential parts of zoology and of the theory of evolution; (4) self-knowledge; (5) consciousness; (6) agency; (7) intensional contexts and (8) scientific realism itself. In this presentation, I wish to demonstrate what those problems are and suggest ways of making and developing the relevant metaphysical claims of interest for realism in general.

**Presenter/s:** Leigh Price

**Organisation:** Norway University of Applied Science

### **Abstract**

Many critical realists, myself included, have noticed the similarities between the work of Roy Bhaskar and certain of the American pragmatists. However, in this presentation I argue that this similarity is something of an illusion: critical realism is a significant and important step beyond pragmatism. One of the reasons for the illusion is that Bhaskar made use of some American Pragmatist concepts, for example we can trace his semiotic triangle back to American Pragmatism (he may himself have not realised this connection). Another reason is that Bhaskar made two major ontological steps, not one. Not only did he move beyond empiricism (step one) but he also, simultaneously, moved beyond actualism (step two). Some pragmatists manage to take the first step beyond empiricism, and when they do this, they sound a bit like Bhaskar. In fact, many thinkers with a philosophical bent, in a number of disciplines, not just those labelled as pragmatist, take this step beyond empiricism and it is usually associated with their advocating (implicitly or explicitly) an ontology of actual relations and/or actual processes. However, they generally remain caught in the actualist moment. The step beyond actualism is where Bhaskar's work is truly innovative and it is this step that distinguishes Bhaskar's work from that of the pragmatists. In this presentation, I specifically compare the work of Roy Bhaskar with that of Charles Sanders Peirce (in my opinion, the greatest of the American Pragmatists). I show how the later Peirce, like Bhaskar, argued for realism about actual categories and actual causation but without a concept of a layered reality and emergence he was unable to fully resolve the problems of philosophy. For this, we require Bhaskar's conception of 'the real' that is more than the actual and the empirical.

**Presenter/s:** Mateusz Tofilski

**Organisation:** University of Silesia in Katowice

### **Abstract**

The concept of affordances, i.e. the relational properties of the environment that provoke an organism to a certain action, was originally formulated within James Gibson's ecological psychology. He wrote that: "the affordances of the environment are what it offers to the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill" (Gibson, 2015). This term became central to Gibson's theory of perception based on direct realism and critique of cognitivism. However, the initial vagueness of the notion of affordances and Gibson's tendency to focus on epistemological issues of the theory of perception (as Costall points out, "Gibson put the epistemological cart before the ontological horse" (1995)), led to a certain freedom in interpreting what affordances are, and thus to disputes about their ontological status present in the literature. This is compounded by the broad context of the use of the concept of affordances, which nowadays appears not only in psychology, cognitive science, and philosophy, but also e.g. in the design, or the IS. Considering this diversity, it can be noted that the category of affordances appears in the sidelines of some critical realist texts (e.g. Donati, Archer, 2015; Elder-Vass, 2017). Volkoff and Strong (2013) consider them a particular kind of generative mechanism, and link the category of affordances to the theoretical framework of critical realism as a tool for IS research. The aim of the paper is to look at the category of affordances in terms of the doubts but also the possibilities offered by its use in the context of critical realism (among others, according to the demands to include neurocognitive knowledge in critical realism (Kaidesoja, 2013)). The planned analysis will be conducted in terms of a discussion of Gibson's realist assumptions and in the context of contemporary pluralistic readings of the idea of affordances itself.