

In a way, you see, coming into your [dharma](#) is an ongoing process. To be fully in your dharma you would need to live in a society that accepted the principle of everyone being in their dharma everywhere. If you had such a society it would be a eudaimonistic society, a society in which the free development of each is a condition of the free development of all. And to achieve that the first thing you need is survival, which for many people is a continuous struggle, including to some extent for me. But once you have survived then you need to flourish, and that is wholly possible, I do believe, in a spirit of concrete utopianism. We have to overcome the material constraints that prevent humanity having the fine future that it could still have. Ecological sustainability is a high priority for that, and of course having a mode of production, consumption, settlement and care and a way of organising our economic life that does not involve the exploitation of human beings in the ways that our current capitalism does is another.

~ Roy Bhaskar in Roy Bhaskar with Mervyn Hartwig.
The Formation of Critical Realism: A Personal Perspective. London and New York: Routledge imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an Informa PLC business. 2010. Page 20.

MH [Mervyn Hartwig]: Did you borrow the concept concrete utopia from Ernst Bloch?

RB [Roy Bhaskar]: It might be a concept that I initially picked up from somewhere else, but I gave it my own meaning. Indeed, I was implicitly using it when I was teaching economics in Oxford in the late 1960s and early 1970s....

RB: ... an emancipatory praxis needs the concrete utopian moment, specifying how the world would, or could, be a better place if and when the constraint or absence that binds the agent is itself absented (or constrained).

— Roy Bhaskar with Mervyn Hartwig. *The Formation of Critical Realism: A Personal Perspective*. London and New York: Routledge imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an Informa PLC business. 2010. Page 113.

Where the prospective horizon is omitted, reality only appears as become, as dead, and it is the dead, namely naturalists and empiricists, who are burying their dead here. Where the prospective horizon is continuously included in the reckoning, the real appears as what it is in concrete: as the path–network of dialectical processes which occur in an unfinished world, in a world which would not be in the least changeable without the enormous future: real possibility in that world. Together with that Totum which does not represent the isolated whole of a respective section of process, but the whole of the subject–matter pending in process overall, hence still tendential and latent. This alone is realism, it is of

course inaccessible to that schematism which knows everything in advance, which considers its uniform, in fact even formalistic, stencil to be reality. Reality without real possibility is not complete, the world without future-laden properties does not deserve a glance, an art, a science any more than that of the bourgeois conformist. Concrete utopia stands on the horizon of every reality; real possibility surrounds the open dialectical tendencies and latencies to the very last. By these the unconcluded motion of unconcluded matter — and motion is, in that profound phrase of Aristotle, “uncompleted entelechy” — is arch-realistically pervaded.

~ Ernst Bloch. *The Principle of Hope*. Volume One. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight, translators. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. 1954. Page 223.

The ultimate, enduring insight of [Karl] Marx is that truth does not exist for its own sake but implies

emancipation, and an interpretation of the world which has the transformation of the world as its goal and meaning, providing a key in theory and leverage in practice. Whoever finds this orientation of philosophical theory to humanistic practice (and to nothing else) superannuated is a supporter of things as they are for whom little can be done. Essential Marxism contains in its past so much that its future still unfulfilled: it is as if everything that it intends under world improvement were still ahead of us even in our world of alluring achievements. But of course, in accordance with the Marxist theory of the maturation of history, remote from all abstract utopian outlines. Yet not, as Marx himself thought, requiring the absence of any utopia at all; for what lies before us is the beginning of that which cannot grow old and cannot be outdated—the beginning of the way to the actual, the *concrete* utopia.

~ Ernst Bloch. *On Karl Marx*. John Maxwell, translator. New York: An Azimuth Book imprint of Herder and Herder. 1971. Page 168.

... the inner glow won for us elsewhere may certainly not glimmer only on high here, but must move back far into the medial life all around. From this place of the self-encounter, so that it may become one for everyone, there consequently also springs, inevitably, the arena of political-social leadership: toward real personal freedom, toward real religious affiliation. Here, then, a second point has been attained, where the "soul," the "intuition of the We," the content of its "Magna Carta," streams responsibly into the world. To be practical in this way, to help in this way on everyday life's structural horizon and put things into place, precisely to be political-social in this way, is powerfully near to conscience, and is a revolutionary mission absolutely inscribed in utopia.

~ Ernst Bloch. *The Spirit of Utopia*. Anthony A. Nassar, translator. Werner Hamacher and David E.

Wellbery, editors. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press. 2000. Pages 236–237.