

of the conceptual differences between Jahr and Georgetown bioethics are given. The second part of the book ends with an overview of several visions of the development and the future of bioethics.

As the authors Amir Muzur and Iva Rinčić state in the preface to their book *Van Rensselaer Potter and His Place in the History of Bioethics*, after researching the life and work of Fritz Jahr, it seemed logical to proceed and explore the life and work of another “father of bioethics”, Van Rensselaer Potter (1911 – 2001). Van Rensselaer Potter of the University of Wisconsin was a biochemist-oncologist by profession but a humanist by conviction, who had long been considered a scholar who coined the term ‘bioethics’. Despite the later discovery, one could say of the “European cradle” of this word, Potter’s ideas have not lost their relevance. Conceiving “global bioethics” in the late 1980s, Potter sought to move bioethics beyond North America to other continents and cultures. Potter’s contribution to the content and methodological foundations of integrative bioethics was significant.

Analysing the original archival material of Potter’s legacy, including manuscripts, correspondence, and photo archives all kept in the McArde Laboratory in Madison (USA), furthermore, the records of the interviews with Potter’s associates and his family, and the legacy of Ivan Šegota (1938 – 2011), one of the first among Croatian bioethicists with whom Potter had contacts during the last years of his life, the authors offered Potter’s biography to the reading audience. The new English edition of this book has minor changes in its content regarding the Croatian edition. First of all, it also lacks image material and does not contain a list of Potter’s bibliography. Nevertheless, the English edition does not lose its importance. Especially due to the fact that now Potter’s biography is becoming globally available.

Hence, thanks to its authors, this monograph is a *homage* to Potter’s life and work. However, it also represents an opportunity for Potter to gain recognition in his homeland at least posthumously.

However, even if such recognition would fail, the English translations of these two monographs will inevitably confirm the authors’ contribution to promoting Fritz Jahr’s ideas and understanding of Potterian bioethics. Furthermore, it will provide a broader audience with a safe starting point for a better understanding of the development path and future aspirations of bioethics in Croatia and its surroundings.

**Robert Doričić**

**Norbert Walz**

## **Philosophie als Abstraktionskritik**

### **Überlegungen zum Leitmotiv der Marxschen Kritik und seiner philosophischen Fundierung**

**Königshausen & Neumann,  
Würzburg 2019**

Books and articles on Karl Marx’s theories have been cursed with a Tantalean task of distancing themselves from distortions brought on by a multitude of “Marxisms”, especially the ones that are built on ideologies. Norbert Walz tries to avoid the problematic aspects by consulting authors from different fields – humanist Marxism, value criticism, critical theory and new works on Marxist theory (p. 9). In broadest strokes, the book deals both with materialistic and idealistic points of Karl Marx’s work, interpretations of knowledge as mirrored objectivity, and the thesis that the social being defines consciousness (p. 11). Marxism, therefore, is not understood as a complete or defined theory with a single interpretation, but its contents and meaning are taken as transitional or changing with time, as they changed in Marx’s work. Since the book’s main topic is the position of philosophy in Marx’s overall *opus*, it can only be characterised as *developing*. Even though his theory is grounded in philosophy, his stance on its value and necessity has changed throughout the years.

Marx’s theory covers history and historical analysis, the critique of ideological forms of societal morality, politics and laws that legitimise property and employment relationships but intertwine as critique of the State and the “religion of everyday life” (pp. 11–12). Usually, the main focus of most researchers regarding Marx’s critique is the political economy, and the philosophical terms, ideas and methodology are left out. The critique of societal interactions cannot be understood in its entirety only from the prospect of political economy. It is important to note that the foundation of economic and societal critique is based on philosophical thought. Engels and the protagonists of the Second international used this powerful foundational tool not to ground the movement but to legitimise Marxism as a worldview (pp. 11–12).

The book is divided into seven parts, with a “Foreword”, “Summary” and a “Bibliography”. The chapters in the book are organised in the following order: “Introduction” [“Ein-

leitung”], “Marxist philosophy and worldview-Marxism” [“Marxistische Philosophie und Weltanschauungsmarxismus”] (chapter 2), “Back to the roots: The leitmotif and the secondary topics of Marx’s theory” [“Back to the roots: Das Leitmotiv und die Nebenthemen der Marxschen Theorie”] (chapter 3), “Critique of social abstractions” [“Kritik der gesellschaftlichen Abstraktionen”] (chapter 4), “The centre of criticism and its repression” [“Das Zentrum der Kritik und seine Verdrängung”] (chapter 5), “What is Philosophy?” [“Was ist Philosophie?”] (chapter 6), “Concrete Philosophy” [“Konkrete Philosophie”] (chapter 7), “Summary” [“Zusammenfassung”] (chapter 8).

The starting point (chapter 2) is the analysis of creation of Marxism as a worldview in the 19th century with Walz pointing out the influence of works as *Anti-Dühring* [*Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft*] (1877/1878), *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats* (1884), *Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie* (1886/1888) by Friedrich Engels (p. 17). The analysis is completed with seven points of the philosophical enhancements to the theory of scientific socialism.

The counter-movements of Western Marxism and individual sub-currents of interpretation of Marx’s theory broke with the unity of the worldview-Marxism (p. 13, p. 17). The multitude of interpretation scratched beyond the surface of Marx’s and Engels’ works as “an all-powerful pseudo-religious doctrine of salvation, and made the disparity and incompleteness of Marx’s theory first became visible” (p. 13.), as well as the problems of the bourgeois society on a broader scale (chapter 3).

The discussion on the critique of the societal abstractions (chapter 4) starts with Walz’s review of Hegels reflections on the individual and the general. Marx’s critique of political economy reads like an attempt to realise this appreciation among people. It intends this by the means of a critique of social abstractions. Social abstractions are historical restrictions that have arisen under certain conditions and prevent the ascribing value to the individual being. In other words, the fetishisation theories with which Marx asserted the inverted world thesis are redeemed with the criticism of social abstractions. From the perspective of the critique of abstraction, Marx is concerned with the elimination of social abstractions that have arisen under certain conditions, and that can be eliminated (p. 45).

“More precisely, it is to be concretised with the instruments of the critique of political economy as a critique of social abstractions. Communism, on the other hand, represents a form of society in which so-

cial abstractions are eliminated and direct producer autonomy is established.” (p. 13)

Following chapter 5, it is quite unmistakably evident that Marx’s theory is not only economic theory and also not just a critique of economics, but also includes on a further level the explanation of why the production agents come forth as not only economic but life-sustaining issues. In other words, it is a critique of the entire bourgeois reality of life, including reproduction and the State, which also includes a theory of the ideology of this “perverted” reality of life (p. 59).

“The Marxian concept of critique implies much more than a mere economic critique, because it is directed to the criticism of the whole reality of life in bourgeois society. The focus of criticism, however, is the person; it only appears occasionally in Marx after 1844, since it is either speculatively equated with the proletariat or has a connotation that is ambivalent to philosophy.” (p. 13)

The concept of criticism used by Marx is in no way limited to an interpretation, as the subtitle of his main work may suggest, *A Critique of Political Economy*. As already mentioned, criticism in the Marxian sense can only be a criticism of the entire context of life dominated by capital, i.e. a criticism *in toto* (p. 61). However, Marx only worked out the critique of bourgeois reality in fragments, forgetting to leave any universally applicable instruction.

In “What is Philosophy?” (chapter 6), it is suggested that philosophy would be the entirety of the philosophical teachings, arranged either historically in the order in which they appear or thematically according to areas such as epistemology, logic, aesthetics and others. In the second case, philosophy would be an action or a practice of thought that, like the determination of the subject, leads back far into history (p. 81).

“Philosophy can on the one hand be understood as the totality of previous philosophical teachings, on the other hand also as the sceptical questioning of the self-evident. Since Socrates and Plato, it has primarily focused on practical life and its challenges, which has been pushed into the background by metaphysical tradition since Aristotle.” (p. 13)

Philosophy is a product of human reflection based on human practice. However, this means at least three things: a) on the one hand, its content and thought methods are time-bound; b) on the other hand, it is also an expression of the human world and life experience, which is linked to an active development of meaning; c) last but not least, the practical testimony implies that the philosophical questions or results cannot achieve “being in itself” or, as it is called in German idealism, *the absolute*, but are only questions and results of the human being, i.e. human constructions and projecti-

ons, which are also fundamentally provisional and incorrect (p. 85).

“Finally, perspectives of a concrete philosophy are developed in various thematic fields based on Kant’s philosophical questions: A concrete philosophy understands itself as a fundamental discipline of the critique of social abstractions, which works out the justification of the wrongness of the bourgeois life context, which is in the *Critique of the political economics* only presupposed or left out by Marx.” (p. 13)

The book presupposes that Marx’s work can accomplish more than stay at the level of “marxisms”. Marxist philosophy must turn into an abstract-critical concrete philosophy that questions self-evident “truths” taken for granted in today’s world.

**Marko Kos**

## Philip Goff

### Consciousness and Fundamental Reality

Oxford University Press,  
Oxford 2017

Consciousness is a timeless and central topic in philosophy, especially as it pertains to the mind-body problem. While, on the one hand, the existence of consciousness is a truth that is certain to us, on the other hand, the nature of consciousness seems to be radically different in kind from the nature of physical matter. How, then, are we to understand the relation between first-person subjective experience and the third-person physical world? The physicalist suggests that every property, including mentality, supervenes on some physical property. Against this view, some philosophers have commented on the failure of physical science to account for the reality of subjective experience. The dualist, therefore, states that physicalism is false and instead endorses the philosophical thesis that consciousness is a fundamental entity that is ontologically distinct from physical matter. Squaring up to the challenge of the mind-body problem, Philip Goff’s book, *Consciousness and Fundamental Reality*, is an engaging work in speculative metaphysics that seeks to offer a somewhat different view.

Goff is perhaps most well known as a defender of panpsychism, which is the view that mentality is ubiquitous in the natural world. His preferred version of panpsychism in this book is cosmopsychism, which suggests that the universe itself instantiates some form of mentality. Since he takes consciousness to be irreducible and fundamental, he agrees with the dualist and disagrees with the physicalist. However, he is disinclined to concede fully to dualism, which he considers as providing a disunified picture of the world. Rather, he suggests that his panpsychism is a form of neutral monism which has been termed “Russellian monism”, although it is contested whether Bertrand Russell fully supported this view.

The book is structured in two parts. In the first part of the book, Goff presents a refutation of physicalism. He discusses some established arguments against physicalism, namely Frank Jackson’s knowledge argument and David Chalmers’ conceivability argument. While Goff sees merits in these arguments, he does not think they are wholly satisfactory in their traditional forms. He concedes that the knowledge argument successfully demonstrates an epistemological gap between physicality and phenomenality, but contends that more is needed to make this into a metaphysical gap. He also considers the conceivability argument, as traditionally presented, to be troublesome because it invokes a contentious two-dimensional semantic framework. To make these arguments successful, Goff proposes that we need to appeal to the notion of phenomenal transparency. A concept, he stipulates, is transparent “just in case it reveals the nature of the entity it refers to, in the sense that it is a priori (for someone possessing the concept and in virtue of possessing the concept) *what it is for that entity to be part of reality*”. Phenomenal transparency, then, is the notion that “phenomenal concepts reveal the nature of the conscious states they refer to”. Goff uses this notion of phenomenal transparency to modify the conceivability argument into a version which he considers to be more successful at undermining physicalism. Take *P* to be a physical fact such as C-fibre firing and *Q* to be an associated phenomenal fact such as the experience of pain. According to the modified conceivability argument, the conceivability of “*P* and not *Q*” entails the possibility of “*P* and not *Q*” because “*P*” and “*Q*” are independent concepts that are both transparent.

However, Goff’s refutation of physicalism does not stop here. Although he suggests that the notion of phenomenal transparency enhances the conceivability argument, he also proposes that the notion of phenomenal transparency undermines physicalism more stra-