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Parrish, THE KNOWER AND THE KNOWN: PHYSICALISM, DUALISM, AND THE NATURE OF INTELLIGIBILITY

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The Knower and the Known: Physicalism, Dualism, and the Nature of Intelligibility, by Stephen Parrish. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2013. 444 pages. $38.00 (paperback). ISBN: 978-1-58731-420-9.

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The Knower and the Known: Physicalism, Dualism, and the Nature of Intelligibility, by Stephen Parrish, is a grand treatise covering a wide range of issues in the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of religion, metaphysics and epistemology. Parrish draws together elements from these various philosophical sub-disciplines in order to defend a theistic explanation of the intelligibility of the world. According to Parish, the notion of intelligibility calls for a two-fold explanation in terms of both "the known and the knower, or the entity that is intelligible and the subject to whom the intelligibility of the object is understood" (2). That is, the intelligibility of the world requires an account of both how it is that the world is understandable and how it is that we are able of understanding the world. Parrish argues that these accounts can be given only in terms of a *theistic dualism* according to which human minds are understood as analogues to the divine mind. The intelligibility of the world is then provided by its conformity to divine ideas, and the ability to grasp such intelligibility by finite minds is accounted for in terms of their similarity to the mind of God.

The *Knower and the Known* is divided into four sections (with two appendices). The first section is a brief introduction to the problem Parrish sets for himself and his method for addressing it. The fourth section is a summary of the sweeping argument of the entire book. Most of the philosophical heavy lifting (and there is much of it to be done) is taken up in the second and third sections. The first of these central sections contains an in-depth argument against naturalist (mainly physicalist) theories of consciousness, stemming from their collective failure to offer an acceptable account of human understanding. The third section is devoted to developing and defending in detail the theistic dualism that Parrish offers as the most plausible way of averting the limitations of philosophical naturalism. In what follows, I address each of these sections in a bit more detail.

Parrish begins the second section with a chapter mapping the conceptual landscape of contemporary philosophy of mind and metaphysics relevant to his project, wherein he defines and distinguishes various versions of dualism, physicalism, emergentism, and views regarding abstract objects. With these distinctions in mind, Parrish continues in the following chapter with a discussion of the nature of physical objects as such. One of his conclusions, drawing on the work of Howard Robinson and

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Jennifer McKitrick, is that a purely physicalist account of physical objects would need to be given solely in terms of dispositional properties. Dispositions, however, must be *dispositions of* something, so Parrish concludes that "physical entities must receive their existence from some other kind of being" (74). Thus, the physicalist is not only confronted by the difficulty of finding a place for consciousness in a universe supposedly composed entirely of fundamentally non-conscious entities (at least under standard versions of physicalism), but likewise with the serious question of whether she can even give a satisfactory story about the physical objects to which she would have us reduce everything else. Though this line of anti-physicalist criticism is not Parrish's main aim, attacking physicalism not just for its increasingly famous failures in the philosophy of mind, but also for its less well publicized conundrums in the metaphysics of material objects, is a welcome addition to these debates.

Parish then spends the next chapter arguing against the standard naturalist positions in recent philosophy of mind, and in all of these cases he concludes that naturalists are unable "to give a reasonable account of why there is such a thing as consciousness, nor why our consciousness has the properties that it does" (185). Though he stakes his case on controversial positions, Parrish's arguments are thorough and well-informed by the relevant literature, and they are deserving of replies from his physicalist interlocutors. In the final chapter of the third section, Parish addresses various versions of naturalistic property dualism (anomalous monism, neutral monism, dual aspect theory, epiphenomenalism, etc.). He presses technical difficulties with each of these positions specifically, but the main locus of worry is that the facts of phenomenal experience and intellectual agency show us that "Perceptions and thoughts are not free floating, but belong to a subject," which is something no account of the mind as a mere aggregate of properties (epiphenomenal or otherwise) can explain; whereas the "necessity of having a subject as the thinker of thoughts is easily accounted for by *substance dualism*" (202).

With his rejection of broadly naturalistic accounts of mind soundly in place, Parrish develops an unabashedly substance dualist theory in the third section. In the first three chapters, Parrish employs a partly phenomenological method to draw out all of the relevant aspects of rational consciousness. Parrish guides this intricate investigation to the conclusion that human understanding requires an irreducible subjectivity (including qualitative properties) related to abstract or ideal objects. Recent attempts to ignore or explain away these aspects of consciousness (both subjectivity and its relation to abstracta) founder on problems of self-referential incoherence or the plain facts of common sense about our experience of ourselves as conscious, rational agents. The point here is that our awareness of the world is qualitative, but also subject to universal laws transcending our immediate awareness; and this dual fact is difficult for naturalism to accommodate.

In the final chapter of this section, we reach what may be the crux of Parrish's vast project; namely, Parrish develops and defends his theistic dualism as the best available explanation of this dual nature of rational consciousness. Parrish takes up two explanatory questions facing us at this point: how do we explain the existence of the abstract objects that render the world intelligible to consciousness; and how do we explain the relationship between the non-physical human mind and the physical world it finds intelligible? Parrish begins to address the former question by arguing against both nominalism and Platonist versions of realism. In their place he defends what he calls "theistic conceptualism," according to which abstract or ideal objects, though they are not independently existing entities in their own right, exist primarily in the mind of God, whose immutable nature assures their universal and necessary being, despite their ontological dependence. Finite particular objects can be instances of such abstract natures because they are the effects of God's creative will. In short, the world is intelligible because it is a reflection of the divine ideas, and here Parrish basically defends the sort of theistic Neoplatonism that has been quite prominent in the Christian philosophical tradition since such luminaries as St. Augustine and St. Anselm. It is helpful to see this old and venerable position put into a conversation with recent metaphysical and epistemological literature.

The primary worry motivating the latter question is the old anti-dualist canard regarding mental-physical causation. Though his earlier arguments defending dualism do much to diffuse this worry, Parrish answers it directly by appealing to the Christian theist's belief that "our minds are made in the image of God's; they are finite analogs of God's mind" (335). Thus, since God is certainly able to interact with, control, and alter physical reality, there is no reason in principle to doubt that human minds can, albeit to a lesser degree, do the same: "God's maintaining the universe in existence is similar to a human mind's occurrently thinking something" (330). In other words, Parrish argues that theism provides the key to understanding both the known and the knower, by giving us a model wherein the physical world can be taken as intelligible because of its relation to the divine ideas, and the human mind can be taken as capable of grasping such intelligibility because of its unique status as the *imago dei*. One may worry, however, whether the fact that God is related to the universe as its creator *ex nihilo*, and not just one efficient cause among others, might not provide disanalogy sufficient to undermine Parrish's case for the latter.

Parrish does much more to defend this important line of argument than I have even come close to addressing in this short review, and I must leave it to the reader to take up the challenges and rewards of this sophisticated philosophical treatise for herself. Suffice it to say, this effort will be worthwhile for anyone seriously interested in the philosophy of mind, metaphysics, and the philosophy of religion, and especially those of us who are concerned with their intersections.

I have just two critical concerns. First, I find Parrish's discussion of emergentism to be a bit too quick. There is significant recent work being done by such philosophers as John Searle and Timothy O'Connor who might best be characterized as naturalists (about human consciousness), but who should not be taken as physicalists in any straightforward sense. These philosophers defend versions of emergentism, which though highly controversial, amounts to some of the more interesting work being done in the wake of the now tired physicalist consensus. Indeed, even some Thomists, whom Parrish should see as worthy fellow travelers, defend naturalist, emergentist accounts of qualitative consciousness (though certainly not rationality!). Parrish does briefly consider emergentism (see 59–62), but a more direct and sustained confrontation with these positions would strengthen his overall argument.

Parrish also presents his theistic conceptualism as a version of divine illuminationism (336), which is what one would expect given the Augustinian/Anselmian roots of his position, and he also follows the classical version of this theory into some of its well-trod idealist consequences (338). Parrish does much to diffuse worries about subjective idealism, but at the end of the day he believes divine illumination (along with its idealist baggage) is something we must live with because the only alternative "is some naturalistic theory of the mind, usually conceived as a physicalist theory," which he has done much to demonstrate as untenable. There is, however, another non-naturalist alternative Parrish does not address in detail. Thomistic philosophers, beginning with St. Thomas Aquinas himself in reaction to the divine illumination theories dominant in his day, frequently argue that the human intellect has an abstractive power that allows it to derive intelligibility from physical objects by direct experience. Such a power would transcend any physical explanation, but this theory is likewise designed to avoid even the hint of idealism. Once again, some consideration of this venerable alternative, especially its more recent iterations, would have strengthened Parrish's already very impressive work.

Moral Emotions: Reclaiming the Evidence of the Heart, by Anthony J. Steinbock. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014. 354 pages. $34.95 (paperback).

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Within contemporary phenomenology, Jean Luc-Marion has become the philosopher of givenness—*degrees of givenness* that culminate in his analyses of saturated phenomena. Anthony Steinbock could be called

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