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The Structure of Objects. By Kathrin Koslicki. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. 288 pages. \$99.00.

The Structure of Objects represents a sustained critique of what is widely considered to be the predominant conception of parthood and composition as defined by "Classical Extensional Mereology" (CEM). In addition, it offers a full-scale defense of an alternative structure-based mereology that is Aristotelian in spirit. For those with sensibilities that rival both the austerity and extravagance that presently dominates the mereological landscape, Koslicki's neo-Aristotelian proposal serves as a welcome breath of fresh air.

The book commences with a chapter devoted to the gradual explication of CEM. For those who are well traveled in the literature on mereological metaphysics, the chapter serves as a refresher to the basic concepts and axioms of CEM. For newcomers to the debate, the chapter serves as the most accessible and concise introduction to formal mereology on offer.

In chapter 2 Koslicki sets her sights on two prominent three-dimensional and four-dimensional ontologies that construe ordinary material objects as mereological sums as characterized by CEM. Here the argument from vagueness as defended by David Lewis and more recently by Ted Sider takes center stage as it represents one of the most widely discussed arguments against moderate answers to the Special Composition Question (SCQ). In brief, Koslicki argues that there are no non-question-begging considerations in support of the notion that placing a restriction on composition forces one to countenance ontic indeterminacy regarding the question of whether a plurality of objects composes something.

The middle portion of the book (chapters 4–6) fills a sizable gap in the contemporary discussion regarding non-CEM conceptions of composition and parthood. Chapters 5 and 6, provide a much-needed historical analysis of composition as presented in the theory of parts and wholes developed by Plato and Aristotle. These two chapters are worth the price of the book and stand alone as independent pieces of scholarship in ancient metaphysics, particularly with respect to Koslicki's detailed explication of Aristotle's highly nuanced mereology in chapter 6. As a specialist in ancient philosophy, she provides an indispensable overview of ancient mereologies in a way that demonstrates the relevance of such views to the contemporary debate in material objects.

Chapter 7 consists of Koslicki's own structure-based account of material objects, which draws heavily from the generalhylomorphic framework of her ancient predecessors. Broadly, Koslicki defends the view that composition is (i) nonidentity nor analogous to identity in any sense (chapter 3) and (ii) restricted, and thus adheres to a moderate answer to SCQ (chapters 2 and 7). Now, as such, these positions are not without their defenders in the literature and thus do not serve to chart any new terrain in the area of material ob-

jects. However, the explicit neo-Aristotelian framework by which Koslicki explicates and defends the above tenets is (with several notable exceptions) largely novel to the contemporary scene in material objects.

In particular, Koslicki sets out to reinstate the Aristotelian and Scholastic notion of material objects as matter-form composites (that is, "hylomorphic compounds," though she never uses the phrase). Koslicki recommends that we draw once more from the rich mereological insights of ancient metaphysics that construes material objects as structured wholes that are composed of formal and material components.

On Koslicki's view, the formal or structural component of a whole serves as what she calls the "recipe" that determines the selection requirements that must be satisfied by a plurality of objects in order to compose an entity of a particular kind. The material component, on the other hand, is best thought of as the "ingredients" that satisfy the composition conditions dictated by the formal component of a particular kind. On Koslicki's own construal of structure or form, the selection requirements that must be satisfied include (i) the variety, (ii) (in some cases) the number, (iii) the spatiotemporal proximity, and (iv) the manner of arrangement of an object's material components.

Central to Koslicki's neo-Aristotelian account is what she calls "The Neo-Aristotelian Thesis," which states that an object's formal and material components are *proper parts* of the object (181). Now, what is most ingenious about Koslicki's proposal is the way she sets out to motivate the thesis, particularly as it applies to the formal component of a whole.

From the view that composition is not identity (via Leibniz's Law-style reasoning in chapter 3), together with the notion that the material from which an object is composed is a proper part of it (she marshals an impressive array of considerations in favor of this on 178–79), Koslicki argues that there must be a distinct proper part of that object that is nonmaterial. According to Koslicki, the best candidate for such an entity is the formal or structural component of the object.

The thrust of Koslicki's reasoning here trades on what is known as *the weak supplementation principle*, a principle of decomposition that is widely considered to be constitutive of the parthood relation. The principle states that if x is a proper part of y , then there is a z such that z is distinct from x and z is a proper part of y . One might worry here about the tenability of bolstering a metaphysical thesis about the structure of objects on the basis of a principle of formal mereology, that is, what is constitutive of the formal relation of parthood. And this is particularly worrisome in light of Koslicki's own explicit reluctance to employ principles of formal mereology to settle matters of ontological commitment (171).

The virtues of *The Structure of Objects* are many. First, it represents what is perhaps the first contemporary book-length treatment of a Series-style response to SCQ (though Koslicki never explicitly describes her view

in such terms). At its core, a Series-style response rejects the assumption that there is a single answer to the question of what necessary and jointly sufficient conditions any x 's must satisfy in order for it to be the case that there is an object composed of those x 's. One reason for this rejection might stem from a conviction that there are different *kinds* of mereologically complex objects (substances and aggregates, for example) each of which are characterized by different composition conditions that determine the conditions that x 's must satisfy in order to compose an object of that particular kind.

One familiar with the contemporary discussion will note that one of the most common objections to a Series-style solution is that no one has yet offered a detailed instance of such a response. Enter *The Structure of Objects*. Koslicki's own kinds-based Series answer states that the x 's compose an object O of kind K if and only if the x 's satisfy the formal constraints dictated by the structure associated with objects of kind K (187–88). Koslicki does a great dialectical service for those who fail to find solace in neither of the two extreme answers to SCQ (nihilism and universalism) nor in the various moderate views that presuppose a single answer to SCQ (fastening, contact, van Inwagen's own proposed answer, and so on). Consequently, in placing the notion of structure together with an ontology of kinds at the forefront of her neo-Aristotelian mereology, Koslicki helps carve out a conceptual space in the literature for a much-neglected Series response to SCQ.

Let us consider, then, Koslicki's own account of the formal or structural component of a mereologically complex whole as it relates to her ancient and contemporary predecessors. In the course of her book, Koslicki considers what we can take to be a spectrum of divergent views on the metaphysics of structure embodied in the work of Kit Fine, Plato, and Aristotle. On the one end of the spectrum we have a deflationary account of structure as advocated by Fine and Plato as that which is mathematically expressible (number, measure, ratio, proportion). Koslicki rejects Finean/Platonic structure as being excessively deflationary in so far as *any* plurality of objects can be viewed as standing in some mathematically expressible relation to one another.

On the other end of the spectrum is Aristotle's "meaty conception of structure" as involving localized teleological content. Though Koslicki's use of this phrase is rather slippery throughout the text, its predominant use involves the notion that the structure of a high-level whole (a whole that is unified by a single structure or form) places certain grounding or dependence constraints on the proper parts of that whole. In this sense, the existence and identity of the proper parts of a high-level whole are metaphysically grounded or dependent on the wholes of which they are a part. As Koslicki points out, this feature of Aristotelian structure provides the metaphysical backdrop for Aristotle's principle of homonymy for high-level wholes.

Koslicki's own account of structure is offered as a "middle ground of some sort, between Plato's and Fine's deflationary mathematical conception

of structure and Aristotle's localized teleological conception" (170). In fact, Koslicki is unequivocal that she intends her view of structure to be *nonteleological* and thus in sharp contrast to Aristotle's own localized teleological account.

While Koslicki uses words such as "mysterious," "controversial," and "teleologically loaded" to describe Aristotelian structure, what is notably absent are the grounds by which she finds fault with such a notion. Perhaps one reason for this absence stems from Koslicki's general aversion to teleological concepts in so far as they are particularly difficult to locate within a naturalistic ontology (103). Here, however, the reader often finds Koslicki conflating various notions of teleology that are entirely independent of one another. For instance, the majority of Koslicki's dissent toward teleological concepts is directed at Plato's cosmic (nonlocal) teleology that holds that mereological wholes are somehow arranged for the best by a divine agent. She refers to this explicitly theological variety of teleology as being "off-putting" and one that "we can no longer accept" (121) given the present hegemony of naturalism amongst contemporary metaphysicians (103). Now, one need not dissent with the thought that on naturalism a divine ordering of mereological wholes for the best is highly improbable, even maximally so, given that naturalism *entails* the denial of any such entity. However, the reader often gets the impression that Koslicki takes the obsolescence of cosmic (nonlocal) teleology for the contemporary metaphysician as a reason to dispense with Aristotelian structure as characterized by localized teleological content. But this is much too quick as the plausibility of Aristotelian structure so defined is in no way tied to the tenability of Plato's cosmic teleology, and thus its merits or demerits should be evaluated independently of such a notion.

As it stands, the reader is left in the dark as to the precise grounds for Koslicki's overt dismissal of Aristotelian structure. By her own lights, the primary metaphysical machinery underlying the notion is that of ontological dependence, that some entities are dependent for their existence and identity on other entities. Stated as such, only the most ardent denier of necessary connections would find such machinery objectionable. The idea that some entities stand in relations of ontological dependence to others is ubiquitous in contemporary philosophy (nonempty sets being grounded in their members, the mental being grounded in the physical, tropes being grounded in their bearers, and so on). Thus, to dismiss outright a particular construal of the formal component of a whole precisely because it utilizes "the controversial metaphysical machinery" of ontological dependence seems rather premature. Consequently, Koslicki's avowed rejection of Aristotelian structure is ungrounded as it stands.

All in all, *The Structure of Objects* is a must-read for those working in analytic metaphysics, particularly the areas of mereology and persistence. Koslicki has written a novel explication and defense of a traditional ontol-

ogy of material objects with long-standing roots in the history of Western philosophy.

REVIEWED BY ROSS INMAN

The Love of Wisdom: A Christian Introduction to Philosophy. By Steven B. Cowan and James S. Spiegel. Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Academic, 2009. 476 pages. \$34.99.

Cowan and Spiegel have made an outstanding contribution to the field of Christian philosophy with this introductory work. At the outset, the authors state straightforwardly that they will engage the discipline of philosophy from a decidedly Christian standpoint. In spite of how negatively the nontheist might consider such precommitments, the authors expect that such an approach will enhance, rather than hinder, the search for truth. "We believe that the Christian worldview as revealed in Scripture will be consistent with what the best, good-faith efforts of human reason can discern. We believe that all truth is God's truth and that God will not contradict what He reveals in the natural realm with what He reveals in Scripture" (10). Unashamed Christian presuppositions notwithstanding, this book contains rigorous philosophical inquiry that interacts with the best of non-Christian philosophy, ancient or modern. This book should stimulate the thinking of both theist and nontheist in the quest for truth. This review will point out three unique elements of the book, three strengths, and three weaknesses.

The first unique aspect of Cowan and Spiegel's book consists in its systematic, quite Trinitarian arrangement. Part 1, "The Study of Knowledge," contains chapters on logic, epistemology, and the philosophy of science. While it is not abnormal to begin a philosophy text with logic and epistemology, it is a little different, albeit very sensible, to address the philosophy of science so early and to connect it so intricately with the study of knowledge. Doing so both reveals and addresses the influence of scientism, the idea that science is either the sole or the primary method of obtaining knowledge, in modernity. Part 2, "The Study of Being," contains chapters on metaphysics, philosophical anthropology and the philosophy of religion. The authors include several theological concepts in the philosophy of religion—for example, divine emotion and Christian exclusivity—that are not usually addressed in introductory philosophy texts. Part 3, "The Study of Value," contains chapters on ethics, political philosophy, and the philosophy of art. Filling a void in the field, the authors conduct a sufficiently deep and compelling discussion of the latter two subjects.

Secondly, in an attempt to make the book accessible to a broad readership, the authors liberally distribute definitions and examples. Imaginary scenarios, allusions to a cinematic or literary character, or references to a