

Indiana Philosophical Association
Spring Meeting 8
April 2006 at
Marian College
Indianapolis, Indiana Stokely
Mansion, Blue Room

Program

- 9:30** Coffee
- 10:00** Winner of the IPA Graduate Student Paper Competition
"Spinoza's Doctrine of Ideas of Ideas." Christopher Martin,
Purdue University.
Commentator: Tad Robinson
- 11:00** "On What There Is: An Evaluation of Silverman's Analysis of Platonic Being."
Michael Thune, Purdue University. Commentator: Pete Celello
- 12:00** Lunch
- 1:30** Business Meeting
- 2:00** "Idealized Explanations as Ontological Guides."
Nicholaos Jones, Ohio State University.
Commentator: David McCarty
- 3:00** "What Precisely *Is* Anselm's Argument?"
Gregory B. Sadler, Ball State University at Indiana State Prison extension.
Commentator; George Dunn

Abstracts of Papers

"Spinoza's Doctrine of Ideas of Ideas."
Christopher Martin, Purdue University.

One of the significant strands of thought in book II of Spinoza's *Ethics* is his doctrine of ideas of ideas. Many scholars agree that this doctrine commits Spinoza to the claim that for each mode of substance there is an idea of that mode, an idea of that idea, and idea of the idea of that idea and so on *ad infinitum*. This doctrine is implicated in several of the more significant arguments of EII. Some have suggested that according to this doctrine, there is an idea of each mode under each attribute, and that this privileges the attribute of Thought since Thought is thereby the only attribute to represent substance in all its ways of expression. Others have suggested that this doctrine may be used to provide an account of reflexive knowledge, consciousness and even certainty. All of these are based on a traditional interpretation of this doctrine. I contend that this interpretation is false and that a more coherent reading falls out of the text. By ridding Spinoza of the entailment of the traditional interpretation - that there is an idea of an idea for each idea *ad infinitum*- we are able to strengthen his beleaguered account of consciousness as well.

"On What There Is: An Evaluation of Silverman's Analysis of Platonic Being."
Michael Thune, Purdue University

In this paper, I'm concerned with Allan Silverman's articulation of Being in his recent book on Plato's metaphysics (*The Dialectic of Essence*, Princeton, 2002). I argue that Silverman's analysis of Being in Plato, namely as the relation a Form has with its essence, is mistaken. This is because Silverman is reluctant to admit a doctrine of "degrees of reality" in the middle dialogues - and this doctrine, I argue, is intimately connected with Plato's articulation of Being. In the final section, I defend the doctrine of degrees of realness in Plato; I also highlight and defend an alternative analysis of Platonic Being - one which is consistent with that doctrine.

"Idealized Explanations as Ontological Guides."
Nicholaos Jones, Ohio State University.

This paper has two aims. The first is to critically discuss two philosophical accounts of the connection between idealized hypotheses and ontology. These accounts are due to Lawrence Sklar and Paul Teller, and they share the assumption that idealizations are false. One thesis of this paper is that neither of these accounts adequately characterize the connection between idealized hypotheses and ontology. The second aim is to present an alternative account of this connection. The account to be presented rejects the assumption that idealizations are false, in favor of the assumption that idealizations are abstractions (in a sense to be explained). The second thesis of this paper is that the resultant account more adequately characterizes the connection between idealized hypotheses and ontology, than do extant accounts that take idealizations to be false.

"What Precisely *Is* Anselm's Argument?" Gregory B. Sadler, Ball State University at Indiana State Prison extension.

The "single argument" Anselm refers to in the *Proslogion* is not simply the proof(s) for God's being or existence, but the entirety of the *Proslogion*, minus the last three chapters. Through exegesis of the *Proslogion* and other Anselmian texts, I) argue this claim; 2) indicate what provides the single argument its unity, namely the key term "that than which nothing greater can be thought"; 3) reinterpret the proof(s) for God's existence, this term, and the larger single argument as providing a means of access for the human rational mind to the divine substance; 4) resituate the proof(s) within the scope of the larger single argument.