

**Indiana Philosophical Association**  
**Fall Meeting 5**  
**November 2005 at**  
**Franklin College**  
Franklin, Indiana Dietz Center  
Formal Lounge

***Program Announcement***

- 9:30**            Coffee
- 10:00**            *Aristotle on the Relation between Practical and Contemplative Virtues in an Ideal Life*  
Christopher Martin, Purdue University  
Commentator: Lucian Stone, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
- 11:00**            *Problems with Situationism and First-Person Deliberation*  
Brandon Warmke, Northern Illinois University  
Commentator: TBA
- 12:00**            Lunch
- 1:30**             Business Meeting
- 2:00**             *In Defense of Rationalism against Skepticism* Tully  
Borland, Purdue University  
Commentator: TBA
- 3:00**             *Moral Facts: Reduction, Relevance and Explanation* John  
Lentz, Ohio University  
Commentator: TBA

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## Abstracts of Papers

"Aristotle on the Relation between Practical and Contemplative Virtues in an Ideal Life" Christopher Martin, Purdue University

The Dominant or Intellectualist view of Aristotelian eudaimonia characterizes the best human life as a life which consists of each of the various virtues, but holds that contemplation (theoria) is the best and most complete on account of its being the best among the virtues. Of principal concern for such a view is how the practical and theoretical virtues are to be related in the best human life. I argue that Aristotle's scant remarks on this relation amount to the following:

since the most complete excellence is theoria and the best life will be one that engages in this well and to the furthest degree humanly possible, and given that practical excellence impedes this, it follows that the individual living the best human life will avoid exercising the practical excellences in instances where it is not necessary that she do so. This is not what we would expect Aristotle to conclude. Nor for that matter is it a view we would likely endorse. Nevertheless, I argue, this is what Aristotle's argument comes to. I conclude by considering an objection to this view in which I take a closer look at whether we as human beings can flourish without flourishing in respect to the character excellences.

"Problems with Situationism and First-Person Deliberation." Brandon Warmke, Northern Illinois University

John Doris's situationist moral theory includes the following two projects: (1) the *broad situationist project*, which calls for a revision of how we use robust character traits to predict and explain moral behavior in light of the experimental literature which purports to show that people like us do not possess characterological psychologies; and (2) the *prescriptive situationist project*, which claims that persons like us can enjoy more moral success if we redirect our moral attention, away from our characters and towards the features of our environments. I will argue that these two projects are mutually inconsistent. Specifically, I contend that the implication of someone successfully following the situationist prescription results in that person possessing a robust character trait. I will show that such a person does, indeed, possess this kind of robust trait and that this does violence to the viability of the broad situationist project. To further my claim, I examine the ways in which situationist can understand the ability to follow the situationist prescription and conclude that the burden is on the situationist to provide a non-ad hoc conception of this ability without recourse to virtue or mere skill. I conclude by showing that the situationist must give up one or both of the projects to maintain consistency and then provide an alternative interpretation of the empirical literature upon which the situationist thesis is founded.

"In Defense of Rationalism against Skepticism" Tully Borland, Purdue University

Recently Laurence Bonjour has given several arguments against empiricism in favor of his own rationalist position. His overarching objection is that without an indispensable a priori component a vast amount of what we think of as empirical knowledge would not be possible. Hence, empiricism without an a priori component leads to certain form of skepticism. In reply to one of his arguments, Albert Casullo objects that Bonjour cannot successfully attack empiricism in this way because Bonjour's own argument can be used against rationalism. The purpose of this paper is to lay out both positions in detail and side ultimately with Bonjour. I will first explain Bonjour's argument against empiricism in some detail. Next I will present Bonjour's argument as offered by Casullo as well as Casullo's counter-argument against rationalism. This counter-argument leads to a discussion of what Casullo calls the 'Generality Argument' which he thinks shows that the rationalist fares no better against skepticism. In the final section of the paper I give a rationalist response to Casullo's arguments pointing out exactly how the rationalist fares better with regard to skepticism.

"Moral Facts: Reduction, Relevance and Explanation" John Lentz, Ohio University

This paper deals with a debate between realist and irrealist conceptions of ethics. More narrowly, I adjudicate the dispute about the existence and efficacy of moral facts in moral explanation between Gilbert Harman and David Brink. Harman is notorious for his claim that explanations of the observation of "moral properties" need only appeal to the observer's psychological set alone, while explanation regarding scientific observation must rely on independent facts about the world. Brink, through a coherentist approach to both science and ethics, causes reserve in accepting Harman's claim. In this paper, I outline the arguments by both parties and conclude that due to some psychological research in the process of moral learning, Brink seems to have a more satisfactory argument concerning the issue at hand.