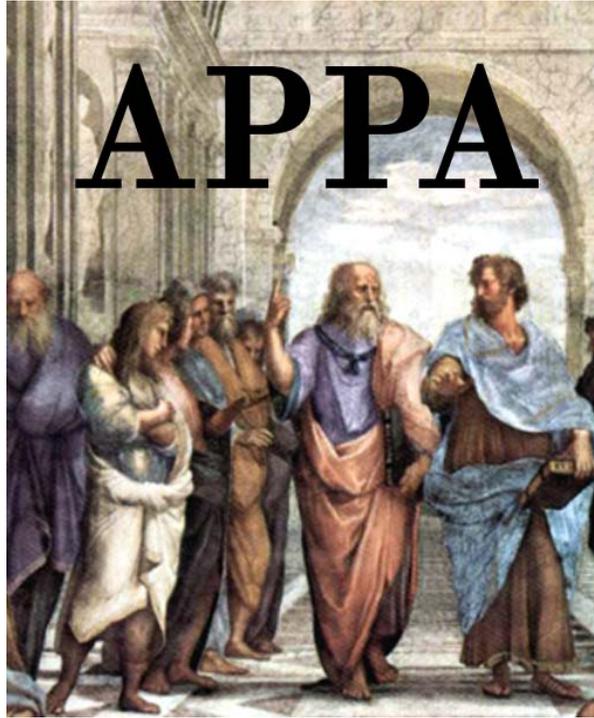


# American Philosophical Practitioners Association



Annual Meeting  
New York, July 16, 2016

The City College of New York  
North Academic Center

Report

**Skye Cleary and Monica McCarthy**  
*Experiential Philosophy*

In Plato's Symposium, a group sat around a table discussing love over wine. Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre spent much of their time in jazz cafes philosophizing over cocktails. And still, in 2016, there is demand among general audiences for a fun, casual, and human approach to philosophizing – that connects people of a wide variety of backgrounds on both an intellectual and social level. This presentation focuses on the cocktails and conversations series that Skye Cleary and co-philosopher Monica McCarthy are running, which aims to open comfortable and unimposing spaces for questioning oneself and others about how we do and should live.



**Monica McCarthy and Skye Cleary**

Skye and Monica make a convincing case that many non-academics can and do philosophize more regularly if encouraged in a socially conducive setting. This genre has proved popular from Paris to Buenos Aires, and thanks to Skye and Monica New Yorkers can now enjoy the benefits of this genre.

## **David Brendel and Shanti**

### *The Transformational Power of Shared Written Reflections in Philosophical Counseling*

David Brendel, M.D., Ph.D., is a Certified Executive Coach and Philosophical Counselor in Boston, Massachusetts. Shanti, Ph.D., is a self-actualization coach in Taos, New Mexico. David is Shanti's philosophical counselor. They have been working together in this capacity for two and a half years. As a part of their work, David and Shanti have been discovering techniques and models of counseling which have been useful in their process that they hope will be useful to others. As a result, they have begun to co-author articles on their findings. More about David here:

<http://leadingmindsexecutivecoaching.com/>



**Shanti and David Brendel**

Philosophical counseling is not necessarily a short-term process. Depending on the client-counselor relationship and the matter(s) at hand, medium-term or long-term work can also be appropriate and beneficial. In his portion of the presentation, David declared that long-term philosophical counseling can be "better than psychotherapy," because it can explore territory and cover ground beyond the boundaries of psychology. We look forward to his forthcoming article on this topic!

**Emily Muller**

*Being Wrongheaded -- Critical Thinking in Philosophical Counseling*

I am a big fan of William James' line about pretensions: "To give up our pretensions is as blessed a relief as to have them satisfied." And my sense is that one of the things that makes my practice very unlike a psych based form of counseling is that I directly suggest to people that their pretensions may be wrongheaded, potentially morally suspect or otherwise worthy of jettisoning. There is some delicacy in disentangling a person from his or her pretensions, though, and I think we could benefit from discussing how best to do this in our professional practices. -- Emily is an APPA-Certified practitioner based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her website is <http://www.beinglifewise.ca/>



**Emily Muller**

Emily has built a successful full-time practice in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her style of "compassionate confrontation" helps clients get beyond false beliefs and fallacious reasoning that exacerbate their issues.

**Simon Kenion**

*Philosophically Fit* (a book in progress)

The clue is in the title. 'Philosophically Fit' marries the moral duties and lessons, and perceptions of self, that are associated with exercise and holistic health. Tackling questions such as: How does success in health compare with other life goals? What is motivation and how does it effect action? How does individual egoism in health benefit society? How does progress in fitness act as a metaphor for two conflicting definitions of happiness? -- Simon is an APPA-Certified practitioner currently based in Hamburg.



**Simon Kenion**

Simon makes the fitting case that philosophical fitness provides a strong foundation for physical fitness. This is especially applicable to the physically unfit, who can be helped to mobilize the intention and will to fitness. A memorable Tao-esque takeaway: the importance of "over-under-achievement."

## **José Barrientos-Rastrojo**

*Philosophical Practice as an experiential journey. The quest to achieve a new being in group and individual sessions*

Life is a journey that sometimes is interrupted by difficult events. Ortega y Gasset pointed out that those difficult situations have to be sorted out not just by modifying ideas but by creating a new ground of beliefs. We need to get a new face, personal identity or being in order to dissolve obstacles. Good ideas are not always enough to overcome those ones: there are great ideas that don't move the world and they are not enough to help counselees to go beyond their problems. Then, we have to work not just on ideas (by means of CT) but on the whole person (feelings, will, ways of seeing life or *weltanschauung*, etc.): we have to add to critical thinking a way of thinking that affects mentioned dimensions.

-- José has been working and researching in Philosophical Practice for more than fifteen years. He is Professor and Vice-Dean at the Faculty of Philosophy of Seville (Spain).



**José Barrientos-Rastrojo**

"Pepe" is a pioneer of philosophical practice. He has focused on critical thinking as his chief methodology, and now crosses a new threshold: the introduction of meaning, via experiential philosophy, into his discourse with clients for whom critical thinking is necessary but insufficient. We also learned why a ring is sometimes a house-key.

*Humor: Seriously -- A One Woman Cabaret Performance on the Virtue of Humor*  
**Written and performed by Shanti**

This cabaret performance, a 20th c. parable about the virtue of humor, is designed to entertain as well as to educate, and is humorous itself! Humor, a form of play, is a play with ideas. It is considered a virtue because it enables us to see the light side of adversity, buffers the effects of life's stresses, and allows us to see our daily hassles in a more benign way. Humor is healthy. When we laugh, positive physiological changes occur in our immune systems. At the same time, humor is a serious trait. It is based on the wisdom that nothing earthly or human is perfect. In that way, it is contemplative, pensive and profound.

In this, her fourth cabaret performance on various virtues, she will do some philosophizing to help the audience understand what humor is, and to explore ways to put more laughter into their lives. Songs by well-known American songwriters such as Harold Arlen, Mel Blank, Sheldon Harnick, and "Weird Al" Yankovic will be used to illustrate her serious points humorously.

<http://www.barbaraujones.com/index.html>



**Shanti**

APPA's annual meeting in New York has premiered numerous *cabaret-philos* by Shanti, and have been her launching pad to international performances. They are ubiquitously well-received, and this year's take on humor had humorous take-aways for all -- even hard-boiled New Yorkers succumbed to laughter.

## APPA Annual Meeting

New York, July 16, 2016



standing, left to right: David Brendel, Jose Barrientos Rastrojo, Vaughana Feary, Lou Marinoff, Robert Andersen, Sara Ellenbogen, Beatrice Gutmann, Shanti, Skye Cleary, Dena Hurst, Monica McCarthy, Simon Kenion, Emily Muller, Patricia Murphy, Alejandra Fierro  
seated, left to right: Elena Balyberdina, Mikhail Dvortsov



dinner at The Grange

The meeting concluded with drinks and dinner at The Grange, an historic bistro with contemporary Harlem ambience and other fine fare for philosophers.

**Thanks to all! See you at next year's meeting ...**