



Annual Meeting

Online, 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. EDT

Saturday, July 11, 2020

All Members Welcome

Flexible Attendance, Come & Go As You Please

**To receive your Zoom link,
please email admin@appa.edu**

Program

9:00-9:15 a.m. **Vaughana Feary** (USA)

Welcome Message

9:15-10:30 a.m. **Lydia Amir** (Israel)

Meaning, Happiness, and Misery—An Inquiry into Philosophy's Scope and Limitations

10:30-10:45 a.m. *coffee break*

10:45 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. **Balaganapathi Devarakonda** (India)

Philosophical Practice in India: A Bird's Eye view

12:00 -1:00 p.m. *lunch break*

1:00 - 2:15 p.m. **Skye Cleary and Massimo Pigliucci** (USA)

How to Live a Good Life

2:15 - 2:30 p.m. *coffee break*

2:30 - 3:45 p.m. **Ashwini Mokashi** (USA)

Wisdom Leads to Happiness

3:45 - 4:00 p.m. *coffee break*

4:00 - 5:15 p.m. **André de Almeida** (Brazil)

Philosophical Practice as a Way of Supporting Business Executives During the Global Pandemic

5:15 - 5:30 p.m. *coffee break*

5:30 - 6:45 p.m. **Shanti Jones** (USA)

How Your Personal Growth can Outstrip the Growth of Any Virus

6:45 - 7:00: p.m. **Lou Marinoff** (USA)

Wrap-up and Close of Meeting

APPA Annual Meeting 2020 Co-Chairs:



Vaughana Feary

Vaughana Feary, Ph.D., taught philosophy and interdisciplinary Humanities at Southern University in New Orleans from 1979-1987. From 1987-2000 she taught Philosophy and Women's Studies at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison, NJ. She is a founding Vice President of APPA, past President of the ASPCP, President and CEO of Education Inc., and Program Director for Excalibur Center for Applied Ethics. She has pioneered programs for correctional facilities, hospitals, and corporations, and has published seminal articles and book chapters.



Lou Marinoff

Lou Marinoff, Ph.D., a Commonwealth Scholar originally from Canada, is Professor and former Chair of the Philosophy Department at The City College of New York, founding President of the American Philosophical Practitioners Association (APPA), and Editor of APPA's Journal, *Philosophical Practice*. Lou has authored several international bestsellers—*Plato Not Prozac*, *Therapy for the Sane*, *The Middle Way*, *The Power of Dao*—that apply philosophy to the resolution of everyday problems.

Summaries of Presentations and Speakers Follow



Lydia Amir (Israel)

Meaning, Happiness, and Misery—An Inquiry into Philosophy's Scope and Limitations
9:15-10:30 a.m.

Summary

The lecture maps the four or five main ways in which philosophy can be helpful today, given that the doctors of the soul are formed for the last 150 years in another discipline. It begins by analysing the psychological notion of therapy in order to point out its essential difference from philosophic ideals. It further indicates how educating oneself in and following any one of these ideals is one way of making good use of philosophy. This way is characterized by the meaning it provides through handling the fear of meaningless suffering (Nietzsche). Depending on the ideal chosen, this path sometimes minimizes suffering along with the significance it grants it. Two criticisms of this path yield alternative uses of philosophy. One criticism states that meanings are lies and the other that ideals are ineffective, and each comes in either a gloomy or a cheerful version. The first criticism leads to tragic philosophy. Differentiated from theories of the absurd, which are still predicated on meaning, tragic philosophies negate meaning and offer happiness instead. They can be further subdivided into gloomy (Rosset) and cheerful theories of the tragic (Amir). The second criticism states that ideal are ineffective as each person has to carve her own wisdom. The cheerful version leads to a revision of philosophy, whose role now is to educate one's judgment (Montaigne). The gloomy version points to the limitations of philosophy, to the inefficacy of reason once personal tragedy is encountered and one is disconnected from the rest of humanity as an unfortunate consequence (Shestov). This view identifies solitude at the core of the philosophy of misfortune, which is inapproachable by regular philosophic tools. It remains to be seen if this approach still finds a role for philosophy or reverts either to literature or to religion for solace. Hence the indecision at the beginning of this abstract about the number of ways in which philosophy can be helpful 150 years after the birth of scientific psychology.

Lydia Amir is Visiting Professor at the Department of Philosophy at Tufts University and President of the Israeli Association for Philosophical Practice. Apart from various articles and essays, she has published on the topic of philosophical practice two books (2017; 2018) and edited two anthologies, one with Aleksandar Fatic (2015; 2017) in Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Of relevance is also her most recent book on the human condition (Palgrave 2019). Editor of one journal and Founding-Editor of another, member of the scientific board of various additional journals, she is Founding Editor of a Lexington book series on philosophical practice.



Balaganapathi Devarakonda (India)

Philosophical Practice in India: A Bird's Eye view

10:45 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

Summary

Darśana (to see) and *tattva śāstra* (science of fundamentals) are the two prominent terms that are used to refer to philosophy in classical Indian tradition. Both these terms inform us that the practice of philosophy is rooted in seeing through the obvious into the fundamental. Broadly, this was the nature of philosophical practice that was envisaged in Classical Indian tradition. Each of the Classical Indian systems expounded their own method and practice of philosophy which enriched its discourse. There is a paradigm shift, however, in the philosophical practice in the contemporary times, when modern modes of education constrained the practice to academia alone and prescribed new ways of doing it in consonance with practices around the world. This contemporary practice of philosophy in India will be explored in this presentation by explicating the shifts in the methodology, practice and the orientation. Though there is no dearth of the resources, it is observed, in the classical Indian tradition, there is a need for reorienting these resources to suit the contemporary concerns of human life. Thus, there is a promising area of study in the Indian philosophical praxis that awaits a deeper and wider exploration.

Balaganapathi Devarakonda is presently heading the Department of Philosophy at University of Delhi, Delhi. His research interests are in the areas of Buddhism, Historiography, and Social and Political Philosophy. Prof. Bala is a certified Philosophical Counselor of APPA. Some of his publications include, *Philosophical Doctrines of Andhakas: Exploring Early Buddhist Sects of Andhra* (2020, Springer Briefs in Religious Studies series), *Revisiting Dana: A response to Eurocentric Approaches* (2020), *Hinduism in Thailand: Its presence and Absence* (2018), *Role of Guru as an interpreter of Dharma* (2017). South Asia Press is bringing out a new edition of *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes with a detailed introduction by Prof. Bala. He is presently working on a project titled “*Yoga Consciousness in Mahabharata: The Ethical value for societal/political Wellbeing*” (SPARC, 2019-2021). Balaganapathi is the Guest editor of a forthcoming Special Issue on *Indian perspectives on Philosophical Counseling for Philosophical Practice: Journal of the APPA*.

<https://du-in.academia.edu/BalaganapathiDevarakonda>



Skye C. Cleary and Massimo Pigliucci (USA)

How to Live a Good Life

1:00 - 2:15 p.m.

Summary

To have a philosophy of life is to have some idea of how the world works (a metaphysics) and a sense of how to properly behave toward others (an ethics). Most people have a philosophy of life, even if they're not fully cognizant of it, because they grow up influenced by their parents' philosophies. The problem is not necessarily that people aren't aware that they have a philosophy of life, but rather that most people don't reflect on whether their philosophy of life is a *good* one. We don't go so far as Socrates to say that an unreflective life is not worth living, but rather we argue that thinking critically about one's philosophy of life can inspire people to change their lives for the better—and to better understand others who have chosen differently.

Skye C. Cleary PhD MBA is a philosopher and author of [*Existentialism and Romantic Love*](#) (Palgrave Macmillan 2015) and co-editor of [*How to Live a Good Life*](#) (Vintage 2020). She teaches at Columbia University, Barnard College, [ThinkOlio](#), and previously at the City University of New York, the [New York Public Library](#), and in a prison. Skye is a certified fellow with the APPA and Her work has been published with [The Paris Review](#), [Aeon](#), [The Times Literary Supplement](#), [TED-Ed](#), [Los Angeles Review of Books](#), and others.

Massimo Pigliucci is the K.D. Irani Professor of Philosophy at the City College of New York. His books include *How to Be a Stoic: Using Ancient Philosophy to Live a Modern Life* (Basic Books), *A Handbook for New Stoics: How to Thrive in a World Out of Your Control* (The Experiment, with Greg Lopez), [*How to Live a Good Life*](#) (Vintage, co-edited with Skye Cleary and Dan Kaufman), and *Nonsense on Stilts: How to Tell Science from Bunk*. His forthcoming book is *A Field Guide to a Happy Life: 53 Brief Lessons for Living*. More by Massimo at massimopigliucci.com.



Ashwini Mokashi (USA)
Wisdom Leads to Happiness
2:30 - 3:45 p.m.

Summary

How often do we ask the question ‘why am I so happy today?’ Not so often. But we often ask the question, ‘Why me? What have I done to deserve this XYZ?’ Normally we take our good fortune for granted and only focus on trying to analyze, blame or hold responsible, that which is not right in our lives. This talk will help you reflect on various aspects of life to understand some universal principles of virtue, wisdom and happiness in the light of the Philosophy of Stoic Seneca and the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

The concept of ‘a wise person’ in Seneca and the *Bhagavad-Gita*, based on the book ‘[Sapiens and Sthitaprajna](#)’ by Ashwini Mokashi, explores how in both the systems, a wise person is endowed with virtue and wisdom, is moral, detached from passions, makes right judgments and takes responsibility for actions. A wise person always enjoys happiness. The talk will look at the guidelines provided by Seneca and the Gita, survey their similarities and differences in their application of these ideas and see how wisdom paves the path to individual happiness and societal well-being.

Ashwini Mokashi, Ph.D. in Philosophy is an Author, a certified Philosophical Counselor, former President of the ‘Princeton Research Forum’ and a Lecturer. Her book ‘[Sapiens and Sthitaprajna](#)’ was published in 2019. She has taught Philosophy at the SP Pune University in India and recently at the Evergreen Forum in Princeton. She spent a decade working in Fortune 500 companies in the corporate world in the USA. She was educated at the SP Pune University (Ph.D.), King’s College London (Certificate in Greek Philosophy), and Rutgers University (Masters in Human Resource Management), NJ, USA. She is active at the local EMS and organizes blood drives for her local community.



André de Almeida (Brazil)

Philosophical Practice as a Way of Supporting Business Executives During the Global Pandemic
4:00 - 5:15 p.m.

Summary

In this paper I will propose a model for the use of philosophical practice as a way of supporting business executives during the pandemic. I will start the paper by characterizing the problem. I will then explain why philosophy (and philosophical practice in particular) is an appropriate “tool” to offer support to them. I will describe the model proposed. I will share insights from the actual application of the model with a group of executives. I will finish the paper by making a point about the application of the model in specific contexts.

André de Almeida is a Philosopher, Philosophical Counselor and Professor at Fundação Dom Cabral (Brazil). For five years André has been an Associate-Tutor in the philosophy department at the University of Sussex (UK). He has also previously worked at the United Nations as a consultant, and as a researcher in International Business. André has a MA in Philosophy and a Ph.D. in Philosophy both from the University of Sussex. He is the author of the book “[*Agent Particularism: The Ethics of Human Dignity*](#)”.



Shanti Jones (USA)

How Your Personal Growth can Outstrip the Growth of Any Virus

5:30 - 6:45 p.m.

Summary

The urgency of the question, “How should I live?” is experienced most acutely in times of stress such as the pandemic we are currently living through. It is just one example of agonizing times human beings must endure and make sense of. The times demand that philosophical counselors dig more deeply into their bag of resources in order to best meet the situations their clients are confronted with. Although we have the entire history of philosophical texts at our fingertips, how many of them can we call on to help our clients think clearly about how one should live in the midst of a pandemic?

A supplement to philosophical texts is well-written novels. Both literature and philosophy pursue the question of how one should live, but novels can be especially helpful in exploring more deeply the issues clients face in these stressful times. Four novels which deal with pandemics and which provide excellent platforms for further thought are discussed: *The Plague* by Albert Camus, *Nemesis* by Philip Roth, *Horseman on the Roof*, by Jean Giono, and *An Enemy of the People* by Henrik Ibsen. Their plot lines and existential themes are presented in a way that will help counselors understand not only why they might want to refer their clients to them, but also help to ensure they can make the best possible use of them.

Shanti Jones, Ph.D. is a certified philosophical counselor with a private practice in Taos, NM. She regularly writes articles on philosophical counseling and practice which have been published in *Philosophical Practice: Journal of the APPA* and the *Korean Journal of Philosophical Practice and Counseling*. She also has written and performed worldwide her philosophical cabarets on topics such as love, humor, wisdom, optimism, and evil.