

Social Orders: A Foreword from the Editors

GLORIA ZÚÑIGA Y POSTIGO AND GERALD J. ERION

This collection of essays is dedicated to Barry Smith by his friends, some of whom are former students, and all of whom are admiring colleagues.¹ The goal of our Festschrift is to celebrate Barry Smith, an outstanding man who also happens to be a philosopher, a mathematician, and a scientist in biomedical informatics. It thus assembles contributions that are both personal in nature and intertwined with the deep ideas that Barry inspired or provoked in our respective lives.

Barry's extraordinarily creative and productive scholarship record (detailed in the bibliography at the end of this volume) marks an exemplary career that few scholars can match. Indeed, to learn of the full breadth of his work, one must search under such subject headings as Austrian philosophy, Austrian economics, phenomenology, Gestalt psychology, mereology, truth makers, states of affairs, apriorism, realism, social ontology, formal ontology, and applied ontologies, to name just a few. But those privileged to know Barry closely believe that his professional work, impressive as it is, pales in comparison to the personal impact he has had in our lives. This is the seed idea for our Festschrift, and we hope to provide here some significant testimony on Barry's impact as a colleague, mentor, teacher, and friend.

This does not mean, of course, that his impact has always produced a conversion to his ideas. Above all, Barry promotes and respects independent thought, and he encourages both students and colleagues alike to pursue the distinct intellectual directions that motivate each of us. To be sure, his encouragement will include a vigorous argument supporting his own views, always with humor and often in a venue with good food, good wine, and sometimes even good music, too. *This* is the man we wish to celebrate here. In doing so, we will share personal insights about Barry that we hope will present a fuller picture of the man revealed only in part by his scholarly writings.

Our motivation to organize and edit this Festschrift for Barry is also very personal. We are among those privileged to be former graduate students of his, and we forged our friendship around the profound delight of his seminars, which set our minds ablaze with questions and ideas. Not surprisingly, we both chose Barry to direct our respective dissertation projects. After reuniting again last year to organize this

Festschrift, we have enjoyed recalling fond memories of our time as graduate students at the University at Buffalo. We thought that in sharing some of these stories we could offer a glimpse of what it is like to be a student of Barry's for those who do not know his teaching. And we hope that as other students of Barry's read this—those who studied with him in the United Kingdom, Liechtenstein, and Germany, as well as former and present students of his in Buffalo—they will smile as they recognize situations that ring similar to ours.

Our Barryesque education began when we both registered for Barry's Cognitive Metaphysics course at the University at Buffalo in New York. As first-year graduate students, we privately wondered what the title of the course could even mean. We did not yet know to expect the unexpected, but we soon began an intellectual adventure with Barry that would last for the next five years. During this time, we enrolled in his seminars and tutorials on Cognitive Metaphysics (whatever that was), Austrian Philosophy, Husserl, Social Ontology, Philosophy of Social Science, Philosophy of Economics, Value Theory, Law and Ontology, Research Ethics, and Social Objects (from Meinong to Searle). We thus examined such a wide range of fascinating subjects that we were often tempted to change our dissertation topics, or even to remain students permanently.

With so much ground to cover, this was a time when sleep was reserved for semester breaks. Luckily, our graduate seminars were typically scheduled in the afternoon, perfect for the night-owl writing schedules that most students kept. One such afternoon, in a very warm classroom, Barry arrived in a stylish turtleneck and blazer. As he taught he seemed to be the only one in the room unaffected by the heat. One student, wiping sweat from her brow, asked him "Aren't you hot?" He replied, "No, I'm English."

Beneath this cool English appearance, however, lay the passionate heart of a philosopher with the unrelenting goal of directing us in a quest for truth, whatever the object of our examination. Students were drawn to his lectures in part because of his animated discussions with hilarious or shocking examples. For example, to explain the Husserlian notion of unfulfilled intentionality, Barry suggested the following. Suppose that you have the expectation of an apple pie fresh

from the oven, an expectation fueled by the aroma of baking apples and cinnamon. But then you discover, upon removing the pie from the oven, that it was instead: a dog pie! *That* is unfulfilled intentionality, explained in a way that cements the idea clearly in a student’s mind forever.

An integral part of studying with Barry was his boot-camp training in clear and precise thought as papers were written and re-written. He returned drafts with comments such as “not English,” “sloppy,” “sounds confused,” and “muddled thought.” He also insisted that we “write in plain and simple language,” “avoid bulbous sentences,” and “do, not, use, too, many, commas.” And in the especially long-winded passages all-too-common in philosophical writing, we would find: “bla, bla, bla” or “eh?” Some students might have been unsettled by such comments, but we appreciated their role in our development, and we also understood the English humor cleverly built into them to soften the blow. Even today, we both agree that we can hear his voice in our heads, still ghost editing as we write. This boot-camp training focused our efforts on articulating clearer arguments, transforming us into better writers and better thinkers. It also prepared us to confront disagreement comfortably, even eagerly, but also charitably. And these, of course, are some of the key practical benefits of studying philosophy.

Finally, we should remember that philosophy cannot be done in complete isolation, at least not all of the time. Indeed, it is fueled by conversation and dialogue with others. Barry recognizes this as well, and as evidence we offer the many wonderful parties to which Barry invited his students, former students, and colleagues at all stages of their lives and careers. Whether elegant garden parties, small dinner parties, casual get-togethers at the end of the semester, or even Thanksgiving gatherings, Barry was always a willing, gracious, and entertaining host. Beyond the great conversations, these moments were especially meaningful to us because they allowed us to see the carefree and joyful side of Barry’s personality. We hope that this Festschrift will, above all, bring out this carefree and joyful side again, for this is our party for you.

Happy Birthday, Barry!
Gloria and Jerry



Photograph: Gloria Zúñiga y Postigo and Gerald J. Erion

NOTES

- 1 We would like to thank the editors of COSMOS + TAXIS, Leslie Marsh and David Andersson, for their enthusiastic support of this Festschrift honoring Professor Barry Smith. Leslie and David immediately recognized our vision for this project's fitness within the journal's distinctive thematic frame of spontaneous orders. Of course, the study of spontaneous orders extends far beyond the walls of the university, and it is hardly limited to abstract academic discussion. Rather, spontaneous orders occur in our daily social experiences all the time—e.g., the ambiance of a café created by those who frequent it, or the many unintended effects of other people in our everyday lives. This special issue of COSMOS + TAXIS documents the latter. In fact, we could say that each of the contributions in this volume recounts one or more instances of spontaneous orders emerging from the author's interactions with Professor Barry Smith. But we prefer to say that the authors in this Festschrift will present unique stories about how knowing Barry has led them toward interesting paths and unexpected discoveries.

We are grateful also to Sandra Smith, Professor Barry Smith's wonderful wife, who wrote the distinctively evocative biography for this issue. She is not only an apt collaborator in Barry's work, but she has also proved to be a great accomplice in our secret plans to produce this Festschrift and to organize the ceremony at which we presented it.

We would like to express our special admiration for the indomitable spirit of Professor Wolfgang Grassl, who without hesitation accepted the task of writing a tribute for Barry that is now part of this Festschrift despite the serious medical challenges he has recently faced, and from which he is still recovering. His loving wife, Rebecca Proefrock, tells us that this tribute for his beloved friend Barry is his first writing since August 26, 2014. We are honored to have it as part of this volume.

Without our contributing authors, this project would not have been possible. Each met the challenges of time (a scarce good for all writers) with cheer, good will, and great affection for Barry. We are deeply indebted to them for their generous efforts, with the promise in re-

turn to respond in kind by producing a manuscript on short notice should there ever be such a need.

Great teaching can help students to appreciate philosophical ideas even as it fosters a willingness to question those ideas. By this criterion, and in our experience, Barry Smith is a truly great teacher, and part of a group of outstanding professors with whom we were fortunate to study at our respective universities. We would like to recognize these outstanding educators here as well. At the State University of New York at Geneseo, Jerry was profoundly influenced by Professors Stacey Edgar and Elias Savellos, who together helped to stoke his initial interest in philosophy and who continue to inspire him today. And at California State University, Professor Kurt Leube led Gloria's graduate examinations beyond the disciplinary boundaries of economics and into philosophy, changing the direction of her studies. Pursuing this new path at the University of California at Berkeley, Gloria had the privilege of being introduced to philosophy by Professor John Searle, who fueled her interest in social ontology. At Buffalo, Professor John Kearns proved a favorite not only because of his warmth and kindness, but because he is a fantastic teacher as well. He leads demanding logic seminars that are popular with students because of the life he infuses even into discussions of the most technical complexity, enriched with charming vignettes that add a personal dimension and make formal logic exciting. To each of these outstanding educators, and of course to Barry, we are grateful; they opened our eyes in different ways and thereby helped us to carve our individual paths in philosophy.