

Acknowledgments

Writing an academic book is, normally, neither particularly amusing nor painfully aggravating. Writing several such books, on the contrary, is both a strangely humorous enterprise and a cruelly taxing task. We must therefore thank Professor Lydia Amir, founding president of the *International Association for the Philosophy of Humor*, for inspiring and initiating this scholarly endeavour of ours, which has given us plenty of opportunity to experience and reflect upon the two pivotal and titular issues of our work. Similarly, we must thank De Gruyter's Senior Acquisitions Editor for Philosophy, Christoph Schirmer, who is the person that actually decided to transform the original project, i. e., one scholarly volume, into a considerably bigger one. We mean three such volumes, one of which is divided into two parts, i. e., four physically distinct books! Without him, in short, we would have hardly experienced and reflected upon so much humour and so much cruelty as we did, including their mutual combination.

Not to mention the fact that both Lydia Amir and Christoph Schirmer concurred on the additional need to overhaul the citation and referencing standards of the original single manuscript at a point in time when this massive document was almost complete. What a laugh! The number of hours spent on nitty-gritty editorial changes and written reformulations was beyond belief. Consequently, if the reader finds any wrong citations or poor references in this third volume, these two lovely persons are to be held co-responsible for our mistakes—here's another combination of humour and cruelty, if you were looking for one... And if the reader cannot get the tongue-in-cheek tone of our previous statements, a further combination is also *de facto* instantiated, on the spot.

There are also a few colleagues who, under a great variety of circumstances, were crucial in helping us to establish, debate, and refine specific lines of argument on select philosophical and psychological topics. These are mirrored *pari passu* in the present third volume which, as hinted above, now comprises two parts. As regards Part 1, Chapter 4, we must thank Dr. R.T. Allen, Britain's leading expert on Michael Polanyi's thought. Without Dr. Allen, our knowledge and understanding of the great Hungarian polymath would have remained severely deficient. As regards Chapters 1 and 3 of Part 2, we must thank three Italian philosophers, gifted writers, passionate feminists, and Baroncelli devotees: Athena Barbera, Mirella Pasini, and Paola de Cuzzani. Their sense of humour and their awareness of the struggles within the West's liberal camp were of immense help to us. Analogously, we must thank an Italian archetypal psychologist, G. Roberto Buccola, and a Canadian critical thinker, Christopher DiCarlo, for important insights into some of the thorniest matters pertaining to the fields of, respectively, psychother-

apy and informal logic. These insights proved most relevant *vis-à-vis* the same two chapters of Part 2.

Thirdly, there are colleagues whom we should thank indirectly because they did not mean to assist us in our arduous endeavour and yet succeeded in providing us with valuable food for thought and meaningful lived exemplar. As regards especially Chapter 1 of Part 2, we have to mention all those academics that gave us repeated example of both conscious and subconscious *self-censorship*. By this we mean the recurrent avoidance of themes, topics, and/or terms that could translate into public outrage, poorer career prospects, and/or prosaic headaches within university departments and/or professional groups. Sometimes, these individuals avoided these obstacles in full cognizance of the obstacles themselves *and* their own decision not to express what they had come to think about certain themes, topics, and/or terms—not even when their conclusions and usages would have been methodologically justified and/or buttressed by empirical evidence and logical reasoning. Other times, instead, the affective import of these themes, topics and/or terms had been internalised to the point of producing unthinking reactions of avoidance. The devil was just too scary to even begin thinking about it, not to mention proffering its name.

As regards Chapter 2 of Part 2, we should thank, also indirectly, the workplace bullies and vicious gossips that we have had the dubious fortune of encountering and enduring in our professional life. Not only have these flesh-and-thorn persons offered us ample and repeated proof of that so-called “Dark Triad” of human personality which keeps being discussed by contemporary psychologists, i.e., narcissism, Machiavellianism, and lack of empathy (aka “psychopathy”). Also, having to suffer their cruel scheming and clever abuses turned out to be an inexhaustible source of bleak jokes without which we would have probably been unable to tolerate the difficulties caused by such obnoxious and, apparently, far-from-rare human beings. Indeed, as John Williams’ masterful 1965 novel *Stoner* exemplifies, they can even turn up in the world of fictional universities.

As to much more pleasant individuals, we ought to conclude these acknowledgments by mentioning Raymond Snider and Audrey Matthews-Hill, who helped us with the time-consuming processes of proofreading and editing. Similarly, with special regard to Chapter 1 of Part 2, we must add the brothers James K. and J. Alan Galbraith, both of whom should be acknowledged for their encouragement, as well as for some clever considerations about the consumption of ice cream in very cold climates. Likewise, we must extend our gratitude to our own families who had to put up with us while busy working on three volumes about humour and cruelty. For our spouses and teenage children, these two concepts became a tangible daily reality. The former was called upon by them in order to let their husbands’ and/or their fathers’ absent-mindedness and mood swings be bearable; the

latter was implied by the very same husbands' and/or fathers' absent-mindedness and mood swings. The tome that you have in your hands (or on your screen) is, therefore, yet another demonstration of how humour and cruelty can criss-cross, contaminate mutually, and combat each other.

Akureyri, Iceland, March 2023 Giorgio Baruchello and Ársæll Már Arnarsson

