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Making Worlds Accessible. Essays in Honor of Angelika Kratzer

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Preface

Every linguist knows how colossal Angelika's impact on our field is. Hearing about this would not be informative for anybody who might (virtually) pick up this volume, including Angelika herself. So, instead of writing about, say, Angelika's crucial role in the development of our understanding of modality, we will write about what Angelika means to us, as a teacher, advisor, mentor, colleague, and friend. We know that these words will resonate with many of you (Angelika has meant so much to so many people). We just get to be the lucky ones to tell Angelika publicly.

Ilaria: When I was still a confused undergraduate in Italy applying for graduate programs in the US, I settled on UMass because of Angelika. When the time came during our first year to form a committee for our generals paper, I naturally went to her, who - also very naturally - turned me down. That could have been the end of the story (and the end of me). But it wasn't; I thought she had her reasons. Although I was a pretty good student in her class, she hadn't had the time to assess me outside routine homework assignments, and this is when I learnt something important about Angelika: she takes everyone and everything very seriously. So, I wrote my first generals paper in psycholinguistics instead (my second was in semantics; I did convince her in the end). Through the years, I found out many other things about Angelika's views that I tried to incorporate into my own, and I don't mean just about semantics. I learnt that every student and every student's project matters, that being a honest advisor is as important as being a supportive one, that it is extremely important to recognize others' contribution to the discussion of a topic as you carve your space into it, that as a woman in academia one should not feel obliged to always be pedagogical and that, as a researcher in general, the best one can do is to become acquainted with the condition of 'groping in the dark'. The list could go on, but I will stop here. I hope to have done some justice to the wonderful and affectionate colleague that Angelika has been to everyone of us.

Paula: I would not have become a semanticist if not for Angelika, and I don't think I would have stayed one if not for her. She took me in at a time when I was an outsider in the department (and trying to learn semantics on the side), and has never failed to support me since. Throughout the whole dissertation writing process she took my work as seriously as if it were her own (and held me to the same standards she would herself). She worked alongside me during that long, hot, stress-filled, summer, and even drove to Northampton once to discuss the final touches of the dissertation (so that I would not waste precious hours on the trip to Amherst and back!). And, afterwards, when her advisor work was officially done, she was still there for me at every step of the way. During all this time, I have learned so many things from her. In her graduate classes I learnt what 'research in action' was, and what 'striving for the truth' really meant. Her undergraduate classes showed me that one could fascinate beginners without sacrificing rigour. She encouraged me (all of us) to pursue bold hypotheses but to follow them through carefully and systematically. She showed me how one could support one's students to incredible extremes without fulfilling

dangerous gender stereotypes ('women in academia are expected to be mothers, men are expected to be brilliant', she warned me once). I could not have wished for a more brilliant, generous, amazing advisor, mentor, and friend. Thank you, Angelika.

Rajesh: Angelika has been a dear friend, a valued colleague, and a source of inspiration and support. I am not sure I would have come to UMass if it had not been for her encouragement. I have always loved Angelika's excitement and her mind which has shown me new things which I hadn't thought were possible. Angelika is never afraid of the new, of the unknown. She is not one who relishes the comforts of the familiar. Getting to see her think has been one of the highlights of my career so far. On a more quotidian note, I am grateful to her for not one but two sacher tortes from Vienna and for running a cafe in her office, which I am happy to report is still functional under a new administration.