

Obituary

In Remembrance of Han Bonarius

25 July, 1935 - 21 April, 2010

Joannes Cornelius Josephus Bonarius, known to all as 'Han', was one of the 'founding fathers' of Personal Construct Psychology as a world wide approach to psychological inquiry. In particular, he introduced PCP to the Netherlands and was influential in doing the same in Sweden, Finland, Poland and Germany.

He was a Professor at the University of Utrecht, with wide ranging interests in personality, psychotherapy and the law. For most of his career his main passion was PCP where his contributions were mainly in relation to Fixed Role Therapy and the use of Extremity Ratings in Rep Grid work. He also wrote widely on Personal Psychology, as well as the Psychology of the Netherlands.

In 1962 he married Marja Vaara, a psychologist and psychotherapist from Finland, and they became a close and mutually supportive team for life. In the same year Han was awarded a Harkness Fellowship to study in the USA for two years. Han, Marja and their first son, Thomas went to Ohio State University, at the invitation of George Kelly.

They lived with the Kelly family till they found accommodation of their own, and became close friends. This relationship continued throughout the following years, through letters and visits. Marja describes how George and Gladys Kelly were 'like substitute parents' to their family.

For the year 1971/72 Han was awarded a Fellowship at the newly established Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences at Wassenaar, to develop his thinking along side Dutch and International scholars.

More widely, he contributed to the first international symposium on PCP in 1969 in London and was then invited by Professor Al Landfield, to speak at the Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, dedicated to Personal Construct Psychology,

in 1975 (which became known as the First International Congress of Personal Construct Psychology). He then undertook the organisation of the Third such Congress held in the Netherlands in 1979.

Later in his career his main interests moved towards Psychology and the Law, as he provided courses for the police force and the judiciary in Utrecht and more widely.

Han was a man of great integrity, upright and honourable, with a strong sense of values. He cared about people and the community in which he lived, while disliking superficiality.

I very much liked his approach to life and found him to be warm, generous, humorous, kind and supportive. He had many interests, including field hockey (which he played and refereed till close to his death), choral music (which he participated in and enjoyed though out his life), genealogy (which he concentrated on in his later years) and baking (especially of cakes!).

I feel honoured to have been his friend, and a friend of the family, for very many years, often enjoying the hospitality of their welcoming home.

Han is survived by Marja, and the children he greatly loved, Thomas, Marco and Saskia.

His, I think, was a life well lived.

Miller Mair, Scotland

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REFERENCE

Mair, M. (2010) In remembrance of Han Bonarius (25 July, 1935 - 21 April, 2010). *Personal Construct Theory & Practice*, 7, 41, 2010 (Retrieved from <http://www.pcp-net.org/journal/pctp10/mair-bonarius10.pdf>)

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