

News

In Memoriam Jan Hendrik van den Berg (1914-2012)

The Dutch psychiatrist Jan Hendrik van den Berg died on the 22nd September 2012 at the age of 98. He had a busy practice as psychiatrist and psychotherapist. After his medical training in Utrecht and his doctoral dissertation (supervised by Professor Rümke), he worked as ‘chef de clinique’ under Rümke. In 1951, he became a professor, first in Utrecht, and later in Leiden in 1954. His teaching assignment was ‘Conflict Psychology and the Phenomenological Method’. He retired in 1979.

Van den Berg is best known for his numerous publications; some were in psychiatry, but most were in the field of historical psychology or historical phenomenology for which he invented the name ‘Metabletics’. After 1956, he wrote more than twenty books about metabletics (see list of publications below). Many of these books were quite successful and were translated into English, French and German. The publications brought him fame, but criticism and rejection as well. In particular, his apparently subjective research methodology raised critical questions. Van den Berg seldom went to conferences, but he was a popular guest speaker at universities abroad, for example, in Belgium, Germany, Canada, the United States, Japan and South Africa.

Van den Berg was inspired by cultural-historical research, as well as theological and mystical writings, literary works and the philosophical phenomenology of Husserl, Heidegger, Bachelard, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. He had an aversion to Freud’s psychoanalysis and practiced his own type of in-depth psychology, both in his therapeutic and written work (see list of publications below). His book ‘Medische Macht en Medische Ethiek’ [Medical Power and Medical Ethics] heralded public debate about moral dilemmas in medical practice.

Van den Berg’s pioneering role for medical anthropology is not well known. A reflection on his phenomenology of illness, care and the body, with a brief discussion about his significance for medical anthropology can be found elsewhere in this volume. The article is followed by a re-publication of Van den Berg’s essay on the meaning of illness from 1952, eleven years before ‘medical anthropology’ as a field of study appeared on the scene.



Jacques De Visscher

List of Dutch publications (books only)

- 1946 De betekenis van de phaenomenologische of existentiële anthropologie in de psychiatrie: een kritische studie over de autologische methode in de psychiatrie en haar toepassing op een bepaalde vorm van defectschizophrenie (de autistische defectschizophrenie van Leonhard) (doctoral dissertation).
- 1949 Over zwijgen en verzwijgen.
- 1952 De psychologie van het ziekbed: een hoofdstuk uit de medische psychologie.
- 1952 Psychologie en theologische antropologie.
- 1953 Kroniek der psychologie.
- 1955 Over neurotiserende factoren: rede uitgesproken bij de aanvaarding van het ambt van buitengewoon hoogleraar in de fenomenologische methode en de conflictpsychologie aan de Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden.
- 1955 The phenomenological approach to psychiatry: an introduction to recent phenomenological psychopathology.
- 1956 Metabletica: leer der veranderingen, beginselen van een historische psychologie.
- 1958 Dubieuze liefde in de omgang met het kind: over de late gevolgen van te veel of te weinig moederlijke toewijding tijdens de jeugd.
- 1958 Psychologie en geloof: een kroniek en een standpunt.
- 1959 Het menselijk lichaam: een metabletisch onderzoek. Deel 1: Het geopende lichaam.
- 1961 Het menselijk lichaam: een metabletisch onderzoek. Deel 2: Het verlaten lichaam.
- 1963 Leven in meervoud: een metabletisch onderzoek.
- 1964 De psychiatrische patiënt: kleine algemene psychopathologie op fenomenologische grondslag.
- 1965 De dingen: vier metabletische overpeinzingen.
- 1966 Kleine psychiatrie: voor studenten en degenen die de psychiater vervangen of bijstaan.
- 1968 Metabletica van de materie, deel 1: Meetkundige beschouwingen.
- 1969 Medische macht en medische ethiek.
- 1969 De zuilen van het Panthéon, en andere studies.
- 1970 Dieptepsychologie.
- 1970 Wat is psychotherapie?
- 1971 's Morgens jagen, 's middags vissen.
- 1972 Zien: verstaan en verklaren van de visuele waarneming.
- 1973 De reflex: metabletische, tegelijk maatschappijkritische studie.
- 1973 Kroniek der psychologie: Revised edition of 1953.
- 1977 Metabletica van de materie, deel 2: Gedane zaken, twee omwentelingen in de westerse geestesgeschiedenis.
- 1979 Het onderste kakebeen: een metabletische les (afscheidscollege Universiteit Leiden).
- 1981 Het gelovige innerlijk: een historisch overzicht (pp. 206-284 from Metabletica van de materie, vol. 1).
- 1981 Hoogte in de kerkbouw: een historisch overzicht (pp. 138-205 from Metabletica van de materie, vol. 1).
- 1984 Koude rillingen over de rug van Charles Darwin: metabletisch onderzoek naar de oorzaak van onze verknochtheid aan de afstammingsleer.
- 1989 Hooligans: metabletisch onderzoek naar de betekenis van Centre Pompidou en Crystal Palace.

- 1991 Pest, syphilis, aids: over een metabletische oorzaak van pandemieën.
- 1995 Metabletica van God: de drie voornaamste veranderingen.
- 1996 Geen toeval: metabletica en geschiedschrijving.
- 1997 Het gestoorde contact: vragen en antwoorden rond neurose.
- 1999 Twee wetten: de twee hoofdwetten van de thermodynamica.
- 2000 Hoe vertel ik het mijn nichtjes en neefjes.
- 2001 De kop van de bromvlieg.
- 2003 De tragedie: waardoor en waartoe.

List of publications in English (books only)

- 1955 *The Phenomenological Approach to Psychiatry*. Springfield: Thomas, (*A Different Existence*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press).
- 1961 *The Changing Nature of Man*. New York: Norton;
- 1966 *Psychology of the Sickbed*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
- 1970 *Things: Four Metablastic Reflections*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
- 1970 *Phenomenology and Metablics*. New York: Humanitas Press;
- 1972 *Dubious Maternal Affection*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
- 1974 *Divided Existence and Complex Society*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
- 1978 *Medical Power and Medical Ethics*. New York: Norton.
- 1999 *The Two Principal Laws of Thermodynamics. A Cultural and Historical Exploration*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

In Memoriam Claudia Roth (1955-2012)

Claudia Roth, a Swiss anthropologist who wrote about intergenerational relations, died recently at the age of 56. Her work shows a long-term and deep dedication to understanding the suffering and vitality of West-African people, specifically in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. Over a period of more than twenty years, Claudia documented conversations with 'her' African family, friends and acquaintances in and around the compound where she used to live, as well as many other people in town.

Over all these years, Claudia noted her observations with great zeal and accuracy in many field diaries, and took countless pictures in which she serially captured the ageing processes of several generations. These materials will be made accessible to scholars working on urban issues in the region. Based on her meticulous fieldwork, Claudia authored and published several books, among which was a monograph related to her PhD project in German and French and a large collection of articles in which she tackled burning issues on intergenerational and gender life worlds.

In 1994, Claudia received her PhD for a study on gender segregation at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Zurich where she was an assistant and lecturer from 2000 to 2006. After her PhD project, she created an exhibition on soap production in the midst of waste, together with photographer Susi Lindig that was displayed in the Musée de L'Homme in Paris, and several places in Swit-

zerland. Next, she worked on African-Swiss women's social networks. From 2000 to 2011, she conducted two research projects supported by a grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF); one was about social security, ageing and gender and the other about burdened intergenerational relationships. In addition to her research work, Claudia was also a lecturer at the Swiss Universities of Basel and Berne. With her passion for anthropology, she was able to raise an enduring interest for other life worlds among many students and made them critically reflect on their own social conditions.

An exemplary case of her pioneering work is her last article on sibling relationships and social security for the *American Ethnologist*, which she completed shortly before her untimely death. In it, she argues that sibling relationships are of the utmost importance for the social security of the elderly parents and for the children themselves, and that the death of hard-working and inventive daughters is disastrous. The reason is that family support breaks down in such a situation because knowledge (cultural capital) and relationships (social capital) created over a long time cannot be replaced.

Finally, what seems to me to be most characteristic of Claudia's perspective is her handling of the contradictions of the desires and realities of everyday life and contradictions between the requirements of scientific projects and the realities of the research context. In her unique way, she included contradictions in her research to grasp them from an anthropological angle and play them out creatively. That she is not with us anymore leaves a painful lacuna in the anthropological community.

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Selected publications

- 1996 *La separation des sexes chez les Zara au Burkina Faso*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- 1998 *Travail dans und décharge: les femmes de la savonnerie de Bobo-Dioulasso / Arbeit im Abfall: die Seifenfrauen in Bobo-Dioulasso*. Catalogue of the photo exhibition.
- 2005 Threatening dependency: Limits of social security, old age and gender in urban Burkina Faso / Dépendence menaçante: limites de la sécurité sociale, vieil âge et genre en milieu urbain burkinabé. In: Willemijn de Jong et al., *Ageing in insecurity. Vieillir dans l'insécurité. Case Studies on social security and gender in India and Burkina Faso. Sécurité sociale et genre en Inde et au Burkina Faso. Études de cas*. Münster: LIT. pp. 103-106, 285-288.
- 2007 "Tu ne peux pas rejeter ton enfant!" Contrat entre les générations, sécurité social et vieillesse en milieu burkinabé. *Cahiers d'Études africaines* 47 (1): 185: 93-116.
- 2013 The strength of *badenya* ties: Siblings and social security in old age. The case of urban Burkina Faso. *American Ethnologist* (forthcoming).

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Date: 2-4 September 2013

Place: Estate 'De Horst', Driebergen, The Netherlands

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- Provide a platform for exchange between researchers from biomedical, social and economic disciplines.
- Foster dialogue between researchers, medical professionals, pharmacists, policy makers, managers, and representatives of the pharmaceutical industry.

Detailed information and guidelines for registration and submitting panel proposals and abstracts can be found at the website:

<https://sites.google.com/site/pharmaceuticallifecycle/>

Deadline abstracts: 1st February 2013

More information: Eva Vernooij, e.e.vernooij@uva.nl.