

An Anti-Conformist Ethicist:
Joseph T.C. Arntz (1919–1981)

DAVID VAN OOIJEN

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Joseph Theodorus Clemens Arntz was born in Nijmegen in the Netherlands on 20 May 1919. He was the only child of his parents, and, since his father had died before he was born, Jos was alone with his mother until he became a Dominican. Not surprisingly, he had a very close relationship with her which continued after he entered the Dutch province of the Dominican Order in September 1937. He visited his 'mamma' as much as possible and phoned her almost every day. He studied philosophy and theology in various Dominican houses of study and was ordained priest in 1943. After becoming a lector in theology, he taught ethics at the house of studies in Zwolle from 1948 to 1952.

From the end of 1952 until 1954 he studied theology and philosophy in Lyon, France, and from 1955 to 1960 he was at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, where he received the degree of Doctorandus (Candidatus ad lauream) in Theology.¹ Later he received the degrees of Doctorandus and Doctor in Philosophy 'cum laude'.² His dissertation was on love in the ontology of Jean Paul Sartre (*De liefde in de ontologie van J. P. Sartre*, 1960).

From 1956 to 1967 he taught 'social ethics' at the Dutch Dominican's Study Centre for Philosophy in Zwolle. From 1967 until his death in 1981 he was ordinary professor in 'philosophical sociology, philosophical anthropology and social ethics' at the Catholic University of Brabant (KUB) in Tilburg.³ He wrote a lot of academic articles in important periodicals, but he also published on very practical ethical problems in social and political life, such as those that concerned Catholic women. He talked and wrote on many topics such as unemployment, the use of leisure, poverty, revolution, the relation between religion and politics, birth control and the transplant of organs.

Arntz died of cancer on 27 July 1981 in Tilburg. He was just 62 years old.

THE LIVING PHILOSOPHER

Herman Coenen has characterized Jos Arntz in a wonderful way. He wrote in 1985: