

# For Martin – Much to Celebrate!

Barbara H. Partee

My memories of Martin Stokhof go back to sometime in the late 1970's, I think. Maybe the first time that I met Martin and Jeroen was at the 1977 Montague Grammar conference that led to the Davis and Mithun volume. (I now know that they were at Ed Keenan's conference in Cambridge in 1973 when they were students, but I don't remember if I met them then.) I first started coming to the Amsterdam Colloquia in 1980, I believe – I think that was the first year the colloquium was opened up more broadly to a fully international conference. And for about the next ten years or so, I came to almost all of the Amsterdam Colloquia – in the decade of the 1980's, that was not only the best place in the world to present new work in formal semantics, but really the only regular international conference where one could presuppose an audience familiar with formal semantics. Martin and Jeroen and Renate all played a big role in making that happen, and I know it must have been a LOT of work! And although I don't come so regularly any more, I know it's still one of the best semantics conferences in the world.

By the time Emmon Bach and I came and spent a year at the Max Planck Institute in Nijmegen in 1982-83, I felt like I knew Martin and Jeroen pretty well; and we got to know them much better during that year, when we alternated week by week going to seminars in Amsterdam and in Groningen (where Van Benthem was at the time). That was a wonderful year, and those were wonderful and exciting seminars in both places. I can remember sometimes going out for beer with Martin and Jeroen after seminars, and I still smile remembering one occasion when Martin and Jeroen were telling us that although most of their work was so joint that they didn't always know what idea was whose, there were indeed things about which they didn't agree, and Martin<sup>1</sup> said, "Well, for instance, Martin once claimed ... oh, wait, I'm Martin!"

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<sup>1</sup> I've actually forgotten whether this was Martin or Jeroen, which seems fitting. Since this is for Martin's festschrift, I'm making it a Martin story.

I've been greatly influenced by Martin and Jeroen's work (and Frank Veltman's, and Fred Landman's, and Paul Dekker's, and many others) – formal semantics would not be the rich field that it is today without their work! Martin and Jeroen have played and continue to play a really central role in working out how to think about formal pragmatics and the integration of context and content, and with Frank on the integration of semantics, pragmatics, and the dynamics of information states. And when I look at the list of students Martin has supervised or helped to supervise, and the conferences and research projects and institutes that he has helped to organize and run, I can see concrete evidence of something I could always “feel”, namely that he has been a pivotal figure in making the Netherlands the country that I am sure has the strongest per capita strength in semantics of any country in the world.

And my thanks to Martin for interesting progress on the problem of the relation between formal semantics and linguistic competence, a problem that has worried me since the 1970's, but on which I never felt like I made much progress in my own work. Martin and Jeroen's paper “Why compositionality?” in my 2005 festschrift addresses that problem in a really serious way, while remaining very sympathetic to the tendency of linguists to happily engage in exciting problem-solving activities even if there are known problems in the foundations of their theoretical frameworks. And Martin has been addressing similar foundational problems increasingly in recent years – I'm not always happy to hear his conclusions, but his work is important and valuable, and since he is a semantics insider, he can write critically about formal semantics in a way that semanticists can and must take seriously. Thank goodness there are thoughtful and sympathetic philosophers like Martin who can critically discuss the philosophical foundational problems while still appreciating the problem-solving work.

So for Martin on his own, and for Martin and Jeroen, and for Martin and Jeroen and Frank, and for all other relevant “Martin and”-s, I am grateful and appreciative of all you've done and am looking forward to more exciting work to come! Gefeliciteerd!