

BoonBerichten

Nieuwsbrief van het Louis Paul Boon Genootschap
nummer 175, maart 2022

In onze Boonberichten 160 en 163 van vorig jaar publiceerden we een fragment van de Engelse vertaling van *Het Geuzenboek* door Frank Vlaeminck, met daarbij een illustratie van de hand van grafisch kunstenaar Inez Michiels.

Frank Vlaeminck vertaalde ook *De meisjes van Jesses* van Boon. Hierbij publiceren we het eerste hoofdstuk uit deze vertaling. De bijbelse tekst die parallel meeloopt bovenaan de pagina's in de originele tekst van Boon laten we hier buiten beschouwing. Uiteraard zal deze tekst in een boekuitgave van deze vertaling zeker niet ontbreken.

De bijgevoegde afbeelding is bedoeld als mogelijk omslag van deze vertaling in boekvorm. Inez Michiels: "De omslag, geschilderd met Ecoline op aquarelpapier, is een geladen afbeelding van de villa waar de moorden plaatsvonden."

In de Boonberichten 160 en 162 is meer informatie te vinden over Frank Vlaeminck en Inez Michiels.

LOUIS PAUL BOON

JESSES GIRLS

Chapter 1

Is this tomorrow's world?

Translation: Frank Vlaeminck

Illustration: Inez Michiels

Babylon was the city that set the tone in our world. What happened there would happen years later in your own small and still undisturbed provincial town.

When the first fortune seekers moved to Babylon it was still a complete jungle. It stayed like that. The children of the fortune seekers were still calling the shots, only now they were driving Rolls-Royces or Thunderbirds. And just like in the beginning you could become rich and world-famous or a murderer overnight.

Babylon was exemplary of what civilization had come up with in terms of progress and madness in the world. One culture lay on its deathbed as another culture was delivered in childbirth. Violence and poetry, sex and drugs, problems and talking about revolution were the new lifestyle. People experimented with LSD and someone pointed out it was the acronym of Love, Sex, and Death: the keywords that gave access to tomorrow's world.

Men with a great past still dwelled and lived there, people full of hope for the future, the old folks seeking peace and quiet, policemen whose duty it had

been to devote a lifetime to fighting crime. But they were hopelessly overrun by both the left and the right. Order and peace were gradually being derided. In Babylon those had long since become obscene words. Unfortunately, criminals and murderers profited most from this.

They named the city Babylon, but in reality Babylon did not exist. There were ten, twenty Babylons. A jigsaw puzzle of totally different worlds, of heaven and hell, of unimaginable wealth and even less imaginable poverty, of fur coats and millions of dollars of jewelry, of hole-ridden socks and eating garbage. It was living in dumps and on dunghills, feverishly looking for new expressions in art, fashion, and perversions.

They said Babylon, and immediately gods and goddesses sprang to mind. But the gods and goddesses did not live in Babylon, which was a somewhat sad conglomerate of concrete and steel and glass, they lived in three, four places in the sunlit hills. The originally pristine Sea View had been the meeting place of the top personalities, but they left as the newly arrived lesser gods also ventured to stay there. They built themselves beautiful villas on Fox Hill, and when the aspiring gods wanted to move to Fox Hill too, they built even more grandiose villas on Kings Hill.

So only the seekers of fame and fortune still lived in Sea View, those who got a shot but were at risk of wasting that chance again the next day. And most of the time they did not own the luxurious villas they lived in. They rented them or were allowed to live there while the owners stayed down South, in Africa or on Mars.

All that, Babylon, from the sea over the hills and down to the desert, was around thirty miles long. It was cut in two by Sunshine Boulevard, part of which was more sin than sun, where hundreds of eleven or twelve year old kids already scrambled for food, money, and drugs. They were constantly stopped by slick, ice-cold policemen. Most did not have papers, a place to live or even a name.

Not only was Sunshine Boulevard the street where the biggest number of luxury cars were driving, it was also the street on which most of the suicides were committed and most of the crime occurred. It was the street with the highest number of junkies and the highest number of sexually deranged. It was the street where psychedelic art and psychedelic music were discovered. Everything that was totally new, the very best and the very worst, was invented there.

At the beginning of Sunshine Boulevard lay Sea View and at its far end lay Motherland. It was almost unbelievable: in Sea View they were millionaires, eccentric and crazy, and in Motherland they were conservative, puritanical and patriotic. There they did not like people of color, they collected weapons and were always prepared to form militias against nothing and against everything. The Motherland folks, prone to washing their puritanical and patriotic conscience in a bloodbath.

They would know a certain Maya, but the next day Maya was no longer there. Maybe gone to the New or the Old World, maybe to Africa or to the Moon, there was, in any case, not the least news anymore. At first Maureen had still worked for the dream factory in Babylon and then she moved to the dream factory in Rome, doing a film on the witches of the Middle Ages. Someone heard it flopped and she now ran a bar in Zanzibar.

Marilyn was divorced and her husband had killed himself; she had returned to her family in the West and it was said she worked in a circus there. Katie spent three months in hospital following a psychedelic trip on LSD and afterward wrote the script for a porn movie – in Babylon no one knew any longer what was porn and what wasn't, since in every film and every play they ran naked and fucked around – and then got hooked on the Messiah of one of these religious sects who were hiding in the Northern forest with weapons and whatnot out of disgust with a world of technology, television shows and supermarkets. As far as John goes, he was still writing a TV series and still lived in poverty. His wife killed herself driving on the freeway and her ashes were scattered on the rocks by the coast.

That was Babylon. People came and went, maybe disappeared, maybe dead. Nobody paid attention. New fortune and happiness seekers were always setting foot there. It may have been exciting, but it was also depressing. Yet whatever happened or whoever was in their way, “pig” was the name-calling on everyone’s lips. It was a “pig” who kept you from making a fortune, who prevented you from taking drugs or abandoning yourself to excess. And of course the policeman as well was a “pig”.

The Babylon newspapers announced the “Opening of the 25th Bottomless-restaurant”. Right up until then there had only been Topless-restaurants, diners where you got served by girls with naked tits. It did not cut it anymore, at the Bottomless restaurants you were served by fully naked young chicks, bare bush and all.

Some thousand homos rented a ballroom in the big Babylon hotel. Some of them showed up dressed in women's clothing, with hairdos, trinkets, and naked under their fur coats. The men danced with each other but photographers were denied every access: too many celebrity gods were attending and

there was no need for the world to know they were gay.

A local newspaper specifically aimed at the Sunshine Boulevard youth put out twenty columns of ads such as: “Looking for sexual pleasure? Now the young too can be satisfied”. “Sex parties”, “Orgy guide”, “Wife swapping club looking for new members”, “Ex nun, fresh from the monastery, looking for any type of boyfriend”, “Wanted: grotesque, ugly, and very fat girls”.

For the benefit of himself plus his peeping-Tom friends, one of the most prominent couturiers on Kings Hill had installed two-way mirrors that offered a peek inside the fitting rooms of his world-famous fashion business. There was opportunity to watch the goddesses from the pictures dress and undress in all intimacy. And afterward they could claim: “Oh yeah, Marilyn Monroe, I remember seeing her pussy. You know, I'd expected a bit more bush.”

Immorality and every lack of inhibition were the requirements for membership of these Babylon circles. The intellectual was “out”, the swinger “in”. By night Sunshine Boulevard looked like an insane film studio. If you weren't a gangster you played one. There the classless society was based on a misconception: it did not undo the class differences, it only made them unrecognizable.



Teenagers lured in by all this came hitchhiking up to Sunshine Boulevard and offered themselves in the cars for prostitution and perversities for the price of two dollars.

Every few hundred yards “Underground” magazine was sold under the eyes of the police, peddled by girls in high boots who pitched “Underground” while soliciting. On the front page the police was made to look like a herd of “pigs” and criminals, on the back page featured a long list of addresses that were venues for orgies. And mostly orgies reminiscent of marquis de Sade stories, seasoned with voodoo, black magic, and mysterious rituals.

In Babylon dreams were no longer made of celluloid only, but also of sugar spiked with LSD. The lumps were available under the counter of your ice cream store. They lived that last hopeless stadium of corruption and perversion where everything, but really everything, was encouraged and committed.

The unmistakable stench of marihuana wafted over hills and lanes. This stench could be noticed in every house, in every villa, and it spawned a totally new vocabulary from everyone’s lips. They smoked “pot”, they were “stoned”, they were “high”. In Babylon they smoked pot the way they drank tea in London. Thirteen year old girls had their own telephone numbers for their lovers to dial. Fourteen year old boys had their own cars. They were the children of the gods of the film industry, the “flower generation,” as they were called. But they no longer smelled the scent of flowers, they smelled the stench of narcotics.

Gert Frobe, a German writer who lived in Babylon for a long time, wrote a novel on the murders committed there. A couple of months later his own seventeen year old daughter Marja was murdered. She had been kidnapped from her father’s house and

the body was later found in the dense grove of a ravine a few miles outside Babylon. Talk of murder was enough to spark off new murders.

In Babylon violence was unleashed in its worst form exactly because the city was constantly replicating itself. Brutality and cruelty were all that was served up. They produced films full of murder, drugs and sex, and at night murderers armed with knives came to Sea View to carve up the film stars and daughters of the gods. Existence seen through Babylon glasses took on different, bigger, and more grotesque shapes. Cynicism was alien to the city in that they believed in what they produced. Maybe only the sequence of things could be called cynical as a production first had to bring in millions of dollars and only then ensued the belief in what they had made. In this way life itself became a film. In the era of hypocrisy the women’s union had the last say, in the era of violence ruled the murderers.

A murderer could enter a Sea View villa unchallenged, but a policeman disturbing a marihuana party had to forget about promotion. Everywhere in the world in those days they experimented with group sex – a pretty word for fucking among each other – , with abstract and psychedelic colors, with narcotics and revolution. But whereas in the world such experiments were still in their infancy, in Babylon they were long since commonplace.

And still, surprisingly enough, eighty-five percent of all tourists were almost mesmerized by the attraction of the halo surrounding the gods and goddesses of film. They were pulled towards Babylon, blinded by fame and blind to corruption and crime. ■

BoonBerichten

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U bent al lid vanaf € 50 per jaar
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De activiteiten van het Louis Paul Boon Genootschap worden mede mogelijk gemaakt door steun van de Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal en Letteren (KANTL), Stichting Maria Elisa, Koninklijke Drukkerij Em. de Jong, firma Jan de Nul, de stad Aalst en Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen.



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Private Stichting Maria Elisa
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