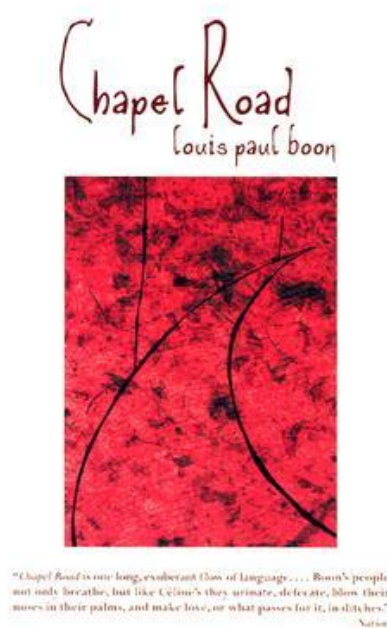




Chapel Road

Louis Paul Boon , Adrienne Dixon (Translator)

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According to the author, Chapel Road is the book about the childhood of Ondine [. . .] about her brother Valeer-Traleer with his monstrous head wobbling through life this way and that. But the book is about a lot more than that. It is also the story of Louis Paul Boon, an author working on a novel entitled Chapel Road, surrounded by his colorful group of friends. His readers and companions include the painter Tippetotje, who habitually works a naked woman into her paintings, and Johan Janssens, the journalist and poet who is fired from the paper for refusing to agree with the Capitalists, the Socialists or the Ultra-Marxists. Beyond that, Chapel Road includes a retelling of the myth of Reynard the fox and Isengrinus the wolf, a tale that underscores the greed, stupidity, hypocrisy, pride and lust motivating the other characters of the book. Chapel Road is a pool, a sea, a chaos: it is the book of all that can be heard and seen in Chapel Road, from the year 1800-and-something until today.

Chapel Road Details

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Author : Louis Paul Boon , Adrienne Dixon (Translator)

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Genre : Fiction, Cultural, Belgium, Literature, Classics, European Literature, Dutch Literature, Novels, Belgian, Roman, Academic, School

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From Reader Review Chapel Road for online ebook

Thomas says

this book has everything folks! if you like the celine style of european literature, where characters poop and pee and say the rude words, and peasants are covered in mud all day, then its got lots of that. but, if you like metafictional books where the author and his friends talk about the book he's writing in the book, and about how novels should be written, and how modernity is a nightmare, then it's got that too! wow! also you get some stuff about the failure of reformist belgian socialism and some funny picaresque retellings of reynard the fox stories, pretty impressive for a book that's not quite 350 pages long. some quotes:

"Oh, be quiet, music master you say... you make me think of those solemn, knowall, never erring modern critics: it's all very well for them to say that an author writing about life must weight this and think of that, and must add a pinch of pepper and salt, nutmeg and cinnamon... no, sorry, I'm wrong, that's an omelet recipe... and these critics can more or less be compared to the tragic case of a baby being thrown away by mistake and the afterbirth being put in the cradle. But the most tragic of all is that they have come to see this error as the normal situation and want to pass their inadequate grocer's mentality on the conceiving, pregnant and birthgiving writer."

"No sooner had the socialist band gone past, then people hesitantly peered out of their doors... vapeur swore by heaven and hell that he'd seen them, that he'd talked to them, but no one would believe him. They wondered whether that band had gone past the chapel without making the sign of the cross... zulma came outside and shouted that they hadn't gone past, but that they'd flown overhead with a terrible scream... The people crossed themselves and wondered what was in store for them: a young mother with a child on her arm burst out sobbing without knowing what she was doing; a peasant joined them; he'd come all the way from his fields and looked back at his fallow land as if he was wondering whether it was worth tilling the soil anymore, now that the world was going to perish anyway. Vapeur looked at them and daren't utter his unbelief: so it was the same as usual again, that he and only he had seen them and had talked to them... he had to conclude that they were people like any others and that therefore all the things these stupid blockheads imagined were fantasy."

"Let me tell you about an old office clerk who's been working in the ministry for over 30 years, but always as a temporary clerk... for 30 years he's been temporary and for 30 years he's been waiting for his permanent appointment... and then comes the medical examination showing that he's got something the matter with him, maybe also a heart that isn't altogether normal... and he's therefore unmasked as if he were a bandit or a swindler: for 30 years he's been working in the ministry and now he has the temerity to have something the matter with him; to have a disease. So he's not appointed, that'll teach him. But... he's allowed to stay on as a temporary clerk. He's allowed to stay till he gets the retirement pension of a 'mere temporary clerk' who was unmasked as a sick man by medical examination. And so they'll be able to punish him by not paying him the higher pension of permanent clerks, and he will have no right to certain advantages to which others have a right: haha! we've caught a little sucker, a little sick sucker in a trap!"

Kris Demey says

Wat een boek. Het is een wilde rit die je literatuurbeleving helemaal omgooit. Elk boek dat je hierna leest, is

niet 'De Kapellekensbaan'.

Zo simpel is het.

Elk ander boek is een saaie rechtlijnige vertelling met een onzichtbare verteller met weinig metaliteratuur.

Zelfs als dat niet zo is, blijf je toch boeken vergelijken met deze roman die geschreven is 'als een kuip mortel die van een stelling valt' en daar bijzonder goed in slaagt. Zelfs nu nog.

Greg says

Once again the world has proven to me that there is still much to be found in it. I'd never heard of Louis Paul Boon before noticing *Summer of Termuren* when it arrived at the store a few weeks ago. SOT looked like the kind of book I normally get excited about. First half of the 20th century gloom and doom, idealism being destroyed by the waves of history, that kind of thing. I was about to buy the book, when I saw that it was the follow up to this novel, so I had to pick it up first. It's just wrong to read books out of order.

This book is set sometime in the 19th century, it's also set sometime following the second World War. The book alternates between the writing of the story of Termuren in the 19th century at the dawn of Socialism, and in the 'present day' (the book being written in the 1950's) as an author named Boon tries to write the novel about Chapel Road. Since this isn't confusing enough already for me to write, I'll add that also in N1 (N1 being used to designate the story of a writer Boon and his friends, as opposed to N2 which is the story the writer Boon is writing within the novel N), there is a running fable of sorts that's a take off of the poem Reynard the Fox.

In N1, the characters are living in a Socialist state. In N2 the characters are living in pre-socialism, and the ideas of Socialism are equal to godlessness in the eyes of most of the people. In both of these settings there is a poverty of real life present, and the book is in a sense a setting up of why did Socialism fail, or maybe why is it still basically the same society but under a different name.

I'm failing miserably. I can't describe this book easily. It's wonderfully post-modern, and possibly the first post-modern novel with its self-reflexive storytelling. Reading this novel isn't for everyone, I can imagine people finding it boring, and it's not really until you start to think about the different stories and characters in particular relations that aren't spelled explicitly by the author that new and wonderful dimensions open up. Maybe once I read SOT I'll be able to write a better description of this novel. The only thing I guess I can really say is that this novel is definitely worth reading, and once again I have Dalkey to thank for putting back into print an amazing piece of literature that probably would have never crossed my path if it hadn't been for them.

Laura Massa says

In 'de stad van 2 fabrieken' waar het altijd regent groeit de kleine Ondine op die zichzelf een groots leven beschoren ziet. Ze wil koste wat kost haar verarmde, burgerlijke gezin ontvluchten en op zwier gaan met de libertijnse en encyclieke rijkeluizen. Wat volgt, is een coming-of-ageverhaal in een gehucht waar geruchten waarheid zijn en geloof bijgeloof. Ondinekes levenswandel wordt afgewisseld met hoekjes die de dagbladschrijver Johan Janssens - het alter ego van Boon zelf - schrijft over de Reinaertstof. Als derde laag zien we de schrijver Boon het materiaal voor zijn werk over de Kapellekensbaan verzamelen.

We bevinden ons in een zeitgeist waar jenever nog aangelengd werd met spiritus en waar het socialisme heel voorzichtig om de hoek komt piepen. Of zoals het in de roman zelf heet: "links, zeer links en ultramarxistisch." In het algemeen kent de Kapellekensbaan een vrij klassieke expositie. Experiment is meer

te vinden in de intermedialiteit die dit werk ondertekent: schema's, pijlen, driehoeken ... Ook de spelling is lichtjes anarchistisch te noemen. Toch al met al geen moeilijkheden om dit meesterwerk te doorworstelen. Voornamelijk de passages over Boons redactionele leven zijn anno 2016 nog zeer genietbaar.

Konrad says

Verrassend...

Een voorbeeld: "Ha... wil de kantieke schoolmeester zeggen... maar johan janssens onderbreekt hem in zijn hoedanigheid van dagbladschrijver, en vertelt dat hij ook andré heeft ontmoet, de theosoof en student in de medicasijnen, en dat hij hem gevraagd heeft of hij iets in de zin van een algemene malaise heeft ontdekt, maar dat andré met een argeloos gezicht geantwoord heeft: neen want aan de universiteit worden nog voordrachten gehouden."

Waouw! En dat in 1953. Niks aan actualiteit ingeboet!

Roel says

DUTCH REVIEW (English review below)

Op het eerste zicht lijkt dit een zeer chaotisch boek te zijn. Het beschikt over verschillende verhaallijnen die door elkaar worden gesmeten. Verder in het boek went deze aparte stijl en begint het lezen te vlotten. Het is een interessant boek dat mij op vele plaatsen heeft aangezet tot nadenken over de maatschappij en het bestaan. Dit is een boek dat men zeker ooit eens gelezen moet hebben.

ENGLISH REVIEW

At first sight this seems to be a very chaotic book. It contains multiple storylines alternate each other regularly. Further in the book, you get used to this strange style and the book becomes easier to read. It is an interesting book that made me think about society and our existence. This is a book that you must have read at least once.

Piet says

Interesting at first, a bit disappointed in the end.

The downfall of Ondine is rather shocking, the ritualistic appearances of Johan Janssen, de kantieke schoolmeester and mossieur Colson van tminnesterie gaan op de duur wat vervelen.

Tippetotje is een vondst, Oscarke ook maar zijn vader is weer licht weerzinwekkend en zotte Zulma en de grijze muis (moeder van Oscar) zijn ook niet echt appetijtelijk.

Teuni Verploegh says

Geworsteld tot pagina 70, daarna opgegeven

Luc De Coster says

Boon (her)lezen blijft een deugddoend tijdverdrijf. Al die mensen met hun vergeefse hoop en aspiraties, dat geploeter om overeind te blijven materieel, moreel en ideologisch, tegelijk hartverwarmend en hartverscheurend. Daarnaast die modernistische structuur die slechts ogenschijnlijk chaotisch is. En die figuren: Johan Janssens, dagbladschrijver en gevelschilder, de kantieke schoolmeester, Tippetotje, de schilderes, ... Verplichte lectuur voor socialisten.

Lotte says

['Ge' blijft echter vechten en doet dat in casu door aan te tonen dat er in ons allen een narcistisch ondineken van de Kapellekensbaan schuilt. In de wereld van vandaag lijkt het alsof de schrijver eerder over

Kris Minne says

Ik heb het graag gelezen. Het begin is even doorbijten (ik deed er 30 jaar over). Anno 2013 is het voor mij nog steeds heel actueel. Er is veel veranderd in die 60-70 jaar nadat het boek geschreven en gepubliceerd werd, maar de mens is nog steeds de mens zoals Boon hem hier ziet en beschrijft en dat is enerzijds geruststellend maar ook wat ontgoochelend: De partij van eerlijke mensen is er nog steeds niet en zal er nooit komen.

Jacob Wren says

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The Darkness Of Our Own Frightened Hearts, Reading Chapel Road in Brussels:
<http://radicalcut.blogspot.de/2013/06...>

Plus, Louis Paul Boon writes:

From your open attic window you can see no-man's wood being painted red by the sinking sun, and you hear msieu colson of the ministry's melancholy sheep bleating one last time before it disappears behind the stable door: and then you push your papers aside and go downstairs, just when the music master opens the door and together with his pretty wife lucette lets a little of that late red sunshine enter. He shakes his head in his

music master's way, and you hear him say:

I suppose you've been poring over your papers up there in your attic, writing about the world-of-today; well, I've misunderstood so many books already and I know that all there is to say has already been said; I'm not even talking now of ecclesiastes, of the faust-writers or the mad actor of hamlet... no, please don't interrupt me, let me go on; do you really think that up in that attic of yours you're going to gather greater wisdom than lao tse, or can you be more surrealist-erotic-simple-minded than the songs of maldoror? Will you sound human depths and heights more deeply and more highly than the demons in the brothers Karamazov, will you chase time outside time and space more ferociously than proust, or will you whip life within time and space more grimly than in the voyage au bout de la nuit? Will you be any better in depicting modern derailed man-in-a-crooked-society in his true condition as living and thinking animal than lady chatterley's love? Can you play with words more soberly than Lenin, more naturalistically than zola, more symbolically than the bible? Can you possibly be more solemn and more infallible than the pope in rome, more fabulously immoral than the Arabian nights, more heavenly than the imitation of christ, more subtle and more cunning than the reynard of william-who-created-madoc; more tragic-rustic than nivardus' isengrinus? And can you be more modernly, mangily unbelieving than tropic of Capricorn? or more romantically miserable than the sprawl of suburbia?

And when you hear the music master fall silent and see him press his lips together, you reply: maybe it is impossible to say anything new and better, but the dust of time falls on everything that has been written and so I think it's right if every ten years someone else draws a line through all those old things and describes the world-of-today in different words.

Marc says

Remarkable novel, especially because of its multi-faceted structure and its imaginative style. Contains some real gems, but the writing process in the end gets a bit boring. As always Boon's language is engagingly flawed: bad punctuation, incorrect grammar, foul language (all intended!).

Various issues are touched upon in this book, but the process of writing and the relation between literature and reality are pivotal: the writer writes his story but everyone sees something else in it; reality is divided into different facets that do not necessarily cover each other; and the writer frantically tries to get some coherence in it; but it's a lost battle.

Certainly one of the great novels in the Dutch language, a real rough diamond.

Leen says

In onze cursus Moderne Nederlandse literatuur (dat slaat dan op de periode na WOII) stond dit boek uit de jaren '50 als experimenteel beschreven, ongewoon voor die tijd door de verschillende perspectieven en vertellers en verhalen.

Het hoofdpersonage is de schrijver die over Ondinneke vertelt, dan heb je nog de burens: mossieu colson van tminnesterie, de kantieke schoolmeester en zijn schone vrouw lucette, johan janssens de dichter en dagbladschrijver, tippetotje de schilderes, enzovoorts; allemaal hebben ze hun eigen verhalen en meningen en gebeurtenissen die in het boek van de schrijver moeten verschijnen.

Een leuk concept, dacht ik zo, dat kan interessant worden. Maar al vanaf bladzijde 1 ergerde ik me enorm aan de vorm: hoofdletters worden zelden gebruikt (af en toe nog aan het begin van de zin), aanhalingstekens liever niet, en dat het hoofdpersonage geen 'ik' maar een 'gij' is, maakt het er niet simpeler op. Ik heb het uiteindelijk opgegeven. Ben wel nieuwsgierig naar hoe het met Ondinneke afloopt, maar ach, er zijn leukere boeken die op me wachten. Hoop ik. Of misschien probeer ik het later opnieuw, als ik wat meer geduld kan opbrengen om langzamer en aandachtiger te lezen :-)

Sabine says

Zo, wat een boek. Het is niet het meest leesbare boek en 'leuk' kan ik het ook zeker niet noemen maar goed is het wel.

In deze roman in een roman volgen we anti-heldin Ondineke, die het niet lukt haar dromen waar te maken, en we volgen de auteur zelf. Je verliest je vertrouwen in de mens, in hun rationele vermogens, en in de samenleving. Het is maatschappijkritiek waar je cynisch en toch ook best verdrietig van wordt. En dat maakt het wel een goed boek.
