

Bob van den Born

1927-2017

The apocalypse of professor Pi

by
MATTHIJS
VAN BOXSEL



Selfportrait



In 1990 he began making digital collages

Phase 1: The sorcerer's apprentice

Pi is a professor but of what? Pi, to name but a few, is a doctor, a surgeon, a dentist, a musician, a mountain climber, a techie, an educator, a traveller; in short, a polymath. He is an expert in everything. A remarkable change occurred in professor Pi's illustrious life, in correlation with the shape of his nose. In the beginning professor Pi was a sorcerer's apprentice, experimenting with the ordinary world. He examined the laws of nature and manipulated them to suit his needs. He knotted the streams of water in the shower, fished the ripples out of a lake, pulled the sea by the tideline onto the beach, tamed a single wave, and made a cloud rain indoors. In the drawings Pi pushes the boundaries of the artist: he reaches the end of the vanishing point, picks the speed lines out of the air when he goes fast and moves a candle by nudging the shadow it casts.

Phase 2: The world gone mad

The well-ordered cosmos is turned upside down by Pi's interventions: a monstrous universe no longer controlled by its creator. The elements break free, flora and fauna go off the rails, machines go haywire. Deviations suddenly become the norm. Masked dogs, a megaphone speaking in flowers, a cactus protecting itself with barbed wire, a skull-phone, cherubs with the measles.

The anomaly

The world's transformation is accompanied by a change of behavior in Pi. From a sorcerer's apprentice he mutates into an observer, flabbergasted by the metamorphoses he has brought about. Pi evolves from an unstable factor in a stagnant society to an anchor in the chaos. The change occurs in the 1000th comic story. It's striking that the more the environment comes apart at the seams, also stylistically, the blacker Pi's contours get.

Pi's nose

The about-face in the interaction between Pi and the world may have a simple cause. Initially, the strip had a classic three-panel division. But when Van den Born discovered he could deliver the gag in just one picture, the landscape began to take over. The transition was complemented by a spectacular change in Pi's nose. In the first strips, Pi has a sharp, hooked nose, but the more unhinged the mundane world gets, while Pi changes from a 'nutty professor' into a bewildered spectator, the rounder and smaller his nose becomes (from strip #250).





WARNING: CONTAINS SENSITIVE MATERIAL!

Aline & Bob in THE ALINE DOCUMENTARY

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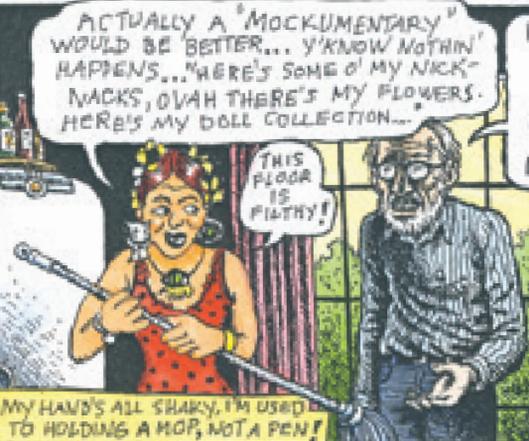
A TRUMP-FREE ZONE



BOB, I'VE BEEN THINKING... SOMEBODY SHOULD MAKE A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT ME...

HEY, GREAT IDEA, ALINE! MAYBE TERRY ZWIGOFF COULD DO IT SINCE HE WAS SO SUCCESSFUL WITH THE ONE HE MADE ABOUT ME!

WHATAYA—



ACTUALLY A "MOCKUMENTARY" WOULD BE BETTER... Y'KNOW NATHIN' HAPPENS... HERE'S SOME O' MY NICK-NACKS, OVAH THERE'S MY FLOWERS. HERE'S MY DOLL COLLECTION...

HERE'S YOUR MOP YOU LOVE SO MUCH!

YOU COULD TELL FUNNY STORIES ABOUT YOUR WILD YOUTH. THAT WOULD BE ENTERTAINING.

YEAH I WAS A CONGIRL FOR AWHILE, DRANK COORS BEER, SMOKED CAMELS, SLEPT IN THE BACK OF A PICK-UP IN THE DESERT, HAD A MOTORCYCLE, TOOK 200 LSD TRIPS... WAS AT THE FIRST BE-IN... AN' OH MY GHOD... THE SUMMER OF LOVE!

I'M LUCKY I WAS YOUNG IN THE 60'S!



YOU WERE A CRAZY GIRL...

I EVEN HAD TWO HUZBINS FOR AWHILE...

YEAH, YOU DID... I WAS ONE OF THEM... SO, WAS THAT FUN? DID THAT GIVE YOU A FEELING OF Y'KNOW...?



IT HAD ITS MOMENTS... BUT IT WAS A LOT OF WORK... ONE OF THEM HAD MIGRAINES, THE OTHER HAD BAD TEETH... NOW NEITHER IS INTERESTED IN SEX ANYMORE... THEY JUST WANNA EAT!



SAD BUT TRUE... WHICH REMINDS ME; IS THERE ANYTHING AROUND HERE TO SNACK ON??

OBIDY, HERE'S SOME CHIPS!

SPARTAN YOGI DID!

UGH! DIZ-GUSTING!



MAYBE YOU SHOULD GET YOURSELF A YOUNGER GUY, ALINE, WHATAYA THINK?

I DON'T KNOW...



I DON'T KNOW HOW TO TALK TO THE YOUNGSTERS AN' I CAN'T STAND THEIR MUSIC OR THEIR SENSIBILITIES IN GENERAL... AN' I CAN'T DO IT WITH A GUY THAT WEARS SHORTS OR CROPPED PANTS AN' I DON'T LIKE JEANS EITHER... I LIKE BAGGY CORDUROY PANTS WITH A LOT OF GROUCH SPACE.

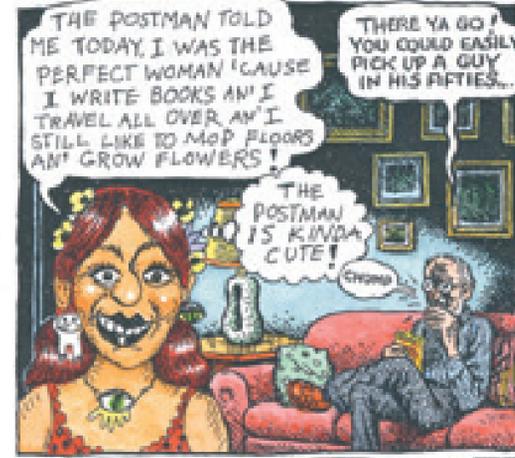


WELL, THAT NARROWS THE FIELD DOWN QUITE A BIT... BUT, YOU KNOW, I—

ANYWAY HOW COULD I MEET A YOUNG GUY??

OH, C'MON, YOU'RE STILL ATTRACTIVE... IT'D BE EASY FOR YOU IF YOU REALLY WANTED TO...

YA THINK SO??



THE POSTMAN TOLD ME TODAY, I WAS THE PERFECT WOMAN 'CAUSE I WRITE BOOKS AN' I TRAVEL ALL OVER AN' I STILL LIKE TO MOP FLOORS AN' GROW FLOWERS!

THERE YA GO! YOU COULD EASILY PICK UP A GUY IN HIS FIFTIES...

YEAH, MAYBE IN A YOGA CLASS... NAH MY HUMOUR IS TOO NEGATIVE + I'M NOT NATURAL ENOUGH... TOO MUCH LIPSTICK + JEWELRY!

ALINE, YOU CAN BE QUITE THE UPBEAT GAL WHEN YOU WANT TO BE—LIVELY, CONVIVIAL, NEVER A DULL MOMENT!

I SUSPECT THAT DEEP DOWN, UNDERNEATH IT ALL, MAYBE YOU DON'T REALLY WANT ANY MORE INTIMATE INVOLVEMENTS WITH MEN... IZZAT POSSIBLE?

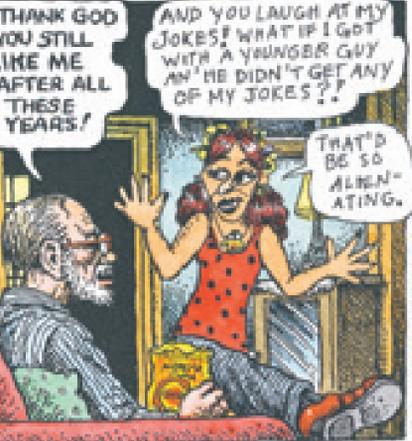
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...



I'M SO USED TO YOU, THE WAY YOU SMELL LIKE WARM TORTILLAS... I CAN SLEEP THRU YOUR SNORING AN' YOU DON'T MOVE AROUND TOO MUCH IN THE BED!

AN' YOUR "THING" IS CUTE... IT'S ROBBY KINDA LIKE A BATH TOY!

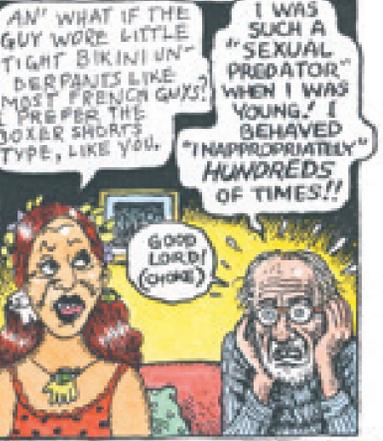
TEE HEE GIGGLE



THANK GOD YOU STILL LIKE ME AFTER ALL THESE YEARS!

AND YOU LAUGH AT MY JOKES! WHAT IF I GOT WITH A YOUNGER GUY AN' HE DIDN'T GET ANY OF MY JOKES?!

THAT'D BE SO ALIENATING.



AN' WHAT IF THE GUY WORE LITTLE TIGHT BIKINI UN-BER PANTS LIKE MOST FRENCH GUYS? I PREP FOR THE BOXER SHORTS TYPE, LIKE YOU.

I WAS SUCH A "SEXUAL PREDATOR" WHEN I WAS YOUNG. I BEHAVED "INAPPROPRIATELY" HUNDREDS OF TIMES!!

GOOD LORD! (GROG)



IT'S A GOOD THING YOU DIDN'T WIN AN OSCAR OR A PULITZER FOR THEM TO TAKE AWAY... DIDN'T YOU RECEIVE A HARVEY AWARD OR SOME THING?

THEY CAN HAVE IT BACK IF THEY WANT...



YOU WERE VERY AGGRESSIVE WITH ME WHEN WE FIRST MET BUT I LIKED IT!

I ENCOURAGED IT... DOES THAT MEAN I'M SICK??

I GUESS WE'RE BOTH SICK... A COUPLE 'A SICKOS!



I'M SEXUALLY MASOCHISTIC, BUT I HAVE A DOMINATING OVERBEARING PERSONALITY LIKE HITLER... HE WAS A VEG-ETARIAN TOO, JUST LIKE ME!

I STARTED OUT AS A SEXUAL PREDATOR, BUT IT WAS NIPPED IN THE BUD BY GEORGE HARRISON... I'LL NEVER FORGET IT... I WAS SIXTEEN.



I JUMPED OVER A POLICE BARRIER AN' THREW MYSELF ON GEORGE... I ASSUMED HE WOULD INSTANTLY FALL IN LOVE WITH ME!

INSTEAD, I SAW A LOOK OF TERROR AN' DIZ-GUST ON HIS FACE... HE LOOKED LIKE I MUST'VE LOOKED TO YRS. LATER WHEN A GRIZZLY BEAR ATTACKED MY CAR!

GUFFAW

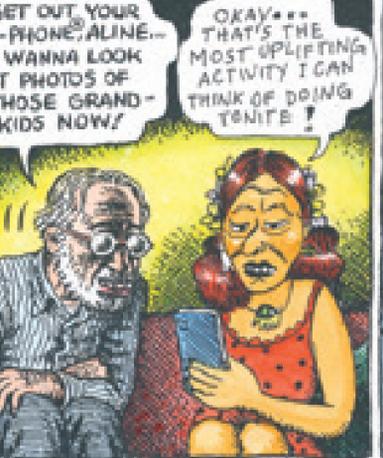


I NEVER WANTED TO STALK A MAN AGAIN AFTER THAT... FORTUNATELY THAT WAS OVER FIFTY YEARS AGO!

HOW ABOUT THE WAY I USED TO GO AROUND LITERALLY JUMPING ON GIRLS!

SOME A' THEM DIDN'T SEEM TO MIND... SOME A' THEM EVEN INVITED ME TO JUMP ON THEM... THAT WAS ALWAYS THRILLING...

JUST DON'T DO A NETFLIX SERIES!



GET OUT YOUR I-PHONE, ALINE... I WANNA LOOK AT PHOTOS OF THOSE GRAND-KIDS NOW!

OKAY... THAT'S THE MOST UPLIFTING ACTIVITY I CAN THINK OF DOING TONITE!



AW, LOOK AT THOSE LITTLE SWEETHEARTS!

CAN YOU IMAGINE ANYTHING CUTER IN THE WORLD?!

NOTHING!

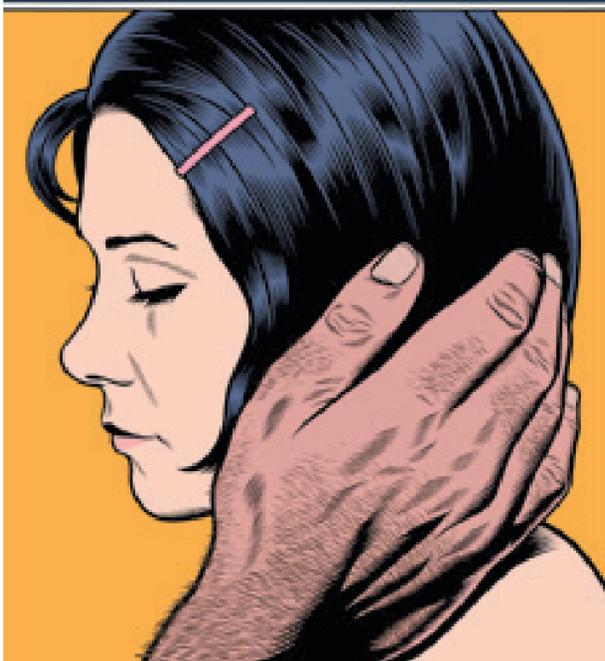
UH OH, HAND ME MY MOP OVER THERE! I SEE SHMUTZ!

LOOK FOR THE ALINE DOCUMENTARY PART 2: CANCER & YOGA, HER NEW FITNESS PROGRAM

HUSS



HUSS



HUSS



HUSS



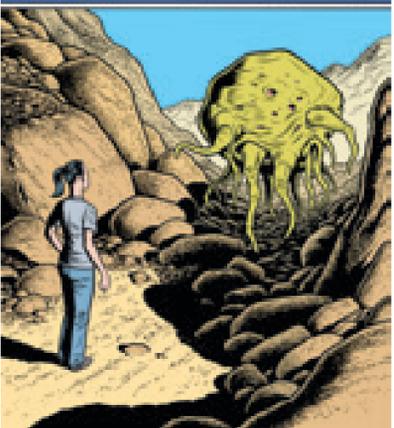
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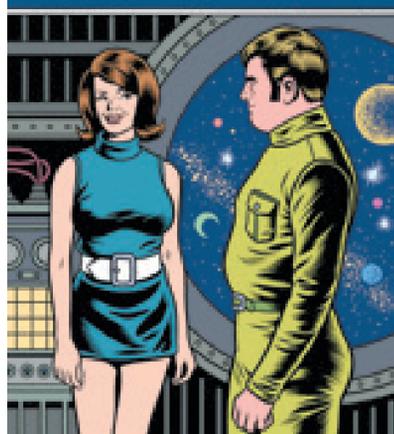
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