



Universiteit van Johannesburg
University of Johannesburg

November-Eksamen 2014
November Examination 2014

KURSUS/ COURSE:	KLASSIEKE KULTUUR 3B CLASSICAL CULTURE 3B (KLK3B21)	PUNTE/ MARKS:	180
VRAESTEL/ PAPER:	1	TYD/ TIME:	3 UUR 3 HOURS
EKSAMINATORE/ EXAMINERS:	1. PROF. A. H. DOYLE 2. PROF. M. DE MARRE (UNISA)		

HIERDIE VRAESTEL BESTAAN UIT 13 (DERTIEN) BLADSYE.
THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF 13 (THIRTEEN) PAGES.

SECTION 1

30 marks each

Essay Questions: Choose **THREE** out of the following questions. (The relevant poems and stories are to be found at the end of this paper)

1. Icarus

Discuss the reception of the Icarus myth in post-classical art and literature. Refere to at least three poets and at least three works of art.

2. Orpheus and Eurydice

Discuss the treatment of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice in Margaret Atwood's *Eurydice*, *Orpheus (1)*, and *Orpheus (2)*.

3. Alan Parker's Angel Heart

The plot of *Angel Heart* has been structured according to a famous ancient Greek myth. Identify and discuss this and describe how it functions in the film.

4. Alfred Hitchcock's Vertigo

Discuss and analyse the film *Vertigo* in terms of the two major classical myths that underpin the film.

5. Margaret Atwood's Penelopiad

Discuss Atwood's portrayal of Penelope and Helen in Atwood's novella *The Penelopiad*.

6. Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* / *Metamorphoses*

Discuss the theme of *curiositas* in the novel.

Total marks for this section 90

SECTION 2

30 marks each

Poems for Analysis and Passages for Comment:

Choose **THREE** out of the following poems/passages for discussion, comment and analysis. Identify each extract/poem and provide a context where relevant.

1. *The day you died I went into the dirt,
Into the lightless hibernaculum
Where bees, striped black and gold, sleep out the blizzard
Like hieratic stones, and the ground is hard.
It was good for twenty years, that wintering--
As if you never existed, as if I came
God-fathered into the world from my mother's belly:
Her wide bed wore the stain of divinity.
I had nothing to do with guilt or anything
When I wormed back under my mother's heart.*

*Small as a doll in my dress of innocence
I lay dreaming your epic, image by image.
Nobody died or withered on that stage.
Everything took place in a durable whiteness.
The day I woke, I woke on Churchyard Hill.
I found your name, I found your bones and all
Enlisted in a cramped necropolis,
Your speckled stone askew by an iron fence.*

*In this charity ward, this poorhouse, where the dead
Crowd foot to foot, head to head, no flower
Breaks the soil. This is Azalea Path.
A field of burdock opens to the south.
Six feet of yellow gravel cover you.
The artificial red sage does not stir
In the basket of plastic evergreens they put
At the headstone next to yours, nor does it rot,
Although the rains dissolve a bloody dye:
The ersatz petals drip, and they drip red.*

*Another kind of redness bothers me:
The day your slack sail drank my sister's breath
The flat sea purpled like that evil cloth
My mother unrolled at your last homecoming.
I borrow the stilts of an old tragedy.
The truth is, one late October, at my birth-cry
A scorpion stung its head, an ill-starred thing;
My mother dreamed you face down in the sea.*

*The stony actors poise and pause for breath.
I brought my love to bear, and then you died.
It was the gangrene ate you to the bone
My mother said; you died like any man.
How shall I age into that state of mind?
I am the ghost of an infamous suicide,
My own blue razor rusting in my throat.
O pardon the one who knocks for pardon at
Your gate, father—your hound-bitch, daughter, friend.
It was my love that did us both to death.*

2. Every nine years nine men enter the house so that I may deliver them from evil. I hear their steps or their voices in the depths of the stone galleries and I run joyfully to find them. The ceremony lasts a few minutes. They fall one after another without my having to bloody my hands. They remain where they fell and their bodies help distinguish one gallery from another. I do not know who they are, but I know that one of them prophesied, at the moment of his death, that some day my redeemer would come. Since then my loneliness does not pain me, because I know my redeemer lives and he will finally rise above the dust. If my ear could capture all the sounds of the world, I should hear his steps. I hope he will take me to a place with fewer galleries fewer doors. What will my redeemer be like? I ask myself. Will he be a bull or a man? Will he perhaps be a bull with the face of a man? Or will he be like me?

*3. Girls, I was dead and down
in the Underworld, a shade,
a shadow of my former self, nowhen.
It was a place where language stopped,
a black full-stop, a black hole
where words had to come to an end
And end they did there,
last words,
famous or not.
It suited me down to the ground.
So imagine me there,
Unavailable,
out of this world
then picture my face in that place
of Eternal Repose,
in the one place you'd think a girl would be safe
from the kind of man
who follows her round
writing poems
hovers about
while she reads them,
calls her his Muse,
and once sulked for a night and a day
because she remarked on his weakness for abstract nouns;*

just picture my face
when I heard –
Ye Gods –
a familiar knock-knock-knock at Death's door.
Him.
Big O.
Larger than life.
With his lyre
and a poem to read with me as the prize.
Things were different back then.
For the men, verse-wise,
Big O. was the boy.
Legendary. The blurb
on the back of his books claimed
that animals, aardvark to Zebra
flocked to his side when he sang,
fish leapt from their waves
at the sound of his voice,
even the mute, sullen stones at his feet
wept wee silver tears.
Bollocks. Furthermore,
we've all, let's be honest,
been bored half to death by a man
who fucks like he's writing a book.
And, given my time all over again,
I know that I'd rather write for myself
than be dearest, beloved, dark lady, white goddess, etc. etc.
In fact, girls, I'd rather be dead.
But the Gods are like publishers –
usually male –
and what you doubtless know of my tale
is the deal.
Orpheus strutted his stuff.
The bloodless ghosts were in tears.
Sisyphus sat on his rock for the first time in years.
Tantalus was permitted a couple of beers.
The woman in question could scarcely believe her ears.
Like it or not,
I must follow him back to our life –
Eurydice, Orpheus' wife –
to be trapped in his images, metaphors, similes,
octaves and sextets, quatrains and couplets,
elegies, limericks, villenelles,
histories, myths ...
He'd been told that he mustn't look back
or turn round,
but walk steadily upwards,
myself right behind him,

out of the Underworld
 into the upper air that for me was the past.
 He'd been warned
 that one look would lose me
 for ever and ever.
 So onwards we walked.
 Nobody talked.
 Girls, forget what you've red,
 it happened like this –
 I did everything in my power
 to make him look back.
 What did I have to do, I said,
 to make him see we were through?
 I was dead Deceased.
 I was Resting in Peace. Passé.
 Late. Past my sell-by-date –
 and here I stretched out my hand
 and touched him once
 on the back of the neck –
 Please let me stay.
 But already the light had saddened from purple to grey.
 It was an uphill schlep
 from death to life
 and with every step
 I willed him to turn.
 I'd managed to filch the poem
 out of his cloak
 when inspiration finally struck.
 I stopped, thrilled.
 He was a yard in front. My voice shook when I spoke –
 Orpheus, your poem's a masterpiece.
 I'd love to hear it again.
 He was smiling modestly
 when he turned
 when he turned and looked at me.
 What else?
 I noticed he hadn't shaved.
 I waved once and was gone.
 The dead are so talented.
 The living walk by the edge of a vast lake
 near the wise, drowned silence of the dead

4. A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
 Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
 By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
 He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push

*The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
And how can body, laid in that white rush,
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?*

*A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.*

*Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?*

*5. It wasn't that she didn't recognise him in the light from the
hearth; it wasn't
the beggar's rags, the disguise – no. The signs were clear:
the scar on his knee, the pluck, the cunning in his eye. Frightened,
her back against the wall, she searched for an excuse,
a little time, so she wouldn't have to answer,
give herself away. Was it for him, then, that she'd used up twenty
years,
twenty years of waiting and dreaming, for this miserable
blood-soaked, white-bearded man? She collapsed voiceless into a
chair,
slowly studied the slaughtered suitors on the floor as though
seeing
her own desires dead there. And she said "Welcome,"
hearing her voice sound foreign, distant. In the corner, her loom
covered the ceiling with a trellis of shadows; and all the birds
she'd woven
with bright red thread in green foliage, now,
on this night of the return, suddenly turned ashen and black,
flying low on the flat sky of her final ending.*

*6. A suspicion, a doubt, a jealousy
grew in my mind,
which turned the hairs on my head to filthy snakes
as though my thoughts
hissed and spat on my scalp.
My bride's breath soured, stank
in the grey bags of my lungs.
I'm foul mouthed now, foul tongued,
yellow fanged.
There are bullet tears in my eyes.
Are you terrified?
Be terrified.
It's you I love,*

Landscape with the Fall of Icarus William Carlos Williams

*3. According to Brueghel
when Icarus fell
it was spring
a farmer was ploughing
his field
the whole pageantry*

*of the year was
awake tingling
near*

*the edge of the sea
concerned
with itself*

*sweating in the sun
that melted
the wings' wax*

*unsignificantly
off the coast
there was*

*a splash quite unnoticed
it was
Icarus drowning.
Carol Ann Duffy*

Mrs Icarus

*4. I'm not the first or the last
to stand on a hillock
watching the man she married
prove to the world
he's a total, utter, absolute, Grade A pillock*

Orpheus and Eurydice

ORPHEUS (1) Margaret Atwood

*1. You walked in front of me,
pulling me back out*

*to the green light that had once
grown fangs and killed me.*

*I was obedient, but
numb, like an arm
gone to sleep; the return
to time was not my choice.*

*By then I was used to silence.
Though something stretched between us
like a whisper, like a rope:
my former name,
drawn tight.
You had your old leash
with you, love you might call it,
and your flesh voice.
Before your eyes you held steady
the image of what you wanted
me to become: living again.
It was this hope of yours that kept me following.*

*I was your hallucination, listening
and floral, you were singing me:
already new skin was forming on me
within the luminous misty shroud
of my other body; already
there was dirt on my hands and I was thirsty.*

*I could see only the outline
of your head and shoulders,
black against the cave mouth,
and so could not see your face
at all, when you turned
and called to me because you had
already lost me. The last
I saw of you was a dark oval.
Though I knew how this failure
would hurt you, I had to
fold like a gray moth and let go.*

You could not believe I was more than your echo.

EURYDICE Margaret Atwood

2. *He is here, come down to look for you.
It is the song that calls you back,
a song of joy and suffering
equally: a promise:*

*that things will be different up there
than they were last time.*

*You would rather have gone on feeling nothing,
emptiness and silence; the stagnant peace
of the deepest sea, which is easier
than the noise and flesh of the surface.*

*You are used to these blanched dim corridors,
you are used to the king
who passes you without speaking.*

*The other one is different
and you almost remember him.
He says he is singing to you
because he loves you,*

*not as you are now,
so chilled and minimal: moving and still
both, like a white curtain blowing
in the draft from a half-opened window
beside a chair on which nobody sits.*

*He wants you to be what he calls real.
He wants you to stop light.
He wants to feel himself thickening
like a tree trunk or a haunch
and see blood on his eyelids
when he closes them, and the sun is beating.*

*This love of his is not something
he can do if you aren't there,
but what you knew suddenly as you left your body
cooling and whitening on the lawn*

*was that you love him anywhere
even in this land of no memory,
even in this domain of hunger.
You hold love in your hand, a red seed
you had forgotten you were holding.*

*He has come almost too far.
He cannot believe without seeing,
and it's dark here.
Go back, you whisper,*

*but he wants to be fed again
by you. O handful of gauze, little*

*bandage, handful of cold
air, it is not through him
you will get your freedom.*

ORPHEUS (2) Margaret Atwood

3. *Whether he will go on singing
or not, knowing what he knows
of the horror of this world:*

*He was no wandering among meadows
all this time. He was down there
among the mouthless ones, among
those with no fingers, those
whose names are forbidden,
those washed up eaten into
among the gray stones
of the shore where nobody goes
through fear. Those with silence.*

*He has been trying to sing
love into existence again
and he has failed.*

*Yet he will continue
to sing, in the stadium
crowded with the already dead
who raise their eyeless faces
to listen to him; while the red flowers
grow up and splatter open
against the walls.*

*They have cut off both his hands
and soon they will tear
his head from his body in one burst
of furious refusal.
He foresees this. Yet he will go on
singing, and in praise.
To sing is either praise
Or defiance. Praise is defiance.*

