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The poet and the underworld: metaliterary katabasis in Eavan Boland's 'The Journey', Derek Walcott's Omeros, and Gloria Naylor's Linden Hills

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Stellingen behorend bij het proefschrift *The Poet and the Underworld: Metaliterary Katabasis in Eavan Boland's 'The Journey', Derek Walcott's Omeros, and Gloria Naylor's Linden Hills*

1. In her poetry, Eavan Boland transformed the interest in everyday life known from Hellenistic poetry, the poetry of Catullus, and Ovid's *Tristia* into a feminist tool.
2. In her glimpses of the underworld, Eavan Boland tried to gain access to the unregistered lives of the women of the Irish past. In 'sexualizing' the male heroes of Irish history, she similarly tried to gain access to the humanity within the unregistered past of these men.
3. Hermes Trismegistus, the Egyptian scribe and mystic, is a mercurial metaliterary character. While in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, he is mocked as a moralist arch-poet on a pair of ibis legs, and while in Derek Walcott's *White Egrets* he is the Caribbean egret, with its beak rendering the poet's hand dipping in the inkwell, in Gloria Naylor's *Linden Hills* he is a winged, fallen angel, creating a new society in union with the poet.
4. There is a significant difference in discomfort between katabasis and *nekyia*. While Gloria Naylor preferred katabasis to convey her distressful message, and Eavan Boland foregrounded the regret at her failed katabasis, Derek Walcott preferred the comfort of the *nekyia* among the living instead.
5. In her essay *Je keek te ver (You were looking too far)* Marjoleine de Vos, in reference to Proust, suggests that art is resurrected each time it is noticed by a fresh pair of eyes. Similarly, ancient literary motifs are resurrected when they are appropriated, and again, when this appropriation is noticed by a new readership.
6. When studying Euripides' *Medea*, classical scholars need to be aware of their present-day filters and biases, and, if possible, remove them. When studying contemporary receptions of *Medea*, filters and biases relating to, in particular, present-day notions of women's and children's rights, are part of the very subject that is being studied.
7. The patriarchal literary tradition that for so long excluded women from the literary underworld, has implicitly appropriated —primarily feminine— textile work, such as spinning, weaving, and embroidering, as a metaphor for the composition of poetry and for poetry itself.
8. The relevance of the underworld descent as a metaphor for human experience and suffering is expressed by the fact that Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner* (1798), which can be interpreted as a katabasis, has been an essential part of the Waldorf School curriculum to this very day.
9. The growing interest in classical receptions may help the discipline of classics to become more diverse and inclusive, and therefore deserves our full attention, not only in academic research but also in secondary and higher education.
10. The contribution to personality development that is expressly required from the Dutch system of secondary education, has been seriously weakened by the reduced role of literature in its curriculum due to the implementation of the so-called Tweede Fase from 1998 onwards.
11. The Corona virus pandemic solicits fresh usage of the motifs of katabasis and exile in contemporary literature.
12. Most PhD candidates dream of having an impact on their areas of study. However, Derek Walcott's, Gloria Naylor's, and Eavan Boland's early departures to their respective underworlds in the course of this project had not been anticipated nor intended.