TRANSITIONS SEMINAR NEWSLETTER 6

January 2023

Bimonthly, edited by M. Aguirre (for now)

The *Transitions Seminar* is a permanent initiative set up in 2019 by the LIMEN Research Group. It convenes approximately on a monthly basis, online since 2020. It provides a forum for debate on liminality and related issues, and a research-training ground for PhD candidates, as well as functioning as a venue for the current *Transitions Project*. It is linked to The Gateway Press and the websites *LIMEN & TEXT*, *The Northanger Library*, and *The Janus Gate Project*.

http://www.limenandtext.com/rst.html
http://www.limenandtext.com/index.html
https://northangerlibrary.com/
http://janusgateliterature.com/

COMING EVENTS

Our next **online** session will take place on Wednesday 22 February at 10 a.m. via Zoom. Our guest speaker will be

Belén Piqueras

lecturer in North-American Literature at the UAM,

with a talk entitled

"Liminality and Potentiality in Postmodernist Narrative"

Abstract

The OULIPO Group (their acronym meaning in French Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle") was founded in 1960 in Paris by the writer Raymond Queneau and the mathematician Francois Le Lionnais with the intention of exploring the semantic potential of a literary text. For them, the ideal text was not to be understood as a fixed, static and impenetrable artifact, but rather it should invoke multiple readings, incorporating within itself a number of thematic and formal variations that would greatly expand its signifying capacity. Either by the application of lexical constraints or of mathematical rules, one text can be for them many texts, every work thus becoming an actual literary "machine". Successive incorporations to the group included writers like Walter Abish or Italo Calvino, who, like many other postmodernist authors, produced works with the intention of transcending the rigid confines of narrative conventions. Some of Robert Coover's short stories, Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* or Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* are multi-layered texts, works that present different versions of themselves, configuring a vast semantic field of possibilities where no outcome is pre-defined. The narrative is never fully completed, and the reader is confronted with a liminal experience where the text is always in a process of becoming, never fully being, always suggesting what it could get to be.

As usual, you will all receive a Zoom link one or two days before this event. There will be ample time for questions and debate after the talk. Everyone is welcome.

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RECENT EVENTS

For our second online session (14 December), Ineke Jolink read a paper entitled 'Between Empathy and Apathy: Liminality and the New Diasporic Space of "Transnationality"'. Her talk is now available on video at http://www.limenandtext.com/rst_online%20videos.html, and her own revised version is scheduled to appear in *The TRELLIS Papers*.

NEW PUBLICATIONS by members of the LIMEN Research Group

- **Ineke Jolink**
  'Between Empathy and Apathy: Liminality and the New Diasporic Space of "Transnationality"'
  Forthcoming as nº 11 in *The TRELLIS Papers*.

- **Manuel Aguirre**
  'A Typology of Transitions'
  Forthcoming as nº 12 in *The TRELLIS Papers.*

Now and then, some of us publish papers with a bearing on liminality in literature and/or text. Circulating these among the group may be a useful practice. The following published paper by Ineke Jolink has been received in galley proofs format, and ties in with her talk last December. The author will welcome comments from the group. Copy of the paper is enclosed in the message that accompanies this Newsletter:

- **Ineke Bockting (née Jolink)**
  'Religious Fervor and the Cognitive Linguistics of the Small-Clause'.
  A French version appeared as 'Ferveur religieuse et approche cognitive de la proposition réduite,' in *Mélanges de science religieuse* n° 1, janvier 2013 (Catholic University of Lille, France), pp. 45-56; English versions of it were read at conferences in Vancouver (2012) and Tromsø, Norway (2014).

OTHER PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

- **Bjørn Thomassen**
  'The Uses and Meanings of Liminality'.
  International Political Anthropology 2:1 (2009), 5–27.
  (*Bjorn Thomassen - The Uses and Meanings of Liminality.pdf)
  A useful historical survey of the concept of liminality and of its applications beyond anthropology. Aside from commenting very generally on postmodernism, however, it makes no reference to literature.

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PROJECT MATTERS

During the on-site meeting of the LIMEN Group (11 January 2023) it was proposed to tighten the project around the notions of Crises and Transitions. It was also agreed that, between now and January 2024, work will proceed as follows:

1. The **Transitions Seminar** retains its present format (online, bimonthly). Our next online meeting will take place on 22 February 2023 (see COMING EVENTS above).
2. Beginning in February 2023 (date to be decided), a monthly, on-site workshop for members of the LIMEN Group will be set up to present short papers and ideas towards updating the project (see THE TS WORKSHOP below).
3. Revised versions of these will be read at a special conference to be held in November.
4. Some of the results of this conference could be published by The Gateway Press as a volume in the *SLL* series.
5. Building on the results of workshop and conference, we will streamline the project with a view to applying for grant funds in January 2024.
6. In February/March 2024, hopefully with some funding, a new encounter of the ***Postgraduate Seminar in Liminality Studies—PS[L]S 5***—will be set up, either on-site or in a hybrid format. We are grateful to our newest members, Verónica Frejo and Carlos Velasco, for volunteering to help with the organisation.

THE TS WORKSHOP

As regards this new initiative (point 2), the first session of the TS Workshop (February; date and time to be decided) will tackle the title proposed for the next grant application—**'From Crises to Transitions'**—and will seek answers to the following questions:

a) Can we define 'crisis' so as not to reduce it to notions of drama and conflict?
b) What connects crises and transitions? Must the first always precede the second?
c) What connects these and liminality?
d) How do these notions connect with the research each one of us is involved in?

Participants are invited to deliver short papers and position statements on these issues.

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