Translating 'fantoom':
Cognitive stylistics and Lucebert's liminal poetics

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17 February 2021

A Thesis Submitted to
the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics, Faculty of Humanities,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Linguistics
Translation in Theory and Practice (Dutch/English)

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Introduction

> Man's "imaginative" and "emotional" life is always and everywhere rich and complex. Just how rich and complex the symbolism of tribal ritual can be, it will be part of my task to show. Nor is it entirely accurate to speak of the "structure of a mind different from our own." It is not a matter of different cognitive structures, but of an identical cognitive structure articulating wide diversities of cultural experience.
>
> (Turner 1969: 3)

Recent developments in Translation Studies have placed the relationship between cognition and style at the center of discussions about translating poetry. Style is important, because the meaning of poetry arises not just through its propositional content, but also through indirect forms of meaning-making, e.g. various types of linguistic patterning and non-literal imagery (Jones 2010: 117). The importance of style means that poetry requires direct translation, where it is important to convey not only what was said, but crucially, *how* it was said (Boase-Beier 2004: 277). Cognition comes into focus when we ask how this *how* can be achieved in translation between different languages and cultures. The answer to this is that literary style is reflective of a mind—to be specific, it is the result of stylistic choices initiated by a mind behind the text (Boase-Beier 2014: 79). In turn, literary style interacts with the mind of the reader and sets in motion a variety of mental changes and operations which can be apprehended through the framework of cognitive stylistics. The general idea is that cognitive stylistics articulates what human beings have in common, but can also make commensurable where we differ (Boase-Beier 2014: 54). This approach thus puts into focus the relationship between the universal and the particular in literary communication. Understanding how style and cognition are related can therefore aid in navigating the difficulties and choices involved with translating poems.

There are still many areas of interest related to translation open to investigation from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. This study will look at the difficulties involved in the translation of a specific poem, whose subject matter invites exploration of one of those areas of interest. The poem is titled 'fantoom', written by the Dutch artist and poet Lucebert. Like many of his poems, 'fantoom' is highly ambiguous and open to interpretation. However, the following phrase provides a clue to its meaning: "*ja meer dan een schaduw / maar toch minder dan lichaam*" [yes more than a shadow / but still less than body] (4-5) . The phrase calls to mind the concept of liminality, which has so far received little attention in Translation Studies. The concept originates from the field of anthropology, and was popularized by British social anthropologist Victor Turner in describing the *rites de passages* of the Ndembu people of Zambia (Turner 1969). The word 'liminality' is derived from the Latin *limen*, meaning 'threshold', and originally referred to the in-between transitory phase in rituals of

social transition. In this phase, the individual undergoing the transition has relinquished his old identity, but has not yet assumed a new identity. The ambiguous meaning of this phase can be difficult to capture through the vocabulary of either viewpoints, precisely because it does not neatly fit into more stable categories.

The concept of liminality may be the key to understanding Lucebert's poem. It is also of theoretical interest to both cognitive stylistics and Translation Studies. To begin with, translation itself can be understood as a liminal process, as it involves the transition between different languages and cultures. However, my primary aim is not to understand translation through the concept of liminality, but rather the other way around: to think about the liminal as an object for translation. This is relevant to translators working with many types of literature. As Turner writes, the liminal is a universal social and cultural phenomenon, and many forms of art and literature explicitly reflect on or represent liminal experiences (Turner 1969: 3). By definition, the liminal is not bound to any particular language or culture, as it refers to moments of inbetweenness common to all languages and cultures. Thus, when interpreting and translating many cultural expressions and artworks, the theory of liminality can provide a useful frame of reference. The universality of the liminal is also of relevance to the discipline of cognitive linguistics, as its universality necessarily also refers to the universality of certain cognitive states or processes.

In order to tease out the significance of the concept of liminality, I will construct a cognitive-stylistic understanding of liminality in literature, and then use this framework to translate the poem 'fantoom' into English. This poem, I argue, can be read as an attempt at describing or understanding a liminal figure, the titular *fantoom* [phantom]. The poem achieves this through what I call 'liminal poetics'. I give an account of what the relevant stylistic features are of Lucebert's liminal poetics, and then formulate a proposal for how these stylistic features can be translated. Throughout this investigation, I work towards answering the following research question:

> How can a translator utilize the analytical and conceptual resources of cognitive stylistics to translate the liminal poetics of Lucebert's 'fantoom' into English?

This thesis is divided into five chapters. In chapter 1, I briefly outline what difficulties a translator might face in translating poetry, and how cognitive stylistics can aid translation. In chapter 2 and chapter 3, I give a brief overview of the origin and development of the concept of liminality and its application in characterizing certain types literature. In chapter 4, I will translate the general description of liminality and liminal literature into the vocabulary of cognitive linguistics.

In chapter 5, I present a stylistic analysis and translation of Lucebert's 'fantoom' based on the theoretical and methodological framework outlined in the previous chapters. Drawing on the work of Dutch literary historian Jan Oegema, I situate the poem's particular

instantiation of liminality in relation to the liminality of Lucebert's work and style in general. Most importantly, I focus on how the poem's particular stylistic features contribute to the poem's manifestation of a liminal figure. As such, chapter 5 functions as an exemplification and proof of concept of a cognitive-stylistic approach to the liminal in literature.

Chapter 1
Literary translation
and cognitive stylistics

1.1 Translation

A common trope in the discussion of literary translation is that it is very difficult if not impossible to do, especially when talking about the translation of poetry. Depending on who you ask, different reasons are given for why this is so. In this chapter, I aim to outline a cognitive-stylistic account of the reasons and solutions for the difficulty of literary translation.

To begin with, what even is translation? Roughly speaking, there are two paradigms of thought about the nature of translation. Raquel de Pedro calls them the universal point of view and the monadic point of view (de Pedro 1999: 546). Common to both paradigms is the presupposition that 'translation proper'—to use Roman Jakobson's term for translation between languages (Jakobson 2012: 127)—is a particular instance of general translational processes which are implicit in all communication. But the paradigms have different accounts of how language in general works. In the universal point of view, it is assumed that there are linguistic universals which make it possible for different languages to convey the same 'thing', however it may be defined. In the monadic point of view, on the other hand, language and the 'thing' that language operates on form a monad—a unity such that a 'thing' articulated in one language cannot be reproduced in another. The first point of view means that translation is in principle possible, while the second point of view means that translation —defined as the transfer or reproduction of meaning—may not in principle be possible (de Pedro 1999: 546).

One way to conceptualize linguistic universals is in terms of cognition. For example, Roman Jakobson speaks of the notion of "cognitive data", which is by definition translatable: "Any assumption of ineffable or untranslatable cognitive data would be a contradiction in terms" (Jakobson 2012: 129). The concept of cognitive data is the foundation for the possibility of achieving "equivalence in difference" (Jakobson 2012: 127), meaning that all "cognitive data" is in principle conveyable in any language (Jakobson 2012: 128). But one can also take the opposite view about the nature of cognition. German Romanticist philosophers, such as Johan Gottfried Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt, believed that language plays an integral role in the formation of thoughts: thinking necessarily comes into being against the background of a human community and culture, and is thus inextricably intertwined with the 'form of life' with which it has a mutually constitutive relationship (Taylor 2016: 93). This intertwinement between language, thought and human community gives rise to different degrees and forms of linguistic relativism, i.e. incommensurability between languages and cultures (de Pedro 1999: 548).

The different paradigms boil down to vastly different accounts of language and translation, and the role that language plays in human life. It is not my intention to participate in this debate. My approach to translation theory is instead wholly pragmatic. I am not so much interested in the metaphysical and existential aspects of translation theory, but moreso in translation theory as a problem-solving tool. The different conceptual frameworks articulate different accounts of the difficulties of translation, and provide different vocabularies for perceiving, talking about, and solving those difficulties. In choosing one conceptual framework over the other, I follow a suggestion given by philosopher Richard Rorty, when he speaks of a pragmatic approach to the goals of scientific inquiry:

> The purpose of inquiry is to achieve agreement among human beings about what to do, to bring about consensus on the ends to be achieved and the means to be used to achieve those ends. Inquiry that does not achieve coordination of behaviour is not inquiry but simply wordplay. (Rorty 1999: e-book)

This is to say that scientific inquiry is a social activity, and that the merits of one vocabulary over another lie in how successful it is in bringing about agreement about ends and goals as well as the means to attain them. For stylistics, Paul Simpson articulated a number of criteria that may contribute to achieving this social end. They are the "three Rs" (Simpson 2004: 4) of stylistics, namely:

- Rigor, which stipulates that stylistic analysis should follow a structured model of language and discourse that explains how language works.
- Retrievability, which stipulates that stylistic analysis should be articulated in explicit terms and criteria, the meaning of which is agreed upon by other stylisticians.
- Replicability, which stipulates that the methodology should be transparent such that they can be applied again on the same text, or applied on other texts.

Over the course of this thesis, I hope to outline a cognitive-stylistic approach to liminality in literature which satisfies above criteria for "coordination of behaviour". In particular, I will articulate it in what I consider to be a 'universalist' vocabulary, namely Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory (Sperber et al. 1995). The primary cognitive mechanism in this theory is not decoding or encoding (which suggest that messages contain their meanings or intentions) —but inference, where messages get their meaning through a process of "producing and interpreting evidence" (Sperber et al. 1995: 2). This process is guided by the striving for optimal relevance, which is thought to be a basic and universal principle of human cognition (Lycan 2008: 166).

1.2 Literary language

If cognitive stylistics is to be a framework for approaching translation problems: What are then the specific problems that literary texts pose to translators? Many theorists believe that literary language poses unique challenges not found in ordinary uses of language. Within this domain, poetry is thought to be the most demanding of all forms of literature. For instance, David Connolly writes that poetry represents writing in its most intense and condensed form (Connolly 1998: 171). Thus, any translation difficulties which appear in, for example, highly stylized prose fiction, will appear in poetry in a greater concentration. These difficulties have to do with the fact that the meaning of poetry resides not just in its propositional content or surface semantics, but also in its stylistic features (Jones 2010: 117). Additionally, poetry often exhibits a high density of stylistic features, all of which have a part in a complex play of meaning-making, the outcome of which is not always clear to the reader. The poem may be open to interpretation, making it a challenge to get a handle on what to focus on in translation.

The intertwinement of form and content resembles a local form of monadism, which ostensibly makes translation more difficult if not impossible. For example, while Jakobson holds that translation in general is possible, the translation of poetry in particular is by definition impossible (Jakobson 2012: 131). The possibility of 'equivalence in difference' depends on the assumption that paraphrase does not essentially impact the meaning of a message. This is the case for 'ordinary' forms of communication. However, poetry is special in that it is the form in which the 'poetic function' (the focus on the message for its own sake) is most dominant (Jakobson 1982: 25). This means that in poetry the selection and sequencing of words and sentences is determined not by relations of semantic equivalence, but by relations of contiguity: "The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination" (Jakobson 1982: 27). A similar thing is suggested by Nida and Taber, when they remark: "Anything that can be said in one language can be said in another, unless the form is an essential element of the message" (Nida et al. qtd. in de Pedro 1999: 552).

In practice, poetic texts are characterized by a number of textual features which distinguish it from ordinary texts. The many possible features are too many to count, but include things like linguistic patterning, word association, wordplay, non-literal imagery, and ambiguity (Jones 2010: 117). The reader is drawn towards these features through the process of foregrounding, which is thought to be a universal stylistic characteristic of literature (Boase-Beier 2014: 14). The effect of foregrounding is that it imparts salience or prominence on particular aspects or parts of the text (Boase-Beier 2014: 90). What is also important is that certain kinds of foregrounding have the effect of what the Russian Formalists called *ostranenie,* i.e. defamiliarization or de-automatization (Boase-Beier 2014: 14). This literary effect is related not to *what* is represented in the poem, but rather *how* it is represented. The

manner of representation is such that it effects a new way of seeing things for the reader. Viktor Shklovsky, commenting on Tolstoy, articulates it as follows :

> Tolstoy's device of *ostranenie* consists in not calling a thing or event by its name but describing it as if seen for the first time, as if happening for the first time. While doing so, he also avoids calling parts of this thing by their usual appellations [...]. (Shklovsky 2017: e-book)

Together, the two characteristics of foregrounding and defamiliarization form the essence of literary texts. They have the effect of drawing the reader's attention and placing prominence on certain aspects or parts of the text over others (Boase-Beier 2014: 90). They also have the effect of changing how the reader perceives and understands the things represented by the text. Crucially, as suggested by Shklovsky, the style of a text plays an important role in bringing about these effects. Style constitutes a particular way of representing things in language, and non-conventional manners of representation (i.e. "avoiding calling parts [...] by their usual appellations") result in non-conventional manners of perception in the reader.

Defamiliarization and other literary-critical concepts

The concept of defamiliarization is semantically and etymologically related to other well-known literary-critical concepts. Alexandra Berlina, for instance, touches on the concept's closeness to Novalis' concept of *Befremdung* and the Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt* (Berlina 2017; e-book). The Romantic notion has the effect of awakening in the reader a sensuous awareness of the beauty of the world. The Brechtian notion (operative in the performing arts) has to do with emotionally distancing an audience from the characters on the stage, with the aim of prompting an intellectual understanding of the narrative. Shklovsky's concept differs from both of these concepts in important ways: Unlike the Romantics, Shklovsky believed that art brings us closer to both the world's beauty and horror; and, unlike Brecht, Shklovsky saw no contradiction between emotion and intellect, treating them as being closely related (Berlina 2017; e-book). As such, *ostranenie* assumes a very broad conception of the nature of cognition through art. It refers to both emotional and intellectual processes, as well as both pleasant and unpleasant affective responses.

Also related is Friedrich Schleiermacher's concept of the Foreign (*das Fremde*), which refers to the incommensurable distance that exists between one's own linguistic-cultural context and one that is other to it. The concept plays a key role in hermeneutic approaches to translation (Thomas 2020: 136). I mention it here because it touches upon another important aspect of literary works. Schleiermacher believed that translation is about balancing between the different interpretative demands posed by the foreign and the domestic: either one moves the reader to the (foreign) writer, or one moves the writer to the (domestic) reader (Schleiermacher 2012: 49). On his account, this balancing act should favor capturing the spirit of the foreign (i.e. to have "*Achtung für das Fremde*"), so that the

encounter with it can contribute to the enrichment and development of the national culture (qtd. in Thomas 2020: 136). Literary artifacts play a special role in this process of cultural enrichment, because the individuality of a language is most pronounced in works of art (and also of science). It is where, to quote Schleiermacher, "the author's free individual combinatory faculties [...] and the spirit of the language along with the entire system of views and sentiments in all their shadings [...] count for everything" (Schleiermacher 2012: 45).

The idea that a literary work embodies something unique about a language speaks in favor of the difficulty of translating literary language. However, my contention is that this difficulty can be understood in terms of the more general difficulties of literary language I outlined above. The reason for this is that all these concepts (*ostranenie, Befremdung, Verfremdungseffekt, das Fremde)* form a family of literary-critical concepts which have some common features. They refer to similar cognitive processes, in that they confront the reader with new ways of looking at things. Additionally, the cognitive processes are prompted by a common source, namely the complex relationship between form and content that exists in a literary work. This relationship can be apprehended through a cognitive notion of style.

1.3 Cognitive stylistics

The concept of mind style is key to integrating the various aspects of literary texts mentioned above into a coherent framework for stylistic analysis. An important assumption is that the text in some form or another is the reflection or product of an intentional being, a 'mind', who makes choices about what to say and how to say it (Boase-Beier 2012: 50, 75). But these terms—'mind' and 'choice'—should be regarded in a minimally committal manner. They relate to roughly two interrelated things:

- The notion that we are dealing with intentional beings of some kind, such as authors, narrators or characters within narratives. As Boase-Beier writes: "to deny intention would be to interpret artistic signs as being on a level with natural ones or traces left by animals" (Boase-Beier: 2014: 34). This minimal assumption of intention can refer to an individual's conscious authorial intention, but may also refer to various sociocultural and historical influences which can play a role in a text's formation unconsciously.
- The notion that style is contingent, and therefore significant. Whatever is said in a text could potentially have been said in another way, but this other way of saying things would have reflected a different 'mind' or different way of cognizing (Boase-Beier 2012: 53). The terms 'mind' and 'choice' thus reflect the assumption that stylistic differences are not arbitrary, but have mental causes of some kind. For that reason they are significant to how texts come have meaning.

Relevance Theory

The concept of mind style suggests that reading a literary text gives access to a cognitive state —consisting of intentions, world views, knowledge (Boase-Beier 2004: 285; Boase-Beier 2014: 19). However, this should not be taken literally. Instead, Boase-Beier observes that gaining access to a cognitive state is a process of the reader making assumptions about the text, and that having knowledge of the author's intention is, following Lecercle, a "necessary illusion" (qtd. in Boase-Beier 2014: 34). How this process of making assumptions works is explained by Relevance Theory (originally by Sperber and Wilson 1995). In the following, I follow Boase-Beier's application of Relevance Theory to literary translation, as formulated in her 2004 article "Saying what someone else meant: style, relevance and translation". In short, Relevance Theory organizes the plausibility of communicative inferences based on the principle of optimal relevance (Boase-Beier 2004: 276). The principle of optimal relevance states that speakers and hearers continually strive towards a favorable balance between cognitive improvement and the amount of time and effort expended to achieve that improvement (Lycan 2008: 166).

An example of one such cognitive improvement is the "acquisition of a true and useful belief" (Lycan 2008: 166). But how does this apply to poetry and literature, which do not seem to be aimed at conveying truth directly? The principle of relevance suggests that what we are dealing with in poetic texts is not the communication of truths in the propositional sense, but rather the communication of cognitive states, which consists of, among other things, attitudes, intentions, world views and knowledge bases (Boase-Beier 2004: 280). If the speaker's intention was to convey only propositional meaning, a poetic text would not display the many stylistic features it has. These features make parsing the message not only more difficult, but may also make the text ambiguous in meaning. However, these 'problematic' features must be relevant, for otherwise they would have been eliminated in order to increase the efficiency of information transfer. The reader therefore infers that whatever the communicative intention of the text, it could only be realized through the text's stylistic qualities. On Boase-Beier's view, the conventional priority of content and style (insofar as they can be separated) is actually reversed in literary texts. Style is usually a means of conveying propositional content, and therefore subject to optimization. In literary texts however, it is propositional content which provides the context for stylistic elaboration, and it therefore is subordinate to style (Boase-Beier 2004: 282).

Relevance Theory thus situates style in a general account of language cognition and shows that style is not at all superfluous, but rather essential to the communication of things which cannot be conveyed directly. Style achieves this by giving rise to what Sperber and Wilson call 'weak implicatures'. These form the basis of the interpretative mechanisms by which mind style gives access to a mind. To explain: Implicatures are inferences made about the meaning of an utterance which do not follow directly from the logical form of the utterances and their 'explicatures'. Strong implicatures are those which the hearer *must*

supply in order to make the utterance comply with the principle of relevance. Weak implicatures are those which the hearer *may* supply, and they can be one of many possibilities (Sperber et al. 1995: 1999). The encounter with a text's style leads the reader to reconstruct the cognitive state of an inferred author, narrator or character on the basis of such weak implicatures (Boase-Beier 2008: 280) . As such, weak implicatures function as building blocks in the process of interpreting poetic texts. Their relative weakness is a function of the amount of work a reader must put in to give them meaning. Weak implicatures are indeterminate, and depend on a complex interaction of the reader's knowledge, literary convention, and the communicative situation. The open-ended meaning of literary texts is a result of the highly contingent nature of this interaction (Boase-Beier 2004: 280).

Part of this interaction are various cognitive phenomena outlined above, such as foregrounding, defamiliarization. Boase-Beier understands foregrounding as providing communicative clues, which guide the reader to salient configurations of style which may provide a cognitive gain to the reader (Boase-Beier 2014: 41). The specific way in which these stylistic configurations articulate objects and events forces the reader to reconstruct how the inferred cognizer sees those objects and events, effectively making them see those items in a new light. Part of this reconstructed cognitive state may be the quality of vagueness or uncertainty, manifested through textual features which give rise to multiple, equally plausible weak implicatures. Of interest here is Boase-Beier's remark about the nature of the cognitive gains facilitated by poetic texts (Boase-Beier 2004: 279). She identifies a special type of cognitive gain she calls 'poetic effects'. These manifest not only increased knowledge in the reader, but also manifest particular affective states. This sounds very similar to Shklovsky's integrated concept of *ostranenie*, by which both intellectual and emotional effects are part of the experience of defamiliarization.

Translation

The utility of Relevance Theory to translation is that it gives a set of tools for speaking about translation problems. Boase-Beier here invokes the distinction between direct and indirect translation (originally Gutt 2000). Direct translation involves maintaining both the propositional content as well as the style of the original utterance; while indirect translation is aimed at conveying only the propositional content (Boase-Beier 2004: 277). In effect, indirect translation is a form of paraphrase across languages. It has the effect of radically changing the inferred intention of the message, because it optimizes the text for the conveyance of propositional content. As such, indirect translation destroys a literary text's intention to convey a cognitive state, for which the style of the text is maximally relevant. Direct translation attempts to preserve this intention, by replicating the set of weak implicatures embodied in the style of the original text. The concept of 'weak implicature' is crucial here. The goal is not to 'strengthen' the weak implicatures embodied in a text and thereby arrive at a stable interpretation in translation, but rather to preserve the non-

deterministic quality of the source text, and allow for a similar network of 'weak implicatures' to arise through the target text.

In the following, I want to focus on reconstructing a general category of cognitive states and figurations of types of objects and events which can be helpful in translating the poem 'fantoom'. This is the general concept of liminality as well its possible manifestations. This reconstruction is necessary to get a sense of how the poem's style guides the reader towards inferring of liminal subject matter. In doing so, I focus mostly on those aspects of liminality which can be said to be common to all human beings. I will therefore downplay theoretical consideration of implicatures that derive from linguistic-cultural differences between speaker and hearer, i.e. those aspects of literary texts apprehended by the notion of the foreign. This narrowing of my theoretical scope is validated by the concept of liminality itself: Though 'liminality' was originally a concept for the analysis of culture in all its diversity, it crucially refers to a cultural phenomenon which appears in all communities, namely rituals of social transition. It is therefore universal in nature (Thomassen 2014: 3).

I derive another argument in favor of my approach from François Thomas, who nuanced Schleiermacher's view on the foreignness of languages and cultures. Though Schleiermacher believed in the individuality of languages, he also thought there was a unity of reason, which lies beyond the differences of languages and cultures (Thomas 2020: 144). This unity of reason is motivated by the fact that the categories of the foreign and the domestic are not absolute: Cultures are not closed, static entities that are completely impenetrable to outsiders. Instead, every culture, no matter how foreign, contains familiar points of entry; conversely, every culture we consider our home has elements which are foreign (Thomas 2020: 137). Every discourse is a patchwork of things both familiar and strange, and the liminal is an example of such a patchwork. It resists a straightforward classification into the foreign or the domestic. When encountered in another culture, it will appear as familiar; but when encountered in our own it will seem strange. The reason for this is that the liminal, as I shall explain in chapter 2, refers to those entities, experiences and spaces which, by definition, exist in-between more determinate sociocultural categories.

Chapter 2
Liminality: a traveling concept

2.1 Origins

Since its conception in the field of anthropology, 'liminality' has found application within a wide variety of different disciplines and subjects. Andrews et al. mention a few of such applications, noting that the concept can be found in, among other things, "studies on management, health, education, cyber space, governance, sexuality, and tourism" (Andrews et al. 2015: 131). It is thus not easy to arrive at a definition of the liminal that everyone can agree on. In the following I give a brief survey of the concept, focusing on its origins, common themes and features.

The origin of the concept of 'liminality' lies in the work of French ethnologist Arnold van Gennep, who coined the term in his 1909 work *Rites de Passages*. The word derives from the Latin word for 'threshold' (limen), and is used to describe symbolic processes and rituals governing important moments of social transition, or 'rites of passage'. These processes are posited to be universal in nature—a claim which, Björn Thomassen writes, must not be underestimated, as "[a]nthropological claims to universality have been few indeed, as a main aim of the discipline often was to demonstrate cultural diversity and variation" (Thomassen 2014: 3). For Van Gennep, the idea of the *rites of passage* functioned as an analytical concept by which he could explain and codify a wide variety of social phenomena. These rites took many forms, and could both be religious and secular in nature, marking changes in social status (e.g. getting married); moving from one place to another (e.g. leaving home); transitioning into new circumstances and situations in life (e.g. graduating from university); and also the passage of time (e.g. the arrival of a new year) (Andrews et al. 2015: 132).

The 'liminal' is the middle or 'in-between' stage of a ritual passage, the moment of transition. This is preceded by the *preliminal stage,* the moment of separation, and succeeded by the *postliminal* stage, the moment of incorporation into a new social state (Andrews et al. 2015: 132). British social anthropologist Victor Turner placed special emphasis on the liminal/transitional stage and characterized it as "a condition or happenstance that has attributes of doubt and lack of inevitability between what is known and had gone before and future outcomes" (Andrews et al. 2015: 132). During the liminal phase, participants are in an uncertain and ambiguous state; they have relinquished their old identity, but have not yet assumed a new one: "liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial" (Turner 1969: 81).

2.2 Defamiliarization and play

The liminal phase in many rituals involves an ambivalent relationship with social structures and hierarchies. It is a phase characterized by creativity and possibility: while standing on the

threshold, old and fixed assumptions about a participant's social identity are suspended, and new possibilities and directions in life become possible (Turner 1969: 81). This is the element of 'play', which facilitates the transition from one social role to the next. Subjects that are in the liminal phase have an ambiguous character, precisely because they fall in-between social categories. For instance, Turner describes how participants in initiation or puberty rites are often stripped of their clothing and possessions, and have to be naked, or alternatively, in disguise (Turner 1969: 94). These actions strip the subjects of distinguishing features of social class, rank or role—and it is in that sense that liminal subjects are ambiguous.

Liminal individuals often engage in subversive and playful acts, manipulating "the elements of the familiar and [defamiliarizing] them" (qtd. in Andrews et al. 2015: 133). This formulation calls to mind Viktor Shklovsky's concept of *ostranenie*, often translated as 'defamiliarization', a key concept in the Russian Formalist understanding of literature and literariness. Shklovsky writes that poetic language has the capacity to induce a renewed and intensified experience of the world, due to its employment of various means of foregrounding, "de-automatizing things" in the process (Shklovsky 2017: e-book). In both uses of the term, 'defamiliarization' designates a process by which habitualized or conventionalized phenomena are put in question, allowing for new ways of seeing the world.

Related to play and 'defamiliarization' is the notion that the liminal can be a source of political and social critique. This aspect plays an important role in post-colonial studies and cultural theory. Post-colonial theory focuses on the many ways in which colonialist discourses can be causative to material inequalities between colonizer and colonized. One of the ways in which this occurs is through fixed hierarchical conceptions about different cultures, by which the exercise of colonial power is justified (Huddart 2006: 5). The liminal subject, standing in tension with everyday norms and conventions, is able to challenge and undermine essentialist preconceptions about our self-identities and the identities of those deemed ´Other' (Andrews et al. 2015: 133).

Anthropologist Björn Thomassen is critical about this way of using the concept. Though Thomassen acknowledges the liminal's potential for political and social liberation, he does not see the liminal as unproblematically positive. The liminal can also be dangerous precisely because it involves a loss of norms and hierarchy, due to which individuals may feel unmoored. Additionally, the loss of norms and hierarchy may also impinge on the social structures that hold a community together (Thomassen 2014: 83). Thomassen interprets 'liminality' not as what he terms a 'normative ideal', but as an analytical concept in which it is recognized that "human life is organized as a precarious balance between the limit and the limitless" (Thomassen 2014: 10, 11). From this viewpoint, discourses that frame human and social life strictly in terms of neat categories and oppositions would also be in error, as they fail to acknowledge the liminal aspects which fundamental to human life. As such, the liminal has to do with understanding and describing moments of transition without attaching to them

a celebratory or negative attitude. The notion of 'transition' is essential: "If it is not about transition, it simply is not about liminality" (Thomassen 2014: 85).

2.3 Dimensions of liminality

Integral to the concept of liminality is that it necessarily manifests in fundamental dimensions of human experience. Firstly, liminality has to do with the division of spaces, and presupposes the significance of crossing boundaries in order to move between spaces. Boundaries are not just materially significant, but also symbolically significant, as they structure an individual's experience of their social environments: "Boundaries are necessary for the framing of human experience and for thought itself" (Thomassen 2014: 13). Of particular importance is the idea of the threshold. Take, for instance, a common type of threshold, such as the 'door'. Doors separate the domestic domain of the home from the 'foreign' domain of the community. On one side of the threshold there is the private domain of eating, sleeping, intimacy; while on the other side is the public domain of work, politics and commerce. On the threshold itself, none of these activities happen, yet liminal rituals and symbols (such as the ritual of cleansing) are essential for passing from one domain to another (Thomassen 2014: 13). Such thresholds, demarcations and borders can be of many kinds, ranging from very small and specific spots (e.g. doorways and hallways) to larger geographical areas (e.g. disputed territories and regions like Central Asia and the Mediterranean) (Thomassen 2014: 91).

Secondly, liminality also has a temporal dimension. By definition, liminality refers to the middle stage in tri-partite sequence: it is sandwiched in-between two more clearly defined and 'permanent' stages. The liminal stage is transitional and temporary, but its duration can be shorter or longer, ranging from mere moments (e.g. ritual passages such as baptism) to an entire lifetime (e.g. prolonged political exile or refugee status). The liminal stage also functions as a temporal demarcation, delimiting and structuring a subject's biography or history. Consider here the experience of marriage or the birth of a child: they are both transforming experiences accompanied by rituals, punctuated by a liminal period or moment (period of engagement and marriage ceremony; period of pregnancy and being in labor) that forever separate a person's life into a 'before' and 'after'.

Apart from the dimensions of space and time, Thomassen also distinguished what I would call the dimension of the subject: the person or entity who undergoes and experiences the liminal event in a liminal space and time. This entity is the focal point of the theory of liminality, as it is the liminal subject who undergoes a transitional event and exists in the in-between state. This liminal subject does not necessarily have to be an individual, but can also refer to groups or entire societies, as they too can be in a period of transition. For instance, Thomassen describes wars, revolutionary periods and epidemics as liminal phenomena impacting entire societies (Thomassen 2014: 90).

1.4 Summary

I list below the commonly referred to aspects of the concept of liminality outlined above. By no means do they constitute a straightforward definition, nor are they exhaustive of everything that has been written on liminality. They form rather a tentative constellation of recurring elements, which are given different levels of priority depending on who uses the concept, in which disciplinary context, and to what ends. They are:

- The dimensions of space, time and 'subjecthood'.
- The idea of passage or transition.
- The motif of ambiguity, or inbetweenness.
- Ambivalent relationship with structure and hierarchy.
- Transgression of limits and boundaries.
- The element of play and 'defamiliarization'.
- Framing in terms of culture, i.e. the limits and boundaries being transgressed are cultural in nature.
- A normative and evaluative framing, e.g. qualifying the liminal state as a state of creativity/liberty or danger/insecurity.

Metaphorical usages of liminality

Before I continue, I want to briefly mention the distinction between concrete and metaphorical usages of the concept of liminality. Turner took care to mention that the application of the term 'liminal' to situations and experiences outside the context of traditional societies is metaphorical in nature (Turner 1982: 29). However, this does not mean that more general uses of liminality are invalid, as Turner himself expanded the use of the concept to, among other things, the notion of performance and 'social drama' in modern societies, and contemporary forms of art and literature (Andrews et al. 2015: 132; Thomassen 2014: 83, 85). We can therefore distinguish between usages of 'liminality' that adhere closely to the narrow conception, which refers to concrete *rites de passages* in traditional societies; and the metaphorical conception, which refers to transitional phenomena in a more general sense.

The distinction between concrete and metaphorical usages of 'liminality' involves the manipulation of one of the recurring aspects of liminality listed above, i.e. 'framing in terms of culture'. The framing of liminality is what determines the nature of of the limits and boundaries in play. Extending the types of frames possible also means allowing for different types of transition, which may not necessarily be sociocultural in nature. For instance, the spatial aspect associated with the liminal can also take the form of a variety of metaphorical spaces and boundaries. As I shall explain in chapter 3, the liminal can also be understood in a cognitive sense.

Chapter 3:
Liminal literature

3.1 Overview

In the following chapter, I will give a brief overview of studies that look at literature from a liminal perspective. My aim is to discover how the general picture of 'liminality' outlined in chapter 2 appears in literary works. Given that the concept of 'liminality' has certain core aspects and ideas, how are these core aspects and ideas translated when they appear in liminal literature? A useful starting point is the following entry on 'liminality' from *Key Concepts in Literary Theory* (2006), which reads:

> **Liminality**—From the Latin, *limen,* meaning threshold, liminality signifies a condition of being at a threshold or limit, spatially or temporally. Textual analysis of liminality draws attention to the passage across limits, boundaries or thresholds in **narratives**, where the limit being crossed is constituted as an assemblage of culturally significant values. (Wolfreys et al. 2006: 61)

This definition transplants some crucial aspects of liminality mentioned in chapter 2 to the context of literary analysis. Notably, textual analysis of liminality looks at interactions with "limits, boundaries or thresholds" in *narratives*. Narration is conventionally understood to be a prominent aspect of prose fiction. However, I am interested in looking at the liminal aspects of modern poetry, in which narration is not as prominent, though many poems do feature some minimal form of narration. In addition to the term 'narrative', I therefore also suggest Semino's notion of a 'text world', by which she means the "context, scenario or type of reality that is evoked in our minds during reading and that (we conclude) is referred to by the text" (Semino 2014: 1). The text-world constitutes a set of conditions and possibilities in which narrative events can take place. Thus, part of the text-world will be the existence of various various limits, boundaries or thresholds which can function as points of interaction in the narrative, whether this narrative is an extended temporal sequence in an adventure novel or an elaboration on a discursive situation involving speaker, hearer and third-person referents in a lyric poem.

With the above amendment, the stated definition provides two key points of contention. The first point concerns the definition's explicitly cultural framing of liminality. The second point concerns the definition lack of mention of a stylistic aspect to liminality in literature. These points of contention give rise to the following questions:

- Studying liminality in literature means looking at narrative (or text-world internal) manifestations of the liminal, but how are these representations expressed stylistically and formally?

- Does studying liminality in literature necessarily mean conceptualizing limits and boundaries in cultural terms? Is it also possible to conceptualize liminality in cognitive terms?

Liminality and liminoid

Before all else, it should be noted that the concept of the liminal, both in its narrow, sociocultural sense as well as the broader, metaphorical sense, can be applied to an extremely wide range of phenomena, spaces and experiences. However, the openness of the concept means that it is possible to apply it so generally that it is no longer useful as an analytical concept in literary analysis. This is something that I want to avoid. One such general application is found in *From Ritual to Theatre* (1982), where Turner introduced a distinction between 'liminal' and 'liminoid'. The former refers to liminal experiences in traditional rituals, while the latter refers to experiences generated by, among other things, nontraditional forms of art, theater and literature in modern consumer societies (Turner 1982: 32-33). The concept suggests that there is a general form of liminal experience, in which a diverse range of liminoid artistic practices partake. These artistic practices involve a temporary—and optional—suspension of social structures and norms. This sounds similar to to the Russian Formalist concept of *ostranenie*, or, defamiliarization, which involves a suspension of conventional ways of seeing things (Berlina 2017: 23). Such reflections touch upon the relationship between liminality and literature in a general sense. However, my interest is not in literature as such, but in a specific body of literary works which engage with the liminal over and above the general form of liminality that *literariness* represents. For that reason, while the whole of literature can be called 'liminoid' and it thereby necessarily shares in the meaning of the concept of liminality, I reserve the term 'liminal literature' to refer to those specific works which depict or express liminal subject matter in a more concrete sense.

3.2 Liminal poetics

How does liminality manifest in literature? Many scholars have looked at texts from a liminal perspectives, involving discussion of both form and content. The collection *Thinking on Thresholds*, for instance, features an essay by Gillian Beer that focuses entirely on the meaning of domestic windows in various works of literature, ranging from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* to the poetry of William Shakespeare (Beer 2013: 3-16). Jean Duffy, in *Thresholds of Meaning*, looks at the representation of illness in contemporary French novels, analyzing the depicted bodily and mental states of illness, as well as the associated social dislocation and disruption of 'healthy' patterns of life, in liminal terms (Duffy 2011: 29-71). Another important type of liminal literature is featured in the collection *Borderlands and Liminal Subjects* (2017), which contains essays about literary 'borderlands' of various kinds: national borderlands; racial and ethnic borderlands; borderlands of sexuality and gender; and speculative borderlands (Decker et al: 2017 3).

To talk about liminality in literature is to talk about figures, spaces, temporalities and events that are conventionally thought of as being liminal, both in the narrowly cultural sense, as well as in the broadly metaphorical sense. This is one way to understand the term 'liminal poetics'. McCooey and Hayes, for instance, explicitly discuss the 'liminal poetics' of the children's novel *The Wind in the Willows*, a children's novel that projects human social structures on anthropomorphized animals. They define liminal poetics as "the thematization of liminality and the mobilization of various liminal tropes (ranging from the concrete and spatial tropes of in-between spaces to the abstract conceptualization of inbetweenness, ambiguity and thresholds generally)" (McCooey et al. 2017: 45). By 'tropes' they do not mean the stylistic devices commonly referred to as 'figures of speech', but rather thematic common places and motifs that can be abstracted from the narrative. But what about the role of style in depictions of liminality? McCooey and Hayes come close to a consideration of stylistic liminality when they refer to Terry Gifford's characterization of the pastoral mode as being essentially liminal:

> [...] the pastoral has defined itself and declared itself as a literary discourse that has retreated from both the sophisticated discourse of the court and the illiterate discourse of the real shepherd. Meeting somewhere between the two, pastoral discourse is a linguistic borderland that constructs the artifice of Arcadia. (Gifford qtd. in McCooey et al. 2017: 55)

However, McCooey and Hayes mention the stylistics of such liminal discourses only in passing. Another scholar, Nathalie Hess, makes a more detailed connection between a specific stylistic phenomenon and liminality. Natalie Hess discusses the liminal meaning of code-switching and style shifting in literature. Code-switchers, by definition, "exist between spheres of reference and move between structures" (Hess 1996: 6), as such code-switching is a clear marker of liminality. As a linguistic phenomenon, code switching can be represented in literary texts through style shifts in dialogue. In particular, Hess focuses on the dialogue of the non-white servant figures in respectively John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* (1960) and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960). The linguistic register of these characters changes as they move through different sociocultural strata. In this respect, style shifts function as a form of sociolinguistic realism, as the author's attempt to accurately reflect the social strata of the world he is emulating (Omole qtd. Hess 1996: 7). Code switching in literature can also support a text's broader thematic intentions, as awareness of stylistic shifts foregrounds broader liminal themes present in the novels. For example, Hess mentions "the love/hate alliances between brothers and the fault lines between good and evil" in *East of Eden* (Hess 1996: 14) and the town of Maycomb in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which "drifts between established codes and its sense of justice" (Hess 1996: 11).

Where Hess touches on a specific stylistic phenomenon, McCooey and Hayes speak mostly of semantic phenomena: recurring motifs and tropes that suggest liminal spaces,

temporalities and subjects. Together, these two aspects form two sides of the same coin of liminal poetics. On the one hand, a poetics can refer to a specific subject matter, or an inventory of recurring images, types of characters, events, spaces, temporalities and emotions. On the other hand, a poetics can also refer to particular styles and forms that are thought to characterize a specific type of literature. However, it is unclear whether liminal styles and forms can constitute a liminal poetics on their own, or only gain their liminal significance because they contribute to the expression of specifically liminal subject matter.

Liminal genres

Another scholar who has studied the characteristics of liminal poetics is Manuel Aguirre, in his study of Gothic fiction (Aguirre 2017). Similar to Gifford's remarks on the pastoral, Aguirre argues that Gothic can be considered a liminal genre—situated halfway inbetween folklore and literature 'proper'—exhibiting formal strategies analogous to the 'anti-structure' devices which Turner identified in the liminal stage of a *rites de passage* (Aguirre 2017: 294). Aguirre emphasizes that Gothic was initially an experimental genre, citing Horace Walpole's comments on his own *The Castle of Otranto,* one of the first exemplars of the genre: "It was an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former all was imagination and improbability; in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success" (Walpole, qtd. in Aguirre 2017: 295).

The idea of a liminal genre presents a complication in our understanding of liminal literature and poetics. The reason for that is that multiple senses of the word liminality appear together here. In the previous section I already touched on the liminality of literature as such, where the liminal properties of literature are derived from its defamiliarizing properties. This is the most general sense in which literature can be called 'liminal'. The second sense of 'liminal literature' is more specific and is the one that Aguirre introduces: Gothic is liminal, because it is an experimental form which stands on the threshold of two other forms—folklore and literature 'proper'. This form of liminality arises from the transgression of the boundaries of literary genre convention, i.e. not limits that exist inside narratives and text-worlds, but limits external to the works and part of the context of their production and reception (Aguirre 2017: 294). McCooy and Hayes also suggest something to this effect when they identify the pastoral as "literary discourse that has retreated from both the sophisticated discourse of the court and the illiterate discourse of the real shepherd" (Gifford qtd. in McCooey et al. 2017: 55). In this thesis, I focus mainly on 'liminal literature' in the third sense, which refers not to the transgressive properties of literature as such, nor to the transgressive nature of specific sub-genres of literature, but to the literary work's subject matter. Aguirre employs this sense when he articulates a poetics of the Gothic, a "model of the laws of literary structure" (Aguirre 2017: 299). The articulation of a liminal poetics in a specific genre is different from the characterization of a genre as liminal based on conventions that separate literary genres and forms. Aguirre writes that central to the poetics

of Gothic stands a concern with thresholds, and the "ambiguities, paradoxes and dangers entailed by crossing, entering or occupying them" (Aguirre 2017: 294). There are sixteen 'rules' of Gothic, of which six are especially relevant to the liminality of the genre. I list them here in shortened form:

- Gothic constructs a world consisting of two ontological zones or dimensions: one is the human domain of rationality and relative order; the other is the Numinous domain of incognoscibility, also known as the Other (Aguirre 2017: 299).
- Gothic plots feature a pivotal 'deed' that exposes the human to the Other, whereby some kind of crossover between the two domains takes place (Aguirre 2017: 301).
- The inability to grasp the Other makes it disorientating and terrifying (Aguirre 2017: 303).
- The liminal stage in the hero's narrative is considerably lengthened, and may never be completed (Aguirre 2017: 305).
- Gothic narratives center around failed heroes who are unable to complete their journeys (Aguirre 2017: 308).
- Gothic characters, objects, actions and environments fail to live up to an implict standard (Aguirre 2017: 309).

These observations bear similarities with previously outlined accounts of liminal poetics. The main resemblance lies in the idea of a crossover between "two ontological zones or dimensions" (Aguirre 2017). The boundaries between these two domains are put into play, causing them to mix together. McCooey and Hayes speak of 'hybridization', which, in their case, takes the form of the "strategic complication of the domestic and the natural" (McCooey et al. 2017: 52). Aguirre speaks of the human and Numinous. The mixing of different domains has unsettling effects on the subjects who encounter them. In the original, 'cultural' conception of liminality, these effects are of a political and social nature, and they act on the individuals of the sociopolitical structures that are put into play. Gothic instead involves the mixing of ontological domains. The effect of encountering liminality of this kind is 'incognoscibility', which acts on structures of thought and perception. Because liminal phenomena are ontologically ambiguous, characters literally cannot make sense of what they perceive and experience. This is the root of Gothic horror and anxiety, and it echoes Thomassen's observation that liminality does not evoke just 'pleasurable' affects, such as creativity and playfulness, but also 'discomforting' affects, such as uncertainty and fear.

3.3 Cognitive liminality in literature

So far, I have focused on studies that approach liminality in sociocultural terms. Aguirre's focus on the incognoscibility of the Other in Gothic narrative is an example of a cognitive approach to liminality. To better understand the cognitive approach, I look at two studies

(Lane 2014; Bernini 2015) which present a more detailed account of the relationship between liminality and cognition in literature.

Cognitive liminality and poetic language

The first study I want to focus on is by Jeremy Lane, who frames cognitive liminality in terms of the states of consciousness that occur on the threshold between being awake and asleep. These are the in-between mental activities called 'hypnagogia': falling asleep and waking up; losing or coming back to consciousness; dreaming and musing, being lost in drifting thoughts or imaginations (Lane 2013: 141). These phenomena are not just physiological or psychological, but are connected to many metaphysical and epistemological concerns. For instance, within Western philosophical and religious traditions, the state of wakefulness and full consciousness often has a positive connotation, related to the ideals of clarity, reason and vigilance[1](Lane 2013: 142). Against this philosophical wakefulness, Lane identifies a counter-movement, embodied in various intellectual and artistic movements (e.g. Romanticism, Surrealism, Modernism) which privilege the notions of dreaming, imagination and the unconscious. He looks at the work of three writers: Michel de Montaigne, John Keats and Marcel Proust, and analyzes how they evoke, reflect on, and dramatize such liminal states of consciousness in their writing (Lane 2013: 143). The three writers each frame the liminal encounter differently, but they do have thematic commonalities in the form of three re-occurring features of liminal cognition (Lane 2013: 151):

a) temporal or spatial indeterminacy
b) unclarity of awareness
c) a lability of identity

These motifs are especially salient in the case of Michel de Montaigne. After suffering a horse riding accident and nearly dying, Montaigne reflects on what he experienced: lapses in and out of consciousness, uncertainty about where he was and if he was alive or dead. Death is a matter of special significance for Montaigne, because one cannot prepare for it through philosophical reflection or study. One cannot be present for one's own death, attentive and awake. The hypnagogic state, however, is a means of catching a glimpse of death, because one is neither here nor there (Lane 2014: 144). During his injury, Montaigne experienced a "dissolution of the self" (Lane 2014: 150)—and experienced himself in a liminal state:

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1. Consider the *eidos* ('Idea' or 'Form') in the Platonic theory of Forms, which is derived from the root verb *eidô*, meaning both 'to know' and 'to see'. A more recent example is the concept of Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) and its historical articulation, described as "encouraging or leading the awakening soul out of the sleep of reason" (Lane 2013: 142-143).

I am chiefly portraying my ways of thinking, a shapeless subject which simply does not become manifest in deeds. I have to struggle to couch it in the flimsy medium of words." (Montaigne, qtd. in Lane 2014: 146)

Montaigne makes a link between the three re-occurring features of liminal cognition and the difficulty of capturing liminal states through words. If words depend on a clear delineation of the things they are meant to describe, then liminal items, for which those boundaries have been put into 'play', will pose a special challenge to language. The reason being that they pose problems to human knowledge and perception. This idea can also be found in Van Gennep and Turner writings on liminality, who noted that neophytes undergoing *rites de passages* were often brought to question their own senses, a process which coincided with uncertainty about their social position and self-identity (Thomassen 2014: 118).

Lane suggests that poetry and fiction are a means to recover an "imaginative or experiential sense of the self", often occluded by practical and theoretical reasoning (Lane 2014: 148). Through their mastery of language, poets are capable of bridging the gap between language and the liminal, which philosophers struggle with. Lane does not delve into detail about how these poetic effects can be understood in stylistic terms, but he gives a few suggestions with respect to Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*. In Proust's narrative, the linear progression of wakeful attention is continually punctuated by episodes of imaginative, dreamlike elaboration and digression (Lane 2013: 251). Lane references here the work of Jerry Aline Flieger on Proust, who characterizes these interruptions as "a lapse, a double movement involving both a break in the ongoing surface narrative, and a sudden, symptomatic intrusion of forgotten material into that narrative" (Flieger qtd. in Lane 2013: 152). The language used here echoes the Jakobsonian formulation of the poetic function[2]: there is, on the one hand, the "continuity and contiguity of event", working horizontally; and on the other hand, "an irruption of the figural" working vertically (Lane 2013: 152). The rhythmic interplay between these two results in a narrative mode that is 'mixed' in nature, forming a pattern that mirrors the "motility of the hypnagogic process, alternating and interweaving the movements towards sleep and waking" (Lane 2013: 152).

Cognitive liminality as cognitive impediments

The second study I want to focus on is by Marco Bernini, who studied cognitive liminality in Samuel Beckett's novels. According to Bernini, the characters in Beckett's novels blur the line between animal and human cognition. Bernini's articulation of the liminal mind is similar to Lane's. Though he does not specifically refer to Lane's work, I derive the same

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2. In 'Linguistics and Poetics' (1982), Jakobson writes: "The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination" (Jakobson 1982: 27). For Jakobson, the core principle of poetry is that the sequencing of elements (the horizontal axis) in a line of verse is governed by principles of similarity and dissimilarity (normally governing the vertical axis), an operation which creates rhythmic patterns. Lane, in invoking similar sounding language of verticality-horizontality, metonymy-metaphor, suggests that this operation can also occur in the sequencing of narrative episodes.

three features of liminal cognition (spatial and temporal indeterminacy, unclarity of awareness, lability of identity) from his analysis. Bernini observes that there is a narratological hierarchy in Beckett's fiction, and that the fictional beings in his narratives can be placed somewhere on this hierarchy. To explain: the term 'fictional beings', in this case, refer not merely to the characters in his stories, but also to the narrators of his narratives. On the lowest rungs of the hierarchy are the animalistic 'creatures' of Beckett's novels. These low-level beings are entirely created (narrated) by higher beings, and therefore dependent on these higher beings for their existence (Bernini 2015: 41). On the highest level exists the author, who can be equated with God, bringing all fictional beings into existence through his authorship. Of special relevance in this hierarchy are 'humans'. These 'humans' are narrated (as they are characters within the narrative), but they are themselves also capable of narrating, thereby bringing subordinate beings into existence. 'Humans' are thus simultaneously creator and creature (Bernini 2015: 42:). A being's place on the hierarchy is associated with their cognitive functioning. Bernini explicates the cognitive features of human beings in terms of two things:

- **The capacity for linguistic locomotion**: Because humans are linguistic beings, they *dwell* in a "linguistically structured space of meaning". Here, Bernini refers to the thought of Martin Heidegger, who writes that humans, in contradistinction to animals (which are 'poor in world') and objects (which are 'worldless'), have a 'world-forming' capacity. Language plays an important role in this process of world-formation, as it is a means of cognizing, navigating and exploring the world (Bernini 2015: 44). Bernini calls this 'logomotion'. Accordingly, having a greater linguistic capacity affords a broader horizon of possibilities, as more freedom of logomotion gives access to new cognitive, semantic and informational domains (Bernini 2015: 45).
- **A teleological disposition towards absences**: If language is a means of exploring the world in thought, then that exploration always has a certain aim, a direction in which it moves. Referencing the work of neuro-anthropologist Terence Deacon, Bernini suggests that these aims are best construed as 'absences'. On this view, the human mind is always marked by "intrinsic incompleteness, an integral without-ness" (Deacon qtd. Bernini 2015: 45). It is this incompleteness which marks the difference between a person and an inanimate object.

These features are essential to proper cognitive functioning, but are diminished in many of Beckett's fictional beings (Bernini 2015: 40). They suffer from what Bernini calls 'impeded logomotion' and 'broken teleodynamics' (Bernini 2015: 45). These characters are (linguistically) immobile, or become immobilized as the narrative progresses. They also do not seem to have wishes, motivations and drives of their own, but are rather ascribed them from a higher authorial or narratological level—which is to say that their narratological

dependencies translate into cognitive dependencies. The two characteristics are connected: 'broken teleodynamics' (lack of motivation) is the reason for their 'impeded logomotion' (being stuck, unable to move around the fictional world through language) (Bernini 2015: 46). These disruptions of linguistic-cognitive function result in the characters not being fully realized as 'cognizers'.

Cognitive liminality and inferential processes

In addition to 'broken teleodynamics' and 'impeded logomotion', Bernini also articulates the features of liminal minds in terms of a model of 'perceptual inferences' (originally Hohwy 2013). To explain: normally functioning human beings create a clear picture of the world they inhabit by continually comparing their predictions about the world with incoming sensory signals. In case of prediction error, the cognizer updates his internalized model of the world, and new predictions are made. But in Beckett's fiction this process is disrupted, because the text-world (Lane gives *Molloy* as an example) does not yield usable data for the liminal creatures that inhabit them—they may make predictions, but these predictions are continually negated or undermined. Often times, they are unable to verify whether or not their predictions are true or false. As such, the text-world is resistant to prediction and interpretation (Bernini 2013: 48).

Bernini thus translates the epistemological difficulties that liminal minds suffer from (i.e. spatial-temporal indeterminacy, unclarity of unawareness) into a vocabulary of inferential mechanics. His account of how fictional characters process the worlds they inhabit also apply to readers. Readers attempt to make sense of the text-world by taking 'inferential walks' (Eco, qtd. in Bernini 2013: 50) into their repository of knowledge about the real world and previously encountered fictional worlds. This background knowledge allows them to create expectations about what is possible in a narrative, thereby constructing a hypothesized model of the text-world. What they expect is then compared with what they actually find in the course of reading; and where there are differences, the reader updates his model of the text-world. But in Beckett's fiction, the reader is unable to construct a clear picture of the world: instead of 'inferential walks', the reader is reduced to making 'inferential crawls' (Bernini 2013: 50). He must make uncertain and inconclusive guesses about the world he is reading about (Bernini 2013: 48). In this sense, liminal cognition occurs not only in the fictional characters inhabiting the narratives, but can also manifest in the reader through the process of interpretation.

Cognitive liminalities compared

Both Lane and Bernini construct elaborate theoretical frameworks from which arise two polar categories of cognition. For Lane they are the mental states of waking and sleeping, while for Bernini they are the cognitive capacities associated with the many creatures in Beckett's fiction. They both situate the liminal mind as sitting on the threshold of two domains. In both

cases, their respective theoretical frameworks attach to one of the categories the qualities of proper linguistic and epistemological functioning, as well as a stable sense of self. In the liminal mind, these aspects (language, epistemology and self-identity) are disrupted in some sense. Their analyses boil down to a number of key characteristics of liminal minds. Adding Bernini's concepts to those outlined by Lane, we may distinguish the following markers of cognitive liminality:

a) temporal or spatial indeterminacy
b) unclarity of awareness
c) lability of identity
d) inferential crawling
e) impeded logomotion
f) broken teleodynamics

These elements are not just put together randomly, but relate to each other in logical ways. For example, a liminal subject's 'lability of identity' can be explained in terms of disrupted linguistic and teleodynamic faculties: Without properly functioning faculties of language and motivation, a cognizer's sense of self is negatively impacted, as they are unable to situate ('narrate') themselves spatially and temporally in the world as autonomous beings (Bernini 2015: 49, 50). They are therefore spatially and temporally indeterminate. Such explanations resonate with the traditional sociocultural conception of liminality. Subjects placed in-between determinate social categories also lack a stable sense of identity, and are marked by sociocultural ambiguity. This ambiguity impacts the liminal subjects' relationship with the world: if societal boundaries determine how one sees and interacts with the world, then having those boundaries put into 'play' will place one's perceptions, actions and motivations on uncertain footing, because the social meaning of what one sees and does will be unclear.

Where Lane's and Bernini's conceptions of cognitive liminality differ from each other is not so much the substantive experience of cognitive uncertainty itself, but rather the context in which the subject experiences that uncertainty. In traditional theories of liminality, uncertainty arises in the context of sociocultural *rites de passages*. For Lane, it occurs in the transition between different states of consciousness, a psychological phenomenon. For Bernini, the uncertainty has an ontological dimension, as it relates to the essential (i.e. creaturely/creatorly) nature of beings in Beckett's worlds. For the purposes of my specific case study, the precise contextual framing of cognitive liminality is not as important as its more abstract conceptual contents, which consists of the problematization of (self-)identity, language and knowledge/perception. This is not to discount or make arbitrary the context-specific insights of cognitive liminality, but rather to emphasize that cognition as such always arises in a context, meaning that consideration of the specific context in which an instance of cognitive liminality arises is essential to the understanding of that particular instantiation.

Chapter 4
Liminal cognitive poetics

The insights I have gathered so far will aid me in carrying out the two tasks which will be integral to literary translation of liminal texts, namely:

- The identification (when the text lends itself to such a reading) of the semantic elements that constitute the expression of 'liminality'.
- The identification of the stylistic means by which the text achieves the expression of liminality.

4.1 Prototypicality of liminality

The first point touches on the 'prototypicality' of liminal literature. The validity of 'liminal literature' as a way of classifying a large body of texts is underpinned by the posited universality of liminal rituals and experiences (Thomassen 2014: 3). This universality means that every culture and society will have a body of items that play a role in liminal rituals, or can be recognized as representations or expressions of liminality in a more abstract sense. The concept of 'liminality' can thus be applied trans-culturally, for though the outward appearance of liminal phenomena differ between cultures, their internal attributes are similar. These internal attributes constitute an *idealised cognitive model* (ICM) of liminality. Peter Stockwell states that "[c]ognitive models are what cause prototype effects and our sense of basic categories" (Stockwell 2014: 33). Having an ICM of liminality thus allows us to organize and classify a broad variety of cultural expressions, symbols and structures in terms of being more or less fitting of the name 'liminal'.

ICM of liminality

We can take as prototypes for the ICM the liminal phenomena generally described by scholars. At the center of the prototype network stand very specific and concrete liminal social rituals, the *rites de passages*, first described by Van Gennep and Turner. Further away from the center are the secondary examples in which the concept of liminality is used in an extended, 'metaphorical' way. These include liminal experiences which are not necessarily embedded in social rituals, such as the experience of illness or exile; and also forms of liminality which are not social or cultural in nature, such as the idea of cognitive liminality associated with the hypnagogic state of consciousness. Together, these various forms of liminality point towards the following distinguishing attributes of the liminal, as outlined in chapter 1:

Core attributes

- The idea of passage or transition.

- The motif of ambiguity, or inbetweenness.
- Ambivalent relationship with structure and hierarchy.
- Transgression of limits and boundaries.
- The element of play and 'defamiliarization'.

<u>Ancillary attributes</u>

- Framing in terms of culture, i.e. the limits and boundaries being transgressed are cultural in nature.
- A normative and evaluative component, e.g. qualifying the liminal state as a state of creativity/liberty or danger/insecurity.
- The dimensions of space, time and subjecthood.

The above can be considered an analytical decomposition of liminal items. I have divided the resulting components in two groups, the core attributes and the ancillary attributes. Though liminal items need not have every core attribute on the list in order to be considered liminal, I follow Thomassen when he states that the notion of 'transition' is essential (Thomassen 2014: 85). The ancillary attributes pertain to three things: the notion of framing, the notion of a normative/evaluative component, and the notion of dimensionality. These attributes have to do with the fact that transition events necessarily take place in a world, i.e. they have to be framed such that they can occur as more than just abstract concept. Because of the concept's origin in anthropology, some frames (e.g. culture) are considered more prototypical than other frames (e.g. metaphysics). When the frame is sociocultural in nature, this will then impart a normative/evaluative component, determined by the value system of the sociocultural frame in question. Additionally, because liminal phenomena necessarily take place in the world and are experienced by subjects, it follows that they will have a spatial, temporal, and actorial/experiental element to them.

This notion of the dimensionality of the liminal is of special relevance to the identification of liminal items in literature. To say that a text is *about* liminality is to say that it in some shape or form contains representations of liminal spaces and liminal times and periods, or expressions and depictions of liminal subjecthood. Liminal items can be liminal spaces (e.g. roads, mental spaces, ontological domains), liminal times or periods (e.g. twilight, moments of slipping in and out of consciousness, *rites de passages*), and liminal subjects, subjectivities and experiences (e.g. being a neophyte, the psychological and cognitive conditions of refugees, the condition of a society being in crisis).

With regard to liminal subjecthood, a distinction can be made between the *internal* features and conditions of liminal subjectivity and the *external* qualification of particular subjects as being liminal within a given structure or framework. In the first case, we are talking about liminality as an experiental phenomenon, i.e. the perceptual, cognitive and psychological processes and events that go on inside a liminal mind; in the second case, we

are talking about liminality as an adjective used to describe mental state of liminal actors and entities. Thinking about liminality in the experiential sense is to think about the cognitive states of liminal subjects. Lane (2013) and Bernini (2005) supply an account of such cognitive states consisting of a number of attributes, they are:

<u>Prototypical attributes of liminal cognition:</u>

a) temporal or spatial indeterminacy
b) unclarity of awareness
c) lability of identity
d) inferential crawling
e) impeded logomotion
f) broken teleodynamics

ICM of the liminal mind

Together, these attributes constitute a partial ICM of the liminal mind. At this point I should introduce the observation that attributes (d), (e) and (f) belong to a highly negative conception of the liminal mind, one where liminality has an impoverishing effect on mental faculties. However, Thomassen notes that liminality has both positive and negative aspects (Thomassen 2014: 10, 11). Against effects like uncertainty and fear, we can posit freedom and openness, which are integral aspects of the notion of play. An example of how this might manifest cognitively is the hybridization of logomotion (as opposed to its impediment). Such a concept is supported by Hess' analysis of code-switching in Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Hess 1996). Logomotion refers to a subject's ability to give shape to the world and to situate themselves in the world through language. Lack of a stable sense of self may then manifest as linguistic impoverishment—a use of language characterized by "gaps, syntactical syncope and informational uncertainties", as in Beckett (Bernini 2015: 45). On the other hand, it may also manifest as linguistic agility: the capacity to move between different linguistic-cultural domains (though never at home in any of them). The lack of a stable sense of self thus makes possible both linguistic enrichment and impoverishment. In order to underwrite the ambivalence of liminality, I propose amending attributes (d), (e) and (f) in the following way:

<u>Prototypical attributes of liminal cognition (amended):</u>

a) temporal or spatial indeterminacy
b) unclarity of awareness
c) lability of identity
d) inferential crawling (inferential jumping)
e) impeded logomotion (hybridized logomotion)
f) broken teleodynamics (exaggerated teleodynamics)

The notion of 'inferential jumping' refers to the observation that inferential crawling goes hand in hand with incessant guessing (Bernini 2015: 38). For liminal minds, the process of making guesses, trying out hypotheses and making predictions, does not yield reliable conclusions. Boase-Beier's characterization of the role of weak implicatures in literary texts is helpful here. The phenomena of 'inferential crawling' or 'inferential jumping' arise out of indeterminate perceptual circumstances, which do not allow inferences analogous to explicature or strong implicature. Only weak implicature is possible, but these require more work, and any specific implicature is only ever one of many interpretative possibilities. As a result, the process of arriving at an understanding of the text is slow (i.e. crawling) and remains uncertain. At the same time, the subject or reader is also not tied down into any one particular avenue of thought, but has the possibility of abandoning and switching (i.e. jumping) between different trains of thought.

A similar explanation holds for 'exaggerated teleodynamics'. Teleodynamics refers to a subject's end-directedness. Consciousness is shaped by this end-directedness, and allows subjects to project their selves, thoughts, purposes and plans into the future (Bernini 2015: 45). A liminal mind has difficulty finding a direction, because it is spatially and temporally unmoored. Bernini describes Beckett's characters as being teleodynamically 'broken'. They do not have any ends or desires in themselves, and continually revert to a state of passivity. Alternatively, liminality may also manifest as a radical openness towards ends and desires previously thought of as "off-limits". This calls to mind the medieval notion of the carnival, described by Bakhtin as "the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal" (Bakhtin 1984: 10). The carnival, being the suspension of everyday norms and hierarchies, permitted an unbridled coming together of peoples and desires, resulting in "gluttony and drunken orgies on the altar table, indecent gestures, disrobing" (Bakhtin 1984: 75). Such rituals indicate an energetic and active aspect of the liminal mind's teleodynamic faculties. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this playfulness and sense of possibility associated with liminal periods is an important aspect of its ritual functioning, as it prepares the subject for the assumption of a new social role.

To put all these mental attributes in the context of Relevance Theory: it is plausible to interpret a poetic text as expressing a liminal cognitive state, when a combination of the cognitive features described above may be supplied as an implicated premise for a text's stylistic features. However, the generality of these cognitive markers means that a great many literary texts could potentially be read as manifesting liminal minds. This broad scope of the liminal cognitive state may be related to the notion that literature is inherently liminal due to its defamiliarizing effects. It is difficult to distinguish the general form of cognitive liminality manifested in literature as such from the particular forms where literature takes liminality as its subject matter. My intuition is that the implication of a liminal mind by itself is not enough to characterize a poetic text as being concretely about liminality. The implication of a liminal mind must be combined with the figuration of liminal spaces, temporalities, events, actors

and entities. In that case, the liminal cognitive state can be plausibly connected to liminal figures that exist within the text-world.

4.2 Liminal items and style

How do the stylistic and formal properties of a text contribute to a text being about liminality? The different forms of liminality described above appear in texts through a process called foregrounding. In many cases, foregrounding through style actually has a dual effect: Firstly, literary language, through foregrounding, places itself in the forefront of our attentions, making salient the medium of language itself. Secondly, in calling attention to itself, literary language becomes at the same time also the means of figuring particular items in the text (e.g. characters, events, places, motifs, themes)—giving them a shape such that they can stand out from the textual field to begin with. Many of the objects figured by language in this way could not appear to our attentions if we were not already paying attention or sensitive to language in itself. Thus, the medium of figuration is not just language as such, but the *self-reflexivity* of language: language when it is turned towards itself—and through that turning, revealing of things other than itself. It is this particular sense of becoming salient or prominent that is the main focus of my inquiry, i.e. the specifically literary ways in which liminal items can come to stand out from the textual field.

There are a number of commentators who discuss specific stylistic or narratological devices by which liminal items are figured in texts (Hess 1996; Lane 2013; Bernini 2015). The utility of these observations is limited, as the stylistic devices in question are very much specific to the text in which they appear, and cannot be straightforwardly transplanted to another interpretative context. However, the examples collected so far do give a sense of what to look for. For instance, given a mental attribute such as 'impeded logomotion (hybridized logomotion)', one can expect stylistic changes in dialogue or the narrator's voice to be possible entry-points for teasing out a work's liminal poetics. Another possible entry-point is the notion of 'image schemas'. These are commonly found mental templates for understanding situations in a text-world or narrative. Stockwell mentions concepts like JOURNEY, CONTAINER, UP/DOWN, FRONT/BACK and INTO/OUT OF (Stockwell 2002: 16). These mental pictures can describe a movement (e.g. JOURNEY), and may play an important role in the liminal aboutness of a narrative or poem, given that the idea of transition is essential to the concept of liminality (Stockwell 2002: 17).

It is not my intention here to construct an inventory of stylistic devices which could potentially figure liminality. Instead, I want to take a more general perspective, and briefly outline how stylistic phenomena relate to the liminal items they express. I propose an analytical framework based on Charles Sanders Peirce's typology of signs. Peirce distinguishes between (1) the symbol, which functions "by virtue of law" (Peirce 1955: 104), (2) the icon, which functions by suggesting a relationship of similarity to the object it

represents (Peirce 1955: 105), and (3) the index, which relates to the objects it represents by virtue of being caused by them (Peirce 1955: 102).

To give an example of how this works. Consider the idea of a mind style. Linguistic patterns in the text express a distinct way of perceiving and making sense of the textual "world" (Semino 2002: 95). This distinct way of perceiving and making sense is attached to particular minds, manifesting in the text as (implied) authors, narrators or characters. Some of these authors, narrators or characters may be liminal in nature, and would therefore exhibit attributes found in the ICM of liminal minds. Stylistic features that imply such liminal cognitive states belong to a 'liminal mind style'. The relation between a mind style and the cognitive state it expresses is, in the first place, indexical. As mentioned in chapter 1, style is considered to be result of a 'choice'. The idea of choice does not necessarily imply conscious intention, but rather points towards the idea that stylistic differences have a minimal measure of intentionality, i.e. they have mental causes *of some kind*. A mind style therefore embodies weak implicatures that point towards the cognizer as a mental cause for a particular configuration of stylistic features. I call this the 'causal inference of the cognizer'.

However, in order for the reader to causally infer a liminal cognizer, there has to be evidence pointing to that effect. My observation is that a liminal mind style functions not merely through indexical relationships (i.e. pointing towards a cognizer as mental cause), but also through iconic relationships (i.e. inferred similarity with a cognizer's mental attributes). Usually, there will be stylistic patterns in the text which resemble cognitive patterns of a liminal mind. One example of this kind of iconicity is the very phenomenon of foregrounding itself, when it evokes prominence or salience in certain parts of the textual field. Foregrounding creates a pattern of focus and attention in the reader that mirrors the pattern of focus and attention in the implied cognizer. One could also think of the notion of 'inferential crawling (inferential jumping)', and how the interpretation of weak implicatures by the reader may mirror the process of perceptual inference of liminal characters or narrators. Lane gives another good example of iconicity. Recall his remark about Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*: there is a rhythmic patterning in the sequencing of narrative episodes, alternating between episodes of dreamlike elaboration digression and wakeful attentiveness (Lane 2013: 152). In this case, the movement between the two resembles the narrator's consciousness moving in and out of dreaming and waking, which is to say, a *transition* between different cognitive domains. This observation about the rhythmic patterning could hypothetically be fleshed out more by comparing the stylistic differences between the two types of episodes, and seeing if and how the linguistic patterns of waking differ from the linguistic patterns of dreaming, and how they correlate with different levels of mental functioning.

Stylistic figures can potentially express any one of the prototypical attributes of liminal cognition through an inferred resemblance. The resulting liminal mind style would then point towards a liminal cognizer through causal inference. Applying these inferential principles for stylistic analysis must be done on a case-by-case basis, because the weak

implicatures that form the building blocks for this process of inference depend on a complicated interaction between the whole text, the reader, and the interpretative context. But keeping in mind what kinds of inferences are possible (e.g. based on causality or resemblance) can point the reader in the right direction, just like one's familiarity with examples of liminal style from other texts. In chapter 5, I will take a look at how all of the above—my observations about the prototypicality of liminality and about liminal style—can be brought to bear on a stylistic analysis and close reading of the poem 'fantoom' by Lucebert.

Chapter 5
Translating 'fantoom'

5.1 Introduction

The text for translation is 'fantoom', a poem written by Lucebert and published in his 1953 collection *van de afgrond en de luchtmens*:

fantoom

ontoelaatbaar mooi en tegen alle maten
van de verwachting en de denkkracht
en met het bevende gebeente van de lichtbron
der liefde — een schim — ja meer dan een schaduw
maar toch minder dan lichaam — een schim
staande op de hoog in de lucht vertragende
verlammende ladders der herfst en daar het
verdriet: zijn kleefrige scherven regenend
om den diamanten pijnboom heen en oh de zo blauwe
de diepblauwe roos de geliefkoosde dood en ook
weldra van de winterse tatouage de klagende draak

maar hoe onverdragelijk mooi en tegen alle regels
van de vertedering en de hevigheid
een schim — een vijand – een schuiflende grijns

Background

The international profile of Dutch poet and artist Lucebert has been raised considerably in recent years, due to the publication of the first 2 volumes of his *The Collected Poems* (2013; 2017) translated by Diane Butterman. Lucebert's work was first brought to the attention of the English-speaking world through a wave of translations of Dutch experimental poetry made in the 60s and 70s.[3] This translation wave focused on the output of a group of artists and writers known as the *Vijftigers* [fiftiers], who rose to prominence after the Second World War. Among their ranks were writers such as Simon Vinkenoog, Remco Campert, Gerrit Kouwenaar, and of course, Lucebert. The *Vijftigers* rebelled against an "unconscionable provincialism" (Ten Harmsel 1971: v) which they thought untenable in light of the horrifying

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3. Aside from the ongoing integral translation of Butterman (Butterman 2013; 2017), Lucebert's poetry has previously appeared in English in various other formats: in literary magazines (Delta 1968; Dremples 1975); in chapbooks (Holmes 1963; Nijmeijer 1974); in anthologies together with other Dutch poets (Nijmeijer 1976; Glassgold 1979; Rollins and Ferlinghetti 1982; Holmes 1984); and also in the form of a doctoral dissertation (Ten Harmsel 1971).

events of the war. Their writings were characterized by wild experimentation with different forms and even 'formlessness', and they sought to forge a "new kind of language for art, a language able to change, to create and destroy, a language of unprecedented power" (Ten Harmsel 1971: vi).

Born in 1924, Lubertus Jacobus Swaanswijk took on the pseudonym Lucebert and became the most prominant member of this group, rising to great acclaim as both a poet and a painter[4] (de Feijter 2012: 16). His breakthrough came in 1951, with the appearance of the so-called "breakthrough number" of the Dutch journal *Podium*. The March issue of the journal printed the work of six poets of the *Vijftigers* movement. Another important event was the publication of the presentation of the *atonaal* anthology in October, which presented the work of eleven new Dutch poets (De Feijter 2012: 36). The stage was thus set for the quick-fire publication of his first three collections of poetry, which appeared in the span of less than a year: *triangel in de jungle / de dieren der democratie* [triangle in the jungle / the animals of democracy] (1951), *apocrief / de analphabetische naam* [the apocryphal / the inalphabetic name] (1952), and *de amsterdamse school* [the amsterdam school] (1952). Before his death in 1994, Lucebert would publish 13 collections of poetry, with a sixteen year hiatus between *mooi uitzicht & andere kurioziteiten* [nice view & other curiosities] (1961) and *oogsten in de dwaaltuin* [harvest in the wander garden] (1981). In 1974, the first edition of *verzamelde gedichten* [collected poems] was published, which included his uncollected poems written between 1949 and 1974. In 2002, an updated edition of the collected poems was published, which included all his titled collections from 1981 onwards, as well as posthumous poems.

Liminal poetics

Cees Buddingh, in his introduction to the anthology *Dutch Interior*, characterized the poetry of the *Vijftigers* in terms of six distinctive features (Buddingh 1984: xxx-xxxi):

- Rejection of anachronistic prosodic forms such as the sonnet and the iambic line.
- Greater freedom in the use imagery, stemming from the discovery of automatic writing.
- Predominance of associative connections in their poetry, rather than causal.
- Disappearance of the so-called 'anecdotal poem', primarily associated with the work of the Criterium group[5].
- Tendency towards emotional multiplicity, instead of emotional unity.
- Indirectly aimed at the reader's consciousness. Buddingh calls poems with an explicit experimental character as being "'stones in the pools of consciousness,' which

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4. In this brief biographical sketch, I leave his considerable accomplishments as a visual artist unmentioned, and focus instead on his literary output.
5. *Criterium* was an influential Dutch literary magazine which first appeared in the 1940s. It published work by, among others: Bertus Aafjes, Gerrit Achterberg, Anna Blaman, C. Buddingh, Jan Elburg and Adriaan Morriën (Buddingh 1984: xxx; Calis 1989: 37).

achieve an ever deeper effect the further the ripples they cause spread outward" (Budding 1984: xxxi).

On the basis of this characterization, we can, broadly speaking, recognize a liminal poetics in the work of the *Vijftigers*. In the first place, their work is *generically liminal*, because they were breaking with tradition and experimenting with new forms of expression, thereby shifting norms of literary convention. In the second place, these characteristics also imply a *liminal-cognitive reading process*: the predominance of associative connections, the tendency towards emotional multiplicity, and the poems acting as "stones in the pools of consciousness". Such characteristics can be plausibly connected to components of the ICM of the liminal mind, such as 'lability of the self'. It also echoes Lane's observations about the hypnagogic state and its attendant perceptual and cognitive mechanisms.

But how does the idea of liminality apply to Lucebert's work specifically? Jan Oegema explicitly analyzes Lucebert's work in terms of a 'liminal poetics' (Oegema 2012: 75). In *Lucebert, mysticus* (2012), Oegema extensively discusses the first four poems in Lucebert's *the inalphabetic name* (the second part of his collection *the apocryphal / the inalphabetic name*). These four poems, Oegema claims, tell the story of Lucebert's 'calling' as a poet (Oegema 2012: 11). They convey a founding narrative of Lucebert's mystical poetics. Central to his poetics is the idea of 'bodily language'. Oegema gives a number of different interpretations of this concept, but I want to outline just one of these interpretations, namely that 'bodily language' is the medium linking myth and reality (Oegema 2012: 248). According to Oegema, the poet is a mystic, caught in the conflict between his own mystical experience on the one hand and the secularized world on the other—in particular, a world in which the Holocaust has occurred:

> How do we bear witness to a perfect reality, when burned on the retina is an Earth covered in a layer of human ash, where beach sand has turned into slack? Where lies the loyalty of the mystic, where is his home? With the angels? With man? The malicious man? The downtrodden man? (Oegema 2012: 251, trans. Au):

Driving the poet's work is what Oegema calls the 'poetic event', a phenomenon which takes place before the writing of a poem. The poet is prompted on a religious-mystical journey by an encounter with divine entities, which Oegema describes as "angels". During this encounter, the poet becomes one with the divine and experiences a dissolution of the self. He is reborn in a dream world, where he is able to apprehend images without language: ["The eye sees without perceiving, the mouth speaks without knowing meaning"] (Oegema 2012: 71, trans. Yi Fong Au). When the poet finally awakens, he is accompanied by a new consciousness of language. In order to share his experience, the mystic has to bridge the gap

between myth and reality, and Lucebert's bodily language is the medium for this bridging (Oegema 2012: 253).

Recall here the comments made by Lane about the epistemological challenge posed by liminal entities, spaces, events and experiences. Because liminal items are not clearly delineated, residing in between more stable and determinate categories, they pose a special challenge to human knowledge and perception, and therefore also to language. But poetry may be able to articulate what is difficult to put into words (Lane 2014: 146). The idea that poetry has a special relationship with that which is ineffable, immeasurable, or indeed, untranslatable, is a common motif in the work of many poets. For example, in *Four Quartets*, T. S. Eliot speaks of poetry as "[...] a raid on the inarticulate / With shabby equipment always deteriorating" (Eliot 1969: 182). This idea recurs throughout Lucebert's work. Consider the following lines from his poem 'her body has her typographer' (trans. Diane Butterman):

> poetry that has lips of blood
> that lives on my mouth your mouth
> they speak of what cannot be spoken of
> (*the amsterdam school,* Lucebert 2013: 367)

Where ordinary language derives its substance from the information it conveys, poetry has a substance of its own, it has "lips of blood". Notice here the invocation of liminal parts of the body, the mouth and the lips. Poetry lives on these threshold zones. They are the instruments by which poetry is spoken, but they are also the site for the interaction between different bodies ("my mouth your mouth").

Oegema outlines a highly sophisticated philosophical framework of the poet as a seer. The key motifs in this framework are liminal: the poet experiences a dissolution of the self and subsequent unity with divine entities, as he enters a sphere of experience on which language has no purchase. Returning from this otherworldly realm, he employs 'bodily language' in order to articulate his experience. This narrative forms an interpretative framework for Lucebert's poetry. As I shall explain, the poem 'fantoom' can be plausibly placed within this framework.

5.2 Close reading / stylistic analysis

fantoom

1   ontoelaatbaar mooi en tegen alle maten
2   van de verwachting en de denkkracht
3   en met het bevende gebeente van de lichtbron
4   der liefde — een schim — ja meer dan een schaduw
5   maar toch minder dan lichaam — een schim

6	staande op de hoog in de lucht vertragende
7	verlammende ladders der herfst en daar het
8	verdriet: zijn kleefrige scherven regenend
9	om den diamanten pijnboom heen en oh de zo blauwe
10	de diepblauwe roos de geliefkoosde dood en ook
11	weldra van de winterse tatouage de klagende draak
12	maar hoe onverdragelijk mooi en tegen alle regels
13	van de vertedering en de hevigheid
14	een schim — een vijand – een schuiflende grijns

I started my inquiry from the suggestion that the titular '*fantoom*' [phantom] in the poem could be understood as a liminal figure. The initial inspiration for this intuition is the phrase "*een schim—ja meer dan een schaduw / maar toch minder dan lichaam*" [a ghost—yes more than a shadow / but still less than body] (4-5). This phrase provides a strong argument in favor of a liminal interpretation of the poem. To begin with, the adverbs '*meer*' [more] and '*minder*' [less] articulate the basic idea of 'inbetweenness'. The quality that is compared here is the relative substantiveness of the *fantoom*. A shadow is entirely without substance, an image negatively created through the absence of light; while a body is with substance, and could in fact be the object casting the shadow in question. The *fantoom* is liminal in the sense that it falls somewhere on the threshold of appearing to have substance and appearing to have no substance. This is also emphasized by the conventional meaning of the word *fantoom*. For instance, the *Van Dale* gives the definition: "*1. spook, schim, geestverschijning, schrikwekkend droombeeld [...]*" [1. ghost, spectre, ghostly apparition, frightening dream image]. (VD 1984: 759). Compare this with the definition for the English 'phantom' given by the *OED*:

> † 1. a. Illusion, unreality; vanity; vain imagination; delusion, deception, falsity. Obs. [...] 2. a. Something that appears to the sight or other sense, but has no material substance; an apparition, a spectre; a spirit, a ghost. (*OED* 2006: e-book)

In both definitions, there is reference to the illusory quality of the '*fantoom*' or phantom. The idea of illusion brings into view the epistemological issues surrounding liminal items. Recall here the general template of the poet-seer articulated by Oegema: the poet is a mystic who brings his vision of a domain which is wordless, and it his task to articulate this vision. However, this still leaves a lot of things ambiguous, because the specific nature of the *fantoom* entity is not explained. If one goes along with Oegema's reading, the *fantoom* could be interpreted some kind of angel or divine being. Another interpretative possibility arises when considering the following definitions that *Van Dale* gives for '*schim*' and '*schaduw*':

> **'schim'**: [...] *schaduwbeelden van platte figuren die men achter een doorschijnend scherm laat bewegen* [...] [shadow images cast by flat puppets which one moves behind a transparent screen] (VD 1984: 2530)

> **'schaduw'**: [...] *donkere vorm waarin een (ondoorzichtig) lichaam zich door het onderscheppen van de lichtstralen op de bodem of op een achtergrond aftekent* [...] [dark shape in which a (nontransparent) body stands out against a surface or background by obstructing light] (VD 1984: 2497).

What strikes me is the evocation of the art form known as 'shadow puppetry'. The shadow puppets are flat objects, cut-outs, which cast their shadow on a transparent screen. The audience sits on the other side of the screen (Orr 1974: 69). This idea explains many of the ambiguous images in the poem. The *"bevende gebeente van de lichtbron"* [trembling bones of the light source] could be interpreted as the flickering flames whose light is obstructed by the cut-outs. The *"verlammende ladders"* [paralyzing ladders] may be the supporting rods by which the puppets are manipulated. On this reading, roughly the first half of the stanza describes the behind-the-scenes workings the play of shadows, while the latter half of the first stanza (with the colon functioning as a figural 'screen') describes the images foregrounded through the play of the shadows.

The idea of shadow puppetry also calls to mind Plato's allegory of the cave. In the *Republic*, Socrates compares the ignorance of ordinary men to the plight of prisoners in a cave, immobilized and facing the back wall, where they see only the play of shadows cast by puppeteers who are hidden from view. For these prisoners, reality consists of the images conjured up by this play of shadows, and they know not of their true nature. However, one of the prisoners escapes and discovers that the images he thought real were mere illusions produced by shadow puppets. Furthermore, when he wanders outside the cave he discovers that those puppets were, in turn, mere copies of a yet more 'real' reality (Plato 2004: 52). In Platonic metaphysics, the transcendent realm of Ideas relates to the material world, as the material world relates to the shadows in the cave.

The escaped prisoner in the cave allegory bears some resemblance to Oegema's notion of the poet-seer, as he too manages to get a glimpse of reality 'behind the veil'. However, in the poem '*fantoom*', the notion of ontological priority is occluded from the presentation: there is no mention of a real world outside the play of shadows, and the *'bevende gebeente van de lichtbron'* is not presented as disillusioning, but rather as adding to the *fantoom*'s mystery. The products of the poem's shadow puppetry—the '*kleefrige scherven*' [sticky shards], the '*diamanten pijnboom*' [diamond pine tree], and the '*diepblauwe roos*' [deeply blue rose]—retain their movement, color, texture and sound. There is no loss of their vividness, even though the poem starts with an exposition of what lies beyond the veil. Thus, while Plato's cave allegory serves to highlight a foundational hierarchical distinction between appearance and reality, Lucebert collapses this distinction.

For him, the mechanisms which produce the images we perceive are not 'more real' than the images; it is rather the interplay between cause and effect—the *passage* from the behind-the-scenes shadow play to what the audience sees—that is the true source of wonder in the poem.

For the purposes of this analysis, it is not necessary to disambiguate the *fantoom* as being either an angel (or other divine entity) or an animated figure arising through an allegorical play of shadows. In both cases, the prominence of the *fantoom* arises from its other-worldliness, and the encounter with it constitutes a 'poetic event' which inspires the poet to articulate his vision into words, an act of *ekphrasis*. The poem, being an account of the poet's vision of the *fantoom* and its workings, is an example of 'bodily language'—the medium connecting the domains of 'heavenly' myth and 'earthly' (and imperfect) reality. Crucially, the notion of 'bodily language' does *not* refer solely to the language of the earth. 'Body' has for Lucebert both a concrete-material as well as a religious-mystical meaning (Oegema 2012: 253):

> The bodily language incorporates the two realities into one, she is the medium in which 'earth' and 'heaven', the created and the uncreated, come into contact with each other. Seen from this perspective, the bodily language can be considered the formula for a temporarily successful synthesis, a formula in which the moral conflict of the earthling and mystic seem to have been temporarily allayed. (Oegema 2012: 253, trans. Au).

In the following, I want to elaborate on how this idea of 'bodily language' manifests in this poem specifically, and how it can be analyzed in cognitive-stylistic terms. I will look at the following aspects of the poem's style:

- Discursive situation and stanzaic structure
- Syntax
- Allusive imagery

Discursive situation and stanzaic structure

To begin with the basics: The discursive situation involves an implicit speaker, an implicit addressee, and an explicitly described scene, consisting of a third entity, the titular *fantoom* and various other objects and entities interacting with the *fantoom*. At no point does the speaker refer to himself, nor does he refer to the person he is addressing. All words are spent on a description of the entity and the actions that the entity undertakes or undergoes. However, this does not mean that the speaker remains a mystery to us, as the *ekphrasis* does give a sense of the subjective experience of the speaker, because we are looking at the scene through his eyes.

How does the speaker go about the description? The poem consists of 14 lines, divided into two uneven stanzas. The first stanza has 11 lines (and contains the bulk of the

ekphrastic action), while the second only has 3 lines. The primary affect suggested by the poem is one of surprise or wonder, as expressed by the opening lines of the poem: "ontoelaatbaar mooi en tegen alle maten / van de verwachting en de denkkracht" (1-2). These lines also articulate an important component of the ICM of liminality, namely the idea of 'transgression of limits and boundaries'. In the case of the first two lines, the limits take the form of, on the one hand, '*maten*' [measures], belonging to the domain of cognition (i.e. '*denkkracht*' [power of thought]); and, on the other hand, norms grounded in an as yet unspecified normative domain, of which the *fantoom* is, apparently, in flagrant violation—it being '*ontoelaatbaar mooi*' [impermissibly beautiful]. Of interest here is that the second stanza begins with the conjunction and question word '*maar hoe*' [but how], but then follows the syntax of the opening lines very closely (i.e. it displays syntactic parallelism), differing only in terms of the words used:

First stanza:

> *ontoelaatbaar mooi en tegen alle maten*
> *van de verwachting en de denkkracht* (1-2)

> [impermissibly beautiful and against all measures
> of expectation and the power of thought]

Second stanza:

> *maar hoe onverdragelijk mooi en tegen alle regels*
> *van de vertedering en de hevigheid* (12-13)

> [but how unbearably beautiful and against all rules
> of tenderness and intensity]

Taking them together, a basic skeletal structure for the poem appears. The first two lines of each stanza articulate a negation, an expression of what the *fantoom* is not. After the negative remarks follow phrases expressing what the *fantoom* is (and what it does). Consider here the differences between the two stanzas. The second stanza, due to the parallelism and its shorter length, reads as a recapitulation and condensation of the first stanza, but the conjunction '*maar*' [but] also suggests that it is some kind of rejoinder to the first stanza. The principle of relevance suggests that repetitions in a poem are meaningful. At minimum, the recapitulation has a particular function, namely to restate something that had gotten lost during the course of the first stanza's poetic elaboration. If we look at the wording of the negative statements, we can also see that there is a clear difference. The opening lines of the first stanza emphasize the domain of cognition and deontic modality ('*ontoelaatbaar*' [impermissibly]), while the

opening lines of the second stanza emphasize affect and epistemic modality (*'onverdragelijk'* [unbearably]):

First stanza (cognition):

ontoelaatbaar *mooi en tegen alle maten*
van de verwachting en de denkkracht (1-2)

[**impermissibly** beautiful and against all measures
of **expectation** and the **power of thought**]

Second stanza (affect):

*maar hoe o**nverdragelijk** mooi en tegen alle regels*
*van de **vertedering** en de **hevigheid*** (12-13)

[but how **unbearably** beautiful and against all rules
of **tenderness** and **intensity**]

One way to interpret this is to relate the two experiental domains to the length of the stanzas in which they appear. Experiencing the *fantoom* in terms of cognition results in an elaborate and overflowing description, but experiencing the *fantoom* in terms of affect results in a one line identity statement: "*een schim — een vijand — een schuiflende grijns*" [a ghost — an enemy — a shuffling grin]. The affective route is more expedient, giving rise to a bodily and also explicitly antagonistic understanding of the *fantoom*, as if to say that anything that aesthetically overpowers the subject in such a way is to be feared and rejected, categorized as an enemy. The cognitive route, on the other hand, results in introjection: the mind places itself in the middle of a thing which exerts a force of attraction or fascination on it—in the first place because the impossibility of the thing is first understood in terms of norms and expectations, and not what the cognizer can physically or emotionally bear. Hence the many words expended in the attempt to describe it—a kind of linguistic envelopment.

This highly ambiguous and complex relationship calls to mind the philosophical notion of the sublime. Consider here the general wording of the two opening lines in each stanza, and in particular the terms '*onverdragelijk mooi*' [unbearably beautiful]. The sublime refers to overpowering aesthetic experiences which are ecstatic and transcendental in nature, inducing feelings of astonishment and awe (Doran 2015: 10). Robert Doran mentions that the Burkean and Kantian formulations of the sublime contain an emphasis on "complex emotions", such as simultaneous attraction/repulsion and pleasure/pain (Doran 2015: 11), as well as the association with formlessness or unboundedness (Doran 2015: 9). There is, in the structure of this complex emotional response, a commonality between the different

theoretical concepts mentioned thus far. The object which evokes the aesthetic response, whether it is conceptualized as liminal, sublime, Platonic or divine, has an impact not only on what the subject perceives and feels and thinks, but also on the consistency of the subject himself. The emotional complexity arises because of the object's closeness and grandness, introducing an element of potential danger to the subject's experience, who runs the risk of being overwhelmed. It is not a simple, distanced aesthetic appreciation, but a very intimate encounter of something outside of the subject's everyday existence. These concepts thus refer to what are essentially threshold experiences. As Carpi notes, the term 'sublime' is derived from the closely related Latin root *sub-limen*, common also to 'liminality' (Carpi 2013: 3). For the sublime, the passage or transition manifests in terms of the subject's experience, and involve the subject being transported outside of itself (as in *ekstase*) or being elevated to a higher level of existence (as in 'transcendence').

Syntax

How is the subject's threshold experience articulated in the poem? Consider here the elaborated description given of the *fantoom*:

> en met het bevende gebeente van de lichtbron
> der liefde — een schim — ja meer dan een schaduw
> maar toch minder dan lichaam — een schim
> staande op de hoog in de lucht vertragende
> verlammende ladders der herfst en daar het
> verdriet: zijn kleefrige scherven regenend
> om den diamanten pijnboom heen en oh de zo blauwe
> de diepblauwe roos de geliefkoosde dood en ook
> weldra van de winterse tatouage de klagende draak (4-10)

> [and with the trembling bones of the light source
> of love — a specter — yes more than a ghost
> but still less than body — a specter
> standing on the high in the sky decelerating
> paralyzing ladders of autumn and there the
> sorrow: raining its sticky shards
> around the diamond pine tree and oh the so very blue
> the deeply blue rose the cherished death and also
> forthwith from the wintery tattoo the grumbling dragon]

This passage suggests two different types of transition: The first one is the temporal/seasonal transition suggested by the words '*herfst*' [autumn] and '*winterse*' [wintery]. The second transition is spatial in nature, namely the descending movement from an undetermined place

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that is 'high' to another place that is 'low'. The 'high' domain is the origin of the *fantoom*: after the opening lines, the *fantoom* is described as initially standing "*hoog in de lucht*" [high in the sky], from where it rains its "*kleefrige scherven*" [sticky shards] down below, onto the "*diamanten pijnboom*" [diamond pine tree]. Within this image schema, I associate the "*lichtbron / der liefde*" [light source / of love] with the sun or with heaven, and the "*diamanten pijnboom*" [diamond pine tree] with the earth. This association is strengthened by the unusual adjective-noun combination "*diamanten pijnboom*" [diamond pine tree]: both trees and diamonds come from the earth, and are also highly concrete and material terms. "*[L]ichtbron / der liefde*", on the other hand, consists of two quite abstract terms. I see the parallelism between the oppositions 'high ↔ low' and 'concrete ↔ abstract' as iconic: they express the poet's journey as he descends from a place of idealized abstraction to concrete and material reality.

The two domains ('heavenly' and 'earthly') seem to flow into one another. During the course of one stanza, we find ourselves suddenly among *bomen* [trees] and *rozen* [roses] and *draken* [dragons], while we started with *lichtbronnen* [light sources] and *schimmen* [specters] and *schaduwen* [shadows]. It is as if these two kinds of things are uttered in one single breath. The sense of fluidity comes about through the poem's syntax, which is characterized by a complex phrasal structure and the lack of finite verbs. The lack of finite verb forms is especially striking, as, conventionally speaking, they are required for forming full sentences. In the poem *fantoom*, the central part of the sentence is left out, leaving us with sentence fragments. Most of the information is put into other parts of the sentence, where it is expressed through non-finite verbs or words which are derived from or closely associated with verbs. An example of this is the noun phrase '*een schim staande op de hoog in de lucht vertragende verlammende ladders der herfst*' [a specter standing on the high in the sky decelerating paralyzing ladders of autumn]. Though such constructions do give a sense of things 'occurring', the lack of predication means that it is impossible to locate these things in time. Consider the following rendering of the opening passage of the poem, with tensed verbs added:

> *ontoelaatbaar mooi en tegen alle maten van de verwachting en de denkkracht*
> *en met het bevende gebeente van de lichtbron der liefde [verscheen /*
> *verschijnt / zal verschijnen] een schim — ja [de fantoom was / is / zal zijn]*
> *meer dan een schaduw maar toch minder dan lichaam — [de fantoom was / is*
> */ zal zijn] een schim (...)*

> impermissibly beautiful and against all measures of expectation and the power
> of thought and with the trembling bones of the light source of love [appeared /
> appears / will appear] a specter — yes [the phantom was / is / will be] more

than a shadow but still less than body — [the phantom was / is / will be] a
spectre

It is not possible to determine whether what is described in the poem takes place in the past, the present or the future. There is also no sense of time passing, of things following or preceding other things. The different phrases are connected with each other through the conjunction '*en*' [and] as well as a colon, but these do not give a clear sense of how things relate to each other temporally. Instead, everything seems to occur simultaneously, even as the speaker references the passing of seasons ('*der herfst*' [of autumn] and '*winterse*' [wintery]). This immediacy is expressed explicitly through the time adverb '*weldra*' [forthwith]. The length and complexity of the phrases means that this single moment is extremely dense in information. All the 'action' is located in the arguments of the sentence, and not it predicate, which foregrounds the dynamic and cognitively and affectively transgressive nature of the *fantoom* entity. It is as if the speaker, temporally dislocated, comes to this sudden and immediate realization that the *fantoom* is all of the things described, all at once.

Allusive imagery

The syntax of the poem expresses important aspects of the cognitive state of the speaker. It can be linked with one of the central components of the ICM of liminal cognition, namely spatial-temporal indeterminacy. To be precise, the syntax is iconic of the temporal dislocation of the liminal speaker, as he describes the *fantoom*, an entity which evidently cannot be described in ordinary spatial-temporal terms. The poem, being an instance of 'bodily language', thus points towards the presence of a speaker who has a need for such a special form of language.

An important aspect of this 'bodily language' is the poem's ambiguous and allusive imagery. I observed that these things appear to belong to different semantic domains: insubstantial and substantial; 'heavenly' and 'earthly'. I also speculated that the poem describes a kind of shadow puppetry, which in turn then becomes an allegory for the relationship between different ontological domains. But these are very general considerations, only weakly implied through the poem's imagery. These images consist of highly unusual combinations of participles, adjectives and nouns, which are difficult to parse denotationally. It is also unclear what the relationship is between the images. In part, this is due the poem's sentence construction, but it is also unclear how different items relate to each other by themselves. For example, in second half of the first stanza we encounter the following:

- *diamanten pijnboom* [diamond pine tree]
- *diepblauwe roos* [deeply blue rose]
- *geliefkoosde dood* [cherished death]

- *winterse tatouage* [wintery tattoo]
- *klagende draak* [grumbling dragon]

What links the [wintery tattoo] and the [grumbling dragon]? Such 'impossible' combinations of adjectives and nouns contributes to the speaker's observation that the fantoom transgresses all [boundaries of expectation and thought]. One reading strategy is to posit an underlying interpretative scheme as an implicated premise for these images appearing together. By positing a general idea—such as the idea of 'shadow puppetry' or of the 'poet-seer'—we can hypothesize about the meaning of such items as 'verlammende ladders der herfst' [paralyzing ladders of autumn] as well as their relationship with other things appearing in the poem. However, even a highly developed idea such as Oegema's 'poet-seer' framework does not fill in all the gaps in the poem, and the interpretations that arise out of this framework hold their shape only tenuously. In this sense, the play of shadows described in the poem, and the vivid though indeterminate images which result from it, mirrors the process of reading the poem. The words in the poem are like light and shadow: as their many different senses meet each other and interact with each other, vague images and interpretations appear in the mind of the reader. This process of reading conforms to another part of the ICM of cognitive liminality, namely 'inferential crawling (inferential jumping)'.

One possible type of inference available to the reader is the inference of allusions. I already suggested one possible allusion, namely the reference to Plato's allegory of the cave. There are several other images in the poem which are highly allusive. In the first place there is the mention of [dragons] in the poem, a familiar creature from mythology. This suggestion of a mythological context opens up the way for interpreting the other items as being mythological—an inferential possibility encouraged by the mention of other non-existent or 'impossible' items such as [diamond pine trees]. However, there are also some items which have a more direct inter-textual link. The first of these is the 'diepblauwe roos' [deeply blue rose]. This is a well-known symbol in Western and Eastern mythology, but it also appears in the work of German Romanticist writer Novalis, specifically in his unfinished novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. It has a thematically salient meaning, as it stands for something other-wordly and unreachable, though deeply desired (Jordinson 2017: web page). It is a well-known philosophical and literary symbol. For example, it was the name of the *Blue Rose* Russian Symbolist group, for whom it represented the "higher, spiritual reality" which was for them the object of their artistic quest (Bowlt 1976: 571).

Another inter-textual reference is '*schuiflende grijns*' [shuffling grin] in the final line, which more directly foregrounds the concept of liminality. The '*schuiflende grijns*' may be linked to *Alice in Wonderland*'s Cheshire cat, who at one point appears to fade away—taking on a spectral quality similar to Lucebert's ghostly figure—until only a disembodied grin is left: "a grin without a cat" (Carroll 2009: 59). Of interest here is the inherent liminality of the grin, which deviates from the usual image schema that obtains between the grin and the face

or body, namely the relationship between parts and wholes. The grin is figured as a delineated entity, while it usually appears only as a component in a larger delineated entity, either a face or a body. It is closely related to the mouth, which relates to the body not just as an another part, but as a threshold of the body. It separates the inside of the body from the outside (Thomassen 2014: 91). It is possible that there are other inter-textual references which I have not noticed, due to the lack of background knowledge. What is interesting is that the two inter-textual references posited so far are from two very different sources. Lucebert possibly alludes to many different literary discourses: myth, German Romanticism, children's literature. This suggests an inter-textual eclecticism: the poem borrows from and moves between many different discourses—a form of literary code-switching.

5.3 Parallel text translation

For my translation of the poem '*fantoom*', I want to be mindful of Gutt's notion of direct translation. Direct translation, as opposed to indirect translation, involves conveying not just *what* was said, but also *how* it was said (Boase-Beier 2004: 277). In cognitive stylistic terms, this means replicating the structure of weak implicatures embodied in the original poem, and the linguistic means by which those implicatures are evoked. However, because this process of inference depends on an interaction between reader, poem and context, any rendering of this structure of weak implicatures is only ever partial and interpretative. My contention is that, in practice, this means aiming to preserve ambiguity and being attentive to how these ambiguities arise. Additionally, this also means articulating the reasons for translation choices in a shared vocabulary, such that they are recognizable and amenable to discussion and critique.

My starting point for approaching the ambiguities of this particular poem is the concept of cognitive liminality. In my stylistic analysis, I outlined a number of stylistic features which become very salient when interpreting the poem's as an expression of cognitive liminality. These are 1) the ambiguous and allusive imagery, 2) the lack of finite verbs and complex phrasal structure, and 3) the stanzaic parallelism and the syntactical deviations within this parallelism. Beyond these thematically salient aspects, the poem also displays a strong musicality, through its alliteration, consonance and meter. I shall discuss some particular instances of the poem's musicality in the translation annotations. The musicality of the poem can also be given thematic significance: It can be connected to the tension between cognition and affect foregrounded through the poem's stanzaic parallelism and lexical deviations (e.g. '*verwachting en de denkkracht*' [expectation and the power of thought] vs. '*vertedering en de hevigheid*' [softness and ferocity]). The sonic properties of the poem emphasize the idea that the titular *fantoom* entity has a strong affective component: its meaning transgresses the boundaries of ordinary language, and cannot be fully expressed through the meaning of words alone. It requires also the words material features, its sonic textures and shapes. However, because musicality is a very common feature of poetry as such, the link between sound and liminal meaning is tenuous at best. Nevertheless, it is an important feature of the poem's style, and I shall try to replicate it when possible.

Source text and target text in full:

fantoom	**phantom**
ontoelaatbaar mooi en tegen alle maten van de verwachting en de denkkracht en met het bevende gebeente van de lichtbron der liefde — een schim — ja meer dan een schaduw maar toch minder dan lichaam — een schim staande op de hoog in de lucht vertragende	impermissibly beautiful and against all measures of expectation and the power of thought and with the trembling bones of the light source of love — a specter — yes more than a shadow but still less than body — a specter standing on the paralyzing ladders of autumn

verlammende ladders der herfst en daar het verdriet: zijn kleefrige scherven regenend om den diamanten pijnboom heen en oh de zo blauwe de diepblauwe roos de geliefkoosde dood en ook weldra van de winterse tatouage de klagende draak maar hoe onverdragelijk mooi en tegen alle regels van de vertedering en de hevigheid een schim — een vijand — een schuiflende grijns	amidst the clouds decelerating and there the sorrow: raining its sticky fragments 'round the diamond pine tree and oh the so blue the deeply blue rose and sweet death's close and also forthwith from the wintery tattoo the grumbling dragon but how unbearably beautiful and against all rules of softness and ferocity a specter — a villain — a shuffling grin

Source text and target text, line by line:

#	Dutch	English
	fantoom	phantom
1	ontoelaatbaar mooi en tegen alle maten	impermissibly beautiful and against all measures
2	van de verwachting en de denkkracht	of expectation and the power of thought
3	en met het bevende gebeente van de lichtbron	and with the trembling bones of the light source[1]
4	der liefde—een schim—ja meer dan een schaduw	of love—a specter[2]—yes more than a shadow
5	maar toch minder dan lichaam—een schim	but still less than body—a specter
6	staande op de hoog in de lucht vertragende	standing on the paralyzing ladders of autumn
7	verlammende ladders der herfst en daar het	amidst the clouds decelerating[3] and there the
8	verdriet: zijn kleefrige scherven regenend	sorrow: raining its sticky fragments
9	om den diamanten pijnboom heen en oh de zo blauwe	'round the diamond pine tree and oh the so blue
10	de diepblauwe roos de geliefkoosde dood en ook	the deeply blue rose[4] and sweet death's close[5] and also

11	weldra van de winterse tatouage de klagende draak	forthwith from the wintery tattoo the grumbling[6] dragon
	[witregel]	[blank line]
12	maar hoe onverdragelijk mooi en tegen alle regels	but how unbearably beautiful and against all rules[7]
13	van de vertedering en de hevigheid	of softness and ferocity[8]
14	een schim—een vijand—een schuiflende grijns	a specter—a villain[9]—a shuffling grin

5.4 Annotations

1. **trembling bones of the light source**: I considered 'trembling bones of the light bulbs', which would have preserved the alliteration in the ST. However, I opted for the non-specificity expressed by '*bron*' [source], instead of the very specific 'bulb'. There is something to be said for the SL 'trembling bones of the light bulb of love' on its own terms, as it evokes the image of a light bulb with its filament. However, this adds the notion of technology to the TT. The English 'bulb' also has vegetal connotations, being derived from the Latin *bulbus* [onion] (Glare 2012: 267). Choosing 'bulb' would be misplaced at this point in the poem, as in my reading the poem begins in the realm of abstraction, before moving downwards to the 'earthly' realm of concretion. This journey is reflected in the lexical choices.

2. **specter**: The word is somewhat overlexicalized in both Dutch and English. The difficulty is finding the right alternative and balancing this alternative against the two near-synonyms used in the ST: '*fantoom*' and '*schaduw*'. For these two terms the literal translations 'phantom' and 'shadow' can be used; however for '*schim*' no such literal translation exists. But the translation for '*schim*' needs to have a similar relationship to these two terms, i.e. roughly equivalent to 'phantom' and *more* than a 'shadow' in some sense. Additionally, it should preserve the alliteration between '*schim*' and '*schaduw*'. Some possibilities are given by in the OED entry for "phantom": 'apparition', 'spectre', 'spirit', 'ghost' (OED 2006: e-book). I also considered 'mirage' and 'wraith'. This collection of terms embodies a number of different semantic domains which are thematically significant: the notions of death, the afterlife, dreaming, imagination, illusion, insubstantiality, appearance and perception. I think the best option is one that finds a balance between all these semantic domains—which preserves the openness of inferential possibilities in the

original—and also allows for preserving some of the poem's musicality (e.g. see annotation 8). I excluded 'mirage' and 'apparition', because they lack a strong association with the domain of death and the afterlife; I also ruled out 'wraith', 'spirit' and 'ghost', because these have too strong an association with death and the afterlife. This leaves 'specter', which strikes a nice balance between the different semantic and musical demands. Its etymology (ultimately from *specio*, 'to look at, behold') (Glare 2012: 1984) also points towards the centrality of the poem's *ekphrastic* action: the *fantoom* is fundamentally something that the speaker is looking at and struggling to describe.

3. **paralyzing ladders of autumn amidst the clouds decelerating**: A literal rendering of the ST noun phrase foregoes a lot of the original's musicality. In particular, the assonance and consonance: '*de hoog in de lucht vertragende verlammende ladders der herfst*'. Important here is also the repetition of the d-consonant in the rest of the poem: e.g. '*verdriet*', '*diamanten pijnboom*', '*diepblauwe roos*', '*geliefkoosde dood*'. Changing the word order and substituting the synecdoche 'clouds' allows for the TT construction "the p**a**ra**ly**zing **ladd**ers of **aut**u**m**n **a**mi**dst** the **cl**ou**d**s de**cel**erating", which goes a long way in reproducing the sound. I also considered substituting the adjective 'despondent' for the more literal 'sorrow', in order to maximize the musicality of the line: "[...] paralyzing la**dd**ers of autumn ami**d**st the clou**d**s **d**ecelerating and there **d**espon**d**ent". But this actually changes the meaning significantly. Instead, I opted for the more faithful 'sorrow'.

4. **deeply blue rose**: The inter-textual significance of this image opens up the way for the slightly more general translation 'deeply blue flower', as Novalis uses the term '*blaue Blume*' (Novalis 2008: 9). In deciding between these two I considered which allowed for preserving the ST rhyme '*roos-dood*'.

5. **sweet death's close**: The more literal 'cherished death' is possible, but this completely foregoes the ST rhyme "de *diepblauwe roos de geliefkoosde dood*". My translation is somewhat awkward, but reproduces some of the original's musicality: "the d**ee**ply blue r**o**se and sw**ee**t death's cl**o**se". I also considered 'sweet death's throes', but this adds a very violent and negative association to the line.

6. **grumbling dragon:** A more literal option is 'complain'. However, grumbling is close enough, as 'to grumble' means: 'to mutter in discontent' (OED 2006: e-book). This choice also compensates for the loss of assonance and consonance of the ST '*klagende draak*'.

7.   **against all rules**: The SL *'regels'* has a double meaning. It can mean both 'rules' as well as 'lines' (of verse). The TL 'lines' is possible, but its double meaning derives from a very different underlying metaphor. Using 'lines' would have added a strong visual connotation (i.e. as in an 'outline' of a shadow) not present in the ST. 'Lines' can also be both curved or straight, while 'rules' imply the notion of straightness or rightness dfrom which are derived also its normative connotations (OED 2006: e-book).

8.   **softness and ferocity:** Other options are 'endearment' and 'tenderness' for SL *'vertedering'*, and 'intensity'; and 'vehemence' and 'fierceness' for SL *'hevigheid'*, though 'intensity' is probably most accurate. I opted for the combination 'softness and ferocity' on the basis of its musicality, which extends to both the lines before and after: "against all **r**ules / of **sof**tness and **fero**city / a **s**pecter — a **vill**ain — a **shuffl**ing grin"

9.   **villain**: More accurate is 'foe' or 'enemy'. However, 'foe' is too short and 'enemy' is too long and dissonant. A key component of the final line in the ST is the rhythmic intensification of the enumeration, with each successive noun phrase increasing in length—the final one being the longest and consonant with both of the others: "*een schim* (2 syllables), *een vijand* (3 syllables), *een schuiflende grijns* (5 syllables)".

Conclusion

Throughout my investigation, I worked towards answering the basic question of how the analytical and conceptual resources of cognitive stylistics can aid in translating the liminal poetics of Lucebert's 'fantoom'. This research question was significant in multiple ways. Firstly, I wanted to explore the notion of 'liminality', because I had the intuition it would be valuable for understanding Lucebert's work. Secondly, I was also interested in developing a cognitive stylistic approach towards liminality, because I saw an opportunity to bring into contact two disciplinary domains which have so far seen little interaction with each other. Liminality, being rooted in anthropology, fits into a disciplinary context which emphasizes the differences between cultures and languages. Cognitive stylistics, on the other hand, focuses on what human beings have in common. However, liminality has the distinction of being considered a universal phenomenon even in a disciplinary context which eschews all universalism (Turner 1969: 3).

As a concept, 'liminality' invites application in many different domains of human experience. It refers to rituals of social transition present in all cultures. Starting from this specific usage, its meaning has since been expanded to encompass a huge variety of more general and abstract types of 'transition' and 'inbetweenness'. This has been a source of difficulty in my investigation, as the challenge was to balance the concept's potential for abstraction and generalization against its utility as an analytical concept for very localized translational problems. Broadening the scope of the concept too much risks making it so general that it loses utility, but narrowing the scope means that the range of possible use cases is diminished.

In order to preserve the usefulness of the concept, I sought to carefully distinguish between different applications of the concept in existing scholarship. Several important distinctions can be made. In the first place, the 'liminal' refers to a very concrete and specific stage in a social ritual, *rites de passages*. The liminal stage is the in-between stage, where the subject undergoing the social ritual has relinquished his previous social status, but has not yet assumed a new social status (Andrews et al. 2015: 132). In the second place, the 'liminal' refers to a variety of metaphorical types of inbetweenness, which are not necessarily sociocultural in nature (Turner 1982: 29). With regard to literature, the 'liminal' can refer to, for instance, the liminality of literature as a whole (Turner 1982: 32-33), or of the liminality of experimental or transitional genres of literature. These types of liminality should be distinguished from the specific type of liminality in literature which I was especially interested in, namely 'liminality' as referring to the representation of specifically liminal items in narratives and text-worlds, i.e. liminal places, temporalities and subjectivities. On the basis of my research, I formulated an ICM of liminality, consisting a set of properties common to prototypical liminal phenomena. This ICM of liminality can be used to determine whether particular items in literary narratives can be classified as liminal or not.

An important form of liminality is 'cognitive liminality'. This refers to the mental attributes of a subject undergoing a liminal experience. In addition to an ICM of liminal items, I also outlined an ICM of cognitive liminality, based on studies of Lane (2014) and Bernini (2015). This model of cognitive liminality consists of a set of mental attributes common to subjects undergoing liminal experiences. These attributes have to do with a subject's sense of time, space and self-identity, as well as with his linguistic, inferential and 'teleodynamic' faculties.

Crucially, these attributes can be translated into the language of cognitive-stylistics. Relevance Theory, as formulated by Sperber and Wilson (2001), gives an account of literary interpretation in terms of weak implicatures. A text's stylistic properties give rise to inferences about the cognitive state of the cognizer 'behind the text'. The reader reconstructs the mental state of the implied author, narrator or character who is the inferred cause for specific stylistic phenomena (Boase-Beier 2008: 280). What is important is that weak implicatures are assumptions that the reader *may* supply to make utterances comply with the principle of relevance (Boase-Beier 2008: 280). Any particular inference is therefore not final, but is only one of many possible interpretative possibilities. Thus, the attributes of liminal cognition can be expressed iconically, by replicating the structure of weak implicatures that a liminal mind would have. The liminal mind, because of his inbetweenness, can be characterized as being dominated by uncertainty—uncertainty about his temporal and spatial surroundings, himself, and his goals and desires.

To translate the poem 'fantoom', however, it was not sufficient to merely identify the presence of weak implicatures embodied through the poem's style. These are, after all, very general features of poetry. In order to substantiate the identification of 'liminal cognition', such inferential features must be connected to more directly expressed representations of liminal items. I found the basis for such a representation in the work of Oegema (2012), who discusses the religious-mystical poetics in Lucebert's poetry. Central to this poetics is the figure of a poet-seer, who undergoes a mystical experience which he cannot properly articulate in ordinary language (Oegema 2012: 248). The poet-seer is liminal, because he is caught in the conflict between his mystical experience on the one hand, and the ordinary world on the other. The answer to this *communicative* problem is 'bodily language', which is a language which can bridge the gap between the different domains (Oegema 2012: 253).

For the poem 'fantoom' in particular, I identified a number of stylistic phenomena which consist in this 'bodily language'. These are 1) the poem's allusive and ambiguous imagery, 2) its stanzaic parallelism and lexical deviations, and 3) its complex phrasal structure and lack of finite verbs. In translating the poem 'fantoom' I sought to replicate these stylistic features, as well as the poem's sonic and rhythmic features.

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