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Exploring Fantastical Liminality in C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master in English Literature, and Civilization.**

Submitted by:

BELKHIRI Hana Khouloud

Supervised by:

Mrs. BENTAHAR Soumia

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Abstract

The current dissertation seeks to provide an analytical study that aims at exploring the significance of fantastical liminality in C.S Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*. To fulfill this aim, reading the novel through the lens of Arnold van Gennep's and Victor Turner's theory of liminality will be of great pertinence in explaining the experiences of the characters in the context of fantastical liminality. The characters, as this study contends, can be transformed in a secondary world by using a *limen* or a portal. The confrontation between the two worlds needs a portal or a door which serves as a means for the characters' transportation. The portal, this research seeks to demonstrate, is considered as a state of liminality which serves as a threshold that leads to spawn a fantastical world that is different in space and time. In this regard, the threshold makes an impact on the characters as it makes them experience a state of liminality and expose them to confront a completely different world from theirs.

Keywords: Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Fantastical liminality, Threshold, Secondary world.

Dedication:

I dedicate this work to my beloved mother and my dear father for their love, devotion, and unlimited sacrifice.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Postmodern writers had different strategies in expressing their insights through literature, especially in the realm of fantasy genre which is believed to enable readers to explore different worlds of boundless possibilities. Yet, it is hard to determine why people tend to read postmodern fantasy as they often struggle to comprehend and grasp its complicated fantastical narrative methodology. In this sense, Fantasy genre tends to use several convoluted literary elements distributed in the frame of narration, which justifies the diversified works produced. Among these works are Portal-quest fantasies which are frequently used by fantasy authors to demonstrate the power dynamics embedded in the element of the ‘portal’ or the ‘doorway’ as it creates a confrontation between ultimately two different worlds, the real and the fantastical.

As the name suggests, portal-quest fantasy denotes a subgenre that takes up the experience of ‘seeking a way to pass through’ as the main focus of its narrative construction. This experience cannot be realized without the presence of a ‘threshold’ which allows entrance into an otherworldly sphere. Hence, the threshold is the element that leads to the world of fantasy and which can be regarded, in this context, as a liminal space i.e. a space which neither belongs to the actual setting of the story nor to the other fantastical dimension, but just in-between. However, our dissertation is not that much interested in the notion of ‘liminal space’ since this label is perceived as an umbrella term that covers many other notions like, the margin, third space and fantastical liminality. The latter constitutes the core focus of our research as it allows for a closer examination of the significance lying in the interplay between the threshold, liminality and the fantastic. Therefore, fantastical liminality plays a significant role in constructing, and most importantly understanding the magical aura that fantasy writers tend to create in their portal-quest fantasies.

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Farah Mendelsohn, the professor of literary history, has introduced the perception of portal-quest fantasies in her book *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008). Portal-quest fantasies are presented by Mendelsohn as a genre that highlights two intrinsically inextricable aspects: the connectedness between the portal with the quest as well as the beginning of a new exploration. In discussing the role of the character in relation to fantastical liminality, Tzvetan Todorov, in his book *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach* assumes that the character has poor knowledge about undergoing an experience of liminality in a magical dimension. He further contends that the very confrontation between the world which the character belongs to and the one he is about to access creates a sense of confusion within him.

In this context, one of the most significant portal-quest fantasies representing and depicting the power of fantastical liminality in giving meaning to the experience of the characters is C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Received as a hugely remarkable and acclaimed postmodern writer of the twentieth century, C.S. Lewis has expressed his genuine interest in using the portal as a means for the characters' experience of transportation which can be considered as liminal in his novel. Lewis's protagonists in *The Chronicles of Narnia* undergo many transformations that lead them to become entirely different and form new personalities. One factor that helps steer this transformation is passing through a 'limen'.

So, it is Lewis's artistic act of immersing a liminal stance into the depths of a magical dimension that draws our attention to seek explanation. Accordingly, the main objective of our current research is to explore C.S. Lewis's representation of fantastical liminality in his novel, *The Chronicles of Narnia* through the characters' experiences. To do so, it is necessary to make use of liminality as both, a theory and an analytical tool. As a theory, liminality was first introduced in the field of anthropology by Arnold van Gennep in his book, *The Rites of Passage* (1909). He defines it as comprising three stages which have become considered and

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read as sites of initiation and empowerment in fantasy fiction. Moreover, Dara Downey in her book *Landscapes of Liminality between Space and Place* (2016) has dealt with liminality as an analytical tool that allows reading and understanding the transition periods of the characters, which she believes are liminal spaces that play a significant role in the characters' self-identification.

Besides, a number of writings have been demonstrating the power of liminal space in fantasy. Rakel' Elizabeth Sampson's 'Just Passing Through': Liminal Space and Re-enchantment in C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* (2009) is considered to be the most relevant in this context . The writer of this research paper has discussed the use of liminal space in the novel. Moreover, Marius Conkan in his article "The Redeemed Land of Narnia and its Internal Dystopias" (2012) has drawn attention to the dystopian structures identifying the novel as 'liminal fantasy'. Another work that seems to be more interested in reading the elements of fantasy in Lewis's novel is Asep Shofian Syahrullah's "The Aspects of Fantasy in C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*" (2012).

However, what seems to escape most research papers is the act of looking into the experiences of the characters through the lens of fantastical liminality. Since most of these researches' interests fall in reading the characters' experiences either with relation to liminal space or in the overall context of fantasy, the study is thus intended to explore the significance of the interplay between liminality (a notion that identifies the experience of the characters) and fantasy (the general atmosphere of the story) that engenders in conceptualizing the 'land of Narnia' as a fantastical liminal space.

Hence, the significance of this dissertation lies in the fact that it considers the setting of 'Narnia' as representing a liminal stance that pushes the characters to experiment and dwell in a magical dimension that is remarkably strange and obscure. In this sense, the reason

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behind choosing this novel is that it offers a prolific context to explore the author's intention behind using liminality in a portal-quest fantasy.

Thus, the main question this dissertation attempts to address is: how does the interplay between liminality and fantasy help read the experiences of the characters within the magical land of Narnia? In addition, further questions are needed in order to fulfill the aims of this research:

- What features characterize portal-quest fantasies?
- Can liminality be considered as an analytical tool?
- How does fantastical liminality function in portal-quest fantasies?
- How are the characters of Lucy and Edmund Pevensies presented before experiencing the fantastical world? How does the doorway affect them? How does liminality influence them?
- Is it possible that changes which occurred on the behavioral level of Lucy are due to Narnia experience? And is the secondary world of Narnia considered as a liminal space?

In order to answer the above mentioned questions, we consider it necessary to use an analytically-based approach that considers Turner and Genep's critical theory of liminality as an essential analytical tool that is meant to help reach the objectives of our research. In this context, we argue the following hypotheses:

- * C.S. Lewis's novel, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, does represent a fantastical liminality that helps read the experience of the characters.
- * The protagonists in the novel are influenced by the first experience with the doorway.
- * The behavioral changes Lucy as well as Edmund undergo after going through Narnia, are entirely due to experiencing liminality.

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In order to conduct a proper academic research, the current dissertation is divided into three chapters. Chapter one will serve as a general background for this research as it contains a body of theoretical assumptions of the study. It will include the nature of the fantasy genre as John Clute and Todorov perceive it. It will also tackle the history of fantasy to delve into its roots and the postmodern manifestations of it. It will also deal with the construction of portal-quest fantasy works as established by Farah Mendelsohn. The second chapter is largely theoretical in orientation. It lays the conceptual groundwork for the literary analysis. It will examine the concept of liminality or the threshold, which arguably will participate in affecting the analytical chapter. This chapter will delve into Genep's and Turner's ideologies on the concept of liminality. It will also illustrate the significance of the notion of liminal space. The third chapter will adopt an analytical study that aims at investigating the significance of the entrance and the way it is used to usher characters of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, from a real world into space where they experience liminality. The focus will be on two dominant characters: Lucy and Edmund Pevensies. It will pursue the events leading to the emergence of new characters, both of Lucy and Edmund.

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I.1. Introduction

I.2. Fantasy Genre

I.3. History of Fantasy

I.3.1. Ancient Fantasy

I.3.2. the Genre of Fantasy in a Postmodern Context

I.4. Construction of Fantasy

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I.1. Introduction

The postmodern fantasy literature has become an extremely popular phenomenon. Readers of fantasy genre are attracted and fascinated by its mystique, magic and all the supernatural elements that surround the fantasy genre. Therefore, this chapter will provide the theoretical background of fantasy. The first part starts with the definition of the fantasy genre since fantasy is not a new concept the second title is built up to dig on the origins and the historical context of fantasy which came into existence from the ancient mythologies. Moreover, the construction of fantasy is dealt with in the next title, relying on Farah Mendelsohn's toolkit, in which it sheds the lights on the main element: Portal-quest fantasy.

I.2. Fantasy Genre

Fantasy is not an easy-to-understand genre, as it has always triggered the interest of scholars who are still arguing and discussing its definitions. So, definitions of fantasy are still blurred and not straightforward (Clute 396). The word genre comes from the French term kind of a literary type or class. As mentioned in the Literary Terms Dictionary, satire, epic, tragedy, lyric were the major classical genres. Yet the term and the concept genre was not widely used until the beginning of the 20th century. A genre according to Oxford dictionary is a category of art, music or literature. Many things can be put in the genre; most chapter books are parts of a vast genre described fiction which only means that those books which tell a story came from the author's imagination. However, fiction alone does not give us many details about what is in the book thus they are divided up into more specific fiction genres.

Basically, the genres derived from classical texts, are divided into three major genres: prose, poetry and drama. René Wellek in his work, *Theory of Literature*, more specifically in the chapter on literary genres, he traces their development and deduces "literary genre should

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be seen as a grouping of literary works theoretically based on both outer form (structure) and inner form (subject)” (355). According to Wellek’s view, the modern theory of genres is blurred as it does not follow the concrete genre rules and blending them for the purpose of creating other new genres (335). Thus, each literary genre can be achieved by following the traditional rules and concepts or seeking uniqueness by deviating from the flat standards. However, accomplishing this cannot be certain in both ways.

Furthermore, as mentioned above there are three major genres and the rest are all sub-genres and even the subgenres have other subgenres. In each of the prose, drama, poetry there are subgenres also, in other words, smaller group or category; for instance, the novels and legends are prose subgenres. In addition to that, there are lots of genres in literature to choose under the umbrella of fiction, for instance: fantasy, science fiction, romance, folklore, mystery, and thriller.

Since this piece of research is about exploring fantastical liminality, we should define the fantasy genre. There is no branch in literature as dynamic and diversified as the branch of Fantasy fiction. Fantastic fiction is a field subjected to change. Fantasy is not an easy genre, a wide variety of scholars as Clute and Grant have been for years and still arguing about the definitions of the term fantasy genre. In their *Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, they define fantasy as follow “Fantasy certainly when conceived as being in contrast to realism...in the late 20th century, however, the term fantastic has more and more frequently been substituted for ‘fantasy’ when modes are discussed.” (337) Because of the lack of consensus, any research dealing with this literary form should give attention to different definitions. In literary criticism, for instance, the Fantastic is a term linked to the supernatural elements.

Tzvetan Todorov in his book *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to Literary Genre*, defined the fantastic under the title “*littérature fantastique*”, which is translated to “fantastic

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literature”, as “that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural events” (25). Therefore, postmodern fantastic works lead the audience to a time and a world that are different and not similar to the contemporary society. However, the story remains true to the morals and human conditions because there is always a justification for the reasons and the way how the main character’s transition into a fictional or supernatural world (Clute 95).

Therefore, not all Fantastic works seek or create the same effect on the reader, and not all of the literary works which contain supernatural creatures or elements are built in the same way. Therefore, there are various kinds of fantasy that share many concepts and themes in common however they are characterized by multiple differences between them. The events in any fantasy work are not expected especially if the reader is not familiar with this kind of fiction works.

Apparently, definitions of the fantasy genre are blurred and not straightforward. Both of the terms are defined differently by scholars, and there is a lack of consensus on a precise definition and classification. However, it is agreed that the term genre is used in modern literary theory to denote a notion that blends different concepts to come up with something new. By blending new concepts, it brought something that did not exist before and that is what happened with postmodern fantasy.

I.2.2. History of Fantasy

Fantasy is not a new concept for literature as it has always been a part of it. Fantasy as a literary form is considered arguably as one of the earliest forms. Therefore, it took roots from ancient myths, and it gains increased popularity in fiction world in the second half of

the twentieth century. One reason is that, between the first and the second world wars, people tended to read more fantasy works and it became more popular.

I.3.1. Ancient Fantasy

Fantasy is a relatively modern genre it has developed mostly from the WWII onwards. However, if we trace back the literary history of fantasy it has started since the ancient mythology, it explained and provided answers to the working of, nature. For instance, the story of Prometheus, the titan, who worked with gods and created humans and felt pity for them. So he gifted them with fire which gave them the power to harness nature and ultimately dominate the natural order consequently Zeus¹ punished him for that (Clute 412). Additionally, Fantasy borrowed some elements from oral tradition too.

In this vein, Rosemary Jackson in her book *Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion* says: “As a perennial literary mode, fantasy can be traced back to ancient myths, legends, folklore, carnival art...” (51). After that, she lists the fantasy features in Romantic, Realist and Victorian literature, for instance, the gothic tales, works of Bronte and Lewis Carroll. As it borrowed elements from the earliest texts, such as the Gilgamesh equals all the ancient Greeks, Arabia and Sumaria. The Arabian fantasy, for instance, is derived from oriental fantasy and we all know Scheherazade’s stories (Stapleford 20). Some elements are borrowed from such books as the battle between good and evil which is quite a common trait in fantasy. Moreover, the kind of quite active gods or goddesses, who wander the earth, and sort of medals in the affair of humans is quite common for instance in the stories of the Ancient Greek Gods who are also common in the fantasy form.

¹ Zeus is, « The supreme god, the son of Cronus (whom he dethroned) and Rhea, and husband of Hera. Zeus was the protector and ruler of humankind, the dispenser of good and evil, and the god of weather and atmospheric phenomena (such as rain and thunder).”

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The Middle Age is probably one of the main time periods for fantasy due to the high fantasy² and depicts some of the medieval culture. Furthermore, a new literary form of epic fantasy showed up by combining some of the elements of classical and heroic epic. First, the concept of a hero, a great brave hero, and the storytelling of how the hero perhaps becomes a hero is quite common in fantasy. Secondly, the heroic epic gave the new genre the supernatural, such as elves, and ghosts. Also, it is noticed in the way of dressing on the weapon, armory, cooking and the concept of knights, such as, Beowulf the work that has been written by an anonymous author (Clute 319).

From the end of the 18th century onwards, is a period when it all happens for the fantasy genre. People were highly interested in supernatural things, thereof characters like Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1899) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) appeared for the first time. So all these things and works lead up to what is considered to be the first fantasy novel. The writer was called George MacDonald. Although he has many works and wrote many books, the one entitled *Phantastes* (1858) is considered by many to be the first fantasy work. It is called *Phantastes*, and it has a sub-title which is a *Fairy Romance for Men and Women*. The latter was not a fairy tale written for children; however, it was meant to be read by adults, and that is a sort of breaking point. Michael J Partridge in his essay, C S Lewis and George MacDonald says that "George MacDonald was at his best as a myth-maker and it was the quality of cheerfulness in his work that captured Lewis's imagination." Thus, C. S Lewis was influenced by MacDonald's works so he admits, "I have never concealed the fact that I regarded him as my master; indeed I fancy I have never written a book in which I did not quote from him." (Michael J Partridge)

² High Fantasy, "fantasies set in OTHERWORLDS specifically secondary WORLDS, and which deal with matters affecting the destiny of those worlds."

Before the existence of Postmodernism, there were fantastic stories and they are mainly published in pulp magazines printed on cheap paper before the television. So, they were not expensive to buy, many people afford them and these magazines contain detective stories, horror, and science fiction. Then, everything has changed between the 60's and 70's and it developed a lot (Clute 336).

I.3.2. The Genre of Fantasy in a Postmodern Context

Fantasy hits a postmodern stage with a remarkable speed which causes some chaos in the world of literature. In other words, it becomes tricky to determine the genre under which we can classify a fantastical literary work. Nevertheless, fantasy literature becomes more popular in our era. Luckily, for modern-day readers, fantasy was given the full attention of adults and was raised to the level of its own genre. Fantasy genre was dominated by the Inklings³, in the postmodern era.

By the rise of Postmodernism, many fantasy writers appeared with marvelous titles such as J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, and C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The Inklings were the reason behind the rise of this genre at that period and later. Their titles encouraged many writers; they viewed that writers are not supposed to be frightened from fantasy. Fantasy genre became popular which lead writers to start adopting it because it was a commercial genre. In this vein, Brian Stableford asserts: "the modern commercial genre of fantasy came into being when it did and in the format that became typical of it. Tolkien was its Homer, *The Lord of the Rings* its *Iliad* and *Odyssey*." (Stableford 16) Science fiction was popular, but after the coming of Tolkien's work, everything changed. It was published in paperback which made it possible to reach all those who could not afford expensive

³The Inklings: informal group of writers that included C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien and that met in Oxford, Oxfordshire, England, in the 1930s and '40s. The Inklings held meetings twice a week, with six to eight members typically attending in Oxford for beer and wide-ranging conversation.

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hardbacks. The low prices and the fantasy works that were reprinted were some of the factors that helped to establish fantasy as a genre. So, after the coming of the inklings, the notion to the fantasy genre changed.

In 1937, Tolkien published the *Hobbit* in which he introduced a new being that changed the common perspective in fantasy. In Tolkien's work *The Hobbit* and by making him an ordinary man, he demonstrates that it is not necessary to link fantasy works with great warriors or wizards (Mendelsohn and James). Therefore, this new perspective in children's fantasy makes the child focus on the small man who can manage the actions and consequences like an adult or a magnificent creature. Tolkien was the source of inspiration for many writers. Many notions and works were created which, added to the current era many concepts like metafiction. Thus, in a postmodern context Fantasy genre is perceived to be characterized by the emergence of a new strand, adult fantasy. Children's fantasy was going strong while adult's was still struggling and trying to find its way through popularity and approbation. In this scope, there are many titles which can be considered as the best in the postmodern era, for instance, Roald Dahl's works *Witches* (1983) and *Matilda* (1988). Those titles were and remain popular all over the world.

Many postmodern fantasy writers tended to use different convoluted elements and cross the boundaries between genres. In this sense, Stapleford says, "Contemporary fantasy... the tensions between the newly defined genre's various components were considerably complicated." (61) Thus, a new genre appeared and exceeded expectations. The subgenres of fantasy flourished, and new subgenres appeared in the 1970's. Fantasy and science fiction were considered as two different and separate genres. However, writers mixed between the two, which created a new subgenre of science fantasy. To illustrate, "The popularization of the chimerical "steampunk" subgenre of science fantasy in the 1980s encouraged a dramatic

increase in extravagant alternative histories accommodating practical magical disciplines.” (Stapleford75) the same happened with horror and animal fantasy. Over time, fantasy became more diverse because of blending elements; by adopting older forms and adding new ones and the ability to deploy such strategies is what makes postmodern fantasy well recognized (250).

I.2.3. Construction of Fantasy

One of the genres of fiction is fantasy; the books that have dragons, wizards, unicorns, and elves; those kinds of stories are called fantasy as mentioned above. Fantasy basically means imaginary and comes from an older word that means visions or dreams, the same old words that gave us *phantom*. Fantasy books come from imagination, and all fiction books come from imagination; what make fantasy exceptional are its elements.

Thus, the fantasy novel can be formed by using several elements distributed in the frame narration. For this reason, it is necessary to deal with and basically understand the author’s construction of fantasy worlds, in addition to the techniques and strategies she used to create and come up with these otherworldly worlds. In this regard, Farah Mendelsohn in her *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008) intends to provide a toolkit to deal with fantasy. She introduces four categories; each one has its set of rhetorical structure. One of the significant elements of constructing a fantasy work is the portal-quest fantasy according to Farah Mendelsohn, especially in fairy tales. In this section, the portal-quest will be described and clarified.

I.4.1. Portal-Quest Fantasy

As more readily accessible to use fantastic elements in the portal as in quest fantasies in which, “a character leaves her family surroundings and passes through a portal into an

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unknown place” (Mendelsohn 01). In both elements portal as well as quest fantasies, the character or the protagonist is typically a normal person who passes through a portal or a door to reach a mysterious location, place or even a world. Though, it is not necessarily to consider all portal fantasies as quest fantasies.

Moreover, in the portal and quest fantasy the reader is tied to the protagonist and depends on him for decoding and explanations, thus it is a “companion audience” (01). Commonly, the narrator of fantasy works or tales is the third person. Since the story is being told in an omniscient perspective, it allows the audience to see and know everything about the characters; simply because the third person omniscient is a godlike narrator who is supposed to know every single thing about the story. It allows the author to move to different characters easily as it gives many interpretations to the story. The points mentioned create a stronger relationship between the reader and the story (01).

Mendelsohn asserts that Clute defines portals as follows, “they litter the world of the fantastic,” she adds, “making the transition between this world and another; from our time to another time, from youth to adulthood.” (qtd, in Mendelsohn 01). As explained by both Mendelsohn and Clute, in fantasy works, the author focuses on the transition between two different worlds, times, or even stages as from youth to adulthood. Thus, the transition period between two places or stages is what characterizes the works of fantasy, and this process should be done by passing through the portal. She believes that the most common portal fantasy works in the United Kingdom is C. S. Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia*(1950) and L. Frank Baum’s *Oz Tales* in the United States.

Although the character clearly encounters two different world models, a portal-quest will be the cause to transform into the second world, and it would be the reason according to the reader concerning the reality of the confronted world. The portal can be a closet shaped as

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a classic utopian wardrobe, and the portal fantasies require that the reader learns from the entry point (xix). What made it challenging to fantasists is making of a portal of wood and wardrobe a portal of a dream. The reader's position in this situation is the same as the protagonist since he is already immersed and regarded as an inextricable part of the story.

The portal-quest fantasies endow both the protagonist and the reader with the authority and the reliability transmitted to the narrator. Pointing to the plethora of fantasy works dealing with the portal-quest fantasy many of them illustrate the possibility of a confrontation between two other worlds. The narrator shifts as the reader traverses from the first position or world to the other which effects the reader's position and settlement in the fantasy world.

Instantly, when the character enters into the second fictional world he is considered as a tourist because he has never visited that place which is magically unreachable, and inaccessible most of the times. The protagonist, then, proceeds to tell what he sees in the confronted world. Accordingly, after passing through the portal, all what they encounter in the secondary and unreal world is anonymous for the reader as well as the protagonist. However, when the protagonist starts passing through the land, the reader starts understanding that world. Thus, when the reader and the protagonist settle into the second world they oddly accept it as fantasy and real, then the adventure begins. In the portal-quest fantasies, the information provided by the narrator cannot be doubted, and the narrative will be close to different interpretations (08).

Furthermore, our contemporary era is characterized by the quest for truth and curiosity which made the portal-quest fantasy relying upon two similar narrative strategies: "transition and exploration." (02). Thus, portal-quest fantasies depend on the entry or the doorway in addition to the transition then the exploration. After passing through the portal,

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the characters, as well as the reader, start exploring the new fantasy world. Until the characters become knowledgeable enough about their situation and world, they start negotiation with the world around them.

Therefore, portal quest fantasies do not consider both the reader and the protagonist as naïve (02). So many portal-quest fantasy works contain a journey in which the characters go through and reach their goals of the quest narratives, such as *Lord of the Rings* (1956), and *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950) and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900). In the case of Lewis's work, it is considered an entirely different world when the Pevensies go from a safe known and understood world into an unfamiliar world. Usually, this kind of fantasy starts with a sense of stability then comes the transition period that changes the situation. Therefore, from the epic genre, portal and quest-fantasies draw the same actions that contribute to making the reader eager to know the characters' actions and the process of the exploration. The reader follows the characters from the beginning then the middle of the journey till the end (04).

Each experience in human life provides a new lesson and the same thing happens to the characters. When the journey starts, the protagonist and the reader begin experiencing new things, meeting new people or creatures. The character meets others and should be clever to listen to those who are wiser and knowledgeable than him. This journey is based on a quest. The latter designates a process in which the character may succeed or fail in taking a reward. However, the real reward, according to Mendelsohn is crowned by moral growth (05).

Fantasy focuses on the way things should be in addition to the belief that should be yielded in the universe. Mendelsohn believes that: "the portal quest fantasies are structured around reward and the straight and narrow path." (05) In which it gives high importance to

moral percepts. The modern-day portal-quest fantasies and narratives are hierarchical according to Mendelsohn. In other words, the authority of some characters can be represented in a greater way than others. The other characters are intended to be fated which appears in the form of speech patterns, such as direct and indirect speech.

More commonly, the club story⁴ is how both of the quest and portal fantasies narrative are delivered. A club story, Mendelsohn believes represents an entrancing atmosphere, “among a group of friends isolated in a context in which they will not be interrupted.” (05). Thus, the story is being told orally among friends that should not be disconnected. In this kind of fantasy, the journey functions as a trope and usually interpreted as a metaphor which creates a space that makes the protagonist improve and grow up.

I.5. Conclusion

Pointing to the plethora of fantasy works that emerged since the WWII, one would also think about the origins of this genre. Thus, after tracing back the literary history of fantasy we conclude, many elements were borrowed from earliest texts especially the Ancient mythology, legends, and folklore. Then, it hits the postmodern stage with a recognizable speed, coming up with marvelous works. Before delving into more details of postmodern fantasy and its origins, the genre term was clarified.

One of the significant elements fantasy writers adopt in constructing their works is the portal-quest fantasy. Farah Mendelsohn, the British academic historian and writer, introduces this kind of fantasy as a journey between two worlds. The confrontation between the two worlds needs a portal or a door that serves as a ferry for the transportation. The portal creates a space where the protagonist encounters a mysterious world and begins a new adventure.

⁴“The Club Story is simple enough to describe: it is a tale or tales recounted orally to a group of listeners foregathered in a venue safe from interruption” Farah Mendelsohn

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II.1. Introduction

II.2. The Concept of Liminality

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II.1. Introduction:

In the mid-twentieth century, the emerging of postmodernism came with new concepts and since it breaks with traditions; it is considered to be the theory which is against all theories and which created ambiguity and confusion in the literary scene. Postmodernism is one of the most flourishing periods in literature, so 'liminality' is one of the concepts that came into existence with the appearance of postmodernism.

In the previous chapter of the dissertation, the fantasy genre was explored. This chapter will move from to the study of the concept liminality to the theory of the liminal space. Our objective in this chapter; therefore, is to study the concept of liminality, the middle stage in the rites, which arguably participates in the understanding of the disorientation and ambiguity of the person in anthropology as well as a character in fiction. To fulfill this task, we are to examine the concept of liminality, which is regarded as one of the most significant stages in the transition period of an individual's experience. Therefore, the second chapter seeks to explore the nature of the concept of liminality and its significance in reading and interpreting postmodern texts.

To pursue such an exploration, a body of theoretical insights are to be discussed to reveal and clarify the interconnectedness joining liminality and literature. The first section will be devoted to discussing the concept of liminality. It will also delve into the theory of literary liminality which this research is essentially built upon. Thus, our study starts with the definition of liminality then the roots of this term. It will further demonstrate critical insights belonging to Arnold van Gennep who first coined the term liminal, and considers it as a second phase in *Rites of Passage*⁵ which was published firstly in 1909. Besides we attempt to

⁵Rite of passage is a ceremony or event marking an important stage in someone's life, especially birth, the transition from childhood to adulthood, marriage, and death.

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expose Victor Turner's ideas since he translated and added much knowledge to Genep's work. Since this research deals with liminality, the terms 'betwixt and between' need to be clarified and explained. Then, Turner and Dara Downey are the scholars who attributed in the understanding of this concept, providing some insights into liminal space which imply the relationship between the human experience and space. They also confirmed the application of the concept in literary works.

II.2. the Concept of Liminality

In this section, the term 'liminal' will be explored, for later use in chapter three. The following section will be concerned with: clarifying the definition of the concept, and the origins of the term according to Genep and Turner. Then, the third part will be devoted to exposing the states of liminality starting with betwixt and between meanings, moving to the liminal space and its significance in relation to literary studies.

II.2.1. Definition of Liminality

Liminality refers to a peculiar state of being and not being. It is one of the stages in the rites of passage as Genep believes. These rites consist of three stages: first, pre-liminal phase, during which rites of separation of the individual from a specific experience are carried out; second a liminal phase, during which transition rites are performed; and finally post-liminal phase, concerned with ceremonies of incorporation into the new world.

Arnold van Genep called the second stage in the *Rites of passage* a liminal period, which is the part this piece of research is going to focus on. Genep describes the person's movement doorway or liminal space as follows:

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The rite of passing between the parts of an object that has been halved, or between two branches, or under something, is one which must, in a certain number of cases, be interpreted as a direct rite of passage by means of which a person leaves one world behind him and enters a new world. (19)

Similarly, Turner asserts in his book, *The Ritual Process: The Structure and Anti-Structure*, that during the liminal period the aspects that the person who faces liminality, or the passenger, are 'ambiguous' as Turner claims and "passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state" (94). The circumstances of the person who passes through liminality are ambiguous and vague. Indeed, Turner defines liminality as follows:

Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. (95)

Being liminal is not a choice, therefore, the person finds himself dealing with the situation and trying to achieve the next stage. Turner describes it as "the acme of insecurity, the breakthrough of chaos into cosmos" (77). He wants to say that it is that gap between things in our life, and most of us cannot exist in liminal space, we rush through liminal space. In this vein, the professor Simone Fullagar in his book, *Narratives of Travel: Desire and the Movement of Feminine Subjectivity* views that the one who suffers from liminality, makes him think through the tension of the in-between, thus he acquires the desire to move to the world (89). The liminal phase brings about change on the person, not necessarily positive change but perhaps an important one.

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II.2.2. the Origins of Liminality

The concept liminality is related to the English word 'limit'. Some authors have attributed this concept to the Latin term '*limes*' like Cowart, Froman& Foster Jr, and Voase, while others have imputed it to the word '*limen*' such as Shields and Turner. Both of the terms are considered as the roots and origins of the concept liminal; the first means 'boundary' or 'frontier' and the second refers to the 'threshold'. They may have the same root (*limus*) according to the Oxford Latin dictionary. Yet, both terms intend to describe the action of transition that happens in the Rites of Passage (Balduk VI).

Discussions on the nature of liminality have always captured the interest of authors and anthropologists alike. However, it is important to mention Arnold van Gennep because the term first emerged in his work as a technical concept in the world of anthropology; then it has become more famous thanks to Turner but after half a century of delay.

II.2.2.1. Arnold van Gennep and Liminality

In 1909, the term liminal was first coined by Charles-Arnold Kurr van Gennep in his remarkable book, *The Rites of Passage*. Van Gennep was the first observer of human behaviour. As mentioned in the rites of passage, van Gennep highlights three ceremonial phases and all the three rites: pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal, in which he describes the stages that a person passes through in any human experience. In the beginning, the work had nearly no recognition in the anthropological Western world in about half a century, however, everything has changed later. As time went on, the concept of liminality and the work of van Gennep became more popular outside the world of anthropology.

It was Marcel Mauss who started the criticism by writing his short and highly critical review on the work of Arnold van Gennep in *L'année Sociologique* (1923). Hence, Bjorn

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Thomassen summarizes his point of view about Mauss's review in his famous article "Durkheim's Herbarium". Under the section entitled 'Arnold van Gennep and the French Social Sciences', Bjorn Thomassen defends Arnold's ideas. In the section mentioned earlier, he writes:

Mauss's review was very negative, perhaps unsurprisingly after van Gennep's attack on Durkheim in 1906. It was also very unfair review, as it distorted the aims and intentions behind the book, showing no appreciation of the conceptual advance it actually presented.

In addition to that, Solon T. Kimball came after them and claimed that he is the one who wrote the introduction of the English version of the important ethnographical work, *Introduction. In A. van Gennep: The rites of passage* in 1960. Since the work of Gennep had failed to reach the other social sciences, Kimball was certain that this would change if they translate the work (Kimball v). Fortunately, he was right because *The Rites of Passage* reached and gained the interest of many scholars and received quite more attention after translation.

II.2.2.2. Victor Turner

Liminality took a long time before it received any attention outside ethnology and anthropology, although it was introduced as early as in the 1909. During his fieldwork, Turner heard about the book of Van Gennep in Henri Junod's work (Turner 159). He stumbled upon van Gennep's work by coincidence in the summer of 1963 a time period when he, himself experienced liminality. In this scope, Bjorn Thomassen asserts that "Turner literally lived at a threshold when he encountered van Gennep...Turner experientially recognized the importance of van Gennep insights" (14). According to Bjorn, Turner, to some degree; experienced the threshold after discovering Gennep's work *The Rites of*

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Passage. Thus, after selling his house and resigning from Manchester, his United States' visa was delayed. This delay happened due to his refusal of armed military service during WWII, which made him wait until the problem can be solved.

In this sense, Thomason's goal is to show that Turner re-discovered the importance of liminality by chance unlike Mauss, the sociologist and anthropologist. Initially, this theory is fruitful according to Turner who wanted to apply it not only to traditional initiation rites, however, to all kinds of occurrences in modern societies and not only Western societies but wherever an experience or a state of marginality occurs. Hence, Liminality was not taken up seriously until the coming of Turner who made the concept more famous and widely known.

Hence, *The Rites of Passage* deeply influenced Turner who did a lot of writing and thinking about the liminal phase. Turner was interested particularly in that phase where the individual experiencing it is neither here nor there but, where in Turner's terms, is betwixt or in between. As a result, and after experiencing liminality himself, he translated the work focusing on the middle phase. Furthermore, Turner developed the concept by exploring the kind of relationships people have during the time of change in a certain social status (Thomassen 14).

II.2.3. States of Liminality

In this section, the terms 'betwixt and between' will be explored for later use in chapter three. The postmodern era has witnessed mounting academic focus on the theory of spatiality since the latter is thought to have a significant engagement and concern with the so-called 'spatial turn'. The increasing interest in the notion of space reflects and plays a significant role in making the human experience meaningful. Accordingly, new forms of space arise in the mid-twentieth century literature, and the liminal space is one of them. The liminal space is a fertile topic to work on. It is considered one of the most fundamental

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pillars of the current study; the following section will be concerned with clarifying the concept of liminal space.

II.2.3.1. Betwixt and Between Meanings

‘Betwixt’ as defined in Oxford Dictionary, is an old use of ‘between’ analogous to Cambridge’s “Betwixt and between means between two positions, choices or ideas and unable or unwilling to decide between them.” In other words, the terms refer to a situation where a person or a character in a literary work, for instance, is in confusion and a situation where he is neither here nor there; in other words, betwixt and between two different situations. Thus, this situation can be perceived as an experience where an individual/character has skipped the first part yet has not achieved the next stage.

In 1967, in Turner’s work, *The Forest of symbols*, to be specific the essay entitled “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage” Turner introduces the terms ‘betwixt and between’. Both of the terms are totally linked to the concept of liminality, because ‘betwixt and between’ is an expression used to catch the essence of the liminal theory or the period of margin. He asserts in his essay that in all societies there are rites in passage, these rites are composed of transitions between and betwixt states (46). Likewise, Frank Kermode in his *the Sense of Ending: Studies in the theory of fiction* states that any individual can find himself located or situated in the position of midst or in-between (Downey ix).

II.2.3.2. Liminal Space

From the end of the twentieth century onwards space, especially liminal space, has become a hot topic in literary studies. Postmodernism is thought to have a significant engagement and concern with the so-called ‘the epoch of space.’ Michel Foucault in his

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essay, *Of Other Spaces*, asserts that “The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space” (01). Various scholars and geographers and ample theories have been dedicated to study the notion of space such as Yi-Fu Tuan, and Michel Foucault.

Postmodernism occurs, simultaneously with the contemporary interests in liminality when Turner wrote his work dealing with it. Therefore, the space that might be described as ‘liminal’ is the nebulous space of sensation in addition to the transition period between one thought and the next, a real and virtual world, a situation and another. Liminal space is considered as a blurry boundary zone in the middle and midst of two spatial areas. As mentioned earlier, it is about the period during which transition rites are performed and the gap between things in our lives, in other words, liminal space is the gap between two points of existence. As a result, the individual who experiences liminality is betwixt and between two positions; he is neither here nor there. Also, it is about encapsulating the ambiguity and confusion that take place at a threshold which has yet to be crossed. When the transition happens, sometimes even the home, the ordinary place can become extraordinary, and considered as liminal space (Downey 78).

II.2.4. Liminality as an Analytical Tool

As mentioned earlier, it is understood that the notion of liminality dates back to the anthropological theory of Turner. The theory of space is a tool for both comprehending and producing literary works. In Turner’s essay “Liminal to Liminoid, in Play Flow, Ritual” he maintains that the notion of liminality and in between-ness would be a period of social transition where the individual gets to be adapted and adjusted to changes. It is not mentioned how to apply the concept in a specific way. However, he stated that liminality emerges in literary works as a vague representation, which means that it should be possible to structure a

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method for applying it to an analysis of a novel. So, according to Victor Turner, the theory of liminality can be used to determine the specific spatial characteristics of literary work.

A mirror inverts but also reflects an object. It does not break it down into constituents in order to remold it, far less does it annihilate and replace that object. But art and literature often do. (72)

Literally speaking, what Turner endeavours to demonstrate is, that the subjects or characters pass through a period of complication and ambiguity. The latter process is shown in spatial symbolism which results in a spatial transference. Thus, as quoted in the book, *Liminality in Fantastic Fiction: a Poststructuralist Approach*, “This may take the form of a mere opening of doors or the literal crossing of a threshold which separates two distinct areas” (Klapcsik 08). This ambiguity or spatial crisis gives the character the desire to move to the next phase which is called the post-liminal phase. Therefore, he essays the most for the purpose of achieving the post-liminal phase that is characterized with more balance and stability.

Liminality represents an imaginative dimension which is not distinguishable from fictional representation. Therefore, it makes the emergent spatial formation of a literary work undetectable. As a result, the discussions of spatiality and liminality became fashionable in literary studies. Eric Prieto in his book *Literature, Geography, and the Postmodern Poetics of Place* asserts that analogous to literature, liminality is tended to be the rising and the difficult to comprehend (02).

In this scope, as stated in the book of Downey, *Landscapes of Liminality between Space and Place* literature itself is considered as liminal. As evidence, the reader becomes in a state of unconsciousness of the real world; that is to say between reality and imagination. Furthermore, literature comes from liminal state’s imaginative potentiality, thus, it is on the

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margins; the “myths, symbols, rituals, philosophical systems, and works of art” (Turner 116) came into appearance, and allow for the generative possibilities of new notions, concepts, forms, and a position of being and existing.

The term liminal is used as an analytical tool describing the state of being on a threshold as Turner believes. Similarly, as an analytical category, liminality has been widely adopted as a critical concept. Thomassen maintains that “[l]iminality explains nothing; liminality *is*; it happens, and it takes place” (14). Thus, it is something observable rather than utilized. As an academic discourse, liminality has been utilized “in and of itself” (14). Therefore, without understanding the notion of liminality, the ways in which the concept manifests, and in-between specific space or state our conceptual perceptions would have no ground to stand on.

II.3. Conclusion

The foregoing chapter introduces the backbone of this research. The theoretical background will guide this research to meet the hypothesis. As it has already been discussed in the chapter, the focus of this chapter relies on the terms liminality and in-betweenness based on Arnold van Gennep’s second or middle phase in the rites of passage.

Firstly, the entry is concerned with clarifying the definition of the concept of liminality. The latter is a term that refers to the situation of in-betweenness and being between two points of existence ‘threshold’. Then, the origins of liminality which is a derivation of the Roman word *Limes* and *limen*. Here again, the term came into appearance in 1909 by the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in his book *the Rites of Passage*. This concept means betwixt and between two different positions as Turner describes it in his significant article *Ritual Process*. Turner is the one who developed the concept and made it widely

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known when he experienced liminality by himself when his visa was delayed after the all the preparations and selling his house to move.

At last, the third part in the section deals with the states of liminality. The notion of liminality is highly linked to the expression ‘betwixt and between.’ In Turner’s article “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage,” liminality means being in the threshold or the margins. In other words, the term is an expression used to catch the essence of the liminal theory or the period of margin. In addition, the liminal space which is a hot topic since both concepts received much attention in the postmodern era. It is considered as a blurry boundary zone in the middle and midst of two spatial zones. The last part is devoted to liminality as an analytical tool.

Chapter III: Fantastical Liminality as Reflected on Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*

III.1. Introduction

III.2. the Wardrobe as a Limen

2.1. Lucy Passing through the Portal

2.2 Edmund Passing through the Portal

III.3. The Influence of Experiencing Liminality

3.1. Lucy's Experience with Narnia's Liminality

3.2. Edmund's Experience with Narnia's Liminality

III.4. Conclusion

III.1. Introduction:

Although Lewis's novel is relatively recent, it has however drawn a lot of academic studies. In his novel, entitled *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Lewis tries to demonstrate the significance of; as well as, the power that the portal that the characters of the fantasy novel pass through to experience liminality in the different world.

In this way, *The Chronicles of Narnia* represents the different experiences through which the main characters of the novel may develop a particular connection to the other world, Narnia. Besides that, *The Chronicles of Narnia* tackles the different processes which the characters undergo as they try to build a certain engagement and relation with the new space or world. In this sense, the wardrobe is the key to the transition to Narnia, and it betokens itself as a key factor in the construction of the character's new perspective.

This final chapter will attempt to apply the concept of liminality on the fantasy work of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, more specifically; exploring liminality in the fantasy work is going to be applied on the main characters and the best examples of entrance attitude, which are Lucy Pevensie, and her brother Edmund Pevensie. Also, the experience of the characters in Narnia is going to be analyzed. It is indeed a referential novel since the characters constitute main figures of the liminal experience. Two of them take a new adventure, which is considered as limen, differently during the process of discovering the myths.

III.2. the Wardrobe as a Limen

Since the story is divided into two different worlds, it is quite interesting to shed the light on the ferry that transports the characters from a world to another and portrays it as a medium. The liminal space is what Lewis uses in order to usher the characters from the material world into a different one where they can be transformed.

The story is, also set in a secondary world, which is bound by different time and space guidelines from our own. Narnia is the land where the Pevensies' adventure took place. *The Chronicles of Narnia* start with the reality then the Pevensies are transported through a remarkable sort of portal that ends up by being transported in a different world. Lewis focuses on the transition period between the house of the Professor Digory Kirke into a secondary world. The ferry that Lewis uses in the novel, as a portal that leads to the other world is the wardrobe.

The existence of the wardrobe, which represents the portal that leads to Narnia, triggers the aspects of liminality in the novel. In this vein, the idea of the entry itself gives us the impression that the characters are in liminal space. As noted in the previous chapter, the person who experiences departure movement from his accustomed world then heads into another one, such as in the case of Lucy and her siblings, will definitely be in need of a mean that connects the two. Eventually, the whole process is divided into three different stages, and the midst is the liminal (Gennep 19).

Similarly to the Pevensies, the reader, at first glance will notice the existence of the Wardrobe mainly when the children decided to explore the professor's house. The latter contains many doors, while they checked each one 'The first few doors they tried led only into spare bedrooms,' (Lewis 03) as they expected. Then, they continue opening the doors one after the other, the narrator tells us:

And shortly after that they looked into a room that was quite empty except for one big wardrobe; the sort that has a looking-glass in the door. There was nothing else in the room at all except a dead blue-bottle on the window-sill. (03)

The children discovered an empty room that contains nothing but a wardrobe. The narrator focuses on the emptiness of the room and the existence of the dead blue-bottle that

symbolizes the destroyed guardian of the liminal space. The latter paves the way and allows the voyagers to go through the passage. The wardrobe did not attract their attention except Lucy's. The youngest girl is the one who stayed; her curiosity drives her to wonder or think that it worth checking the Wardrobe's door although she thought it was locked. Surprisingly, the door was open, which triggered question in the little girl's mind, a question like who left this door open and why, and what mysteries exist beyond. This notion of the 'beyond' is the spatial embodiment of Narnia.

Lucy's initial integration to the wardrobe is because of her innocent curiosity which drives her into her next biggest life expedition. When Lucy takes a look into the 'wardrobe' and checks what is inside of it, she finds many coats hanging on it most of them are "long fur coats" (04). Henceforth, the closet or the wardrobe does not contain only one single row of coats, but more. Furthermore, in accordance to the omniscient narrator, when Lucy is inside the wardrobe the reader notices that it is dark, the darkness symbolizes ambiguity and the latter is associated with liminality. Then, after taking many steps, Lucy, as well as, the reader notices that this 'wardrobe' has no woodwork by the end of it.

We get to know that the technical term for Lewis's entrance represents liminality; since it provides the ability and the point of transition from one world to another. By entering the wardrobe, Lucy is passing through the portal that leads her to an ambiguous and mysterious location which is a sign of beginning a new adventure. When we go to the borders of something, we do not really know what is on the other side or what we may encounter and the same happens with Lucy and later with her siblings. The physical aspects of liminality are quite strong because of the use of the entrance of the wardrobe that makes the reader manufactures it as a 'bridge' in his own imagination.

In this sense, going into and entering a different area is what Arnold calls liminal space or phase. Henceforth, it takes us for the first time to where the wardrobe leads. When Lucy no longer senses the soft fur and notices the tree branches and the light ahead, she wants to check. Thus, the snowy land frightens her but at the same time, she gets excited. Then, she meets a faun named Mr. Tumnus, and there she realizes that she is in Narnia, a totally different world. Narnia is a world that does not share the same cultural realm with Lucy's. In the same way, Lucy uses the same ferry or tool to return home, the wardrobe.

Evidently, Lucy attempts to tell her siblings about the magical wardrobe, however, they do not believe that there can be also a parallel world to the real world that is recognized for them. Lucy is accused to be silly or just trying to make jokes, but, she replies with confidence: "It's - it's a magic wardrobe. There's a wood inside it, and it's snowing, and there's a Faun and a Witch and it's called Narnia; come and see"(11). When they check the wardrobe, it does not work and seems ordinary.

Lewis's employment of liminality in the novel plays a significant role. However, what makes the wardrobe an interesting thing is that it does not work all the time. The latter justifies the Pevensies failure, to experience liminality through the wardrobe at the first moment but they manage to reach it and pass through it later.

2.1. Lucy Passing through the Portal

In *The Chronicles of Narnia* there are four children Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy. The youngest girl is the main protagonist. By passing through the wardrobe, Lucy longs to reinforce her inquisitive skills, which leads her into the most adventurous experience in her life. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate how the little girl deals with liminality. The wardrobe is the space that shows this connection. As mentioned earlier, when the Pevensies enter to the room that contains the wardrobe, it did not interest them, unlike Lucy. The

youngest girl is a nice, innocent and very inquisitive girl; her curiosity makes her wonder what does the wardrobe contains and here starts the whole adventure of Narnia chronicles.

The moment when Lucy unlocks the wardrobe, she begins checking and touching the fur coats that she liked. Next, Lucy enters the wardrobe and “rubbed her face against them,” (04) to feel the fur. The fur coats could be a sign of what lays on the other side of the wardrobe. Before she starts going further, Lucy makes sure to leave the wardrobe’s door open “because she knew that it is very foolish to shut oneself into any wardrobe” (04). Lucy leaves the door open because everyone knows that it is very foolish as she thinks to close oneself into any closet or wardrobe. It demonstrates that the real world taught the little girl to be more witty and clever even in mysterious, unknown places.

Henceforth, Lucy takes further steps in the middle of a bunch of luxurious fur coats. She goes from the Professor’s house into another area, in the context of this study; this area will be referred to as liminal space. We also have aspects of liminality when it comes to the wardrobe because it gets darker as Lucy enters the beyond of the wardrobe, this represents ambiguity. The wardrobe contains more than a line of coats that makes Lucy so fascinated and thinks that it is unlimited, she thought: “This must be a simply enormous wardrobe!” (04). It serves as the blurry boundary zone in the midst of two spatial areas that Lucy does not discover yet.

When Lucy explores the wardrobe, and instead of finding the coats and the woodwork by its end as any regular one, she discovers that this wardrobe leads to the woods. When she takes her steps carefully looking for the woodwork, she touches something under her feet that she thinks mothballs, however, it turns to be snow instead.

Hence, the moment Lucy moves through the coats toward the snowy new area that she can see, she has fuzzy feelings about the place. As the omniscient narrator describes, Lucy

feels “a little frightened” but “very inquisitive and excited as well.” (04). Lucy has some fear when she passes through the doorway or the limen. Lucy's curiosity and inquisitiveness make her a strong female, who becomes eager to know more about what is around her. Yet, she makes sure that she can still get back by checking the door.

The sense of curiosity is still driving her to wonder about what she encounters in the liminal area, but her English sensibilities still exist in her mind:

What was rubbing against her face and hands was no longer soft fur but something hard and rough and even prickly. “Why, it is just like branches of trees!” exclaimed Lucy. And then she saw that there was a light ahead of her; not a few inches away where the back of the wardrobe ought to have been, but a long way off. (04)

The little girl steps out where there is no more soft fur as the narrator tells us. She is assured that she is no longer inside the wardrobe when she notices the light ahead. The lamppost is the first thing Lucy notices in the land of Narnia. She wonders about the reason behind its existence; however, the lamp serves as a way backtracker by the end of the adventure in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

In this vein, Lucy is transported to a different world, not by choice. Thus, she is not aware that the wardrobe functions as a bridge to take her into a fantastic world; the latter is full of magic and fascinating things. Narnia is a weird land it is outside the norms. Lucy spends some time in a land full of magic, which has the aspects of the other. Hence, she experiences liminality involuntarily according to Turner. In this case, Lucy finds herself dealing with the situation and tries to reach the next stage.

Nevertheless, Lucy encounters a weird creature, when she attempts to explore the snowy wood which exists behind the doorway. Indeed, after she hears steps of someone's feet

coming towards her in the wood, she sees “soon after that a very strange person, he stepped out from among the trees into the light of the lamp-post” (04).as the narrator tells and through the lens of Lucy, that creature looks like a man, carries an umbrella but instead of human legs he has a goat's legs.

Obviously, the faun is the very first Narnian creature Lucy meets. Nevertheless, she does not notice all his awkward body in the first moment because he is nearly covered with the umbrella. Later, she discovers that he is a faun. The latter feels so surprised that he drops all his stuff when he notices Lucy. He is a bit surprised and shy, yet, he feels curious more than being shy which makes him introduce himself. He is called Mr. Tumnus. He is very inquisitive to know whether the girl is a daughter of Eve. Although, she notices that he is a fantasy creature and his question puzzles her, but she answers his questions and acts nice rather than afraid.

The wardrobe has a special effect on Lucy's character, when they move from London to the Professor's house she acts very shy and a bit fearful. In contrast to her attitudes with Mr. Tumnus, she acts more confident and comfortable. Being in a limen helps Lucy in building more self-confidence attitudes, which can be seen when she trusts the faun, a non-human creature and goes with him to visit his home. The fact that, she accepts his invitation and visits his house, demonstrates that she becomes more open, confident and the limen or portal-quest influences her.

Furthermore, she listens to his stories very carefully because it is her first time to visit an unknown place alone and encounters a fantasy creature. However, Tumnus's intentions are not pleasant. When he discovers that she is a human being he abducted her. When the faun confesses about that, she becomes afraid a little bit “turning very white”(08). But she tries to

convince him rather than acting weak. Her actions demonstrate that she is transformed to be courageous enough that she manages to handle the situation.

As mentioned earlier, the reader uses the wardrobe as a bridge into our own imagination. The latter is what characterizes the works of the fantasy genre. The fascinating thing about the story is that rather than exploring or going out into the world Lucy passes through an old wardrobe's door to reach a magical land.

2.2 Edmund's Experience with the Doorway

Edmund is the third of the Pevensies in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Thus, he is one of the main characters his brothers call him Ed. He represents one of the significant examples of the entrance attitude in the novel. To bring to light, he is a character that lacks the 'English sensibilities' unlike his little sister. He mocks on her story of the wardrobe, and he is not nice to her. The purpose behind this part is to demonstrate the difference of attitudes when dealing with liminality through Edmund.

Obviously, Edmund analogous to his siblings, Peter and Susan, they do not give the old wardrobe's room any attention or interest. However, when Lucy passes through the portal and comes back telling her story with excitement, he does not believe her. Unlike his siblings who pretend to forget about it, he makes her feel bad by sneering at her story: "kept on asking her if she'd found any other new countries in other cupboards all over the house." (11) He teases her by telling her that it is not real and she makes it up. His bad temper and his spiteful attitude make her feel bad.

Despite the fact that Ed does not believe in the existence of Narnia, he follows Lucy when she gets into the wardrobe. The children decide to play hide and seek. At that moment, Lucy decides to give the wardrobe a chance and take another look to make sure that she was

not dreaming. Edmund follows her to check where she goes. What makes him go after her is not that he is worried or cares about her feelings. However, he follows her for the purpose of teasing Lucy about the reality of the inexistence of the other world or the “imaginary country” (12), so he still denies it.

We get to know the reasons behind Edmund's intentions when he follows Lucy into the wardrobe when he is behind her “He at once decided to get into it himself - not because he thought it a particularly good place to hide but because he wanted to go on teasing her,” (12) his intentions were no good. He eventually gets into the wardrobe to find Lucy and thinks she hides somewhere in the wardrobe. Then, he finds nothing as he expected but a whole different world.

Earlier, in the text we notice that Lewis emphasizes on the door part when Edmund leaves it open. Thus, the narrator states “He jumped in and shut the door, forgetting what a very foolish thing this is to do” (12). That demonstrates the lack of the ‘English sensibilities’ and cleverness, it shows how hasty and careless he is. His foolishness drives him to encounter what he may regret and nearly results his death. Besides, his siblings are not very pleased by his irresponsible actions.

Edmund's first visit to the liminal space takes him to trouble. He meets the most dangerous woman in Narnia. The latter is the main antagonist in the novel; she is the one who puts Narnia under her evil control. After talking to him, she discovers that he is a son of Adam. At that moment, she uses a different tone to trick him with enchanted Turkish delight. Therefore, there is prophesy in Narnia; it states that when four sons of Adam reach Narnia, they help in the appearance of Aslan again who will mark the reappearance of spring.

The white witch releases him after he eats the Turkish delight and asks him to bring her his siblings. She promises him with more Turkish delights whenever he brings his siblings to her.

Because, if you did come again - bringing them with you of course - I'd be able to give you some more Turkish Delight. I can't do it now, the magic will only work once. In my own house it would be another matter. (16)

Due to his immaturity and lack of morality, he agrees and does not think that it is a bad idea. She attempts to lure him with Turkish Delight and be the next king of Narnia. Edmund's attitude and desire to be better than his siblings, especially Peter, makes him an easy target.

In this sense, Turner asserts in *The Ritual Process* that "the characteristics of the ritual subject are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state" (94). Thus, the magic is a part of the other, meaning that there is another circle of culture which is still associated with liminality. The enchanted Turkish delight is one of the aspects of liminality that Narnia world captures quite well, especially when it comes to the perception of magic. To put it another way, liminal spaces can be wondrous, magical or some area that suits experiencing an unusual adventure.

After the departure of the White Witch, Edmund encounters Lucy in the woods. There she expresses how happy she is and tells him about meeting Mr. Tumnus and the White evil Witch. Then, Ed asks about what interests him only, the Witch. Lucy replies that "She is a perfectly terrible person," she further adds that "She calls herself the Queen of Narnia" (17) he already feels uncomfortable from the Turkish delight and becomes more anxious after what Lucy says about the person he befriended in Narnia.

Nevertheless, the second experience of the fantasy world that the reader gets through Edmund is quite different. Although Lucy and Edmund meet in the liminal space, he totally

denies it; when she tells Peter and Susan about it again. He just could not admit the idea that Lucy is right, and that is why he says "Oh, yes, Lucy and I have been playing - pretending that all her story about a country in the wardrobe is true. just for fun, of course. There's nothing there really." (19) Edmund's bad attitude is becoming worst; his personal interest is placed upon, denying the story which makes him feel like he scores a great success. His actions demonstrate how mean he is and becomes worst after experiencing liminality and encountering the White Witch Jadis.

III.3. The Influence of Experiencing Liminality

It is profitable to observe the difference between the persons' attitude that experiences the liminal space. Thus, it influences their development through the process of transition. All of the Pevensies pass through the same portal; however, it makes different impacts on each. This section is devoted to examine the influence of liminality when passing through the portal, In this case, Lucy and Edmund's experiences. It also aims to demonstrate that the entire experience in Narnia is considered as liminal, and not only the wardrobe.

Here we may distinguish the difference between the character's attitude with liminality in the doorway and the place of transition, Narnia. Additionally, the experience of liminality in the world of Narnia influences the characters in different ways. Each door in Narnia makes an impact on them but not like the wardrobe's impact. This part shows the significance of passing through the multiple doorways. Thus, we try to demonstrate and place each character according to her or his reactions.

In this vein, Turner explained that liminality does not serve to demonstrate only the importance of the in-between phase in life or that gap between things in our life. However, it focuses on the divers and various ways human react to liminal experiences. In other words, Turner thinks that liminality helps in shaping the personality of a person through experience

(12-19). Thus, the liminal phase influences the person in different ways, which create a sort of crossroad and each one chooses his path, either good or evil.

3.1. Lucy's Experience with Narnia's Liminality

Lucy Pevensie, the youngest girl in the family, fits the stereotypes of her position well. She is a meek, reliable, truthful and inquisitive girl. In other words, she is a typical example of a portal-quest fantasy protagonist. A curious girl who follows her desires to seek answers. Living in Narnia, the liminal world makes of her a braver person.

After Lucy experiences the wardrobe's magic, we have an impression that she is powerless and miserable. However, everything changes and she gains her confidence back when they all pass through the first door, "Everyone agreed to this...Lucy proved a good leader." (25) We can notice the difference after the first threshold; Lucy and her siblings pass through together. The latter is Mr. Tumnus's house she finds it damaged and he is not there. Here the journey begins, and the transformation can be seen, which influences her as well as the shift of the story. Hence, Lucy knows that the witch hurts him and thinks that "she's a horrible witch" (26). While her siblings are discussing what to do, she decides to put away her fears and feels responsible for what happens to him: "It is all on my account that the poor Faun has got into this trouble... We simply must try to rescue him" (26). Well, it is not Lucy's ordinary behavior to refuse her siblings' suggestions. Thus, she becomes eager to rescue Mr. Tumnus, who already put himself in danger for her. We may assume that liminality makes a positive impact on the girl, she becomes braver and wiser than she demands the others to follow her.

The meek, little Lucy starts the transformation process. From being an introvert she becomes more open, her curiosity drives her to become eager to know more. In Mr. Beaver's house, Lucy and her siblings gain more knowledge about Narnia, the prophecy, the witch and

the hierarchy. This threshold provides more knowledge and minimizes the puzzlement. From the beginning, Lucy's position is in the good part of the story, she believes in justice; since she cares about the faun. In this quote "At the name of Aslan ... Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer" (30). Lewis focuses on demonstrating Lucy's inquisitiveness and the tendency for discovery, and that is what the portal-quest all is about.

Lucy shows to what extent people's experiencing liminality can be transformed in a fantasy world. She appears to be a static character who finds she has the ability for dynamic actions. Therefore, she becomes stronger when she encounters Aslan, which is considered the last threshold she passes through. We can observe that Lucy becomes stronger after meeting Aslan in which she builds a special relationship with him and she gains more insights about life. Thus, Lucy and her siblings accept the journey, and they involve themselves in a battle because of their brother Edmund. They want to save him and ask Aslan for help, says Lucy: "can anything be done to save Edmund?" (54) Aslan does not refuse their request and succeeds in doing so. Lucy is a character that is more reliable than Edmund; she is wisest amongst the Pevensies.

3.2. Edmund's Experience with Narnia's Liminality

The vaguest character in the novel is Edmund. He can be regarded as the best example to portray the transformation in Narnia. The liminal phase changes the person, not necessarily a positive one but perhaps an important change, and that what happens to Edmund in the first part of the expedition. For the first half of the story, he is characterized by his spitefulness; however, his character transforms later.

The threshold is important for the development of the story as well as the Pevensies' characters. A considerably substantial example depicting this process is Edmund's journey in

the world of Narnia. He passes through the wardrobe's door twice, the first when he encounters the White Witch and Lucy, and the second with his siblings. As expected, Peter, the eldest brother, becomes mad when he discovers Edmund's lies and denial being in Narnia before. So, Edmund feels angry about Peter's comment concerning his bad treatments against Lucy.

Therefore, in the process of exploring Narnia, the Pevensies pass through many doors, and the first is Tumnus's. Edmund stays away and stands outside of it so that he does not see the damaged home and does not feel pity for Tumnus' situation. Hence, the first door within Narnia does not affect him, and not passing through it is the reason. Later, the next entrance they encounter is the Beaver's. On their way to the Beaver's home, the children notice the house's shape, the chimney, and the flowers; while Edmund's intentions and focus are quite different. Thus, in this context the narrator describes the scene as follow:

but Edmund noticed something else. A little lower down the river there was another small river which came down another small valley to join it. And looking up that valley, Edmund could see two small hills, and he was almost sure they were the two hills which the White Witch had pointed out to him when he parted from her at the lamp-post that other day. And then between them, he thought, must be her palace, only a mile off or less. And he thought about Turkish Delight and about being a King. (31)

In so doing, Lewis accomplishes this by exposing where Edmund's focuses. Edmund center of attention is the two hills that the White Witch told him about, her castle is located between them. The second doorway they pass through within Narnia is the Beaver's, and Edmund enters this time with them which affects him. Insofar they stay they gain more knowledge about Narnia after passing through that door. Thus, knowledge is what they get from crossing this threshold. Aslan is the one who can provide safe and secure the Pevensies. Mr. Beaver tells them all about him and the prophecies concerning their appearance in the

fantasy world, Narnia. In the middle of the conversation, Edmund slips away out and thinks about the Turkish Delight.

In this sense, each doorway has an impact on the children in Narnia. The reason behind Mrs. and Mr. Beaver's door is about knowledge of Narnia, the prophecies, Aslan and the White Witch. By slipping away, Edmund misses the effect of the second passage too. He would rather follow his desires than following his siblings' path. Thus, Edmund has many chances to choose the side he wants, good or evil, but his greedy and selfishness drives him to the witch's castle.

Edmund's intentions are not to turn his siblings to stones as Lewis demonstrates, which shows that he still likes his siblings and do not want to hurt them that much. His desire reaches the point of tasting the Turkish Delight and becoming a king to make his brother Peter pay for the way he treats him, "He did want Turkish Delight and to be a prince and to make Peter pay out for calling him a beast." (39) His anger and selfishness drive him to go to the Witch without thinking about the consequences. As he moves, it gets darker which demonstrates the ambiguity of what may happen there, in the castle. Then, he reaches the weird castle and talks to the wolf, which is associated with Arnold's idea of the liminality's guardian. When he asks for permission and let him in, he finally encounters the White Witch in the castle.

Then, Passing through the previous doors does not affect Edmund as the last one. He passes through the wardrobe's door and takes a long journey to reach the castle. However, he becomes disappointed when the witch treats him in a way he did not expect. She makes him suffer for not bringing his siblings with him. When he tells her about their location, they go out in the freezing weather. Lewis conveys the image of Edmund frustration and tells us: "how miserable he was! It didn't look now as if the Witch intended to make him a King." and

he adds, "All the things he had said to make himself believe that she was good and kind and that her side was really the right side sounded to him silly now" (49). We notice that Edmund regrets choosing the witch's side as we can see that this threshold is not supposed to be crossed. However, the last threshold is the main cause for the twist in the story, as well as his character. There was no twist before denying his desires, so when the witch treats him horribly; he realizes the bad choices he made.

Eventually, Aslan makes a huge impact on the children's characters and the same happens with Edmund, especially when Aslan sacrifices his life to save him. Edmund's encounter with the Lion changes him; Aslan makes the experience of liminality positive. Edmund's self-realization after what happens with the witch and the transformation leads him to change his bad behaviors. This is what Mendelsohn asserts about the reward, as the moral growth is finally obtained (05).

III.5. Conclusion:

In the foregoing chapter we have brought into analysis the concepts of liminality, and a portal-quest fantasy in Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In the first section, we have pointed out to what extent Lewis's use of the old wardrobe is important. Indeed, he uses the magic wardrobe to serve as a ferry, and we can use it as a bridge in our own imagination. The fantastical portal of *The Chronicles of Narnia* is highly associated with liminality since it provides a point of transition from the Professor's house to Narnia. Then, we investigated the characters attitudes and how they dealt with the doorway which is considered as limen.

In the light of the second section, we have come to a conclusion that the whole experience in Narnia is considered as liminal, and Narnia itself is a liminal space. Thus, the children pass through thresholds that affect them and change them for good. Mendelsohn believes that the portal quest fantasies reach a point where the character can be rewarded. All

the portals they pass through in Narnia make a positive impact but the witch's. We notice that Lucy transforms from a meek English school girl to a warrior, as well as Edmund who demonstrates the real meaning of transformation and the White Witch doorway makes the twist for him.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

General Introduction

The Chronicles of Narnia was written in an infused age with modernism, however, approaching the postmodern era. The 20th century, has opened the doors for an unprecedented fantasy works as Lewis's, depicting many new interesting concepts. After finishing *The Chronicles of Narnia*, one will remain confused about the entrance, the characters behavioral change, and the fantasy world; the moment of entry he or she will recognize its significance. Fantastical Liminality in this research paper highlights the connection between the portal-quest fantasies and the liminal atmosphere prevailing in the novel.

Lewis's contribution to fantasy is immeasurable due to his mastery of representing the mythical world. Throughout reading C. S. Lewis's works especially *The Chronicles of Narnia*; one could notice that Lewis adopted many concepts, such as liminality. So, he created a fantastical, mythical world in the novel through the use of liminal space. As we read the unique style of narration in Lewis's work, we see his success in depicting liminality as an analytical tool.

Undoubtedly, Lewis's use of the wardrobe provides access to Narnia, in fact, makes it a liminal space to the fantasy dimensions. His treatment of the doorway denotes the focus on the blurry boundary zone in the middle of the two spatial zones, which is considered as liminal. Therefore, he uses the magic wardrobe to serve as a medium that ushers characters from an ordinary world to Narnia. So, he helps the reader interpret the experience of the characters and the significance of Narnia through providing him with a portal that serves as a bridge to his own imagination.

General Conclusion

In this analysis, the concept of liminal has been applied in the wardrobe, as well as, the world of Narnia. Lucy and Edmund Pass through several portals that affect them and the transformation appears from the first portal they pass through, which is the wardrobe's door. C.S. Lewis demonstrates the behavioral change on Lucy from a shy school girl to a leader; on the other hand, Edmund who is regarded as the best example of an entrance attitude that shows a real meaning of transformation.

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix 1: short biography: Arnold van Gennep

Appendix 2: short biography: Victor Turner

Appendix 3: short biography: C. S. Lewis

Appendices

Appendix 1: Arnold van Gennep (1873-1957)



Arnold van Gennep was a Dutch-German-French Ethnographer and Folklorist. He is best known for his work regarding rite of passage ceremonies and his significant works in modern French folklore. He learned a remarkable number of languages, 18, and thus could effectively use linguistic and philosophical facts in anthropology. He is recognized as the founder of folklorist studies in France.

Appendices

Appendix2: Victor Turner (1920-1983)



Victor Turner is one of the most influential and respected British anthropologists of mid-to late twentieth century. He was born in Scotland and studied poetry and classics at the University of Collage London. He was an active Communist Party of Great Britain. Turner was best known for his *Symbols of Rituals* and *Rites of Passage*.

Appendices

Appendix3: Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963)



Clive Staples Lewis was a British medievalist, academic author, essayist and Christian apologist. He held academic positions at both Oxford University and Cambridge University. He wrote influential works, where he has more than 30 books which have been translated into more than 30 languages. He is best known for his works of fiction, especially *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *The Peace Trilogy*.

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