Ellen Turner, Lund University

**Stepping through the Narnia wardrobe: Exploring meta-reflection of threshold concepts on a theory-oriented literature course**

In their seminal discussion of threshold knowledge, Meyer and Land suggest that grasping certain threshold concepts can enable students to view their discipline through the eyes of the professional - that they enter “a portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something” (2003). For students on teacher education programmes, mastering these threshold concepts can be seen as of especial importance in their journey towards professionalization; just as we are responsible for helping students to “transform [their] way of understanding, or interpreting” (Meyer and Land 2003), they too will be responsible for helping students use literature as a transformative force. Building on a presentation given at Örebro University’s 2016 *Teaching English Literature in Cultural/Historical Context* workshop, this paper presents the initial findings of a case study in which I have encouraged student reflection on what makes studying literature and critical theory difficult, and why such difficulties should be embraced rather than avoided. Crossing over a threshold might be likened to stepping through the wardrobe into Narnia; what students witness when they step through the wardrobe might radically challenge existing ways of viewing texts, the world and their selves, but once they have seen Narnia this new perspective cannot be unseen. My goal was to foster in students the idea that literature and critical theory is troubling, and *should* be troubling, because it forces us to confront new ways of seeing the world which may not be consistent with our preconceptions. In this paper I outline the ways in which I have implemented this reflective element and also discuss students’ reactions to their own “Narnia” moments.

Ellen Turneris a senior lecturer in English Literature at Lund University. Her Ph.D. thesis on conceptions of sovereignty and domesticity in interwar women's writing explored the relationship between popular low- or middlebrow writing and modernist fiction. She has published articles on detective fiction and physical cultures as well as E.M. Hull and the desert romance genre.