**Prof. Pope Fischer**

[Lpopefischer@citytech.cuny.edu](mailto:Lpopefischer@citytech.cuny.edu)

**ANTH 1102**

**Attendance/Participation Questions for Week 13: Ghosts and Spirits**

**Attendance/Participation:** Your attendance/participation will be determined by your post in the discussion board on Blackboard. Read the entire article before answering the questions. Or for Option 3, you can tell a ghost story. Only answer one option each covering the topic, thesis, and cultural example (aim for 250 words).

OPTION 1: Bosco

A.(Topic) What is the main point of this article? (One sentence)

B.(Thesis) Bosco looks at ghost stories told at University orientations. He states:

“Variations in the stories were not errors in the telling but, as structuralism has shown, hints of the core symbolism of the story. The widespread rejection of the interpretation of student suggests that the informant-centered (or “emic”) approach often advocated by anthropologists is not always possible, and that a universalistic perspective can add additional insights. In addition, this shows that at least in the case of the Chinese University ghosts, the ghosts are cultural – not material – beings, and the interpretation offered here shows the advantage of interpreting and explaining them at the cultural level” (Bosco 2007: 804).

Having read the entire article, explain what Bosco means by the above quotation in your own words, and relate it to his overall argument. (This should be at least 3 sentences)

C.(Cultural example) He draws on ghost stories collected from his students to contemplate especially the context in which they are told, and what the underlying purpose of telling them might be. Can you describe an experience of telling ghost stories and relate it to the Bosco article (what might the context in which these were told tell us about an underlying purpose of the stories?)

OPTION 2: Freed and Freed

A.(Topic) What is the main point of this article? (One sentence)

B.(Thesis) Freed and Freed look for explanations for Sita’s spirit possession. They state that:

“cultural, psychological, and physical stresses were preconditions for her possessions. Research my neuroscientists during the past two decades may shed light on the underlying physiological mechanism of ghost possession. Under the stress of mental or physical pain, the body produces morphinelike substances called endorphins, which relive the pain and may trigger mental states called alternate, altered, or dissociative. Ghost possession is one such dissociative mental state” (Freed & Freed 2009: 345-346).

Having read the entire article, explain the above quotation and how it contributes to the author’s overall analysis? (What happened to Sita). (This should be at least 3 sentences)

C.(Cultural example) They focus on the spirit possession of a young bride named Sita. Ghost possession tends not to be a part of most Americans’ experience, but what I think this article shows is how different cultures may view and experience stress. One comparison is an “anxiety or panic attack” – if you have ever experienced this, it is the fear associated with a real or imagined threat. Perhaps "stress related back or neck aches," or "nervous sweats." Can you relate an example to this article?

*OPTION 3:* Do you know any ghost stories? Tell us your ghost story. After you tell us the story, consider the following questions.

* 1. Where did you learn this ghost story? (What was the context, time, place)
* 2. How old were you when you learned this story?
* 3. What other people were there when you initially heard the story?
* 4. What were the general emotions felt when the story was told?
* 5. Do you believe the story to be true? Why or why not?
* 6. How might another culture interpret the story?