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**ANTH 1102**

**Attendance/Participation Questions for Week 8: Rites of Passage**

**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. Only answer one option each covering the topic, thesis, and cultural example (aim for 250 words).

Option 1 (Victor Turner):

Turner, Victor “[Liminality and Communitas](https://bbhosted.cuny.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-2667922-dt-forum-rid-423228136_1/xid-423228136_1)”, in Reader in the Anthropology of Religion. Edited by Michael Lambek. Blackwell Anthologies: New York, 2008.

A.(Topic) What is the main point of Victor Turner’s article? (One sentence)

B.(Thesis) Turner talks about rites of passage as a three part sequence of stages (Preliminal, liminal, post liminal) but focuses primarily on the middle “liminal” stage as this is the part in which group bonding develops, in a concept he defines as “communitas.” Turner states:

“What is interesting about liminal phenomena for our present purposes is the blend they offer of lowliness and sacredness, of homogeneity and comradeship. We are presented, in such rites with a “moment in and out of time,” and in and out of secular social structure, which reveals, however fleetingly, some recognition (in symbol if not always in language) of a generalized bond [. . .] I prefer the Latin term “communitas” to “community,” to distinguish this modality of social relationship from and “area of common living.” [. . .] It is rather a matter of giving recognition to an essential and generic human bond, without which there could be no society (Turner 2008: 328).”

Having read the entire article can you explain what the above quotation means and how it contributes to Turner’s overall argument? (This should be at least 3 sentences)

C.(Cultural example) Turner presents several different cultural examples, the main one being the initiation of a Chief elect from the Nedembu of Zambia. Can you describe a rite of passage that you are familiar with in terms of Turner’s understanding? [If you prefer you can refer to the rite of passage in the film “Masai Woman” marking the transition of a young girl from bride to wife/cowife. Or as some of you are focusing on “virtual communities,” can you describe a virtual community as a “liminal space” that creates “communitas”?]

You can outline the three part stages of your example, but pay special attention to the liminal stage to describe how it creates “communitas.”

Option 2 (Donna Winslow):

Winslow, Donna. 1999. “[Rites of Passage and Group Bonding in the Canadian Airborne.](http://citytech.ezproxy.cuny.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=tsh&AN=2026795&site=ehost-live&scope=site)” Armed Forces & Society (0095327X)25 (3): 429–57. doi:10.1177/0095327X9902500305.

A.(Topic) What is the main point of Donna Winslow’s article? (One sentence)

B.(Thesis) Winslow draws on Turner’s understanding of rites of passage, again emphasizing the liminal state in which communitas is established. Winslow states:

“It is important to note that although group loyalty and bonding is important during battle, small group bonding can foster and maintain inappropriate norms” [. . .] “Severe initiation ceremonies such as those carried out by the Canadian Airborne Regiment promote increased loyalty and devotion to the group. But this group bonding is a double-edged sword: what can be functional unit bonding for war can quickly become dysfunctional in an army at peace” (Winslow 1999: 453).

Having read the entire article, can you explain what Winslow means by the above quotation and how it contributes to her overall argument? (This should be at least 3 sentences)

C.(Cultural example) Donna Winslow uses the initiation rites for the Canadian airborn military as the cultural example to relate to her thesis. Unlike Turner, Winslow suggests that the group bonding created through communitas can be maladaptive, can have a negative side. Can you describe a rite of passage or ritual that you are familiar with, and show how there can be both a good side to group bonding, but perhaps also a negative side? [If you prefer you can refer to the rite of passage in the film “Masai Woman” marking the transition of a young girl from bride to wife/cowife illustrating the pros and cons of this group bonding. Or as some of you are focusing on “virtual communities,” can you describe how a virtual community can create “communitas” that could be maladaptive (having both a pro and a con)?]]