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Q2(b)

Compare and contrast the symbolic approaches of Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner to understand culture

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · Anthropology GS 1 · 15 marks · Symbolic and interpretive theories (Turner, Schneider and Geertz)

(h) Symbolic and interpretive theories (Turner, Schneider and Geertz)

Facts & figures for this PYQ only.

Numbers move. Confirm the latest Budget, Economic Survey or census round. This sheet is for revision, not a substitute for the model answer.

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Clifford Geertz

The Interpretation of Cultures (1973). Thick description; culture as publicly acted meanings; the Balinese cockfight essay.

Victor Turner

The Forest of Symbols (1967) and The Ritual Process (1969). Ndembu ritual, liminality, communitas and social drama.

Thick description

Recovering the public code that distinguishes a wink from a twitch. It is interpretive method, not mere extra detail.

Liminality

The in-between phase of rites of passage in which status is stripped. It may generate communitas, a fleeting anti-structure.

Arnold van Gennep

Rites of passage (separation, margin, aggregation) supplied the skeleton that Turner developed as liminality.

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