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## From the Editor

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Blau: From the Editor

## FROM THE EDITOR

Anthropologist Victor Turner spent the bulk of his intellectual energies interested in the spaces of ritual that are woven into the fabric of every culture. He was fascinated by social and/or religious events that, as he saw them, functioned as a transition—from, say, being single to being married; from being a child to being an adult; from being in profane time to being in sacred time. As a result of his experiences and observations, Turner played extensively with the notion of "liminality." The term comes from "limen," the Latin word for "threshold." If we think about a door, a threshold is that part of it that exists between—but which is not really a part of—the inside and the outside of any given structure. It may be a small and short-lived space, but you have to pass through it in order to go in or go out.

Liminal space, then, is that place/space that, though it undoubtedly exists and is important, is neither here nor there. Liminal space is, as Turner famously put it, "betwixt and between." As such, it's a rather special place, with its own set of rules: where behaviors can and often are tested, where norms and limits are played with in any number of ways. As humans, we need these spaces. Though we may not be fully used to the idea—and some of us may even be made quite uncomfortable by it—we need spaces where things are ambiguous, indeterminate, open. People's ability to change and to grow in a very real way depends on liminality.

As Turner's words on the cover of this issue of *Moebius* indicate, it might not be a bad idea to think about our own Cal Poly campus as a liminal space. What's more, it might also be worthwhile to think of those instances we often refer to as "controversies" in the same way. After all, isn't a controversy a space between? Between one person's right and another's wrong? Between competing stories, or versions, of the truth? Disagreement and conflict are nothing if not a working out of the terms and conditions that will define the way that we view and act in the world—or, better yet, in our worlds. The trick is, in

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passing through controversy, can we have it be a productive and functional experience (like a coming-of-age ritual), and not a destructive and dys-functional one? Indeed, it is a fact of human life that we cannot stay in liminal space. We must inevitably come back to "real" life and move forward, have some measure of certainty and stability with which—from which—to live our lives. The question, again, is whether or not the experience will have been a positive one. We can always hope so, and try to have this be the case.

With this issue of *Moebius*, themed as it is around "campus controversies," it is our sincere hope that, in some way, we can all come out the other end enriched, better off.

It is with no small measure of honor and humble pride that I find myself the new managing editor of *Moebius*. As you turn this journal's pages, I do hope that you enjoy what, as a community of Cal Poly denizens, we have generated. Let us enter, together, its liminal spaces. See you on the other side!  $\bigcirc$ 

Jnan Ananda Blau, Managing Editor Moehius

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