

The Loss Of Community In Days Without An End

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Abstract:

Days Without an End written by distinguished contemporary Irish novelist Sebastian Barry explores the common theme of rootlessness and wanderlust, which implicitly reflect “rites of passage” process as developed by the anthropologist Victor Turner, which involves separation, liminality, and *communitas*. By combining Sebastian Barry’s liminal writing with Turner’s theories of symbolic community and liminality, it becomes apparent that the protagonists are trapped in the rigid and static “permanent liminality” after experiencing series of changes in geographic space, psychological space, also the stagnation of memory space. The individuals, who are in a state of liminality, are unable to develop amid structural invisibility, absolute submission, and complete equality. The infinite potentiality and creativity that liminality offers lost and they never achieve community. The impotence to enter into the highly fluid and binding existential *communitas* signifies the loss of community as a reality.

Keyword: *Days Without an End*; *A Thousand Moons*; liminal writing; permanent liminality; community

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I. Introduction

Days Without an End written by Sebastian Barry, a distinguished contemporary Irish novelist, follows the journey of Thomas McNulty, an Irishman who was exiled by the Great Famine. In 2020, the sequel *A Thousand Moons* was published and tells the story of Winona, an Indian orphan adopted by Thomas and John. Barry’s poetic language and introspective historical perspective are inherited in the two novels. It is worth considering why Barry, who has lived in Ireland for a long time and has little experience of being dispersed, makes rootlessness and diasporas the common theme in the two novels? Upon closer examination, we find that the non-traditional family formed by the wanderers in this story is follows Victor Turner’s rites of passage, including three stages of separation, limen, and *communitas*. Characters, or liminal people, are being separated and get into “between and betwixt”. Turner’s further development on the characteristics of “liminality” - uncertainty and ambiguity - constitutes the common goal of the two works. My goal in this paper is to bring novels into the liminal discussion by connecting Barry’s liminal writing with Turner’s theories of symbolic community and liminality. By sorting out and analyzing the different representations and connotations of the liminal stage in the novels, the novels ultimately reveals Barry’s sense of community in his works, also shows the process of characters being trapped in permanent liminality, which leads to the loss of community. To achieve this goal, I have organized my paper into four main sections, three of which have sub-sections. First three chapters center on sequential changes in geographic space, psychological space, and eventual stagnation of memory space. Each of them correspondingly embody characteristics of liminal people, namely structural invisibility, absolute submission, and complete equality. Special attention is paid to the individuals, who are in a state of liminality, are unable to develop amid liminality, and the impotence to enter into the highly fluid and connected existential *communitas* signifies the loss of community in reality.

Before I can begin the examination of the novels’ liminal writing, however, I need to comb the theoretical context. Tracing back the theoretical origins, it can be seen that the “rites of passage” was first proposed by the French anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep, who emphasized in *The Rites of Passage* (1909). Van Gennep emphasized the fundamental goal of the rites of passage is to “passes from one to the other finds himself physically and magico-religiously in a special situation for a certain length of time: he wavers between two worlds”[1]18. He extracted a basic framework of the rites of passage from a wide range of folklore cases. In the 1960s, the British anthropologist Victor Turner developed the concept of liminality further, distinguishing between liminal and liminoid states. He improved Van Gennep’s three-step process theory, and finally formed a rite of passage consisting of three stages: separation, limen and *communitas*. The word “liminal” is derived from the Latin word “limen/ limin”, which means threshold. Studies of Barry’s literary works have primarily centered on character trauma, narrative and thematic analyses, while rites of passage can expand the scope of literary analysis to include boundary subjects, interstitial moments, and paradoxical hybrids[2]. It makes it more universal and potentially

integrative. In relation to community, there are main three categories: first, the traditional concept of community represented by Ferdinand Tönnies's theory, which emphasizes the opposition between society and community. Tönnies proposed his most well-known characteristics of community - "real and organic life" in contrast with "imaginary and mechanical" society[3]33; second, the concept of moral community represented by Émile Durkheim's thesis, which argues that community is endemic to modernity and a kind of moral individualism; and, third, the idea of symbolic community represented by Turner, which understands community as existential *communitas*, representing the anti-social moment[4]. Turner's symbolic community provides an important dimension of community and liminality plays a significant role in it.

II. Geographical Space: Structural Invisibility

In a typical rite of passage, the separation stage, also the preliminal period, "comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure or a set of cultural conditions (a 'state')"[5]94. Once characters finish the separation stage, a new position in limen stage makes them structurally invisible instantly. At the beginning of the novel, Thomas and John enter the separation for the hardship of surviving and catastrophe of endless wars. Similarly, Winona, who witnessed the extermination of her ethnic people also has been forced to start separation stage within wars. As the characters progress from the preliminary to the liminal stage inevitably, they become invisible subjects when they experience fragmentation and reunion. As Turner notes, "the structural 'invisibility' of liminal personae has a twofold character. They are at once no longer classified and not yet classified"[5]96. And the characteristic of being invisible is presented in travelers.

War-worn Travelers Stuck in Slaughters

Sebastian Barry's historical perspective is primarily focused on Irish history. The Great Irish Famine (1845-1850), which caused nearly millions of Irish to emigrate, is one of the most influential factors also directly causes Thomas's exile. He was born in Sligo, where his father had a small business exporting butter, but "In '47 the harvest was so bad even my father had nothing then. My sister died and my mother, on the stone floor of our house in Sligo town"[8]22. Desperate and alone, Thomas clandestinely boarded a "coffin ship" carrying the living dead to Canada. Amidst of starvation, pestilence, tiny hope, and great despair, he traveled across the Atlantic to the American continent. In his own words, "Hunger takes away what you are. Everything we were was just nothing then. Talk, music, Sligo, stories, future, past, it was all turned to something very like the shit of animals" [8]23. In conditions of extreme affliction, where the quest for belonging or other spiritual dimension becomes unattainable. Thomas finds himself separated from his homeland and compatriots and is placed in a state of loneliness irresistibly. Similarly, John is forced into a state of separation stage due to the complete disconnection from families and homeland - he only learns about his father's death after receiving a letter from Pennsylvania, and he is unable to even remember his mother's face. The two wanderers who struggle to survive and are forced to separate themselves from their country or their families are akin to lonely ghosts drifting through the North American wilderness, leaving behind their established place in the original social structure.

After separation, Thomas and John enlist in the army to earn a living, unfortunately losing themselves in ruthless wars and massacres. During the limen stage, "symbolically, all attributes that distinguish categories and groups in the structured social order are here in abeyance; the neophytes are merely entities in transition, as yet without place or position"[6]103. During the war, the Irish, the English, the Missourians, and the various ethnic of people who fled from the famine in the western coastal counties... all in the midst of the war had their identities and belongings erased by the war, "We're strange people, soldiers stuck out in wars"[8]104. They ran and retreated in endless wars, like pieces on the chessboard of war tumbling to the ground, with no place and no position. As chess loses its significance for they're just wooden pieces, people are trapped in a war predicament from which they cannot escape, finding no meaningfulness. Turner explains that in many societies, symbols in the liminal stage representing death are drawn from biological processes such as decomposition and catabolism, which have a negative connotation. In other words, the symbol of death can promote structural invisibility. After the first massacre of the American Indians, Thomas and John are tasked with digging pits to bury the deceased, while the white townspeople holds a great ceremony to honor their "valor". When they have witnessed innocent people like themselves are deprived of their rights and value to live, their inner conflicts intensify and inevitably they question the so-called "justice", feeling that "time was not something then we thought of as an item that possessed an ending, but something that would go on forever, all rested and stopped in that moment"[8]31. In the spacetime of countless deaths, it's the first time to feel "days without an end" because they fail to distinguish themselves from others in the spacetime stagnated by the war, where anyone has the chance to be either an executioner or a victim. They fall into the liminality of "invisibility" together in the symbolic journey of war, traveling without traces of their past lives or any hope of a future life, that is "nothingness".

Way-worn Traveler Lost in Survival

Turner and Van Gennep both observe that funeral ceremonies prominently feature rites of separation. In literature, funeral ceremonies are often closely related to the theme of death. Winona, a Lakota Indian, faces the holocaust twice and enters the separation stage, in contrast to Thomas and John who indirectly face the death of consanguinity. After that, the chance of survival is unable to resolve the anxiety and confusion of identity brought about by liminality characterized by unclear and uncertain, and Winona loses herself in the midst of survival at last. As a survivor of the war, young Winona loses her mother and most of her clan in the first massacre. She witnesses the first separation and is taken to the fort as a prisoner, learning English at Mrs Neale's little school, and "Her history as it was contained in her own language I guess she starts to discard out of her head because all her talk is of Mrs Neale and how things be with her in the fort"[8]71. Living in a white camp and educated by whites, Winona is separated from her Indian culture. Years later, Winona is involved in wars again, and after her return to the tribe, a vengeful Colonel Neale, in a blatant violation of the Treaty of Amity, launches a siege and brutally murdered 470 Indians. According to the text, Winona is the only survivor of the attack. Undoubtedly, Winona was completely cut off from her ethnic group and culture after two massacres. The reunion and separation left nothing but dramatic trauma: on the one hand, slaughters and captures isolate herself from her original homeland; on the other hand, the hatred between her and colonizers set the stage for later failed communitas. According to scholar Pang Haonong, consecutive revenges make the belief of "blood for blood" become the group consciousness, executing the revenge for abuse. Dominating by it, they have constructed their own revenge ethics, disregarding the fundamental principles of human civilization[10]. Back in Tennessee, Winona is completely isolated from Indian culture, forgetting not only the tribal language but also the cultural identity of the ethnic, which is lost step by step in the massacres and wars. Ultimately, she becomes materially and spiritually rootless and dispossessed. When discussing structural invisibility, Turner is also concerned about the physical state of seclusion, that is "since neophytes are not only structurally 'invisible' (though physically visible) and ritually polluting, they are very commonly secluded, partially or completely, from the realm of culturally defined and ordered states and statuses"[5]98. That's why Winona, an Indian who tries to integrate into mainstream society, despite being educated in white culture, is confined to seclusion by her unalterable Indian identity.

For Barry, personal story always has a place in the dominant narrative of collective history[11]. In an interview, he argued that Thomas and Winona are correlatives of one another for their common experiences of violence and dispossession. However, though both the Native American and Irish populations have risen to roughly similar levels after huge depletion, the Irish have always been in the majority in their own land while lands have always been taken for ever from the American Indians, thus the phrase "give it back" is echoing in his mind[12]7. In this non-traditional family of Thomas, John and Winona, they become physical and mental wanderers but still long for a peaceful homeland. After separation, their liminal state of "nothingness" and "no longer categorized" increases and they become more invisible in social structure, leading to a great uncertainty.

III. The Psychological Dichotomy: Absolute Authority And Submission

Except for structural invisibility, identifying absolute authority and submission in psychological space can blur liminal subjects. During the liminal stage, the relationship between the trainer and the newcomer is often expressed as absolute authority and absolute submission. Turner argued that the authority of the elders over the neophytes is not based on legal sanctions; it is, in a sense, the personification of the self-evident authority of tradition[5]100. In the pre-liminal stage, character's communal aspirations are subordinate to the dichotomy in the liminal stage and the personification of the common good in empirical society. The change and reconstruction of the psycho-spatial order of the liminal subject further exacerbates the dichotomy under the premise of structural invisibility. It moves away from the connective nature of communitas, rather than getting closer to it. This provides an emotional basis for the eventual becoming trapped in a state of "permanent liminality".

External Persecution Reinforces Self-alienation

The novel explores the impact of external factors on psycho-spatial shifts, particularly the trauma of war and racial persecution. Thomas and John enlist in the army and suffer a severe existential crisis on battlefields, where offers nothing but the feeling that "everywhere strength and power and terror. Even in the heart of every trooper. Terror of dying and being second with a shot. Bullet in your soft body. Kill them all. An order we never known"[8]149. Appalled by the murder and brutal dismemberment, the troopers believe that the dead souls of the warriors would be denied access to the heavenly hunting ground because they were incomplete. The deepest evils of human nature were aroused by the war machine and the soldiers were lost in the power of controlling life and death. Simultaneously, as a "disciplinarian" representing the absolute, common good of the moment, the war excludes all moral, ethical and legal constraints but emphasizes only "the passivity of neophytes to their instructors, their malleability"[5]101. In other words, the troopers are forced to abandon all norms and boundaries of the old social structure when they are trapped in the war machine, and they hold guns numbly and aimlessly. Moreover, Thomas and John nearly lost their faith and questioned the nature of the war and the world they were

living in after witnessing the brutal massacre of hundreds of coloured soldiers in their group. They keep asking “What crazy war is this? What world we making? We don’t know. I guess whatever world it is ending. We come to the end time and here it is. Just like the goddamn Bible says” [8]114.

Winona and Tennyson Brogue, a black man, are violently attacked successively because of their racial differences. The self-alienation within the liminal subjects is further exacerbated by the South’s very different attitudes towards different races during the Civil War. On the one hand, Winona has always assumes an inferior status, blaming her Indian identity for all misfortunes and sufferings, as evidenced by her statement “Nothing, nothing, nothing, we were nothing”[9]32. On the other hand, when Tennyson is unjustly attacked, Winona bursts out the courage to take the rifle and seek vengeance on her own, vowing to find the perpetrator. It is out of a strong desire for a home community that Winona, despite her usual passive submission, temporally develops the valor to protect her unrelated “family”! Unfortunately, her attempt at revenge fails halfway and , resulting in the loss of Tennyson’s rifle. In the dichotomy of absolute authority and submission, Winona is confined in the ambiguity of “between and betwixt” as a liminal subject all along. That is, influenced by experiences of loss and racial discrimination, she eventually submits herself to the outside world after a staged struggle against persecution. As for the Lige farm group, they stay out of conflicts and remain structurally inferior, attempting to transgress or dissolve the old system by being “unstructured” in order to achieve *communitas* and enter a brand-new social structure. However, the final result remains uncertain. In a case of murder, Winona was accused of killing Jas Joski. Charged by the racist magistrate Parkman, Winona is impotent to defend herself strongly because the townspeople are more concerned with getting rid of the Indian tomboy than with justice. So two of them were instigated to perjure themselves by claiming that they had seen Winona leave the house at midnight.

For liminal subjects, “their behavior is normally passive or humble; they must obey their instructors implicitly, and accept arbitrary punishment without complaint”[6]95. Thus, this absolute submission to external trauma, such as war and racial persecution, leads to internal alienation for the protagonists. With external persecutions reified, the conflict of absolute authority and submission inevitably intensifies. Liminal people aspire to establish a community with equality and peace, but the violent circumstances they face while crossing the border force them to withdraw. Consequently, they become stuck in the liminal stage, experiencing ambiguity and uncertainty.

Internalized Marginalization Increases Ambiguity

The significant shift in psychological perspective also arises from the internalization of identifying the marginal identity. This is demonstrated through gender ambiguity and name dislocation. In a secular society, where we are disciplined and categorized, it is difficult to define a person as neither here nor there, because “as members of society, most of us see only what we expect to see, and what we expect to see is what we are conditioned to see when we have learned the definitions and classifications of our culture”[5]95. Gender ambiguity is present in both novels. On the one hand, Thomas and John, who were young and beautiful at that time, became famous as dancers in a tavern in Grand Rapids. Even when returning to the Lige farm, Thomas occasionally wears the dresses he had kept to play the role of Winona’s mother; on the other hand, Winona often wears men’s clothes for safety, also her personality is very much that of an Indian boy. The co-occurrence of gender ambiguity in both novels represents liminal subjects that often “elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space”[5]95. Here categorization in social structure fails to constrain them, thus characteristics of unclarity and ambiguity are emphasized. The essence of gender ambiguity encompasses the negativity of having nothing in the structure, i.e., no position, no status, “neither here nor there” in Parisian society, and it further reduces one’s position in the structure through self-denial.

In addition to the identity crisis brought about by gender uncertainty, liminal ambiguity is further reinforced by Winona’s denial of her name which serves as a social signifier. At the beginning of the novel, she explains that her original name was Ojinjintka, meaning rose, but Thomas McNulty failed to pronounce it correctly and gave her her dead cousin’s name instead. Winona means first-born, but she clarifies that she was not the first-born. Names are fundamental symbols of a person in society. Winona, who loses her real name at an early age, has been living under someone else’s name symbols. It proves that far away from her own ethnic and culture, she does not exist as her real self in the new society of Paris. Furthermore, the ambiguous genders and misplaced names further prompt the protagonist to actively submit to an inferior position. Return to Lige farm, Winona always tacitly approves the negative view that Indians are born inferior in her interactions with the Paris natives even reshaping herself by the eyes of the Other. When Winona and Tennyson are violently attacked one after the other because of their racial differences, she initially wants to revenge but finally internalizes her liminal identity, acquiescing to the injustice of modern medicine and law not applying to Indians.

Overall, the dichotomy between absolute authority and absolute submission is gradually intensifying in their inner world. Trauma, distrust and discrimination contribute to the ambiguity of the liminal person, who attempt to transcend previous structures and enter new ones but end in failure. External persecution and internal skepticism fundamentally undermine the possibility of existential *communitas*. As Szokolczai said, permanent

liminality is generated when “rites consist of three stages, and the ritual can be suspended at each”[15]. Once trapped in liminal stage forever, the protagonists will completely lose the possibility of achieving existential *communitas*, and their pursuit of a community will fail.

IV. Mnemonic Space: Complete Equality

Except for absolute authority and submission in the liminal relation, relationships within threshold groups, on the other hand, are characterized by absolute equality. As Turner argued, “the liminal group is a community or comity of comrades and not a structure of hierarchically arrayed positions. This comradeship transcends distinctions of rank, age, kinship position, and, in some kinds of cultic group, even of sex”[5]100. At the Lige farm, Winona, Thomas, and John form a nontraditional family and establish a deep connection with the other three individuals, who are not related to each other by blood. This connection transcends the limitations of hierarchy, age, gender, and kinship, creating an almost utopian environment. For Turner, community “has a symbolic character in the sense of creating powerful links between members of a society or social group”[4]32. And his concept of symbolic community stresses the binding nature of *communitas*. The shared liminal symbols in the mnemonic space of the protagonists represent absolute equality among memberships, creating a strong connection and a conceived *communitas*.

Liminal Symbols and the Communication of Sacra

In traditional initiation rites, the communication of the sacra can be “the heart of the liminal matter”, which consists of threefold methods, namely (1) exhibitions, “what is shown”; (2) actions, “what is done”; and (3) instructions, “what is said”[5]102. Into the modern society, the rites of passage transplanted into literature are represented by liminal symbols. For example, the sun in *Days Without an End* and the moon in *A Thousand Moons* are typical liminal symbols, carrying significant meanings. During the war, Thomas and John experience a sense of timelessness and the stagnation of spacetime amidst the chaos of death, bullets, and shouting. As prisoners, they endure hunger, torture, and hopelessness, leading to a feeling of endless days once again. It is the stagnation of spacetime that violates nature laws, and creates an ambiguous state of liminality between sunrise and sunset, indicating that “neither here nor there” crisis of identity faced by Thomas and John is going to worsen. Here, the sun achieves sacra communication by exhibition, that is “what is shown.”

As for Winona, on the other hand, time was measured in terms of the moon in her original ethnic. Instead of using “many, many years ago” to indicate the distance of time from the present day, her people would say “many, many moons”, as she said, “for my mother time was a kind of a hoop or a circle, not a long string. If you walked far enough, she said, you could find the people still living who had lived in the long ago. ‘A thousand moons all at once’, she called it”[9]31. Moon as the sacra achieves communication within generations by the way of instruction, that is “what is said”. Winona has always undertaken inferiority in society, suffering injustice, persecution and discrimination because of her identity. The moon, a liminal symbol, offers her hope and courage to live, to continue living and working with the people of Lige farm to achieve true *communitas* even though she has been separated from her family and ethnic people for ever. The Lakota view of space-time is similar to the Möbius Ring in that everything here can be somewhere else. The moon’s never-ending succession of waxing and waning phases further increases the ambiguity and invisibility of the liminal stage. Liminal symbols render protagonists being complete equal place because they are driven to pursue an ideal community with love, trust, and peace. Influenced by the dilemma of war and the mainstream of society, Thomas, John, and Winona are both silently submissive to sacras and their symbolic meanings due to ambiguity, but also wish to create a communal homeland for absolute equality of love, which is described as “unique individuals with their own flaws but with a very human need for love and affection, whose experiences are occasionally illuminated by friendships formed across political boundaries”[13]237.

In the interview, author Barry acknowledges that “his characters frequently find themselves at the interstices of history, propelled by forces unknown to them. Violence is commonplace; separation, loss and madness far from unusual”[12]6. Liminal people in the interstices of history share the disorientation of mnemonic space brought about by liminal symbols. Undoubtedly, the recurrence of special symbols such as the sun and the moon in the story, like the exhibition and transmission of sacra in the rite of passage. Their symbolic meanings both create the possibility of stagnation and stillness in the mnemonic space for liminal people. In all, Barry not only focuses on the structural invisibility of the liminal people but also emphasizes profound symbolic meanings behind the liminal symbols. He shows us Thomas, John and Winona’s common quest for a home community in the uncertain and invisible liminal stage from the perspective of both historical and individual significance. However, the stagnant nature of liminal symbols, or sacras, increases ambiguity to absolute equality of comradeship, preventing the liminal subjects from entering into the real *communitas*, and thus their vision of a community remains unrealized.

Stagnating in Conceived Community

Sociologist Aprad Szakolczai further discusses liminality in the context of modernity, suggesting that “permanent liminality is intolerable ... as it generates a sense of stasis, meaninglessness; the more things change, the more they stay the same”[15]224. That is to say, negative aspects dominate the permanent liminality due to the lack of creativity and potentiality. In novels, liminal people continue to be trapped in the liminal stage after experiencing the separation brought about by changes both in geographical space and psycho-spatial order. The attempts and obstacles to building a harmonious home community deepen the ambiguity and unclarity as liminal people, so they inevitably fall into permanent liminality at last with limited connections and a paralleled lifestyle.

Their quest for a community, a symbol of peace and love, is still confined to the utopia of Lige Farm, to a small group (Thomas, John, Winona, Tennyson, Peggy and Rosalie) excluded from mainstream society. And a community confined to that cannot be called a true community. Upon entering the South, they observe several black slaves hanging from trees and choose to remain silent; after Winona and Tennyson suffered horrible attacks, they are outraged and can do nothing but accept the fact they’re unable to punish the perpetrator. The people of Lige Farm endeavour to stay out of the town and remain inferior in the structure, imagining a homeland between borders of society, that is ideological *communitas*. It appears when “the scattered clues and indications we have encountered in preliterate and pre-industrial societies ... become in complex and literate societies, both ancient and modern, a positive torrent of explicitly formulated views on how men may best live together in comradely harmony”[6]134. In two novels, the ending both focus on the gratitude to the small group in Lige farm rather than a wider sense of communion in society. In other words, “best live together in comradely harmony” for liminal people has an idealistic attribute of being confined to a small group and lacking deeper interaction with the community.

The people living on Lige Farm continue to live in isolation from the outside world, lacking mutual support and collaboration on a wider scale. This temporarily safe and relatively free space is fundamentally detached from society and lacks “an enduring and genuine common life”; it remains an isolated monolith. As scholar Yin Qiping has emphasized, community should not be “a purely metaphysical concept” but “a cultural practice”[14]76. Therefore, liminal people in novels are still confined to the liminal stage. As Szakolczai highlights the detriments of permanent liminality, it “brings disaster to all parties involved; it consumes their forces, persisting until their resources are exhausted, leaving nothing but devastation through escalating mimetic crises”[15]234. At the end of stories, characters all stick in permanent liminality and achieve only ideological *communitas*, failing to build a dynamic community in which people can realize a vibrant exchange of ideas and other interactions. Although the murder case is resolved, Winona survives in persecution but their isolation from the mainstream of Paris society remains undissolved. It is uncertain whether they will continue to live peacefully in Lige Farms. However, it is certain that isolated islets like Lige Farms will not survive for long without a lasting survival experience.

V. Conclusion

From Long Days without an End to A Thousand Moons, Thomas, John, Winona and Lige farm people have experienced famine and war, and go through the stage of separation as wanderers. Then they’re trapped in the ambiguous liminal state in the predicament of war and mainstream society. Starting with liminal writing, it can be seen that in the changed geographical space, the liminal people continue to be in great uncertainty due to their structural invisibility; in the change of order in the psychological space, the dichotomy in the absolute authority and absolute submission intensifies inner conflicts with the effect of external persecution and self-alienation. In mnemonic space, the stagnation of liminal symbols increases the ambiguous quality in the comradeship of absolute equality, preventing the liminal subjects from entering into *communitas*. This ultimately leads to the loss of community and rigid, static permanent liminality. As a result, the infinite possibilities and creativity contained in liminality disappear, and liminal subjects are trapped within structural invisibility, absolute obedience, and absolute equality and are unable to move forward.

In all, Sébastien Barry’s writing incorporates liminality in a distinctive and inclusive manner. The existential dilemma resulting from liminality and the use of liminal symbols both demonstrate the search for community by those who are wandering. However, inferiority in the structure does not lead to the success of *communitas* stage. Differ from the existential *communitas* with high mobility and connectivity, ideological one is still confined within the original structure and is impossible to “understand the community from the opposite side of the structure”[4]32. Ultimately, the loss of community becomes a reality, which inspires contemplation of true community in contemporary society.

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