

Markscheme

May 2019

Social and cultural anthropology

Standard level

Paper 1

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Paper 1: Engaging with anthropology

1. Define the term *self* and describe how it is understood in the context of the young people in California described in the text. [4]

This question requires candidates to demonstrate conceptual knowledge and understanding of the term **self**, and apply it in relation to the text. Stronger responses may also develop a detailed explanation of the concept.

Candidates will be expected to provide any conceptualization along the lines of self as the culturally constructed concept of the individual human being, the view of an individual in the eyes of the social group, the construction of the self as the product of social interaction.

There are many possible ways of demonstrating conceptual knowledge. For example, candidates may define the concept of self as a relational category how the self is defined in relation to the notion of other. Candidates may explain how human beings are likely to develop an understanding of themselves as physically distinct and separable from others; they can discuss the relationship between the body and the self; or, that the self can be constructed or conceptually represented in multiple ways.

They may support their definition from a Durkheimian approach, understanding the category of the self as primarily the product of constraining social factors. Some candidates may also draw from Mauss' explanation of the "person" or "self" as a historically developed and contingent concept. Others may choose to define this term drawing from symbolic interactionist approaches, such as Mead or Goffman. Also, some candidates may choose to define self by drawing from post-structuralist theory, such as Foucault, linked to subjectivity and power relations.

Candidates are expected to apply this concept in relation to the provided ethnographic data in order to show how the concept of self derives from one's relations with other people and social institutions. Candidates may demonstrate their understanding of the importance of others in constructing reality and regulating behaviour. These others become an integral part of the context to which the self is connected, and the way in which the self is constructed depends crucially on the nature of this context. Others thus participate actively and continuously in the definition of the self, as is evident in the passage.

Drawing from this particular ethnographic case, candidates might show how the concept of self can be applied in this context. For example, candidates may discuss how the individuals' subjectivities are shaped by the moral expectations associated with bodily appearance. In the text, individuals are seen to internalize social expectations and standards, and to judge themselves accordingly. They develop negative feelings and view themselves as failures. The text also hints at a hierarchy of moral referents. That is, subjects are influenced more by certain people, in particular those that are associated with the medical establishment, and especially by peers who are perceived as examples of successful achievement of body standard goals (such as John's athletic dormmates, or Margaret's brother and her female friends). Candidates may also develop discussions related to the specific age-range of the subjects, who are seen in a transitioning moment in their lives (passage into adolescence and youth) in which their successful integration into their status appears to depend on sexual attractiveness in order to gain social acceptance. Candidates may move further into more general explanations about how self is defined or influenced by broader societal expectations, or that judging or classifying individuals according to body characteristics (e.g. ethnicity/race, clothing) is a frequently recognized trait in the United States. For the highest marks, candidates would explain the concept of self in detail, for instance, by discussing how the concept is treated differently by different authors, or maybe referencing Western ethnocentric assumptions implicit in the concept as treated by certain authors.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	The response demonstrates a basic knowledge and understanding of the concept. There is a partial application of the concept in relation to the text.
3–4	The response demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the concept, and is clearly applied in relation to the text. The concept is explained in detail.

2. Explain how the key concept of *social relations* helps you understand the ethnographic data presented in the passage.

[6]

The question requires candidates to develop an analysis and explanation of this ethnographic text using the key concept of **social relations** to help make sense of the ethnographic data. In order to do this, candidates are required to demonstrate an understanding of the key concept and use it to illuminate certain issues within the context, supporting arguments by making reference to the ethnographic data of the extract.

Understanding social relations as any relationship between two or more individuals in a network of relationships, this key concept involves an element of individual agency as well as group expectations and forms the basis of social organization and social structure, pervading every aspect of human life. Based on this understanding, candidates may explain the young Californian students' experiences and conceptualizations of their bodily perceptions through their accounts, and how these are part of encompassing social relationships and recognize that their behaviour is determined, contingent on, and, to a large extent, organized by what these actors perceive to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others.

In the text, the informants mention specific people that influence their views of themselves, and we see that these are all close relationships (parents, siblings, close friends, dormmates). Thus, the key concept of social relations is dominant in informants' narratives. In addition, some candidates may distinguish that these social relations, the relative social distance and intensity of affection has a different impact on the subject. Specifically, subjects are more impacted by persons with whom they have a closer relation. For instance, the medical discourse is embodied by the doctor, and John's mother internalizes this authoritative discourse, thus changing her views and behaviour towards her son. John feels sad due to his mother's change towards him and her new constant demands placed upon him.

The text also exemplifies that subjects name specific individuals who influence them, and there is only one allusion to the "nation" as a generic structure which has potential influence on the subject. Again, this implies that from the perspective of the subjects, social relations are more relevant than social structures in their self-perception. Thus, candidates may notice that informants are not aware of the structural constraints and pervasive discourses addressed by the researcher's (Greenhalgh) theoretical claims.

Candidates may also explain how agents in social relations convey moral and aesthetic discourses and use them to classify and qualify one another. From the last paragraph of the text, it can be inferred that according to the author these discourses normalize prejudice and constitute a socially legitimized basis on which to pursue continuing forms of discrimination and inequality. While certain prejudices are no longer discursively sustainable in the context of the society studied, the "fat discourse" is acceptable and hegemonic.

Other candidates may focus on how power is embedded in social relations. For instance, sexual attractiveness is viewed as a source of influence on other people, and thus individuals with certain body types are more able to exert this type of power. More generally, with reference to the context of this passage, candidates may discuss the extent to which markers of identity constrain or enable agency, drawing on the debate between agency and structure in terms of explanations of social and cultural life.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	The response offers a common-sense or superficial understanding of the key concept. There is an attempt to relate the key concept to the text, and some ethnographic examples are presented but these are only partially relevant.
3–4	The response demonstrates an understanding of the key concept and establishes its relevance to the text. There is an analysis of the text using the key concept, although there are some inconsistencies. Relevant ethnographic examples from the text are presented to support the analysis.
5–6	The response demonstrates a clear understanding of the key concept, discussing this in the context of the text. There is a clearly explained analysis of the text using the key concept and a detailed interpretation of the ethnographic data. Clear and explicit ethnographic examples from the text support the analysis.

3. Compare and contrast the way in which the concept of *power* or *belief and knowledge* is evident in this passage with how it is evident in *one* other ethnographic example you have studied.

The target societies for this comparative question are varied and many. Candidates are expected to show an ability to think about the text in relation to other contexts and draw explicit comparisons. In order to do this, responses must demonstrate an understanding of how either the key concept of **power** or **belief and knowledge** relates to this ethnographic context. They should be able to establish a relevant comparison with any other group or society based on any of these concepts. The response should be structured as a comparison and contrast, highlighting similarities and differences.

This passage focuses on how social structures create subjectivity. More specifically, it examines suffering and other harming effects on subjectivity in relation to cultural discourses and social relations and how a group of people narrate their past experiences on these. Candidates are expected to show an ability to think about the text in relation to other contexts and to draw explicit comparisons and contrasts. Either of the two key concepts chosen on which such comparison may be drawn should be made explicit and clearly linked to any anthropological issues raised by the text. Candidates must situate the comparative case in terms of place, author and historical context.

Additional guidance:

The question is broad and allows for a wide array of responses. Some candidates may choose to use **belief and knowledge** to explain this ethnographic account. This key concept – a set of convictions, values and viewpoints regarded as “the truth” and shared by members of a social group, underpinned and supported by known cultural experience – may be addressed from different approaches. Terms such as discourse, ideology, hegemony, resistance, socialization, morality, classification, consensus, social control, medicalization may come into play. Candidates can explain how the young students in California internalize their subordinated position by reference to cultural understandings and beliefs and establish relevant comparisons based on other groups and their cultural knowledges and beliefs.

Candidates may recognize the complex interplay between social institutions and individual agency in the production of **knowledge and belief**. Students may refer to the power of the biomedical discourse – as a knowledge/power dyad – to dominate perceptions and understandings of health and the body and its centrality on how people experience and make sense of their worlds. Alternatively, candidates may discuss issues of morals, classifications, systems of value, and meanings.

Those candidates who choose to support their answers by analyzing the ethnographic data through the lens of the key concept **power**, will likely consider the suffering and discrimination of these young Californian students from the understanding of power as an essential feature of social relations and may analyze the association between power, authority and legitimacy. Similarly, candidates may stress the authority position of certain actors to pronounce legitimate discourses.

Candidates may work with diverse concepts from multiple analytical approaches, such as social control, structural power, hegemony, discourse, discipline, biopolitics, violence, habitus, embodiment, inequality to explain the ethnographic data of the passage and relate it to other contexts. Responses may focus on how power is expressed practically and symbolically in ideas, values, emotions and actions of individuals and groups. In this passage, the interweaving of morality, power, knowledge and social positions make for complex and diverse levels of analysis.

Some responses may compare this ethnographic passage to other ethnographic accounts based on group or personal experiences of suffering and pain, or the subaltern condition, or may focus their comparison and contrast on the body. Other topics for comparison and contrast are also possible.

OR

4. Compare and contrast the approaches to research adopted by the anthropologist in this passage to the approaches to research used by another anthropologist you have studied. Make reference to concepts and ethnographic material in your answer. **[10]**

While in the previous question the stress of the comparison and contrast needs to be drawn on the key concepts which would help to frame the responses, here candidates are expected to show an ability to think about the text with emphasis on the approaches of the anthropologists as the main principle on which such comparisons and contrasts should be established.

For example, candidates may note how the author of this extract investigates the ways in which a group of young students from California experience intense socioemotional suffering and discrimination by approaching research with a focus on their written narratives and memories, based on these individuals' accounts about themselves. The author explains that the topic cannot be approached with more commonly used methods. Better responses would make explicit this methodological concern and discussion. Candidates can then compare and contrast this with how another anthropologist has approached issues of feelings, experiences, inequality, discrimination, group identity or any other ethnographic issue, focusing on the approaches.

Also, candidates may highlight how the author's approach focuses on agency and structure, with an emphasis on the structural influences that shape the subject. Or, for instance, how the author demonstrates how societal forces produce and disseminate cultural values. Candidates would compare these approaches with the approaches used in another ethnographic work.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	<p>Comparative ethnography or approaches are presented but in limited detail; relevance is only partially established.</p> <p>The response is not structured as a comparison.</p> <p>The identification of material in terms of fieldwork location(s), historical context(s), group(s) studied, and ethnographer(s) is missing.</p>
3–4	<p>Comparative ethnography or approaches are presented and although this is in limited detail, its relevance is established.</p> <p>The response is structured as a comparison, but this is not balanced and lacks detail.</p> <p>The identification of material in terms of fieldwork location(s), historical context(s), group(s) studied, and ethnographer(s) is partially complete.</p>
5–6	<p>Comparative ethnography or approaches are presented; relevance is established and explained.</p> <p>The response is clearly structured as a comparison; however, either comparison (similarities) or contrasts (differences) are discussed in some detail, but not both; or both are discussed, but superficially.</p> <p>The identification of material in terms of fieldwork location(s), historical context(s), group(s) studied, and ethnographer(s) is mostly complete.</p>
7–8	<p>Comparative ethnography or approaches are presented; relevance is clearly established and explained in detail.</p> <p>The response is clearly structured as a comparison with comparisons (similarities) and contrasts (differences) being discussed in detail, although this is not balanced.</p> <p>The response demonstrates anthropological understanding.</p> <p>The identification of material in terms of fieldwork location(s), historical context(s), group(s) studied, and ethnographer(s) is mostly complete.</p> <p><i>If fieldwork location(s), historical context, group(s) studied and ethnographer(s) have not been fully identified, no more than 8 marks will be awarded.</i></p>
9–10	<p>Comparative ethnography or approaches are presented; relevance is clearly established and discussed in detail.</p> <p>The response is clearly structured as a comparison with comparisons (similarities) and contrasts (differences) discussed critically.</p> <p>The response demonstrates anthropological understanding.</p> <p>The identification of material in terms of fieldwork location(s), historical context(s), group(s) studied, and ethnographer(s) is complete.</p>

5. What does it mean to be a person? Discuss with reference to *at least two* sources of ethnographic material and examples from the passage. [10]

This question requires candidates to develop an argument which is built on an understanding of the following “big anthropological question”: **what does it mean to be a person?** This argumentative response includes discussion and analysis that should be supported by relevant, detailed ethnographic material that gives evidence of the understanding of this big question in different cultural contexts.

This “big anthropological question” should be the very backbone of the response, and be informed by the ethnographic material studied. The aim of this question is to facilitate students to think with and through ethnographic material; to explore these materials analytically, aided by the focus on a “big anthropological question”. A broad variety of ethnographic data can be put forward in order to create meaningful responses.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	There is limited understanding of the big anthropological question. The response refers to ethnographic material in the passage; relevance to the question is superficial or not established. The identification of material in terms of fieldwork location(s), historical context(s), group(s) studied, and ethnographer(s) is missing.
3–4	There is some understanding of the big anthropological question. The response presents some ethnographic material, but relevance to the question is superficial. There is an attempt to analyse and interpret the ethnographic material in relation to the big anthropological question, but this lacks clarity and coherence. The identification of material in terms of fieldwork location(s), historical context(s), group(s) studied, and ethnographer(s) is partially complete.
5–6	There is an understanding of the big anthropological question in different cultural contexts. The response presents some ethnographic material and partially establishes its relevance to the question, but this lacks detail. There is some analysis and interpretation of the ethnographic material in relation to the big anthropological question and there is some explanation. There are inconsistencies in the overall argument. The identification of material in terms of fieldwork location(s), historical context(s), group(s) studied, and ethnographer(s) is mostly complete.
7–8	There is clear understanding of the big anthropological question in different cultural contexts.

	<p>The response presents a range of comparative ethnographic material and establishes its relevance to the question.</p> <p>Analysis and interpretation support an argument; however minor inconsistencies hinder the strength of the overall argument.</p> <p>There is some evaluation, which is generally supported by the argument presented.</p> <p>The identification of material in terms of fieldwork location(s), historical context(s), group(s) studied, and ethnographer(s) is mostly complete.</p> <p><i>If fieldwork location(s), historical context, group(s) studied and ethnographer(s) have not been fully identified, no more than 8 marks will be awarded.</i></p>
9–10	<p>There is a clear understanding of the big anthropological question in different cultural contexts.</p> <p>The response presents detailed comparative ethnographic material and establishes its relevance to the question.</p> <p>Analysis and interpretation support a reasoned argument; any minor inconsistencies do not hinder the strength of the overall argument.</p> <p>There is critical evaluation.</p> <p>The identification of material in terms of fieldwork location(s), historical context(s), group(s) studied, and ethnographer(s) is complete.</p>
