

# **MARKSCHEME**

**November 2006**

## **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**Standard Level**

**Paper 1**

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- 1. What assumptions do transplant professionals make in the process of ranking potential organ donors? [6 marks]**

There are many descriptive examples to choose from which illustrate the manner in which transplant professionals construct the differences between potential donors and rank them according to their medical worth in the process. These range from the healthy young at the top of the scale to the diseased prisoners at the bottom. Such hierarchies are not based solely on the known health status of the potential donors but depend on assumptions made by transplant professionals about life-style and the moral and social worth of the individuals concerned. The construction of difference is not fixed but allows scope for prized commodities to fall in the ranking to the level of 'refuse' when discoveries are made which lessen the value of the human organs. Conversely some, such as the black male victims of street violence may, in the eyes of the procurement specialists, redeem lives which are considered to have been wasted by the post-mortem donation of their organs. Whichever examples a candidate chooses the assumptions and value judgements made by the transplant professionals based on non-medical knowledge about potential donors is key to understanding and answering the question. Better answers will develop an organised and focused response to the question which is supported by relevant selections of materials from the text. There should be a clear and sensible structure to the discussion.

- 2. Why do transplant professionals and the families of organ donors wish to remember donors in different ways? [6 marks]**

This question requires candidates to move from the more clearly descriptive answer of question 1 to consider the contested nature of memorials for the dead and the power struggles waged by transplant professionals and donor kin for control over how donors are remembered. Transplant professionals, because of the nature of their work, tend towards dehumanising the donors in order to consider them as spare body parts and valuable commodities to be used for the benefit of the ill. The families of donors, however, remember their individual lost loved one and the memory of individual names, hobbies, and even cause of death are to be honoured rather than obliterated in anonymous rituals which serve to erase individuality and to deny the donors the specific identities they had in life. Medical memorials celebrate the life of transplant recipients while rendering anonymous the people the organs came from in a form of mystification which also serves to obscure the socioeconomic processes by which such organs were procured in the first place. Donor kin memorials have been created in opposition to those of the medical specialists precisely in order to contest the denial of the existence of people who became organ donors. The battle over memorials is one about who controls memory and what those memories should be. The construction of such rituals in the present serve to show how contested and political such memorials are. Different groups seek to gain the power and legitimacy to decide for the future and in public how those who have died and become organ donors should be remembered.

Strong answers will be able to incorporate examples from the text in order to present coherent and well-argued discussions revealing some of the complexities of ritual production and control in relation to this specific category of modern dead.

3. **Choose an object or ritual that symbolizes a group of people in a society that you have studied in detail, and compare it with organ donor memorials in the United States.** *[8 marks]*

The target societies for this comparative question are varied and many. In essence the question requires candidates to demonstrate an understanding of the social and constructed nature of objects and rituals as well as the uses to which such objects are put or the complex reasons why rituals are performed. It also requires candidates to demonstrate their awareness that control of the meaning and form of such objects or rituals is often a mark of power and prestige in society. Those who control significant cultural objects or rituals shape social understanding and the public recognition of select groups. The meanings of objects and the performance of rituals are not unchanging. As the memorial rituals in the passage above reveal, new rituals may be constructed in opposition to official ones by categories of people who feel dissatisfied with the pre-existing rituals.

In order to obtain full marks answers must be organised in a clear manner, highlighting similarities, differences and generalizations. Candidates must situate the comparative case in terms of group, place, author, and ethnographic context to gain more than *[4 marks]*.

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