



MARKSCHEME

November 2012

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Higher Level

Paper 1

5 pages

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1. Describe how older and younger generations in Burma and the U.S. understand rap. [6 marks]

This is a mainly descriptive question that requires candidates to highlight the similarities and differences between older and younger generations’ understandings of rap, particularly in Burma but also in the U.S..

Older Burmese see rap as a continuation or modern manifestation of an earlier indigenous call-and-response tradition of musical expression known as *thañ ja’*. Younger Burmese do not naturally make this association and identify rap as a new phenomenon.

Thañ ja’ are traditionally associated with flirting rituals and socially sanctioned protests, and by extension older Burmese may understand rap as having roles in these same contexts. The lyrics are, after all, about romance, while the style of delivery is quite confrontational. For younger Burmese the content of rap concerns disappointment in love, but beyond this the clothing and accessories worn by rappers help them to present themselves as “rich, cosmopolitan and modern” in a culture where this remains little more than an aspiration for most.

Different perspectives exist within U.S. rap too, with some older aficionados knowing of its roots in African American call-and-response traditions while “current consumers... have no knowledge of those practices.” In this way, these art forms are used and appreciated differently by different generations in the same group, as well as across cultures.

Candidates do not need to cover all of the above points for full marks. They do have to develop a reasoned response to the question.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	There is an attempt to organize the response and identify relevant points or examples, but the response relies too heavily on quotations from the text <i>and/or</i> limited generalizations are offered.
3–4	The response is organized, identifies and explains some relevant points or examples, and offers generalizations.
5–6	The response is organized, identifies and explains detailed relevant points or examples, and links them to generalizations, demonstrating good anthropological understanding.

2. Using theoretical perspectives, analyse how rap is adapted locally in Burma. [6 marks]

Burmese rap has been adapted locally/localized in comparison to other possible comparative cases where rap is a vibrant cultural form. Keeler focuses on American rap as a comparative case to evaluate the local grounding of Burmese rap. The lyrics are one aspect of Burmese rap that appear specific to the context. Burmese rap lyrics are mostly about unrequited or betrayed love, and lack the crudeness of language and themes found in other rap genres produced in other cultural contexts, such as the U.S. Where boasting takes place it is mild. In its localized form Burmese rap is rhythmically simple and predictable.

Keeler proposes that the mild nature of rap lyrics be understood partly as a response to strict and pervasive Burmese censorship laws. Government control would block any controversial content from being distributed. An equally compelling explanation that he proposes concerns Burmese cultural expectations. One Burmese rapper explains that the profanity of Western rap would jar Burmese Buddhist sensibilities, bringing shame upon him and upsetting his family.

Candidates may also note that some aspects of Burmese rap appear as if they are the product of global flows. These include the adoption of a certain style of clothing associated with U.S. rappers, of the persona of an angry and wild performer, and of a wealthy and cosmopolitan lifestyle as positive qualities to aspire to.

Candidates may refer to theories of globalization and localization, hybridity, scapes, flows, creolization and to the work of anthropologists such as Hannerz, Appadurai, Comaroff and Comaroff, Eriksen, Sahlins and others.

This knowledge should clearly refer to relevant theoretical works or perspectives.

Marks

Level descriptor

- 0 The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
- 1–2 The response is mainly descriptive and relies on quotations, but may demonstrate limited understanding of relevant anthropological issues and concepts.
- 3–4 The response demonstrates some understanding of relevant anthropological issues and concepts or theory, *or* the response recognizes the viewpoint of the anthropologist, *but* not all of these.
- 5–6 The response demonstrates a critical understanding of relevant anthropological issues, concepts and theory, and recognizes the viewpoint of the anthropologist.

3. **Compare and contrast how rap has been used by younger Burmese with how another group has used a cultural practice from outside of its own culture.** [8 marks]

Candidates may choose any social group in order to develop a comparison. The question requires candidates to demonstrate an understanding of how cultural practices are used between societies and groups, and are transformed in the process. This transformation is an adaptation to local context, but also generates new cultural forms in this local context.

Candidates are required to use theory and concepts (ideally introduced in their question 2 response) to frame their comparison.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	Comparative ethnography is presented in limited detail and its relevance is only partly established. It is not identified in terms of place, author or historical context. The response may not be structured as a comparison.
3–4	Comparative ethnography is presented in limited detail but its relevance is established. The comparative ethnography is identified in terms of place, author and historical context, <i>or</i> the response is clearly structured as a comparison.
5–6	Comparative ethnography is presented and its relevance is successfully established. The comparative ethnography is identified in terms of place, author and historical context, <i>and</i> the response is clearly structured as a comparison. Either similarities <i>or</i> differences are discussed in detail, <i>but</i> not both.
7–8	Comparative ethnography is presented and its relevance is successfully established. The comparative ethnography is identified in terms of place, author and historical context, <i>and</i> the response is clearly structured as a comparison. Similarities <i>and</i> differences are discussed in detail. The response demonstrates good anthropological understanding.
