Exercise walk-through

2.3
Areas of inquiry: health, illness and healing

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Social and Cultural Anthropology · SL

Engaging with ethnography

- name the nine areas of inquiry and how they are grouped;
- read an ethnography with five questions: who, where and when, how, what, and which concepts;
- compare exchange in the kula ring, Mauss's theory of the gift and Yan's study of gifts in a Chinese village;
- plan a Paper 2 answer that uses and compares ethnographic material.

The nine areas of inquiry

- The course groups its nine areas of inquiry in three groups.
- SL students study one area from each group; HL students study a fourth from any group.
- For each area you need ethnographic material from at least one real study, with the details that make it real: the anthropologist, the place, the time and the methods.

Key terms

- **Area of inquiry**: one of the nine topics through which the course studies social life, such as the body or production, exchange and consumption.
- **Ethnographic material**: books and articles that anthropologists write after fieldwork.
- **Kula**: a ring of ceremonial exchange of shell necklaces and armbands between the Trobriand and nearby islands.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 Distinguish **disease** from **illness**. [2]

2.2 In two districts of 50,000 people, a disease affects 40 people in district A and 180 in district B. Calculate both rates as percentages, and how many times higher B's rate is. Explain **one** way an anthropologist would study the gap. [3]



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disease: the biological problem as defined by medicine; illness: the person's own experience and meaning of being unwell

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2.2

A: $40/50\,000 = \mathbf{0.08}\,\%$; B: $180/50\,000 = \mathbf{0.36}\,\%$; $180/40 = \mathbf{4.5}$ times; participant observation and interviews in B to learn how people live, work and seek care; looking at structural causes, e.g. housing, income, distance to clinics, stigma (structural violence)

Exercises 2.3·2.4

2.3 Explain how the Azande use witchcraft to explain the collapsing granary. [4]

2.4 Explain **structural violence** and evaluate its usefulness, with reference to Farmer's work in Haiti. [6]

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2.3

the Azande knew termites weakened the granary: they had a natural explanation of how it fell; witchcraft explained why it fell at that moment on those particular people; so witchcraft answers “why me?”, which natural causes do not; Evans-Pritchard: the belief is logical within its own system

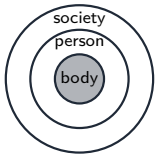
2.4 Explain **structural violence** and evaluate its usefulness, with reference to Farmer’s work in Haiti. [6]

2.4

structural violence: harm caused by social, economic and political structures, not by individuals; Farmer: HIV in Haiti followed poverty, inequality and the history of foreign domination; people’s “choices” were limited by these structures; usefulness: moves blame from individuals to causes that can be changed; limit: it can hide people’s agency and local differences; a judgement

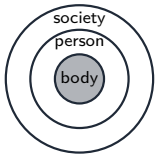
Exercise 3.1

3.1 *(Paper 2 style.)* Evaluate the claim that illness is as much a **social** experience as a **biological** one. Refer to **two** ethnographies. [15]



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3.1

Mark with the markbands: [13-15] clearly focused on the question, key concepts used accurately, ethnographic material in detail (author, place, group), different perspectives and theories evaluated, well-developed critical analysis, different perspectives evaluated, a reasoned conclusion; [10-12] focused, mostly accurate knowledge, analysis with some evaluation; [7-9] some focus, relevant knowledge, mostly narrative or description with limited analysis; [4-6] little focus, limited knowledge, mostly narrative; [1-3] little understanding of the question. Points that may be included: explains disease, illness and sickness; ethnography 1 in detail, e.g. Evans-Pritchard on the Azande; ethnography 2 in detail, e.g. Farmer on Haiti, or Fadiman's The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down; explanatory models: social meaning of illness; sickness role and stigma; structural violence: social causes of who gets sick; counter: biology is real; treatments work across cultures; medical pluralism shows people combine both; comparison of the two ethnographies; a reasoned conclusion