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MARKSCHEME

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SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Higher Level

Paper 1

2. In which ways is television viewing particularly interesting to women in this village of Upper Egypt?

[6 marks]

This question invites candidates to bring together materials from the passage and materials from their background in the anthropology of gender, modernity, and social change. The first paragraph of the passage provides a convenient entry into the question (although candidates are not forced to begin here): television is the one token of modernity that has enabled those who are typically least favoured in society at large, namely younger people, rural dwellers, and women, to claim access to experiences from which they were hitherto excluded. Assuming that everyone is interested in new experiences, it follows that women (and particularly young rural women) would find in television a particularly exciting opportunity to expand the range of experience available to them.

The first paragraph also provides a jumping point that better-prepared candidates will seize: the television set sits at the heart of the most domestic of contexts, the home. But so do women, as we know since the writings of Michelle Rosaldo. This juxtaposition already prepares the ground for a particularly strong bond between women and television, particularly when viewed in light of the fact that television, in essence, brings the most non-domestic of worlds to the confines of the most domestic.

The attraction of television might not be as intense if television programmes focused on worlds so removed from the lives of female viewers that they could find little to identify in them. However, such is not the case. The television serials do depict a distant world: distant geographically (set in town while the viewers are in the country), socio-economically (depicting wealth to which viewers have no access), and psychologically (concerned with dramas and traumas not familiar to viewers). But they also depict the world from the perspective of women, albeit rich women. This fact in itself is not sufficient for rural women to feel particularly attracted to the television serials, in that gender solidarity might be overshadowed by differences in wealth and power. However, because women view the television serials selectively and critically, they give a local meaning to the themes and concerns that the television serials present. These may then form a basis for social and moral commentary that has direct relevance to their lives as women and the lives of those immediately around them.

This analysis (or at least part of it), re-told in candidates' own words, will demonstrate their understanding of television viewing among Upper Egypt rural women that goes beyond the simplistic remark that television watching is escapist. It requires some reading between the lines, some background in relevant topics in anthropology, which, if successful, can give rise to imaginative and varied answers.

- 3. Compare Upper Egypt villagers’ response to television with the ways in which a token of globalization (other than television) is integrated into and transformed by the local context in another society. [8 marks]**

This question provides candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their comparative skills and their understanding of the working of globalization in different contexts. Candidates can choose from a very wide range of possible comparative situations, and should not be expected to necessarily stick to cases of modernity-meets-tradition. Better answers will eschew simplistic accounts of the “impact” of Western technologies and modes of thought on agentless populations (*e.g.*, “television is ruining indigenous peoples’ lives”), and will opt instead for a nuanced, ethnographically informed approach that recognizes the complexities of the meeting of the modern and the local. The best answers will touch on both differences and similarities between the two situations. To receive **[4 marks]**, answers must sustain a comparative mode throughout, and must clearly identify the name, location, ethnographer and ethnographic present of the comparative material.
