



MARKSCHEME

November 2004

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Higher Level

Paper 1

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1. Explain why we must understand the meaning of the veil in contemporary Java in terms of the local context.

[6 marks]

This question seeks to elicit from candidates evidence that they understand one of the most basic precepts of social and cultural anthropology, namely that people’s actions must be explained in reference to local socio-cultural dynamics, even though they may resemble the actions of people in other societies, and even though these actions may be responses to large-scale processes that affect people all over the world, like industrialization and globalization. Responses may approach this question from a variety of angles, and no approach is inherently more successful than others. For example, responses may use materials from the text to demonstrate that the veil is at once a fashion statement, a marker of religious fervour, an affirmation of a modern outlook, as well as a political stance against government corruption, excessive consumerism, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. In addition, perceptive responses will deduce from the text that mainstream Javanese, whether they approve or disapprove of the jilbab, may see it as a marker of middle-class status and education. Alternatively, responses may invoke well-known representations of the meaning of the veil in other Islamic societies (or of the meaning of de-veiling, as in post-Taliban Afghanistan), and compare these representations with the reasons why young Javanese women decide to wear jilbab. Responses may emphasize the fact that, contrary to popular Western representations of the veil in Muslim countries, women in Java do not wear the veil as a marker of gender oppression or of the social and cultural “feudalism” of the society around them, but for diametrically opposed reasons.

However they choose to demonstrate that the veil in Java has a specific meaning that can only be understood through an examination of the socio-cultural dynamics that form the context in which it is worn, candidates have to present their arguments in an organized fashion that explicitly refers to the question, and must do so in their own words.

- 2. Discuss why the decision made by young Javanese women to wear the veil is an act of agency. [6 marks]**

The fact that wearing the jilbab is an agentive act is demonstrated most straightforwardly in the remarks that many people in Java, such as employers and members of the older generations, are opposed to it, and create difficulties for the young women who wear it. This fact clearly shows that the jilbab is an act of self-assertion against, even in defiance of, the wishes and expectations of those in power. Slightly more subtly, young Javanese women wear the veil as an external marker of disapproval with the government-sanctioned embracement of modernity, consumption, and globalized capitalism. The jilbab thus affirms for these women an opposition to the dynamics associated with powerful institutions, such as the State, employers, and traditional forms of the family. More perceptive responses may offer an analysis of the jilbab as a marker of educated and social sophistication, one that demonstrates that the wearer is able to distinguish between Westernization and modernity, and to choose the latter while rejecting the former. This kind of subtle difference-making functions as an assertion that one is capable of choosing the social configuration of one's life-course and to act upon this choice, which is what agency is, and to do so, in addition, in an intelligent and rational fashion, marking this choice with the highly conspicuous symbolism of clothing.

Responses that successfully demonstrate an understanding of agency and its relationship to its opposite category, structure, and which do so in the candidates' own words, will earn good marks. The best marks will be meted out to responses that manage to animate a theoretical angle in their discussion, not necessarily by invoking particular theories of agency but by demonstrating an understanding of the way in which anthropologists approach the tension between agency and structure.

- 3. Choose a social group you have studied that has adapted to the forces of modernity, globalization or industrialization. Compare these responses to that of veiled young Javanese women. [8 marks]**

This question provides candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their comparative skills and their understanding of modernity or globalization or industrialization from an anthropological perspective, which highlights the particularism of responses to large-scale phenomena. A broad variety of comparative situations can be used here, and the wording of the question allows candidates to choose either an entire society or a specific subgroup within a society. Candidates can also choose an example that refers to only one of the dynamics of socio-economic change listed, or to more than one at the same time. Judicious comparisons will highlight the differences and the similarities between the comparative case and veiled Javanese women's response to socio-economic change, and will highlight the generalizations that derive from the comparison. To receive more than **[4 marks]**, candidates must explicitly structure their answers as comparisons, and clearly situate the comparative case in terms of group, place, author and historical context.
