

MARKSCHEME

MAY 2005

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Higher Level

Paper 1

*This markscheme is **confidential** and for the exclusive use of examiners in this examination session.*

*It is the property of the International Baccalaureate and must **not** be reproduced or distributed to any other person without the authorization of IBCA.*

1. What do the women’s discussions of the events of September 11 reveal about their identity? *[6 marks]*

The passage offers a good deal of material relating specifically to identity which the candidates can discuss and most of this is explicit in the passage. Clearly the women’s gender, their roles as mothers caring for children, and their class and race positions are all relevant in the formation of identity. The women’s gender and motherhood are aspects of identity which are relevant to the women’s rejection of violence as an appropriate response to the September 11 attacks. Their class and race positions render them sceptical of the media interpretations of the terrorists as madmen and also enable them to empathize with the black and oppressed peoples of the world in ways which they believe white Americans would find more difficult.

The women also present their identity as different from that of mainstream white America by not considering the events of September 11 to have been so unique as to “split time into a ‘before’ and ‘after’”. They live with violence on a daily basis and the terrorist attacks, however appalling, were no more than a part of the violence which they dealt with all the time. The implication of this is that those who do not deal with routine violence and oppression are more likely to find the events of September 11 unusually horrifying and disruptive of day-to-day routines.

Candidates may discuss the contradictory nature of some of the views that the women express as they reject violence in the name of protecting their children, while being proud of sons who are in the military and upholding mainstream American values. They may also show how identity is not fixed but in process. For example, the women’s first reactions later change as their social context and subject positions within America lead them to draw distinctions between themselves and the American media response to terrorism.

Candidates may present some of the above points in a range of different fashions and may combine some elements in ways that vary from those set out above. Candidates are not expected to provide an exhaustive list of all possible aspects of identity and their implications both explicit and implicit in the text. A clear and well-organized discussion of a few relevant aspects of identity, explicitly linked to the question, will receive better marks than a long list of identity markers with little or no explanation. Stronger responses will avoid uncritical dependence upon quotations from the text.

2. **What does the passage tell us about how these black American women understand their position within the global political context?** *[6 marks]*

The passage provides much material that candidates may use to answer this question. This question is designed to encourage candidates to think more analytically than the first question. Answers can be developed in a variety of ways, although all good answers must address the “broad international diaspora consisting of peoples of color”, the experience of oppression and social marginalization and the relation between the two.

In this passage it is made clear that being black is at times the most salient aspect of the cultural identity of the women. At such times they hypothesize that being black allows for greater compassion and minimizes the otherwise significant differences between them and the peoples of color across the globe. Differences of culture, including those of religion, are implicitly considered less important than the shared experience of oppression by white America. In this way the women in the passage express a shared identity with peoples with whom they do not share language, culture or life experience, and distance themselves from Americans with whom they do share language, religion and (at least some) values, but who happen to be white.

As a result of their social marginalization the women are sceptical of media portrayals of others who are presented as in some way un-American. The women do not accept the official media representations of the terrorists as “madmen” because they themselves understand what it feels like to both belong and yet not belong to a society. They are American and yet because of color and class they will never be other than marginal to mainstream America. This marginality gives the women what they consider to be a greater insight into the position of those others across the world who are also marginalized and do not have the means to control how they are represented in powerful media forms.

However, their gender roles complicate this picture by dividing the women from men, black as well as white, who are more ready to choose violence as a form of retaliation for violence previously inflicted. These women are both divided from and united with mainstream America through their experiences of motherhood. As mothers in a generalized sense they wish to protect and nurture children to keep them safe from violence. However as individual women, who are mothers of particular sons, they wish to feel proud of the achievements and work of their children. They are proud even when their children’s work may involve potential violence as in the case of the son of one of the women who has chosen a military career.

3. **Choose a people, or a group, you have studied in detail. Describe an aspect of their culture which expresses meanings that both unite and divide members. Compare these meanings with the meaning of September 11 for different segments of American society.**

[8 marks]

A very wide range of case studies may be used as the basis of the answer for this comparative question. However, candidates must demonstrate that the comparative case has the capacity to provide a shared common experience as well as the capacity to divide, isolate or marginalize a section of the society which does not, for whatever reason, fully share in the selected aspect of culture. Further, this comparative case must be explicitly compared with the situation of some of the segments of American society described in the passage. The comparative case need not focus on race, gender or class and may relate to either a concrete object, or event, or abstract activity, experience or symbol. Answers must be organized in a clear manner, and highlight similarities, differences and generalizations. 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.
