

MARKSCHEME

November 2006

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. How do transplant professionals construct differences between potential organ donors? **[6 marks]**

There are many descriptive examples to choose from which illustrate the manner in which transplant professionals construct the differences between potential donors and rank them according to their medical worth in the process. These range from the healthy young at the top of the scale to the diseased prisoners at the bottom. Such hierarchies are not based solely on the known health status of the potential donors but depend on assumptions made by transplant professionals about life-style and the moral and social worth of the individuals concerned. The construction of difference is not fixed but allows scope for prized commodities to fall in the ranking to the level of 'refuse' when discoveries are made which lessen the value of the human organs. Conversely some, such as the black male victims of street violence may, in the eyes of the procurement specialists, redeem lives which are considered to have been wasted by the post-mortem donation of their organs. Whichever examples a candidate chooses the assumptions and value judgements made by the transplant professionals based on non-medical knowledge about potential donors is key to understanding and answering the question. Better answers will develop an organised and focused response to the question which is supported by relevant selections of materials from the text. There should be a clear and sensible structure to the discussion.

2. Why are organ donor memorials the subject of dispute in the United States? [6 marks]

This question requires candidates to develop answers which move beyond the more descriptive answer of question 1. In this question the nature of personhood and the loss of a loved one reduced to a series of ‘spare parts’ for the ill serves to mark the distinctions made between the memorials to remember organ donors designed by transplant specialists and those by the families of the donors themselves. For transplant specialists the donors are, by necessity, dehumanised and commodified while for the donor kin this can never be the case. The former construct memorial rituals which unite the donors into a single anonymous mass often symbolised by a tree, while the latter produce memorials recording and celebrating the names and thus individuality of the donors. Even the cause of death, no matter what form this took, may be rendered explicit by donor kin while the transplant specialists’ moral judgements based on their assumptions about the social worth of donors would tend towards obliterating all individuating and personal information about donors.

The passage provides some indications of the reasons why transplant specialists would prefer to keep donor identities anonymous and one of these is highlighted at the end of the text where the Donor Quilt is described as an object which organ recipients study in detail to discover information about where their transplant organs came from. This is the significant point about including the date of death of the donor.

Both medical specialists and donor kin are engaged in a battle to control and own donor bodies and the memories that may be produced and celebrated after their deaths. Donor kin memorials are the outcome of dissatisfaction with, and a form of protest against, the official medical remembrance ceremonies which are modelled on those of mass war dead. Ultimately, the passage is about who has the power to control memory, how this is constructed and how this is rendered public in ritualised social acts of remembrance.

Good answers do not have to provide an exhaustive discussion of all elements of the rituals for donors and the different constructions of memorials for the dead by medical specialists and donor kin covered in the passage but they do have to contextualise their answers within a suitable conceptual framework and select a sufficient range of appropriate examples from the text to justify their discussion.

3. **Choose an object or ritual that symbolizes a group of people in a society that you have studied in detail, and compare it with organ donor memorials in the United States.**

[8 marks]

The target societies for this comparative question are varied and many. In essence the question requires candidates to demonstrate an understanding of the social and constructed nature of objects and rituals as well as the uses to which such objects are put or the complex reasons why rituals are performed. It also requires candidates to demonstrate their awareness that control of the meaning and form of such objects or rituals is often a mark of power and prestige in society. Those who control significant cultural objects or rituals shape social understanding and the public recognition of select groups. The meanings of objects and the performance of rituals are not unchanging. As the memorial rituals in the passage above reveal, new rituals may be constructed in opposition to official ones by categories of people who feel dissatisfied with the pre-existing rituals.

In order to obtain full marks answers must be organised in a clear manner, highlighting similarities, differences and generalizations. Candidates must situate the comparative case in terms of group, place, author, and ethnographic context to gain more than ***[4 marks]***.
