D- This quote is derived from “The Divine Comedy – *Purgatory*” of Dante where it was said by Beatrice, the old childhood love of Dante that represent the ideal character that lead Dante in his Pilgrimage. Upon reaching Paradise and being cleaned from his sins in the river of Lethe, Beatrice orders him to stop that his sins are now gone and he ought now to overcome his feelings and be careful to what she will say so that he won’t return back to sin anyway. Beatrice shows him that through this pilgrimage she managed to lead Dante to the right path even with her dead body. This here poses a stand on Dante’s real consideration of love. First, he observed Beatrice as a perfect beauty but upon her death and his marriage to another, he found that he should not long for the earthly desires but for the true joy of heavens that was symbolized through Beatrice. Therefore, with the light of Beatrice’s dead body, Dante managed how to pass from hell to paradise through the long road of Purgatory and purification of the self. Here at paradise and upon meeting Beatrice, Dante senses the real meaning of the eternal love that is the love of people through God and honoring not the mortal traits but the eternal joy and beauty of Heavens.

B- Shedding light on the real aspect of the divine faith and ideal love, Dante in “The Divine Comedy”, introduced a new approach toward the world and the relation with the Eternal. He was ordained by Beatrice, his old childhood love, to pass along a journey starting from hell to paradise passing through Purgatory so that he can rid himself of the sins and be able to receive the Eternal Joy of Heaven. Through his poem, Dante explains many important theological aspects of man and the world along with his advisor, Virgil, whom Beatrice summoned to lead him to the right path. Through his trial Dante shows through purgatory that best resemble this life where souls seek purification of themselves from sins in order to elevate their souls to receive the real grace of God. In this period along with our life the importance of reason was there in order to help man understand and approach the real faith. This was manifested by Virgil who represented this part of human character that showed Dante what each state stands for and explained he different questions that he have in mind as that of the free will and the source of love. Virgil was showing the importance of reason as a servant of grace and a method for the introduction of the unshakable faith. This reason masters in hell, whereas it starts to fumble in purgatory and disappears in Heaven. For instance, Virgil explains to Dante that every soul in itself includes the innate zeal toward the eternal and love of him, but the sins deviate such zeal toward the temporal. However, this explanation of the nature of the divine love reaches the point the Virgil can’t answer any more and left the rest for Beatrice that is the sign of faith and grace of God where Virgil leaves Dante at the gates of Paradise. Therefore, the real theological conception of man that Dante has is a real blend of the rational and faithful man. Both reason and faith must act together in harmony to reach the Eternal Joy. The reason alone is not enough. Reason can answer on many questions about this life and the afterlife and man’s duties but it stands still when the question extends to the articles of faith. Such articles should be perceived merely and entirely through faith and reason can serve no more. Reason is not an autonomous and self-sufficient guide for human fulfillment. Rather, it needs the grace of God so that it can elevate itself to the highest levels of belief and understanding. This was the first aspect of man that Dante emphasizes through his allegory that man must be equipped with both reason and faith in order to win the battle for heaven against the temporal sins that can occupy his soul. Through this conception of human nature, the idea of the grace of God comes to appear in Dante’s allegory. As reason alone is not sufficient to be the road to Heaven, one needs also the grace of God. This is mainly acquired through having the faith in the Word of God, in the resurrection of Christ and the zeal for salvation. When man reaches the level of faith that is unshakable, he therefore becomes under the wings of the ecstasy of God with his soul elevated toward the real enlightment of the soul. Thus, virtue and reason are not the only road toward the eternal joy in Heaven; in addition, the grace of God should be there as the aid that makes the soul surmount all the obstacles of life and reach the eternal salvation and bliss. Here, the importance of having the complete self-sufficient guide that is faith. Faith ought to be everywhere beside reason so that the Grace of God can find a real host to dwell and nourish one’s soul. Moreover, talking about sins, Dante introduces the conception of love and its importance in the human life. Man is familiar with two forms of love, the natural and the rational. The natural love is innate, and it always tends to good whereas the rational can deviate with excessive zeal toward temporal aims. The first love is the result of the grace of Holy God and tends always towards Him. However, the mental love is aided by reason and shows the free will of human. The conception of love with Dante is as a motivator of one’s all actions that resembles the power of the Heart with Al-Muhasibi. This mental love that is driven by the reason and free will can tend toward good or evil, and also can lean toward things with appropriate or excessive zeal so that both leaning toward bad deeds or toward good ones with inappropriate zeal are sins to be punished for in purgatory. So it’s the ill-direction of love or the perverted love that is the source of all sins. Therefore, the ideal love that one should have is a true unmasked natural love in God that is not defective and a moderate and non-excessive love of the worldly things. However, Dante views on the tongue of Virgil that the natural love is innate in human as do bees innately go to make honey. Such innate believe that is against that believed by Thomas Aquinas is another component of the epistemology of Dante who believes that every soul have that love that comes from outside and cannot be comprehended that lead one to the ultimate truth that is God. Consequently, the four components needed for heaven in Dante’s philosophy are faith, reason, grace, and right love. By his passage through his pilgrimage, Dante draws the road for all people to reach the eternal Bliss by following these four concepts and receive the eternal joy. Here, it becomes evident to us the roles of Virgil and Beatrice as mentioned before. Virgil corresponds to reason as an aid for human salvation but it’s not autonomous and self-sufficient since Virgil stops at the gates of paradise waiting for another component to let Dante enter. The other is Beatrice that is the symbol of the Grace of God that is the main light toward Eternal Joy and Virgil being the servant of Beatrice shows how the reason is the servant of the grace of God. Dante on another hand mentions the fact of Limbo that encompasses all people that are neither damned nor saved. They are those who were equipped with both reason and virtue and did not receive the faith in Christ and the grace of God. Such level that’s unaided by grace cannot enter paradise due to the deficiency in the major component of success. The significance of such is that reason and virtue alone cannot stand without the complete components of the Eternal Joy.

 By reading such work of Dante we can view it as closest to that of Saint Augustine who had a similar shift in his life from a sinful state to a state of enlightment concentrating on showing the road of salvation for human beings. We can find that both concentrate on the existential experience and stories to make people follow their path; one through an allegory and the other through an autobiography. Moreover, both had the main conception of the free will that is the main property of human reason. Both asked the question about the origin of evil and found out that we humans have our own independent tendencies that we tend through them to do wrong or good according to the type of will we have. The ideal behavior appeared by have the full will with Augustine similar to the ideal love with Dante. Nonetheless, both concentrate on the importance of faith and the limitation of reason. Not neglecting the power of reason, they both belief that it stands at a certain state of understanding that requires the faith in order to perfect it and the grace of God to reach the state of ecstasy and enlightment. Even their political beliefs tend to coincide that they believe in the importance of the ideal ruler who can guide his subjects to the correct path since the flock eats as their shepherd wants. By this we find how both Augustine and Dante tend to approach each other in experience, theme and belief.

F- By reading The Muquaddimah of Ibn Khaldun, one realizes the advent of a new conception of history versus what was common as history writing in that time. History with Ibn Khaldun is not a simple report of occasions from the mouth of tellers in books containing falsehood more than right. History, im fact, is a wholesome study of the different conditions of a society. It’s the study of politics as well as anthropology, geography, sociology and science. It’s an entire mapping of the circumstances and results together with the reasons of different civilization changes and properties. Studying a civilization includes studying the geographic conditions if desert or forest , studying the social connections and group feelings, and studying the politics from monasteries, dynasties, kingdoms, and republics in addition to studying religions and sciences and wars and disasters. Therefore, it’s not the retelling of a story that makes history, it’s a deep and complete study that requires thorough understanding of what would be true or false from such telling and what to accept and what is illogical. This was the bases of modern conception of Historiography along with sociology what made Ibn Khaldun a founder and contributor to both sciences.

1. A- During the sixteenth century, Europe witnessed a great renaissance accompanied with the shift of the center of gravity of concern from God and religion to man and sciences where individualism and humanism arouse. This accompanied the conception of this temporal life as a life that is worth to be lived and not neglected. The recognition of the importance of this temporal life brought great advancement in sciences as well as politics. One great advance in politics that shifted from the single moral order was with Machiavelli who introduced a new concept of what really politics is and what really a Prince would take into concern so that the state can persist. In his letter “The Prince”, which includes his advices for the princes, Machiavelli states that the gap between what should be lived and what is lived and the gap between the imagined and the actual is so wide that a Prince should be first of all pragmatic. This pragmatism that a Prince should follow is of threefold. The first is that a Prince should not be deceived by appearances; he must have the prudence that make him not judge and build his strategy on what appears but rather on his power and stratagem. He gives the example that people in times of relief express that they can scarify themselves in honor of the Prince and so do flatters and mercenaries, so the Prince should not be deceived and overconfident by these flatters. He must be realistic recognizing things as they are away from deception and this is the base of his prudence. The other fold is related to virtue with the Machiavellian concept “ the end justifies the mean” so that a Prince should maintain his state whatever the method is and that recommends that he abandons the natural belief in the ideality of the Prince and his behavior. A Prince should act virtuously as much as that maintain his state but if not, he must know how to act through an evil behavior. The Prince should recognize what of his acts does really maintain his state and what he imagines as an ideal behavior. The last and most important property of a real practical Prince is the adaptability of his policy to circumstances and time. A Prince puts in his mind a certain property to follow in order to reach a certain goal or achievement. However, whenever the circumstances change he must be able to change his policy and sometimes the whole strategy and adapt it to the times and change his imagined and readily believed strategy. This adaptability is a key for the success of a Prince since many methods can lead to success but such methods of success change as fortune change so the success of a Prince depend on how his method and policy accord with fortune. Such pragmatism is a key for the success of a Prince. The first and most important type of the pragmatism is in accordance with man’s nature that Machiavelli views. Machiavelli views man as incredulous, fickle, simple, ungrateful, liars, deceivers, and wretched creatures that break friendships and judge by the circumstances. This low conception of man that Machiavelli has is somehow justifiable. First, men are fickle. They are easy to persuade but hard to confirm this persuasion; thus, once people are persuaded, a prince should develop power so that when they are no more believing in the Prince, they will be forced to do so. Moreover, human nature is incredulous; people are always afraid of all what’s new. The hardly accept innovations and resist it with no evident reason. This obliges a prince to use force to innovate or not to do so to preserve his principality. Nonetheless, people are ungrateful. In times of misfortune and adversity, they will shift against you and forget all the good that you have previously done to them. They leave the Prince alone in times of adversity and try to exploit him much in relief. Consequently, a Prince should not always predict to have grateful subjects. That’s why he should deliver his benefits progressively so that people are always in touch of his generosity. Most important is the fact that people are deceptive and liars as mentioned before they stand with you in times of relief and try to exploit you and make you feel over-confidence by their promises. However, people are simple and only judge by the appearances and results that’s why Machiavelli states the principle that the end justifies the mean. Another character that Machiavelli assigns to men the property of beasts that men are sometimes as beasts. They lose their mentality and rationality and act like beast driven by greediness and avarice. Comparing Machiavelli to other politicians, we find similarities and innovations.

Focusing on Ibn Khaldun in particular, we find that both approach each other in certain field and deviate in another. Start where they meet we find that both had the secular concepts that religion and politics are two different realms where Machiavelli believes that a Prince might use religion to reach Principality but he shouldn’t be always religious and Ibn khaldun differentiates between the rational politics and the religious laws where the former work for this world and the latter works for this world and the afterlife what necessitates that rational politics should be well exploited to manage this life and its occurrences. Also, they both aim at separating the natural from the supernatural where Ibn Khaldun says that the supernatural Will of God can interfere through making the king loose his qualities in the decline of civilization and so in Machiavelli the fortune can change and once it doesn’t accord with the prince’s policy he will come to grief. On another hand we find that both grant a wide consideration of the importance of the goodwill of people for the rise of kingdoms and its decline. Avoiding the people to hate you, was he same advice in the letters of Machiavelli and Taher Ibn El Hussien since this is the first sign of setback. Nevertheless, the pragmatic thought is available with both Ibn Khaldun and Machiavelli where in the letter of Tahir Ibn El Hussien he command son to be practical and not deceived by appearances which is similar to the pragmatic advice of Machiavelli to all Princes. Also as Machiavelli advices kings to have the nobles to his side and maintain their position so that they stay beside you, Ibn Khaldun recognizes the importance of the maintenance of the positions of the “houses” of dignity in the kingdoms so that one can ensure their loyalty. In the field of property, both are with private property and they see that preventing people from their properties is a sign of setback where Machiavelli sees with private property an incentive for people to work and states to flourish and Ibn Khaldun says that a Prince should abide by the religious law that properties, soul, intellect, progeny, and religion should not be corrupted or injured. Considering the points where both deviate from each other, we find that Ibn Khaldun have a major different conception than Machiavelli where Ibn Khaldun believes that Virtue is the major component of the success of kings however it’s power with Machiavelli that decides that. Ibn Khaldun believes that both power and virtue come together but Machiavelli believes that power alone is important and the prince should have amorality that he can act virtuously or not according to the situation. However, virtue is the main concept for Ibn Khaldun where power is a commodity and not an essence of success. Furthermore, the prince in Machiavelli’s thought should only appear to have good qualities and act amorally. Contrarily, Ibn Khaldun views the prince as an ideal model for his subjects that have the perfect of qualities and coins the loss of these qualities to the decline of civilizations. Another major difference is the concentration on group feeling by Ibn Khaldun and basing his study on it as a road to royal authority and civilizational cohesion, Machiavelli on the other hand focuses on prowess and the power of the prince that make him through cunning and power reach the state. But the major methodological difference between the two is that Ibn Khaldun have brought a wide comprehensive study of the difference sides of human civilizations from the social to political, economical and historical and provided a study that fits every civilization and based the foundations of historiography whereas Machiavelli wants only to advice the prince on the best way to maintain his state and address the Italian prince to achieve and maintain the cohesion of Italy taking advantage of ancient lessons.

In order to take a position to agree or not with any of the two philosophers we first must recognize that each of them has the goal and circumstances for his writing and according to the aim or circumstance we can say that both have excelled. In one field, Ibn Khaldun was able to achieve his thorough study of history, correct previous wrong assumptions, and put the bases for a new science, and in another field Machiavelli was able to draw efficient and practical methods that a prince could work through so that Italy can be united and strengthened again. We can say in general term that Ibn Khaldun and Machiavelli achieved their goals. However, the ideas of Machiavelli, if they suit his time, are not applicable for all times and places. On one hand, the spread of media made every small incident echo in the whole world so that the bad deeds that Machiavelli supposed will be expressed to the minority are now in the hands of the majority and the Prince can no more be deceptive in his appearance because media can unmask all his bad deeds. Moreover, if we consider Machiavelli’s advocacy of amorality in the modern view, we find that it can work but it creates men with much lower conception that Machiavelli has. Even if the Prince aims at maintaining the state, this is not an ultimate excuse for him to deviate into wrong. Such type of corruption that starts at the head of the society, once people are accustomed to recognizing it and accepting it for the prince, will no more consider as a vice and it becomes for all people a normal act as the prince does, and this what really happened in history where kings in their attempt to justify their sins show that these are actually not sins and that changed the whole moral order and lead to the corruption of the society as for Omayyads who tried to view many Islamic sins as normal acts and lead to the corruption of the society. I, therefore, leans more toward the conception of Ibn Khaldun, Aquinas, Plato, and Aristotle that concentrate on the ideal behavior of the society and Prince. In this field it’s better to mention that even if ideal behavior is hard to attain or maybe unattainable as Machiavelli suggest, but the act of tending toward perfection is of the same importance and is related to the very essence of Human’s Reason of Existence. That’s the side that makes me more agreeable with Ibn Khaldun than Machiavelli.