

CIVILIZATION SEQUENCE 202

FINAL WRITTEN INTERPRETATION EXERCISE

A.U.B.
1997-98

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Samira Khoury

OPEN BOOKS - OPEN NOTES - OPEN MINDS
(TIME: 2 HOURS)

PRO-MEMORIA: Your papers will be graded in terms of five major considerations:

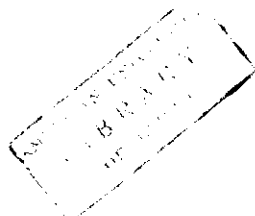
1. **RELEVANCE:** Your ability to define or limit the issues under discussion (neither TOO MUCH NOR TOO LITTLE sticking to the point; focussing on the point).
2. **COHERANCE:** Your ability to select, organize, argue or analyze the issues logically, relatedly, systematically.
3. **ADEQUACY:** Your ability to present the point of view of the text fairly, forcefully, empathetically, showing a command of the material and an appreciation of the major elements and characteristic "spirit" of the text.
4. **CRITICAL EVALUATION:** Your ability to apply the vision or views of the text, to compare with other views you have considered, and to measure the views against your own experience and reflection upon the issues presented.
5. **VERBAL EXPRESSION:** Your ability to use language at the service of your thought. I cannot grade what you have in mind, unless you express it clearly.

ANSWER ONE QUESTION

- I. "The study of the books of the ancients"(Ibn Rushd, p.3-6)

"We can even say that a man who prevents a qualified person from studying books of philosophy, because some of the most vicious people may be thought to have gone astray through their study of them, is like a man who prevents a thirsty person from drinking cool, fresh water until he dies of thirst, because some people have choked to death on it. For death from water by choking is an accidental matter, but death by thirst is essential and necessary."

1. Explain, first, briefly, the above simile.
2. Interpret it within the context of Ibn Rushd.
Point out his conclusions concerning "the art of arts, philosophy" (p.4)
3. How would Ibn Khaldun (p.398 ff.) comment on the above quotation? OR Al-Ghazali (use one of his similes...)
4. What are your conclusions or comments?



OR II. "BEYOND the NARROW RANGE OF WORDS" (Al-Ghazali, p. 16)

1. Elaborate why and when the "range of words" becomes narrow, with special emphasis on the consequences of such a language problem.
2. Describe briefly what Al-Ghazali means by what lies "beyond" the range of words, stating clearly his solution to this problem. (You may wish to compare with Ibn Tufayl pp. 11-12: "Do not expect any more through mere words, for this is almost impossible").
3. What is your own experience and/or opinion concerning language problems of the above-mentioned nature? Is there a way to avoid them? How?

OR III. DREAMS (Dream-State/Dream-Visions)

1. Analyze briefly and critically each reference to the dreams (within its context), by examining why and what for the dreams are referred to by TWO (2) of the following authors: (a) Al-Ghazali, (b) Dante, (c) Ibn ~Khalidun.
2. Comment comparatively on the role and function assigned to this human phenomenon of dreams (and its interpretation).
3. State your own opinion (attitude) concerning dreams.

OR IV. THE BROKEN GLASS

"When a man comes to know that, the glass of his naive beliefs is broken. This is a breakage not to be repaired by patching or by assembling of fragments. The glass must be melted over again in the furnace for a new start, and out of it another fresh vessel formed." (Al-Ghazali p. 6)

1. Interpret the above statement in its context by elaborating, first, what "to know that" means; second, why the glass was broken, and finally, if and how it has been melted once again. (Base your analysis on the text and refer to it).
2. Discuss the difference between the 'old glass' and the 'fresh vessel' by checking in particular what remained the same and what has been transformed.
3. Could the same simile be applied to the transformation of Augustine? Show how and why or why not. (Quote references).
4. Draw your OWN personal conclusions.

PART B. CHOOSE ONE QUESTION ONLY

OR V

"Customs are like a Second Nature" (Ibn Khaldun, p. 245).

1. Analyze briefly what this means and implies within Ibn Khaldun's context.
2. Elaborate how this view on "customs" affects Ibn Khaldun's concept concerning the course of history with respect to the life-time of dynasties.
3. Is there anything comparable in Al-Ghazali's experience? Specify.
4. State your own opinion.

OR VI

"The gulf between how one should live and how one does live..." (Machiavelli)

1. Interpret Chapter XV of "The Prince" by elaborating the consequences of the "gulf" - concept:
 - a. with regard to the author's recommendations to the prince.
 - b. in view of Machiavelli's own moral consciousness.
2. React to this statement from Ibn Khaldun's or Ghazali's or Ibn Tufayl's point of view.
3. State your own opinion.

OR VII

"The common people are always impressed by appearances and results." (Machiavelli)

1. Interpret Chapter XVII of "The Prince" by analyzing the implication and the conclusions the author is drawing from the above quotation with regard to the special aim of this chapter.
2. Comment on the quotation from Ghazali's or Ibn Tufayl's perspective.
3. Evaluate this passage and the author's concept critically and state your own opinion.

OR VII

Al-Ghazali's various types of "EYES" (p. 18-19, see also p. 14).

1. Elaborate role and function of the various "eyes" in the corresponding "stage of human development".
2. Discuss critically the method and the aim of Al-Ghazali's presentation and proof, in particular concerning the 'objects seen' by each "eye", and in view of the role he assigns to "sense-perception" (p. 3).
3. React to these "eyes" from Ibn Rushd's perspective.
4. Evaluate and state your own opinion.

BEST OF LUCK FOR ALL YOUR EXAMS!