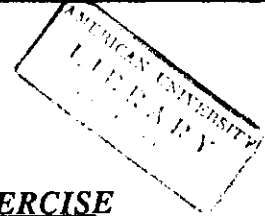


CIVILIZATION SEQUENCE 202



FINAL WRITTEN INTERPRETATION EXERCISE

A.U.B.
2001

June 6, 2001
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 TO 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 III. INTERPRETATION

"They have no right to interpret Scripture merely by authority and without learning". (Luther. p. 11).

1. Analyze critically the underlying bases that led Luther to this conclusion with a brief discussion of the alternative recommended.
 2. React to the above quotation from the point of view of Ibn Rushd and Thomas Aquinas.
 3. Do not forget to specify, in each case, who the "they" are, and what "authority" and "learning" stand for.
 4. Evaluate and state your OWN opinion.
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OR IV. "PRESUMPTION.....IS THE MOTHER OF ERROR". (Aquinas, p. 7).

1. What concept of man does this quotation reveal, and how does it relate to Thomas Aquinas' main thesis?
 2. How would TWO (2) of the following authors analyze the above quotation within his own conceptual framework:
(a) Al-Ghazzali, (b) Ibn Rushd, (c) Ibn Tufayl, (d) Augustine.
 3. Do not forget to specify, in each case, the underlying thesis that led to your answer.
 4. Conclude and state your OWN opinion.
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OR V. Guidance = Virgil and/or Beatrice?

"He (Virgil) says he'll bear me company until I shall be where Beatrice also is, and after that he needs must say farewell,"
(Dante, Purgatory, XXIII, p. 27 f.)

1. Interpret these lines (allegorically?) with particular emphasis on what each Virgil and Beatrice symbolize (or stand for), their function and role in guiding Dante on his journey, their relationship and their limitations.
 2. Comment on the results of your interpretation from the point of view of Ibn Rushd. Does he agree with this allegorical meaning? Why or Why not?
 3. How would Augustine OR Aquinas OR Luther view this guidance? Justify and clarify which would be the favourite guide for your chosen author.
 4. Conclude and state your OWN opinion.
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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 VIII

KNOWLEDGE

"But do not intrude yourself into the divine secret... understand that these things are incomprehensible".
(Thomas Aquinas, p. 10).

1. Analyze critically this advice, with particular emphasis on its consequences vis-a-vis Man's Knowledge.

2. Respond to it from the point of view of Ibn Rushd. (You may compose a short dialogue on the basis of the texts).

3. Conclude and state your OWN opinion.

BEST OF LUCK FOR ALL YOUR EXAMS!