



CIVILIZATION SEQUENCE 202

FINAL WRITTEN INTERPRETATION EXERCISE

A.U.B.
2003-04

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OPEN BOOKS-OPEN NOTES-OPEN MINDS
(TIME: 1 1/2 HOURS)

PRO-MEMORI: 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.398ff.) comment on the above quotation?
OR Al-Ghazali (use one of his similes...)? **OR** Thomas Aquinas?
4. What are your conclusions or comments?

OR

II: The Journey of Life

- "In none of these things does he find that for which he is ever searching"?
(Dante, Convivio, quoted in Lecture flysheets)
- 1. Identify clearly and briefly the "object" of the search, its purpose and aim in:
 - a. Augustine or Dante
 - b. Al-Ghazali
- 2. Why is he "misle" or "ill-directed" in each case? Do the various solutions/remedies succeed? Analyze briefly on the basis of selected quotations.
- 3. Which is your favorite journey? Justify your choice.

OR

III. 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, XXVIII)

- 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. Conclude and state your OWN opinion.

OR

IV. "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

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

- 1. Analyze 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. Comment on the title-quotation from Al-Ghazali's OR Ibn Tufayl's stand point.
- 4. State your own opinion.

GOOD LUCK!