

Response Paper #1

Choose **one** of the following questions, and write two pages in response.

1. In his introduction to The Ornament of the World, Harold Bloom says: “I come away from a reading of Menocal’s book with a sense of loss, another tribute to her evocative power. Our current multiculturalism, the blight of our universities and of our media, is a parody of the culture of Cordoba and Granada in their lost prime.” Comment.
2. The rich cultural diasporas described by Chanda in Chapter 2 were in great part the result of the long time required for travel and trade. Chanda describes multi-cultural universes linked through trade. How do you think the emergence of rapid transportation and the electronic revolution will change cultural diasporas? Be specific.
3. What characteristics made Cordoba in 950 CE the “ornament of the world”? How did it compare with medieval Christian lands to the north?
4. Menocal chronicles vast changes in language that took place in the 9th and 10th centuries in Europe. What were some of the forces that led to the ascendancy of vernacular languages and the decrease in importance of Latin? How did Hebrew gain vernacular power? What role did Arabic play in these changes? Think about Mozarabic, Romance, and Hebrew. Why were lyrical songs (the “ring” songs) important?
5. What are the principal arguments Sen sets out regarding globalization. Do you agree with any of them? Why? Why not? Be specific. You can use arguments based on your reading of Chanda and Menocal.
6. In Chapter 2, Chanda describes changes in commerce that emerged over centuries to make trade between individuals from different countries possible. What are some of the problems traders encountered early on in doing business with individuals with different currencies? What were some of the factors that motivated the change from bartering to coins, to credit cards? What inventions made this possible? What are some of the positive aspects of virtual trade? Some of its problems? (If you know about the “euro” you can include this in your response.)
7. Choose two or three inventions Chanda describes in Chapter 2 and argue that they were the most important for speeding the development of global trade. Be specific. Include advances in communication. Consider the negative impact of these inventions as well if you think any exist.

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21F.076 Globalization: the Good, the Bad, and the In-Between
Fall 2009

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