

**ENGLISH - HIGHER LEVEL - PAPER I**

WEDNESDAY, 7 JUNE - MORNING 9.45 - 12.15

Total Marks: 160

BOTH SECTIONS of this paper (Composition and Unprescribed Prose) must be attempted.

**I. COMPOSITION - (100 marks)**

Write a prose composition on one of the following subjects:

- (a) The enduring magic of the cinema.
- (b) Waiting.
- (c) To work or not to work.
- (d) Life is a tale told by an idiot.
- (e) Science and ignorance.
- (f) Tell me your music and I'll tell you who you are.
- (g) This age of uncertainty.
- (h) Write a speech for or against the motion that "a society can be judged by the way it treats its minorities".

**II. UNPRESCRIBED PROSE - (60 marks)**

Read this passage carefully, and then answer any four of the five questions which follow:-

If politics is the technique of preserving the coherence and welfare of the community and art the expanding of individual perception, then it is not difficult to forecast a confrontation between the two.

At its simplest, the politician, whose power depends on a reasonably co-operative electorate, will be suspicious of anything that encourages imaginative speculation, particularly in the realm of alternative attitudes and assumptions. The politician in power is wedded to the *status quo* while art is forever disrupting it.

This threat posed by art, particularly literary art, is recognised by only a few politicians, though all are instinctively wary of it. Most are too busy discrediting the parliamentary opposition which they see as the enemy, not realising that opposition and government are a closed system, ensuring them a share of power while preserving the illusion of choice for the electorate.

The practice of politics in many countries has boiled down to the preservation of power by the government in office and the effort to wrest it from them by the other party or parties. Most legislation, and the parliamentary opposition to it, has this end in view. The enhancing and protection of communal life is nearly always a secondary incentive.

The writer, on the other hand, has neither executive power nor any prospect of it, does not want it and could not conceive of what to do with it if he had. He is immersed in the imaginary world of his fiction which to him is a more vital part of reality than is the world of the politician, which he sees at best as large-scale socioeconomic housekeeping; something, which need not concern the more daring and exploratory intelligences.

As far as the politician is concerned, the poet and the novelist deal in make-believe. So they do, we might agree, but to them belief is only 'made' or achieved at moments of imaginative certainty, when they are convinced they have had a glimpse of reality.

If this was all it came to, if the novelist lived a private and secret existence in a world of his own without reference to any other, nobody would be any the worse or any the wiser. But the serious novelists communicate by myth and parable to their readers, and if only a handful of these respond with understanding and delight, then a counter-current is set flowing. Deeper levels are slowly hollowed out in the communal thought-channels, levels at which political complacency has difficulty in surviving.

Not that political or social subversion is ever the main aim of the imaginative writer; if it comes about it is a fringe benefit, so to speak. A writer who directly in his work takes part in public controversy loses the trance-like state of consciousness, or subconsciousness, out of which art is created. Of course, occasionally, the artist has dreams of participating in power, power-politics, violent power; even a few have been fascinated by warlords and dictators. But in general the artist knows that only through a kind of passive, powerless (practically speaking) trance, a state of non-striving after worldly eminence, can he help push forward the frontiers of perception.

1. According to the author in the opening two paragraphs, what is the "threat posed by art"?
2. What is the author's view of politics?  
Support your answer by reference to the passage.
3. At the end of the passage, the author speaks of the artist as helping to "push forward the frontiers of perception".  
Trace the development of this notion in the passage as a whole.
4. Explain in its context what the author means by each of the following:-
  - (a) "The enhancing and protection of communal life is nearly always a secondary incentive."
  - (b) "... the serious novelists communicate by myth and parable to their readers".
5. How effectively does the author argue his case in the above passage?