



ENGLISH - HIGHER LEVEL - PAPER I

WEDNESDAY, 10 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) Making connections.
- (b) "The past is the present, isn't it?"
- (c) Features of contemporary culture I admire.
- (d) Hidden depths.
- (e) Idealism - a thing of the past?
- (f) Ours is a caring generation?
- (g) What's worth knowing.
- (h) Dreams.

II. UNPRESCRIBED PROSE - (60 marks)

Read this passage carefully, and then answer the questions which follow it.

1. Historians have recently begun to recognise the ways in which governments and political movements since the eighteenth century employed an array of symbols and ritualistic devices to mobilise mass support. Public festivals, monuments, national emblems, banners and patriotic songs were not, as they have been commonly understood, superfluous accompaniments to the political process; they were frequently its central components, the very substance of power itself.
2. From the mid-nineteenth century to the outbreak of World War I, one symbolic device in particular - public commemorative monuments - enjoyed extraordinary popularity in western Europe. Governments encouraged and often sponsored this effusion of public sculpture because they saw it as a way to strengthen popular support for their regimes and to instil in their societies a sense of political unity and nationhood. Nations, after all, are "imagined communities"; to command allegiance they must first be created in the public mind. The state is invisible: it must be personified before it can be seen, symbolised before it can be conceived. Public monuments are ideally suited to this process. Not only can they serve as dramatic symbols of the state, but by their occupation of public spaces, their three-dimensionality and often their sheer bulk, they impose the ideals and aspirations that they represent on the public consciousness in a way that other cultural signifiers cannot. Unlike words on a page, always gesturing at something beyond the ink and paper giving them form, memorial icons seem to embody ideas, inviting viewers to mistake material presence and weight for immutable permanence.
3. Ironically, the qualities that make public statuary so valuable in building support for established regimes also make them useful to groups who seek to overthrow such regimes. Monuments can sometimes be used to challenge the legitimacy of governments and to objectify the ideals of revolutionary movements. Late Victorian and Edwardian Ireland provides a good example of an attempt to do precisely this. In the half-century leading up to World War I, nationalists erected some forty monuments to honour people and events that represented resistance to British rule.

Their design, construction and consecration consumed the attentions and energies of Irish Nationalists and the public at large to a degree that historians have not fully appreciated. These public monuments were used to express nationalist aspirations and to transmit political ideas. Symbolism and ritualistic devices were employed to further these ends, particularly in the years around the turn of the century, when statomania in Ireland was at its peak. This was also a time when nationalist politics were in a state of transformation and rejuvenation following a decade of drift and disillusionment. It can be argued that there was a close correlation between the two developments and that patriotic monuments both reflected and gave shape to a new nationalism that was emerging in the early twentieth century.

4. What did nationalists hope to gain from putting up monuments? Firstly, they believed that public effigies of Irish patriots would show the world that resistance to British rule thrived in Ireland. Patriotic statuary would prove that, despite appearances, separatist ideals still lived in the country. Nationalists also believed that memorials to dead heroes could teach the country's youth priceless lessons in history and serve as illustrations of a portion of the national story. Finally, patriotic monuments were considered proof of Ireland's readiness for self-government; tickets of admission to the select club of independent nation states.

5. It is impossible to measure popular responses to nationalist monuments with any precision. Certainly, they were capable of generating enormous and enthusiastic crowds for their dedications. Thousands of people in scores of localities devoted extensive amounts of energy, time and money to their construction. Most of the communities that raised these memorials regarded them with pride and incorporated them into civic activities. And their sheer abundance indicated that the general public liked them. They appealed to popular tastes. Wolfhounds, harps and figures of Erin, represented in visual form the traits and preoccupations of the "Davisite" tradition in literature (after the patriot, Thomas Davis). This tradition emphasised romanticism and sentimentality. It enjoyed a massive following and came to dominate the political culture of Ireland because it articulated the tastes and self-images of the majority of the Irish people. Patriotic memorials spoke the same language as popular nationalist literature, albeit in symbolic form. They were Davisism in stone and bronze. Monuments and the rituals that accompanied them were no less important than histories, poems, novels, songs and plays in constructing and articulating a political culture - in inventing, as it were, the idea of an Irish nation.

1. "Public monuments are ideally suited to this process." (Paragraph 2)

(a) Explain, in your own words, the process to which the author is referring.

(b) How does the author show in Paragraph 2 that public monuments are ideally suited to this process?

2. What is the irony to which the author refers in Paragraph 3 and how does he illustrate that irony in the remainder of the paragraph?

3. Answer EITHER (a) OR (b)

(a) In Paragraph 5 how does the author (i) establish, and (ii) account for the popularity of monuments among the Irish?

OR

(b) Explain, in its context, what the author means by each of the following:

(i) "... they impose the ideals and aspirations that they represent on the public consciousness in a way that other cultural signifiers cannot." (Paragraph 2)

(ii) "This was also a time when nationalist politics were in a state of transformation and rejuvenation following a decade of drift and disillusionment." (Paragraph 3)

4. What, in your view, are the merits of the writer's style in the above passage?