

國立清華大學命題紙

96 學年度 外語 系(所) <sup>外國</sup> (文學) 組碩士班入學考試

科目 英文 科目代碼 4104 共 3 頁第 1 頁 \*請在【答案卷卡】內作答

Part I (50%)

**Instructions:** Read the following passage and answer the Questions as directed.

The historian, in his function as historian, can remain quite remote from the collective acts he records; his language and the events that the language denotes are clearly distinct entities. But the writer's language is to some degree the product of his own action; he is both the historian and the agent of his own language. The ambivalence of writing is such that it can be considered both an act and an interpretative process that follows after an act with which it cannot coincide. As such, it both affirms and denies its own nature or specificity. Unlike the historian, the writer remains so closely involved with action that he can never free himself of the temptation to destroy whatever stands between him and his deed, especially the temporal distance that makes him dependent on an earlier past. The appeal of modernity haunts all literature. It is revealed in numberless images and emblems that appear at all periods—in the obsession with a *tabula rasa*, with new beginnings—that finds recurrent expression in all forms of writing. No true account of literary language can bypass this persistent temptation of literature to fulfill itself in a single moment. The temptation of immediacy is constitutive of a literary consciousness and has to be included in a definition of the specificity of literature.

The manner in which this specificity asserts itself, however, the form of its actual manifestation, is curiously oblique and confusing. Often in the course of literary history writers openly assert their commitment to modernity thus conceived. Yet whenever this happens, a curious logic that seems almost uncontrolled, a necessity inherent in the nature of the problem rather than in the will of the writer, directs their utterance away from their avowed purpose. Assertions of literary modernity often end up by putting the possibility of being modern seriously into question. But precisely because this discovery goes against an original commitment that cannot simply be dismissed as erroneous, it never gets stated outright, but hides instead behind rhetorical devices of language that disguise and distort what the writer is actually saying, perhaps in contrast to what he meant to say. Hence the need for the interpreter of such texts to respond to levels of meaning not immediately obvious. The very presence of such complexities indicates the existence of a special problem: How is it that a specific and important feature of a literary consciousness, its desire for modernity, seems to lead outside literature into something that no longer shares this specificity, thus forcing the writer to undermine his own assertion in order to remain faithful to his vocation? ----- Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight*

*tabula rasa*: (Latin) something existing in its original pristine state.

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96 學年度\_\_\_\_\_外語\_\_\_\_\_系(所) <sup>外國</sup>甲 (文學)\_\_\_\_\_組碩士班入學考試

科目\_\_\_\_\_英文\_\_\_\_\_科目代碼\_\_\_\_\_4104\_\_\_\_\_共 3 頁第 2 頁 \*請在【答案卷卡】內作答

1. Translate the **second paragraph** of the passage above from English into Chinese. (20 %)
2. Write a critical response to the passage above in your own opinion on the writer's language, literary consciousness and his/her commitment to literary modernity. Support your argument with specific examples. (30%)

**Part II (50%)**

**Instructions:** Read the following passage and answer the questions as directed.

All I do here is to remark upon the fact that for two centuries tourism and the marketing of Ireland as an object of consumerism has been implicit in much of its literature and history. Both these forms of writing are, indeed, the most influential agencies in the sponsorship of Ireland as an entity that is instantly recognizable and marketable. The internal divisions that mark such writing, as in the variation between a so-called 'romantic' and a disenchanted version of Ireland, between fantasy and realism, are not radical; they do not disturb the security of the entity 'Ireland'; they merely enrich it. Even the division of the island since 1922 is represented in analogous terms, with the British north being caricatured as 'hard-headed' and 'realist', and the Irish south as 'romantic' and impractical, one as modern, the other as archaic, one industrialized, the other underdeveloped, one First, the other Third world. Political propaganda, just like tourism, feeds off such divisions; sometimes they are exploited in order to confirm political and economic power, sometimes to conceal the operation of such power under the guise of a shared, if disputatious, even endearingly attractive because strongly felt, communal loyalty that confirms the shared unity of Irishness by the fissiparous nature of its competing loyalties. For what could be more Irish than the tendency to split into factions? Factions, sectarian and political, confirm the unity they appear to deny.

Thus, as a country for tourists—internal and external—Ireland is in many respects unreal, really unreal, in the sense that the construction of its 'real' status and that of its consumer fantasy are inseparable activities. Yet the system of representation that is so generated can never be at ease because it is never complete. Like any system, it depends on exclusion as well as inclusion. As in political, so in literary forms—there is a system of representation which is not ever identical with a representative system. Even when there is a serious effort to represent minorities, as in the electoral form of proportional representation that is favoured in the Irish Republic, there is always going to be some residue, some peripherality that cannot be centred. But the peripherality need not merely be a matter of numbers—it may be a

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matter of interpretation. The translation of what Chatterjee calls 'fuzzy communities' to 'enumerable communities' inevitably involves an interpretative act whereby the community so enumerated may claim that it is not satisfactorily defined by number, indeed that to represent it as merely an enumerated minority may refuse its representation as a complex and even central culture. This would, for instance, be true of Northern Ireland where both the Protestant and the Catholic communities, in their different ways, would respectively refuse their enumerative status within the bounds of the northern statelet or within the bounds of the island as a whole, partly but not entirely because they then would be transferred from minority to majority and vice versa. To paraphrase Coleridge, communities ought to be weighed, not counted. Similarly, in the Republic, it is often said that the status of the Irish-speaking community is one that cannot be estimated numerically only, and that the forms of state aid, a kind of economic proportional representation, that are designed to support its historically central role is in fact no more than a mode of peripheralizing it, rendering it archaic, quaint, a residue. Further, that same community would claim, with some justice, that Irish—as a language and as a literature—has been so severely misrepresented in English language discourse for so long, that it has effectively been produced as an object of tourism—that it is no more than a romantic residue that can only survive in the world of global capital as a species of sentiment, official and thin piety. It is obvious that the ease or difficulty encountered by a community in verbally representing itself has an effect on the ease or difficulty it has in being politically represented. That is clearly a problem that Irish works of fiction engaged with throughout the nineteenth century; it is part of the explanation for 'strangeness' and the aspiration to overcome it so that it might be appropriately represented as it is, in its own normality, rather than misrepresented as an oddity for which there is no available language. Dialect, or any form of vernacular language that is derided as inappropriate, uneducated, has either no linguistic status or a very frail one. Those who speak are correspondingly marginalized or excluded politically. -----Seamus Deane, *Strange Country*

1. Summarize the main ideas of the **entire passage** in your own words (around 200 words in length). (20%)
2. Elaborate Seamus Deane's statement on the unrepresentative/misrepresentative literary forms of minorities. Use specific reasons and examples to support your argument. (30%)