

**TEMASEK JUNIOR COLLEGE  
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS  
2016**

**Higher 2 Literature**

**9748/01**

**Paper 1      Reading Literature**

**Time            3 hours**

**INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL CANDIDATES**

Answer **three** questions; one from each of the sections.

**INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES**

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

You are advised to spend an hour on each question.

Begin each question on a fresh sheet of paper.

Submit your answer to each question separately.

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**This paper consists of 9 printed pages**

## SECTION A

1.

**Either (a)** Write a critical comparison of the following poems, considering in detail ways in which language, imagery and form are used to present the machine.

### A. Portrait of a Machine

What nudity as beautiful as this  
Obedient monster purring at its toil;  
Those naked iron muscles dripping oil  
And the sure-fingered rods that never miss.  
This long and shining flank of metal is 5  
Magic that greasy labour cannot spoil;  
While this vast engine that could rend the soil  
Conceals its fury with a gentle hiss.

It does not vent its loathing, it does not turn  
Upon its makers with destroying hate. 10  
It bears a deeper malice; lives to earn  
Its master's bread and laughs to see this great  
Lord of the earth, who rules but cannot learn,  
Become the slave of what his slaves create.

Louis Untermeyer (1885-1977)

## **B. This Excellent Machine**

This excellent machine is neatly planned.  
A child, a half-wit would not feel perplexed:  
No chance to err, you simply press the button –  
At once each cog in motion moves the next,  
The whole revolves, and anything that lives 5  
Is quickly sucked towards the running band,  
Where, shot between the automatic knives,  
It's guaranteed to finish dead as mutton.

This excellent machine will illustrate  
The modern world divided into nations: 10  
So neatly planned, that if you merely tap it  
The armaments will start their devastations,  
And though we're for it, though we're all convinced  
Some fool will press the button soon or late,  
We stand and stare, expecting to be minced, – 15  
And very few are asking 'Why not scrap it?'

John Lehmann (1907-1987)

**Or (b)** Write a critical comparison of the following poems, considering in detail ways in which language, imagery and form contribute to each poet's portrayal of the owl.

**A. The Owl**

I saw my world again through your eyes  
As I would see it again through your children's eyes.  
Through your eyes it was foreign.  
Plain hedge hawthorns<sup>1</sup> were peculiar aliens,  
A mystery of peculiar lore and doings. 5  
Anything wild, on legs, in your eyes  
Emerged at a point of exclamation  
As if it had appeared to dinner guests  
In the middle of the table. Common mallards<sup>2</sup>  
Were artefacts of some unearthliness, 10  
Their wooings were a hypnagogic film  
Unreeled by the river. Impossible  
To comprehend the comfort of their feet  
In the freezing water. You were a camera  
Recording reflections you could not fathom. 15  
I made my world perform its utmost for you.  
You took it all in with an incredulous joy  
Like a mother handed her new baby  
By the midwife. Your frenzy made me giddy.  
It woke up my dumb, ecstatic boyhood 20  
Of fifteen years before. My masterpiece  
Came that black night on the Grantchester road.  
I sucked the throaty thin woe of a rabbit  
Out of my wetted knuckle, by a copse<sup>3</sup>  
Where a tawny owl was enquiring. 25  
Suddenly it swooped up, splaying its pinions  
Into my face, taking me for a post.

Ted Hughes (1930-1998)

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<sup>1</sup> hawthorns: plants; shrubs

<sup>2</sup> mallards: wild ducks

<sup>3</sup> copse: a small group of trees

## **B. The Owl**

Downhill I came, hungry, and yet not starved;  
Cold, yet had heat within me that was proof  
Against the North wind; tired, yet so that rest  
Had seemed the sweetest thing under a roof.

Then at the inn I had food, fire, and rest, 5  
Knowing how hungry, cold, and tired was I.  
All of the night was quite barred out except  
An owl's cry, a most melancholy cry

Shaken out long and clear upon the hill, 10  
No merry note, nor cause of merriment,  
But one telling me plain what I escaped  
And others could not, that night, as in I went.

And salted was my food, and my repose,  
Salted and sobered, too, by the bird's voice  
Speaking for all who lay under the stars, 15  
Soldiers and poor, unable to rejoice.

Edward Thomas (1878-1917)

## SECTION B

### EDITH WHARTON: *The Age of Innocence*

2.

**Either (a)** Discuss the significance of art in *The Age of Innocence*.

**Or (b)** Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the relationship between Newland and Ellen, here and elsewhere in the novel.

Dr. Carver bowed himself out, and Mrs. Manson, with a sigh that might have been either of regret or relief, again waved Archer to a seat.

"Ellen will be down in a moment; and before she comes, I am so glad of this quiet moment with you."

Archer murmured his pleasure at their meeting, and the Marchioness continued, in her low sighing accents: "I know everything, dear Mr. Archer—my child has told me all you have done for her. Your wise advice: your courageous firmness—thank heaven it was not too late!" 5

The young man listened with considerable embarrassment. Was there any one, he wondered, to whom Madame Olenska had not proclaimed his intervention in her private affairs? 10

"Madame Olenska exaggerates; I simply gave her a legal opinion, as she asked me to."

"Ah, but in doing it—in doing it you were the unconscious instrument of—of—what word have we moderns for Providence, Mr. Archer?" cried the lady, tilting her head on one side and drooping her lids mysteriously. "Little did you know that at that very moment I was being appealed to: being approached, in fact—from the other side of the Atlantic!" 15

She glanced over her shoulder, as though fearful of being overheard, and then, drawing her chair nearer, and raising a tiny ivory fan to her lips, breathed behind it: "By the Count himself—my poor, mad, foolish Olenski; who asks only to take her back on her own terms." 20

"Good God!" Archer exclaimed, springing up.

"You are horrified? Yes, of course; I understand. I don't defend poor Stanislas, though he has always called me his best friend. He does not defend himself—he casts himself at her feet: in my person." She tapped her emaciated bosom. "I have his letter here." 25

"A letter?—Has Madame Olenska seen it?" Archer stammered, his brain whirling with the shock of the announcement. 30

The Marchioness Manson shook her head softly. "Time—time; I must have time. I know my Ellen—haughty, intractable; shall I say, just a shade unforgiving?"

"But, good heavens, to forgive is one thing; to go back into that hell—" 35

"Ah, yes," the Marchioness acquiesced. "So she describes it—my sensitive child! But on the material side, Mr. Archer, if one may stoop to consider such things; do you know what she is giving up? Those roses there on the sofa—acres like them, under glass and in the open, in his matchless terraced gardens at Nice! Jewels—historic pearls: the Sobieski emeralds—sables—but she cares nothing for all these! Art and beauty, those she does care for, she lives for, as I always have; and those also surrounded her. Pictures, priceless furniture, music, brilliant conversation—ah, that, my dear young man, if you'll excuse me, is what you've no conception of here! And she had it all; and the homage of the greatest. She tells me she is not thought handsome in New York—good heavens! Her portrait has been painted nine times; the greatest artists in Europe have begged for the privilege. Are these things nothing? And the remorse of an adoring husband?"

As the Marchioness Manson rose to her climax her face assumed an expression of ecstatic retrospection which would have moved Archer's mirth had he not been numb with amazement.

He would have laughed if any one had foretold to him that his first sight of poor Medora Manson would have been in the guise of a messenger of Satan; but he was in no mood for laughing now, and she seemed to him to come straight out of the hell from which Ellen Olenska had just escaped.

"She knows nothing yet—of all this?" he asked abruptly.

Mrs. Manson laid a purple finger on her lips. "Nothing directly—but does she suspect? Who can tell? The truth is, Mr. Archer, I have been waiting to see you. From the moment I heard of the firm stand you had taken, and of your influence over her, I hoped it might be possible to count on your support—to convince you ..."

"That she ought to go back? I would rather see her dead!" cried the young man violently.

"Ah," the Marchioness murmured, without visible resentment. For a while she sat in her arm-chair, opening and shutting the absurd ivory fan between her mittened fingers; but suddenly she lifted her head and listened.

"Here she comes," she said in a rapid whisper; and then, pointing to the bouquet on the sofa: "Am I to understand that you prefer *that*, Mr. Archer? After all, marriage is marriage ... and my niece is still a wife..."

## Chapter 17

## SECTION C

### JOHN WEBSTER: *The Duchess of Malfi*

3.

**Either (a)** “The world of Malfi is inevitably perverse.”  
How far do you agree with this comment on *The Duchess of Malfi*?

**Or (b)** Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the dramatic effects created, here and elsewhere in the play.

DELIO	Yond's the Cardinal's window. This fortification Grew from the ruins of an ancient abbey, And to yond side o'th'river lies a wall, Piece of a cloister, which in my opinion Gives the best echo that you ever heard, So hollow and so dismal and withal So plain in the distinction of our words That many have supposed it is a spirit That answers.	5
ANTONIO	I do love these ancient ruins. We never tread upon them but we set Our foot upon some reverend history, And questionless, here in this open court Which now lies naked to the injuries Of stormy weather, some men lie interred Loved the church so well, and gave so largely to't, They thought it should have canopied their bones Till doomsday; but all things have their end: Churches and cities, which have diseases like to men, Must have like death that we have.	10           20
ECHO	<i>Like death that we have.</i>	
DELIO	Now the echo hath caught you.	
ANTONIO	It groaned, methought, and gave A very deadly accent.	
ECHO	<i>Deadly accent.</i>	25
DELIO	I told you 'twas a pretty one: you may make it A huntsman, or a falconer, a musician, Or a thing of sorrow.	
ECHO	<i>A thing of sorrow.</i>	
ANTONIO	Ay, sure, that suits it best.	30
ECHO	<i>That suits it best.</i>	
ANTONIO	'Tis very like my wife's voice.	
ECHO	<i>Ay, wife's voice.</i>	
DELIO	Come, let us walk farther from't. I would not have you go to th'Cardinal's tonight:	35



	Do not.	
ECHO	<i>Do not.</i>	
DELIO	Wisdom doth not more moderate wasting sorrow Than time: take time for't, be mindful of thy safety.	
ECHO	<i>Be mindful of thy safety.</i>	40
ANTONIO	Necessity compels me. Make scrutiny throughout the passes Of your own life; you 'll find it impossible To fly your fate.	
ECHO	<i>O fly your fate.</i>	45
DELIO	Hark: the dead stones seem to have pity on you And give you good counsel.	
ANTONIO	Echo, I will not talk with thee, For thou art a dead thing.	
ECHO	<i>Thou art a dead thing.</i>	50
ANTONIO	My Duchess is asleep now, And her little ones, I hope sweetly: oh heaven Shall I never see her more?	
ECHO	<i>Never see her more.</i>	
ANTONIO	I marked not one repetition of the echo But that: and on the sudden a clear light Presented me a face folded in sorrow.	55
DELIO	Your fancy merely.	
ANTONIO	Come, I'll be out of this ague; For to live thus is not indeed to live: It is a mockery and abuse of life. I will not henceforth save myself by halves, Lose all, or nothing.	60
DELIO	Your own virtue save you! I'll fetch your eldest son, and second you: It may be that the sight of his own blood Spread in so sweet a figure, may beget The more compassion.	65
ANTONIO	How ever, fare you well. Though in our miseries Fortune have a part, Yet in our noble suff'rings she hath none. Contempt of pain—that we may call our own.	70

*Exeunt.*

*Act 5, Scene 3*

**END OF PAPER**