1. Essay (40 points)
Sun and moon. Sunlight and moonbeam. The perennial counterpart. A writer once said: we humans should bathe ourselves more in the moonbeam than in the sunlight because the latter being itself a light for life keeps laying bare the fact of us being organisms which are always moving towards the final corruption and decomposition, while the former being itself a borrowed light is already a light of death which would stop the constant movement of any organisms towards their final end. Please write a short essay, in whatever form or style, of your response to this figurative observation.

2. Reading Comprehension (60 points)
In this section, a poem and an excerpt are given to you to read before you answer the question that follows each piece of work. There is no limit to the number of words you write, but you should always make your answers succinct and to the point in competent English. Mark the question number clearly as 2(A) or 2(B), without copying the questions. And use your time wisely.

(A)
Fulbright Scholars
By Ted Hughes

Where was it, in the Strand? A display
Of news items, in photographs.
For some reason I noticed it.
A picture of that year’s intake
Of Fulbright Scholars. Just arriving—
Or arrived. Or some of them.
Were you among them? I studied it,
Not too minutely, wondering
Which of them I might meet.
I remember that thought. Not
Your face. No doubt I scanned particularly
The girls. Maybe I noticed you.
Maybe I weighed you up, feeling unlikely.
Noted your long hair, loose waves—
Your Veronica Lake bang. Not what it hid.
It would appear blond. And your grin.
Your exaggerated American
Grin for the cameras, the judges, the strangers, the frighteners.
Then I forgot. Yet I remember
The picture: the Fulbright Scholars.
With their luggage? It seems unlikely.
Could they have come as a team? I was walking
Sore-footed, under hot sun, hot pavements.
Was it then I bought a peach? That’s as I remember.
From a stall near Charing Cross Station.
It was the first fresh peach I had ever tasted.
I could hardly believe how delicious.
At twenty-five I was dumbfounded afresh
By my ignorance of the simplest things.

Question: With this poem Ted Hughes opens his Birthday Letters (1998), his last collection of poems, many of which allude to his late wife, the American poet Sylvia Plath. Argue in what manner could “Fulbright Scholars” be understood to be a love poem. If it is not simply about love, what else does it delve into? Glean your evidence from the poem to support your view. (30 points)

(B)

The myth in no way exhausts the semantic constitution of the symbol. I want to recall here the principal reasons why the myth should be subordinated to the symbol. First of all, the myth is a form of narration: it recounts the events of the beginning and the end inside a fundamental time—“In those times...” This referential time adds a new dimension to the historicity which charges the symbolic meaning and so must be treated as a specific problem. Second, the relation of myth to rite and to the complex of institutions of a particular society places the myth in the social web and, up to a certain point, masks the temporal potential of the
symbols put into play. The importance of this distinction will be shown later; the determined social function of the myth does not, to my mind, exhaust the fullness of meaning of the symbolic base, which another mythical constellation can use again in another social context. Finally, the literary ordering of the myth implies a beginning of rationalization which limits the signifying power of the symbolic base. Rhetoric and speculation already begin to fix the symbolic base; there is no myth without a hint of mythology. For all these reasons—the arrangement in narrative form, the relation to rite and to a determined social function, mythological rationalization—the myth is no longer at the level of the symbolic base and of the hidden time which we are seeking to unearth.

From symbol to myth and to mythology, one goes from a hidden time to an exhausted time. It seems, then, that tradition, to the extent to which it descends the slope from symbol to dogmatic mythology, places itself on the trajectory of this exhausted time. It is transformed into heritage and into sediment at the same time that it is rationalized. This process is evident when one compares the great Hebraic symbols of sin to the fantastic constructions concerning original sin of Gnosticism and also Christian anti-Gnosticism, which is only a reply to Gnosticism on the same semantic level. A tradition exhausts itself by mythologizing the symbol; a tradition is renewed by means of interpretation, which reascends the slope from exhausted time to hidden time, that is, by soliciting from mythology the symbol and its store of meaning.


**Question:** In his effort to speak against Claude Lévi-Strauss' global claim that the study of myth by structuralist anthropology should serve as the basis for all human sciences, Paul Ricouer is instead proposing that the hermeneutic project, where interpretation reigns, seems more fundamental. Based on the text above, argue which category you think the literary text falls more into, the myth or the symbol, and why. Whether your view is either, neither, or both, offer a solid argument to back up your view by sticking neatly to the clues offered above by Ricouer. (30 points)