**Name:** Vikash Kumar

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**Course instructor:** Suprotik Chakrabarti

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**Question:**

1. “India is an ancient land”. Examine this statement critically through the temporal

lenses of mythic time, geological time, evolutionary time, and historical time. How

does the use of different temporal lenses shift the focus of what constitutes India and

the idea of Indianness?

**Essay:**

**Introduction**

The facts and figures gathered from mythic, geological, evolutionary, and historical times emphasize the ancientness of the Indian subcontinent. The Vedas, sacred texts of India, the epic stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata, the ancient lore stories of Puranas, and the philosophical texts of Upanishads are some of the most popular evidences from Mythic Time. The continental drift led to the formation of the Indian subcontinent by the collision with the Eurasian plate, and creation of Himalayan range with respect to Geological Time. The gradual change in the human body, behavioral pattern, migration of Aryans, and the intermingling of the human created the Evolutionary Time. The Indus Valley Civilization, one of the well planned architecture, trade networks, and the Vedic Period, the composition of Vedas, are the most spoken figures from Historical Times. These temporal lenses together support the idea that “India is an ancient land” and will be spoken a lot throughout this essay.

**Mythic Time**

The *dharma*, divine avatars, and epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, Puranas and Upanishads symbolize the ideals of righteousness, truth, and the spiritual and moral foundational values of duty in the Indian subcontinent, which reflect India's ancient mythic times. These epic stories narrate the gods and avatars like Rama and Krishna reflecting their continuous guidance to Indian society through spirituality and ethical values. The Puranas explore theological ideas, while Upanishads deal with cosmological issues. The Vedas include the four different and vivid aspects of human life namely *Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda,* and *Atharva Veda*. The collection of hymns and the philosophies likely represents India’s mythic time. These epics have shaped the moral and cultural aspect of the Indian subcontinent by practicing stories that continue to influence everyday life, from festivals to rituals. This time is not marked by archaeological records but by enduring spiritual values and ethical principles that form the idea of “Indianness”.

**Geological Time**

The Earth began with a supercontinent that gradually fragmented due to tectonic shifts over millions of years. Through continental drift, the Indian tectonic plate separated from Gondwanaland and collided towards north with the Eurasian plate around 50 million years ago. This collision led to the formation of the great Himalayan range, shaping the subcontinent’s physical and environmental landscape, marking a significant event in Earth's geological history and defining where the Indian subcontinent stands today. The collision brought the new environmental condition of flora and fauna life on the subcontinent and the creation of rivers, mountains, and neighborhood led to the expansion in resources. The rivers like the Ganges and Indus, flowing from these mountains, developed human settlements, agricultural practices, and cultural identities. This interaction between the physical landscape and human civilization defined India's geological origins to its long-standing cultural identity as an ancient land.

**Evolutionary Time**

The interplay of environmental exposure, resource availability, and migratory patterns serves as a central theme in the evolution of human development. The archaeological evidence indicates that early hominins inhabited this region over two million years ago, with gradual advancements in tool-making and the development of social structures. The migration of various groups, including the Aryans, brought diverse cultural influences and contributed to the rich varieties of Indian civilization. Genetic studies reveal significant intermingling of populations, illustrating a complex narrative of evolution. The settlement of communities along fertile riverbanks cultivated agriculture, shaping social hierarchies and cultural practices. The availability of diverse resources, humans began to innovate trade concepts, establishing networks for the exchange of goods and ideas. This evolution not only allowed for specialization within communities but also fostered connections between different groups, leading to the creation of complex trade routes that enriched cultures and shaped economic systems. India’s ancientness and the essence of "Indianness" are deeply rooted in its evolutionary journey, where environmental forces and human innovation shaped its unique cultural identity, linking its past to its present.

**Historical Time**

The period when human societies and the civilizations began recording the events, the emotions, and the artistic expressions laid the foundation of the historic time, starting from the Indus Valley Civilization to the Vedic era and beyond. The advanced urbanization of the Indus Valley Civilization which showcased advanced urban planning and trade, followed by the philosophical and cultural richness of the Vedic era. The Maurya and Gupta empires marked political and cultural heights, while the Mughal period introduced rich artistic and architectural traditions. These civilizations evolved, they set the stage for the complex historical varieties that extend into later periods, reflecting the dynamic journey of human expression and societal growth in India. India’s historical journey, from the Indus Valley to the Vedic age and beyond, reflects its enduring identity shaped through time. Each period deepens the sense of "Indianness," showing how the land’s ancient roots and evolving culture define the nation across temporal lenses, blending the past with the present.

**Conclusion with the lens of Mythic, Geological, Evolutionary, and Historical times**

The assertion that "India is an ancient land" can be thoroughly examined through mythic, geological, evolutionary, and historical lenses. Mythic time that we came across reveals a rich narrative of values and ethics that have shaped Indian society, while geological time highlights the subcontinent's formation through tectonic activity, emphasizing its ancient roots. Evolutionary time traces human development and adaptation across diverse landscapes, and historical time captures the rise of civilizations like the Indus Valley. Together, these perspectives illustrate that India's identity is deeply intertwined with its ancient past, showcasing a continuous relationship between land and culture, ultimately enriching the concept of Indianness as both a historical and evolving identity.

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1. Used the words from the following book and also to reflect back to the oldness of the stories.

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