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PhD (English Literature)

Entrance Test Model Paper

Time: 3 hours

Max.Marks: 150

Instructions

1. Write all answers on the answer book provided.
2. Return the question paper along with the answer book at the end of the test.
3. **There are three Sections in this paper (A, B and C). Answer ONE question from each Section.**
4. All questions carry equal marks.

Section A

I Answer either (a) or (b) below, i.e., either ONE long essay from question (a) or TWO short essays from question (b).

(a) Write a critically informed essay (1000-2000 words) on any ONE of the following topics:

1. Post-Marxism
2. Critical Pedagogy
3. Cultural Anthropology
4. Digital Humanities
5. Postmodernist Narrative Strategies

OR

(b) Write short essays (500-600 words each) on any TWO of the following topics:

1. New Developments in Milton Studies
2. Minoritarian Discourse
3. The Politics of Translation
4. Diaspora Consciousness
5. Dalit Aesthetics
6. Nietzsche and Postmodern Literary Theory
7. India in the Literature of the Long Eighteenth Century
8. Romantic Orientalism

Section B

II Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow in not more than 100 words each.

The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth ô it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true.

Ecclesiastes

If we were able to take as the finest allegory of simulation the Borges tale where the cartographers of the Empire draw up a map so detailed that it ends up exactly covering the territory (but where, with the decline of the Empire this map becomes frayed and finally ruined, a few shreds still discernible in the deserts ô the metaphysical beauty of this ruined abstraction, bearing witness to an imperial pride and rotting like a carcass, returning to the substance of the soil, rather as an aging double ends up being confused with the real thing), this fable would then have come full circle for us, and now has nothing but the discrete charm of second-order simulacra.

Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory ô precession of simulacra ô it is the map that engenders the territory and if we were to revive the fable today, it would be the territory whose shreds are slowly rotting across the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges subsist here and there, in the deserts which are no longer those of the Empire, but our own. The desert of the real itself.

In fact, even inverted, the fable is useless. Perhaps only the allegory of the Empire remains. For it is with the same imperialism that present-day simulators try to make the real, all the real, coincide with their simulation models. But it is no longer a question of either maps or territory. Something has disappeared: the sovereign difference between them that was the abstraction's charm. For it is the difference which forms the poetry of the map and the charm of the territory, the magic of the concept and the charm of the real. This representational imaginary, which both culminates in and is engulfed by the cartographer's mad project of an ideal coextensivity between the map and the territory, disappears with simulation, whose operation is nuclear and genetic, and no longer specular and discursive. With it goes all of metaphysics. No more mirror of being and appearances, of the real and its concept; no more imaginary coextensivity: rather, genetic miniaturization is the dimension of simulation. The real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models ô and with these it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times. It no longer has to be rational, since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than operational. In fact, since it is no longer enveloped by an imaginary, it is no longer real at all. It is a hyperreal: the product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere. [í]

Hyperreal and imaginary

Disneyland is a perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulation. To begin with it is a play of illusions and phantasms: pirates, the frontier, future world, etc. This imaginary world is supposed to be what makes the operation successful. But, what draws the crowds is undoubtedly much more the social microcosm, the miniaturized and religious revelling in real America, in its delights and drawbacks. You park outside, queue up inside, and are totally abandoned at the exit. In this imaginary world the only phantasmagoria is in the inherent warmth and affection of the crowd, and in that sufficiently excessive number of gadgets used there to specifically maintain the multitudinous affect. The contrast with the absolute solitude of the parking lot — a veritable concentration camp — is total. Or rather: inside, a whole range of gadgets magnetize the crowd into direct flows; outside, solitude is directed onto a single gadget: the automobile. By an extraordinary coincidence (one that undoubtedly belongs to the peculiar enchantment of this universe), this deep-frozen infantile world happens to have been conceived and realized by a man who is himself now cryogenized; Walt Disney, who awaits his resurrection at minus 180 degrees centigrade.

The objective profile of the United States, then, may be traced throughout Disneyland, even down to the morphology of individuals and the crowd. All its values are exalted here, in miniature and comic-strip form. Embalmed and pactfied. Whence the possibility of an ideological analysis of Disneyland (L. Marin does it well in *Utopies, jeux d'espaces*): digest of the American way of life, panegyric to American values, idealized transposition of a contradictory reality. To be sure. But this conceals something else, and that "ideological" blanket exactly serves to cover over a third-order simulation: Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America, which is Disneyland (just as prisons are there to conceal the fact that it is the social in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence, which is carceral). Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle. The Disneyland imaginary is neither true nor false: it is a deterrence machine set up in order to rejuvenate in reverse the fiction of the real. Whence the debility, the infantile degeneration of this imaginary. It is meant to be an infantile world, in order to make us believe that the adults are elsewhere, in the "real" world, and to conceal the fact that real childishness is everywhere, particularly among those adults who go there to act the child in order to foster illusions of their real childishness.

Moreover, Disneyland is not the only one. Enchanted Village, Magic Mountain, Marine World: Los Angeles is encircled by these "imaginary stations" which feed reality, reality-energy, to a town whose mystery is precisely that it is nothing more than a network of endless, unreal circulation: a town of fabulous proportions, but without space or dimensions. As much as electrical and nuclear power stations, as much as film studios, this town, which is nothing more than an immense script and a perpetual motion picture,

needs this old imaginary made up of childhood signals and faked phantasms for its sympathetic nervous system.

[Extract from Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 1988]

1. How does the Borges tale help explain the relation among the real, the imaginary and the illusory?
2. How is Disney Land an exemplar of the hyperreal? Would you consider Baudrillard's Disney Land significantly different from Dan DeLillo's 'Most Photographed Barn'?
3. What is 'third order simulation'?
4. How does Baudrillard's Borges-inspired inversion of the relation between the map and the territory compare with the postcolonial critique of imperial geography?
5. Do you think the concept/metaphor 'hyperreal' runs the risk of confusing one to such an extent that nothing looks real to them? Explain.

Section C

III Answer either (a) or (b).

(a) Write a short note (150 words) on any FOUR of the following themes:

1. The Two Cultures Debate
2. Anthology as a kind of Literary History
3. Dalit Autobiography
4. "In reading great Literature, one becomes a thousand men."
5. Anti-Foundationalism and its Critics
6. Neo-Pragmatist Reader-Response Theory
7. Colonial Gaze
8. The Body in Twentieth Century European literature

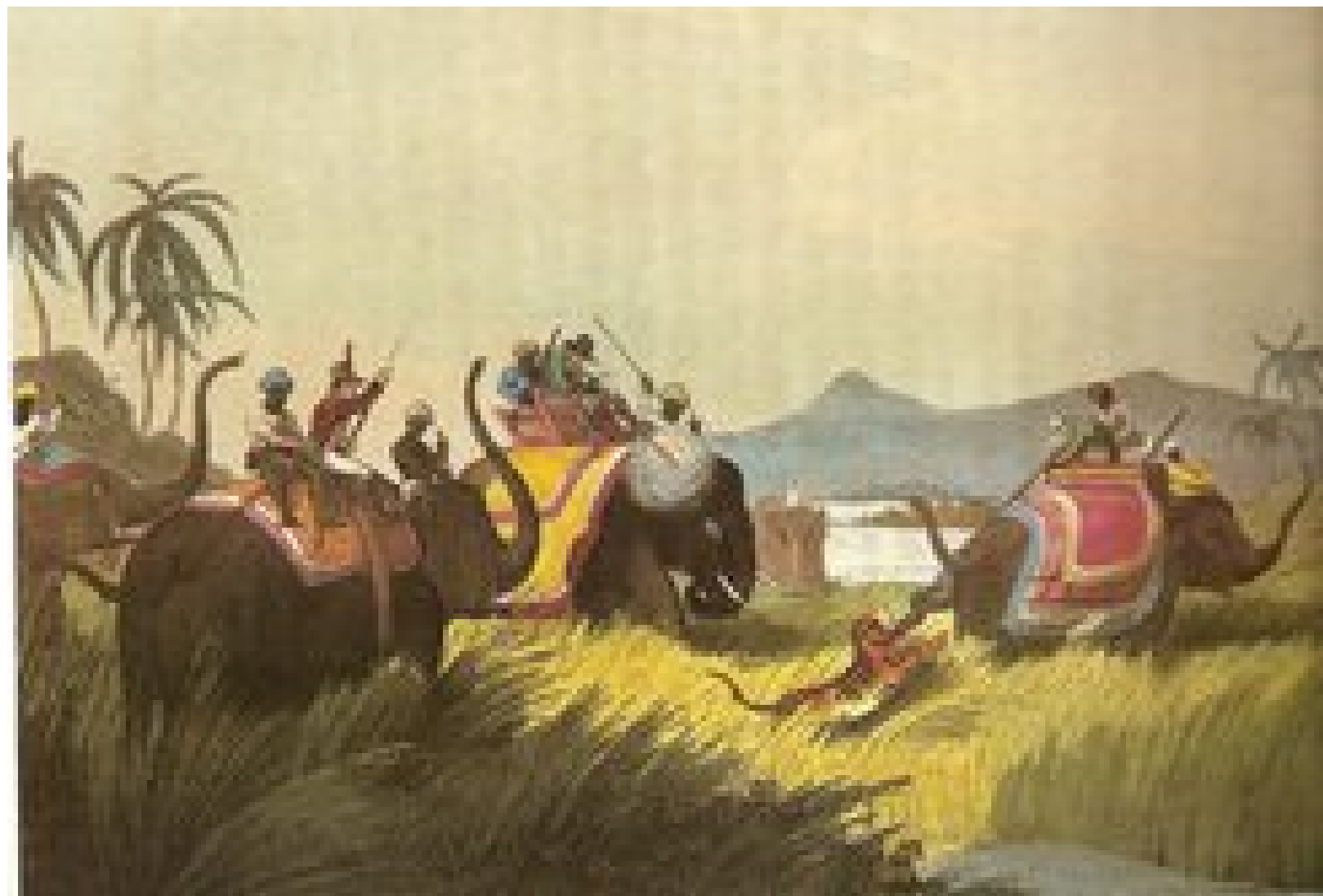
OR

(b) Study the enclosed painting of Samuel Howitt (1808) and answer the following questions in not more than 150 words each.

1. Show how the painting represents the 19th Century British belief that tiger-hunting is struggle with fearsome Nature that needed to be resolutely faced "like a Briton."
2. Has the painter succeeded in depicting tiger-hunting as an important symbol in the construction of British imperial and masculine identities? Explain.

3. Does the scene depicted create the impression that the tiger-hunt is the epitome of the imperialist domination of India's natural environment? Discuss.

4. In the painting, there aren't any members of an Indian royal family or nobility in the hunting party. Do you consider this significant? State your reasons.



Thomas Williamson, Samuel Howitt. **Oriental Field Sports** (1808).