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Question: Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meaning from the context.

blow-by-blow account

de facto

morale booster

astute

relegated to

doctored accounts

political acumen

gave vent to

Solution:

blow-by-blow account : detailed account. In the text “The Adventure” this expression occurs in the context of Gangadharpant trying to understand the outcome of the Battle of Panipat by reading a book on the topic.

morale booster : anything that serves to increase morale or confidence. The expression occurs in the text 'Adventure' where it is told that the Marathas emerged victorious in the Battle of Panipat which increased their morale or confidence in establishing their supremacy all over the country.

Relegated to : assigned to a lower rank or position. In the text it is said how Dadasaheb, a maratha Chieftain was assigned to a lower rank after the Battle of Panipat.

political acumen : political shrewdness with keen insight. In the text 'The Adventure' the expression is used to convey how Madhavrao and Vishwasrao because of their shrewdness could expand their influence all over India.

de facto : existing in fact whether with lawful authority or not. In the text 'Adventure' the Peshwas are regarded as de facto rulers as they kept the Mughal regime alive in Delhi.

astute : marked by practical hardheaded intelligence. In the text “The Adventure” this word is used to convey that the Peshwas were very intelligent to recognise the importance of technological age dawning in Europe.

doctored accounts : manipulation of accounts. This expression conveys that the Bakhars were not providing historical facts but manipulated account of history.

give vent to : to express one's feelings and ideas. Professor Gaitonde expressed his ideas in the public lecture on the Battle of Panipat.

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Understanding the Text

Question: Tick the statements that are true.

1. The story is an account of real events.
2. The story hinges on a particular historical event.
3. Rajendra Deshpande was a historian.
4. The places mentioned in the story are all imaginary.
5. The story tries to relate history to science.

Solution:

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True

Question: Briefly explain the following statements from the text.

1. “You neither travelled to the past nor the future. You were in the present experiencing a different world.”
2. “You have passed through a fantastic experience: or more correctly, a catastrophic experience.”
3. Gangadharpant could not help comparing the country he knew with what he was witnessing around him.
4. “The lack of determinism in quantum theory!”
5. “You need some interaction to cause a transition.”

Solution:

1. This statement was said by Rajendra to Professor Gaitonde. He made a transition from one world to another and back again. By making a transition, he was able to experience two worlds although one at a time. He neither travelled to the past nor to the future. He was in the present but experiencing a different world.
2. This statement was made by Rajendra to Prof. Gaitonde in the text The Adventure by Jayant Vishnu Narlikar. Gangadhar had passed through a strange experience. He had the experience of living in two worlds, one he lived in now and other where he had spent two days.
3. Gangadhar knew India which had seen the decline of Peshwas and experienced the slavery of the British. But the India he had seen in two days was completely different. It had not been subjected to slavery for the white man. It was self dependent and enjoyed self respect. He compared the two countries the one that he knew already and other that he was witnessing around him. Both had different histories.
4. Professor Gaitonde had decided to go to a big library at Bombay and browse through history books. Then he would find out how the present state of affairs was reached. On his return to Pune, he would have a long talk with Rajendra Deshpande. He hoped that Rajendra would help him understand what had happened.
5. This Bombay was under the British Raj. An Anglo-Indian in uniform checked permits. Each of the blue carriages of GBMR had the tiny Union Jack painted on it. The Victoria Terminus station looked very neat and clean. The staff was mostly of Anglo-Indians and Parsees along with a handful of British Officers.

Talking about the Text

Question: Discuss the following statements in groups of two pairs, each pair in a group taking opposite points of view.

- (i) A single event may change the course of the history of a nation.
- (ii) Reality is what is directly experienced through the senses.
- (iii) The methods of inquiry of history, science and philosophy are similar.

Solution:

(i)

For

A single event may change the course of the history of a nation. The battle of Panipat for example is said to be

the turning point in the history of India. In the Battle of Panipat, the Marathas gave in to the forces of Ahmed Shah Abdali. After this event the history of India took another turn. Gradually, the country was overtaken by the foreign forces. In the story The Adventure it is mentioned how in the beginning Prof. Gaitonde was preparing a speech on what course the history would have taken if the Marathas had won the Battle of Panipat. This shows the importance of a single event in the history of a nation.

Against

The motion that A single event may change the course of the history of a nation is a matter of perspective only. It is a relative truth. If we apply the catastrophic theory in understanding history then we will find that there may be alternative outcomes of a single event so that we cannot proclaim that any one course of event is the reality. Since there may be alternative courses of history so debating on a single course is not fruitful. In the story the Adventure due to catastrophic phenomenon the Battle of Panipat is revealed in a different version to Prof Gaitonde. According to this version, the Marathas emerged victorious in the Battle of Panipat. After the event the Marathas extended influence over the entire country. India never fell to the alien forces. So, to argue that a single course of event may change the course of history is not tenable. There may be alternative effects following an event.

(ii) For

Our senses, that is the senses of touch, sight, taste and hearing and smell provide us facts about the world we live in. Knowledge from experience come through these senses. The reality is what we directly experience through these senses. No other reality exists which is not revealed to the senses.

Against

Reality is not what is directly revealed to the senses. We cannot experience so many entities like atoms and molecules but these are real. We cannot even predict the behaviour of these entities accurately. This point is mooted by Rajendra in the story Adventure when he points to the discoveries made by the physicists regarding the behaviour of the atoms. We can predict the position of a bullet fired in a particular direction from a gun but we cannot predict the position of an electron fired from a source. This proves that reality is not what is directly revealed to the senses, there can be alternative realities existing side by side.

(iii) For

The methods of inquiry of History, Science and Philosophy are similar. In the story The Adventure one can find the perspectives of History, Philosophy and Science converging towards a focal point. History employs the methods of observation, analysis and rationalism in understanding the course of past events. Science is based on observation, experimentation and analysis.

Rationalism is the most fundamental principle that Science follows. Philosophy is thoroughly critical in methodology.

Philosophy examines everything including the assumptions and methodology of Science and other disciplines like History. In the story The Adventure History, Science and Philosophy converge. Prof. Gaitonde experienced

an altogether different version of the outcome of the Battle of Panipat. Contrary to the version as provided in History text books, the Marathas emerged as victorious in this battle. Prof. Gaitonde tried to understand this rationally but he failed to get any clue. In this context, Rajendra intervened to explain this phenomenon in the light of the Catastrophic theory which is being employed by Physicists in understanding the behaviour of atoms. Here we find Science and History converging. The similar perspective is seen in Philosophy that truth is relative and not absolute. In fact, the philosophical movement of post Modernism is based on this. In other words, the methods of inquiry of History, Science and Philosophy are similar.

Against

It is a misnomer that the methods of inquiry of History, Science and Philosophy are similar. The similarity is at superficial level and not at the core. In the story The Adventure Rajendra tried to rationalise the experience of Prof Gaitonde by applying the Catastrophic theory. But this explanation is not convincing though it convinced the professor. Catastrophic theory can best explain phenomenon of the physical world but History deals with behavioural world. It is concerned with the behaviour of society and individuals. The methods of inquiry will also vary accordingly.

The method of inquiry of Philosophy is speculative. Philosophy even questions rationalism. Philosophy is highly critical of the methods of Science and History. In other words, the methods of History, Science and Philosophy are not similar. The story The Adventure by Jayant Vishnu Narlikar is, in fact, a science fiction which is trying to show the convergence of Science History and Philosophy. In reality the three disciplines, namely, Science, History and Philosophy have to employ different methodology of inquiry vis-a-vis the subject matter.

Question: (ii) Why do you think Professor Gaitonde decided never to preside over meetings again?

Solution:

(ii) Professor Gaitonde was experiencing a different version of the Battle of Panipat. According to this version, the Marathas emerged victorious in the Battle and started extending influence over the entire country. His mind was actually witnessing a different version of the historical reality. Interestingly, he was also witnessing an event that was not conforming to the conventions. The event was a lecture session on the outcomes of the Battle of Panipat. In this lecture session Prof. Gaitonde observed that the chair of the President was vacant. This again was contrary to the conventions. Prof. Gaitonde rushed to occupy the chair and started explaining the need of a President in a lecture session like this. The public got angry on this point and started throwing objects on him. He had a harrowing experience. This led him to decide not to preside over meetings again.