

Fever: Between Past and the Future

There has existed throughout history an ironic relationship between the past and future. Those who glorify the past and seek to recreate it almost invariably fail while those who view it comprehensively and critically are able to draw on the past in meaningful and lasting ways. People who have confidence in their future approach the past with seriousness and critical reverence. They study it, try to comprehend the values, aesthetics, and style which invested an earlier civilization its greatness or caused it to decline. They preserve its remains, and enshrine relevant, enriching images and events of the past in their memories both collectively and individually.

By contrast, peoples and governments with an uncertain sense of the future manifest deeply skewed relationships to their history. They eschew lived history, shut out its lessons, shun critical inquiries into the past, neglect its remains but, at the same time, invent an imagined past -- shining and glorious, upon which are super-imposed the prejudices and hatreds of our own time. The religion-political movements of South Asia bear witness to this truth. Many Hindus and Muslims alike glorify their history -- that is what they imagine to be their history -- in ways that separate them from the other; rather, pit them against each other.

Thus for decades many Muslims viewed the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb as symbolizing the strengths and virtues of Muslim rule in India. On their part, Hindu nationalists presented the Maratha chief Sivaji as an embodiment of Hindu resistance to Muslim rule. In reality, both were tragic figures out of sync with their own history, signalling the decline of Indian statehood, and the rise of a European empire in India. In this instance, as most recently in the Babri mosque affair, history became a casualty of communal myth making.

In the summer of 1990, I visited Ayodhya and Mathura while researching the campaign which militant Hindu movements -- BJP, VHP, RSS, and Bajrang Dal -- had launched to demolish the Babri Mosque and build a temple on the site which they claimed was the real birth place of Lord Rama two thousand years ago. I was particularly amazed at two features of this campaign. The Hindu revivalists had put out an enormous body of publications and educational material on the alleged excesses of Muslim rule in India, and Hindu resistance to it. Apart from books, colorful posters portrayed in graphic detail the presumed atrocities and heroism of the Hindu-Muslim encounter in India. Narratives in prose and songs were also available by the dozens on audio cassettes. It seemed impossible to stem this tide of invented, poisonous history. To their lasting credit, the most eminent among India's historians openly and consistently debunked the revivalists' claims, in the short run they had little success. Subsequently, their impact was not inconsiderable, and the ire against them has risen in direct proportion to the decline of BJP and its ancillaries. "Inn historians kay liye Hindustan men koi asthan naheen hai", says a ranking BJP leader.

The phenomenon holds also in Pakistan. There are, however, underlying difference between it and India. One is that during crucial periods of our history, governments have favored the distortionists and actively discouraged historical research, instruction, and inquiry. The other significant difference is that because our institutions of higher learning rapidly deteriorated and also because our insecure rulers -- Mohammed Ziaul Haq occupies the highest place in this pantheon -- needed the crutch of inverted history, in Pakistan historians did not thrive and history ceased as a subject of serious study. Hence in Pakistan the inversions of history are greater and embraces such contemporary subjects as the birth of Pakistan and the views and personality of its founding father. But few subjects have suffered greater disfiguring as Islam and Muslim history.

On a daily basis Islam and its history have been invoked In Pakistan for more than four decades. Yet, during all these years neither religion nor history have been accorded serious attention in this country either from the state or society. I know of not a single noteworthy work on these subjects to have been published in Pakistan. The curriculum of deeniyat, a compulsory subject in our schools and. colleges, is almost entirely devoid of a sense of piety [taqwa] spiritualism [roohaniyat], or mysticism [tassawuf]. At best it is cast in terms of ritualistic formalism. At worst, it reduces Islam to a penal code.

As for history, any historian of Islam would shudder at what passes here for instruction in Islamic history. Three years ago, I queried an M.A. class in this subject at a major Pakistani university. None of the 25 odd students there had an inkling of the issues which defined the first major schism in Islamic history -the khawarij movement. None gave a satisfactory explanation of the Ash'arite doctrine and its place in Muslim theological development. And only one had an inkling about the Mu'tazila -- woh acchay log naheen thay. Unki fikr men dahriyat ke anaasir thay (They were not good. people, There were elements of atheism in their thought.) 'We are witnessing', I had then thought, 'the end of history in Pakistan.¹ (Francis Fukuyama had not yet come out with his arcane thesis about history's end.) I was wrong of course, for this sort of ignorance, being widely cultivated in our colleges and universities, can produce a history of sorts.

The history thus produced shall bear but a remote, formalistic relationship to the past, and provide no positive links whatsoever to the future. For the past is not being viewed critically or creatively in most post-colonial societies. Take the Muslim world as a whole. For three centuries, it has been in steady decline. Yet, few Muslim intellectuals have inquired with a degree of rigour and honesty into the causes of this decline. It is only when one identifies the problem that one seeks solutions. In the 19th century, Syed Ahmed Khan inquired loudly into the causes of Muslim decline; and sought to overcome it with reformist zeal. The little that the sub-continent's Muslims accomplished in subsequent decades, they owed largely to his critical intellect. Similar efforts were made in the Ottoman empire, and among Iranian constitutionalists of the late Qajar period. The Muslim tragedy is that subsequent generations failed to build meaningfully on this reformist beginnings.

Politics are at the roots of this failure. For politics shape the intellectual environment. Isolated, illegitimate rulers no less than sectarian movements employ history and religion as ideological weapons and manipulative devices. Their appeal falls often on receptive ears. When the present is painfully replete with inequalities and frustrations, and the future holds little promise people, specially young people, turn to the past. The less they understand the past, the more they are prone to glorify, imagine, and invent it. The past then becomes the anchor of their hopes and their frustrations. The phenomenon is often, and wrongly I believe, identified as fundamentalism.

EQBAL AHMAD [Dawn, 1 April 1994]

Fever between past and future

Apply semantics:

1. Glorification of the Past vs. Critical Analysis:

Example: Those who romanticize history and strive to replicate its glory often find their efforts futile. Conversely, those who engage in thoughtful analysis draw substantial and lasting lessons.

Explanation: This topic juxtaposes the approach of idealizing the past against the more analytical perspective. The example shows how the quest to mimic past achievements can result in failure, while deep critical understanding leads to meaningful insights.

2. Confidence in the Future and Historical Reverence:

Example: Individuals with optimism about the future tend to treat history with reverence. They diligently study and absorb the values and aesthetics that shaped earlier greatness.

Explanation: This topic explores the connection between future confidence and historical respect. The example illustrates how a positive outlook motivates people to understand the past in-depth, recognizing its influences on present and future.

3. Uncertain Future and Distorted Historical Relationships:

Example: Societies grappling with uncertain future is often mold history to serve present biases. They craft an idealized past that mirrors their current animosities.

Explanation: Here, the topic delves into the link between uncertainty and distortion of history. The example portrays how societies, facing an unclear future, reshape history to create a comforting narrative that aligns with their current prejudices.

4. South Asian Religious-Political Movements:

Example: Organizations like BJP, VHP, and RSS in India use historical narratives to advance their agendas. These groups publish literature and imagery that emphasize past conflicts for divisive ends.

Explanation: This topic focuses on the manipulation of history by religious-political groups. The example demonstrates how such movements exploit historical narratives for their goals, creating content that fuels divisions based on historical conflicts.

5. Manipulation of History and Education in Pakistan:

Example: Pakistan's education system has been influenced by distortions, favoring specific perspectives on history. The result is an educational decline and an incomplete understanding of crucial historical events.

Explanation: This topic discusses how history can be manipulated in education. The example highlights how political interference has led to a skewed understanding of history in Pakistan's educational system.

6. Global Decline and Lack of Rigorous Analysis:

Example: Despite the gradual decline of the Muslim world, there's a lack of rigorous examination into the underlying causes. Scholars rarely engage in comprehensive exploration of these historical trends.

Explanation: This topic addresses the global trend of decline and the absence of in-depth analysis. The example underscores the importance of probing historical decline to find solutions and rectify course.

7. Political Influence on Intellectual Landscape:

Example: Political forces significantly shape the intellectual environment. Leaders and movements exploit history to advance their ideologies, which often influence public perceptions.

Explanation: Here, the focus is on the political manipulation of history. The example showcases how political actors use history as a tool to further their agendas, molding public understanding of the past.

8. Role of Education in Shaping Perspectives:

Example: Education plays a vital role in forming perspectives on history. In Pakistan, educational degradation coupled with ideological motives distorts historical narratives and fosters a shallow understanding among the youth.

Explanation: This topic highlights the significance of education in influencing historical perspectives. The example emphasizes how the combination of

deteriorating education standards and political motivations leads to a skewed understanding of history in Pakistan.

Apply stylistic and figure of speech:

1. Glorification of the Past vs. Critical Analysis:

Stylistic Element: Contrast

Figure of Speech: Metaphor

Example: Like a moth drawn to an ancient flame, those who romanticize history and yearn to replicate its golden glow often find their efforts mere wisps against the winds of time. Conversely, the discerning minds who embark on an archaeological expedition through the annals of time not only uncover treasures of insight but forge an unbreakable chain connecting antiquity to the present.

Explanation: The contrast between the moth's ephemeral attraction and the winds of time emphasizes the fleeting nature of attempts to replicate the past. The metaphor of an archaeological expedition imbues the pursuit of critical analysis with a sense of adventure and discovery, underscoring its profound impact.

2. Confidence in the Future and Historical Reverence:

Stylistic Element: Parallel Structure

Figure of Speech: Personification

Example: Just as a gardener tends to the delicate buds of tomorrow's promise with careful reverence, those who hold confidence in the future meticulously cultivate the soil of history, cherishing the values and aesthetics that once bloomed in the gardens of past civilizations.

Explanation: The parallel structure creates a rhythmic flow, underscoring the parallelism between the gardener's care for future buds and the historical reverence. The personification of history as a soil to be cultivated adds depth to the comparison.

3. Uncertain Future and Distorted Historical Relationships:

Stylistic Element: Irony

Figure of Speech: Imagery

Example: Across the tapestry of time, the Muslim world's decline remains a puzzle, an enigma unexplored, and a story untold. Few scholars brave the labyrinth of history's depths, seeking the keys to unravel this mystery.

Explanation: The parallelism of "a puzzle, an enigma unexplored, and a story untold" adds emphasis and rhythm. The anaphora of "Few scholars" creates a sense of rarity and courage, emphasizing the challenge of delving into historical depths.

7. Political Influence on Intellectual Landscape:

Stylistic Element: Rhetorical Question

Figure of Speech: Simile

Example: As politics weaves its intricate tapestry, can history ever escape its embrace? Like a river carving its path through the landscape, leaders and movements wield history's waters to mold the intellectual terrain.

Explanation: The rhetorical question engages the reader, pondering the inescapable link between politics and history. The simile of a river carving a path draws parallels between the shaping force of politics and the natural force of a river's flow.

8. Role of Education in Shaping Perspectives:

Stylistic Element: Antithesis

Figure of Speech: Metonymy

Example: Education, once a beacon of enlightenment, now casts shadows of distortion. In the halls of learning, ideological motives eclipse the purity of knowledge, leaving young minds stranded on the shores of historical misconceptions.

Explanation: The antithesis of "beacon of enlightenment" and "shadows of distortion" creates a stark contrast. The metonymy of "halls of learning" symbolizes educational institutions, and the imagery of "stranded on the shores" evokes a sense of being misled and isolated.

Grice maxim:

The Grice Maxims, proposed by philosopher H.P. Grice, are conversational principles that guide effective communication. These maxims help to understand how people convey meaning, exchange information, and interpret each other's

messages. The maxims are often divided into four categories: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. Let's apply the Grice Maxims to the provided text:

1. Quantity Maxim: Provide enough information, but not too much or too little.

Example: "The juggernauts of history manipulation, including BJP, VHP, RSS, and Bajrang Dal, orchestrate symphonies of selective stories, their literature loaded with bombastic bias, aimed at kindling flames of divisive fanaticism."

Explanation: While this example seems verbose, it adheres to the Quantity Maxim by conveying information about multiple organizations involved in history manipulation. It avoids excessive detail while offering a clear portrayal of their actions.

2. Quality Maxim: Say what you believe to be true and have evidence for.

Example: "In the corridors of Pakistan's education, history becomes both a victim and a weapon, manipulated by the puppet strings of distorted narratives, creating a cacophony of ignorant echoes reverberating through generations."

Explanation: This example adheres to the Quality Maxim by presenting a description of history manipulation based on the author's perspective. The portrayal aligns with the author's beliefs and interpretation of the situation.

3. Relation Maxim: Make your contribution relevant to the ongoing conversation.

Example: "As politics weaves its intricate tapestry, can history ever escape its embrace? Like a river carving its path through the landscape, leaders and movements wield history's waters to mold the intellectual terrain."

Explanation: The Relation Maxim is met in this example by using a simile that relates politics to a river carving its path. The metaphor helps to maintain the relevance of the contribution to the overall discussion.

4. Manner Maxim: Be clear, concise, and orderly in your expression.

Example: "Education, once a beacon of enlightenment, now casts shadows of distortion. In the halls of learning, ideological motives eclipse the purity of knowledge, leaving young minds stranded on the shores of historical misconceptions."

Explanation: This example adheres to the Manner Maxim by employing clear and concise language to describe the transformation of education. The metaphors used also contribute to the organized and orderly presentation of the idea.

Speech act theory:

Speech Act Theory, formulated by philosophers J.L. Austin and later developed by John Searle, is a framework for analyzing the different functions and intentions of language in communication. This theory goes beyond analyzing language purely as a conveyer of information; it delves into how language can perform actions and have various effects beyond mere information transfer. Speech acts are categorized into three main types: locutionary, illocutionary, and perLocutionary Acts.

1. Locutionary Acts: These refer to the literal, grammatical aspects of speech, including the formation of sentences, word choices, and grammar. It is the surface-level meaning of an utterance.

Example: "The sky is blue."

2. IlLocutionary Acts: These are the intended communicative acts or functions performed when language is used. They represent the speaker's intention beyond the literal meaning of the words. These acts can include making requests, giving orders, asking questions, making statements, and more.

Example: "Could you please pass me the salt?"

3. PerLocutionary Acts: These refer to the effects or consequences of speech on the listener. They focus on how the listener interprets and responds to the ilLocutionary Act. PerLocutionary Acts encompass emotional reactions, changes in beliefs, actions taken by the listener, etc.

Example: The listener actually passes the salt.

Applying Speech Act Theory to the provided text, we can identify various speech acts and their intended functions:

1. Locutionary Act: "Those who glorify the past and seek to recreate it almost invariably fail..."

2. IlLocutionary Act: The speaker is making an assertion about the failures of glorifying and recreating the past.

3. PerLocutionary Act: The listener may reconsider the effectiveness of attempts to recreate the past and its implications.

1. Locutionary Act: "Confidence in the future approach the past with seriousness and critical reverence."

2. IlLocutionary Act: The speaker is suggesting that confidence in the future leads people to approach the past with seriousness and critical reverence.

3. PerLocutionary Act: The listener may adopt a more thoughtful approach to studying history, recognizing its relevance to the future.

1. Locutionary Act: "Thus for decades many Muslims viewed the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb as symbolizing the strengths and virtues of Muslim rule in India."

2. IlLocutionary Act: The speaker is describing a historical perception held by many Muslims about Aurangzeb's symbolic significance.

3. PerLocutionary Act: The listener might reflect on the implications of historical figures being revered for their perceived strengths and virtues.

1. Locutionary Act: "In the summer of 1990, I visited Ayodhya and Mathura..."

2. IlLocutionary Act: The speaker is recounting a personal experience of visiting Ayodhya and Mathura.

3. PerLocutionary Act: The listener may gain insight into the author's direct engagement with the subject matter, potentially lending credibility to the analysis.

Use of language:

The use of language in the provided text is rich and purposeful, contributing to the conveyance of complex ideas and engaging the reader. Let's explore some key aspects of language use in the text:

1. Precise Vocabulary: The text employs precise and descriptive vocabulary to communicate nuanced concepts. Terms like "glorify," "critical reverence," "distorted historical relationships," and "manipulation of history" help articulate specific ideas clearly.

2. Metaphorical Language: Metaphors are used to create vivid imagery and enhance understanding. For example, "moth drawn to an ancient flame," "gardener

tends to the delicate buds of tomorrow's promise," and "orchestrate symphonies of selective stories" paint mental pictures that illustrate complex concepts.

3. Rhetorical Devices: The text employs rhetorical devices such as parallelism, repetition, and rhetorical questions. These devices enhance the rhythm and emphasize key points. For instance, "Education, once a beacon of enlightenment, now casts shadows of distortion" uses parallelism to draw attention to the contrast.

4. Complex Sentence Structure: The text utilizes complex sentence structures to weave intricate ideas together. Longer sentences accommodate multiple ideas and elaborations, allowing for comprehensive explanations.

5. Alliteration and Assonance: Alliteration and assonance are employed to create a pleasing rhythm and memorable phrasing. "Orchestrating symphonies," "wield history's waters," and "stranded on the shores" demonstrate how these devices enhance the textual flow.

6. Formal Tone: The language adopts a formal tone suited for discussing historical, political, and philosophical matters. This tone lends an air of authority and seriousness to the discourse.

7. Varied Syntax: The text employs varied sentence structures to maintain reader engagement. Sentences range from short, impactful statements to longer, elaborative ones, offering a dynamic reading experience.

8. Historical References: The text uses historical references to ground its arguments. References to historical figures like Aurangzeb and the description of specific events in South Asian history provide context and illustrate points.

9. Imagery: The use of imagery, such as "sepia filter," "river carving its path," and "tapestry of time," enriches the text by appealing to readers' senses and aiding comprehension.

10. Subject-Specific Terminology: The text employs terminology specific to historical and political contexts. Terms like "BJP," "VHP," "RSS," and "Bajrang Dal" assume the reader's familiarity with these entities, streamlining communication within the context.

11. Authorial Voice: The text carries a distinct authorial voice, expressing the author's perspective and insights. This voice personalizes the discourse and allows readers to connect with the author's viewpoints.

12. Analytical Language: The language is analytical, facilitating the exploration of ideas, causes, and effects. This approach allows the author to delve into the complexities of historical manipulation, education, and societal implications.

Forms of language used:

1. Formal Language: The text employs a formal register throughout, reflecting its serious and scholarly nature. This formality is particularly suitable for discussing historical, political, and philosophical topics.

2. Analytical Language: The language used is analytical and reflective, aiming to dissect complex ideas, historical events, and their implications. The author examines different perspectives, causes, and effects with a critical lens.

3. Descriptive Language: The text utilizes descriptive language to paint vivid pictures in the reader's mind. Metaphors, similes, and imagery are employed to create a rich visual and conceptual landscape.

4. Subject-Specific Terminology: The text employs terminology specific to historical, political, and religious contexts, such as "BJP," "VHP," "RSS," "Mughal emperor Aurangzeb," "South Asian religious-political movements," and "history manipulation."

5. Complex Sentence Structures: The text uses complex sentence structures to convey intricate ideas and provide comprehensive explanations. Longer sentences allow for the exploration of multifaceted concepts.

6. References and Examples: The text provides references to historical events and figures, enhancing its credibility and grounding its arguments. It also offers specific examples to illustrate points and concepts being discussed.

7. Authorial Voice: The text carries a distinct authorial voice, expressing the author's perspective, insights, and analysis. This voice adds a personal touch and allows readers to engage with the author's viewpoints.

8. Formal Tone: The tone of the language is formal and scholarly, reflecting a serious engagement with the subject matter. The tone contributes to the text's authoritative and academic character.

1. Glorify: To praise or honor with admiration.
2. Venerate: To regard with deep respect and reverence.
3. Invariably: In a way that is unchanging or constant.
4. Comprehensive: Thorough and complete, considering all aspects.
5. Reverence: Deep respect and admiration.
6. Eschew: To deliberately avoid or abstain from.
7. Cacophony: A harsh, discordant mixture of sounds.
8. Eclipse: To overshadow or obscure something.
9. Prolific: Producing a large amount or quantity.
10. Anaphora: The repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses.
11. Elicit: To draw out or evoke, often in a reaction or response.
12. Orchestrate: To organize and coordinate in a skillful manner.
13. Hyperbole: Exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally.
14. Distorted: Misrepresented or twisted in meaning or appearance.
15. Cacophony: A harsh, discordant mixture of sounds.
16. Perlocutionary: Relating to the effects or consequences of speech on the listener.
17. Ephemeral: Lasting for a very short time.
18. Antithesis: A contrast or opposition between two things.
19. Vivid: Producing clear, strong, and distinct mental images.
20. Labyrinth: A complex and intricate arrangement or structure.
21. These words contribute to the text's formal and sophisticated tone, enhancing its ability to convey complex ideas and engage readers at a deeper level.