



# Study of Cultural Fusion in *HARAPPA: Curse of the Blood River* by Tracing Perlocutionary Effects:

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## Abstract

*Harappa: Curse of the Blood River* is a modern-day thriller which is a fusion of mythological and historical fiction elements. This novel attracts readers, as this consist of an interesting plot, its title reflects the name of ancient culture Harappa, for which everyone wants to know more. This craze comes to a peak when it synchronizes a mythical tale, a tale of Devta, a tale of the curse which linked past and present culture together, and the tale of universal truth about human tendencies. All these factors lead to a new but old approach to literature. This paper is an effort to analysis this novel in the light of speech-act theory, especially to trace out perlocutionary effect. This novel is remarkable for its effects of language which swings its readers towards two different atmospheres, one is ancient and other is modern. Beyond it, it dwells with suspense, thriller, sometimes light and sometimes heavy emotional juncture. Contradiction and controversial factors both are present here. All this helps readers to fly with the writer's imagination. And finally, make this work more interesting.

Keywords: Devta, Harappa, curse, perlocutionary effect .

## Introduction:

At this juncture when the whole world is affected from the coronavirus, human society can realize basics of life. Indian culture is well developed to sustain in every circumstance. After realizing the vastness of Indian culture it seems interesting more than ever to read 'Harappa: Curse of the Blood River', which is the renowned entrepreneur Vineet Bajpai's first work of fiction. The novels explore

a new take on the unexplained and mysterious end of the Harappan civilization and draw from Hindu mythology and history at several instances. This novel is a reflection of the Indian lifestyle in the context of modern and ancient time. This novel also reflects intercultural panorama in different time zones This novel narrates the story of Vidyut and Vivaswan Pujari – two people separated by three millennia but joined by blood. The plot is divided into two major timelines that run simultaneously through the book—one of Vidyut Shastri, a young and successful entrepreneur who has made his mark in the tech industry; and the other of Vivaswan Pujari, the great and revered Surya of Harappa, soon to be appointed as the chief priest. Both the protagonists share a common link, that of being half-human and half-god, or in other words, a devta. The novel does work in a certain way since Vineet ensures that the story moves fast and the pace never drops – an essential trait for any thriller. Even as Vidyut leads a modern life similar to that of the rich in the society, his roots peek through now and then. His extensive knowledge of the Vedas akin to his predecessors', intense yogic practices, belief in astrology and mastery of Kalaripayattu—the Indian form of martial arts, are all evidence to that. With the plot tied to different regions — Banaras, Harappa and Rome, this book unfold an ancient mystery that confluences Indian history and mythology. This novel presents Indian values. Nowadays when western lifestyle leads new generation to the darkness and Hindustani culture, again and again, throws a bright light to the world by adopting good behaviour and right understanding to set a harmony all over the world this novel helps to close vista of Indian society. To study this novel within the framework of speech-act theory will help readers to enjoy it more than before. Only by observing the perlocutionary effect reader can interpret this story with many more sheds of life. In other words, we can say that to enjoy this novel, to study perlocutionary effects can bring more charm to this novel.

One might also spot qualities of Amish Tripathi and Ashwin Sanghi's writing in this book, which when coupled with the author's unique style, makes a cracker of a plot! The art to narrate a complicated plot with easy approach pave Vineet's way towards successful authorship. That is why Times of India declares " Vineet Bajpai... an engrossing articulator"

One reviewer observes, there are some points in this novel that will make to go back and insist readers to truly understand what is happening. Writing about the present seems like an easy task but how Bajpai packs a hearty dose of Harappa is what gives the book more value. In addition to this it is also recommended to not to talk much about the details of the story since that could prove to be a spoiler. To the lovers of a good thriller, have an interest in history or are a fan of Dan Brown style, this one might just become latest favourite. Analogous to any other work of fiction, the Harappa series too has a set of antagonists. The present novel is a thriller with its combination of assassins, ethereal beings, tantric, and the decisive enemy, The Big Man. With a constant arena of mystery around this man, a reader can only guess the extent of his supremacy as not much is revealed about him either in Harappa or Pralay; he wants to kill Vidyut. The novel has an ample amount of action sequences and horrific and heart-wrenching deaths.

To assess this discourse, we have to understand the speech-act theory which is the most precious gift by Austin to understand the speaker and his speech. This theory is a comprehensive theory of linguistic communication. "It is a theory about what a speaker and a listener have to know and to do if the former is to communicate with the latter through spoken discourse." (Thorat,32). Discourse is not only limited in the words which are spoken. Its purpose lies in the use of words, their interpretation and their meaning. The interpretation of words used in the utterances depends on a certain context with certain intentions. Above all, it depends on the listener's point of view, his ability to grasp the intention behind the utterance and understanding of what is said, how it is said and why it is said. For an appropriate discourse, both the speaker and the listener are responsible. In a word what/ where/ why/ how to speak and to listen to are the basic features to understand discourse. "Discourse analysis concerns itself with the use of language in a running in a running discourse, continued over a sequence of sentences, and involving the interaction of speaker (or writer and auditor (or reader) in a specific situational context, and within a framework of social and cultural conventions".<sup>3</sup> Since 1970, the speech-act theory has influenced the interpretation of

discourse variously. "When applied to a literary work, it provides a systematic framework for identifying the unspoken presupposition, implication, and effects of speech acts which the competent readers and critics always took into account".(M H Abraham,293). The Oxford philosopher J. L. Austin, whose 1955 lectures at Harvard University were published posthumously as *How to Do Things with Words* (1975), established the foundation of speech-act theory. This theory is a widespread theory of linguistic communication. It is a theory of what a speaker and the listener have to know and to do if the former is to communicate with the latter through spoken discourse. In the same sequence to under what Harappa wants to say can be revealed through speech-acts. This novel flows with perlocutionary acts. To hold readers mind power of this act is applied often. Whole magic lies in the atmosphere generated here, to glamour, serenity, mystery; Vineet Bajpai provides an avoidable introduction in the first few pages of *Harappa* in which he presents us a summarized version of the plot. This takes away from the rest of the book as what follows is just a more detailed version of the events that occurred resulting in the downfall of Harappa.

How much do you know about this pillar and this archway, brother? Enquired Vidyut with a soft smile. The young man was taken aback by the fearlessness and insolence of this stranger. But he also sensed something familiar about Vidyut. He couldn't tell what it was.

The narrative is written in the third person from multiple perspectives permitting the author to furnish multi-faceted insight into the plot and characters. Vineet provokes the reader to think, ask questions and absorb information. The language is simple and easy to understand. While *Harappa* may still seem a raw read, Pralay with its introduction to Matsya (the first avatar of Vishnu), the ambiguity regarding The Black Temple and increasing penetration of the philosophy of a New World Order makes the series riveting. The first book of a four-part series, *Harappa: Curse of the Blood River*, begins with Vidyut being summoned to Banaras by an old teacher. He is informed that

his great-grandfather and the matthadheesh of the Dev-Raakshasa Matth, Dwarka Shastri, is on his deathbed. In his final few days, the leader of the Brahmin clan has decided that the time has arrived for Vidyut to come to Kashi and learn of his ancestral lineage and why he was kept away from his home town. Vidyut is the only one who can reveal what is written in an ancient scroll kept in the Black Temple, at the prophesied sacred hour, which was so far kept a secret by his ancestors. It is to end the curse that was brought about by his ancestor Vivasvan Pujari 3700 years ago that not only resulted in the destruction of an entire civilization but also obliterated its truth.

Bajpai takes up the colossal task of taking the reader on an expedition through time, crossing millennia. He intelligently uses the gaps in what little is known of the Harappan civilization to weave a remarkable plot. Harappa is illustrated as an ancient civilization whose inhabitants are believers of God and also worship the Great Saraswati, the river on the banks of which Harappa is situated. It is a highly organized city with a parliamentary and judicial structure in place along with its own set of laws and education system.

Bajpai also takes the reader into Varanasi in the present day of current age, through the eyes of Vidyut. Considered the spiritual capital of India and the oldest city in the world, the roots of Kashi go beyond history. Bajpai doesn't miss a beat in capturing its essence, from the narrow stinky galis (streets) to the finest sweet and savoury Indian delicacies one can devour. He aptly defines it as 'not everyone's cup of tea'.

While the 'godliness' of the two protagonists remains vague for the most part, it is their simple human characteristics that make them relatable. Bajpai falls short when it comes to substantiating—through incidents—what it is that makes the protagonists singular and so one has to settle for what is reflected through dialogue or thoughts of other characters. However, he delves deeply into the simple human sentiments exhibited by each character, from making Priyamvada's gluttony trigger suffering upon Vivasvan and his family, and consequently over the entire civilization; to the desolation, both Vivasvan and Vidyut feel due to afflictions faced by or loss of loved ones.

The conversation between Vidut and Dwarka Shastri affects the readers' mind to interpret the difference of personalities of modern and ancient human beings. "Now will that Purohit decide when Dwarka Shastri himself is well or unwell?" Growled the grand old man angrily as he sputtered into a painful coughing bout. This statement is enough to provide the impact or influence of Dwarka Shastri. Here he reflects as a strong and powerful man. Above it, he seems to have hate for sympathizing. The same feeling reflects in the next dialogue by him. As Vidut stepped forward to show his concern. "Stand back" Yelled the breathless master. Vidut Froze where he stood. The stubborn old man has the royal legacy to maintain his identity for which everyone respects him. The next statement by him suddenly changes the whole atmosphere in deep worry. The way he instructs Vidut about his reality generates the effect of terror. As he says:

"Now that you have come, I see it is quite at an opportune time. Now with me gone they will come for you." Dwarka Shastri's voice was uncharacteristically shaking. It had traces of an emotion that was never even remotely associated with the grand old man over the hundred-plus years that he lived and ruled.

It had traces of fear.

The boldness and strong willpower are like an ornament of ancient people, their honest and natural style make life transparent while modern human being lives in an artificial world and tries to manipulate everything even their conversations too. Beyond it, this conversation provides a turning point to the running story. Let's see:

From here Vidut the protagonist takes his charge of being a devta, who is the bearer of the curse of Blood River. This modern version of divinity is strange. To find himself as devta rather than a human being is quite shocking for him. The reaction was that he felt a cold sweat breaking on his forehead and temples. He had a faint inkling of who his grandfather was referring to. This version of devta connotes a sense of mystery. Vidut was cowed by the truth. Shastriji portrays as a martinet, his draconian laws create an atmosphere where everyone feels egalitarian notions, and they all are bounded to follow him with respect. All this generate an impact of the seriousness in

the audience. They are mentally prepared for something shocking. That is why they easily accept protagonist Vidyut as a half-man and half devta.

"Wow.....!" gasped Damini. "This is all so...so... crazy.

This conversation is a single example of switching of readers from one zone to another zone. Vidyut conversation with his wife is enough to his restlessness while his conversation during a meeting with his childhood fellows reflects the nostalgic essence of a person. In another episodes atmosphere created by selected diction perfectly presents a throwback of ancient time. Vivasvan era is presented by serious and sincere vocab that marks intense circumstances leads to some mishap.

"Take my life, O mighty Mother! I have earned your wrath. And I submit myself in thee!", he yelled out as the night sky lit-up with an angry clap of thunder. It was as if the Gods were rejecting this fallen devta's plea.

In above dialogue, readers notice a sad mood of the speaker who wants to give up his life, of course, this statement is produced by Vivasvan who is a victim of political corruption and being an honest and innocent victim he is eager to sacrifice his own life however further description personify river as mother river who knows the real fact and want to punish the actual culprit. This dialogue is the most important changing game statement which gives ground to expend the plot of the novel. In another place where a conversation between Damini and Vidyut took place, the reader can observe the present scenario all around. Here the use of words like baby, dining table, psychiatric consultant all is modern terms of modern life. The style of dialogue delivery reflects the liberty of the present young generation. the freeness which we can notice in Damini's attitude is reflecting the presence of a modern woman. To add some mystery flavour in the novel Bajpai introduces the character of Romi. Romi represents a dual-minded personality, At first sight, he appears a very insecure, very subdued personality. Later he is introduced as a strong person, for

whom Maschera states, "Remember your profound work in that speeding tunnel of Paris. It was 1997. You were what.....only 16 then? He is a professional killer. The description of Romi defines the author's ability of well character sketch and produce the perlocutionary effect which sheds new interpretation of the novel. In the same way, characters like Manu and Somdutt are sufficient to project a differing view of the narrated story, both are the characters who reflect positivity. Some characters support the mystic effect of the story. Meanwhile, there are some dialogues to generate mythological effects in the plot. In the last scene, Vivasvan Pujari screamed out an agonizing pronouncement

'Hear me one and all! Hear me you city of sinners!..... and today you stone me like a rotten animal!"

Later when he let out a final, frightening warning for all to hear.

Remember my words, you cruel Harappans! At the end when he looked up to the sky and sent out his last, bloodcurdling words to the masses of Harappa-

'Listen you who are already dead. Listen you congregation of corpses.

Listen you fools.

I am half-human, half – God!"

All these dialogues consist of the serious impact of cultural background, a mythological approach and social reflection of injustice and cruel actions come as a reaction of the anger of Vivasvan Pujari. Every word uttered by him is full of sincere attitude, each word is effective to generate its impact. In this way, each sentence conveys an effective background of a story of a curse of the blood river. The revenge story which never ends but comes to another end as a new beginning of another story which would be continued in the second novel of the series entitled 'Pralaya'. This makes this novel more interesting and engages its author in a new responsibility to maintain the same legacy in the second version of the story.

There are many more examples in between the novel to hold readers and carry them in a very different era. Readers switch into different time zones. One is modern and one is ancient time. All the essence of that particular scenario seems imaginable with perfect use of words and signals which generate perlocutionary effects and accomplish the purpose of the novel. All the description of locations, explanation of expression of characters, the structures of sentences, and conversation between characters are well placed to organize perlocutionary effects that easily convey the motto of the novel. The complicated plot of the novel easily can be traced out by such perlocutionary hints provided by such factors.

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