

## A New Historicist Perspective of Thomas Preston's *Cambyses: A Lamentable Tragedy Mixed Full of Pleasant Mirth*

Abdul Ghaffar Bhatti<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Afzaal<sup>2</sup>, Amina Shahzadi<sup>1</sup> & Kaibao Hu<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Education, Multan Campus, Pakistan

<sup>2</sup> School of Foreign Language, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China

Correspondence: Abdul Ghaffar Bhatti, Assistant Professor of English, University of Education, Multan Campus, Pakistan. E-mail: [abdul.ghafar@ue.edu.pk](mailto:abdul.ghafar@ue.edu.pk)

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### Abstract

This paper aims at the application of new historicist principles to Preston's *Cambyses*. It begins with the elaboration of the key assumptions of new historicism. Particularly, the researchers have applied the new historicist concepts such as use of anecdote, historicity of text and textuality of history, discourse and power relations and construction of identity for the purpose of detailed analysis of the play. The available traditional criticism focuses on the topical and political interpretations of the play. The paper evinces a departure from traditional criticism since the researchers contend that Preston has used the literary discourse of *Cambyses* as an ideological tool to propagate and promote the idea of British Empire and thereby helped fashion the identities of his audience. The play functions as a part of continuum in representing Persians as cultural others with other historical and cultural texts of early modern period. Through the story of a cultural other like Cambyses, the play not only instructs and entertains his audience but also tends to support the dominant ideology of the period. The research findings confirm our contention that the Western playwrights like Preston have deliberately chosen the story to disseminate the idea of British Empire that developed later on but its foundations were laid down in the early modern period.

**Keywords:** new historicism, anecdote, historicity of text and textuality of history, discourse, cultural other, ideology, early modern period

### 1. Introduction

New historicism is a literary method that pays attention to the socio-cultural and historical conditions rooted in a literary work. To new historicists, both the literary texts and authors are cultural artifacts because they are product of their negotiation with history and cultural exchange. Such texts have more resonance than others which are less culture-sensitive. Therefore, it is an appropriate critical theory to analyze historical and cultural works. It has already been successfully applied to the works of Renaissance writers. In this paper, the selected play will be juxtaposed with the non-literary works like histories, pamphlets, diaries, and letters. New historicists challenge and question the assumptions of New Criticism and liberal humanism in order to analyze the mechanisms of power reflected in the circulating discourses. For this purpose, new historicism conflates the deconstructive technique of literary reading with the (post)-Marxist ideological orientation and provides a useful insight into the socio-cultural power dynamics. Peter Barry (1999) points out the following methods that the new historicists adopt for their approach to literature:

- 1) They juxtapose literary and non-literary texts, reading the former in the light of the latter.
- 2) They try to 'defamiliarise' the canonical literary text, detaching it from the accumulative weight of previous literary scholarship being it's as if new.
- 3) They focus attention (within both text and co-text) on issues of state power and how it is maintained, on patriarchal structures and their perpetuation, and on the process of colonization, with its accompanying 'mind-set'.
- 4) They make use, in doing so, of aspects of the post-structuralist outlook, especially Derrida's notion that every facet of reality is textualized, and Foucault's idea of social structures as determined by dominant 'discursive practices' (p. 179).

In the light of the new historicist assumptions, this paper will draw on Michel Foucault's notion of the relationship between knowledge and power that functions through the circulation of discourses and Clifford Geertz's concept of thick description. While using the technique of juxtaposition, the selected play will be studied with the non-literary texts. In the words of Louis Montrose (2007), new historicism is "a reciprocal concern with the historicity of the texts and the textuality of history" (Veese, 2013, p. 20). Old historicism uses history as a background to contextualize the works of art and claims the autonomy of the works of art. Contrary to it, new historicism gives equal importance to literary as well as non-literary texts e.g. history, newspaper, diaries, letter, pamphlets, speeches. One text refers to another. There is no absolute truth or fact rather there are only narrations and interpretations. It does not use history as context rather history works function as co-texts with which we can see how things are represented in the circulating discourses. This co-textuality or inter-textuality provides a panoptic view. Further, these circulating discourses reflect ideologies and the ideological conflicts of the period and play vital role in constructing individuality. It is through these ideologies, the workings of power dynamics and how power groups wield power to construct individuality can be understood. In this respect, new historicism also differs from Marxist literary criticism as Marxist literary critics believe that power is related to class. Whereas, new historicism argues that power permeates the whole society. It circulates in all dimensions and it works equally everywhere through the process of exchange from top to bottom and vice versa. The exchange, maybe the exchange of goods, exchange of people or exchange of ideas embedded in circulating discourses. Through the interaction of overlapping, competing discourses, an insight into the phenomena can be gained but no definite truth is possible for the socio-cultural complexity precludes any adequate explanation. Influenced by the post-structural thinking, new historicists also advocate the multiplicity of meanings. There is no history. All are narratives, and stories. Likewise, there are no meta-narratives or grand narratives. It is only a matter of interpretations. These interpretations always occur within a framework of social and cultural conventions. Hence, new historicism is also known as cultural poetics. This leads to Clifford Geertz's (1973) concept of thick description that "means detailed examination of a given cultural production to discover the meaning that particular cultural production had for people in whose community it occurred and to reveal the social convention, cultural codes, and ways of seeing the world that gave that production those meanings" (Tyson, 2006, p. 288). Thick description is not search for meanings rather it is concerned with the interpretation of an event that is socially or culturally embedded phenomenon. Moreover, historical analysis can't be objective as old historicists argue rather it is subjective as personal biases are there. There is always self-positioning in one way or the other.

## 2. Research Questions

- a) What desired effects does Preston want to achieve through the dramatic representation of Cambyses as the cultural other?
- b) In what way(s) does Preston's *Cambyses* promote ideology that supports or undermines the prevailing power structures of the period in which it was written and performed?
- c) To what extent did the dramatic representation of *Cambyses* play role in constructing identities of the English audience?

## 3. Methodology

Within qualitative research paradigm, the researchers have employed the theoretical lens of new historicism for the descriptive textual analysis of Preston's *Cambyses*. Usually new historicist practitioners focus on the concept of history, author, text and critic, use of anecdote, study of power relations, historicity of text and textuality of history, construction of identity and so on. However, the researchers have applied only the relevant and some of the key assumptions of new historicists to this play as it is realistically not possible to apply all the principles of a theory to a literary work.

## 4. New Historicist Analysis of the Play

### 4.1 USE of Anecdote

And albeit at the begynnyng he [Cambyses] subdued and conquered Egypte, yet anone he forgatte all goodnes and degendred quyte and cleane from the renowned and excellent vertues of hys father... But such maners coulde not long haue successe. For God speaketh in the scripture. Blowdy men and wylfe shall not fynyshe halfe theyr days upon the erthe. Wherefore not long after, wyth a greuouse vengeance, God plaged him (Taverner, 1539, Fol. 18v-21r).

Richard Taverner (1539) describes the story of Cambyses, King of Persia in the second book of his historical work *Garden of Wysedome*. He shows only one good deed of Cambyses i.e., the flaying of his corrupt deputy

Sisamnes. Otherwise, he represents Cambyses as a tyrant and a wicked person who commits many heinous crimes in the whole story. Through the example of Cambyses, Taverner highlights the point that “god will not longe suffer tyrants to reigne. For not longe after the deathe of Cyrus above the space of one yeare lyved Cambyses, neither lefte he any heire of hys kyngdome” (ibid). Thus, according to Taverner, Cambyses’ fall is an act of divine punishment. Like Taverner, a German writer John Carion (1550) has represented Cambyses in a negative way in his work *Chronichorum*. According to Armstrong (1950), Carion’s work in translation was available in England six years before Taverner’s work (pp. 129–135). If it is accepted, it means Taverner has followed Carion. Just look at the similarity at the end of Cambyses’ story in Carion’s work that “This example sheweth, that God suffreth tyrauntes not very long. For he lyued not much more than one year after Cyrus, neither left he anye heyre after hym: and of thys wyse is he cleane deade” (ibid, p. 134). Similarly, Preston (1561) in his play *Cambyses* depicts Cambyses in a negative way. Ambidexter describes Cambyses in the words:

I insure you he is a king most vile and parnitious,

His doings and life are odious and vicious. (Preston, 1561, L. 778–779. p. 31).

After Cambyses’ death, the First Lord comments:

A just reward for his misdeeds the God above hath wrought (ibid, L. 1193, p. 45).

one traditional way of starting a new historicist analysis is to narrate a historical document that is termed as the anecdote. An anecdote is “the literary form or genre that uniquely refers to the real” (Fineman, 1989, p. 56). The juxtaposition of anecdote with the literary text enables the new historicists to explore the power relations in both the text and co-text and subsequently make certain generalized socio-historical and political claims. The above lines taken from Taverner’s (1539) *Garden of Wysedome* provide the picture of how the early modern writers of the period perceived King Cambyses of Persia as an incarnation of evil who met his punishment because of his wickedness. As Burton J. Fishman (1976) puts it that “Cambyses was, after all, regarded in middle ages and in Renaissance as an unredeemably vicious and cruel man” (p.201). But, some modern historians like A.T. Olmstead (1948), T. C. Young, Jr. (1988) and *Encyclopedia Britannica* on the basis of their rigorous study of some ancient non-Western sources such as the accounts of Udjahorresene, Elamite documents, Aramaic materials, *the Bisitun inscription of Darius I*, Babylonian cuneiform sources, *the Cyrus Cylinder*, the Egyptian hieroglyphic writings, and the Memphis Serapeum see the discourses of Western writers about Cambyses’ life and career with suspicious eyes and consider Cambyses an “effective king of Babylon” (Young, 1988, p. 47). In the light of the evidence of these ancient non-Western discourses, it can be argued that the early modern English writers have misrepresented Cambyses in their works which shows their biased attitudes in case of representations of the cultural others. This was a general discourse of the early modern English period to represent the negative and stereotypical images of the cultural others for the sake of education, entertainment, and construction of the identities of their audience of the period. In this way, the main purpose of this discourse was to support and justify England’s domination of the world’s resources. This discourse may be described as “the Renaissance’s imperialist discourse” (Bartels, 1993, p. Xiv).

#### 4.2 Discourse and Power Relations

While using Foucault’s concept of discourse, new historicists, like Edward Said, see a close relationship between discourse and power. A discourse “is not singular and monolithic” rather “there is always a multiplicity of discourses” (Barry, 1999, p. 176). Power circulates more effectively in different directions through exchange of ideas which may be traced in different discourses of a culture. A discourse is “not just a way of speaking or writing, but the whole mental set and ideology” (ibid). The terms discourse and ideology “are often used interchangeably” (Tyson, 2006, p. 285). With reference to the representation of Cambyses in the early modern English period, it is not only Taverner who has employed imperialist discourse in the portrayal of Cambyses but other writers of the period have done the same thing in their works. For an instance, Preston also depicts Cambyses in his play *Cambyses* (c. 1561) as an Oriental despot who possesses all the negative traits which may be observed in the Western representations of some other Oriental rulers like Sultan Soliman, Sultan Selimus and Sultan Murad. Taverner and Preston copied this information from their Western-European predecessors such as Carion, Herodotus and other classical writers “with or without acknowledgement and felt no compunction in coloring the narrative to increase its interest” (Wann, 1915, p. 434).

Both Taverner and Preston have employed the same discourse to represent the cultural others which can be even traced back in the work of Greek historian, Herodotus’ *History* printed in 1584. This imperialist discourse which denigrated the others was pervasive in the early modern English society to promote “an imperialist cause” and for “the ideological backing” (Bartels, 1993, p. Xiv). In this case, it is worth mentioning in passing that “the phrase The British Empire was invented in the late sixteenth century by the English mathematician and

astrologer John Dee” (Khan, 2012, p. 94). It shows that the seeds of imperialism were sown in the early modern England though the real imperialism started in 18<sup>th</sup> century. This imperialist or pre-colonial discourse granted linguistic and intellectual superiority to England and subsequently enabled her to project the image of a civilized and powerful nation of the world. Writers and playwrights of the early modern period used their literary representations as ideological tools to strengthen this sense of superiority. This becomes prominent at the end of the play where Preston introduces the positive adjectives for his queen and country fellows. He has created this play to admonish “the gentle Audience” and guide “the noble Queen and her honorable Council” (Preston, 1561, Epilogue, pp. 45–46) so that they may practice justice in England. Moreover, he uses the binaries of “this wicked king” and “our noble Queen” (ibid) to stress the point that the Oriental are irrational, illogical, beast-like and the Western are logical, rational and true human beings. Thus, Preston’s *Cambyses* is complicit in the contemporary discourses which were Eurocentric. The play supports the dominant ideology of the period which was to demonize the cultural others. Like Preston, most of the playwrights of the period have portrayed stereotypical images of the aliens or the others in their works. As Emile Bartels (1993) asks a question “And why were ‘other’, non-European, worlds like Persia, Egypt, Africa, and the East so often the settings on the stage ...” (ibid, p. Xiii)? It is in this context, Carion, Taverner and Preston have represented Cambyses as a tyrant, despot, a drunkard, a murderer and a lusty fellow who commits unnatural acts to hold the sway. Thus, all these texts “form a perfectly circular and closed discourse” (Brannigan, 1998, p. 152) since they are intertextual and treat the story of Cambyses in the same manner. If Herodotus, Carion, Taverner, and Preston have represented Cambyses as a tyrant, there is a reason behind it. For this purpose, it is significant to understand Cambyses’ role in “Judeo-Christian history” (Hill, 1992, p. 419). According to the historical events of the period, it was Cambyses who caused the persecution of Jews and stopped the Jews to build their Jewish temple, the house of Lord which the Jews had started building during the reign of King Cyrus. Mainly, it is due to this act, Cambyses is considered “a sacrilegious tyrant” (Calvin, 1852, pp. lxxi–lxxii). In England, King Henry also persecuted his political and religious enemies and stopped the construction of the reformed church because of which he is known as a “tyrant and lecherous monster” (Hill, 1992, p. 427). Thus, the story of King Cambyses, a cultural other, not only enabled Preston to comment on the contemporary political situation but also helped him disseminate the dominant ideology of the period. Subsequently, these different discourses may be considered as imperialist discourses that paved the way for the Oriental discourse of the later years.

The commonalities in these different discourses of the period i.e. literary discourse of Preston and historical discourse of Carion and Taverner reveal the fact that texts are cultural artifacts because they are embedded in the socio-historical and political realities of the early modern English period. Both literary and non-literary texts “tell us something about the interplay of discourses, the web of social meanings, operating in the time and place in which the text was written” (Tyson, 2006, p. 291). They result from the negotiation or exchange with the socio-historical conditions of the period hence there is a dialectic relationship between them and the conditions. Both Preston’s *Cambyses* and Taverner’s *Garden of Wyshedome* along with Carion’s *Chronichorum* “are mutually constitutive: they create each other” (ibid, pp. 291–292). The conditions of the early modern period created these texts and in return the texts created them. Like the texts, the authors, historians, readers and critics are also cultural constructs because they are unavoidably caught up in their socio-historical and political contexts. Therefore, Preston, Taverner and other writers have written what circulated in the early modern culture as a result of exchange of ideas. These ideas in the form of different discourses shaped their personality and in return they shaped their works. Different discourses create the episteme which refers to “the rules and constraints outside which individuals cannot think or speak without running the risk of being excluded or silenced” (ibid, p. 185). Thus, it was a dominant thought of the early modern English period to portray the negative and stereotypical images of the cultural others and particularly the Orient rulers. It is under this thought Carion, Taverner and Preston have represented the negative image of Cambyses in their works.

#### 4.3 Historicity of Text and Textuality of History

The historical discourse of Carion and Taverner and the literary discourse of Preston serve good example of what Louis Montrose defines as “the historicity of text and the textuality of history” (Montrose, 2007, p. 20). The historicity of text means that a literary text should be studied with reference to its context i.e. the socio-historical conditions of the period. Thus, the study of Preston’s *cambyses* with reference to the conditions of the early modern period in which this play was created may be described as the historicity of the text. The textuality of history means that all history is recorded in written form, in different texts of the past written by historians, therefore, history is in textualized form. From this point of view, the parallel reading of Carion’s and Taverner’s historical texts along with Preston’s *Cambyses* forms the textuality of history. It is through these literary and non-literary works, “one not only arrives at a more accurate picture of the past but also discovers knowledge that

was lost in traditional historical and literary accounts” (Dobie, 2002, p. 185). This is the only way to know the past and “to speak with the dead”. (Greenblatt, 1988, p. 1).

Preston’s play *Cambyses* was ‘performed for the queen [Elizabeth] at the beginning of her rule’ (Ward, 2008, p. 167). Its purpose was to express good wishes, “pray” (Preston, 1561, Epilogue, pp. 45–46) for the newly enthroned queen and make her learn the lesson from the story of an Oriental barbarian. The play serves an oblique commentary on the historical and political conditions of the period. It refers to the significant events that took place during the regimes of King Henry VIII, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth. Martin Luther’s movement of religious reformation which started with the publication of his 95 theses in Wittenberg caused the division of Christianity into Catholicism and Protestantism. England decided to follow Protestantism and dissociated herself “from the wild boar of Rome” (Sanders, 2000, pp. 104–105). This prompted the abolition of Pope’s authority (1534) in England and King Henry VIII (1509–1547) became the head of the church of England. But it was Queen Elizabeth who properly consolidated the church of England and attained the dual dignity of the “Head of State and the Supreme Governor of the Church of England” (ibid, p. 128). After the death of King Henry, Edward VI (1547–1553) ruled England and was followed by Queen Mary (1553–1558). With the accession of Queen Mary, there was return to Catholicism in England. Queen Mary’s death in 1558 led to the accession of Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603) who revived Protestantism in England.

Eugene D. Hill (1992) finds close parallels between Preston’s story of Cambyses and the contemporary historical conditions. To him, Henry VIII resembles Cambyses. As Cambyses obstructed the construction of the Jewish temple, similarly, Henry VIII hindered the building of the Church of England. (pp. 404–433). To support his point, Hill cites Anthony Gilby, the famous translator of Scripture known as the Geneva Bible. Gilby, describing the period of Henry VIII, sums up “Thus was there no reformation, but a deformation, in the time of that tyrant and lecherous monster” (ibid, p. 427). Later on, when Mary became the Queen of England, she caused the persecution of many Protestants, particularly through Edmund Bonner who was a Bishop of London from 1553 to 1559 and who became notorious as ‘Bloody Bonner’ (Carleton, 2004). Preston (1561) in *Cambyses* compares Cambyses to this Bishop:

What a king was he that hath used such tyranny!

He was akin to Bishop Bonner, I think verily!

For both their delight was to shed blood,

But never intended to do any good (L. 1147–1150. p. 43).

Preston’s mention of Bloody Bonner in the play is an explicit allusion to the violence of Queen Mary’s period. Lawrence Stone (1989) observes that this was “the fearful period”, “the most ferocious period of arbitrary and bloody tyranny in English history” (pp. 24–38).

All these events created the atmosphere of frustration and rebellion and fanned the subversive voices among the people of England. Thus, the need was felt to contain and control the public peacefully. There was a surge of multiplicity of discourses such as statutory, religious, historical and literary whose purpose was to teach English public the doctrine of passive obedience to a tyrant. In this respect Henry VIII’s 1534 and Mary’s 1553 royal proclamations are significant since they warn the citizens not to do any seditious act (Mathur, 2010, p.47). Similarly, the theological discourses of the period exhorted people not to disobey a tyrant since he is a divinely ordained ruler, therefore, “whosoever resisteth shall go to dampnacioun” (Ward, 2008, p. 151). It is in this context, Carion and Taverner created the historical discourses and Preston created the literary discourse to teach the concept of passive obedience. In this way, the function of these different discourses may be seen as vehicles of containment that tried to counter the subversive voices of the early modern English society. All these discourses also support the dominant ideology of the period that was to make people obedient to the rulers of the period. To make their message more effective, the writers and playwrights of the period chose the story of a cultural other like Cambyses since through a story distant geographically, they found great space to deal with the issues close locally. As Allyna Ward (2008) remarks that “In developing the emphasis on the infernal nature on Cambyses’ actions, Preston took explicit account of contemporary discussions about political resistance and obedience, predestination and divine providence” (p. 153). In the light of this historicity, it can be argued that Preston’s play *Cambyses* and Taverner’s description of Cambyses in his historical work *Garden of Wysedome* are rooted in the socio-historical realities of the early modern English period and are in conformity with one of the basic concepts of New Historicism that there is “the mutual embeddedness of art and history” (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2001, p. 7) because there is an interaction in all these discourses. The interaction of the different discourses related to Cambyses also confirms the new historicist concept of ‘thick description’ which they have borrowed from the French cultural anthropologist, Clifford Geertz’s work *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973).

Geertz in his work contrasts thick description with thin description. Thin description “focuses only on an isolated act” whereas thick description “includes the context of the act” (Dobie, 2002, p. 186) and conveys the “notion that history is a matter of interpretations, not facts, and that interpretations always occur within a framework of social conventions” (Tyson, 2006, p. 289). Thus, the multiplicity of discourses on Cambyses are not facts but mere interpretations. That is why, the new historicists think that the claim of objectivity or finding truth is wrong since truth is “narratologically and culturally contingent” (Dobie, 2002, p. 178). Furthermore, this historicity also bears out new historicists’ views on representation. To them, representation does not simply reflect reality. Rather, representation refers to a process of mediation which involves negotiation and exchange. All representations are “in some ways interconnecting and interactive” (Brannigan, 1998, p. 132). Preston’s *Cambyses* is also a product of negotiation with the contemporary representations of Cambyses such as Tavern’s *Garden of Wysedome* and Carion’s *Chronichorum* which circulated in the early modern English period. Further, all these representations have dialectic relationship and form intertextuality.

#### 4.4 Construction of Identity

one of the central assumptions and arguments of new historicist analyses is that identities are fictions which are formulated and adapted through narratives and performances, and that they are formulated and adapted in response to and as a way of interacting with the prevailing historical conditions (Brannigan, 1998, p. 61).

New historicism rejects the concept of a complete and autonomous self. Like text, author, reader and critic, self or personal identity is also a cultural artefact. It results from negotiations and is constituted by and constitutes the culture in which one lives. The new historicist critics like Louis Montrose (1980), Stephen Orgel (1975) and Stephen Greenblatt (1980) in their works tend to emphasize the significant role of Renaissance culture in shaping identities. Greenblatt (1980) stresses that “literary and social identities were formed in this culture” (p. 6). Renaissance culture shaped identities through the interplay of different discourses. In this respect, the interplay of different discourses related to Cambyses, King of Persia, such as literary and historical played an important role in constructing individual and cultural identities that in return constituted these discourses.

The critical reading of the discourses related to Cambyses indicates the point that these writers have depicted Cambyses as an Oriental despot and barbarian to teach English audience and royal figures that they should try to distinguish themselves from the Oriental people and rulers due to their nobility and cultural superiority. It is only by setting them apart from the irrational, sensual and wicked Oriental, the English can become the leaders and dominate the world. These discourses embody the dichotomies of self and other which show self as superior, noble, rational, and full of self-control whereas other as inferior, wicked, irrational and sexual. The interplay of discourses on Cambyses not only helped the West produce the Orient of their own will, define itself and finally form its identity. The Oriental is wicked and inferior, we are noble and superior. Therefore, being intellectually and culturally superior, it is our right to dominate and rule such irrational and illogical others. The demonization of Cambyses like other Oriental rulers, on the one hand, enabled the English writers and playwrights of early modern period to educate and entertain their audience, and on the other hand, “provided a highly charged impetus for England’s own attempts to dominate the East” (Bartels, 1992, p. 5).

The demonization of others is necessary for the construction of self and subsequently for the justification of gaining power over others. As Greenblatt maintains that “we define ourselves in relation to what we are not, making it necessary to demonize and objectify what we are not as ‘others’. Designated as disruptive, foreign and perhaps mad, the ‘others’ are evidence of the rightness of our own power” (Dobie, 2002, p. 180). Such imperialist discourses functioned as the tools of “ideological backing” (Bartels, 1993, p. Xiv) and paved the way for colonialism. In this way, the circulation of the multiplicity of discourses on Cambyses provided great space to the writers and playwrights of the early modern period. Firstly, they enabled them to comment obliquely on the contemporary topical and political conditions of Renaissance period and subsequently fashion the identities of the English public by instructing through these discourses to become the obedient citizens of England. Secondly, as circulating discourses related to a cultural other i.e. Cambyses, they helped them assert their cultural superiority, define themselves and construct their identity as superiors with which they distinguished themselves from the Oriental as inferiors. In the words of Edward Said (2003), it was this “idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” which granted cultural hegemony to the Western countries “both in and outside Europe” (p. 7). This cultural hegemony lent linguistic and intellectual superiority to the West with which it produced the Orient through their cultural representations and at the same time constructed its identity.

#### 5. Conclusion

The new historicist analysis of the play reveals that author, historian, critic, reader and text are cultural artifacts

since they are products of negotiation and exchange. They shape the culture in which they are produced and are shaped in return. Preston's *Cambyses* embodies the specific ideology of the period and seems to support that ideology because the play clearly registers the birth of a discourse which was later on termed as an Orientalist or imperialist discourse. The playwright has used this play as an ideological tool to propagate and promote the idea of England as a colonial power and helped construct identities of his audience of the period. Like other writers of the early modern period, Preston has deliberately dramatised the story of a cultural other since it was the need of that time to define and fashion the individual and national identities in relation to others.

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