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Historicity of Nepalese Society in *Prahlad*: A Study of Bal Krishna Sama's *Prahlad*

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Letter of Recommendation

This is to certify that **Mr. Poshan Raj Pokhrel** has completed his dissertation entitled “**Historicity of Nepalese Society in *Prahlad*: A Study of Bal Krishna Sama’s *Prahlad*”** under my guidance. I recommend this thesis to be submitted to the research committee for final examination of viva voice.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “**Historicity of Nepalese Society in *Prahlad*: A Study of Bal Krishna Sama’s *Prahlad*”** submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by **Mr. Poshan Raj Pokhrel** has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

Bal Krishna Sama's play *Prahlad* (1995 B.S.) tries to present the different aspects of contemporary Nepal. Hiranyakashipu, advocate of science and technology, pays great attention to suppress the god advocate like Prahlad. Around him the lives of Danavapura dwellers unfold the situation - the passionate pluto housewife, lovesick teenagers, scientific research, domination of spirituality and resistance against the oppression. By including such events within Danavapura, Sama has observed the follies and miseries of Nepalese society. Throughout *Prahlad*, there is a constant comingling of the physical, material and mundane life with the spiritual and divine sentiments. All of the scenario is transformed, however, into a microcosm of society, that provides Hindu insights into the nature of reality. Through the window of Danavapura, Bal Krishna Sama creates an intimate and intricate portrait of life in a beautiful Nepalese society.

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I. Contextuality of Sama's Contemporary Society in *Prahlad*

Bal Krishna Sama, born in Kathmandu in 1959 B.S., studied science at Tri-Chandra college, Kathmandu. He could not receive any degree because of the contemporary political situation of Nepal and world wide spreading threat of war and his family need and desire. At first his service was in different schools as a teacher but his career as a dramatist helped him cope with the horror of being lieutenant. Sama produced a literary stir with his much anticipated humanistic drama *Prahlad* (1995 B.S.). This play advocates the humanism and helps communicate the message of contemporary political scenario of Nepal and world.

When political power operates and suffuses in so many spheres, the possibility of fundamental change and transformation may come to seem very remote. This political power operation is discursive practice which may dominate the liberal ideals of personal freedom creating multiple discourses. Hiranya Kashipu, the protagonist in Bal Krishna Sama's *Prahlad*, who masters the scientific development, is killed by god. He chases and threatens devotees of god. This study is mainly concerned with the subversion of spiritual and scientific ideological conflict, particularly in the context of liberalism and domination of discourses. The emphasis is on the characters' interpretation and active response to the world and human socio-cultural spheres.

This study begins with the tentative hypothesis that the play traces the writer's desire to show the superiority of spiritual sentiments crushed by the dominance of science and technology. Through actions which include arrogance, snobbery, threatens and varieties of suppressive activities. All these actions bear the necessity of one's desire of peace and religion.

Hiranya Kashipu, in a moment of ideological difference between him and Prahlad, punishes and thrashes Prahlad who is the "messenger of God". There is the

conflict about the truth which one claims to have possessed. Prahlad is protagonist who claims that the ultimate truth is god and Hiranya Kashipu can't tolerate it but claims that ultimate truth is not god but science, which can survive the life because it helps make medicine, weapons, vehicles and luxurious things. These contrastive ideologies create a sort of discourse which subscribe to the belief that the ultimate truth is possessed by one. This conflictual activity motivates one to resist and other to repress. Throughout the mythical story, there is repugnance between spiritual advocacy and scientific domination. At the end, death of Hiranya Kashipu shows that tyranny and obstinacy of supremacy ultimately decline. Critic Krishan Gautam opines, "Coincidence or circumstance of death of materialism and life of spiritualism changes the way of history and gathers the group in favor of live" (401). After the death of Kashipu there is clear way to Prahlad who wants to bring peace, spiritual prosperity and harmony among the people.

Many of his works have influence of Eastern Hindu mythical philosophy. And these works directly and indirectly show the context of contemporary Nepalese society. His desire of humanism comes in his writing because when Sama was growing and writing being within his palace and the world was heading towards Second World War which could have been destructive to the country. The brothers of Rana family were quarrelling for the post and position. Therefore Nepalese were utterly disappointed with Rana tyranny. These activities inspired Sama towards humanistic writing.

Prahlad and Kashipu are contrastive characters in Sama *Prahlad*. Kashipu says: "Science is to bring back to life" (Sama 3), it makes medicine, weapons, vehicles. In contrast, Prahlad is true devotion to god is only the means of getting heaven. He says, "Continue uttering Vishnu's name" (28). There is the need of

devotion and love for the meaningfulness of life. War, Violence and excessive consumptive attitude are the disobedience to god. This contrastive thought and ideology has played a role of catalyst between Prahlad and Kashipu, and spiritual knowledge and science.

Prahlad is the play where Sama has given the importance of spirituality. Many critics have put forward various arguments about *Prahlad*. In *Asian Awaja Weekly* Nirmal Kumar Aryal argues:

Sama has given appropriate place to the science and knowledge standing own's vision of spiritualism in his work *Prahlad*. In this play he has chosen qualitative and quantitative words which are essential for one creative writing. *Prahlad* is one step a head in the development of art and literature. *Prahlad* is full of philosophy of knowledge and science. As he has reconciled all and every quality *Prahlad*, he became popular cutting *Sher* being *Sama* among all Nepali people. (1)

Not only through the perspective of spiritualism, *Prahlad* is self-sufficient in its materialistic view and perspective. Being mythical play, it is charged as a story from *Shreemad Vagawat* but Sama has reapproached this myth to show the truth and fact. Though the play seems to be devaluing science, he praises it because all sorts of weapons god and goddess hold is the result of science, not the spirit and religion.

However, before the emergence of Sama into the Nepali literary scene there was not any drama that would dramatize the nation's or the people's problems and sentiments but also exploration of Nepali life and Nepali language which became the content and medium of modern drama for the first time in the plays of Sama. He assimilated both the eastern and western influences in his plays but the setting of his drama is Nepal.

Sama has used symbols in this text, which can be taken as an influence of new literary criticisms of world literature on Sama. Use of symbols is prevalent throughout the play, "Shanda - Children, like smart and swift kids, Jumping here and there, fighting and pushing. And playing at last come back to their mother own" (Sama 61). This symbolically shows one small child is always disobedient to his/her responsibilities. Prahlad is small son of Hiranyakashipu who is opponent to his father. Hiranyakashipu is annoyed about Prahlad's behaviour and asks Shanda to improve his behaviour. At that same time Shanda says, "one child can not go away from parents whether they jump here and there, fight and push" (Sama 73). Parents are shelter for children, so that it symbolizes Vishnu's devotee Prahlad is away ideologically but will come nearer to his father.

There is the use of personification in this play. Sun, moon, stars and clouds are used in this extract:

Samahu - The sun has set long with the prince.

Tomorrow he will rise again with gloomy face. We will ask him where he left our prince. What answer will he give ?

Tamul - The sun will say - As soon as they saw Prahlad, the pole and other stars started eye signaling that he is their friend. The moon expressed gloomy face claiming him as his complete art. Clouds started embracing him saying he is their inner heart and seas started flinging currents that he is their jewel. (123)

The above extract shows that use of personification in the play gets the true aim of development of the story. Sun, moon and clouds are personified to surplus the quality of the play. Here sun is personified as god Vishnu who is light of all being and stars are other thousand gods of Hindu myth. Moon is also personified as goddess

Saraswati who is goddess of art and literature, who consoles in grievous time. Cloud here shows relation with Brahma, who has great lap and has embracing power that reside within hearts of all devotees.

Sama's characters are from social, mythical, historical and techno scientific background. Sama has included all major male or female characters and their spacetime, social background, moral consciousness, psychological and intellectual aspects creating immortal human features.

Life is theatre where human has to suffer, has conflict, has hallucination and the results of comic and tragic picture. Critic Rajendra Subedi has seen satirical quality in *Prahlad*. He argues in his *Samaka Rachanama Paine Hasya Ra Byangya*:

In *Prahlad* Sama has presented a kind of debate subjecting spirituality and matter which is satire of contemporary reality. In his for or against reference Sama has sometimes sided against and sometimes for. First he supports one side and other time he supports other side. Sama has presented satire presenting dialogue between Brahma and Hiranyakashipu. Readers laugh seeing the arrogant attitude of Hiranyakashipu of his power which was provided by Brahma.

Hiranya Kashipu - can not death kill me ?

Brahma - Death is for cowards, and for heroes like you it is not.

Hiranya Kashipu - I rely on version true. Shall I never die.

Brahma - you will never die.

Hiranya Kashipu - Be it true, Hiranya Kashipu will never die. (148)

This extract proves that Sama has satirically presented the idiot knowledge of Hiranya Kashipu. He thinks himself as a powerful and intellectual being. He is booned by Brahma of immortality. He has knowledge about his immortality. Nobody can kill but

he is afraid of death which cannot do anything to him. Power and knowledge is not only the means of living, it needs a good manipulation what one possesses. Hiranya Kashipu has power and knowledge but he can't know how to conduct it. So the critic says Sama has the desire to use satire in his plays.

Sama's personal touch was modest and mild His good attitude has impressed ruler and people. Devi Prasad Subedi in his book *Mahan Vibhuti Bal Krishna Sama* argues: "Though he was born and fed in gold along with his maturity he tried himself to confront with the people. He left using highly respected words and began to follow people-tongue-words" (62). This extract shows that being in powerful family, Sama was always in the favor of people. He had no desire of palace and gold, he had desire of equality and cooperation among the people. Being such kind of person, Sama always wanted to be nearer with the ruler. After the end of Rana regime he changed himself and became nearer to king. He spent his life serving the king with full of devotion.

Krishna Gautam argues more about Sama's artistic creation *Prahlad* in the book *Aadhunik Aalochana*:

In the play the unknown mysterious opponent demon king Hiranya Kashipu holds the scientific intellectualism and hands great success.

Theist Prahlad has no wants of magical progress. Prahlad has the quality of peace, stability, patience and generosity and Hiranya

Kashipu seems gaudy, pungent and curious to scientific progress. (10)

This extract is contextually suitable to describe. In 1986 B.S. - before the revolution - the environment of Nepal was reverse to reality. The then rulers wanted to teach different types of subject matter to the world. So, there was hallucination as Prahlad has and there was pungent attitude what Hiranyakashipu has.

Govinda Bhatta opines in his *Samalochana Sangrah* about the contextual scenario of Nepalese society. He says more about Prahlad and its effects:

Ancient conservative education system was non-productive, people had blind-faith on religion, deep thought on spiritualism. This conservative culture began to flourish with the help of *Prahlad*. Society was under control of Rana ruler and its symptoms of protesting, global and international changing attitude of politics, Nepali reformists movement inspire Sama to write *Prahlad*, which is the cut-piece of contemporary scenario, when spirituality and science were fighting.

(78)

This above extract carries the reality of context and Sama's motives of writing *Prahlad*. The autocrat Rana rulers had become fierce and began to oppress Nepalese people heartlessly. They had no sympathy and empathy towards Nepali people.

Analyzing all different perspectives of different critics, Sama had published this play to bring reconciliation between science and spirituality. Sama got appropriate materials to justify the milieu of Nepal and world through mythical story - *Prahlad*.

According to the different criticism, the *Prahlad* is understood on different themes: drama of humanism, mythical text, biographical text, drama of free verse, drama of spirituality. However, this research tries to blend the fact and fiction in order to show the importance of science in relation to spirituality, though, spirituality dominates the science.

New Historicism, which is the theoretical methodology of this research work, was developed in late 1970s in response to perceived excess of New criticism, and other language-based theories which tended to ignore importance of historical context

of any work of art. New Historicists argue that we cannot know texts in isolation from their historical context. For them all interpretation is subjectivity filtered through one's own set of historically conditioned view points. History is an intersection of discourses that establish an episteme, a dominant ideology. The postmodernist thinker Keith Jenkins argues, "History is the history and theory is ideological and ideology just has material interests" (qtd. in Shreedharan 305). Similarly for Abrams, "History is not a homogenous and stable pattern of facts and events which can be used as the 'background' to explain the literature of an era" (250). The centre of inquiry is not the text, but history. As a postmodern perspective New-Historicism denies the hierarchy and the vertical history. So, the research has applied New-Historicist reading as the perspective to historicize and contextualize the text with contemporary Nepalese society and global circumstances.

This research has been divided into four parts. First part is an introduction section in which there is a short introduction of the objective of the thesis as well as the writer. Second part contains the detailed description of the tool. Third part is the textual analysis which gives the textual evidences to support the thesis statement. Fourth or last chapter sums up the main ideas of this thesis.

II. Blurring the Distinction between History and Fiction : A Concept of New Historicism

New historicism, which emerged in the late 1970s reacted to both the formalist view of the literary text as somehow autonomous and Marxist view which ultimately is related to economic infrastructure. It is a term that refers to the parallel reading of the literary and non-literary texts usually of the same historical period by giving equal weight on the basis of special and temporal background. The tendency of new historicism, to view history as a social science and the social sciences as historical, became very radical in its tantalization of history and historicization of text. For new historical critics, a literary text does not embody the author's invention or illustration the spirit of the age that produced it, as traditional literary historian asserted. It sees the literary text not as somehow unique but as a kind of discourse situated within a nexus of cultural discourses - religion, political, economic, and aesthetic - which both shaped it and, in their turn, were shaped by it.

Moreover, new historicism blurs the hierarchy that privileges either the literary text or the non-literary that; the age-old demarcation between history and fiction is now blurred and this merging of 'historical actuality' and fiction parodied the search for 'objective truth' in the history. It is an approach to literary criticism and literary based on the premise that a literary work should be considered as a product of the time, place, and circumstances of its composition rather than an isolated creation. New historicism developed in the 1980s, primarily through the work of critic Stephen Greenblatt gained widespread influence in 1990s.

In place of dealing with a text in isolation with its historical context, new historicists attend primarily to the historical and cultural conditions of its production, meaning, effects, and also of its later critical interpretations and evaluations. History,

like a work of art, becomes something like a negotiated product of a private creator and the public practices of a given society. The more radical thesis of new historical thinking - as inspired by Michel Foucault - was refusal to see history as an evolutionary process, a continuous development toward the 'present'. New Historicist scholars begin their analysis of literary text by attempting to look at other texts- literary and non-literary to which a literary public had access at the time of writing, and what the author the original text himself might have read in. So, new historicists view that history should be constantly revisited, rewritten and reread along with the demand of time.

The concept of 'historicity of the text' arose because of the thinking that sought to connect a text to the social, cultural and economic circumstances of its production. Being the practice of interdisciplinary approach and ultimately emphasizing the transdisciplinary' approach, New Historicism seeks to blur the generic boundaries between different disciplines. So, for new historicists literary texts and non-literary texts bear equal importance. New historicism rejects the autonomy and individual genius of the author and the autonomy of literary texts as absolutely inseparable from their historical context. The author's role is to a large extent determined by historical circumstances.

Similarly, the idea of 'textuality of history' comes as a jolt to the age-old search for metaphysical spirit that was said to be all pervasive throughout the historical movement. That is to say 'textuality of history' means textual forms because s/he is not completely familiar and his/her contiguity to reach up to it unwillingly happens to be fictional. It is thereby one has to pile up some reminiscences through the use of his/her creative imagination. In this sense, we give emphasis to the backgrounded history of the text rather than the foregrounded materials which a void

so many voices of underprivileged people. Lou's Montrose asserts the pot entail flow in critical history:

The newer historical criticism could claim to be new in refusing unexamined distinctions between 'literature' and 'history', between 'text' and 'context', in resisting a tendency to posit and privilege an autonomous individual - whether an author or a work to be set against a social or literature background. (398)

For Montrose, new historicism is an attempt to mediate the relations between text and context, connecting the two and providing the mechanisms through which they interact in representing context not as a set of extra-discursive relations but as a set of inter textual and discursive relations which produce readers for texts and texts for readers.

The new historicism argues that analysis of literary text could not be restricted to texts themselves or to their author's psychology and background; rather the larger context and cultural conventions in which texts were produced needed to be considered. When analyzing a text with reference to all historical forces, it is not possible to have a single and definite meaning. The new historical thinkers, therefore, are unlikely to suggest that literary text can have an easily identifiable historical context that fictionalization of history and historicization of fiction, both result in indeterminacy and various 'truth'. Montrose argues:

By the history of texts, I mean to suggest the historical specificity, the social and material embedding, of all modes of writing - including not only the texts that critics study but also the texts in which we study them; thus I also mean to suggest the historical, social, and material embedding of all modes of reading. By the textuality of histories, I

mean to suggest, in the first place, that we can have no access to a full and authentic past [...]. In the second place, those victorious traces of material and ideological struggles are themselves subject to subsequent mediations when they are constructed as the "documents" on which those profess the humanities ground their own deceptive and interpretive texts. (410)

The argument of new historicists that we can never possess objective knowledge of history, because historical writing is always entangled in tropes, owes much to the philosopher and the 'historian of otherwise' Michel Foucault. Although Foucault share a lot with those new historicists, his redrawing of boundaries of history has had a central influence on the domain of the ideas like power, discourse and subject.

Foucauldian Concept of Discourse

Perhaps the most direct action in which Michel Foucault influenced New Historicism was that his contextualizations were 'super structural' (rather than referring literary and cultural phenomena to an economic base): even the realm of economics, like historicists tended to view literature as one discourse among many cultural discourses. M.H. Abrams clarifies the Foucault's notion, which calls text "a discourse which, although it may seem to present, or reflect on external reality, in fact consists of what are called representations" (183). The Foucauldian notion that views a text as verbal formation in the form of ideological products of cultural constructs of a certain historical era, assists the concept of historicization of the text. The text, to Foucault, never represents or reflects pre-existing entities and orders of a historical situation, rather it speaks of the power structures, oppositions and hierarchies which are after all product of propagators of power. A text, in Foucault's view, speaks of 'history' but not as it is described by traditional Marxists and historicists. It, within

itself, buries the 'situatedness' of institutions. Social practices including their working amidst the power relations and the hierarchies. So, a text becomes, 'a history of otherwise' it presents a historical situation not as a 'background' but as something with which it can have constant interaction, for text is both product and the propagator of the power structures of society.

Foucault has significant contribution to drag new historicism up to its maturity. Foucault refuses to see history as evolutionary process, a continuous development toward a 'present'. He is always aware of the fact that a historian cannot escape the 'situatedness' of his time, Foucault takes a historian to be embedded in the social practices. The position of a historian occupies in society determines the history he writes. The way he 'goes inside' the forms of power structures and social practices determines his description of history. That is way, it is not also outside the network of power, discourse and representation since these are social, cultural products and are taken for granted in certain historical context. Power is never ending process, and in the way of formation. In this regard, new historicist has great affinity with Foucault as he states in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*:

Power is everywhere: not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere [...]. Power comes from below; that is there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between ruler and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving extending from the top to down [...]. There is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives [...]. Where there is no power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather in a position of extending in relation to power. Should it be said that one is always "inside" power, there is no 'escaping' it, there is no absolute outside where it is concerned, [...] ? or that, history being

the ruse of reason, power is the ruse of history, always emerging the winner ? (93-95)

From this definition of power and its scope, power is not always repressive, and circulates in the same direction rather it also bears the qualities of productivity and creative potentials. It subverts the traditional concept of taking power as only the tool for subjection and domination since it turns the negative conception of power upside down. This means to say that power is all pervasive, and deserves equal weight.

Hazard Adams in *Critical Theory Since Plato* argues, "Foucault's influence in a literary theory has been strong among revisionist literary historians known as 'new historicists' who study the culmination of power through society and literary texts that are part of it" (1133). The position of a historian occupies in the society determines the history he writes. The way he goes inside the forms of power structures and social practices determines his description of history. Foucault's main interest is historical reading was to see how various discourses govern a certain era but in a contradictory way where a discourse doesn't come to term with others. With this idea, now comes Foucault's confrontation with the traditional concept of history and his apparent neutrality in describing the deep-rooted techniques of power in historical moment. That is why McHoul and Grace writes:

For Foucault, resistance is more effective when it is directed at a 'technique' of power rather than 'power' in general. It is techniques which allow for the exercise of power and the production of knowledge; resistance consists of 'refusing' these techniques [...].

Foucault suggests that power is intelligible and susceptible to analyze down its smallest details, in terms of the historical strategies and sets

of tactics advantage. But importantly, oppressive Forces of domination do not hold the monopoly in the capacity to invent factices. (86)

Foucault's main project is not devaluate and discredit the truth or science in general but to question the historical conditions necessary for the emergence of such truths. For this purpose, he demonstrates the historicity of different disciplines and concepts of objects related to such disciplines along with power relations and their strategies. However, power cannot function in the absence of knowledge/truth.

Writing about Foucault's ideas describing him as the 'historian of otherwise' McHowl and Grae write:

Foucault is no historical determinist [...]. What are we how is not what we must necessarily be by virtue of any iron laws of history. History is s fragile at it seems, in introspect, to be fixed. But for Foucault, history is never simply in retrospect, never simply 'the past', it is also the medium in which life today conducted. (viii)

From this depiction of Foucault as 'no historical determinist' he becomes more difficult in is analysis of history. He, at the same time, takes a person at present to be affected by 'the past' and denies that we are what 'iron laws' of history make us. This is not a deviation of Foucault's theory. It is his standpoint making strategy to attack the humanistic tendency of seeking the 'culmination of history.'

For Foucault history has had a central influence on the domain of the ideas of like power, discourse, and subject. A text, in Foucault's view, speaks of his 'history' but not as it is descried by traditional Marxists and historians. Lois Tyson in his book *Critical Theory Today* also emphasizes the new historical notion that, "history is a matter of interpretation, no facts, and that interpretations always occur within a framework of social conventions" (286). Again in the same book, Lois Tyson claims,

"New historicists also acknowledge that our subjectivity, or selfhood, is shaped by and shapes the culture in to which we are born" (280). From this all, it is clear that, for new historicists, our individual identity is not merely a product of society like any kind of text, a work of literature is profoundly shaped by different socio-political, economical circumstances. Hence, new historicists "view literature as one discourse among many cultural discourses" (Habib, 762).

In the essay, *Truth and Power* Foucault says, "The important thing here, I believe, is that truth isn't outside power, or lacking power: contrary to a myth whose history and functions would repay further study, truth isn't the reward of free spirits. Truth is a thing of this world. It is produced only by Virtue of multiple forms of constraint" (qtd. In Alams 1144). Therefore, Foucault sees truth as product of relations of power and it changes as system change. Both literature and history are narratives and they are in the form of discourses.

Every epoch of history is not connected with each other rather it is a kind of fragmented series of events, a chain of unrelated events, Foucault says. Genealogists even consider the insignificant and minor events as significant because they do not believe in the point of perfection. They do not believe in the possibility of teleology and the concept of origin. History, for them, is not linear and cyclic, critics see Foucauldian terms like archeology and genealogy as tools for studying the history. The function of genealogy is to expose the body totally imprinted by history and the process of truth, Foucault takes genealogy as a synchronic method to deal with history, where as archeology as diachronic.

Foucault's genealogical concept of power is explanatory. It aims to uncover how power diffuses itself in the system of authority and how the effects of truth are created within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false. Truth itself is

product of the relation of power and changes as the system changes. Not only that, Foucault also questions the concept of sex. Conventionally sex was seen as enlightenment, later society forced it to be repressed. Anyway from this all, we can also claim New Historicism, which analyzes literary texts as socio-political discourses rather than as timeless aesthetic objects. It is abundantly clear that New Historicism means studying literature in relation to its historical contexts, but a wealth of possibilities and problems lie, buried in the innocuous phrase, 'in relation to.'

Foucauldian concept of discourse may be seen to have a number of components which are fairly identifiable: objects (the things any discourse studies or produces), operations (methods or ways treating the objects), concepts (the terms which constitute the unique language of discourse), and theoretical options (those different assumptions and theories on the basis of which discourses are formulated). With the help of all these components a discourse produces effects and is itself produced. But all of these components are subject to change. This implies that discourse is always in process of formulation, correlation and transformation, which takes place after a certain epoch. Foucault does not believe and distinguish between the best or the metadiscourse and the minor or the marginal discourse is how individuals are made 'subjects' by the discourse. The simple thesis that Foucault is not interested in discourse as language, implies that he must be interested in discourse as a thought-that intension of men who have formulated them.

But, in turning away from discourse as a system of language to discourse as thought, Foucault clearly says there is no reason to suppose that these rules and criteria are someone's personal thoughts. In this view, discourse can be a theoretical framework for manifestation of ideology of and society. And by this logic, a discourse

never allows freedom to an individual. He is always guided by the rules of this discursive formation and their effects.

Foucault reforms the role of a historian. A historian has a three-fold task. First, while confronting the 'one' reality a historian should be in favor of the use of history as a 'parody.' Second, he should be against a singular human identity. And thirdly, the 'investigations' should be directed against objective truth.

Thus, the discourse is in separation from power because discourse is the ordering force that governs every institution. This enables institutions to exercise power. Those who possess the authority to define discourse exclude others who are not in power. M.H. Abrams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* writes:

Discourse has become the focal term among critics who oppose the deconstructive concept of a 'general text' that functions independently of particular historical condition. Instead they conceive of discursive as social parlance or language - in - uses and consider to be both the product and the manifestation not of a timeless linguistic system, but of particular social conditions, class structures, and power-relationships that alter in the course of history. (262)

Discourse informs us of the state of affairs. So it is informative or mis-informative. Discourse also tells us of the propriety or impropriety, rightness or wrongness, of something and consequently influences our attitude, opinion and behavior. The exclusive function of discourse is to serve as a transparent representation of things and ideas standing outside it.

From a new historical perspective, no discourse, by itself, can adequately explain the complex cultural dynamics of social power. For there is no monolithic (single, unified, universal) spirit of an age, and there is no adequate totalizing

explanation of history can explain that provides a single key to all aspects of a given culture). There is instead a dynamic unstable interplay among discourses.

They are always in a state of flux, overlapping and competing with one another (or, to use new historical terminology, negotiating exchanges of power) in any number of ways at any given point in time.

Furthermore, no discourse is permanent. Discourse wield power for those in charge, but they also stimulate opposition to that power.

(Loistyson 281)

These above lines try to suggest how new historical perspective sees the text. The discourses are produced in specific historical and material conditions. Material conditions that enable and constrain the production of discourses. Discourses represent the specific cultural circumstances under which lie the power structures and the relations of power. Discourse, which make a society but are themselves contradictory. Because discourse themselves are not absolutely true.

Foucauldian idea of historical reading is general approach that seeks to analyze. "the order, mechanism, and exclusion that have been the features of western societies since enlightenment" (Gupto 114). The general approach, in sharp contrast to total history which looks at the overall development of the period, attempts to describe differences, changes, alternations, mutations and so on. Foucault sees truth as a product of relations of power and it changes as systems change. Both literature and history are narratives as they are in the form of discourses. They are entangled in the power relations of their time. Literary works are not secondary reflections of any coherent world-view but the active participants in the continual remaking of meaning. In short, all the texts, including history, and literature are simply the discourses which

seek the power of ruling class the power to govern and control. Hence, the dividing line between history and literature is effaced.

Through the observations of all these aforementioned features, it can be stated that Foucault's genealogical concept is to reconstruct the history of subverting the linear history, by seeing into the histories of events. Genealogy reconstructs the history through marginalized and dominated people's perspective that is the new historical perspective to take all the neglected bodies of the society altogether. This perspective comes in sharp contrast to the historical one and creates a new history which is not the final one but the emergence of history which may have more histories within it and related it. Thus, the embryo of new historicism has been planted through the emergence of Nietzsche and Foucauldian ideas of history which challenge the singular, homogenous, monolithic, universal, unified history to embrace the histories of heterogenetic, multiplicity, instability, progressive, processual and ever changing in course of time and place.

Foucault's notions of 'power' and 'discourse' were particularly formative to develop a critical approach to literature known as 'new historicism' in the early 1980s. These literary critics, new historicists like Stephen Greenblatt, Louis Montrose, Jonathan Goldberg, Kermode, H. Aram Veveser and others are more interested in the relationship between history and literature. They have tried to dismantle the barrier between literature and history widened by New critics and structuralisms. As with old Historicism, New Historicists argue that one cannot know text in isolation of from their historical context. But unlike old historicists, new historicists insist that an interpretation is subjectively filtered through one's own set of historically conditioned view points. Hence, there is no 'objective' history. Here, for the purpose and interest

of this research Greenblatt and Montrose's notions on relation between history and literature will be studied.

Views of Stephen Greenblatt and Louise Montrose about New Historicism

Louis Montrose stressed that contextualization of literature involved a reexamination of an author's position within a linguist system. Montrose also points out that new historicists variously recognize the ability of literature to challenge social and political authority.

One of the peculiar characteristics of the new historicism in literary studies is precisely how unresolved and in some ways disingenuous it has been about the relation of literary theory. He points out some of the influences on the school (Michel Foucault and European anthropological and social theorists) while distinguishing the approach from both Marxist critics like Frederic Jameson and post-structuralist critics like Jean-Francois Lyotard. Greenblatt argues that both Jameson and Lyotard employ history in an effort to support one theoretical viewpoint that in turn leads to their monolithic and contradictory version of capitalism. History functions in both causes as a convenient anecdotal ornament upon theoretical structure, and capitalism appears not as a complex social and economic development in the west but as a malign philosophical principle.

Lois Tyson in his book *Critical Theory Today* tries to show new historical perspective speaks from marginalized perspective and blur every boundary. He claims:

New Historicists consider both primary and secondary sources of historical informations forms of narrative. Both tell some kind of story, and therefore those stories can be analyzed using the tools of literary criticism. Indeed, we might say that in bringing to the foreground the

suppressed historical narratives of marginalized groups - such as women, people of color, the poor, the working class, gay men and lesbians, prisoners, the inhabitants of mental institutions, and so on new historicism has deconstructed the white, male, Anglo, European historical narrative to reveal its disturbing, what most Americans know about history . (284)

The new historicism views the work of art itself as the product of a set of manipulations. The product of a negotiation between a creator and class of creators have equipped with a complex communally shared repertoire of conventions institutions and practices of society. The general movement here is away from a mimetic theory of art to an interpretative model that more adequately account for the unsettling circulation of materials and discourses that is the heart of modern aesthetic practices. Habib argues:

... He purposes to situate this practice in relation to Marxism on the one hand and post structuralism on the other. Citing passages from Marxist Fredric Jameson and the post structuralism Jean Francois Lyotard. Greenblatt questions the connection between art and society. He further argues that both Jameson and Lyotard are trying to provide a 'single, theoretically satisfactory answer to the question of the relation between art and society. (Habib 764)

It saw the literary text not as somehow unique but as a kind of discourse situated within a complex of cultural discourses religion, political, economic, aesthetic - which both shaped it and, in their turn, were shaped by it. It also rejected any notion of historical progress or theology, and broke away from any literary historiography based on the study of genres and figures.

Literary criticism found itself in the contradictory situation of justifying the study of literature as an alternative mode of knowledge one more fundamental than of science, but requiring the development of an analytic and scientific methodology to confer on it the authority to make such a pronouncement. This history of criticism is riddled with such contradictions, and they go a long way to explain the tensions in the twentieth century over the recognition of the role of theory in literary studies.

Louis Montrose views literature and history as fully interdependent. He thinks that 'new-historicism' has been constituted as an academic site of ideological struggle between containment and subversion, "Within the context of the containment subversion debate my own position has been that a closed and static, monolithic, and homogenous notion of ideology must be replaced by one that is heterogeneous and unstable, permeable and processual" (404). He further argues that the key concern of new historicist critic is the 'historicity of texts' and the 'textuality of history.' He explains on what he means by the historicity of text and textuality of history: "All texts are embedded in specific historical conditions. Literary texts, therefore, must be treated along with its historical context, likewise, by the textuality of history he means that access to a full and authentic past is never possible" (410).

The idea of a uniform and harmonious culture is a myth imposed on history and propagated by ruling classes in their own interests. So the new historicists focus not in history but in histories. New historicism is characterized by "a shift from history to histories" (Montrose 411). This is to say that history is not a homogenous and stable pattern of facts and events. New Historicists assert that the historians, like the authors of literary texts, possess a subjective view. They too are informed by the circumstances and discourses specific to their era. So they can no longer claim that their study of the past is detached and objective. Literary texts polish the dominant

ideas of a particular time by representing alternatives of deviations as threatening. The new historicists tend to examine widely different texts in order to show that those texts play a key role in mediating power relation within the state only to contain, and make safe, that subversion.

New Historicism is often linked in discussion with cultural materialism, that has much continuity with new historicism. Though by appellation, cultural materialism is British phenomenon and it shares some of the inherent qualities of new historicism which is mainly the American phenomena. However, both of these phenomena have some differences despite some of their peculiar proximities since new historicism is an early 1980s phenomenon tending mainly towards poststructuralist orientation on discourse and power especially on the construction of identity and so on. So, it is largely based on Foucauldian notion of discourse and power. On the other hand, cultural materialism developed as a historicist approach to literature by Alan Sinfield and Jonathan Dollimore in mid '80s oriented towards the focus on ideology, on the role of institution, and on the possibilities of subversion, "[...] the meaning of a text cannot be stabilized. However, writing and reading are always historically and socially situated events, performed in the world and upon the world by ideologically situated individual and collective human agents" (Greenblatt 415). Thus, cultural materialism broadly deals with Marxism but in particular with Marxism of Raymond Williams's concept of 'structures of feelings.' New Historicism situates literary texts in the political situation of its own day while the cultural materialism locates in within that of ours.

Besides this, cultural materialism reads even the most reactionary texts against the grain, offering readings of dissidence, subversion and transgression, which are relevant contemporary political struggles that allow us to reach up to the socially

marginalized groups and expose the ideological machinery that is responsible for their suppression and exclusion. Moreover, in cultural materialism, any past event can be revisited, reconstructed, reappraised and reassigned all the times through diverse institutions in specific contexts. Likewise, it sees the historical materials within a political framework. So, it is viewed as ' politicized form of historiography.' M.H. Abrams writes:

Whatever the 'textuality' of history, a culture and its literary products are always to an important degree, conditioned by the material forces and relations of production in their historical era. They are particularly interested in the political significance, and especially the subversive aspects and effects, of a literary text, not only in its own time, but also in later versions that have been revised for the theater and the cinema. Cultural materialism stress that their criticism is itself oriented toward political 'intervention' in their own era, in an express' commitment as Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield have put it, to the transformation of a social order which exploits people on grounds of race, gender, and class. (196)

Cultural materialism takes interest equally to the understanding of the past and current political scenario to read the historical texts, and overtly tries to effectuate political change in the present form - a broadly socialist and feminist point of view. However as new historicist approach is more neutral approach to literature than cultural materialism which can be politically biased.

So, for new historical critics, the literary text, though its representation of human experience at a given time and place, is an interpretation of history. As such, the literary text Prahlad maps the discourse circulating at the time it was written and

is, itself, one of those discourses. That is, the literary text shaped and was shaped by the discourses circulating in the culture in which it was produced. Likewise, our interpretations of literature shape and are shaped by culture in which we live.

Thus, to represent those different aspects of contemporary society, I have selected New Historical reading, Foucault's idea of power in discourse plays the vital role to analyze the events of the play with such perspective.

III. Danavapura as a Microcosm: An Analysis of Contemporary Nepalese Society

Nepal got freedom in 2007 B.S. from Rana autocratic rule. Though politically independent, culturally and religious hegemony and its influence of Rana reign was still continuing. Religious superiority over science and its development was prevalent throughout the reign. So, fragmentation, alienation, distress etc. also existed for some years. The society could not develop well due to Rana's and its follower's cultural exploitation and religio-politico-superiority. However, the country slowly started making progress. But around 1990 B.S. exploitation, religio-ideological conflicts, superstitions, human foibles, and miseries were plaguing the nation and internationally political colonization and its resistance was continuing/crawling. These social evils and global phenomena then started to be expressed by the medium of different texts. Against his background, *Prahlad* by Bal Krishna Sama, contextualizes every aspect of contemporary Nepali society and global circumstances.

Bal Krishna Sama's *Prahlad* is a melange of social commentary. Blending fantasy and reality, the author focuses on Danavapura inhabited by several active and non-active characters. Each character is unable to escape both his/her true state of mind and the role he/she plays within confines of the small place Danavapura. *Prahlad* skillfully captures the struggles of different ideology, spirituality and science. In order to understand the author's frequent mythological reference, it's best to brush up on the basis of Hinduism. The events of the play are not chronological and vertical but unchronological and horizontal. The events of the play reflects the past and present Nepali society. The cultural and religious traditions have been contextualized through different memories and those traditions have been mingled with contemporary

Nepalese life. Every activities of the characters in the play are the activities of contemporary global and Nepali people. Prahlad's so called powerful devotion, father-son quarrel, Chakramurti's inventive activities, Hiranya Kashipu and Halaa's activities and other character's activities are the examples of it.

Sama's work was inspired by the mythical story of Prahlad - a boy who had lived and prayed god Vishnu in the house of Hiranya Kashipu. According to Hindu mythology, whenever there is an imbalance between good and evil, Narayan, "the preserver" is born to re-establish order. The deity of Narayan has emerged from the pillar to sort out the emotions, which are completely out of equilibrium. Sama explores the deeper workings of human nature as he approaches an electrifying catharsis of illumination, love, and loss. Sama has called the Danavapura in *Prahlad* a microcosm of Nepal. The play chronicles several relationships within Danavapura: a pair of scientists, a bereaved widow who lives in her on past, love sick teenagers and general people and their simplicity. By focusing the acts of his play on how these different characters interact with one another and with Prahlad, Sama is able to show how religion, death, faith and unexpected changes all work together to define each person's individuality.

Religious issues distress several of Sama's characters including disciple of Shanda who followed Hinduism with Prahlad and Halla who supported the material development or atheist. In the play, religion is taken as a discourse. Different people have different faith and belief. Some are theist and some are atheist. They represent Religion and God in their own way. Every utterance is created within so-called power. Hiranyakashipu thinks himself as God, there is no external power outside of him, what he thinks is that the thought of God but Prahlad has great devotion towards unknown Vishnu. Prahlad thinks that everything is ruled by external power which is

invisible and omnipotent. They think themselves as the representative of power/God. Prahlad agrees to become their 'alterer' and Shares vicariously in the dangerous devotion and innocent beauty of religious love. Prahlad's father, Hiranyakashipu, in his deep effort to understand the obstinacy and hysteria of scientific development, is determined to experience milieu of material progress. However progress can also be destructive force. The deep animosity between Hiranya Kashipu and God results from petty arguments over mean nature of superiority in spirituality versus science. The seemingly mundane Danavapura is fused with the impressive literary accomplishment. This all shows that the text *Prahlad* deals with socio-political context of Nepal of contemporary Rana reign time and worldly problem in which New Historicist expresses his/her concern.

He reveals Hindu mythology in an accessible manner borrowing from the stories of the Bhagavad-Gita and clearly demonstrates how these stories enable the poor to cope with the burdens of life on the lowest rung of Nepali society. In this response Narad says:

Narad: Prince, the salvation you see outside a prison also lies within

Bondage you feel only going out and coming in

[...] no matter then whether you are in or out of cage.

Prahlad, misery is only shadow flee from it and it will always follows,

Sit down and flap it, into one body it forms, [...] freedom you will feel from all that misery.

Have you taken that arsenic I gave you ? (22-23)

This extract contextualizes the Nepali society, Nepalese people couldn't feel freedom out or inside of house. Everywhere there was bondage and people had to live in cage. But Prahlad like characters had devotion towards god which is only the last means of

freedom to be away from any type of misery. This kind of spirituality provides somehow relief to the people during the suppression and oppression.

The play juxtaposes small but searing human foibles with the attempt to find higher religious meaning. The religious superstition like father-son conflict to serve Narayan, exploitation of women like Yaya and Sagari are the important foibles of the society. The Danavapura is a specimen of domestic misery-lab, palace, garden, parlour, school. A member of the Hindu trinity the God Narayan is the sustainer of the universe, the center between Brahma, the creator, and Shiva the destroyer. However in *Prahlad* the title character is only a blind devotee who is suffering in the palace while contrastive thoughts meet between Hiranya Kashipu and Prahlad. And yet perhaps there is much more to this Prahlad, he is indeed the reincarnation god Vishnu- the one who sustains the peace in entire world.

The play takes place over a short period of time in the life of Rana Regime and contemporary political situation when Second World War was crawling and Gandhi was leading peace movement in India. Through this window, we learn the stories of its residents and the forces that have shaped their lives as Bal Krishna Sama creates an intimate and intricate portrait of life in a great Indian-subcontinent and western countries. The dramatist tries to place Prahlad as a blind devotee to portray superstitions belief about God. This is a domestic story and people or familiar ones, with common sins of vanity, religious zeal, covertiousness and narrow mindedness.

While analyzing the play, *Prahlad*, I like to bring an extract from Jagadish Sharma's review. There he says:

[t]he division of Sankhya and Yoga propounds a supreme state of being free from consent and dissension, a state of pure equilibrium. It is stressed that the acceptance of this state alone will ensure the

liberation of man from all entanglements. What is stressed here is the need for transcending over what is proposed in Sankhya and Yoga-attaining a state of equilibrium, a state of pure being, and unanchored state. (XV)

From this extract, it is clear that the play always states importance of spirituality which can be attained and realized through Yoga-actions. The actions move to past and present helping transcendence of mundane life. The ordinary people believe that the person's achievement is pure being when being becomes free from consent and dissension.

Chakramurti :

This learning is highly powerful, Be it a case of demon, deity, or man too. It measures the degree of one's greatness. Albeit the deities decry science's value through ignorance. Ask them, can they manage without science ? Their every movement depends on science. Why should they drive on chariots like us ? Why should they fight sword in hand with us ? Our greatness in science is always supreme, our victories in World Wars every deciding. (1)

From this extract it is also clear that aforementioned value of Yoga/knowledge is nothing before the eyes of science. So, science values, scientific knowledge is powerful than ignorance of spirituality. Though god claims about transcendental movement, it is only possible by science which is inevitable process of contemporary Nepali society. The lines try to portray the Nepali as well as world wide contemporary society. Here the new historicist's socio-political context works. The Jagadish Sharma's idea of "liberation of man from all entanglements" describes the Nepali

context is a bit unclear. Every event in the play is related to culture and religion rather than politics.

In the prologue of this text, Bal Krishna Sama clarifies that:

The rivalry between the demons and deities developed into acute bitterness. Even Vishnu, the great maintainer, became the arch enemy of Hiranya Kashipu who sought and obtained from Brahma the boon of 'no death' in day or night on earth, in heaven and space by deities, human beings and weapons. (I)

The Hindu epics depict how the Eastern World with the lofty Himalayas in the north and mighty ocean in the south and developed a high standard of ethical and spiritual values along with the advances in science and technology. The ascetics meditating on the Himalayan heights came into contact with giant maidens of lower regions and new but exceptionally brilliant race came into existence. Deetee and Kaikasi were such maidens whose descendants were the great geniuses like Hiranya Kashipu. Thus a new race of geniuses grew up and came to be known Daityas or Rakshasas.

In the same prologue Bal Krishna Sama writes:

Radio broadcasted the invasion over Poland by the army of Hitler one day before the play was performed in Assembly House in Kathmandu in 1995 B.S. Mahatma Gandhi had sent a message of "War may stop", to Hitler. I don't want to mention what happened during the war, it is well-known to every one. In every corner of the world old saying "Om Shantih" awoke. The faith of human is declining in first step and in the second step the selfish world is ready to fight. (V)

From this extract, one can also guess that the dramatist is trying to depict the minute details of Nepali, Indian sub-continental and western society. He brings the reference

from Gita to join the religious and political aspect of Nepali, Indian-sub-continental and western society. The higher religious practice of the characters also contextualize the text with worldly socio-cultural context. So, this extract is also a reference of it.

The whole bodies of data from the past-everything contained in legend, myth, fable - were excluded as potential evidence for determining the truth about the past - that is to say, that aspect of the past which such bodies of data directly represented to the historian trying to reconstruct a life in its integrity and not merely in terms of its most rationalistic manifestation. The condition of scarcity caused a struggle among men for the goods of nature which an inadequate technology could not efficiently augment. This led to the 'creation' of society, which regulated human conflict by force and sustained its authority. Over men by the aid of religion, itself also a product of the combination of want and ignorance. Thus, the state of society becomes identified as at once the cause and the manifestation of unreason in the world. Progress was conceived as the gradual unmasking of the irrational nature of the social state by the small group of rational men capable of recognizing its intrinsically tyrannical nature. Thus, the meaning of the historical process was to be found as the expansion of an originally limited reason into areas of experience formally occupied by the passions, emotions, ignorance, and superstition.

Drifting through increasingly vivid scenes, Sama recalls his relatively rare snatches of love and especially his romance with Sagari - a demon's daughter brought up in the place of the demon king - would be Prahlad's wife. Rudhabhanu recalls her secret passion for Hiranyaksha - Hiranyakashipu's elder brother. However, the palace upon whose floor Hiranyakashipu spends his final hours functions as a microcosm of Nepali society. It helps to know even a smattering about Hindu mythology or Indian sub-continental religious conflicts. In this reference Rudhabhanu argues:

Rudhabhanu:

Hiranyakha, Hiranyaksha ! my thrist and life, my only joy, every drop of water in my beaming eye my only source of happiness, that store of all sources. My Shakun's father, your gayful laughter all; you were ever mine and I yours, gone you are pearl like drops of tears in fondly care. You dropped on my hands and I wept and smiled with joy. (10)

The lines show Sama's desire to portray women as a submissive creature. It is not a revolutionary aspect of female life but a obedience to male. Feminine exploitation in patriarchal regime and gender determination with sexuality has been shown. Passivity, calm, self agony are the made characteristics of female in Rana reign. Rudhabhanu has been shown as a feminine submissive emotional character. Rudhabhanu, being a mythical character, represents the superstition and sexual exploitation of the society also relate the text with Historical reading. The exploitation is continuing-female's exploitation carrying patriarchal thought, proletariat exploitation carrying bourgeoise thought, and aboroginal's exploitation carrying racialist thought.

Every abstract generalization is powerless with respect to history, and neither or generic nor any universal norm can comprehend its wealth. Every human condition has its peculiar value, every individual phase of history has its immanent validity and necessity. For the western reader, *Prahlad* at times presents challenges of interpretation - is *Prahlad* semi-accidental search for enlightenment supposed to be comic or not ? Indian-continent is a very strange place to westerners, but Sama deftly brings it closer without greatly westernizing the story. Actually Bal Krishna Sama does not westernize the text. Every context in the drama depicts the Nepali and Indian-sub-continental society. The context of Hindu religion together with the Hindu

religious book Gita and religio-political conflict in Nepali and Indian-continent is depicted in the drama. Here the non-western especially Indian-continent is represented purely in non-western especially Nepali and Indian continental context.

The movement from perception of the world through religious, artistic, scientific, philosophical, and historical comprehensions of it reflects the essential movement of being in its actualization, and consciousness in its realization, in history. Historical consciousness in itself is born at the same time as a specifically historical mode of existence in the history of humanity. From the Greeks to Hegel's own time this historical consciousness, and was used by individual historians for the production of the various kinds of reflective histories they actually wrote. The actual writing of history creates reflection on the nature of historical consciousness itself and on its relation to historical being and promotes what are effectively the preconditions for a higher kind of consciousness within religious, artistic, scientific, and philosophical consciousness alike.

Religion, art, science, and philosophy themselves reflect the different stages in a given civilization's closure within its object. These can be used to characterize the quality of a culture's apprehension and comprehension of itself and its world as they develop in time in the modalities of the "in (Universal history), for (Pragmatic history), in and for (Critical history), and in-for-and-by (Philosophical history), itself", (101) which in turn provide the modes of characterizing the four stages through which all civilizations pass from birth to death:

Hiranyakashipu: Burn, burn, burn, burn again ! Burn he must even though stone hard he may be [---] I shall refuse the blessing of saving Prahad's life. Why ? Void is a blessing granted for buying and selling of life. In Prahad lies the loss or gain of glory of demon clan including

my own and safeguard of demon civilization, technique great. Who gave him his birth ? (115)

A history might have an explanatory component like the legend, but this component had to be relegated to a place on the periphery of the narrative itself, in the same way that the legend of *Prahlad* was. The legend of the history was to be put in a special box contained in the 'general remarks' with which one prefaced one's histories or concluded them. The true explanation lay in the telling of a story that was as accurate in its details as it was compelling in its meaning. But accuracy in the details was often confused with the true of the meaning of the story. It was not seen that the meaning of the story was given by the mode of emplotment chosen to make of the story told a story of a particular kind.

Bal Krishna Sama regarded problems within the context of the nation and the institutions formed in the nation for those restraining impulses which he took to be inevitably destructive in their immediate forms of expression. He regarded anything that threatened the authority of the religion, of the state or of the nation as a threat to civilization itself. He saw any movement which vested faith in a liberated human nature as little more than sentimental humanitarianism. And, insofar as any such movements sought to establish themselves by revolutionary means, he saw them as the forces which the state and the religion had been established to suppress.

Almost every page is polluted by false statements and abuse of the royal family and other leading families of the kingdom, without the author's making the smallest probability to give a color to his calumnies. This is not writing history, it is writing slander which deserve the pillory.

Shanda : These are my pupils all and all study science. Sharp witted they are and in application genuine. Prince, they are older than their

own age. And in years to come they will be scientists great. Renowned they will be on earth, heaven and underworld Demon's domain they will spread flying. Though space to stars and onwards. Machines thousands they will invent, dull they will enlighten Desired whatever, they will show and as desired you can listen. Food you eat as desired and to your heart's desire you clothe. Thought desired you achieve, and thins you wish get in hand [---]. (44)

Bal Krishna Sama was not slanting the facts or his comments on them in the interest of the cause for which he labored, which was that of truth against untruth, reason against folly, and enlightenment against superstition and ignorance. But here the polemical interest was manifest, and his reflections on world history took on the aspect of a critical play rather than a scholarly inquiry into what the truth of the fact was. The facts were used merely as occasions for pointing to lay before his readers in an appropriately colored form.

Mostly images are depicted with the Nepali and Indian-sub-continent context like in Edward Said's *Orientalism*, the play tries to show that the non-western writers are also able to create their own images in their own literature. Though the dramatist has influenced of western literature, he is able to show the pure image of contemporary Nepal and world. Different writers have made different criticisms and responses about the drama but all they accept that the text is depicting Nepali life without greatly westernizing the story.

In the prologue, Bal Krishna Sama claims that Hiranyakashipu and Prahlad are actually based on mythical period. Both have contrastive vision but attempt to combine science and spiritual knowledge. The conflict between science and spirituality is not only the present action but it was continuous like process: "It is my

attempt to shade ancient mythical time to modern period of Hitler and Gandhi, shifting mighty but cruel Hiranya Kashipu and merciful but powerless Prahlad" (V).

Prahlad views about the existence of God and its superpower over the all beings and non-beings. In this reference Prahlad says:

Prahlad: What place in the universe can I show you where Vishnu does not exist ?

This string is his arms to ties and this pillar his residence

A copy lap. And again he lives not only in the pillar

But there, there, there and everywhere.

He in minute form exists in sky there, there ! there ! (130)

However ambitions is he in the faith of God ? Can a man claim himself as a great devotee to God ? As claimed by F. Nietzsche God is always dead. He questions God that it is the human image only. There is no God, instead of it there is superman. Man himself is the God. I also believe this point. A person who is claiming the existence of God is not God. There is no hierarchy of God and man and demon. If man shows good behavior and behaves humanly, he is the God. So here I don't accept God's self discursive line. All activities done to satisfy Narayan (Vishnu) by Prahlad is only superstition of Nepali and Indian sub-continental society. Here to blur the boundary of so-called God and demon and man, the New Historical reading also concerns. To prove this the reference from the text argues:

Brahma: The ignorants who think means to be action performed may see and read it. But, worship, fasting, reciting and sacrifice are all battles and victory depends on supreme lord. Let the pompous fellows regard sacrifice as the target but let them perform sacrifice with mind on Lord Supreme. (79).

This is only the self-ambition of power through the imaginative creation of supreme Lord. Not only that this can be supposed as patriarchal power. Supreme lord shows that Vishnu is powerful. Krishna Gautam opines:

Without any information about world historical revolution and struggle, labors in factories and industries and the public revolution leads by Gandhi in India would not be seen the sacrificial challenge of Rodh and Raumak in the text. Prahlad is opponent of international level of capitalism and opponent of feudalism in national level and approves the renaissance. (Aadhunik Aalochana 51)

Greenblatt claims about new historicism in his essay, "Towards a poetics of culture" (1987). He begins by nothing that he will not attempt to define the New Historicism but rather to 'situate is as a practice'. What distinguishes it from the 'positivist historical scholarship' of the early twentieth century is its openness to recent theory; Greenblatt remarks that his own critical practice has been informed by Foucault, as well as anthropological and social theory. He proposes to situate this practice in relation to Marxism, on the one hand, and post-structuralism on the other. He claims: citing passages from the Marxist Fredric Jameson and the post structuralism. Jean-Francois Lyotard, Greenblatt questions the generalizations made about 'capitalism' in each passage. Both writers are addressing the question of the connection between art and society (Habib 764).

Like Greenblatt's ideas, Krishna Gautam also tries to read the text from Marxist point of view. The misery of Nepalese working class and exploitation are the heart core for Marxist reader. In such raising the voice against exploitation, and social hierarchy. New Historicism is too closer to Marxism, Hiranya Kashipu also tries to exploit others who are a round him. They are compelled to serve the seslf claimed

god. Hiranya Kashipu who tries to exploit Hallaa, Yayaa psychologically and physically. Hiranya Kashipu is the symbol of Chandra Shamsar and Bhim Shamsar all sucking in, Prahlad a sucked in. The fall of Hiranya Kashipu, at last of the story, startles the fall of dictatorship.

In a comically anachronistic pursuit of enlightenment, Prahlad submits himself to deprivation and, for his pains is granted a vision of the divine nature of Vishnu. (The god Vishnu is a member of the Hindu trinity, and is said to have descended to earth in a number of avatars) Putative divinity perhaps serves as a metaphor for the Hindu sense that our essence partakes of the infinite, as part of a supreme universal spirit. The play remains tantalizing inclusive of the subject of whether divinity is metaphorical or actual. Prahlad feels his consciousness detach itself from his body but is powerless to change events.

For new historical literary critics the literary text, though its representation of human experience as a given time and place, is an interpretation of history. As such the literary text maps the discourses circulating at the time it was written and is, itself, on of those discourse. Likewise, our interpretation of literature shape and are shaped by the culture in which we live (Montrose 292).

As claimed by Montrose, *Prahlad* is also shaped by Nepali and Indian subcontinental culture. Different interpretations have been shaping it with Nepali culture with Hindu religions situation in Nepal. So we cannot go out from Nepali socio-political, and religious context while interpreting the text. *Prahlad* is constant commingling of the physical, material and mundane with the spiritual and divine. But again, we also can find that creating a story filled with ambiguity that raises meaningful questions about the nature of reality and human life. Hiranya Kashipu - "If that be so, why should a Vishnu fight another Vishnu ? Why should a Vishnu eat

another Vishnu's flesh ? We are not at all different from them Shanda, ask him and aski him this" (Prahlad 60). As Nietzsche questions the reality, here the extract also tries to question the reality. Though the text depicts the society, here is the question on reality. I think this is not so surprising because reality and dream, existence and delusion are integral parts. A same society can believe in dream, illusion and reality. Some may be superstitions but some may intellectually analyze God. So everything of this depends upon interpretation. Either seeing the same text real depicting or ambivalence of real and illusion depends upon interpreters and power. As claimed by Foucault the interpreters who is powerful create his/her own discourse which is either false or true. Here in the play *Prahlad* and Hiranya Kashipu are creating own discourse, thinking about the existence of god and material superpower over spirituality. This above also clarifies that truth is always contextual there is no final truth and final interpretations.

During the course of the novel Prahlad's soul disentangles itself from his earthly remains and begins ascending. This spirit looks back on the life just ending. From this it is also clear that Sama's play also achieves an eerie and memorable transcendence or in short this is an enchantingly transcendent play about contemporary life, even listeners unfamiliar with Nepali religions and Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva respectively the creator, the preserver and the destroyer will marvel at Sama's ability to reveal the tapestry and nuance of Nepali culture through the activity contained in Danavapura.

Sama permits his readers to experience the explosive fullness of contemporary Nepali life, its sensuality and asceticism; passion for food, science, physical advancement; love for gods and ceremony; the viciousness of spirituality and science; and intellectuality and devotion. What is the relation between the god Vishnu and man

? The play's answer to this question is invasion, playful, cosmic, funny and ineffable. In the play, there are different references of Hindu religion and customs: the devotion of God, Hindus bathing in holy river are some rituals of Hindu and Nepali society. Not only that there are different words and phrases directly taken from Nepali culture and society like soul, Sudras, Vedas, Puranas, Brahman, Yogi, Maya, Shantih. These different words also help the text to contextualize as the representation of Nepali society and culture.

One can only hope that many more plays of this reach and quality will come from Sama's hand. To have held in balance so many characters, themes, lines of action and symbols is an achievement worth the many honors that the book is bound to receive. Some readers will doubtlessly find the juxtaposition of slapstick and tragedy a bit forced. The text is also true representation of tribal discrimination of Nepal. Hindu mythology has divided people in different castes and divided works according to that Brahmins think themselves the highest class. But other some lower classes are not allowed to touch everything of that so-called Brahmins and Chhetries. Now there is a kind of conflict between so called higher castes and lower castes. This is also represented in the play *Prahlad*. "Shanda - [---] in whose region, as desire goes, the disabled be fed well, Rituals on river banks performed with respect to all Vedas, Purans and the Brahmins. In place several may Vishnu's Worship and rituals done [---] where Gandharvas also are held in eastern" (Prahlad 34).

Similarly, to join the analysis of text Hans Bertens argues, in his book, *Literary Theory, The Basic* elaborates:

We might well ask what the point of view historicist research is if we know before hand that whatever it comes up with will be flawed and therefore incomplete. One important answer to this question is that

new historicist arguments about the past, no matter how flawed are relevant for our contemporary situation. Inevitably, we too live within discourses that we have at least partly been shaped by. (182)

This extract tries to show that New Historicism always describes every discourse of the past and present. It elaborates every event unchronologically linking with socio-political or contemporary context. By including every event we create a discourse which is analyzed according to the society, the base of which is power. Like this Bal Krishna Sama explores the role of religion and faith in the lives of the occupants. He explores the thinly veiled hostility between science and spirituality in Nepali community through Prahlad's spiritual journey and Hiranya Kashipu's over ambition of science. Bal Krishna Sama creates an intimate and intricate portrait of life in a great Indian sub-continental and Nepali society.

Social, economic, and political injustices in addition to faction-ridden Rana house, dissension among the army and the civil personnel, the armed revolution and international pressure were among the chief causes which brought the termination of the Rana Rule. It was the repetition of the same story in any part of the world where the rulers made all sorts of efforts in keeping their military regimes in power. There was no meeting ground for reconciliation between the autocratic Ranas and the militant elite. In this regard Hiranyakashipu argues:

Hiranya Kashipu: Chakri, I have never known what a defeat is. If defeated (Thumping on Chest) I will kill him, cut his flesh and I will conquer myself, I know nothing but victory alone, my son-in-law dear, what result have you achieved after a month's toil? Could you not shave even a chicken's head. (87)

This is the roaring of Hiranya Kashipu which can be compared with Bhim Shamsher, holding power and politics he had fear. Even he feared with his own family member like Hiranya Kashipu with Prahlad. Prahlad was nothing externally but he was fire to sustain own regime like Hiranya Kashipu's fall.

Mohan Shamsher and his followers could not hope to maintain their hold for very long. The democratic forces, demanding democracy and freedom, were pushing hard and growing in strength day by day. Even a hard crack-down, use of brute force to repress political activities and jail them with threats of death sentence, could not check growing political opposition and popular protest demonstrations:

Prahlad: A poem of Lord Supreme, like myself. Lord supreme is the poet. I am my own poem. Along with me my poem beaten and injured, weeping with me, hunger stricken lean and thin now stays with me, its height like my own. It equals my size when within me and when it is out, I am the water and my poem a fountain, while I am wind it is a torrent and when I am fire it is a wild-fire, when I am fire it is a wild-life, when I am clay it is a house and when I am silent it is voice. (92)

Prahlad represents all farmers, clay man, workers and exploited group where exploitation was legal but these group began to rise their voice against dictatorship. In aforementioned extract there are many images which show the real demonstration and opposition during Rana Regime. They were asking for peace and equality which was impossible to provide because Rana never reconciled with lower classes or working people but being wild-fire people's agitation compelled Rana to lean to people.

It would be clear that there were more internal factors than the external ones which directly were responsible for the over throw of the Rana Rule. The Rana

system itself was very defective. It had germs of discontentment in itself. Not a single section in Nepalese society was happy with the system. Dissatisfaction grew in all the power-sharing, power-sustaining and power-maintaining circuits. The Ranas themselves were bitterly divided among themselves and the disgruntled with the democratic forces in their struggle against Rana system. The Rana Rule survived till its rulers could contain the dissatisfaction in the country by means of every possible stratagem, but once these internal factors became formidable it began to collapse. To prove above analysis Hiranyakashipu argues:

Hiranyakashipu : [---] in Prahlad lies the loss or gain of glory of demon clan, including my own and safeguard of demon culture technique great. Who gave him his birth ? What purpose and why was his birth ? To invite his own death ? Could he not stop his birth or give no birth at all ? Very soon from now, son-in-law will bring here rotten blood of ours. Can you bear to see him ? Go. (115)

The dissatisfaction was within the family member. As Prahlad protests his father's ruling system Bal Krishna Sama and others were there who didn't show any equilibrium with their fathers but they came in the road and began to protest against own family member. If Rana had liberalized their system to some extent, probably they could have survived for some more years, but their lack of historical sense, relentless conservatism and autocracy up to the hilt compelled them to surrender their political power and authority to the people and the king. Sooner than later in the spring of 1951. This made the Nepalese revolution a success and ended the chapter of the history of the Rana Regime in the country:

Hiranya Kashipu : It is falling, it is falling.

Demon king has fallen ! Help ! Help !

Demon clan has fallen ! Earth is turning down trembling.

Help ! Help ! see all friends of fortune days have fled. (131)

The fall of Hiranya Kashipu is fall of Rana Regime and fall of Hitler's desire to conquer the world. Demon clan falled in never rising place means that Nepali people got freedom and whole world took breath of peace after the defeat of Hitler. It is the victory of Prahlad means the people of democratic favor, Gandhi and peace and prosperity.

Seeing all dictatorial activities Bal Krishna Sama desires freedom and democracy. To have peace and prosperity in the nation one must be free and he/she must have rights of humanism. One dictatorship can't provide freedom to all people so there need a kind of revolution and protest. As Prahlad protests against his father's dictatorship contemporary people also fought against long run region of Rana rule and handed success. But Bal Krishna Sama ha mentioned here only the bad aspect or negative message of science and favors the superiority of spirituality. In short case it may be suitable but without science there is hard to live and survive. Probably Bal Krishna Sama feared with atomic bomb during world war and favors religion, which is only the final mean of peace and altruism. Sama had to see scientific advancement and its making comfortable life. Its unfortunate he didn't see it and only through the myth he opines his view.

Thus, the whole drama covers the quarrel between ideological differences which have guided by political power. Bal Krishna Sama tries to depict the contemporary Nepali culture and horrid situation of forth coming war. So, by all these reasons, we can join the text with contemporary Nepal and the world. The above all analysis helps us to understand the text with New Historical perspective. So New Historicism as focused to be an approach to contextualize the text with Nepali socio-cultural context together with the Nepali religious context.

IV. Conclusion

At the conclusive part of my research claims that the drama, set in a single Danavapura around the characters Prahlad and Hiranyakashipu, keeps intimate relationship of contemporary Nepali and Indian sub-continental society. Though the setting seems small and narrow but in reality it is not so because every aspect of Nepali society such as superstition, class conflict, ideological conflict, Hindu belief on God etc. are directly represented together with miseries and foibles. So to represent those every aspect I have used New Historical Reading with its references.

Suffused with Hindu mythology, the story of one Danavapura a metaphor for the social and religious and ideological divisions of contemporary Nepalese and Indian sub-continent. This book *Prahlad* is set around a short period of time, but from the window of Danavapura, we learn the stories of its residents and the forces that have shaped their lives as Bal Krishna Sama creates an intimate and intricate portrait of life in Indian and Nepalese society. In the play Sama explores the deeper workings of human nature as he approaches an electrifying catharsis of illumination, and loss.

Not only that Sama's play, *Prahlad* combines the rich elements of spiritual and scientific ideology, and Hindu mythology, but also the play is very funny in its exploration of social airs and keeping up appearances and at other times deadly serious when contemplating the implications, such attitudes may have on others. This play also serves as a rich allegory and exploration through the Hindu faith, through spiritual quests, and scientific longing. The play contains richly drawn characters and highly developed stories that are tragic. As the play progress, Hiranya Kashipu continues his arrogance of his scientific longing and Prahlad moves towards salvation and its importance of God. Each event brings new occupants and new stories to tell. This also shows that the events of the play are not chronological. By observing every

incident of the play, it can be claimed that Sama has a discerning eye for human foibles, an empathetic knowledge of domestic interaction and an instinctive understanding of the religion-political nuanced traditions of Nepalese society. He has also discerning eye on the oppressive heat, the mixture of superstitions and religious and scientific fanaticism, the social cruelty etc.

The deep-set animosity between Hiranya Kashipu and God results from petty arguments over mean nature of superiority in spirituality versus science. The play takes place over a short period of time in the life of Rana Regime and contemporary political situation when second World War was crawling and Gandhi was leading peace movement in India. The cultural and religious traditions have been contextualized through different memories and those tradition have been mingled with contemporary Nepalese life. Every activities of the characters in the play are the activities of contemporary global and Nepali people. The play chronicles several relationships within Danavapura.

The story, infused with Hindu mythology, is a metaphor of a religious and political divisions. Prahlad and Hiranya Kashipu are very similar Hindu family, who live in constant challenge of their own philosophy and ideology. There is no doubt that New Historicists aim simultaneously to understand the work through its historical context and to understand the cultural and intellectual history through literature, which documents the new discipline of the history of ideas, New Historicism frequently addresses the idea that the lowest common denominator for all human actions power.

Thus, Sama's play *Prahlad* is based on the events only in Danavapura place and minutely Kamal Pokhari, which itself can be taken as a microcosm of Nepali society. The play records the realities of Nepali as well as Indian sub-continent and European culture and political situation and mingles them with myth.

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