V. S. Naipaul's Travel Anecdotes and Daniel Pipes' Historiography: A New Historicist Reading

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Abstract

Nobel laureate V. S. Naipaul (1932-2018) describes experiences of his travels from August 1979 to February 1980 to four non-Arab Muslim-majority countries – Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia – in *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* (1981). After sixteen years, in 1995, he revisited the same countries and illustrated his impressions in *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted Peoples* (1998). Since then, critics have debated the (in)authenticity of Naipaul's narratives in these travelogues. This article attempts a new historicist analysis of Naipaul's travelogues within the historiographical framework of Daniel Pipes' *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power* (1983). It argues that Naipaul's anecdotes and Pipes' historiography are complementary in terms of their production in, and impact on, Western culture. Such anecdotal historiography, this article argues, is a reflection of the authors' psychological and ideological position within the politico-cultural discourse involving the West and Islam in the post-Iranian Revolution period.

Keywords

V. S. Naipaul, travelogues, Daniel Pipes, historiography, new historicist reading

> Millions have been killed because they were Marxists; no one will be obliged to die because s/he is a deconstructionist.
> —Michael Ryan, *Marxism and Deconstruction: A Critical Articulation*

Introduction

The epigraph at the beginning of this article foregrounds the relatively unmapped space between the ideological stance in any narrative and the resulting anti-hegemonic influence that it exerts on a particular socio-cultural setting. It

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suggests that society perceives a revolutionary with the Marxist approach more threatening than a seemingly mild theoretical iconoclast with the deconstructionist approach. Power operation is easily discernible at the revolutionary level but less identifiable at the level of ideology. How this ideological stance in the anecdotes of V. S. Naipaul's (1932-2018) travelogues and the historiography of Daniel Pipes (1949-) shapes, and is shaped by, Western culture will be analysed in light of new historicism. For this, knowing spatiotemporal backgrounds of culture in which these texts are set is necessary, as they influence the implied selves of the two authors.

Throughout the Cold War (1947-1991) period, the Muslim world either as a region or as an ideology was not an important factor to influence decisions of the two ideological poles: the USA and USSR. However, in post-1970s Muslim-majority countries, some post-colonial traumatic shocks and few Cold War-strategic mishaps attracted the attention of world politics to Islam as a political force. These incidents include the advent of the Iranian Revolution, the USSR invasion of Afghanistan and the consequent US aid to the Afghans, and the usurpation of Pakistan's power by the martial-law ruler General Zia-ul-Haq (1924-1988). Particularly, during and after the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the hostage crisis of 1979-81, the rampant representation of so-called political and militant Islam in media, literature, and history catapulted Western attention to Islam to an unprecedented height. This Western consciousness had been sown when some national/international Islamic movements were creating pressure upon Muslim governments to conform to Islamic values after the Arab defeat by Israel in the Six-Day War in 1967. These movements range from the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt to the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (ABIM) and Jamaʿat-i Islami in Pakistan.

In the aftermath of these incidents, especially the Iranian Revolution, Naipaul was in the USA and decided to travel to Muslim-majority countries (Dalrymple 1). Accordingly, from August 1979 to February 1980, he traveled to four non-Arab Muslim-majority countries – Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia – in order to see Islam in action. Out of this travel, Naipaul produced an anti-Islamic diatribe, *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* (1981), which placed him onto the cover of *Newsweek* as a penetrating analyst of Islamic culture and history among many Western circles. Similarly, "in 1979, the Islamic revival sparked a widespread interest in Islam and politics that encouraged" (Pipes, *In the Path* 25) Pipes to write a putative history of Islam titled *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power* (1983). Its central argument is that Islam is inherently incompatible with liberal values and that it should be understood not as a religion but as a political ideology (Pipes, *In the Path* vii).

Although Naipaul's travelogue, *Among the Believers,* and Pipes' supposed history, *In the Path of God*, were composed against the aforementioned backgrounds, Naipaul's last travelogue, *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the*

Converted Peoples (1998) was written while a politico-cultural conflict between the West and Islam in the post-Cold War period was underway. However, "conflict along the fault line between Western and Islamic civilizations has been going on for 1300 years" (Huntington 31). With the end of the Cold War in 1991, through the collapse of the Soviet Union, this conflict had a paradigmatic shift because the Western world in general and the USA in particular felt a psychological "threat vacuum" (Esposito 2). This space instigated them to construct an Islamic green menace (green being the color often associated with Islam) in the place of a Cold War red menace, as Islam was deemed to be the most powerful transnational force with roughly one-fifth of the world's population as its adherents. As such, Daniel Crecelius says, "To some Americans, searching for a new enemy against whom to test our mettle and power, after the death of communism, Islam is the preferred antagonist" (60).

While such "a new phase in world politics" (Huntington 22) was going to emerge, Naipaul revisited the same four Muslim countries for five months in 1995 apparently to comprehend the theme of religious conversion. The description of this travel becomes another anti-Islamic diatribe. Given these spatiotemporal backgrounds, Naipaul's travelogues and Pipes' historiography can be ascribed to the same cultural condition and time of Western society for their productions, impacts, meanings, interpretations, and evaluations. This same cultural dynamic makes Naipaul's anecdotes and Pipes' historiography intersect and support each other concerning the historicisation of Islamic culture. Such communicative interconnection between texts is regarded as "intertextuality" (Kristeva 36). The intertextuality between Naipaul's *Among the Believers* and Pipes' *In the Path of God* explicitly reinforces Pipes' historicisation of Islamic culture as he considers Naipaul's travelogue "an exceptional analysis of Islam in politics" (*In the Path* 24) and frequently refers to its anecdotes. Similarly, Naipaul's anecdotes contained in *Beyond Belief* are implicitly identical to Pipes' historiography. For this, Pipes wrote one article, "*Beyond Belief*: V. S. Naipaul," praising the travelogue as "brilliant" and "a pleasure to read" (1).

To discover the causes and effects of this intertextual convergence, this article interprets Naipaul's travelogues within Pipes' historiographical framework on the basis of new historicism. New historicism is generally a method of reading two parallel texts, one literary and another non-literary, of the same historical period. In such an analysis, both the texts are given equal significance in interpretation and constantly inform or interrogate each other (Ukkan 22). As per the new historicist analysis, the travelogues are regarded as the text and Pipes' history, the co-text. This interpretation reveals that Naipaul's anecdotes and Pipes' historiography are complementary in the sense that, after the Iranian Revolution, they influence, and are influenced by, the Western culture in which they emerged.

Anecdotal and New Historicist Reading

An anecdote is a tiny or fragmented unit of historiography but represents the whole of any larger and complex historical theme or idea. Conversely, new historicist reading is an interpretive strategy of historical analysis of the time, culture, society, place, and circumstance in which literary texts are composed. Anecdotes and new historicist reading are complementary, as the latter begins with the anecdotes of any literary text. Then, by interpreting these anecdotes, this reading eventually unfolds the reciprocal influence between the text and the cultural condition in which the text is produced. This relationship between new historicist reading and anecdotes is termed "the new historicist anecdote" (Greenblatt, *Practicing* 35) in line with Eric Auerbach's foundational work *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Culture* (1953). According to Greenblatt, Auerbach would validate the bigger and grand claims regarding Western culture on the basis of anecdotes (*Practicing* 35). Since then, it has been a mechanism for new historicists to consider an anecdote an echo of the work from which it is extracted and of the culture in which the text is composed. So, from both the textual and cultural point of view, an anecdote is like a synecdoche in nature but a metonymy or metaphor in practice. In this article, such anecdotes of Naipaul's travelogues are given a new historicist reading within Pipes' historiography.

After the dissolution of the Soviet empire in 1989, a belief that a clash of worldviews and civilisations is leading to a looming confrontation between the West and Islam was held in the media, fictions/non-fictions, and historiography. Consequently, "there are a good many people who think that the war between communism and the West is about to be replaced by a war between the West and Muslims" (Pfaff 7). This discourse seems pragmatic as "Islamic rage already threatens the stability of traditionally pro-Western regimes from Morocco to Jordan to Pakistan" (Smith 74). This transnational rage is assumed by Western leaders to design a resurgent "evil empire" (Esposito 2), which is potentially a threat against Western power in the new world order. As such, at an international conference in Germany in 1995, Islam was dubbed "new communism" (Esposito 2) by Willy Claes, the then secretary-general of NATO. Both Naipaul's and Pipes' social cognitive knowledge of the new enemy, Islam, of the West in the post-Cold War period is reflected in their historiography. For example, Naipaul refers to an anecdotal comparison between the old communist countries and the Muslim world in general and Iran in particular. As he states:

> Just as, in the old communist countries, the news in the neutered papers was principally of other communist countries, so the news in the English-language *Tehran Times* was of the Muslim world. (*Beyond* 147)

He alludes to anecdotal evidence of "the United States trade embargo" (*Beyond* 147) sanctioned by the Bill Clinton administration in 1995 against Iran. Its impact on Iran included "a shortage of spare parts in the oil industry and the currency going down" (*Beyond* 147). Thus, these anecdotes are manipulated to categorise Iran under the so-called new communist power, Islam. This arbitrary categorisation is supported by Pipes who says: "In significant ways, Naipaul finds Iran to be an Islamic flavored version of the Soviet Union" ("Beyond Belief"1). In fact, this prejudice was propagated in the historiography of Pipes implicitly as he considers Islam as "a successor of fascism and Marxism-Leninism in terms of its being another radical utopian ideology" (*In the Path* vii). Pipes also compares the Marxists with the Muslims in terms of ideological belief:

> All this [Muslims' problem] resembles closely the predicament of those Marxists who acknowledge the historical failure of Communist states but who, when pushed to account for the reasons, point to the personal mistakes by the leaders, such as brutality, the cult of personality, isolation, inflexibility, paranoia…. Fundamentalist Muslims, like them, must blame the people, never the ideology or the structures. (*In the Path* 136)

Thus, by representing Islam as a unitary ideological culture like communism, both Naipaul and Pipes lock Islam and the West into politico-cultural oppositional configurations bound to be in deadly conflict. But in this relationship, they cannot integrate what Homi Bhabha calls "hybridity" (37), cultural pluralism, which is the daily reality in the globalised world due to intercultural communications, multicultural conglomeration in one culture, and continuous porosity of cultures. Such pluralism in both Western and Islamic cultures can in some ways extinguish any spark of conflict between these two entities. In fact, both Naipaul's anecdotes and Pipes' historiography are Western society's way of constructing historiography that fits the Western categorisation of Islam as the new communist threat. Such constructs are usually included in historiography according to the demand of various cultural discourses as suggested by "the historicity of texts" (Montrose 20) in new historicism.

Similar historiographic constructs, Greenblatt argues in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), are also included in the writings of the Renaissance writers such as Sir Thomas More (1478-1535), William Tyndale (1494-1536), Edmund Spenser (1552-99), Christopher Marlowe (1564-93), and William Shakespeare (1564-1616). These writers, Greenblatt claims, aligned their identities with the micro-forces of the social inside/outside authority including "God, a sacred book, an institution such as church, court, colonial or military administration" (9). Such a power dynamic between the authors and the political agent, from the postcolonial perspective, is called "dynamic exchange" (Said, *Orientalism* 14). This

is an exchange "between individual authors and the large political concerns shaped by three great empires – British, French, and American – in whose intellectual and imaginative territory the writing was produced" (Said, *Orientalism* 14). Such exchange and negotiation between Naipaul's anecdotes and Pipes' historiography and the Western political discourse about Islam can be included in Clifford Geertz's "thick descriptions" (9) of culture. To this thick description, new historicism, as a theory, is indebted.

According to thick description, any new historicist, like an anthropologist, "thickly describes… and unearths the underlying meaningful structures of local events and local interactions and from those interactions generalizes whole societies" (Murry 806). Therefore, considering Naipaul's anecdotes and Pipes' historiography as the Western cultural artifacts, new historicists can easily interpret the very political spirit of Western culture regarding Islam in the post-Cold War era. This thick description is identical to Greenblatt's "Cultural Poetics" ("Poetics"18), a study of distinct cultural practices and an inquiry of relations among these practices at a given time. This cultural poetics divulges the indirect ideological stance of Naipaul's anecdotes and Pipes' historiography which circulate micro-discursive forces of disciplinary power to all directions of social, cultural, and political levels. Such power even influences the foreign policy of the West and is an example of the "nexus between Power and Knowledge" evoked by Michel Foucault (Murry 806). How the disciplinary knowledge of political Islam influenced the US foreign policy can be easily assumed through the statement of Michael E. Salla:

> The widespread knowledge of policies that 'successfully' dealt with the former Marxist-Leninist threat will prove influential in the foreign policy that emerges to deal with the threat of political Islam. (732)

Accordingly, new historicism covers a unique strategy of a political reading of the textual elements like the anecdote of Naipaul and the historiography of Pipes. In this sense, new historicism resembles cultural materialism because both of them are interpretive strategies for the micro-logical discursive practices of politicised historiography. Cultural materialism considers historiography to be controlled and administered by contemporary power structures for political and ideological implications as Graham Holderness defines it as "a politicized form of historiography" (175).

Naipaul's anecdotes refer to the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and historicise, in a very positive way, the Iranian Shah's regime with phrases like "glittering time of Shah" (*Among* 242). The Shah family had ruled Iran from 1925 to 1979 without a democratic mandate and was dethroned through this revolution. Conversely, his anecdote denigrates the revolution by way of calling

it "revolutionary shabbiness" (*Among* 242) and attributes this revolution to so-called Islamic rage. Similarly, Pipes argues that this revolution is not at all a result of "economic discontent, of social tensions, political disfranchisement, repression, charismatic leadership" (*In the Path* 5). Islam, he claims, is the instigator of the revolution for which "many in the Occident suddenly thought Islam capable of anything" (*In the Path* 9). Thus, Naipaul's anecdotes and Pipes' historiography form a metanarrative representing Islam as the cause of the Iranian Revolution. New historicists do not depend fully on any metanarrative for historical interpretation. For "a plurality of historical voices" (Tyson 287), they emphasise the historical mini-narratives of the marginalised or the people who are the object of historiography. This reading strategy is tantamount to Said's "contrapuntal approach" (*Culture* 51) which takes the perspectives of both the coloniser and the colonised into account while reading the canonical colonial texts.

However, the mini-narrative of Sankaran Krishna provides an alternative voice to the Naipaulian and Pipesian metanarrative regarding causes of the Iranian Revolution. Krishna says that the termination of the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh and his replacement by Shah Reza Pahlavi in 1953 by a CIA-sponsored coup are some of the reasons for this revolution (142). By denying this polysemic interpretation, Pipes claims, "the Iranian Revolution delivered a final blow" (*In the Path* 7) to the modernisation theory laid down by the First World countries. This shock, he argues, was prompted by Islam because "Islam, like other religions, inspires impractical acts which cannot be ascribed to economic self-interest" (*In the Path* 7). Such alleged impracticality of Islam is also attributed by Naipaul to the Iranian Revolutionary Muslims because he believes they have been suffering from a psychological dichotomy. He argues that Muslims are intent on rejecting Western civilisation in the name of Islam, but simultaneously are also attracted towards the fruits of the scientific innovation of the West. As Naipaul says:

> The West, or the universal civilization it leads, is emotionally rejected. It undermines; it threatens. But at the same time, it is needed, for its machine, goods, medicines, warplanes. (*Among* 168)

He reiterates that Western civilisation "was to be rejected; at the same time, it was to be depended upon" (*Among* 82) by Muslims. Thus, they suffer from "disturbance-expressed in dandyism, mimicry, boasting, and rejection" (*Among* 13). These Naipaulian lines are quoted by Pipes in his historiography, as he poses a question: "Can fundamentalists really separate the technology of the West from its culture?" (*In the Path* 133). Then, he himself answers and says that "the chances for becoming modern without Westernization are about as good as conceiving children without sex" (*In the Path* 196). Thus, he becomes a collaborator of

Naipaul and claims that "it was their [Muslims'] effort to do so that attracted the attention of V. S. Naipaul and inspired him to write his masterly inquiry" (*In the Path* 133). Then, he announces the consequence of this Muslim mental dichotomy:

> A paralyzing ambivalence resulted. While the civilization of Islam was not sufficient, that of the West was not accepted; old ways were discredited and new ones are indigestible…. This was Islam's modern dilemma, a trauma that increased with the decades. (*In the path* 23)

To overcome this Islamic dilemma, both Naipaul and Pipes prescribe a way for Muslims, stating:

> As long as the Muslims will not stop denouncing and will antagonize the 'great new circling civilization' of the West, the social, political, economic, and psychological shock of the Muslims will continue. (*Among* 82, *In the Path* 135)

Similarly, Huntington refers to this argument to support his view that "Western Civilization is the universal civilization that fits all men" (40) whereas "Non-Western civilizations have attempted to become modern without becoming Western" (Huntington 49).

Such definition of Western civilisation as universal comes from the structured power dynamic between these authors and Western society. As such, the Foucauldian concept of discursive power relation explains: "The power structure of society controls its member through constructing and defining what appears to be universal" (Murry 809). Again, from both Marxist and postmodernist points of view, this hierarchical definition is one of the results of Western capitalism though these views define capitalism in different ways. For instance, according to the Marxist critic Fredric Jameson, capitalism is "the agent of repressive differentiation" (20), whereas it is "the agent of monological totalization" (37) to the postmodernist critic Jean-François Lyotard. On the contrary, Greenblatt argues that new historicism discovers a mutual relationship between Jameson's repressive differentiation based on materialism and Lyotard's monological totalization based on discourse ("Poetics" 6).

This relationship suggests that capitalism constructs a monolithic discourse that establishes a hierarchy between the capitalist and the proletariat for hegemonic exploitation. Accordingly, new historicist reading shows that Western capitalistic culture indoctrinates both Naipaul's and Pipes' minds and constructs a monological discourse in order to represent the simplistic binary of the Western civilisation as universal and the Muslim civilisation as proletariat.

However, this binary and Muslims' dichotomic attitude to Western civilisation and technology are dismantled through a new historicist reading that seeks to "discover or to disclose some wrinkling and historicizing interruption, a breaking and a realizing interjection" (Fineman 60). Such interjection finds out that both Naipaul's anecdote and Pipes' historiography are confined to imperial historiography.

Like imperial historiography, their historiography emphasises the binary to continue Western hegemonic exploitation of the Muslim world in the post-colonial capitalistic system. Simultaneously, it prepares the ground for this hegemony by omitting the record of the traumatic experience that Muslim had during the colonial period. Accordingly, both Naipaul and Pipes refuse to recognise that the memory of this colonial shock constitutes an extreme sensitivity among Muslims to any hint of Western intrusion, discrimination, and patronisation. This hypersensitivity makes Muslims reject Western culture psychologically. Not only Muslims but also adherents of other religions, who were once colonised by the West, must have attempted to be modern, but, not Western.

Both Naipaul and Pipes do not seem to understand the simple fact that the continued impoverishment of the Muslim world is not internally generated but structurally conditioned by global capitalism controlled by the West. Western capital is invariably the logical outcome of the systematic exploitation in the ex-colonial world. As a result, the West has reached a new stage of development through different innovations. As Fanon says: "Europe is literally the creation of the Third World. The wealth which smothers her is that which was stolen from the underdeveloped peoples" (98). Muslims, on the one hand, cannot adapt to the Western way of life due to their traumatic colonial experience; on the other hand, they also do not have any alternative without relying on the innovations of the coloniser for their survival in the open market economy of the current globalised world.

Naipaul's and Pipes' observation of the historicisation of the Iranian Revolution and the Muslim's simultaneous attraction to Western technology and rejection of Western civilization are not objective even though they tend to represent it so. Rather, this historical fact is a consequence of manipulating historical documents in both Naipaul's and Pipes' historiography according to the Western politico-cultural agendas after the Iranian Revolution. Such manipulation in historiography is discovered by new historicists who consider historiography not "the direct recreation of the past, but rather the processes by which the past is constructed or invented" (Cox and Reynolds 4). These historiographic processes make new historicists believe in the impossibility of an objective interpretation which differentiates new historicism from traditional historicism. Hence, new historicists never believe in the neutrality of any historian, even though the historian thinks himself and promises to be objective.

Such promise of objectivity is reflected in Naipaul's conversation with Jan Hamilton in 1981 as the former persists:

> Nothing was falsified. I am very, very scrupulous about that. And I have seldom been misled by people because in every new situation I am always with the other man, I am always looking at the world through his eyes. (qtd.in Barnouw 50)

In *Among the Believers,* Naipaul often manipulates the answers of his respondents to prioritise his subjective position over that of his interviewees. For example, in response to the consecutive questions of Naipaul, Mr. Jaffrey, a typewriter of the *Times*, a new English-language Iranian daily, answers: "[T]he country [Iran] was now in the hands of fanatics" because of Khomeini's faults (*Among* 30); he again answers: "Every kind of corruption had come to Iran during the Shah's rule: money corruption, prostitution, sodomy" (*Among* 30); then he says that "Islam was the answer" to all these problems (*Among* 30). Here, one question comes automatically to readers: Can this typewriter's answers be taken as the opinion of an expert? The answer is no.

Despite knowing this fact, Naipaul continues asking him again and again about the Iranian Revolution and Islam. Similarly, disregarding the supporters' voice, he portrays the Iranian Revolution through the statements of Behzad, one of its opponents. Moreover, the interviewees have hardly any access to the author-narrator, Naipaul. When Mr. Parvez, the editor of the *Times*, asks Naipaul whether he is a Muslim. He instantly replies: "No. But I don't think it's necessary" (*Among* 29). This elusive attitude does not let Mr. Parvez ask any more questions about his identity and, thus Naipaul keeps his real identity hidden. This subject position or self-positioning can be explained through the philosophy of existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre. According to this theory, for completely understanding the Other as a person, the subject has to know the Other both as an object or "being-in-itself" and as a subject or "being-for-itself" (qtd. in Radhakrishnan 435). But whenever the subject places himself in an object position to the Other who is a subject, the Other's subjectivity stands ontologically as a threat to the subjectivity of the subject (Radhakrishnan 435). This ontological threat usually does not let the subject place himself in the object position. Likewise, the self-position of Naipaul, as an author-narrator, faces an ontological threat when he wants to place the Other, such as Jaffrey and Behzad, in the position of a subject or 'being-for-itself'. That is why, his subject positioning helps him steer his interviewees into telling only those things that Naipaul wants to expose.

Similarly, Pipes adopts an ethnohistoric subjectivity in his historiography. An ethnohistorian usually compares the findings of his fieldwork with those of other archived records found in the study of anthropology, history, and so on.

Then, from both sources, he finds out the recurring similarities of information about the past of a nation. At last, he reaches a decisive generalisation of the nation's past as the logical consequence of his observations, classifications, and interpretations. In this circumstance, Naipaul's collection of anecdotes about political Islam works as archived data for Pipes. In an instance, Naipaul says:

> [Islam] had the flaw of its origins – the flaw that ran right through Islamic history: to the political issues it raised it offered no political or practical solution…. This political Islam was rage, anarchy. (*Among* 355)

This line is quoted by Pipes (*In the Path* 129) to convey his historiographic diagnosis of the Western indifference to political Islam: "In my view… for Westerners, the main problem … [is] a disinclination to acknowledge the political force of religion [Islam]" (*In the Path* 4). Such ethnohistoric subjectivity does not allow the ethnohistorian to collect the investigated nation's history from its members because the ethnohistorian believes this nation is non-literate and has no written history, but they may have a true past as garnered from the records of the other literate historians with whom they come into contacts (Fontana 2). In other words, the nation is either underrepresented or represented by others as this nation does not have any capacity to represent themselves. As such, Pipes claims that Muslims cannot represent themselves because, "unfortunately, Muslims themselves have added relatively little to the study of Islam as a force in public life" (*In the Path* 24). Both Naipaulian subject positioning and Pipesian ethnohistoric subjectivity cross the boundary of subjectivity, a boundary that is fashioned by new historicism for historical analysis.

New historicism claims that any historical interpretation is unavoidably subjective. But this belief does not justify "a self-indulgent, anything-goes attitude toward the writing of history" (Tyson 289). Such inevitability of subjectivity makes a self-imposed imperative: the self-position of historical analysts be "as aware of and forthright as possible about their own psychological and ideological positions relative to the material they analyze" (Tyson 289). Disregarding this imperative, Pipes constructs Islam's incapacity for its self-representation, self-consciousness, and self-understanding page after page in *In the Path of God;* even he refers to and praises V. S. Naipaul as a useful and clever witness of this incapacity (Said, "Reconsidered" 90). Such consensus between Naipaul and Pipes concerning Islam is one of the reasons for textual mediations between their historiography. According to new historicism, when any chaotic past is constructed as a historical document by any historian, this is mediated by successive historians irrespective of its (in)authenticity (Montrose 20). Such mediations happen between Naipaul's *Among the Believers* and Pipes' *In the Path of God* to show that Islam is incompatible with democracy. For example*,* at the

beginning of his travel, Naipaul states that he is traveling Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia in order "to find out about the application of Islam to institutions, to government, to law" (*Among* 103). Accordingly, when he comes to Pakistan, he states:

> The faith [Islam] was full of rules. In politics there were none. There were no political rules because the faith was meant to create only believers…. For everyone in open political life, Islam was cause, tool, and absolution. It could lead to this worldly virulence. (*Among*107)

Then, he goes to Indonesia and says that Islam "offered no political or practical solution. It offered only the faith…. This political Islam was rage, anarchy" (*Among* 349). Pipes cites these Naipaulian observations to support his generalisation about the political role of Islam and claims: "Islam buttresses hereditary monarchies in Morocco and Saudi Arabia, theocracy under Khomeini in Iran, and military rule under Zia-Ul-Haq in Pakistan" (*In the Path* 129).

Such mediations of historical document between Naipaul's anecdotes and Pipes' historiography make their travelogue and historical analysis one kind of cross-fertilised and even cross-pollinated genre. In this sense, their travelogue and historical analysis can be called "Historiographic Metafiction" (Hutcheon 105). In this regard, one question may arise: How can Naipaul's travelogues and Pipes' historical analysis be considered historiographic metafiction, whereas historiographic metafiction is usually used for fiction which combines the literary device of fiction and the historical discourse? Indeed, Naipaul's travelogue can be considered fiction in terms of generic and thematic mutability. Michael Kowaleski says that travelogue "borrows freely from the memoir, journalism, letters, guidebooks, confessional narrative and, most important, fiction" (qtd. in Youngs 1). For instance, in order to authenticate his historiography involving the first Muslim arrival in India by Muhammad bin Qasim (695-715) (*Among* 131-140), Naipaul refers to *Chachnama* which stands at the generic crossroads of history and fiction.

Linda Hutcheon claims that "there are non-fictional novels, however, which come very close to historiographic metafiction in their form and content" (111). Similarly, Pipes' history is also a matter of interpretations, not facts, as he admits: "I aspire, as objectively as possible, to analyze the condition of modern Muslims" (*In the Path* 25). Accordingly, his historiography can be analysed by many of the ways used by literary critics to analyse fictions. As Roland Barthes says, "[H]istory is nothing but a fiction with no immediate claims to a representation of the Real" (82). So, Naipaul's travelogues can so easily be read as fictions that have anecdotes as historical discourse and Pipes' text is history as a genre but can be read as fiction too. Due to this generic convergence, mutual

imbrications between Naipaul's travelogues and Pipes' historical analysis blur the line between these two different genres. This usually happens in historiographic metafiction as "there would be overlappings of concern and even mutual influences between two genres" (Hutcheon 106). In this way, textual mediation in new historicism is akin to historiographic metafiction in postmodernism. Just as historiographic metafiction "foregrounds the rejection of the claims of both 'authentic' representation and 'inauthentic' copy alike" (Hutcheon 110), textual mediation does not ensure any certainty of (in)authenticity in historiography. New historicists believe that one event certainly has multiple and complex causes and "one cannot make simple causal statements with any certainty" (Tyson 284). The causality that both Naipaul and Pipes demonstrate between autocracy, tyranny, and totalitarianism in Muslim countries and Islam, seems to be a one-way street from cause to effect.

This blame is myopic. Orientalists gaze at military coups, insurgence, religious fanaticism, civil war, and dictatorship in Muslim-majority countries, but do not seem to realise the simple fact that Western power not only exploited Muslim countries during the colonial period but also has been operating neo-imperial intervention in these countries since the end of manifest colonialism. By denying this fact and attributing political failures of Muslim countries solely to Islam, both Naipaul and Pipes categorise themselves as neo-Orientalists.

Both Naipaul and Pipes represent Islam as a failed political force in establishing real democracy. Political failures in Muslim countries have been wrongly historicised and mediated as the fault of Islam. The construct of the incompatibility of Islam with democracy has been passing into the accepted myths of Western society. Consequently, this myth has been making Western neo-imperialist aggressions against Muslim countries look like a legitimate and morally justifiable action in the pretext of imposing so-called democracy.

Conclusion

Naipaul's travelogues are different from Pipes' history in terms of genre. However, a dynamic relationship between their texts and Western society can be mapped. Western culture influences their textual expressions, and these texts, in turn, reshape the society from which they are originated. As a result, some generic, semantic, and thematic similarities between Naipaul's travelogues and Pipes' history are obvious. Both the authors share an identical psychological and ideological position concerning the historicisation of Islamic culture, which has been instrumental in creating their grand narratives that fit within the web of the politico-cultural agendas of contemporary Western society regarding Islam.

Their historical interpretations sometimes cross the boundary of subjectivity. This over-subjectivity is manifested in both Naipaul's and Pipes' narrative that smacks of Eurocentrism, ethnocentrism and deeply embedded cultural misapprehension about Islam. Naipaul's anecdotes and Pipes'

historiography involving Islam and Muslims are tainted by a singular, monolithic narrative. Given their bias against Islam and Muslims, this research deconstructs their master-narratives in the light of a new historicist reading.

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