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Memory, Trauma, and Compromised Identities in Nadeem Aslam's Post-9/11 novel *The Wasted Vigil* (2008)

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Abstract

The Wasted Vigil (2008) by Nadeem Aslam portrays the complicated interplay of memory, trauma, and identity in post-9/11 Afghanistan. This paper examines the impact of historical and political factors on the characters' experiences and their identities, using postcolonialism and trauma studies as its theoretical framework. It analyzes the interactions between memory and trauma as reflected in the characters' lives, as well as their views of their positions in the world, through a close reading of the novel's exquisite language and sophisticated narrative structure. The novel depicts trauma as it undermines the characters' identities, particularly as they navigate the intricate politics of Muslim culture in the postcolonial milieu. The article also investigates the remnants of war in post-9/11 Afghanistan, as well as the traumatic experiences of the Muslim characters. Finally, the paper examines war policies, highlighting the ways *The Wasted Vigil*

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challenges Western stereotyping of the unified self and merges its characters' shattered identities within the traditional Islamic teachings. The concluding thoughts contribute to a wider understanding of the complex dynamics of postcolonialism, trauma, and Muslim culture via examining the varied ways in which the novel illustrates the impact of history, culture and trauma on the characters' experiences and identities.

Keywords: *The Wasted Vigil*, Nadeem Aslam, Post-9/11 novel, Muslim literature, Memory, Trauma, Islamic teachings, Identity Crisis, Postcolonialism

الذاكرة والصدمة والهويات المتضررة في رواية نديم أسلم ما بعد 11 سبتمبر "السهر الضائع" (2008)

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المستخلص

تصور رواية "السهر الضائع" (2008) لنديم أسلم التفاعل المعقد بين الذاكرة والصدمة والهوية في أفغانستان ما بعد أحداث 11 سبتمبر. تبحث هذه الورقة في تأثير العوامل التاريخية والسياسية على تجارب الشخصيات وهوياتهم، مستخدمة نظريات ما بعد الاستعمار ودراسات الصدمة كإطار نظري لها. وتحلل التفاعلات بين الذاكرة والصدمة كما تنعكس في حياة الشخصيات، وكذلك نظرتهم لمواقعهم في العالم، من خلال القراءة المتأنية للغة الرائعة للرواية وبنيتها السردية المتطورة. تصور الرواية الصدمة وكيف تقوض هويات الشخصيات، خاصة أثناء تقلبهم في السياسة المعقدة للثقافة الإسلامية في بيئة ما بعد الاستعمار. كما تبحث المقالة في مخلفات الحرب في أفغانستان ما بعد 11 سبتمبر، وكذلك التجارب الصادمة للشخصيات المسلمة. وأخيراً، تفحص الورقة سياسات الحرب، سلطة الضوء على الطرق التي تتحدى بها رواية السهر الضائع التمييز الغربي للذات الموحدة وتدمج هويات شخصياتها المحطمة ضمن التعاليم الإسلامية التقليدية. تساهم الأفكار الختامية في فهم أوسع للديناميكيات المعقدة لما بعد الاستعمار والصدمة والثقافة الإسلامية من خلال فحص الطرق المتنوعة التي توضح بها الرواية تأثير التاريخ والثقافة والصدمة على تجارب الشخصيات وهوياتهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السهر الضائع، نديم أسلم، رواية ما بعد 11 سبتمبر، الأدب الإسلامي، الذاكرة، الصدمة، التعاليم الإسلامية، أزمة الهوية، ما بعد الاستعمار

Introduction:

The Wasted Vigil (2008) by the British Pakistani author, Nadeem Aslam, addresses the effects of historical and manipulated political pressures on individuals and communities in post-9/11 Afghanistan. The work has gained critical acclaim for its riveting representation of postcolonial society's memory, loss, and identity difficulties. According to Wood (2008), *The Wasted Vigil* is "a novel about war and loss, the ways in which the past makes and breaks us, and the difficulty of telling true stories." A Russian woman weeping for her slain brother in war, an Afghan commander burdened by his upbringing, and a British ex-soldier yearning for his former fiancée are among the characters in the novel who confess their heartbreaking conflicts and brutal experiences in Afghanistan. The novel's unique narrative method, which weaves together multiple points of view and timelines, allows Aslam, the author, to analyze the impact of trauma on the protagonists' lives and identities. "Aslam's novel brilliantly depicts the way that trauma, like an earthquake, can transform the very landscape of our memories," Marcela Valdes (2008) says. Aslam discusses larger problems of Muslim culture politics and the consequences of Western intervention in Afghanistan throughout the novel. In interviews, Aslam has claimed that he wants to challenge Western ideas of Muslim culture and investigate the complexity of Islam in a postcolonial environment. As a result, *The Wasted Vigil* is a work that approaches tough and sensitive subjects with sensitivity and understanding. "It's the rarest thing: a novel that doesn't sacrifice its lyricism for its politics, or vice versa," Cummins (2008) writes.

The purpose of this research is to make a critical argument on the significance of memory and trauma in Aslam's novel, especially in the context of Afghanistan's Muslim community in the aftermath of 9/11. By studying the many ways in which memory and trauma shape the characters' cultural identities, the study sheds light on the impact of historical and political factors on individuals in postcolonial contexts. This will help researchers better grasp the complex relationship between personal and communal memory. Violence's painful experience, as well as cultural and political contexts, may present a variety of choices for facing and resolving these emerging cultural difficulties.

The study's hypothesis argues that historical and political events may have a direct impact on the characters' experiences and identities. It also contends that the novel puts into question Western ideas of the unitary self by integrating the protagonists' fractured identities within the context of Muslim culture. The characters' exploration of memory and trauma suggests how past trauma persists in post-9/11 Afghanistan, and how the characters' traumatic events interfere with their identities, particularly as they investigate the complicated politics of Muslim culture and arising cultural shifts.

Scholars have paid close attention to Aslam's work *The Wasted Vigil* since its release in 2008. The novel, according to Khan and Rashid (2017), "offers an effective assessment of the politics of conflict and violence in Afghanistan" (p. 63). Mehta (2013) writes that "Aslam calls on the oral tradition of storytelling and employs an elaborate plot structure to weave together the lives of each of his characters" (p. 49). Wang (2013) and Shaheen (2015) investigated how Aslam uses the novel's structure to develop various notions about memory and trauma.

One of the novel's central themes is the impact of historical battles and political upheavals on the protagonists' lives and identities. *The Wasted Vigil* "is not just a novel about the war in Afghanistan," Smith (2012) writes, "but about how Afghanistan has been influenced by over a century of foreign intervention" (p. 120). The novel depicts the characters' memories and traumas, as well as their interactions with one another and with larger social and political systems, to study this issue. Another crucial feature of the research is its investigation of new patterns in Muslim culture in the post-9/11 era. According to Rana (2016), "*The Wasted Vigil* conveys a sophisticated and complex perspective on Islam, which challenges conventional representations of the religion as inherently violent or oppressive" (p.118).

This engagement with rising cultural trends is especially important in post-9/11 writings since Aslam's work provides a counter-narrative to prevailing Western depictions of Muslims' faith and culture. As a result, the critical literature on *The Wasted Vigil* emphasizes the novel's complicated narrative structure and techniques, examination of memory and trauma, engagement with the politics of certain Islamic practices, and manipulation of Muslims' dress code and appearances for men and women. These themes and topics will serve as the foundation for the current study, which attempts to critically examine the role of memory and trauma in the story in the setting of Islamic cultural milieu.

Theoretical Framework

Loomba (2005:189) argues that many manipulated Islamic teachings violate the individuals' rights and mostly women on "the basis on which to enforce their subordination." Also, she believes that the local communities in including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries are repressing politicized Islamic teachings that restrict individuals' freedom of expression. Accordingly, postcolonialism becomes a theoretical paradigm that evolves as a response to colonialism and imperialism in the latter half of the twentieth century. It opposes the Eurocentric worldview and emphasizes the experiences of colonized peoples. Said (1978, p339) highlights that colonialism's impact extends beyond the political and economic domains and into the cultural and psychological spheres as well. In contrast, the trauma studies emerged as an interdisciplinary field that investigates the effects of trauma on individuals and communities. It is informed by a number of disciplines, including psychology, psychiatry, sociology, and literature. Trauma research emphasizes that trauma is a social and cultural phenomenon that is shaped by historical, political, and cultural elements (Caruth, 1996). Consequently, Durrant (2013, p 197) suggests that Caruth's theory of implicated subjectivity seems harmonious with the different trends of postcolonial theory that suit contemporary trauma studies.

Furthermore, according to Durrant and Topper (2020, p 187), "both trauma theory and postcolonial critique [are] centrally concerned with the traumatic origins of racial and cultural difference and the undoing of identitarian binds." The impact of political and historical events on the experiences and identities of literary characters has been studied in literary contexts using postcolonialism and trauma studies. For instance, in Aslam's novel "*The Wasted Vigil*" (Froula, 2008), political assumptions and cultural stereotypes have an impact on the protagonists' struggles with identification and post-9/11 trauma in Afghanistan. Postcolonial and trauma studies can help literary study better comprehend how historical and political events affect individuals and communities. With the use of this theoretical framework, it is now feasible to assess *The Wasted Vigil's* portrayal of the impact of trauma and historical and political influences on the experiences and identities of the characters in a more nuanced manner.

This paper will explore how memory and trauma affect the experiences and identities of the characters in Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil*, particularly in the setting of Muslim culture and Afghanistan, using postcolonial and trauma studies theoretical frameworks. Postcolonialism, in Bhabha's opinion, emphasizes the need of understanding how colonialism affected the cultures and identities of colonized peoples as well as how it

continues to have an impact on postcolonial nations. Trauma studies also offer theoretical frameworks for understanding how traumatic experiences alter personal and societal identities (Caruth, 1996).

Using these frameworks, this study will investigate how historical and political pressures, particularly those related to Afghanistan's current conflict, impact the characters' trauma experiences and define their identities. Furthermore, the talk will look at how the novel challenges Western concepts of a unitary self by depicting shattered identities shaped by greater social, political, and historical forces.

Critical Analysis

Memory and Trauma in *The Wasted Vigil*

Memory and trauma are presented as two highly influential factors among the characters' experiences and their identities throughout the narrative. Marcus, an Englishman haunted by his traumatic experience in Afghanistan, is described as "the prisoner of his memories" (Aslam, 2008, p. 58), whereas David, a Russian soldier, struggles with traumatic war memories and his own complicity in atrocities committed against Afghan civilians (Aslam, 2008, p. 95).

Another significant character, Lara, exemplifies the impact of trauma and its interaction with her identity as she mourns the loss of her husband and son in the 9/11 attacks in New York and is compelled to hunt for their remains in Afghanistan (Aslam, 2008, p. 43). This depiction of memory and trauma is congruent with trauma studies' findings that traumatic experiences have long-term consequences on an individual's psyche and sense of self (Caruth, 1996). This depiction of trauma in the context of postcolonialism is also a reflection of the ongoing repercussions of colonialism and the trauma imposed on colonized peoples (Bhabha, 1994; Rothberg, 2008 p 60).

The Wasted Vigil illustrates the ways in which historical and political factors continue to form individual and community identities in postcolonial societies through its depiction of the characters' experiences with memory and trauma. The past haunts the present in post-9/11 Afghanistan in *The Wasted Vigil*, as memories of the Soviet-Afghan War and the Taliban's rule continue to impact the protagonists' lives and identities. According to one character, "the past was always present, hovering around them like a ghost" (Aslam, 2008, p. 50). This sentiment is repeated throughout the narrative as characters deal with the aftereffects of past trauma and violence. For example, the character David is haunted by recollections of the Soviet-Afghan War, which continue to influence his relationships and understanding of the present (Aslam, 2008, p. 54).

Similarly, Lara's experiences as a war reporter in Afghanistan haunt her, and the tragedy she witnessed continues to influence her identity (Aslam, 2008, p. 72). This picture of the past as a haunting force is typical of postcolonial literature, which frequently investigates how historical and political factors continue to influence the present. According to Bhabha (1994), "the past is never simply the past...it is always reinscribed in the present" (p. 3). *The Wasted Vigil* highlights how the past continues to impact the present in post-9/11 Afghanistan by depicting the persistent effects of past tragedy and violence.

Muslim Identity in a Postcolonial Context

The protagonists' trauma experiences in Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil* damage their identities as they traverse the difficult politics of Muslim culture in a postcolonial context. According to Chakrabarty (2007), postcolonialism emphasizes the long-term repercussions of colonialism on colonized peoples, particularly how trauma can change individual and social identities. Aslam's characters are no exception, as they cope with the pain of war, violence, and grief that has penetrated their lives. Marcus, a former British soldier, for example, is haunted by the memories of a massacre he witnessed in Afghanistan. As though remembering itself is a type of punishment, all he can do is remember, he muses (Aslam, 2008, p. 18). A horrific ordeal is being endured by Lara, an American who traveled to Afghanistan in search of her brother's tomb. "There is always before and after," she says. According to Aslam (2008), "You go through something so profound that you will never be the same." Lara's concept of self and her relationship to the rest of the world have been profoundly changed by the tragedy of losing her brother.

While navigating the complex politics of Islamic rites and teachings in a postcolonial culture, the protagonists' identities are nonetheless affected by their traumatic experiences. Casa, a Christian convert from Afghanistan, must flee for her life due to persecution from her neighborhood. Aslam's findings lead her to the following inference: "I have come to see that what we believe about ourselves is often based on what others have told us" (Aslam, 2008, p. 309). Casa's experiences demonstrate how trauma may impact one's identity and ties to the community.

The complicated relationships between trauma, identity, and the politics of Islamic beliefs and practices are explored in a postcolonial environment in Aslam's novel. The protagonists' experiences represent both the long-lasting legacy of colonialism and the continuous misery of the Afghan people as a result of war and slaughter. As a result, the novel calls into question Western ideas of a unitary self and emphasizes how larger social, political, and historical factors impact individual and societal identities. Postcolonialism, according to Bhabha (1994), comprises a critical examination of how colonialism has influenced the cultures and identities of colonized peoples. Aslam's work, with its complex depiction of sorrow and identity in post-9/11 Afghanistan, contributes significantly to this ongoing critical investigation.

The Wasted Vigil frequently discusses the impact of Islamic ideas and practices on the protagonists' terrible experiences. The novel depicts the significance of political Islamic beliefs and practices in shaping the protagonists' experiences and identities, especially in a postcolonial setting. As a result, the story illuminates how political Islamic teachings and practices may both exacerbate and alleviate suffering. Marcus, a Westerner who converted to Islam, considers the possibilities of taqwa, or God-consciousness, as an aspect of Islamic teachings to assist him manage the trauma of his previous life in one incident "It wasn't until I discovered Islam that I realized what taqwa meant," he says. The fear of God. "I realized I was accountable for every thought, action, and speech" (Aslam, 2008, p. 189). Marcus finds solace in Islam, which is an unfamiliar faith to him, because it gives him a sense of responsibility and an outline for understanding his traumatic experiences.

However, the novel also portrays how Islamic beliefs, particularly in a postcolonial context, can deepen pain. For example, when Lara, a Russian woman who has traveled to Afghanistan to search her brother's tomb, is apprehended by the Taliban, she is subjected to a sort of torture known as Islamic justice and sharia law. "What was most difficult to bear was the knowledge that the men who had done this to her claimed to be religious," she says of the situation's hypocrisy. And the terrifying conclusion that their faith did not mean what she had been taught" (Aslam, 2008, p. 278).

The story explores how political Islamic doctrines and practices may both intensify and relieve suffering through the characters of Marcus and Lara, among others. In addition, the story highlights the complexities of politicized Islamic rituals in a postcolonial environment and challenges simplistic Western views of the faith. As such, *The Wasted Vigil* provides a complex and perceptive depiction of the influence of corrupted Islamic doctrines on the trauma experiences of its characters. The characters exhibit religion-based reasons for crimes, violence, and enmity among many members of society, including armed and civilian citizens, within the Muslim community and other ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Remnants of War in Post-9/11 Afghanistan

In *The Wasted Vigil*, Aslam investigates the long-term legacy of conflict on post-9/11 Afghanistan, focusing on how the remnants of war continue to alter the country's landscape and people. Aslam depicts the physical and psychological toll of war on both the individual and the collective through the figure of Marcus, a British ex-soldier who has returned to Afghanistan in search of his brother. According to Marcus, "there are places in the world where violence is not a random occurrence, but the logical consequence of history" (Aslam, 2008, p. 7).

The novel outlines the devastation caused by decades of conflict, including the wreckage of homes and the vandalism of cultural places, in dramatic detail. Aslam's descriptions of Kabul's bombed-out buildings and shattered streets provide a picture of a city torn apart by conflict but persevering. The characters are frequently physically and emotionally wounded by the violence. Lara, an American journalist kidnapped and kept captive by the Taliban, for example, characterizes her experiences as leaving her "no longer whole, but in pieces" (Aslam, 2008, p. 93).

At the same time, the narrative emphasizes the Afghan people's fortitude in the face of suffering. As the character Abdullah observes, "We are a people who live among ruins, and yet we will rebuild, and we will take what is destroyed and make it new" (Aslam, 2008, p. 203). Aslam suggests that, even in the aftermath of conflict, there is still hope for Afghanistan through such moments of resilience. Therefore, the story depicts the long-term effects of war on post-9/11 Afghanistan with empathy and urgency. Aslam portrays a complex portrait of a country grappling with the aftereffects of war through his vivid descriptions of the physical and psychological wounds of war, as well as moments of resilience and optimism.

Post-9/11 Afghanistan is a country dealing with the aftereffects of war, and Aslam's work depicts the impact of this ongoing struggle on the individuals' trauma experiences in a beautifully researched manner. Aslam adds, "the violence of history remains alive within the survivors" (Aslam, 2008, p. 13), underlining the pervasiveness of trauma in a post-conflict community. The novel also underlines how actual war artifacts, such as landmines and bombed-out buildings, serve as constant reminders of the nation's bloodshed. These battle relics have a significant impact on the trauma experiences of the protagonists. Lara, a Russian woman who flew to Afghanistan to find her brother, is haunted by recollections of a bomb exploding outside her Moscow window. In Afghanistan, she is met with a landscape torn by carnage, and the continual presence of landmines and unexploded bombs only increases to her unease and terror. Aslam (2008) writes, "every minute or so there was a small sound, a sharp, metallic snap as if something had been bitten through, and then the ping of metal against metal, a sound that made Lara flinch and hold her breath" Similarly, Casa, an Afghan detainee at Guantánamo Bay, remains afflicted by memories of torture and interrogation, and his physical wounds serve as a constant reminder of the injustices he has witnessed.

The novel depicts how the effects of war modify people's trauma sentiments through the representation of these characters. According to Aslam (2008), "everything was always sinking back into the past, into its causes and antecedents, and then into deep geological strata where the sediment of time is compacted into rock" (p. 19). The novel presents trauma as a continuous process in which the past continuously shapes the present and future. The story also emphasizes how crucial it is for civilization to advance in order to deal with and live with the effects of war. Casa is of the opinion that "we must not only not forget the past, but also not be held captive by it" (Aslam, 2008, p. 294). Violence and sadness' repercussions on people and society are examined in *The Wasted Vigil*. The story focuses on the lasting and wide-ranging repercussions of trauma as well as the necessity of facing the legacy of war in order to go on.

Critique of the Politics of War and Violence

War and violence are the subject of the political critique *The Wasted Vigil*. The story investigates how conflict has affected Afghans since 9/11. Aslam illustrates the arbitrary and destructive nature of war by showing how Afghan civilians' suffering, particularly that of women and children, is depicted. Marcus discovers this when he comes across a young child who has been hurt and rendered blind by a bomb blast. According to the author Aslam, "this was a place where one didn't have to be in the army to die in a violent death" (Aslam, 2008, p. 1). Aslam focuses on the terrible effects of war on defenseless civilians in this nation and others. Aslam's novel *The Wasted Vigil* is an irritating critique of political and military cruelty. The story investigates how civilians are impacted by the fighting in Afghanistan following 9/11. Aslam illustrates the suffering of Afghan citizens, notably that of women and children, in order to highlight the arbitrary and deadly nature of war brutality. When Marcus first sees the young girl who has been severely hurt and rendered blind by a bomb blast, this is evident. According to Aslam (2008), "this was a place where one didn't have to be in the army to die a violent death" (p. Aslam underlines the horrifying effects of war on helpless populations in this and other examples.

Aslam's incident provides as an example of how pain and loss may fuel cycles of violent conflict and a desire for retribution. By showing the horrific impacts of conflict on people and communities, *The Wasted Vigil* offers a critique of war and violence politics. Aslam encourages readers to evaluate the human cost of war as well as the cycle of violence that it perpetuates. The art serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of peace and the urgent need to break the cycle of bloodshed. The novel calls into question the common notion of a unified self in Western society, instead showing broken identities shaped by larger social, political, and historical circumstances. Aslam focuses on the impact of memory, trauma, and colonial legacies on the characters' experiences and identities within the context of political Islamic beliefs.

Aslam challenges Western ideas of self by situating his characters' fractured identities in a larger political and historical context. Aslam exposes people who struggle to reconcile their own convictions with their societal commitments. Marcus encounters David, a Muslim American who has moved to Afghanistan to join the Taliban. David admits that converting to Islam was driven by his desire to reject American culture and politics. "Islam is the alternative," David explains to Marcus. It is the only thing capable of freeing the world from the hold of America" (Aslam, 2008, p. 72).

Aslam examines the difficulties of identifying in a postcolonial, post-9/11 world where political and religious values are usually entwined. Furthermore, Aslam presents his characters' fractured identities as a direct result of colonialism and imperialism's legacy. Marcus says of his personal relationship with Afghanistan, "I am, as far as this country is concerned, still the invader." The aggressor is still present. It doesn't matter that I arrived after the conflict. It doesn't matter that I'm attempting to help" (Aslam, 2008, p. 19).

Through Marcus' story, Aslam emphasizes the continued impact of colonialism and imperialism on modern postcolonial countries, as well as the ways in which these legacies shape individual and social identities. As a result, "*The Wasted Vigil*" provides a complicated and nuanced exploration of how historical and political forces affect personal identity. Aslam challenges readers to reconsider their own concepts of identity and to consider how wider social, political, and historical influences impact our self-conception and outlook in the world by depicting its characters' fractured identities in connection to Islam and postcolonialism.

The work reveals how trauma affects the characters' identities, especially as they navigate the complicated politics of Islamic teachings and extremist ideologies in a postcolonial setting. The characters' past experiences with violence, brutality, and loss have left them divided and broken. They struggle with themes of identity, belonging, and faith as they try to make sense of their experiences. Many of the characters' physical and psychological wounds reflect the impact of trauma. The young girl who was blinded and deformed by a bomb blast, for example, symbolizes the sad toll of war on innocent populations.

Other characters, such as Marcus and Lara, are possessed by past memories that have an impact on their current life. The novel offers a critique of the politics of war and violence through its representation of agony, underlining the devastating implications of fighting on both a human and political level. The novel repeatedly calls into question Western ideals of the unified self, fusing the protagonists' fractured identities against a backdrop of politicized Islamic terrorists. The individuals' social, cultural, and religious contexts influence their traumatic experiences, and their battles with identification and belonging are a more comprehensive picture of the challenges postcolonial society faces. The idea of "in-betweenness," as it is used in this book, is reminiscent of Homi Bhabha's theory, which describes how cultural identities are constantly negotiated and recreated in the context of colonial and postcolonial encounters. The characters' horrific encounters serve as a sobering reminder of the ongoing battle to balance colonialism's legacies with the realities of contemporary postcolonial regimes.

Conclusion

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil* offers a potent political and cultural study of the politics of war and violence. The dispute, which has significant Muslim involvement and catastrophic emotional and political ramifications, is at the center of the story. Aslam challenges readers to consider the frightening scenarios in which Muslims are portrayed as oppressors and victims, as well as the negative effects of war and the deadly cycle of violence it encourages on people's lives. The novel also looks at how trauma and identity are related, as well as how political Islamic ideas and practices affect trauma patients. The book aims to bring the protagonists' dispersed identities back together while simultaneously challenging Western notions of the unitary self. identity in light of the political and cultural climate following 9/11. *The Wasted Vigil* is a leading example of postcolonial literature and offers a solid platform for more research. Future studies could look at how the book relates to Homi Bhabha's idea of "the third space" and how it serves as a setting for character development and negotiation. Take a look at how the book portrays the complicated alliance between the West and the Middle East, especially in the years following 9/11. Research on how trauma is portrayed in the book and how it impacts the characters, particularly when they encounter conflict and violence, may also be done. *The Wasted Vigil* then discusses trauma, identity, and the long-term effects of the bloodshed that occurred in Afghanistan following

9/11. Readers are prompted to reconsider their opinions on warfare and the human cost of war by the book's stinging indictment of brutality and violence. In this way, it serves as both a significant contribution to the area of postcolonial studies and a tribute to the ability of literature to elicit thought and promote understanding.

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