

Reality and Identity in Flux: Multicultural Simulacra in Nadeem Aslam's the Wasted Vigil

Ayesha Perveen

Assistant Professor, Virtual University of Pakistan

Corresponding author's email: ayesha@vu.edu.pk

Abstract

The paper evaluates Nadeem Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil* as a deconstruction of some postmodern discourses, in its effort towards fabricating some sort of multicultural society by displacing it from the West to East. However, nationality is closely related to identity, and identities should not be assimilated. Applying Kwame Anthony Appiah's ideas of multiculturalism as a mirage and the need for a cosmopolitan society, the paper focuses how this sort of society in *The Wasted Vigil* turns out to be a mirage in spite of challenging previously dominant discourses and an attempt to create a new discourse. However, instead of being successful, the newly emerging identities in his novel seem to be in flux as the multicultural society remains a co-habitation only, instead of a peaceful co-existence that has the potential to celebrate differences. Scintillating against each other, the differences between different nationalities are more highlighted as a heterogeneous juxtaposition within the paradigm of the novel. The discourse seems to be another postmodern simulacrum instead of establishing some reliable version of reality and identities.

Keywords: Multicultural, nationality, Co-habitation, Heterogeneous, Identity, Cosmopolitanism

1. Introduction

“....two sets of people oceans apart can dream up similar sacred myths” (Aslam)

Postmodern theory emerged as a reaction to some of the perceived limitations of the modern era. Postmodern theorists became skeptical about any truth or reality as center of existence. They instead questioned and challenged the different facets of reality and truth as perceived, produced and sustained by human beings. There is no absolute truth rather discourses presenting polyphonic perspectives. Postmodernists believe that knowledge is plural, contextual and historically produced through multiple discourses (Hutcheon, 2003). Any discourses whether spoken or written need to be analyzed for their hidden agenda and, challenged if required. Aslam in his novel *The Wasted Vigil* takes up this uphill task of deconstructing some postmodern discourses by creating a multicultural society with all its problems and assumed positivities. However, this turns out to be an anomalous task as he challenges some preexisting discourses with his discourse – his vision or interpretation of some facet of reality and identity in flux.

Increasing immigration from developing countries to the developed countries in postmodern era resulted in multiculturalism. This resulted in destabilization of identities and the collision of cultures as well as discourses. Ideally a multicultural society is characterized by cultural pluralism, celebrates differences in race, culture and religion as opposed to the processes of assimilation or acculturation that force the immigrants to become integrated in the host society’s culture as they are in power and their culture becomes dominant. However, these ideals failed to be achieved in reality. Therefore, multiculturalism as an ideal has been rejected by many. (Taylor, 1994)

According to Kwame Antony Appiah, the problems arising out of multiculturalism are not culture based rather identity based (Appiah, 1997). One can form one’s identity based on culture, geography, sex and religion. When that identity is challenged and made to assimilate, problems begin. The state should treat all different individualities with equal respect. Appiah warns against teaching “correct” behavior to people whose difference—whether sexual, racial or national—has been constituted as part of their identity, since to do so would suggest the possibility of authentic and inauthentic sermons resulting in the problems from mild differences to wars. Aslam’s novel is an attempt at this sort of multicultural society. The uniqueness about this society is that immigrants are Westerners and the host society is an Eastern one.

Jean Baudrillard, a postmodern French social theorist, in his essay “Simulacra and Simulation”, traces the problem of postmodern culture in our societies on being too reliant on models and maps ((Baudrillard, 1994). This results in a loss of contact with reality so much so that borders and maps seem to precede any other reality. The world however, was not initiated with any borders. Therefore, walls are man-made and they keep on mending walls. The postmodern reality itself has begun to imitate the manmade models of divisions and barriers, which now precede and determine the real world. *The Wasted Vigil* is a failed attempt at breaking borders and liminalities and also rejecting simulacra in favour of individuality.

In his book *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), French social theorist, Michel Foucault, maintains that social processes legitimize discourses through power. These legitimized discourses are wrongly considered to be truths based on their powerful propagandist representation. Aslam challenges such discourses in his novel. He brings different nationalities in collision. He also presents a different facet of Taliban by challenging the established discourses about them. However, his discourse does not seem to be the accurate representation. The paper aims to address following research questions:

1. What sort of multicultural society Nadeem Aslam fabricates in *The Wasted Vigil*?
2. Does he succeed in challenging existing discourses, borders or creates new binaries?

2. Literature Review

Nadeem Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil* seems to be an attempt at creating some sort of multicultural society by breaking borders and challenging discourses. However, it comes into direct contrast to Kwame Anthony Appiah's desire for a cosmopolitan world in his book on *Cosmopolitanism: ethics in a world of strangers* (2006). Appiah favours this term over globalization and multiculturalism and sets out to "rescue" it from its "posture of superiority toward the putative provincial" (Appiah 2006: xi). In contrast to Brennan's materialist approach, Appiah relies on a philosophic trajectory of relativism and rationality to argue for a figuration of the cosmopolitan that is more attuned to difference and tries to understand that through the difference of value systems.

Both Appiah and Brennan reject the notion of the multicultural in their respective positions of partial cosmopolitanism and cosmo-theory (Brennan, 2001). Their interventions can be read as commentaries on the post 9/11 crisis. While Appiah marks a shift from a national trajectory toward a globalising vision, Brennan returns to the idea of internationalism as conceptualized by Gramsci; an internationalism that includes recognition of national sovereignty as a preferred model over an imperial cosmopolitanism that rides roughshod over civil society.

Many critics have touched this aspect of Aslam's attempt at creating a different society than the existing ones. For example, Muneza Shamsie in her article "Covert operations in contemporary Pakistani fiction" (2009) explores the American-Pakistan-Afghanistan encounter portrayed by Aslam. According to her, the novel reflects the region's history across thirty years by challenging the polarization of nations.

Oona Frawley in "Global civil war and post-9/11 discourse in *The Wasted Vigil*" (2013) contends that Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil* helps us reconsider the civil war politics in post 9/11 postmodern era. Colonial and extremism discourses complicate the notion of civil war. According to Frawley, Aslam's text presents both Afghanistan's centuries old legacies expressed in various discourses as well as represents an international symbolic civil war through language. The novel moves beyond the American representations of the rhetoric about extremism and challenges the American-centric discourses and media's normalization of such discourses.

Daniel O'Gorman in his article "'Planetarity' and Pakistani Post-9/11 Fiction" (2012) highlights the ambivalence associated with the concept of 'global'. The text makes the readers imagine the "hermeneutic or imaginative 'itinerary'" they partake in. O'Gorman challenges the authenticity of the text by referring to the fact that it does not represent a real image of Pakistan. However, he highlights Aslam's efforts to 'deterritorialize' any territories by bringing both metaphorical and literal borders into question.

Cristina Ivan and Marta-Teodora Boboc in their article "Heterotopias in the postmodern and transnational geography of identity: Eastern versus Western framings" declare *The Wasted Vigil* as 'heterotopia of emplacement'. Afghanistan is presented both as a place and space with its mythical house and garden. This space gets to acquire all the humanizing aspects, the outer dehumanized world no longer bears. They envision the house as a utopia full of love and compassion— a refuge from outside dystopia. Nationalities, religions and versions of historical narratives form multiple mirrors not only of the present but also of the past. The space of the novel according to them brings an end to the war of nationalities.

It remains a question whether the war of nationalities ends or not in *The Wasted Vigil*. Aslam's attempt is ambivalent as it may or may not seem very successful in breaking borders and can be interpreted as a postmodern simulacrum. Moreover the text is a new discourse which needs to be analyzed for its implications with reference to the research questions highlighted above.

3. Research Methodology

The research is a qualitative one and the novel *The Wasted Vigil* is the primary data. The framework to analyze the novel is in the light of various theories presented by theorists like K. A. Appiah and Jean Baudrillard. Articles on the relevant topic from internet and library have been utilized as secondary data.

4. Discussion

The Wasted Vigil is like a miniature painting or a bricolage because of its international cast and global implications. It encompasses cultural collision with brutal and torturous scenes within the aesthetic paradigm of the text. The setting is Afghanistan - a land excavated for her bloody yet questionable discourses over the decades. However, the Afghanistan presented in the novel is post 9/11 and in a state of global civil war (Frawley, 2013). The overall atmosphere is that of fear and terror (King, 2009). The novel challenges the binaries of boundaries and tries to reverse them. Aslam tries to bridge the geographical boundaries by making Afghanistan the setting for action and arranges a get together of various nationalities at Marcus' house in particular and in the land of Afghanistan in general. While posing the question 'can boundaries ever be broken?' the novel seems to provide historical and geographical breathing space to its characters (Flannery, 2013). Aslam seems to be attempting at something like 'a passage to Afghanistan' inspired by E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. The passage has of course changed in post 9/11 scenario in comparison to colonial times of E. M. Forster. Aslam presents a multicultural world with its positive aspects of peaceful coexistence as well as its dangers of most heterogeneous identities 'yoked together by violence'.

The four main nationalities and thus identities that Aslam makes cohabit are British with their long history of colonization, Americans who got rid of British colonization and began colonizing through hegemony other counties like Afghanistan, Russian who have a long history of rivalry with United States and Afghans in their state of deprivation in a shell-shocked post 9/11 world scenario. Cohabitation is a neutral term that neither refers to peaceful coexistence nor means assimilation of identities. Aslam does not assimilate the identities of his characters. Rather he highlights their identities whether geographical or political or religious by scintillating them against one another. Lara represents Russia and is attacked with a tire iron because she slept with her feet pointed toward Ka'aba. She has come to Afghanistan to find her long-lost brother, a soldier who turns out to be a rapist when she explores this fact over a course of events. Casa represents Afghanistan, who being an orphan is brought up by Taliban. He becomes a victim to Jihadi training camps as presented by Aslam. The host, Aslam chooses, is an Englishman named Marcus. Marcus represents Great Britain. Although, he is a Muslim convert, his hand is cut by Taliban. He loses his wife at the hands of Taliban and daughter to the Soviet invasion. David represents United States of America. He is a former spy. His agony is his disappeared brother during the fighting in Vietnam. All nationalities are not without agonies and still are at a civil war in this international society presented by Aslam.

Bringing them all together, Aslam highlights the discourses of borders and liminality and tries to break the borders in his novel. Borders can have multiple interpretations. Seen on maps they can be simple lines facilitating the viewer with demarcations. However, when the question of identity comes to fore, the same lines determine, break and reassemble identities (Donnan & Haller, 2000). This raises another problem: will crossing a border transform one's own identity, a sense of self, an owning of the unfamiliar by leaving the familiar for example the predicament of the diaspora like Aslam. Crossing borders can play its role in forming or deforming one's identity. Aslam perhaps does not intend to break the borderlines of the maps/mind maps and identities. He, however, brings together Russians, Americans, Britons and Afghans in a sort of multicultural struggle that many Western societies have faced. Now, the multicultural collision is shifted to the East. He makes them stay in one house, under one roof. He adds human compassion to their characters beyond nationalities and identities. Simultaneously, he maintains the extraneous dangers in the name of Taliban who commit various cruelties. Lara the Russian got beaten for lying with her legs towards Ka'aba. Lara may have been poisoned being a Russian. She is in search of her lost soldier brother who, she gets to know, is a rapist. Absolute goodness is not attached to any nationality: Taliban can be brutal, Americans can be killers, Russians can be rapist:

There had been reports of soviet soldiers landing their helicopters to abduct a girl and flying away with her, parents or lovers following the trail of her clothing across the landscape and finally coming across her naked bone punctured body, where she had been thrown out of the helicopter after the men had been sated. (Aslam, 17)

"Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely," Orwell (1945) is so much resonant, so is Foucauldian critique of power discourses. Corruption is not limited to any nationality or identity, it comes out of absolute power and history asserts this fact. Aslam, however, seems to be a humanist or a cosmopolitan, going beyond geographies and religions, celebrating human nature.

Liminality challenges identity rooted in binaries of nations, ethnicity, race, sexuality and gender. Aslam's characters are facing all such challenges. Crossing puts them simultaneously among several states of existence, experiencing insolubility and the vicissitudes of permeation and borders. Exactly as in a liminal period, all kind of social hierarchies in Afghanistan have been reversed and time and again dissolved. The continuity of traditions becomes uncertain and future outcomes are thrown into doubt. No discourse is real. The dissolution of order in Afghanistan during post 9/11 liminality has created a fluid and malleable situation that politically or socially does not seem to be creating new stable orders.

The mountain looms above the house. On those quartz and feldspar heights at the end of 2001, American soldiers had ceremonially buried a piece of debris taken from the ruins of the World Trade Center, after the terrorists up there had either been slaughtered or been made to flee. Before these soldiers flew out to attack Afghanistan, the US secretary of defense told them they had been 'commissioned by history.' (Aslam, 35)

Aslam is decoding the established world of simulacra in search of a simulation in the words of Baudrillard. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory – procession of simulacra---that engenders the territory. (Baudrillard, 1)

In "Simulacra and Simulation" Baudrillard poses the question: what would become of a world where access to reality is denied (Baudrillard, 1994). Simulations overcome our real life, creating a hyperreality which is just a sample. The original of such a sample cannot be traced because the difference between reality and representation cannot be judged by common man. Thus, any culture becomes a symbolic trade of signifiers, no image represents anything real. In the chapter "Precession of Simulacra", Baudrillard describes three orders of simulacra. The first order is the one in which image does represent reality, for example, a map represents a territory like Afghanistan. The second order is the one in which simulacra blur the distinction between reality and representation, for example, the Taliban practices blur the image of Islam. The third order of simulacra is the one in which reality is replaced by simulation, for example, Aslam's text. Reality becomes hyperreality, a hyperreality more resonant than reality. This hyperreality is symbolically conveyed when Lara uses a mirror to see the titles of the books that are nailed to the roof in Marcus' house:

...she placed mirrors on the floor to look at the books overhead, though not all of them had been nailed with the titles facing out, and any number of them were in languages she did not possess. (Aslam, 11)

It is difficult to reach reality as there are many barriers. The real image may not be available due to centuries of masking and unmasking. The only reality available may be a mirror image only. Even language as a representation of nationality and hence identity plays a barrier in deconstructing the popular discourses of reality to reach the really real.

Aslam presents Taliban as a simulacrum of Islam, one representation, according to him, far away from reality. "The original thought was heresy to Taliban and they would have burned the books" The territorial identities and geographic divisions become other simulacra. It is the ideological discourses that keep human beings away from each other either in the name of geography, or nationality or gender and above all religion. Therefore, Aslam blurs the boundaries of religion as well. Marcus gets converted to Islam, marries an Afghani lady and settles there for good.

In Usha they know Marcus Caldwell by his Muslim name. He believes in no god but had converted to Islam to marry Qatrina, to silence any objection. Like him she would have been satisfied with a non-religious ceremony, indifferent to the idea of supreme being and their holy messengers, but she had agreed on condition that a woman perform the rites. 'We have to help change things,' she said. 'Nowhere does the Koran state that only men may conduct the wedding.'" (Aslam, 39)

Aslam's multicultural society seems to be a secular one but the question arises if secularism does not assimilate then his multinational inhabitants coexist or get assimilated?

Marcus and Qatrina's daughter Zameen falls in love with an American, David and runs away with him. The multicultural world makes people fall in love irrespective of their nationalities. Love is a boundary-crosser. Aslam's representation of Islamic religion in favour of a multicultural society is itself an example of religious assimilation. Marcus' Afghani wife living with him without proper marriage rites can be objectionable for any sect representing Islam. He justifies a living relationship in Maps for Lost Lovers as well. The assimilation somehow takes place by border crossings. As a diaspora Aslam may have accepted some of the western practices as more human and practical but here he deviates from his own religion. So challenges one of the major limits propagated by religion and presents alternatives as human and natural.

In his book *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), French social theorist, Michel Foucault, maintains that social processes legitimize discourses through power. These legitimized discourses are wrongly considered to be truths based on their powerful propagandist representation. The image of Taliban as presented by Aslam can be very much analyzed in this viewpoint. Taliban consider themselves/or the Western discourse presents them as the true representatives of Islam. However, their brutality stands in direct contrast to the tenets of religion. They beat Lara when she is sleeping with her legs towards Ka'aba clad in an Afghani woman's dress. Here Aslam highlights Taliban treatment towards women but with more focus on their religious extremism. They try to implement their version of religion with force whereas religions cannot be spread by coercion and Islamic viewpoint is very clear in this regard. Taliban also force Qatrina to cut Marcus' hand. There is no room for this sort of brutality in the teachings of Islam. This can also raise many concerns. If Taliban are that anti-feminist would they make a woman cut the hand, rather they would directly kill the person. Taliban are a fear all around and Aslam does not decode this representation. He describes Qatrina's being stoned to death:

....Qatrina was put to death by the Taliban. A public spectacle after the Friday prayers, the stoning of a sixty-year-old adultress. A rain of bricks and rocks, her punishment for living in sin, the thirty nine year marriage to Marcus void in the eyes of Taliban because the ceremony had been conducted by a female. A microphone had been placed close to her for her screams to be heard clearly by everyone. (Aslam, 38)

He takes up ages old controversy of the place of art in Islam. The art painted on the walls of the rooms of the house represents human senses. Out of fear of Taliban Marcus covers it with mud. What sort of art is this? "Allah created through the spoken word" is inscribed above the door that led to the interior of second room in his house. The belief is all apparent even on the walls:

Out of fear of Taliban, all depictions of living things had been smeared with mud by Marcus. Even an ant on a pebble has been daubed. It was as though all life had been returned to dust. (Aslam, 13)

As an answer to this school of thought, Aslam refers to the great Muslim cultural heritage by referring to Kamal ud din Behzad (1450-1535), the great Muslim Persian painter. Orhan Pamuk, the Nobel Prize winner Turkish novelist also refers to Behzad as one of the greatest Persian miniaturist in his novel *My Name is Red*. Referring to the owner, who Marcus bought the house from, Aslam says:

The house was built by an old master calligrapher and painter in the last years of nineteenth century. He belonged to what was almost the final generation of Muslim artists to be trained in the style of the incomparable Bihzad. (Aslam, 12)

Art for Aslam is a direct foil to the blood ridden land and blood thirsty people he presents in his multicultural mirage. Art in the form of literature, music, paintings and sculpture as a representation of love and beauty as inspired by nature, is the only redeeming factor in this shell-shocked world. Art diminishes all boundaries.

The sense of loss prevails throughout the novel through a reassertion of the identity through boundaries. Aslam conveys it in a very moving manner through the geography of Afghanistan. He presents the land as mythopoeia of mountains, caves and barren plains.

....this land that Alexander the Great had passed through his unicorn, an area of fabled orchards and thick mulberry forests, of pomegranates that appear in the border decorations of Persian manuscripts written one thousand years ago. (Aslam, 6)

He asserts the beauty of a land - beauty encompassed as in a fairy land or a myth, like Baudrillard's pre-modern period where nature and artifice could be separated when the image was still a place marker of the real.

This country has always been a hub of things moving from one point of the compass to another, religion and myth, works of art, caravans of bundled Chinese silk flowing past camels loaded with glass from ancient Rome or pearls from gulf. The ogre whose activities created one of Afghanistan's deserts was slain by Aristotle. (Aslam, 9)

The geographic identity is directly related to historical identity (Flannery, 2013) which leads to an excavation of some version of reality. Even in ancient time periods, Afghanistan had been a hub of economic and cultural activity with different nationalities visiting and gathering at the place. However, the maps were not more real than the reality itself. The Industrial Revolution, according to Baudrillard, because of mass production, brought a wide distinction between image and representation and resulted in proliferation of copies. This age started misrepresenting reality and masking it by imitating it so well that it was easily replaced by imitations appearing real. The land of Afghanistan was played havoc with by geo-political and economic interests of the power groups of the world. Afghanistan has witnessed a long period of colonization and hegemony.

The entire world it seemed had fought in this country, had made mistakes in this country, but mistakes had consequences and he didn't know who to blame for those consequences. Afghanistan itself, Russia, the United States, Britain, Arabia, Pakistan? (Aslam, 39)

The postmodern era is replete with simulacra, a representation that precedes and determines the real. Aslam captures this time period where no reality seems reality except the power group discourses presented to the world via media culture and multinational capitalism through the use of language and ideology.

Aslam retraces the history of Afghanistan for his critical discourse. "History is our lost referential, that is to say our myth" (Baudrillard, 1994). The novel also seems to be a mythical representation. The history when looked from today's standpoint is bloody and traumatic. It seems a shell shocked world with signs of blasts in human organs as amputees and broken houses due to land mines as well as firings. The novel combines antithetical things, beauty and beasts, butterflies and bombs, gems and guns, flowers and fury, poetry and pain, paintings and plight, and feelings and fright.

Along with the house of Marcus, the abandoned perfume factory is worth noticing. Aslam's synesthesia does not ignore the sense of smell ranging from natural flowers to gunpowder to manmade perfumes. He perhaps is of the view that manmade can be a replacement if there is no actual beauty left. The factory is also important for the remnants of Buddha a reminiscence of the country's past and Aslam's symbol of peace. If he is breaking the boundaries of religion, why is he relying on other religion? Aslam highlights that in all history peaceful non war years have been only 29. The history has left its reminiscences in wounding forms only. As a result Afghanistan still bleeds because of its years old infected wounds.

Himself a diaspora, a Pakistani who settled in England in 1966 for good "a Pakistani-British" perhaps Aslam can well define the blurred boundaries in the postmodern era. As a result, he codes, decodes and uncodes maps of the world over ages till the famous or rather notorious 9/11 trying to allude how the demarcation were done, redone and undone.

Aslam's drawing of a postmodern reality and identity in flux is itself celebrating parts not equal to sum total. He not only tries to bring boundaries together but also tries to bring religions together—all discourses of difference engaged in one geography where the irony of fate make them rewrite history. Simultaneously, the book raises the question whether Taliban stand for Islam or Islamic ideas as they commit all their brutalities in the name of Islam. To answer such questions Aslam creates another blurred vision closer to human practices and not to written scriptures in

introducing characters like Duriya who is highly religious yet against all such practices and Marcus, Katrina and Zameen who are not very particular about religion.

Marcus also considers the West responsible for ruining the beauty of Afghanistan. Is it a clash of civilizations: orient vs. occident or is this unfortunate collision which is self-reflexive? Thus the novel is looking at established discourses from a critical perspective for example the discourse of Taliban as representative of Islam has been clearly challenged and decoded by his version of Islamic religion. However, the question remains whether there is any heterosis or hybridity in Aslam's critique. After drawing binary oppositions, does he look for any binary unification? Who is Aslam: a Pakistani, a British, A Pakistani-British, A Muslim or A British-Muslim? For the west he may be an orientalist. For some Muslims he may be a traitor or Western diaspora. He simply changes old positions with new ones to explore multi-faceted reality. Is he really concerned with representation or he thinks that not only identity is in flux rather the notion of identity is itself a flux. The multicultural society he creates seems some sort of simulacrum of a successful co-existence or Appiah's proposes cosmopolitan society. Aslam does not side with any discourse. For him aesthetic pieces are not meant to answer questions. "Writers have always got into trouble with people who think they know the answers....there's no message in my books. My books are a way of exploring my own life and the working of my own consciousness... there is no conscious effort to be universal or relevant (Nadeem Aslam on Maps for Lost Lovers)." The only answer Aslam has to every question is beauty, the synesthesia of his novel.

5. Conclusion

In one of his interviews, Nadeem Aslam maintains that he represents his discourse from an international point of view. The only protagonist in the novel is "the House" as it stands for a human being. As a result the protagonist of Aslam's novel and the answer to all simulacra discourses is the grandeur of a human being fraught with senses. The house's five rooms stand for five senses, sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. The top most room stands for the synesthesia of all these senses. Senses that observed bombs, heard blasts, smelled blood, touched dead bodies and tasted poison still stand for love the most elevated human passion—love for each other, love for humanity, irrespective of boundaries- nationalities, geographies, histories, and gender. Love is the only remedy to a world fraught with simulacra of deception leading to wars and hatred. Love is the only warrior that cannot be defeated. When the foundation of Marcus' perfume factory is dug out, the head of a giant Buddha is found, too heavy to move. When Taliban try to destroy it by firing at it, it bleeds gold. They are afraid and run away. A country's past cannot be abolished. People's beliefs cannot be distorted by force that easily. Human senses assert more than anything. Any temporary fascism can become a source of nailing books but they will rain again and again. Original thought is not heresy. Aslam wants everyone on the planet to think, to critically analyze the discourses that have nailed the reality so that it cannot be accessed. Although the society of *The Wasted Vigil* is a simulacrum of multiculturalism, the utopia Aslam looks for is his artistic endeavor. However, the reality and identities remain in flux in this imaginative creation.

References

- Appiah, K. A. (1991). Is the post-in postmodernism the post-in postcolonial?. *Critical Inquiry*, 336-357.
- Appiah, K. A. (1998). Cosmopolitan patriots. *Cultural Politics*, 14, 91-116.
- Appiah, K. A. (1997). The multiculturalist misunderstanding. *The New York Review of Books*, 44(15), 30-35.
- Appiah, K. A. (1994). Identity, authenticity, survival: Multicultural societies and social reproduction. *Multiculturalism: Examining the politics of recognition*, 150, 14.
- Aslam, N. (2009). *The wasted vigil*. Random House LLC.
- Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*. University of Michigan Press.
- Bhat, M. A. (2014). Counter-Hegemonic Discourse in *The Wasted Vigil*. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 2(7).

- Brennan, T. (2001). Cosmo-theory. *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 100(3), 659-691.
- Donnan, H., & Haller, D. (2000). Liminal no More. *Ethnologia Europaea*, 30(2), 7-22.
- Flannery, E. (2013). Internationalizing 9/11: Hope And Redemption In Nadeem Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil* (2008) And Colum Mccann's *Let The Great World Spin* (2009). *English*, eft010.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archeology of knowledge*, trans. AM Sheridan Smith. London: Tavistock.
- Frawley, O. (2013). Global civil war and post-9/11 discourse in *The Wasted Vigil*. *Textual Practice*, 27(3), 439-457.
- Haber, H. F. (1994). *Beyond Postmodern Politics: Lyotard, Rorty, Foucault*. Psychology Press.
- Howitt, R. (2001). Frontiers, borders, edges: liminal challenges to the hegemony of exclusion. *Australian Geographical Studies*, 39(2), 233-245.
- Hutcheon, L. (2003). *A poetics of postmodernism: history, theory, fiction*. Routledge.
- Hutcheon, L. (2003). *The politics of postmodernism*. Routledge.
- Ivan, C., & Boboc, M. T. Heterotopias in the postmodern and transnational geography of identity. Eastern versus Western framings.
- King, B. (2009). Muslim modernities.
- Lyotard, J. F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* (Vol. 10). U of Minnesota Press.
- Lyotard, J. F., & Demand, A. (1993). 1□ Answering the Question, What Is Postmodernism?. *Postmodernism: A reader*, 38.
- Lyotard, J. F. (1999). *Postmodern fables*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Lyotard, J. F. (1999). The postmodern condition. *Modernity: Critical Concepts*, 4, 161-177.
- Natoli, J., & Hutcheon, L. (Eds.). (1993). *A postmodern reader*. SUNY Press.
- O'Gorman, D. (2012). 'Planetarity'and Pakistani Post-9/11 Fiction.
- Shamsie, M. (2009). Covert operations in contemporary Pakistani fiction. *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*, 31(2), 15.
- Taylor, C. (1994). *Multiculturalism: Examining the politics of recognition*. Princeton University Press, 41 William St., Princeton, NJ 08540.