



Deconstructing Misinterpretations: Exploring Islam and Eurocentrism in Nadeem Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil*

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores the depiction and interpretation of Islam in Nadeem Aslam's work *The Wasted Vigil* by, focusing on the notions of Said (1978) and Amin (1989) whose significant insights into the ideas of Othering, Orientalism, and Eurocentrism inform the analysis of the narrative. As a part of textual analysis, the paper uses thematic analysis as general method of research to explore the mechanisms in which Aslam's narrative construction is used to distort the historical events, Islamic philosophy, and practices. The analysis shows that Aslam's portrayal of Islam operates from a Eurocentric perspective, exoticizing the Islamic faith and perpetuating stereotypes that undermine its genuine nature. Additionally, the study emphasizes how Aslam's portrayal of Islam and his narrative decisions depart from authentic Islamic texts, including the Quran and Hadith, sustaining a narrative that portrays Islam as fundamentally superstitious and archaic religion. The results show that these distortions contribute to a cultural gulf that hinders a positive communication and comprehension between Western culture and Islamic dogma by reinforcing Eurocentric stereotypes.



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INTRODUCTION

Post-9/11 fiction has been the focus of many researchers, particularly the fiction where narratives frequently cross delicate socio-political representation of Islam. In this sense, *The Wasted Vigil* (2008) by Nadeem Aslam is a powerful and an appropriate case study that provides a

comprehensive examination of the portrayal of Islam against the tragic background of war-stricken Afghanistan. This paper provides a thorough analysis with the goal of exposing the layers of misinterpretations and misjudgments about Islam that are prevalent in Aslam's narrative, exploring the elements of Eurocentrism that shape these depictions. In light of this, the paper aims to enhance our understanding of Islam's genuine ideology and the manner in which it has been misrepresented in *The Wasted Vigil*. This study seeks to unearth the finer points of misunderstanding by closely examining narrative decisions, characterizations, and recurrent themes. This will help to illuminate the ways in which Aslam's narrative decisions and thematic choices reinforce Eurocentric prejudices.

The Wasted Vigil received a great deal of attention soon after its first release: It was nominated for several significant international awards, and won several of them. It was on the 2008 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award shortlist, which recognizes outstanding novels from throughout the globe. Furthermore, the book was longlisted for 2009's major literary awards, including the Warwick Prize for Writing and the Man Booker Prize. . “*The Wasted Vigil* dramatizes contemporary events post-9/11, but it removes away from many of the previous novels concerned with 9/11” (Falmerny, 2002, p. 297). The work has been subjected to critical evaluation due to its theological concerns, specifically its perspective on Islam and its followers. Critics have heaped praise on Aslam for his ability to delve deeply into the complexity of individual relationships and for his perceptive understanding of the political and cultural contexts of Afghanistan. Many have commended *The Wasted Vigil* for its powerful examination of how war affects both individuals and society as a whole. “*The Wasted Vigil* offers the opportunity to consider the ways in which notions of civil war in the twenty-first century are complicated both by legacies of colonialisms and by contemporary discourse on political extremism” (Frawley, 2013, p. 440).

Nadeem Aslam's third book, *The Wasted Vigil*, narrates the story of thirty years in modern-day Afghanistan via the lives of a number of individuals who meet at a lake house near the Tora Bora caves, “one mile along the edge of the lake is the village that takes its name from the lake. Usha. Teardrop” (p. 9), where Osama bin Laden managed to escape US soldiers. Various people find themselves entangled in a variety of personal narratives, although these narratives are interconnected. Through the narratives of these characters, Aslam explicitly showcases his stance towards Islam.

Statement of the Problem

After the tragic event of 9/11, Islam and its followers have been the subject of many literary representations. However, this depiction of Islam is far away from the real essence of Islam, resultantly, it promotes Islamophobia all across the globe. Islam has been portrayed as an archaic and outdated religion which has no practical application in the modern world. This paper deals with such misinterpretation of Islam by Nadeem Aslam in his work *The Wasted Vigil*. This paper, exclusively, seeks to explore the ways in which Aslam's work is influenced by the Eurocentric biases and Orientalist perspectives, which lead to the eroticization of Islam. This eroticization of Islam in the literary representations on part of a Muslim writer may further distort the image of Islam and Muslim and accentuate the stereotypes about Islam which are prevalent in the West. The study seeks to reinforce that Islam should be interpreted through its authentic sources i.e. Quran and Hadith rather than through its distorted portrayal in the literary texts.

Research Questions

In order to address this problem, this paper attempts to explore the following questions in the narrative of *The Wasted Vigil*:

1. How does Aslam portray Islam in *The Wasted Vigil* and associate it with terrorism?
2. How does the portrayal of Islam in *The Wasted Vigil* reflect and reinforce Eurocentric biases?

Significance of the Study

The study has great significance in the current global political scenario in which religious ideologies have greatly influenced the international establishment. In this context, this study contributes to the enormous discourse dealing with Islam in literature. The critical analysis of the depiction of Islam in *The Wasted Vigil* unearths the ways in which Islamic faith and its jurisprudence have been distorted and misinterpreted by Aslam which ultimately accentuates the Eurocentric perspectives about Islam. This study not only sheds light on the mechanisms of these misinterpretations but it also provides the insight into how these misinterpretations influence the global image of Islam and Muslims. Ultimately, the findings of this study contribute to the deeper understanding of Islam and its representation in literature, prompting the researchers to critically engage with such narratives for the better understanding of narratives surrounding Islam and Muslims.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Said (1997) thinks that a small percentage of Muslims is portrayed as Islam's representatives in literary works. This idea of Said suggests that it is crucial to note in *The Wasted Vigil* that a tiny group (the Taliban) who identify themselves as Muslims have been represented as attempting to denigrate all of Islam's teachings. Throughout the story, Aslam has generalized the interpretation of Islam executed by the Taliban which according to Said (1997) is "misinterpretation of the Taliban in the context of Afghanistan" (p. 82).). It proves the argument quite valid that "The writer(s) knowingly or unknowingly adopt(s) the dominant perspective and become(s) an ally in the imperialist agenda" (Said, 1993).

Parveen (2015), evaluating *The Wasted Vigil*, argues "The main focus of Aslam seems to have a tilt of the Western colonial misrepresentative discourses about Islam as manifested in the practices of Taliban" (p. 2). According to Said (1978), the portrayal of Muslims as "others" reflects an antiquated European ideology that views Islam as the antithesis of Christianity and sought to establish and maintain control over Islamic cultures and non-European nations during the Imperialist era. Parveen (2015) evaluates that the narrator of *The Wasted Vigil* makes an effort to draw comparisons between Christian and Islamic rituals, beliefs, and cultural systems. So the author "Depicts the extremist and inhuman activities of Taliban in order to justify the ongoing carnage in the narrative" (p. 3). *The Wasted Vigil* has been evaluated by Ali & Asif (2020) using a fundamentally different framework. They have established a link between neoliberalism and the novel's portrayal of Islam and Islamic values. Biopolitics, which Foucault describes as a "art of government" (1979, p. 2) that functions in various ways and affirms its pertinent nature, is linked to neoliberalism. *The Wasted Vigil*, in their words, "responds to the biopolitical control of the Muslim Nation-States through the resilient nature of neoliberal ideology, constructed by capitalism" (p. 305).

Chambers (2011) provides an overview of the development of Pakistani fiction and draws comparisons with other novels written by Muslim writers. Pakistan's Muslim identity presents issues not only in the Middle East and Central Asia but also in Europe and beyond, even though analyses of Pakistani writers are usually conducted within the broader South Asian tendencies. This method brings together writers from Muslim countries so they can learn from each other, even while the idea of a universal *umma* is not overstated (since this might lead to the disregard of diversity and tensions between different Muslim groups). . "The shared religious heritage of South Asians, Arabs, and Africans is discussed, but not without considering their vast contextual differences" (Chambers, 2011, p. 122).

Karim (2018) observed *The Wasted Vigil* in the binaries of "us" and "them". According to him, *The Wasted Vigil* does a good job of expressing these binary choices. He examined the book from the perspectives of Islam, Feminism, and Secularism, the three most relevant fields. Karim concludes that *The Wasted Vigil's* political representation of Islam is flawed. The true nature of Islam is opposed to this political portrayal of it. The Muslims have been wrongly associated with the "Talibanization" movement, and Aslam has commoditized them irrespective of their geographical location. He further observes that the images and the knowledge about the Muslims and Islam which have been represented in *The Wasted Vigil* is an "ideological representation" of Muslims which runs counter against the "secular, liberal and democratic West" (Karim, 2018, p. 39). Karim (2018) goes on to say that Nadeem Aslam has appropriated secularism and Islam to fit in with the Western narrative surrounding this issue. Aslam has solidified long-held beliefs of "extremist" Islam and its connection to terrorism.

Abbasi (2021) evaluated *The Wasted Vigil* to see how Aslam represents the imperialist countries' narrative about Islam and Muslims. According to his research, the author has embraced the Western perspective on the War on Terror and has turned into an ambassador for the imperialist nations, promoting their ideology through his writing. The stereotype-based Western discourse regarding Muslims and Islam is reflected in *The Wasted Vigil*. e.g. "Supremacy of the Western culture, violation of fundamental human rights, oppression of women, superstitious East, white man's burden to civilize the brutes, Islamophobia and terrorism" (Abbasi, 2022, p. 71). On the other hand, Ahmed's (2021) study covers the portrayal of Islam in *The Wasted Vigil* as well as two other novels written by the same author. According to him, Aslam has made an effort to support the idea of the Islamic Golden Age, in which Baghdad was seen as the center of research, learning, and understanding, in contrast to native informers. Furthermore, Aslam supports the artistic output of the Islamic Golden Age. Ahmed believes that Aslam's books track the presences of Islam in the archives, after investigating the role of Islam in the enormous geographical environment shown in the novels. Thus, according to Ahmed (2021), Aslam makes an effort to open up conversation and close the divide between Islam and the secular West. Aslam also draws a comparison between the strength of the faith of modern Muslims and the profundity of the Islamic belief system of the Golden Era.

According to Nasir (2015), the hegemonic and patriarchal powers that tend to take advantage of women's oppression are clearly seen in *The Wasted Vigil*. Religion is one of the many instruments, these forces use to justify their control over women. For example, women are oppressed because of religious beliefs, honor killings, male authority, wearing veils, and numerous other ethnic conflicts. According to her, *The Wasted Vigil* depicts Afghanistan as a horrifying dystopia where women are constantly under observation and everyone is the adversary of everyone else. Afghani women are hated and despised targets of radical religious and political

forces, in addition to being pitiful objects in the hands of an absolute hegemonic dictatorship. According to her, Muslim women in *The Wasted Vigil* have been portrayed as unsightly representations of evil and wickedness. Additionally, she contends that *The Wasted Vigil* is a genuine document that exposes the misogyny of fundamentalists who view the murder of a woman as a sacred act in the name of Islam. *The Wasted Vigil* explores the excess of power against women in the name of Islam (Nasir, 2015).

Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Samir Amin's (1989) and Edward Said's (1978) fundamental works, whose theoretical insights shed light on the mechanisms of Eurocentrism and Orientalism that are common in non-native English-language writing, are key to the analytical framework of this study. As a critical lens, Amin's critique of Eurocentrism helps us analyze how Aslam's depiction of Islam might be a reflection of larger Western-centered narratives and ideologies. In the meantime, Said's investigation of Orientalist discourses reveals the delicate network of stereotypes and prejudices that frequently appear in representations of the East, including Islam, in Western literary traditions. Perceiving the world only from a Western or European perspective is known as Eurocentrism. The culture permeates every aspect of modern society. According to Amin (1989), "This dominant culture invented an eternal West, unique since the moment of its origin" (p. 165). Amin highlights that Eurocentrism is not only the sum of the discoveries of the Western educational institutions about non-European nations; rather, it is a psychological construct of a fictional Orient, constructed in opposition to the characteristics of the Occidental world. Said (1978) demonstrates how, as the West's influence increased, it started to evaluate other nations according to its own standards. That is exactly what Amin (1989) argues that "Europe granted itself the right to represent others—notably the Orient—and even to judge them" (p. 175). Hence, Amin (1989) argues "this construct is like the analogous Orientalist construct" (p. 166).

Amin (1978) argues that Eurocentrism is more than just a collection of prejudices and misperceptions; it is a general framework that shapes views and maintains an arbitrary system of power. Amin says "But if Eurocentrism does not have, strictly speaking, the status of a theory, neither is it simply the sum of the prejudices, errors, and blunders of Westerners with respect to other peoples" (p. 177). Based on the observations of Amin (1989) and Said (1978), which highlight the tendency in the West to exoticize Islam and portray it as an outdated and radical religion, this study uses a conceptual framework to examine how Islam is portrayed and how it is associated with extremism in Nadeem Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil*. The goal of this study is to clarify the ways in which the novel depicts Islam and the ways in which these depictions interact with larger discourses of Orientalism and Eurocentrism by grounding our analysis in these critical viewpoints.

Thematic analysis has been utilized as a general research method in the context of textual analysis in this qualitative study. According to Braun & Clarke (2012), thematic analysis is a straightforward, flexible, and popular method for examining qualitative data. The concept of "thematic analysis" was developed in order to explore beyond themes and thematic structures that are overtly apparent to more implicit, subliminal themes and thematic structures (Merton, 1975). It presents the concepts that are essential to understanding the phenomenon being studied. The most notable meaning clusters in the dataset should be highlighted at the end of a theme analysis. These forms contain symbolic, psychological, and affective components (Daly et al., 1997). It is noteworthy that the researchers used a deductive approach in this study in order to

conduct thematic analysis. Pandey (2019) claims that while using deductive approach, researchers approach data with a prepared and preconceived hypothesis and, using any accepted theory as support, look for reflections of their assumed themes in the chosen data. Thus, in our theme analysis of *The Wasted Vigil* by Nadeem Aslam, we have used a logical approach based on the ideas of Amin (1989) and Said (1978).

Data Analysis

Aslam does not only misrepresent Islam and Islamic beliefs; instead, he fully constructs them right from the start of the novel. It is clear from Aslam's formulation of Islamic beliefs that "Angels bent down towards the feet of humans, to ascertain from the odor whether these feet had ever walked towards mosque" (p. 4). Islamic belief does not support the idea that angels should be entrusted with smelling Muslims' feet to determine whether or not they have ever attended a mosque or feeling their tummies to determine whether or not they have fasted during the month of Ramadan. Aslam's ignorance and disregard for Islamic teachings is further illustrated in the following passage:

"In the room about the sense of touch, there was a likeness of Muhammad with his hands plunged in a jar. He was someone who would not shake hands with women, so order to make a pact he would put his hand in a vessel containing water and withdraw it, and then the woman would put her hand into the water (p. 11)."

This account exaggerates Prophet Muhammad's actions by saying he would make agreements with women by immersing his hands in a jug of water rather than shaking hands. It is important to keep in mind that Islamic teachings do not endorse this image. Such behavior has no basis in Islam and is presented in a way that distorts the true principles of the religion. This misperception of Islamic traditions feeds prejudices and creates a misleading sense of Islam in the minds of Western readers, making them feel odd or illogical. It perpetuates a narrative that portrays Islamic beliefs and practices as strange or incomprehensible, which adds to the Eurocentric perspective of Muslims and maintains perceptions of their "otherness".

Furthermore, there has been a ridiculous association made between Zameen's implicit love and the tenants of Islam. The text shows that at first, because she couldn't talk to her boyfriend, they corresponded with one another through books and letters. Aslam depicts this scene in the following way:

"In the beginning she was too timid to say anything to him and consoled herself with what Muhammad had said about those who died of secret love - they would be granted immediate admission to Paradise as martyrs (pp. 22-23)."

These words show a false view of Islam by honoring and treating as martyrs those who die of secret love. According to Islamic doctrine, becoming a martyr is a highly regarded and sacred position that is attained by acts of self-sacrifice in defense of the religion rather than by problems with interpersonal relationships or love relationships. It is critical to distinguish between literary interpretation and religious dogma. Islam's last prophet, Muhammad PBUH, made no mention of a specific position or recompense for people who die with implicit love.

Islam emphasizes religious belief, moral principles, and adherence to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. "They wanted to kill Zameen's lover too, because he

was always reading and a young man who spent that much time with books had to be Communist" (p. 23). A lack of understanding of communism and Islam is evident in this line. Islam is unrelated to the socialist political and economic doctrine. It is improper to combine or apply these two concepts in the same way. By misrepresenting the image of Islam and linking reading to communism, the phrase maintains a misleading impression of the religion. It disregards the rich intellectual legacy of Islamic history, which includes the contributions made over the centuries by Muslim scholars, writers, scientists, and philosophers. Islam encourages independent investigation, critical thinking, and the pursuit of knowledge across fields, in contrast to this Eurocentric perception of Islam.

The main character, Marcus, who converted to Islam, defies expectations and social norms by claiming he may marry any Muslim woman. It is Aslam who asserts that "Nowhere does the Koran state only men may conduct the wedding" (p. 33), portraying Qatrina as sharing Marcus's opinions. This representation absolutely distorts Islamic teachings and authentic laws about marriage, which suggests a great deal of responsibilities for both men and women in a marriage. Islamic marriage law proposes certain guidelines and prerequisites for what is considered a holy bond between a man and a woman. The Quran lays emphasis on the need of permission and mutual consent in marriage ties, while acknowledging the roles and responsibilities of both genders. When presenting Qatrina's point of view, Aslam does not acknowledge the entirety of Islamic jurisprudence and instead of doing so, he adopts a Eurocentric perspective that is antagonistic to authentic Islamic norms. This misunderstanding undermines the delicate understanding of marriage found in Islamic teachings. The statement "Qatrina was put to death by the Taliban" (p. 33) is another one that mentions Qatrina's execution by the Taliban, suggesting that her views on marriage did not align with their interpretation of Islamic law. It is critical to realize that extremist organizations and people do not always embody Islam or its teachings. It is important to distinguish between cultural practices, personal beliefs, and the core principles of Islam because there are numerous ways to understand and apply the religion's teachings.

"He said they used to give lessons in the Koran to djinn up here, a long time ago. They came to the mosque down there at first but their presence was too overwhelmingly for humans, a child or two fainting with awe. So this minaret was built for them to walk up to without being seen or felt by humans (p. 43)."

Aslam asserts that djinn received guidance in the Quran in a minaret, suggesting an irrational and mystical element attributed to Islamic traditions. On the other hand, neither Islam nor its adherents advocate for the construction of a tower dedicated to the djinn, their existence, or their study of the Quran. Aslam presents this viewpoint in a way that misrepresents Islam's teachings and reasoning through distortion and exaggeration. In the past, Islamic civilization has made significant strides in a variety of academic fields, such as mathematics, physics, medicine, and philosophy. Therefore, it is false and dishonest to describe Islam as an irrational faith or its followers as superstitious. Islam emphasizes comprehension and critical thinking, encourages intellectual growth, and supports the pursuit of knowledge.

"The religion of Islam as its core does not believe in the study of science, does not believe the world runs along the rational and periodical laws. Allah destroys the world each night and creates it again at dawn, anew reality that may or may not match the old one of yesterday, the Muslim

clerics demanding a ban even on weather forecasts since only He can decide such a thing according to his will (p. 122)."

The above quoted passage of *The Wasted Vigil* demonstrates Aslam's profound ignorance on the true nature of Islam. The paragraph dispels a myth that claims Islam is uninterested in reasoning and science. However, the teachings of the Holy Quran, which constantly emphasize the importance of investigation and discovery, are in directly opposite to this idea. Muslims are advised by Allah Almighty at the several occasions in the Quran to learn about the wonders of the universe. Furthermore, the Quran calls for believers to widen their ideas in order to discover new realities and Quran criticizes those who do not engage in critical thought. "Say, 'Go about in the land and look how He has originated the creation. Then Allah will create the subsequent creation. Surely Allah is powerful to do anything'" (Quran, 29:20). Aslam propagates a fabrication that prominent Islamic scholars and religious figures endorse these distorting opinions. Islam truly encompasses a vast range of readings and ideas, thus it would be false to compare the opinions of a small number of people with those of the entire religion. This kind of portrayal reveals the Eurocentric prejudice in Aslam's portrayal of Islam as an illogical faith cut off from science.

To justify Casa's intention to steal David's automobile in *The Wasted Vigil*, Aslam fabricates a historical incident from the viewpoint of Islam. Casa thinks, "He could present the car to Nabi Khan as a token of good will, convince him of the truth of what had transpired at the hospital" (p. 179). Aslam described how the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) wife, Ayesha (R.A.), disappeared from the Muslim caravan. Aslam's account of this incident demonstrates how Aslam misinterprets the fundamentals of Islam in addition to portraying Ayesha (R.A.) as having a distorted understanding of the religion. While it is true that Ayesha (R.A.) was separated for a short period of time from the caravan during her journey in Islamic history, Aslam's fictitious account distorts this event as under:

"When the rumors reached Ali about the virtue of Ayesha - the wife of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him - Ali had had Ayesha's maid-servant tortured to learn if the gossip had any basis in fact. Muhammad, peace be upon him, was aware of this (p. 179)."

The way that *The Wasted Vigil* constructed Ayesha's (R.A.) account does not match any authentic Islamic sources. Aslam seems to have exaggerated the story in order to distort Islamic history and sway people's opinions about the religion. Aslam tells a false story that contradicts canonical historical accounts in an attempt to discredit the authenticity and integrity of Islamic teachings. Aslam aims to raise doubts in his readers' minds by portraying mistrust regarding the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) narrative of Paradise. Aslam challenges Muslim beliefs and attempts to undermine their religion by casting doubt on the accuracy or legitimacy of Islamic depictions of Paradise. "When he described the Muslim Paradise, Muhammad in all probability drew on memories of the Byzantine places he had seen during his pre-prophethood days as a travelling merchant" (p. 192).

When Aslam portrays the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as being fascinated by Byzantine settings and incorporating characteristics from these areas into his picture of Paradise, he is defaming Islamic beliefs. The description of Paradise comes from the Holy Quran, which is the source of Islamic philosophy and is considered to be the word of God as revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). For instance, the Quran states that "And for one who is fearful of having to stand before his Lord, there are two gardens. So which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?" (Quran,

55:46-47). Muhammad PBUH's visits to the Byzantine Empire are therefore unrelated to the imagery of Paradise. The gardens of Paradise are shown in the Quran in extremely distinct visual form. . "(The people of these gardens will be) reclining on floorings whose (even) linings will be of thick silk and the fruits plucked from these two gardens will be at hand" (Quran, 55:54).

Legitimate Islamic texts such as the Quran and Hadith do not provide solid proof to support Aslam's portrayal of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as "Muhammad had personally saved portraits of Jesus, Mary and Abraham from the Kaaba shrine while ordering others to be smashed" (p. 194). The religious rituals and principles of Islam are being misrepresented and perverted by this representation. The addition of this account by Aslam seems to have been done with an explicit objective in his mind, which is to present an inaccurate picture of Islamic customs and beliefs. Aslam seems to have the intention of discrediting the religious practices and beliefs of the residents of his hometown by attributing to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) actions that have not been corroborated by trustworthy sources.

"Aslam attempts once more to distort the history and principles of Islam by utilizing Lara's assertion that "When Muslims conquered Persia they burnt the libraries, as instructed by Omar, the second caliph" (p. 219). Islamic history has no evidence that Omar, the second caliph of Islam and himself a scholar, issued such directives. It is evident from the text that Aslam misrepresented and distorted Islamic ideas and history. Although Islam encourages Muslims to pray five times a day, it does not give them the order to execute anyone who does not. But Aslam has also misconstrued this essential Islamic obligation in an effort to curry favor with the West. He portrays it as "The man was staring at him. He recognized one of them. He had shot dead a man in the street last week for having missed prayers at the mosque on three consecutive days" (p. 224)."

"Aslam's account that "Angels constantly praise Allah for having created beards for men and long hair for women" (p. 313) further misrepresents Islam in *The Wasted Vigil*. It is not possible to cite any Hadith or passage from the Holy Quran in order to support this claim. This assertion is inconsistent with both the Holy Quran and Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) hadith. It appears that Aslam makes these improvised remarks on purpose to cast doubt on Islam in the eyes of his intended audience. Similarly, during a suicide strike, a jihadi trainer gives Casa the order to tilt his head downward so that his head can explode entirely. Aslam, for sure, has no evidence to support his commentary that "The must be destroyed completely or he will enter Paradise with his body decapitated" (p. 313)."

CONCLUSION

Using a thorough thematic analysis based on the conceptual framework offered by Amin (1989) and Said (1978), this research carefully looks at how Islam is portrayed in Nadeem Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil*. The analysis of the different passages of the book reveals the situations in which Aslam's portrayal of Islam events produces a distorted and false depiction of historical events, Islamic theology, and practices. As a result of Aslam's Eurocentric perspective and retreated propagation of the explicit superiority Western civilization, Islam, as religion, has been exoticized and seen as an alien, outdated, and incompatible with modernity. This prejudiced portrayal of Islam distorts the rich intellectual and spiritual traditions found within Islam in favor of emphasizing stereotypes that are synchronized with Western perceptions. Furthermore, Aslam's narrative distorts the true essence of the teachings of Islam by departing away from

reliable Islamic sources like the Quran and Hadith, and perpetuates a perspective that portrays Islam as flawed and barbaric religion through fabricated accounts, exaggerated quotes, and outright fabrications. Aslam's work contributes to a biased stereotype that favors Western perspectives over non-Western ones by propagating false image of Islam. It also fosters negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims by perpetuating stereotypes and misinterpretations that hinder meaningful dialogue and understanding between cultures and religions.

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