

Narrative Deception: Political Misinformation in Nadeem Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil*

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Abstract

This study analyzes Nadeem Aslam's novel, *The Wasted Vigil* from the perspective of the politics of representation. In contemporary times, the politics of representation takes on new forms, including the role of 'Native Informers'. Hamid Dabashi's (2011) theory of 'Native Informer' is used while the acquired facts are examined and weighed. Dabashi argues that the US relies on intellectuals from third-world countries to write about their nations in ways that align with US political goals. These informers feign authority and authenticity to justify US Imperialism. With this theory, it is found that the writer of the selected novel has used different strategies to justify the American invasion of Afghanistan, such as the invasion as a humanitarian mission, women empowerment, and educating the natives. The close reading technique, designed by Fisher and Frey (2013), is used to examine issues relating to the politics of representation. Exploring neo-colonialism, specifically the new modes of the politics of representation, this study examines Nadeem Aslam's role as a 'Native Informer' in portraying the U.S.-led Afghan war.

Keywords: Imperialism, Neo-colonialism, The Politics of Representation, Native Informer.

Introduction

Throughout history, the Orient has been portrayed by Western orientalist writers like Gerard de Nerval, Gustave Flaubert, and Edward William Lane, shaping it to suit their agendas. The purpose of these representations was to perpetuate the colonial discourses that helped the Western countries in their imperial projects. Although, direct colonization is no more practiced, the previously colonized

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countries still face new modes of imperial practices. Ashcroft et al. (2006) write in the general introduction to their book, *The Post-Colonial Reader* that “independence has not resolved the issue of neocolonial dominance, which still exists in some form in all post-colonial states, whether overt or covert” (p. 2). The politics of representation, specifically its new modes, are employed by the current imperial powers such as the United States, to perpetuate their agendas and ideology in the underdeveloped countries. These representations are not objective but constructed, requiring scrutiny for their ideological content.

The post-9/11 era marked a dramatic shift in such representations, especially regarding Afghanistan. Pretended to be a humanitarian effort, the U.S.-led “War on Terror” (2001–2021) actually served to further neo-colonial narratives of emancipating downtrodden Muslims and civilizing barbarism (Mamdani, 2004; Gregory, 2004). Afghanistan's complicated history of sovereignty (such as the 1979–1989 Soviet–Afghan War) was erased, and its people were reduced to helpless victims or terrorists, while Western media and literature largely portrayed the country as a monolithic place of instability, extremism, and backwardness (Dabashi, 2011).

Without such representations, the imperial countries cannot uphold their ambitious imperial designs. According to John McLeod (2000), “the tendency of colonial representations is to reinforce a worldview that upholds the legitimacy of colonialism” (p. 144). Edward W. Said (1979) also says about representation of the Orient that “the way that Muslims, Ottomans, and Arabs were portrayed in Europe has always been a strategy for dominating the illustrious Orient, and this is somewhat still true of how modern trained Orientalists operate today” (p. 60). Since people of the previously colonized countries have become familiar with the old tactics of the imperial powers, these powers now need new forms of the politics of representation in order to legitimize their neo-colonial projects in the third-world countries. According to Said (2012) “the very nature of representation has been described as maintaining inferiority and subordination” (p. 80). The overall purpose of these representations in all its forms is the subordination and degradation of the people of the previously colonized countries.

However, while critiques of Western Orientalism exist in large numbers, fewer studies examine how native informers complicate this dynamic. Hamid Dabashi (2011) identifies this gap, arguing that countries like the US need people from the

third-world countries to write about their own nations in ways that support and consolidate the political agendas of the US. He proposes that immediately following the September 11 attacks, specific native intellectuals were actively recruited to play an essential role on behalf of the militant ideologues linked to the United States. Their primary function was to pretend to have expertise, authenticity, and deep understanding of their native regions, which they would use to inform the American public about the evils happening around the world, especially in their home regions. This was done in a way that justified the United States' imperial ambitions by making it seem like they were liberating these nations from their own supposedly harmful actions.

Countries like the US exploit this new mode of representation in multiple ways for their political interests. The native informers are people who are by birth linked to their native countries. They are considered authority on issues related to their countries. The US uses them to perpetuate their imperialist designs because the native informers endorse those designs and justify them according to the wishes of their masters. The basic objective of this change in the mode of representation is that imperialist designs need justification, and these native informers provide the needed justification by portraying their own people as inferior, evil, and savage, who need the attention of countries like the US in order to be civilized and educated. They mix facts and fantasies in order to create a narrative, agenda, and propaganda in the favor of their masters.

This paper addresses the identified gap by analyzing the new mode of representation, specifically the role of Aslam as a Native Informer, a striking element in his novel, *The Wasted Vigil* (2009). Aslam seems to write in the pattern of the native informers, as characterized by Hamid Dabashi (2011). In the novel, his portrayal of the American invasion of Afghanistan, after the 9/11 incident, is problematic and biased.

Review of the Literature

A substantial amount of research data is available that corresponds with different aspects of this study. The most relevant literature present on the politics of representation, Native Informer theory, and the selected text is reviewed here.

❖ Colonial Legacies in Representation

Existing research consistently links representation to imperial power structures. Shabanirad and Marandi's (2015) analysis of *Burmese Days* demonstrates how Orwell's Eurocentric narration marginalizes both colonized subjects and women, reinforcing what Spivak (1988) terms "epistemic violence" (p. 76). Similarly, Mertania and Amelia (2020) critique Tagore's *The Home and the World* for portraying hybrid identity as a site of crisis rather than resistance, aligning with Bhabha's (1994) ambivalence theory but neglecting indigenous agency. These studies reveal a pattern: even "critical" texts often reproduce colonial binaries.

However, Jamshed's (2020) work on Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* diverges by foregrounding the colonized subject's voice as a counter-narrative. While his focus on cultural misunderstandings is valuable, he overlooks how geopolitical power asymmetries shape representation—a gap this study addresses by centering U.S. neo-colonialism in Afghanistan.

❖ The Native Informer Paradigm

Scholarship on native informers highlights their role in legitimizing neo-colonial narratives. Anjum et al. (2021) argue that Mohammed Hanif's *Red Birds* reduces Islam to a regressive force, echoing Dabashi's (2011) critique of native intellectuals who weaponize "authenticity" to justify Western intervention. Yusof et al. (2011) extend this to Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, showing how her memoir exoticizes Iranian women as victims needing salvation. These studies collectively expose how native informers distort local realities to serve imperial agendas.

Yet, none of these analyses exactly focus on Afghanistan. This study bridges that gap by examining how Aslam's novel—a fictional account of the Afghan War—operates within the same paradigm.

❖ Gaps in Afghan War Literature

Existing critiques of *The Wasted Vigil* offer partial perspectives. Das and Rai (2023) apply Bhabha's transnationalism to argue that Aslam universalizes the Afghan crisis, but they sidestep his portrayal of U.S. militarism as inevitable—a narrative this study interrogates. Nasir (2015) and Parveen (2015) employ feminist and postcolonial lenses, respectively, yet neither engages with Dabashi's native informer framework. This omission is critical: Aslam's status as a Pakistani-British writer complicates claims of "authenticity," a tension this paper explores.

While prior research throws light on representation's colonial roots and the native informer's role, no study has systematically analyzed *The Wasted Vigil* through this dual lens. This paper fills that gap by asking: How does Aslam's novel replicate neo-colonial tropes despite its postcolonial critiques?

Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature. The approach which is used in this research is an inductive approach. It means that this research is data-driven. The data is picked in the form of quotations from the novel. To collect data from the novel, the researcher has applied four stages of reading as outlined by Fisher and Frey (2013). In the first stage, the researcher reads the novel to figure out the nature of the novel. This stage of reading for collecting data is known as 'pre-reading'. In the second stage, the researcher reads the novel thoroughly and underlines the quotations and lines which are related to the area of the research. The researcher collects all these lines in a separate file so that interpretation is made easy. This stage is known as 'critical reading'. In the third stage, the researcher keenly observes all these lines through the lens of the politics of representation. This stage is known as 'interpretative reading'. In the final stage, the researcher critically analyzes all these lines and makes clear interpretations of these lines which are presented in the analysis section of this paper.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretically, this study is based on Hamid Dabashi's theory of Native Informer from *Brown Skin White Masks* (2011). The researcher's aim is to find out various strategies of the writer that support the US invasion of Afghanistan in the novel, by using the lens of Dabashi's Native Informer theory. Specific lines from Dabashi's theory, such as "native informers are now serving the white-identified society out of pure careerism because they have fully assimilated into it. Compensation is high for competent native informers" (Dabashi, 2011, p. 20), and "they work to persuade people that it is right and moral to invade, bomb, and occupy other people's countries" (p. 20) are helpful in analyzing the quotes and lines from the novel.

❖ Analysis

Both Russia and the US, countries that attacked Afghanistan over a different period of time, are outsiders and aliens in Afghanistan. In modern world, attacks and interventions of this kind are deemed uncivilized and brutish. Nadeem Aslam in his novel *The Wasted Vigil* justifies the American invasion of Afghanistan in many ways, while severely criticizing the Russian invasion at the same time. He seems to support the American invasion of Afghanistan on many pretexts and reasons such as protection of women rights in Afghanistan, restoration of democracy, and promotion of education etc. In order to analyze these justifications, the select passages and lines from the text are analyzed in this phase using Hamid Dabashi's concept of 'Native Informer'.

Aslam (2009) acts as a perfect mouthpiece for the US propaganda while justifying their imperial projects in the form of military invasions. As Dabashi (2011) says that "Native informers are spreading the word that imperial adventurism is good for the world and, most importantly, for the people who are targeted for invasion and redemption. This colonialism has now covered up its bare cruelty and entered a neocolonial stage of globalization" (p. 26). In comparison to Aslam, we can refer to Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, a book for which Dabashi severely criticizes the writer, Nafisi, as a native informer who, according to Dabashi, has misrepresented her own culture and country (Iran) in her book. In the pattern of other native informers who justify the United States' intervention as a force for good, such as Azar Nafisi, Aslam (2009) tries to persuade the Afghan people through his portrayal of the American invasion that this invasion is good for them, and will bring prosperity to the country in many ways. In the novel, he writes about the American CIA agent David Town:

He is in Jalalabad because he supports numerous educational institutions there. He has stayed out of the way, letting a team of dedicated and knowledgeable locals handle the arrangements. They are even allowed to choose the name, and they prefer Tameer-e-Nau Afghanistan School. *Building the New Afghanistan* (p. 42)

The presence of the US in Afghanistan is equated with humanitarian projects, for instance building schools, and eventually, 'Building the New Afghanistan'. The US is so keen to help the Afghans that they do not want to take the credit of the development projects. They want Afghanistan to prosper, without associating their names with that prosperity. The ultimate purpose of the American invasion of

Afghanistan is 'Building the New Afghanistan'. Marcus, a British national is also shown as participating in this promotion and development of education in Afghanistan: "Marcus, whose hand had been amputated, made the decision to teach Usha's children in the perfume factory in secret. Soon, tutoring was no longer necessary. A school was there" (p. 193). His hand is cut by the Taliban when accused falsely of theft. Aslam implies that even after the Taliban cut his hand, who are Afghans (Muslims), still he wants to help their children and promote education.

This exaggeration is necessary to convince the native Afghans and the rest of the world that the American invasion of Afghanistan is justifiable because they are helping the local Afghan population in numerous ways. Dabashi (2011) is also of the opinion that:

There is a need for American imperialism to do something to save a planet that it perceives as being engulfed in natural barbarism...the goal of American imperialism isn't to erase native peoples' histories and traditions; rather, it's preferable for these primitive societies to exist elsewhere...acknowledge the obvious and act like Americans (p. 9).

This idea of native barbarity is consolidated by Aslam (2009) using the British man Marcus Caldwell who says in the novel:

I might very easily come out as one of those unfortunate white males...who came to live among them in the East after leaving his own country in the West and paid a heavy price for his careless decision. The barbarians surrounding him destroyed his life (p. 64)

Through a third person voice in the novel, Aslam says about Afghanistan that "what actually did the Americans know about these regions of the world and the countless layers of barbarism that made them up?" (p. 134). A white man who is presumed as civilized, cannot live among Afghans. The Afghans are represented as barbarians, savages, and primitive. Trying to come into contact with the Afghans is shown synonymous with foolishness, and stupidity. The British man's father came here as a doctor, and was killed by the natives. "Several months prior to Marcus's birth, in 1934, a tribesman killed his [Marcus'] father, a doctor working on the Afghan frontier" (p. 30). Again, the British character is associated with a good cause. Aslam implicitly says that an angel like doctor heals them, and the barbarians kill their own

healer. Dabashi (2011) says about such representation by the native informers who create sympathy for the self-proclaimed victims, that “after taking in these sympathetic details, one felt an immediate connection to the victims and shared their sorrow” (p. 2). While on the other hand, we do not see such detail about the suffering of Afghans, and the humanizing details about them. Marcus himself is portrayed as an angel in the novel. “Marcus appeared to be one of the select few people who gave dignity to everything they looked at. Like a saint appearing to you in a dream” (p. 28). The details that the writer give these British and American agents in the novel are strikingly problematic when compared to his depiction of Afghan people.

Wherever we come across a Western character in the novel, they are associated with help, aid, charity, and everything else that is good. “He walks into the orchard on seeing the kitchen door being opened by David. These foreigners...They are probably attached to a charity or an aid organization” (p. 158). Dabashi (2011) says that “in order to inform the liberation-seeking populace (Afghans, Iraqis, Somalis, Palestinians, and Iranians) that their countries will be invaded, bombed, and occupied for their own good, the Americans turn to expatriate intellectuals” (pp. 17-18). Aslam also presents the CIA agents as members of charity or aid organizations. They are in Afghanistan to help the local people. While in reality, invasion or colonization of a country has nothing to do with charity or aid. The colonizers or invaders destroy the peace of the country for their own material or ideological gains. Dabashi (2011) believes that “being American makes you want to save the world even if doing so means destroying it” (p. 9). Aslam presents bombing a country, displacing local populations, destroying peace, and hindering day-to-day activities as humanitarian projects. The writer tries to cover the evils of the invasion with humanitarian propaganda.

Aslam (2009) repeatedly says in the novel that the American soldiers are friendly and do nothing that is inhumane or against basic human ethics. He justifies all kinds of violence and tactics of torture used by the CIA agents and American soldiers. For instance, he writes:

Military psychiatrists made him undergo a regimen of procedures before he joined the Special Forces in case he was ever taken by hostile nations. Lack of sleep, exposure to harsh weather, loneliness, humiliation in front of others, both

religiously and sexually...Nothing that wasn't done to the interrogators themselves is being done to the terrorists who have been apprehended (p. 204).

Aslam implies that because the American soldiers themselves were subjected to such practices, it is justifiable to use all the tactics of torture against those who are captured during war. He shows that Americans allow Muslim detainees even at Guantanamo Bay to recite the holy Quran and practice their religion freely. "As a matter of religious freedom and human rights, they are permitted to read the Koran at Guantanamo Bay" (p. 216). But what we find in reality is completely different. Dabashi (2011) writes in detail about the tactics of torture used by the American soldiers in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries where the War on Terror was imposed. For instance, he quotes a BBC report which states that:

Amin Said al-Sheikh, an Iraqi detainee at Abu Ghraib, was being tortured when a US soldier inquired if he believed in anything. I believe in Allah, he responded. The liberator of Iraq said, 'But I believe in torture, and I will torture you.' Meanwhile, a different US soldier beat his damaged leg and told him to curse Islam (p. 109).

What Aslam (2009) portrays in his novel is completely contrary to facts. He says that religious humiliation is a normal practice for the American soldiers when they are trained. Aslam clearly defends the American torture cells in Afghanistan when we read the conversation between David and James, the CIA agents in the novel:

Using terms like 'torture' in these nations requires caution. It might incite violence. These folks immediately conjure up images of victims being murdered after being raped, having limbs amputated, and having six-inch nails driven through their skulls when they hear the word. Torture does not include being in a cold room. No one is being tortured by depriving them of painkillers if they have an injury (pp. 215-216).

The Afghans are shown to have an extremist understanding of torture. They are equated with rapists, killers, and people with sadist traits. Although, the most severe torture the Americans can inflict on their detainees is a cold room, or withholding painkillers from someone who is injured, the reality is seen in Dabashi's mentioned report of the BBC. Aslam (2009) is involved in the "inversion of facts by fantasy, of truth by politics" (Dabashi, 2011, p. 6). The purpose of this inversion in Dabashi's words is "to persuade the public that occupying, bombing, and invading other people's countries is an ethical and advantageous thing" (p. 20). Also, anyone who

shows resistance against the American invasion is termed as terrorist in the novel. Their resistance is deemed totally unjustifiable by the writer. But as Dabashi (2011) says, “do they not bleed when pricked? And should they not seek revenge if you wrong them?” (p. 103).

Dabashi (2011) says that “less to reveal crimes than to package them in a way that best benefits the empire they work to maintain is the role of the comprador intellectual” (p. 73). The relative lack of women rights in underdeveloped countries like Afghanistan gives way to the native informers like Aslam to paint a horrible picture of these societies. Aslam justifies the American invasion on the grounds of women rights too. The Western characters are there to help Afghan women. They are shown in need of the help provided by the Americans. Marcus, already an angelic person, is yet again shown as someone who takes every possible step to help the Afghan women. The discussion between Lara and Marcus goes as: “Were you always interested in perfume?” “The factory? I started it to give the women of Usha a chance to earn money” (p. 192). He is there to create opportunities for the Afghan women who are deprived of their rights. The idea of women rights is specifically used as a weapon against underdeveloped countries like Afghanistan. Native informers around the globe follow this same agenda. For example, Khan et al. (2021) in their analysis of Khalid Hosseini’s novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* find that through the Westernized idea of romantic love, Hosseini tries to defend an illegitimate sexual connection in the book. They believe that Hosseini holds Eurocentric beliefs. For him, Western values are the standard that non-Westerners (the Other) must adhere to. Dabashi (2011) is also of the view that:

Native informers gave American colonial ambitions in the Islamic world the appearance of legality. Due to the relative lack of these rights in Muslim countries, they were given the space and legitimacy to carry out their operations in the honourable name of safeguarding the civil, human, and women’s rights of Muslims (p. 17).

Aslam (2009) also shows in the novel that the Americans are there to give Afghan women job opportunities and build schools for the young boys and girls. “The Americans want a school here..both boys and girls are taught at the school” (p. 212). Throughout the novel, the Americans are shown at the service of the Afghan people, and their country. They are busy with either protecting women rights, restoring democracy, or promoting education in Afghanistan. They think that the Afghans are

savages who need to be civilized in the Western way. James Palantine, a US soldier, thinks in the novel about the Afghans that “these folks need to be educated otherwise they’ll continue to be brutal without recognising it” (p. 243). The centuries old way of thinking about the Orient is reaffirmed by the writer, that is civilizing the natives under the ‘White Man’s Burden’. Dabashi (2011) is also of the opinion that “from the scramble for Africa to the conquest of Asia to the exploitation of Latin America, the White Man’s Burden has included the requirement of persuading ‘the natives’ that they can never be the actors of their own history” (p. 36).

The American soldiers are shown as the saviors of the Afghan women. For example, Aslam (2009) writes:

The widow's home is situated close to the mosque. Marcus has revealed to him how she fled into the desert...The three women had gotten into the hands of some Taliban militants outside. They were led back to this home by American soldiers who had arrived just in time to rescue their lives and honour (p. 99).

The Americans are portrayed as fighting Islamic terrorism, and saving Muslim women from their own men. Dabashi (2011) quotes Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s line from “**Can the Subaltern Speak?**” which clarifies the context even more: “White men saving brown women from brown men” (p. 69). The indigenous Afghans are portrayed as abhorrent, violent, and most importantly, brutal towards women.

Aslam (2009) presents the American soldiers and agents as flagbearers of democracy in Afghanistan. They are working day and night for the restoration of democracy in Afghanistan, and overthrowing the Taliban. James, the American soldier in the novel says “we are here to help your country. We came to get rid of the Taliban for you” (p. 277). At a point in the novel, David, another CIA agent, tells an Afghan boy that “simply wait until the Soviets are vanquished...After that, we’ll assist you Afghans in driving out the landlords and mullahs” (p. 126).

Whatever the US is doing in Afghanistan is portrayed as something for the betterment of the people of the country. Aslam acting as a perfect native informer, tries to convince the Afghans and justify the American invasion. James also says that “there is a great deal of good work done by our government and many of other American organisations worldwide” (p. 277). According to Aslam, not only in Afghanistan, but also in other parts of the world, the US is involved in plenty of

humanitarian works. That is to say that the US invades countries for those countries' own good. Aslam (2009) uses the orientalist discourse of them versus us, by othering Muslims and particularly Afghans. James says "it's not between him and me. It's between them and us" (p. 305), when he talks to David about torturing Casa, the Afghan boy. Aslam (2009) justifies the killings of Afghans with the pretext that those natives who are killed as a result of the American invasion of Afghanistan are due to collateral damage, and also because the Americans are defending themselves against these Afghans. James tells David that:

We are not accountable for it. It's not our fault if he is partially blind or if he passes away from his injuries. And those detainees at Guantanamo and other jails, as well as the hundreds who unintentionally perished during our bombing raids...We are merely defending ourselves from them (p. 306).

The native Afghans are deemed criminals and terrorists when a member of them is involved in such acts, but these native informers are silent when millions of them are the victims of the criminal acts of countries like the US. For instance, Dabashi (2011) notes that:

Civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq were frequently killed. A little Iraqi girl named Abeer Qassim Hamza al-Janabi was gang-raped by US marines before being killed together with her parents and siblings and having their remains burned. The slaughter in Hadithah, northwest of Baghdad, was one of several. Here, scores of Iraqi people, including women and children, who were in their care and utterly at their mercy, were massacred by US marines (p. 2).

Aslam justifies the American invasion of Afghanistan using all these strategies and tactics. He functions like a perfect native informer in the service of his Western masters. He works for the neo-colonial strategists and propagandists. As Dabashi (2011) says:

Native informants are spreading the word that imperial adventurism is good for the world and, most importantly, for the people who are targeted for invasion and redemption. This colonialism has now covered up its bare cruelty and entered a neocolonial stage of globalization (p. 26).

The way that Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil* interacts with the language of the US War on Terror is examined in greater detail thanks to Dabashi's theory. The way the US participation in Afghanistan is portrayed in the book partially supports Western defenses of militarism, including the advancement of democracy, the freedom of women, and the "civilization" of Afghan society. Although these themes align with the public narratives of the U.S. government (Hunt, 2017), Aslam's handling of them is conflicted: his criticism of Taliban brutality coexists with an idealized portrayal of American aggression, making it difficult to support intervention outright. Aslam's narrative strategies (such as selective focalization, and symbolic imagery) may unintentionally reproduce the logic of the "native informer" by centering Western moral dilemmas while marginalizing Afghan perspectives, rather than explicitly defending the invasion. This tension suggests that the novel serves two purposes: it condemns extremism and unintentionally participates in neo-colonial discourse.

Conclusion

This study has examined Nadeem Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil* through the lens of Hamid Dabashi's *Native Informer* theory, revealing how the novel's representation of the U.S.-led Afghan War aligns with broader neo-colonial narratives. Orientalist and postcolonial frameworks have been thoroughly examined in previous research on the politics of representation, but this study closes a significant gap by examining how native informers helped to justify the ideological arguments for the War on Terror. The results show that Aslam's narrative techniques—such as supporting the "White Man's Burden" cliché, linking Western figures to goodness, and portraying the invasion as a humanitarian mission—recreate the discursive patterns that Dabashi criticizes.

The implications of this study extend beyond literary analysis, adding to continuing discussions about cultural production and imperial authority. By highlighting how even critically acclaimed postcolonial literature can inadvertently support neo-colonial discourse, this research underlines the need for deeper scrutiny of who represents marginalized populations and how these representations circulate in global literary markets. The study also emphasizes the moral obligations of diasporic authors when portraying occupation and war, especially when their writings run the risk of being appropriated by prevailing political narratives.

The current paper encourages more investigation into the ways in which neo-colonial narratives function in modern literature. Future research could look at how various readers understand Aslam's work, compare it to other diasporic writers' portrayals of U.S. interventions, or explore how the publishing system shapes war representations. The wider applicability of the native informer paradigm may be tested by extending the concept to examine literary representations of other conflict areas. Furthermore, studies that integrate author interviews and textual analysis may shed light on the ways in which market forces impact postcolonial narrative. These paths would preserve critical engagement with representational politics while expanding our knowledge of the intricate link between literature and imperial discourse.

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