

THE IDEA OF ORIENTALISM IN
THE QUIET AMERICAN

by

GRAHAM GREENE

Thesis submitted to the
Institute of Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

English Language and Literature

by

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November 2009

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AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

2. The advanced study in the English Language and Literature graduate program of which this thesis is part has consisted of:

- i) Research Methods courses both in the undergraduate and graduate programs.
- ii) English literature as well as American literature including novel, poetry and drama studies, a comparative approach to world literatures, and examination of several literary theories as well as critical approaches which have contributed to this thesis in an effective way.

3. This thesis is composed of the main sources including several books by the major authors discussed in comparison; and the secondary sources including scholarly articles from academic journals as well as newspaper articles, and theoretical books on the history and a redefinition of womanhood within the feminist theory. The thesis style guides of Turkish universities and international universities as well as many relevant books published by university presses on this subject.

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Degree Awarded and Date: November 2009

ABSTRACT

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The world is composed of two different sides according to the modern, Western approach. It is divided into two not only geographically but also culturally, politically, economically, and even linguistically. These are differentiated as East and West. Edward Said has put forward the notion of Orientalism. He conceptualized that the Orient and Occident differ from each other substantially, first of all, because the people in the West and East have strikingly different worldviews in ontological and epistemological aspects. Secondly, it refers to the way the powerful West established dominance over the weak East and this Western oppression of the East. This understanding results in an unequal relationship between East and West. I am not going to side with either Orientalism or Occidentalism in this thesis, but I am going to focus on the themes of East and West in the novel, *The Quiet American* by Graham Greene, a 20th century British author. To sum up, Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* demonstrates the relationship between different cultures, and how the East approaches the West and the West approaches the East on a plot framed upon a love relationship, war, colonialism, and conspiracy. It can be concluded that

Westerners have a certain image of East in their minds and behave to them according to this, which is called Orientalist approach by Edward Said. I will try to articulate all these ideas.

Key words:

Orientalism, East, West, Idea of otherness, American, British, Vietnamese, Graham Greene

Üniversite: Fatih Üniversitesi

Enstitüsü: Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Anabilim Dalı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Mohammed BAKARİ

Tez Tarihi: Kasım 2009

KISA ÖZET

GRAHAM GREENE'İN ESERİ *SESSİZ AMERİKALI*'DA

ORYANTALİZM

Meryem KARA

Modern Batı yaklaşımına göre dünya ikiye ayrılmaktadır. Sadece coğrafi olarak değil kültürel ekonomik politik ve hatta dilbilimsel olarak ikiye ayrılmış durumdadır. Bu farklı iki alan doğu ve batı olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Edward Said bu durumla ilintili olarak Oryantalizm kavramını ortaya koymaktadır. Said aslında Batı ve Doğu farkını, her şeyden önce Batıdaki ve Doğudaki insanların farklı dünya görüşleri olduğunu kavramsallaştırır. İkinci olarak da güçlü olan Batının, Doğu üzerinde hakimiyet kurma çabasını yansıtmaktadır. Bütün bu anlayışlar Batı ve Doğu arasında eşit olamayan bir ilişki ile sonuçlanmaktadır. Ben bu tezde ne Batıyı ne de Doğuyu savunacağım. Asıl amacım 20. yüzyılın İngiltereli yazarlarından Graham Greene'nin eseri "Sessiz Amerikalı" da doğu ve batı temasını işlemektir. Özet olarak Graham Greene bu eserinde aşk, ilişki, savaş, sömürgecilik temalarını işleyerek doğu batı ilişkilerini ve iki tarafın birbirine yaklaşımlarını ortaya koymaktadır. Bütün bu anlatılanlardan şu çıkarılabilir ki Batı tarafından oluşturulmuş bir Doğu imajı vardır ve Edward Said bunu oryantalizm olarak adlandırmaktadır. Graham Greene'nin eseri "Sessiz Amerikalı" Doğu Batı ilişkilerinin, günümüz politik olaylarının ve oryantalizm temasının birleştirildiği unutulmaz bir eserdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Oryantalizm, Doğu, Batı, Ötekileştirme fikri, Amerikalı, İngiliz, Viyetnamlı, Graham Greene.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe my most special thanks and gratitude to Prof. Dr. Mohammed Bakari, who has always been an influence to me with his academic discipline. Without his guidance and help, this thesis would not have been possible.

I also wish to acknowledge my appreciation to my my parents, İsmail and Ayşe KARA who have supported me in every way they could from the very first day of my life. They have always been giving parents and taught me to go through life with patience and compassion. And I thank my sister and my brothers for forcing me complete my thesis, and being there for me with their kind hearts.

I cannot end without thanking my grandparents Osman KOCAMEŞE and Mehmet KARA, on whose constant encouragement and love I have relied throughout my life.

Meryem KARA

November 2009

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to Western perspective, the world is composed of two different sides. It is divided into two, not only geographically, but also culturally, politically, economically, and even linguistically. These are differentiated as East and West. Edward Said has put forward the notion of Orientalism. He conceptualized that the Orient and Occident differ from each other substantially; not only do the people of the West and East have strikingly different worldviews both ontologically and epistemologically, but existing power structures see the powerful West as having established dominance over the weak East, thereby oppressing them. This understanding results in an unequal relationship between East and West. According to Said, westerners appreciate the view of Orientalism and they also cherish some prejudice against and curiosity in the Orient (Said, 12).

Orientalism is founded upon the historical relationship between Eastern and Western cultures throughout history; a relationship that has so often been characterized by power struggles. The West, which has been the powerful side for the past few centuries, has mentally constructed a certain image of the East. For a long period of time, Westerners have seen Oriental peoples as "stupid" and "lazy" on the one hand and, on the other hand, has seen the Orient itself as somewhat "mysterious" and attractive, geographically and ideologically remote from the imperial centre and Western metropolitan countries (Said, 28). The East is usually connoted to being weak, dependent, ignorant, traditional, conservative, religious, and oppressed. Such an approach of mentally labeling the East has enabled the West to fabricate the East as a world of 'others', a world that needs to be controlled, guided, protected, educated, democratized,

suppressed, and colonized. The imperialism in the Third World, underdeveloped countries in the East by the Western superpowers, is a striking phenomenon in the last centuries supporting the view of Orientalism. Orientalism reflects how Westerners regard Easterners.

On the other hand, as a counter-argument to Orientalism, there arises the idea of Occidentalism. This, represents the outlook of the Easterners on Westerners. Colonialism and exploitation of raw materials in the Eastern world by the world of the West has given birth to the reaction of the Orient against the West. Wang Ning describes the theory of Occidentalism as “Occidentalism manifests itself as an antagonistic form that strongly opposes Western hegemonies” (Ning, 62). Occidentalism is a response to the conception of Orientalism in the West.

I am not going to side with either Orientalism or Occidentalism in this thesis. Instead, I am going to focus on the themes of East and West in the novel, *The Quiet American* by Graham Greene, a 20th century British author.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

For the readers of *The Quiet American*, the novel has many different aspects enveloping all kinds of genres in literature. There is an ageing reporter (self pity) whose wife is on another continent, a native girl that the reporter wants to live with as long as possible (love), a newly arrived young American (a rival) who falls in love with the same native girl, a kind of friendship and envy between the reporter and the American, a murder (thus a detective story), philosophy of life, religion in question, among others. In addition, there is a war going on. All events take place in an already prolonged war that seems to be between France as a colonial power and the Vietnamese people. After reading the whole book, we come to understand that it is not merely a story about the three people, i.e. the reporter, the native girl and *The Quiet American*, but about the war itself. The war is not just fought between the two forces but on a new international level. As Gibson sees the novel presents itself as an epochal novel:

Important as questions of character, psychology, sexuality, responsibility, choice, religion and conscience may at some level be, *The Quiet American* is very aware of their precise implication in a determining historical, cultural and geopolitical moment. The corollary of this is a text in which novelistic realism is inseparable from a strain of political allegory (Gibson 1).

Since *The Quiet American* is set in a specific context by the writer, the events take place around a war, however briefly, it is imperative for us to focus on the Indochina War or the Vietnam War itself.

2.1. The Indochina War and the French

After World War II, once Japan was defeated, France sought to re-establish its control over Indochina. However, the international situation and conditions were very different after 1945.

In 1945, Viet Minh - a broad front of Vietnamese patriots and nationalists controlled by the Communist Party - seized power. Ho Chi Minh declared independence. In 1946, in Hanoi, 30,000 Viet Minh launched their first large-scale attack against the French. Thus began an eight year struggle known as the First Indochina War. In 1950, The People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union recognized Ho Chi Minh's Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The same year, U.S. President Harry S. Truman sent 35 troops to Vietnam as 'Military Advisors', authorized \$15 million in military aid to the French and established a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Saigon to aid the French Army. The Military Assistance Advisory Group/Indochina was formed, and The United States and Britain recognized Bao Dai's French-controlled South Vietnam government. In 1953, Eisenhower cited a 'Domino Theory' in which a Communist victory in Vietnam would result in surrounding countries falling one after another like a "falling row of dominoes", and thus greatly increased U.S. military aid to the French in Vietnam to prevent a Communist victory (Vietnam Research, BBC News).

In 1954, after a bitter defeat, France withdrew from Vietnam and a peace treaty was signed in Geneva. The Geneva Accords divided Vietnam in half at the 17th parallel, with Ho Chi Minh's Communists ceded to the North, while Bao Dai's regime is granted the South (Vietnam Research). The accord also set guidelines for a national election to be held in two years to unify the country.

But according to Brigham, the Geneva Accords helped to increase tensions in the region between the western and eastern powers.

The Geneva Accords did not satisfy the US from the start and they did not support it. According to the US's Secretary of State, the peace treaty was giving too much power and independence to the Communist Party of Vietnam. Thus, the US started to take counter measures by creating and supporting a rival group.

The United States supported this effort at nation-building through a series of multilateral agreements that created the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (Brigham).

2.2. The Indochina War and the United States

To devote a special part for the US's role in the Vietnam War is actually arbitrary here. The reason behind this division is partly due to the fact that the US was the biggest western state involved at first indirectly, then directly in the Vietnam War along and after France, as stated in Greene's *The Quiet American*. Another reason is that while France had fought a war there too, it was the US that was mostly known and more widely remembered because of the movies, documentaries, books and other media which had helped to establish an association between the US and the Vietnam War.

Even after so many years, it seems that, for the U.S., the war has not been concluded yet. The Vietnam War is still far from forgotten in the US. For example, in his (or her) "Reprogramming Memories" article, Ikui writes that the Vietnam Veterans Memorials have not been completed as planned. The Wall (on which names are written) was completed in 1982, and then in 1984 the Statue of Three Servicemen was added. However, with the Statue of Three Servicemen addition the wall was still incomplete. Other forgotten veterans and nurses also

demanded an addition to the memorial for the sacrifices they had made in the war. Thus the Statue of the Three Nurses was added in 1993. In the words of Ikui:

This diversification of memories of the war resulted not only in a light being shone on the forgotten victims of the war but also pointed to the fact that a political reprogramming of the public's consciousness was taking place (Ikui 52).

The public's consciousness about the war also presents a gap between the people who were at home and soldiers who fought the war. A web page dedicated only to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial tries to describe this gap of consciousness. The gap is not an easy one to cross, a gap between reality and imagination which can not imply the same things in the eyes of veterans. For the people at home, names of the battle grounds and cities in Indochina are reminders of sons, daughters and friends that were lost forever. But for the veterans it is much more than that, and in the words of one writer:

For those who served there, the sights, sounds, smells, and heat of Vietnam are indelible. But Vietnam was another world, and episodes in that faraway place were difficult to explain to those at home (Personal Legacy: The Healing of a Nation).

The title of *The Healing of a Nation* itself seems very explanatory here, hence the efforts of 'reprogramming memories'. There is still something to be healed after so many years. And the patient in question to be healed here is not just one person but a nation. Ikui, using Michael Foucault's concept of the reprogramming of popular memory, explains the *healing* process in three phases. According to him, the first phase was Americanization of the popular

image of war in the 1970s. An image of war told and saw by American eyes were presented. The second phase put the American foot soldiers in the victim's seat. A kind of confession took place around the tales of soldiers as wounded and tricked heroes in the 1980s. And the third phase took place around the late eighties and early nineties. An official version of the war has been presented, not only to the Americans, but to the whole world. The Vietnam War was just and was fought for the free world. The circle is complete and the US claims are the same now as proposed when the war was proposed against the Vietnamese. Again, in the words of Ikui:

The success of the Persian Gulf War gave revisionists confidence to redefine the "lessons of Vietnam." This official validation of the revised historical status of the Vietnam War gradually began to melt into the popular memory of the war... (Ikui 44).

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, between 1954 and 1975 about 58,200 members of U.S. armed forces were killed or went missing as a result of the war (Britannica Online). The losses of the Vietnamese were much more horrible (about 2 million civilians and 1.1 million soldiers on both sides).

2.2.1. Anti-Colonial United States in South East Asia

The US involvement in Vietnam, however indirectly, goes years before its occupation of Vietnam. And its perspective was a very different one. "Roosevelt was convinced that the war had accelerated the demise of an obsolescent European colonial order and that the forces unleashed by decolonization movements were bound to shape the postwar global order in major ways." (Adas 27). Roosevelt was especially against French rule. "...He dismissed the French as incompetent and exploitative overlords whose century of rule had impoverished the peoples of the area and done little to prepare them for self-rule" (28). The US even supplied assistance to the Viet Minh and other

groups fighting with the Japanese. Thus Ho Chi Minh "...paraphrases from and references to the American Declaration of Independence in his proclamation of Vietnamese nationhood in September 1945 were simply the most striking manifestations of a more general Vietnamese determination to depict the United States as an ally in their freedom struggle." (28) Therefore French was left alone in its struggle to re-colonize Indochina. But, according to Adas, the US governments' aversion for the colonial powers was biased. "...Roosevelt's harsh assessment of the legacy of French colonial rule drew on deeply rooted sentiments and a long history of summary dismissal...the Americans never sought to politically or militarily reoccupy the territories the British turned over to indigenous nationalist leaders" (34-35). So the French colonialism was seen as bad while the British colonialism went mainly ignored by Americans. But when China set foot on the stage, The US's stance radically altered in a very short time.

2.2.2. New Game: Domino Theory

In 1949, when the People's Republic of China had been declared, the US feared that communism would spread faster and further in South Asia. Thus it seemed vital to support the French in Indochina to re-establish its colonial rule. Seeing this situation to their advantage, the French managed to demand more and more resources from the US.

The Americans began to fear that the French might abandon Indochina. The threat of withdrawal was a card the French themselves occasionally played, to some effect. (Gibson 2)

The US was afraid that once Indochina fell to communism, others in the region would follow suit, which was later called the "domino theory". The Cold War unmasked the US's pretense of championing decolonization in the world,

especially in the South Asia region. And Indochina was one of the victims of the US's new policy of a front to stop communism. It had become the battle ground for the US itself when France was not capable of holding the line even with the all aid supplied generously by the US; and that:

By the early 1950s, the United States had become a vital source of military supplies and had assumed a major share of the costs for that failed endeavor (Adas 29).

The US involvement in Vietnam was heavily coordinated by the Economic Aid Mission. "By 1953, the US was paying 78% of the cost of the war." (Gibson 5) After splitting Vietnam into North and South with the Geneva Accord, matters complicated further for the US. In the south the National Liberation Front (formed at the end of 1960) became a target that Washington accused of being puppets of the north regime. NLF's claims of being independent and made up mostly of non-communist members did not satisfy the US. "Washington continued to discredit the NLF, however, calling it the "Viet Cong," a derogatory and slang term meaning Vietnamese Communist." (Brigham) While giving full support to the south regime, the US institutionalized its 'third force' with Ngo Dinh Diem.

In 1955, the US gave up supplying Diem via the French. With passing time they were involved more and more directly in the Indochina War through various aids which led Diem to claim that Indochina was an extension of the US border. Gibson notes that:

By 1956, the US was solely responsible for agrarian reform, economic aid and the training of the South Vietnamese troops, police and administration. By May 1957, Diem could claim that 'the frontier of the United States extends to the 17th parallel (Gibson 5).

Americans, while afraid of the domino effect in the region, were very confident that they could easily handle the situation in Vietnam where the French were doomed to fail. They thought the Vietnamese had no chance at all against the most powerful western country in the world. With their organizational and technological advantages, Americans thought that the victory was inevitable in Indochina, as would be anywhere else in the world. The Europeans' days were past along with their seemingly outdated methods, while the US, a new and superior power that fought against the most powerful war machines in WWII and won, could easily handle a few primitive forces in the region.

But as the war progressed, the US learnt of a different method of warfare (guerilla) which French and British forces had had first hand experiences long before. In 1962, the number of US military advisors was raised to 12,000 and in 1965 200,000 combat troops arrived and then in 1966 the number of US troops rose to 500,000 (BBC News). Even these numbers alone show how bad the war progressed for the US against the "primitive" Third World country.

The French forces in Indochina were losing the war mainly because of the guerilla warfare. As a modern army, the French were not capable of fighting against small Vietnamese guerilla groups. The US, missing the essence of the Vietnamese war methods against the French, concluded this as not the success of the communist insurgents but as an evidence of further French ineptitude in Indochina, as explained thus:

As was the case earlier in Panama, the Americans were confident that their superior technology, engineering skills, and managerial abilities would allow them to succeed where the French had failed. (Adas 35)

The regime in the south was another problem for the US winning the war. As the war escalated, the ordinary people in cities and villages were often the victims of the corrupt Diem rule, in that:

“...many local officials and police engaged in extortion, bribery, and theft of government property. That many of these officials were, like Diem himself, northerners and Roman Catholics further alienated them from the local people.” (Britannica Online)

Diem’s brother’s raid of a the Buddhist pagodas of South Vietnam, resettlement of the villagers (Strategic Hamlet Program), etc. further alienated local people and thus helped the North to gain more support from the southern Vietnamese (Brigham).

The war in Indochina was not progressing for the better for the US. Becoming a financial black hole, an increasing death toll, hatred mounting against the US all over the world and Indochina, and protests at home and so on forced President Kennedy of the US to send two of his advisers to investigate the situation in Vietnam.

The two advisers concluded that the South Vietnamese government was losing the war with the Viet Cong and had neither the will nor the ability to turn the tide on its own (Britannica Online).

But the two advisers’ suggestions only led the US to a deeper involvement in the Indochina war. Kennedy’s advisors recommended a greatly expanded program of military assistance but “(o)f special relevance to the managers of America's techno-war was the David and Goliath mindset with which the Vietnamese had for millennia approached foreign invaders as a result

of their long struggle to retain their independence from the Chinese colossus to the north (Adas 40).

Under General Westmoreland's command and with massive fire power (especially helicopters and fighter-bombers), the US brought war to the rural areas. The north's casualties were huge at first. But after sometime, with the help of China and Soviet Union, they acquired modern weapons and thereafter planes and helicopters were no longer as serious a threat. "In general, we believe that the types of weaponry the Soviets are likely to supply during the coming months will be intended to strengthen the air and costal defenses of North Vietnam and to increase the firepower of both the regular North Vietnamese forces and the Communist forces fighting in the South." (SNIE 5)

2.2.3. Domestic Problems

The US was having problems at home too. People were tired of the prolonged war and hearing never ending names of dead soldiers. There was pressure both from within and the outside world. There were huge demonstrations around the world demanding an end to the war. One notable tension in the homeland was about civil rights, mostly concerning black people. Especially the young blacks were furious about democracy and freedom rhetoric of the US. The president was calling for economic sacrifices as well as human power to put in to fight for democracy in the Far East while holding back poverty programs and civil rights reforms in the homeland,:

“Defining his goal in a special message to Congress on 16 March 1964, Johnson hoped to build
"an America in which every citizen shares all the opportunities of [this] society, in which every man has a chance to advance his welfare to the limit of his

capacities." Unfortunately for Johnson, the Vietnam War smothered the Great Society and its programs." (Mathews 76)

Johnson's Great Society and its programs were lost in the dust of the American war in Vietnam. Many disadvantaged people (particularly poor people and blacks) had felt abandoned and cheated by the president. "Highly touted by Johnson as bills capable of securing first-class citizenship and the right of democratic participation for African Americans, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, similar to the Great Society programs, failed to alter many local conditions." (77) The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), seeing the results of the mentioned acts in the southern states, heavily criticized the federal government for focusing on the Vietnam War with false arguments and ignoring domestic problems and for the impotency of the federal government in implementing the acts. The SNCC believed that all the quasi-democratic rights granted to African Americans were superficial. Even the budget promised to fight poverty was diverted to war efforts. "For example, in fiscal 1967 the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), the central antipoverty agency, received \$138 million less than Johnson had promised it. Apportioned only 45 percent of their expected budget..." (92) The Johnson administration found itself in a tough dilemma between the internal and external conditions. "Fearful that any apparent U.S. inability to thwart a communist advance in Vietnam might jeopardize the security of many other Asian nations and result in adverse reactions among our friends and allies, the Johnson administration decided to take a stand in Vietnam." (87) This, known as "domino theory", was one of the US policies that the SNCC attacked during the war. Frustrated by the US policies toward its own disadvantaged people, the SNCC saw many similarities between the internal and external rhetoric. They claimed that blacks fighting in Vietnam would be looked upon as traitors by all the Colored People of the world were they to risk [their] lives and kill other Colored People... so that the White American [could] get richer. Labeling the

U.S. an "octopus of exploitation [with] its tentacles reaching from Mississippi and Harlem to...Vietnam" (89) However, even the Johnson administration was aware of the black people's sentiment in which they saw themselves trapped in the "domino theory". "Put simply, if losing the Great Society was a terrible thought, then losing a war to the Communists was unthinkable. In order to put more resources into the war effort, Johnson refused priority to the achievement of civil rights legislation and Great Society programs." (91) Instead of abandoning Vietnam, Johnson spared more human and economic resources to the war which in the end cost more in the future and that is still the case today.

The U.S. military left Vietnam early 1973. Even though the Vietnam War officially ended in 1973, it has left a very serious wound to be healed.

2.3. The Cold War and the Super Powers

With the end of World War II, a new era called the 'Cold War' had started in the international arena. This Cold War was between the US (and its western allies, dubbed the "free world") and the Soviets and its mainly East European allies, beside China (sometimes confronting Soviets and other times cooperating) and Cuba. In Britannica Online the term "Cold War" is explained as: "The open yet restricted rivalry that developed after World War II between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies. The Cold War was waged on political, economic, and propaganda fronts and had only limited recourse to weapons. The term was first used by the English writer George Orwell in an article published in 1945 to refer to what he predicted would be a nuclear stalemate between the United States and the Soviet Union." (Britannica Online) The Vietnam War was also part of the "Cold War". Once the US got involved in the Vietnam War on a large scale, the "Cold War" became more apparent than during the French colonial time.

2.3.1. Struggle among the New Super Powers

The US's logic of "domino theory" as a part of the "national security" almost wholly governed the international actors in the Vietnam War (even though not all of the actors involved themselves whole heartedly). "According to the domino theory, if Vietnam were to fall to communism, other countries in Southeast Asia would quickly follow, and then countries in other regions would begin to fall under the rule of the Soviet Union. Eventually almost every state in the international system would jump on the Soviet bandwagon, leaving the United States alone and weak against an unstoppable juggernaut." (Mearsheimer 2)

From Mearsheimer's explanation we see the sides of the war waged in Vietnam. Looking for support and justification, the US claimed to fight on behalf of the "free world", thus dragging the Western allies to the war, if not on the battle ground, then to the diplomatic battle. The Vietnam War on the international level can be clearly seen in the SNIE's (Special National Intelligence Estimate) report prepared in May 4, 1967. In its 'Soviet Attitudes and Intentions toward the Vietnam War' report, the SNIE examines the USSR's policies toward the Vietnam War. It concludes that the Soviets are avoiding confronting the US directly but other than that they are supplying any means for Vietnamese to fight against the US. The report also described Chinese involvement by (at least) allowing Soviets to transport weapons to North Vietnam and to the forces in South Vietnam across China. "But the relations between the Moscow and Peking are still fundamentally hostile, and their attitudes toward major issues of war and peace in Vietnam will continue to differ profoundly" (SNIE 1, 2)

According to the report, the USSR saw this war at its advantage with some uncertainty. In case of a US defeat, the USSR would gain the respect of the communist world and the US, along with its shame of defeat, would also be in an economic struggle after using so many resources for the war. Furthermore, the risk was similar for the USSR if the US succeeded, along with losing ground to China as the leader of the communist world. In the report we also see the other countries mentioned between the two superpowers

of the cold war. The war “diverts US political and strategic attention away from areas of primary interest to the USSR, it imposes burdens on US resources, and it employs a substantial portion of US military forces-in-being. Moreover, it has deeply troubled many US allies and associates, especially in Europe” (SNIE 3)

2.3.2. Old Super Power: Great Britain

Britain, an old superpower, also tried to play a role in the Vietnam War as negotiator more between the US and the USSR than the US and Vietnam. Then the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson attempted to settle a peace agreement between the US and North Vietnam without much success. The US did not bother to listen to Wilson and instead demanded for a military contribution from London which was not probable at that time due to the Malaysia situation. “Although there was no formal agreement reached between the UK and the US, the Wilson government insisted on an Anglo-American division of labor in Southeast Asia, with Britain bearing the burden of defending Malaysia and the US assuming chief responsibility for fighting the Vietnamese communists” (Mizumoto 8). Although President Johnson was not happy with the British commitment in the struggle, the British Prime Minister tried hard to establish a link between Washington and Moscow in order to help settle an honorable agreement in which the US would end its invasion of Vietnam.

In the Cold war era, the US was not as free as in today’s world as stated by Lieberfeld discussing the Iraq war. “The US is less constrained than it was in Cold War, when the superpowers had a mutual interest in avoiding direct confrontation, and has increasingly adopted a policy of preventive war” (Lieberfeld, 5). Thus even the superpowers had never clashed directly in the Vietnam War; they battled behind the curtains by all means.

CHAPTER III

CRITICAL ANALYSIS WITH THE PARADIGM OF ORIENTALISM

3.1. The Fowler, Pyle and Phuong Triangle

“Phuong,' I said - which means Phoenix, but nothing nowadays is fabulous and nothing rises from its ashes.” (Greene, 11) In this sentence at the beginning of *The Quiet American* we are introduced to the Vietnamese woman to whom Fowler and Pyle are in love with. Again we immediately understand from this sentence that something vitally important in Fowler’s life is not going well lately. He knows the waiting girl even before he sees her face. The time behind this knowledge makes it harder now that the girl waits for someone else as she had waited for him before. Something has fundamentally changed between the reporter and the girl for some reasons that he is very bitter in his words while translating Phuong’s meaning for us.

Since the events in the book do not follow linearity in terms of time, a complete reading of the relationship between Fowler, Pyle and Phuong requires going back and forth throughout the book. Actually, as the book progresses, one may think that what is said about the relationship between Fowler and Phuong is an incomplete one or it has just one direction. Thus it is difficult to talk about what is the nature of the relationship other than what is Fowler’s or Pyle’s relation with Phuong. Fowler thinks (mostly) and sometimes talks for Phuong throughout the book. Usually, what we learn about Phuong is learnt indirectly from the observations of Fowler. It is difficult to understand if she is in love with Fowler or even if she is capable of loving. Fowler asks if Pyle is still in love with her. Instead of giving a direct answer, “In love?” -perhaps it was one of the phrases she didn't understand. 'May I make your pipe?' she asked.” (12-13) We do not hear Phuong’s answer; it is Fowler’s thoughts claiming that she is not capable of understanding the notion of love. While Phuong is concentrated

on pipe preparation, Fowler, after learning that Pyle does not smoke, gives a clue of what it could be that Phuong expects from a relationship.

'You ought to make him or he won't come back.' It was a superstition among them that a lover who smoked would always return, even from France. A man's sexual capacity might be injured by smoking, but they would always prefer a faithful to a potent lover. (13)

So, according to Fowler, a faithful lover who always comes back is more important for Phuong. Indirectly it is Fowler who is faithful to her since he smokes his pipe, though the logic seems simple. He thinks he knows what she expects from a relationship and proves himself to be faithful by being there. And since Pyle is a young man, 'potent lover' is also very meaningful. After smoking his first pipe and thinking that Phuong is back he says: "What a fuss we Europeans make about nothing. You shouldn't live with a man who doesn't smoke, Phuong.' 'But he's going to marry me,' she said.'" (14)

For the second time Fowler proposes how important smoking is in binding a man to a woman. This time Phuong's answer is interesting. She tries to object to Fowler's association of 'pipe smoking' with marriage. Thus it seems that Fowler is right about what she expects from a relationship, just her means are different. Even Pyle does not smoke; he is going to marry her and that at the end will serve a similar result: safety and security for her. Starting from this point, we read that according to Fowler and Pyle, almost the only thing that matters for Phuong is to achieve security and safety in a relationship with a man. She is an object of competition between these two men, even sometimes being herself completely invisible in the competition. The winner of the 'object' will be the one who provides the highest security and safety for her. And the motives behind wanting her security and safety so badly are more clear for Fowler than for Pyle within the lines of the book. It is very difficult to understand the relationship between Fowler and Phuong without presenting Pyle into the scene.

Because of Pyle, we see Fowler realize how Phuong is important for his life and because of him Fowler decides to act at the end to divorce his wife in England.

When Fowler sees Pyle for the first time he thinks "... an unmistakably young and unused face flung at us like a dart." (17) Pyle is not a threat for Fowler yet, but it seems that the attributed qualities, being young and having an unused face, are important. Since they 'flung at us like a dart'. And until the death of Pyle, the dart is always there flung at him.

Two months later when Fowler and Phuong have their drinks at the Continent, Pyle comes across and invites them to his table. They accept the invitation and go to Pyle's table and a man called Joe, the Economic Attaché, is sitting there. Sometimes later, a drunken American reporter, Granger, comes to the table too. All of them but Phuong begin arguing about the war and the failure of the French forces as an old colonial power. Phuong is easily forgotten while the men talk about important matters. It is only Granger who seems interested in her and asks her if she has got a date. Fowler intervenes and says she has got a date every night with him. Other than being with her, it is the first time Fowler declares himself Phuong's lover. She sits and drinks her orange juice and never talks. When Pyle shows his embarrassment at Granger's attitudes, Fowler starts to like him. When Fowler and Phuong talk about Pyle, she says simply and shortly that Pyle is 'quiet'. After the Continent, Fowler, Phuong, and Pyle meet at the Chalet where there is a dancing floor. Pyle comes a little late in joining them and apologizes to Phuong for being late because he wanted to see Granger home.

'Home?' I said and laughed, and Pyle looked at me as though I were another Granger. Suddenly I saw myself as he saw me, a man of middle age, with eyes a little bloodshot, beginning to put on weight, ungraceful in love, less noisy than Granger perhaps but more cynical, less innocent, and I saw

Phuong for a moment as I had seen her first, dancing past my table at the Grand Monde in a white ball-dress, eighteen years old, watched by an elder sister who had been determined on a good European marriage. (40)

Fowler looks at himself through Pyle's eyes and sees an ugly man, and even thinks he is more cynical and less innocent than Granger. But perhaps the real emphasis here is about age. Looking at Pyle, he sees and feels himself old and emotionally corrupt. He remembers the past at a time when he first saw Phuong, young, attractive and dancing. It seems that sitting there with Phuong and Pyle, Fowler somewhat feels that he does not have a place in this picture among two young and innocent people. When Phuong's sister joins them the attention shifts to Pyle. Phuong's sister, seeing the young American as an opportunity for her sister, asks many questions about his work and family. Fowler becomes uncomfortable and tries to interrupt the conversation continuously without much success. Fowler does not see Pyle as a threat yet, but Phuong's sister's questions make him very uncomfortable and he asks "Have you got another sister?" I asked Miss Hei. 'No. Why?' 'It sounds as though you were examining Mr Pyle's marriageability.'" (42). When the sister leaves, Phuong and Pyle dance. Fowler watches them dancing without much jealousy. He is in love with Phuong again and happy to have her. Everything seems fine. Because of Pyle, Fowler starts to realize and thinks how important Phuong is in his life.

Why should I want to die when Phuong slept beside me every night? But I knew the answer to that question. From childhood I had never believed in permanence, and yet I had longed for it. Always I was afraid of losing happiness. This month, next year, Phuong would leave me. If not next year, in three years. Death was the only absolute value in my world. Lose life and one would lose nothing again for ever. (44)

Here Fowler expresses his love for Phuong. But it is not as simple as this. He confesses the nature of his love for Phuong. When the paragraph is analyzed closely, there is more than love expressed here. What we see is Fowler's idea of love and what Phuong means to him. As if said in a psychologist's coach, the confession belongs not just to the present time but expands to his childhood. He is not afraid of dying but of being left alone, or, in other words, of dying alone. Fowler's love for Phuong now has a different meaning. He does not care to die as long as Phuong is there at the end. But then, one may not see Phuong at the centre of his love. Rather, he hopes Phuong will be with him permanently, but what he really pursues is someone who will end his loneliness, who will end his fear of dying alone. As can be seen in various sections of the book, Phuong does not look like Fowler's lover but like a kind of anchor he can safely hold onto while time is passing and he is getting older. Even Phuong's role in the book is very consistent with that. She is almost always presented as a third person and wanted both by Fowler and Pyle for their own reasons. Someone may think that Phuong has the last word, that she is the powerful one to choose one of the competitors, i.e. Fowler or Pyle, but in reality she is out of the decision circle. Fowler, Pyle and her sister Hei all want the best for Phuong and thus have the real power. "One always spoke of her like that in the third person as though she were not there. Sometimes she seemed invisible like peace." (44)

Until Pyle comes between Fowler and Phuong, Fowler thinks he is at home in Vietnam and even the war has its routine as a part of life. There is somehow an attained equilibrium in Fowler's life that goes smoothly till Pyle comes in and now home is not as it used to be. In one of his visits to Hanoi, when Fowler talks with a French officer, he says he is going back: "Home?" Pietri asked, throwing a four-to-one. 'No. England,'" (68) and in his letter to the Managing Editor he writes "... Indeed, if I could afford it I would resign rather than return to the U.K." (72) For Fowler, Vietnam is home, not where he was born. Phuong may be the most important reason why he feels he is home in Vietnam. That is why Fowler slowly but surely starts to feel insecure when he

realizes Pyle is also interested in Phuong. Home, it seems, has not a solid place in Fowler's mind. There is a place that he can go back to but he does not consider it as home and there is another place he thinks of as home as long as Phuong is with him. So, home is where Phuong is. But, as Fowler explains, since he does not believe in permanency (44), all the homes are temporary to him. There are no fixed locations in his life. He belongs to nowhere, to no one, and he is always an outsider. As we will see through the book, involvement (or not involvement) is an important issue for Fowler in terms of relationships, war, love, etc. So, where the home is is a question Fowler himself tries to figure out. According to Kerr, Fowler "...appears to take no pride, and much interest, in his writing, which is valuable to him providing him a professional reason for staying in Vietnam" (Kerr, 96). 'Reporting' is only a means for him to stay with Phuong and he is careful not to risk expulsion by filling news that would displease the French authorities.

When Pyle first met with Phuong and danced with her at the Chalet, Fowler was not concerned very much and was not jealous at that time, other than of Pyle's youth and innocence. However when he goes to Phat Diem to report how the war is going on and he experiences horrible deaths, he cannot sleep. It is death and love coming together in the sleepless night:

I wondered, but oddly without jealousy, whether Phuong was at the flat. The possession of a body tonight seemed a very small thing - perhaps that day I had seen too many bodies which belonged to no one, not even to themselves. We were all expendable. When I fell asleep I dreamed of Pyle. He was dancing all by himself on a stage, stiffly, with his arms held out to an invisible partner, and I sat and watched him from a seat like a musical stool with a gun in my hand in case anyone should interfere with his dance. A programme set up by the stage, like the numbers in an English music-hall, read, "The

Dance of Love."A" certificate.' Somebody moved at the back of the theatre and I held my gun tighter. Then I woke. (55)

The role of the gun in the dream is strange. Pyle was dancing with an 'invisible' partner and it is questionable whether the gun in Fowler's hand was really for protecting Pyle as he so believed. Here we see that Fowler's attention shifts from himself to Pyle. He has some hidden doubts about Pyle's intentions: 'The Dance of Love' and an 'invisible' partner. Fowler unconsciously worries that Pyle perhaps is a threat after all and he needs to protect his love or to correct his way of life. His home is threatened. He wakes up suddenly with a man standing at the doorway, the gun ready in his hand, as in his dream. The unexpected visitor is Pyle.

Fowler not fully awake, his first question is from where he got the helmet. For sometime mundane conversation goes on before Fowler ask why he is there. Finally Pyle confesses that he came to tell Fowler that he fell in love with Phuong.

I laughed. I couldn't help it. He was so unexpected and serious. I said, 'Couldn't you have waited till I got back? I shall be in Saigon next week.'

'You might have been killed,' he said. 'It wouldn't have been honorable. And then I don't know if I could have stayed away from Phuong all that time.'

'You mean you *have* stayed away?' 'Of course. You don't think I'll tell *her* - without you knowing?'

'People do,' I said. 'When did it happen?'

'I guess it was that night at the Chalet, dancing with her.'

'I didn't think you ever got close enough.' (57)

The 'invisible' dancing partner of Pyle is Phuong. The situation is very absurd for Fowler and he still cannot take Pyle's confession seriously. What surprises Fowler more than Pyle's love for Phuong are his very different attitudes and his coming to the hot war zone to say he fell in love with Phuong without thinking about being killed on the way. He is much unexpected and straight that Fowler cannot control the events. Pyle is not like others, and is thus very difficult to handle for Fowler. Pyle's motives are unusual too. He thinks Phuong needs protection, and since Fowler does not provide the protection, he decides to step in. He is an honorable man because, if Fowler and Phuong were married, he would not intervene.

'You seem pretty sure you *can* come between,' I said.
For the first time he had irritated me.

...

'I can call you Tom, can't I? I feel in a way this has brought us together. Loving the same woman, I mean.'

'What's your next move?'

He sat up enthusiastically against the packing-cases.
'Everything seems different now that you know,' he said. 'I shall ask her to marry me, Tom.'

'I'd rather you called me Thomas.'

'She'll just have to choose between us, Thomas. That's fair enough.' But was it fair? I felt for the first time the premonitory chill of loneliness. It was all fantastic, and yet . . . He might be a poor lover, but I was the poor man. He had in his hand the infinite riches of respectability. . He began to undress and I thought, 'He has youth too.' How sad it was to envy Pyle.

I said, 'I can't marry her. I have a wife at home. She would never divorce me. She's High Church - if you know what that means.'

'I'm sorry, Thomas. By the way, my name's Alden, if you'd care . .

.'

'I'd rather stick to Pyle,' I said. 'I think of you as Pyle.'

He got into his sleeping-bag and stretched his hand out for the candle. 'Whew,' he said, 'I'm glad that's over, Thomas. I've been feeling awfully bad about it.' It was only too evident that he no longer did. (58)

When Pyle comes to see Fowler just to inform him that he loves Phuong and will offer her his protection, Fowler is no longer laughing. It is not Fowler's permission Pyle is asking or Fowler's opinion about the prospect. He seems sure he has much to offer, at least more than Fowler, and as an honorable man Pyle is simply informing him. What irritates Fowler is that he sees Pyle can be right in being so sure that Phuong may choose him. He feels the 'chill of loneliness' at the prospect of Phuong's leaving. Loneliness seems to be the ultimate concern here again. Fowler's nature or centre of love feeds on his fear of being left alone and dying alone. His excuse, or a kind of begging, is full of sadness when he says he cannot divorce his wife in England. It does not matter for Pyle. It is a kind of 'survival of the fittest' and since Fowler is not up to it, he must step aside as a gentleman. However, Fowler's love may seem selfish, but it is nonetheless understandable. There is a strong emotion, an anxiety that is common and shared by many people. To understand why Pyle loves Phuong is much more difficult. He wants to protect her. He wants her to be happy. But why he loves her is not clear, other than perhaps he simply fell in love with her. Pyle's way of handling the matter, such as his informing Fowler, looks more like making business. Just before sleeping, because of the explosion outside, they resume their conversation. And interestingly Pyle wants help from Fowler about Phuong, he asks his advice as if everything is settled and Fowler already gave her up. It is business for Pyle and he has the upper hand to win the contract.

'You've seen so much more of the world than I have. You know, in some ways Boston is a bit - cramping. Even if you aren't a Lowell or a Cabot. I wish you'd advise me, Thomas.'

'What about?'

'Phuong.'

'I wouldn't trust my advice if I were you. I'm biased. I want to keep her.'

'Oh, but I know you're straight, absolutely straight, and we both have her interests at heart.'

Suddenly I couldn't bear his boyishness any more. I said, 'I don't care that for her interests. You can have her interests. I only want her body. I want her in bed with me. I'd rather ruin her and sleep with her than, than . . . look after her damned interests.' (59)

Pyle, very logically, believes that both of them want what is best for Phuong and thus expects Fowler to advise him. But Fowler is not cooperative on this matter. He seems defensive when asking Pyle to leave Phuong alone. For Pyle, Fowler's outburst is nothing but a manifestation of his suffering. He does not understand why Fowler is so angry. Since both of them want Phuong to be happy, then the logical thing would be for one to leave, and in this case it is obviously Fowler who should leave. It is not fair for Pyle to leave because he can provide safety and security to Phuong with a marriage while Fowler has a wife in England and will one day leave her behind when he has to go back. The turns of the conversation also present problems for Fowler in that he cannot anticipate where the conversation is going and this makes him angry. He is not in control of the situation or the conversation. There is a serious gap between the two men's understanding. According to Pyle, it is very natural to intervene, 'These things happen. I wish it had happened to anybody else but you. Are those our mortars?' (60). He is not even concerned with what Fowler thinks or feels.

The matter is settled and 'let's go back to our other business' is his manner. 'Pyle got away from Phat Diem the morning he arrived: he had fulfilled his mission - to speak to me about Phuong, and there was nothing to keep him.' (62) Neither of them understands the other accurately. For Fowler, Pyle too is a very different species. He does not know what to make of him. Coming all the way to inform Fowler that he is in love with Phuong, Pyle thus completes his mission and goes back as he came, suddenly as if nothing happened. '...he was as incapable of imagining pain or danger to himself as he was incapable of conceiving the pain he might cause others.' (62) When Fowler reaches Hanoi he finds a note from Pyle saying: "There are not many men who would have taken the whole thing so calmly. You were great, and I don't feel half as mean as I did, now that I've told you." (63). Pyle, so concentrated on his mission, or merely ignorant, dismisses Fowler's anger and what he had told him in return. And at the end of his note Pyle promises not to see Phuong until Fowler returns, which is a proper thing to do. He angrily thinks:

Again that calm assumption that 'later' it would be I who would lose Phuong. Is confidence based on a rate of exchange? We used to speak of sterling qualities. Have we got to talk now about a dollar love? A dollar love, of course, would include marriage and Junior and Mother's Day, even though later it might include Reno or the Virgin Islands or wherever they go nowadays for their divorces. A dollar love had good intentions, a clear conscience, and to Hell with everybody. But my love had no intentions: it knew the future. All one could do was try to make the future less hard, to break the future gently when it came, and even opium had its value there. But I never foresaw that the first future I would have to break to Phuong would be the death of Pyle. (63)

Although the above paragraph can be read differently, for the sake of examining Fowler and Phuong's relationship, we will take it literally for now. Fowler compares himself with Pyle with the use of an analogy of 'sterling quality' and 'a dollar love'. 'A dollar love' is portrayed as Pyle's attitude. It has good intentions, a clear conscience, and the rest is not important. On the other hand, 'sterling quality', Fowler's love has no intentions. All he tries to do is to make the future bearable when it comes. Fowler is a living human being while Pyle is a man of bookish ideas "I knew then he was already forming his phrases in the style he had learnt from York Harding." (62) A man 'incapable of imagining pain'. No real qualities of human or 'sterling quality'. Thus someone can doubt if even Pyle is capable of loving somebody. When they are back, Pyle visits Fowler with his dog and Phuong is not at home. Pyle talks about his first dog which was run over when he was a child. Fowler, curious about his emotion, then asks if he was upset. Pyle replies:

'Oh, I minded a lot. He meant a great deal to me, but one has to be sensible. Nothing could bring him back.'

'And if you lose Phuong, will you be sensible?'

'Oh yes, I hope so. And you?'

'I doubt it. I might even run amok. Have you thought about that, Pyle?'

...

'Of course I haven't. (75)

It is 'a dollar love', very rational. His dog's or Phuong's death does not much matter, 'one has to be sensible' according to Pyle. Fowler, by asking the question, one may think that he already knows Pyle's answers and he is trying to comfort himself that he has an advantage here against Pyle. He says he even may run amok if he ever loses Phuong. The last question Fowler asks hangs on for a while and not properly replied to by Pyle at the end, or replied to as Fowler expected.

At some point in the conversation between Fowler and Pyle, Phuong comes home explaining that her sister was not in. Pyle welcomes Phuong as one of his family and blushes when he says he is very pleased to see her again. This is one of the rare events in which we see Pyle showing his emotions. Fowler feels himself an intruder. Unfortunately, Pyle's French and Phuong's English are not good enough to communicate between themselves. Fowler, feeling as an intruder, interestingly offers his services as an interpreter seeing the situation.

'I'll act as interpreter,' I said. "The local accent takes some getting used to. Now what do you want to say? Sit down, Phuong. Monsieur Pyle has come specially to see you. Are you sure,' I added to Pyle, 'that you wouldn't like me to leave you two alone?

'I want you to hear everything I have to say. It wouldn't be fair otherwise.'

'Well, fire away.'

...

... I translated for him with meticulous care - it sounded worse that way, and Phuong sat quiet with her hands in her lap as though she were listening to a movie.

'Has she understood that?' he asked.

'As far as I can tell. You don't want me to add a little fire to it, do you?'

'Oh no,' he said, 'just translate. I don't want to sway her emotionally.' 'I see.'

'Tell her I want to marry her.'

I told her.

'What was that she said?'

'She asked me if you were serious. I told her you were the serious type.'

'I suppose this is an odd situation,' he said. 'Me asking you to translate.'

'Rather odd.'

'And yet it seems so natural. After all you are my best friend.'

'It's kind of you to say so.'

'There's nobody I'd go to in trouble sooner than you,' he said.

'And I suppose being in love with my girl is a kind of trouble?'

'Of course. I wish it was anybody but you, Thomas.'

'Well, what do I say to her next? That you can't live without her?'

'No, that's too emotional. It's not quite true either. I'd have to go away, of course, but one gets over everything.'

'While you are thinking what to say, do you mind if I put in a word for myself?'

'No, of course not, it's only fair, Thomas.'

'Well, Phuong,' I said, 'are you going to leave me for him? He'll marry you. I can't. You know why.'

'Are you going away?' she asked and I thought of the editor's letter in my pocket.

'No.'

'Never?'

'How can one promise that? He can't either. Marriages break. Often they break quicker than an affair like ours.'

'I do not want to go,' she said, but the sentence was not comforting; it contained an unexpressed 'but'. (76-7)

As can be seen from the long quotation above, Fowler is very helpful indeed. Although it seems funny to read the lines Fowler is translating for Pyle, his real intention is not to help. It is very rational, something that we do not expect from Fowler but from Pyle. It is more like Fowler finally accepts the challenge and he wants to know what Pyle has to say and what decision Phuong is going to make. This translating business does not bother Pyle; he trusts

Fowler in translating and wants him to hear everything he has to say. Otherwise it would not be 'fair'. He is right to trust Fowler who translates Pyle's sentences 'with meticulous care'. Phuong, as somewhere else in the book, is a passive subject and listens to the translation as if it is about someone else. The only question she asks is whether Pyle is serious about proposing to her. She is 'invisible' even when someone proposes to her.

According to Pyle, the situation is odd because Fowler helps him with the translation, but at the same time it is very natural because he is his best friend. However, he is not troubled to ask his best friend's girl friend to marry him. He fell in love with her and it is only fair for her to decide based on the advantages and disadvantages of the candidates, 'a dollar love' situation. Other than Pyle's saying that he fell in love with Phuong when they danced together, there is no other emotion of his mentioned in the previous pages. When Fowler offers to say, on behalf of Pyle, he cannot live without her, Pyle take this offer seriously and finds it too emotional and also not true. So it is difficult to see what Pyle finds in Phuong and what love means to him. While Pyle thinks what to say next, Fowler asks Phuong if she is going to leave him for Pyle and says he can marry her which is not possible for him. Fowler also plays fair as Pyle does. But it seems that the terms are set by Pyle and, by accepting them, Fowler has no chance at all. Phuong wants to know if he would stay with her. Fowler has no direct answer for that and tries to convince Phuong that Pyle cannot promise that too. We understand that actually Fowler and Phuong are after similar things if not the same thing; a life-long lasting relationship, safety and not left behind alone. Therefore Pyle has an advantage over Fowler in this competition of winning Phuong. Seeing that he is losing Phuong, Fowler starts to tease Pyle and gives up playing nice when Pyle mentions that he can supply his medical certificate and blood type if she wants to see them. He is not rich, Pyle says, but will have about fifty thousand dollars when his father dies. "Is that how you make love in America - figures of income and blood-group?" (78) Fowler asks. So the conversation goes on:

'Tell her I don't expect her to love me right away. That will come in time, but tell her what I offer is security and respect. That doesn't sound very exciting, but perhaps it's better than passion.'

'She can always get passion,' I said, 'with your chauffeur when you are away at the office.'

Pyle blushed. He got awkwardly to his feet and said, "That's a dirty crack. I won't have her insulted. You've no right...'

'She's not your wife yet.'

'What can you offer her?' he asked with anger. 'A couple of hundred dollars when you leave for England, or will you pass her on with the furniture?'

"The furniture isn't mine.'

'She's not either. Phuong, will you marry me?'

'What about the blood-group?' I said. 'And a health certificate. You'll need hers, surely? Maybe you ought to have mine too. And her horoscope - no, that's an Indian custom.'

'Will you marry me?'

'Say it in French,' I said, 'I'm damned if I'll interpret for you anymore.' (78)

That is where we see what kind of relationship Pyle has in his mind. Love may come in time. He wants to protect her by offering security and respect. Passion has no place in his love. He is rational and what he offers is better than passion. When Fowler jokes that Phuong may get passion from somewhere else, we see that maybe for the first time Pyle gets angry, leaving rationality for a while. But then he counters Fowler with the calm rationality again by asking him what he has to offer. And in all this time, Phuong just watches as she has nothing to do with all these absurd arguments about her. It is a bargain which

Fowler seems bound to lose. But when Phuong answers Pyle's proposal at the end with a simple 'no', both Fowler and Pyle are shocked. They fall silent trying to understand if they heard correctly. They are as surprised as if Phuong suddenly materialized from thin air. She became visible even for a short time. "For her inner life is a blind spot to these Western men, a linguistically impenetrable hinterland that is beyond representation" (Kerr, 100) Fowler, relaxed, stops mocking Pyle and invites him to drink something. Pyle, deciding the competition is over and embarrassed for losing his control when arguing with Fowler says the best man wins. As a last wish before leaving he expresses his concern for Phuong and hopes that Fowler will not leave her behind and that he will marry her. Moreover, he hopes his friendship with Fowler will continue without any hard feelings until he gets his transfer to somewhere else. We see that even Fowler is confused by this turn of events and he has difficulty in understanding that Pyle sincerely wants him to marry Phuong.

Phuong's reply to Pyle's proposal gives Fowler a renewed hope to write to his wife to ask her to understand that he cannot return to England and that he wants a divorce. He does not hide Phuong from his wife and explains that he loves her very much. "...she has been very loyal to me, but I know I'm not essential to her. If I leave her, she'll be a little unhappy I think, but there won't be any tragedy. She'll marry someone else and have a family." (Greene, 80) From these sentences we understand how Fowler perceives his relationship with Phuong. Phuong is the loyal one and Fowler is the loving one. The loyalty of Phuong is the key here. Although Fowler does not believe in permanency, he still wants it. It is with Phuong that he hopes to end his fear of loneliness. However, like Pyle, Fowler also believes that all depends on providing security and promising not to leave Phuong by herself. Fowler has an orientalist image of Phuong in his mind that if he leave her behind she will find someone else without too much tragedy. The loyalty goes as far as that he provides what she needs. The lines below show what Phuong' expectations are.

I said, 'He's young.'

'Who?'

'Pyle.'

'That's not so important.'

'I would marry you if I could, Phuong.'

'I think so, but my sister does not believe it.'

'I have just written to my wife and I have asked her to divorce me. I have never tried before. There is always a chance.'

'A big chance?'

'No, but a small one.'

'Don't worry. Smoke.'

...

'I could come with you. I would like to see London.'

'It would be very uncomfortable for you if we were not married.'

'But perhaps your wife will divorce you.'

'Perhaps.'

'I will come with you anyway,' she said. She meant it, but I could see in her eyes the long train of thoughts begin, as she lifted the pipe again and began to warm the pellet of opium. (81-2)

It is interesting to see how fast and easily Phuong forgets about Pyle, who just has proposed her a while ago. Fowler, after a second pipe and the whisky he had with Pyle, says the truth that he has been called back to England. That is when Phuong feels insecure and has doubts about Fowler. When she tries to talk casually, she asks if there are skyscrapers in London and at another time she talks about seeing the Statue of Liberty, both of which remind Fowler of America.

Returning from Tanyin to attend a festival at the Holy See, Fowler and Pyle together have to take shelter in a mud tower with two guards when Fowler's car runs out of gas. They have nothing to do but talk to pass the time until the sun rises. And naturally at some point it is Phuong they start to talk

about in particular and of women in general. Fowler, answering Pyle's question about women, says he needs nobody but Phuong. Pyle goes further asking Fowler's deepest sexual experience he has had. His reply is "Lying in bed early one morning and watching a woman in a red dressing-gown brush her hair". (103) Step by step with Pyle we learn why Fowler came to the East and what Phuong really means to him.

'Was Phuong the girl in the red dressing-gown?'

I wished that he hadn't asked that question.

'No,' I said, 'that woman came earlier. When I left my wife.'

'What happened?' 'I left her, too.'

'Why?'

Why indeed? 'We are fools,' I said, 'when we love. I was terrified of losing her. I thought I saw her changing - I don't know if she really was, but I couldn't bear the uncertainty any longer. I ran towards the finish just like a coward runs towards the enemy and wins a medal. I wanted to get death over.'

'Death?'

'It was a kind of death. Then I came east.'

'And found Phuong?'

'Yes.'

"But don't you find the same thing with Phuong? "

'Not the same. You see, the other one loved me. I was afraid of losing love. Now I'm only afraid of losing Phuong.' Why had I said that, I wondered? He didn't need encouragement from me.

'But she loves you, doesn't she?'

'Not like that. It isn't in their nature. You'll find that out. It's a cliché to call them children - but there's one thing which is childish. They love you in return for kindness, security, the presents you give them - they hate you for a blow or an

injustice. They don't know what it's like - just walking into a room and loving a stranger. For an aging man, Pyle, it's very secure - she won't run away from home so long as the home is happy.'

I hadn't meant to hurt him. I only realized I had done it when he said with muffled anger, 'She might prefer greater security or more kindness.'

'Perhaps.'

'Aren't you afraid of that? '

'Not so much as I was of the other.'

'Do you love her at all? '

'Oh yes, Pyle, yes. But that other way I've only loved once.' (103-4)

Not seeing Pyle as a threat anymore after *Phuong's* refusal, and maybe because of the danger of being killed at night in the mud tower, Fowler replies to Pyle's questions without any reservation about very intimate subjects. Even when Pyle asks him a very sensitive question, Fowler chooses to reply to it, if not very willingly. Fowler did not run away from England because of some difficulties he had had with his wife but from the fear of being left by a woman who loved him. He was terrified of losing this woman and his fear of losing was a kind of death for him. He makes an interesting comparison when Pyle asks if he did not the same thing with *Phuong*. According to him, he is now only afraid of losing *Phuong* and not of losing love. It does not mean that he does not love *Phuong*. Since now he is the loving one, there is no need to be afraid of losing this love. He is, sort of, in control by making this distinction. He tries 'to get death over' by this way. Here again it is from Fowler, as an observer/reporter, that we learn about *Phuong's* (and orient women's) way of love. He says she does not love as a Westerner loves, it is not in their nature. She (they) love more like children. There is no passion involved in their love. Fowler finds this very secure for an aging man. What Fowler claims here looks almost the same as

Pyle's ideas when proposing to Phuong. He sees that too, and with anger, suggests that Phuong may prefer greater security or more kindness. Although Fowler and Pyle seem to be in agreement about what Phuong wants and needs, they do not understand each other's reasons for wanting Phuong. Fowler again and again repeats the same things:

'...I just don't want to be alone in my last decade, that's all. I wouldn't know what to think about all day long. I'd sooner have a woman in the same room - even one I didn't love. But if Phuong left me, would I have the energy to find another? . . .'

'If that's all she means to you . . .'

'All, Pyle? Wait until you're afraid of living ten years alone with no companion and a nursing home at the end of it. Then you'll start running in any direction, even away from that girl in the red dressing-gown, to find someone, anyone, who will last until you are through.' (104-105)

With Pyle, Fowler is continuously concerned about his old age. Till he met Pyle, there was no need to worry about living the last decades of his life alone. Phuong was his as long as he cared about her; she would be there beside him always preparing his pipe. When they escape from the mud tower and Pyle celebrates their successful run, saying they made it, Fowler bitterly thinks "...and even in my pain I wondered what we'd made: for me, old age, an editor's chair, loneliness..." (111) Pyle tries to help Fowler on the road because of his injured leg and Fowler says the weight is on him. Pyle says:

'I can stick it, I'm young.' He had meant the claim humorously, but it struck as cold as the mud. I had intended to apologize for the way my pain had spoken, but now it spoke again. 'You're young all right. You can afford to wait, can't you?'

'I don't get you, Thomas.' (111)

He is still afraid of losing Phuong to Pyle and almost begs him to understand how badly he needs Phuong and has no energy to start over with somebody else. He desperately wants Pyle to leave them alone. Pyle does not understand him. The gap between them is too big.

Checking out of the hospital, he comes home with some uncertainty that Phuong may not be there. But she is, and he with a great relief he thinks everything is the same as before. He is glad to be 'home'. The following paragraphs show well why Fowler is so fond of Phuong and afraid of losing her, his probable reason for running away to Vietnam, which he now calls home, and why he is so reluctant to return back to England.

She told me that she had missed me, which of course was what I wanted to hear: she always told me what I wanted to hear, like a coolie answering questions, unless by accident. Now I awaited the accident. (115)

...

'Kiss me, Phuong.' She had no coquetry. She did at once what I asked and she went on with the story of the film. Just so she would have made love if I had asked her to, straight away, peeling off her trousers without question, and afterwards have taken up the thread of Mme Bompierre's story and the postmaster's predicament. (116)

Unlike his wife and the woman who loved him in England, Phuong is the perfect woman he is looking for. She is here to please him as long as he treats her with kindness, provides for her needs, and gives her security as if she were a child. And after loyalty, we see that Fowler loves Phuong for her obedience too. He feels secure and strong. His thinking thus is not a bad thing for both sides are happy that way. It is in their 'nature' to be like that, and taking advantage of this nature only benefits both sides. This logic, also applicable to Pyle, he realizes is

what makes matters problematic. As rightly put by Pyle, “She might prefer greater security and more kindness” (104) Thus, Pyle and what he promises Phuong always haunt Fowler.

Back at Saigon, seeing a telegram opened, Fowler asks if Phuong has opened the letter from England. Phuong says she does not read his private letters and 'What are you afraid of?' Phuong asked, and I thought, 'I'm afraid of the loneliness, of the Press Club and the bedsitting room, I'm afraid of Pyle.' (117).

He reads his wife's letter but stops form time to time to think how badly he injured his wife, a fact that comes back to him in every line of the letter. The letter actually explains Fowler to himself: “I always believed you loved Anne more than the rest of us until you packed up and went. Now you seem to be planning to leave another woman because I can tell from your letter that you don't really expect a ‘favorable’ reply. (118) His wife reminds him of the exact phrase he had used when they were trying to save their marriage, a phrase about how losing Phuong would be the end of life for him. “...and I suppose you wrote in the same way to Anne. You say that we've always tried to tell the truth to each other, but, Thomas, your truth is always so temporary.” (119) What is different this time is, as his wife states correctly, his age. Just as Fowler has confessed to Pyle, he has no energy left to start over with another woman. His wife's letter finalizes with a ‘no’ reply about divorcing him. Seeing his face, Phuong asks if the answer is no. Fowler lies that his wife has not yet decided and there is still hope. Phuong suggests to him to make a settlement but he has no savings and he says “I can't outbid Pyle.” (120) It is always Pyle, and he behaves as if to confirm his wife's thoughts that he is not really expecting a ‘favorable’ reply. However he chooses to lie to Pyle by writing that his wife is near divorcing him and that he can stop worrying about Phuong since he is here to stay. He asks Phuong to post the letter he wrote to Pyle. “Then I lay back and in the relaxation of the opium I thought ‘At least she won't leave me now before I go, and perhaps, somehow, tomorrow, after a few more pipes, I shall think of a

way to remain” (121) It is because of his fear that he behaves and acts like that, not only because of selfishness. Gaining more time, life goes on for a while until Pyle finds out that Fowler is lying about staying in Vietnam and the competition between them starts again.

... 'I trusted you, Thomas.'

'You shouldn't trust anyone when there's a woman in the case.'

... 'Couldn't you have won without lying?'

'No. This is European duplicity, Pyle. We have to make up for our lack of supplies.' (131)

'Can't you explain, Thomas, why . . . !'

'Surely it's obvious enough. I wanted to keep her.'

'At any cost to her?'

'Of course.'

'That's not love.'

'Perhaps it's not your way of love, Pyle.'

'I want to protect her.'

'I don't. She doesn't need protection. I want her around, I want her in my bed.' 'Against her will?'

'She wouldn't stay against her will, Pyle.' (132)

Pyle is very disappointed with Fowler and expects a rational explanation from him. He is disappointed because Fowler was his best friend. But he does not easily give up on Fowler. He expects and hopes for a good, rational explanation. Again we see how different they are ('a dollar love' against 'sterling quality'). All the conversations between them in the mud tower have not solved the understanding gap. It seems that, for Pyle, only the rational behaviors have meanings that he is capable of understanding. Even when Fowler says he wants to keep Phuong at any cost, this does not satisfy Pyle and he looks for a more solid response from Fowler. According to him, love is protection.

While Fowler and Pyle are arguing about what is for Phuong, she looks unconcerned and, as she always does, she looks at one of her picture books. She becomes invisible again. It is in their nature. Since they are like children, she leaves the important decisions to be taken by the adults, Fowler and Pyle. They will look after her interests. Phuong is the ideal woman for Fowler simply because of their distinct nature. As Fowler learns that Phuong is aware of his lie since last night, he says she might have been furious but then continues "...but you are Phuong, you are no fury." (132) Turning to Pyle, Fowler: "'Love's a Western word,' I said. 'We use it for sentimental reasons or to cover up an obsession with one woman. These people don't suffer from obsessions.'" (133) It is not very clear here who is obsessed with one woman and whose actions represents the Western word 'love'. It seems that he tries not only to convince Pyle but also himself.

'You'll just keep her as a comfortable lay until you leave.'

'She's a human being, Pyle. She's capable of deciding.'

'On faked evidence. And a child at that.'

'She's no child. She's tougher than you'll ever be. Do you know the kind of polish that doesn't take scratches? That's Phuong. She can survive a dozen of us. She'll get old, that's all. She'll suffer from childbirth and hunger and cold and rheumatism, but she'll never suffer like we do from thoughts, obsessions - she won't scratch, she'll only decay.' But even while I made my speech and watched her turn the page (a family group with Princess Anne), I knew I was inventing a character just as much as Pyle was. One never knows another human being; for all I could tell, she was as scared as the rest of us: she didn't have the gift of expression, that was all. (133-4)

Fowler's reply about Phuong's not being a child looks contradictory, as if he is manipulating the words for his own interests. With his lie known to Pyle,

Phuong, and her sister, Fowler just tries to do everything he can think of to keep Phuong. He knows that Phuong is slipping away from him, and maybe more than trying to convince Pyle, he invents a strong character to convince himself that when he has left for England Phuong will be okay. Pyle tells Phuong that she has been cheated and asks her to go with him, but she does not understand him.

The following weeks are very hard for Fowler to live through. Every day he comes home he expects Phuong to have left. Uncertainty makes him suspicious and cruel to Phuong. When Phuong is not home, he is not able to do anything but be anxious. And when is home, instead of treating her with 'kindness', he acts as if he hates her.

...but what I hated was the future. Loneliness lay in my bed and I took loneliness into my arms at night. She didn't change; she cooked for me, she made my pipes, she gently and sweetly laid out her body for my pleasure (but it was no longer a pleasure), and just as in those early days I wanted her mind, now I wanted to read her thoughts, but they were hidden away in a language I couldn't speak. (140)

For Fowler, even life at home going on as it used to is not enough anymore. He wants more from Phuong. He wants to conquer her completely. It is not her body or mind he desires to have, but he wants her thoughts too. And since her thoughts are out of his reach, he becomes crueler. He tries to avoid questioning her openly, afraid of lies which in turn leads to teasing her. Instead of directly talking about Pyle, he discredits anything related to America. "It was as though she were being taken away from me by a nation rather than by a man. Nothing that America could do was right." (140)

One day, after a bombing incident, Fowler goes home and finds a note saying that Phuong is out with her sister. He lies down on the bed but when he

wakes up she is still not home. Fowler checks a drawer where Phuong keeps her scarves, they are not there. And when he sees that one of her favorite books is missing from the bookshelf, he understands that she is gone. He lost her.

In the moment of shock there is little pain; pain began about three a.m. when I began to plan the life I had still somehow to live and to remember memories in order somehow to eliminate them. Happy memories are the worst, and I tried to remember the unhappy. I was practiced. I had lived all this before. I knew I could do what was necessary, but I was so much older - I felt I had little energy left to reconstruct. (145)

Losing Phuong at first does not strike hard. Fowler needs time to comprehend; the shock has a tranquilizing effect on him. He knows just too well the psychology of the break-up situation. He is an experienced man. He knows the process, timing, and order of the feelings that will come inevitably. Again, there is a difference from past experiences now that he is not young anymore. Knowing what to do does not mean he can do it again. As he explained several times to Pyle, he does not feel he has enough energy to start over. Therefore forgetting his role of almost forcing Phuong to leave him, the first thing he does after the shock is go see Pyle. According to him, it is Pyle's fault. He does not take responsibility for his own actions even though Phuong had chosen to stay with him instead of going with Pyle.

Fowler goes north to see the war, leaving in hope of lessening his pain and to 'eliminate' his memories of Phuong. But when he returns back to Saigon he feels very lonely. Nobody welcomes him at the airport. He does not want to go home where a lot of memories are waiting for him. To himself he thinks: "Is the pain a little less than when I went away?" and tried to persuade himself that it was so. When I reached the landing I saw that the door was open, and I became breathless with an unreasonable hope." (154) But it is not Phuong as he hoped

for. They exchange some casual sentences at first, and then Fowler asks if they are married yet. Pyle says that it will be proper to marry her in America. Fowler surprises Pyle by advising him about Phuong, saying how fragile she is and he should not force things etc. He even tries to convince Pyle that he is happy that he is marrying her.

'I'm so glad, Thomas. I can't tell you how glad I am. I've said it before, I know, but I do really wish it hadn't been you.'

'I'm glad it's you, Pyle.' The interview had not been the way I had foreseen: under the superficial angry schemes, at some deeper level, the genuine plan of action must have been formed. (156)

This is where Fowler decides, as he says unconsciously, that Pyle should be eliminated. It is not because of Phuong, but she does have her share in the reason for this decision.

After Pyle's death, Phuong stays with Fowler again. One night Phuong tells Fowler about a movie she went to. The movie was about two lovers in the French Revolution with an unhappy ending. There is a telegram waiting to be opened. Fowler thinks the telegram is about business and he has to go north. But it is from his wife telling that her lawyer will start the divorce proceedings. He reads the telegram aloud for Phuong to hear. She jumps from the bed, happy, and wants to go to her sister to deliver the good news. Fowler, thinking Pyle can harm no one anymore, asks Phuong:

'Do you miss him much?'

'Who?'

'Pyle.' Strange how even now, even to her, it was impossible to use his first name.

'Can I go, please? My sister will be so excited.'

'You spoke his name once in your sleep.'

'I never remember my dreams.'

'There was so much you could have done together. He was young.'

'You are not old.'

'The skyscrapers. The Empire State Building.' She said with a small hesitation, 'I want to see the Cheddar Gorge.'

'It isn't the Grand Canyon.' I pulled her down on to the bed, 'I'm sorry, Phuong.'

'What are you sorry for? It is a wonderful telegram. My sister ...'

'Yes go and tell your sister. Kiss me first.' Her excited mouth skated over my face, and she was gone. (189)

The last lines of the book are actually very sad. Phuong's answer about missing Pyle shows that all the pain he suffered was in vain. The actual question was not only if she missed him, but if she missed him *much*. Phuong did not recognize or chose not to recognize who was asked. Pyle was already forgotten. What she wanted is to go to her sister to tell the good news that she will be the wife of Fowler. When Fowler, sadly, says they would have been a good match, she comforts him that he is not old and does not understand why he is sorry after the wonderful news.

3.2. The Relationship Between Fowler and Pyle

At the start of the book, the reader is introduced to three people; Fowler, the narrator, and a Vietnamese woman named Phuong waiting for a young American, Pyle. They are the three main characters of the book. The reader immediately knows that there is a love affair between Phuong and Pyle while Fowler seems to be left out of the love equation for some time. Fowler is bitter when remembering the past with Phuong. So it is a love story then. And as we saw above, all the elements of a love story were present. A young quiet American comes to Saigon and falls in love with the reporter's girlfriend. Then both of them compete to win the girl till the American dies.

However the book is not about a love story. Greene has carefully crafted his novel *The Quiet American* to talk about war, international politics, colonialism, invasion, nationalism and so on. Therefore, the three characters' relations are well placed to convey his opinions on the above issues. For a careful reader, everything said in the book was very well planned by Greene. Even all the reporter's inner conflicts are intentionally constructed to lead a definite moral conclusion that was finalized with the death of Pyle. After a blow in Saigon, seeing many deaths, Fowler is furious with Pyle, who supplies materials for the local warlord, General Thé. Pyle still tries to be friends with Fowler.

‘After all, Phuong was much more important than this.’

‘Do you really believe that, Pyle?’

‘Why, she's the most important thing there is. To me.

And to you, Thomas.’

‘Not to me any longer.’ (Greene, 177)

‘Not to me any longer’ means it is end of being an observer (or reporter). It is time to decide. It is time to choose a side. “‘Sooner or later,’ Heng said, and I was reminded of Captain Trouin speaking in the opium house, ‘one has to take sides. If one is to remain human.’” (174) This is what Greene says in his novel *The Quiet American*. It is ultimately about the war. It is how a human being is forced to take sides, a voyage from observer to actor. The excerpt from the Byron at the beginning of the book is thus very properly selected.

‘This is the patent age of new inventions

For Killing bodies, and saving souls,

All propagated with the best intentions.’

All three characters created by Greene are important to this end, ‘to take sides’. Even the love affairs take place among them serves the same goal. It is with the coming of Pyle that events start to unroll. Actually it is not possible to divide the book in terms of relations among and between the main characters.

Here we will focus on how the relationship with Pyle leads Fowler to take sides while Phuong is also present. As we will see, most of the time, she is the battle ground for the two men. Therefore, analyzing the characters separately here can only be superficial.

It is about six months since Fowler and Pyle have had met. When Pyle does not show up to a planned dinner with Fowler, he decides to go home, sees Phuong waiting for Pyle and invites her upstairs where she can wait for Pyle who is safe from being picked up by the police. Shutting his eyes at home, Fowler dreams of Phuong acting as if she never left him. He wonders, then, what Phuong and Pyle were talking about together.

I had suffered from his lectures on the Far East, which he had known for as many months as I had years. Democracy was another subject of his - he had pronounced and aggravating views on what the United States was doing for the world. Phuong on the other hand was wonderfully ignorant; if Hitler had come into the conversation she would have interrupted to ask who he was. The explanation would be all the more difficult because she had never met a German or a Pole and had only the vaguest knowledge of European geography, though about Princess Margaret of course she knew more than I. (12)

Fowler 'suffers' from Pyle's lectures on the Far East. With an experience few months, Pyle's lectures have little value for Fowler who has much more experience than Pyle. In addition, he was also suffering from 'aggravating' views on what the United States was doing for the world. On the other hand, he thinks, Phuong is wonderfully ignorant. While Fowler as a European and Pyle as an American are concerned with politics, Phuong is 'wonderfully ignorant'

about what happens in the world and is concerned more about Princess Margaret's life.

Phuong prepares Fowler a pipe, then a second one. He is relaxed and while inhaling opium from the pipe he says there is nothing to worry about to Phuong as much as to himself. "What a fuss we Europeans make about nothing. You shouldn't live with a man who doesn't smoke, Phuong." (14) Fussing about democracy, lecturing about world politics and love is what Fowler thinks Europeans do while people of the East know how to enjoy life. Phuong knows more than him about Princess Margaret but is ignorant about world politics, all the while men smoke opium pipes.

The same night, a policeman knocks on Fowler's door and asks him and Phuong to come to the police station at once. A French police officer, Vigot, says he is sorry to ask him to come. Fowler says he was ordered to come, not asked.

When I refused to allow him to question Phuong without me he gave way at once, with a single sigh that might have represented his weariness with Saigon, with the heat, or with the whole human condition.

He said in English, 'I'm so sorry I had to ask you to come.'

'I wasn't asked. I was ordered.'

'Oh, these native police - they don't understand.' (16)

Fowler does not portray a romantic colonial world here. He observes the French officer's weariness with Saigon, whether do to the heat or to the whole human condition. It is not a place for the Europeans to live. Even the 'native' policemen are not civilized enough to know how a person should be politely asked to a police station.

Vigot wants to learn how well Fowler knows Pyle. He says Pyle is a good guy and a serious one. "Not one of those noisy bastards at the Continental. A quiet American,' I summed him precisely up as I might have said, 'a blue lizard', 'a white elephant'." (17) He is different from the other Americans. He does not try to hide his dislike towards Americans, at least Americans in Vietnam. Vigot adds he is indeed a very quiet American and asks how he met Pyle.

Fowler remembers Pyle coming to the Continental and introducing himself as someone new in Vietnam. When he hears a sound he wants to know if it was a grenade and excitedly hopes that it was. Fowler says that it probably was not and thinks that grenades are news only for the local papers' back pages and they never make the European papers. Grenades are part of the city life in Vietnam. Fowler turns his attention to the lively street before him. But Pyle is still interested in grenades.

'The Minister's very concerned about these grenades. It would be very awkward, he says, if there was an incident - with one of us, I mean.'

'With one of you? Yes, I suppose that would be serious. Congress wouldn't like it.' Why does one want to tease the innocent? Perhaps only ten days ago he had been walking back across the Common in Boston, his arms full of the books he had been reading in advance on the Far East and the problems of China. He didn't even hear what I said; he was absorbed already in the dilemmas of Democracy and the responsibilities of the West; he was determined - I learnt that very soon - to do good, not to any individual person but to a country, a continent, a world. Well, he was in his element now with the whole universe to improve. (18)

Pyle's distinction is important here. He, very new in Vietnam, thinks in terms of 'us' and 'them'. The incident is only important if it was with one of them. Fowler, repeating Pyle's words, teases him that their congress would not like it, but then considers how young and innocent he is. Without any real experience, Fowler thinks, he is an idealist and full of ideas to change the world for good. Of course there is a little problem here: a contradiction that will lead Fowler to act. Pyle believes that they have a responsibility to the East, saving people from communism and colonialism, but at the same time ignoring incidents if they, the Westerners, are not affected.

Now, with Pyle dead, both Fowler and Vigot know that he himself caused some incidents for a greater good.

'To speak plainly', Vigot said, 'I am not altogether sorry. He was doing a lot of harm.'

'God save us always,' I said, 'from the innocent and the good.'

'The good?'

'Yes, good. You are a Roman Catholic. You wouldn't recognize his way. And anyway, he was a damned Yankee.'

(20)

They both feel relief from the Pyle's death. Fowler sounds even angry calling Pyle 'a damned Yankee'. Pyle's way was the innocent's way, full of good intentions, "...he was as incapable of imagining pain or danger to himself as he was incapable of conceiving the pain he might cause others." (62).

Vigot shows Fowler a body at the mortuary to confirm that it belongs to Pyle. Looking at him, he thinks sadly that Pyle should not be there at the first place.

He looked more than ever out of place: he should have stayed at home. I saw him in a family snapshot album, riding on a dude ranch, bathing on Long Island, photographed with his colleagues in some apartment on the twenty-third floor. He

belonged to the skyscraper and the express elevator, the ice-cream and the dry Martinis, milk at lunch, and chicken sandwiches on the Merchant Limited. (20)

All the things coming to Fowler mind here belong to the modern world of America, such as skyscrapers and elevators, etc. It is Americans, Fowler implies here, that have no business in Vietnam. With their purely academic ideas they do more harm than good, Fowler thinks. Learning from books and applying the theories to matters they do not have any real understanding of is one of their problems according to Fowler. “The Minister had a great respect for Pyle - Pyle had taken a good degree in - well, one of those subjects Americans can take degrees in: perhaps public relations or theatrecraft, perhaps even Far Eastern studies (he had read a lot of books).” (21)

When they are home, Fowler tells Phuong that Pyle is dead. She does not shed tears or show any reaction other than look like she is thinking for the future. Fowler offers her to stay with him. She nods and begins to prepare a pipe for Fowler. Fowler once again is not alone.

York Harding is the reason why Pyle comes to East. Fowler learns at the Continental that Pyle’s political ideas come from Harding’s books. Pyle asks if he ever read York Harding who wrote a book called *The Advance of Red China*.

I said, 'You know, if you live in a place for long you cease to read about it.'

'Of course I always like to know what the man on the spot has to say,' he replied guardedly.

'And then check it with York? '

'Yes.' (24)

Pyle is a very straight man. When Fowler teases him he does not seem to understand it and replies seriously. Pyle likes to know ‘what the man on the spot

has to say' but it seems that what really matters is not the facts, but whether the facts fit the theory (i.e. the books). After Pyle's death, Vigot visits Fowler and seeing Harding's book *The role of The West* on the shelf he asks who York Harding is.

'He's the man you are looking for, Vigot. He killed Pyle
-at long range.'

'I don't understand.'

'He's a superior sort of journalist - they call them diplomatic correspondents. He gets hold of an idea and then alters every situation to fit the idea. Pyle came out here full of York Harding's idea. Harding had been here once for a week on his way from Bangkok to Tokyo. Pyle made the mistake of putting his idea into practice. (167)

Now, as Fowler thinks Harding alters situations to fit an idea, Pyle also sees if the situation in Vietnam fits his ideas. It is important how Fowler thinks about Harding, Pyle and their likes. They are correspondents unlike him. He says he prefers to call himself a reporter because he reports only what he sees. This is how he defends himself in Pyle's death investigation. He says to Vigot:

'You can rule me out,' I said. 'I'm not involved. Not involved,' I repeated. It had been an article of my creed. The human condition being what it was, let them fight, let them love, let them murder, I would not be involved. My fellow journalists called themselves correspondents; I preferred the title of reporter. I wrote what I saw. I took no action - even an opinion is a kind of action. (28)

He claims that he is in Vietnam only to observe and then report what he observed. He takes no action, he does not interfere with what is in human nature and Harding is the worst kind of correspondent to him. He is a superior one, being just a week in Vietnam on the way from Bangkok to Tokyo he had

published many books full of ideas to change a country, the world, the universe. Fowler suffers from their lecturers as he states when wondering what Pyle and Phuong might be talking about. "I had suffered from his lectures on the Far East, which he had known for as many months as I had years." (12) It is this superior view that Fowler is angry about. The West has a responsibility to the Far East to bring democracy; they must be freed from communism and so on. Then the West must act, America this time, without asking if it is wanted by the East what they have to offer.

Fowler, 'the man on the spot', tries to explain the situation to Pyle. He has done it before too many times to the newcomers. Sometimes he catches himself in the nights saying:

'Take the case of the Caodaists.' Or the Hoa-Haos or the Binh Xuyen, all the private armies who sold their services for money or revenge. Strangers found them picturesque, but there is nothing picturesque in treachery and distrust.

'And now,' I said, 'there's General Thé. He was Caodaist Chief of Staff, but he's taken to the hills to fight both sides, the French, the Communists ...'

'York,' Pyle said, 'wrote that what the East needed was a Third Force.' Perhaps I should have seen that fanatic gleam, the quick response to a phrase, the magic sound of figures: Fifth Column, Third Force, Seventh Day. I might have saved all of us a lot of trouble, even Pyle, if I had realized the direction of that indefatigable young brain. (25)

Fowler as a reporter tries to explain the complex situation in Vietnam to Pyle. 'There is nothing picturesque in treachery and distrust' he says. Everybody kills everybody. He does not suggest any ideals. Pyle, apparently not paying attention to the explanation, thinks about what the East needs. He is already fitting the facts to the ideas formed by Harding. He knows the answers to the

problems of the East. A third force is needed, as proposed by Harding. Fowler understands this too late and is sorry that he could not see 'that fanatic gleam, the quick response to a phrase, and the magic sound of figures' which cooked in America by Harding. Instead he leaves Pyle there and takes his daily walks.

Pyle's death is an act of war according to Vigot, the French police officer. When Fowler asks if Vigot is really looking for the murderer, he says that all he can do is make a report. He might be killed by the Vietminh, Vietnamese Sûreté, Cao daists, by Fowler because of Phuong, Vigot suggests, or by French Sûreté, adds Fowler. It is interesting for a man who has just been in Vietnam for a few months to have so many contacts and thus suspects for his death.

Fowler goes with Vigot to Pyle's flat to pick up Phuong's belongings. He comes across the bookcase and examines the books.

Pyle's library. *The Advance of Red China, The Challenge to Democracy, The Role of the West* - these, I suppose, were the complete works of York Harding. There were a lot of Congressional Reports, a Vietnamese phrase book, a history of the War in the Philippines, a Modern Library Shakespeare. On what did he relax? I found his light reading on another shelf: a portable Thomas Wolfe and a mysterious anthology called *The Triumph of Life* and a selection of American poetry. There was also a book of chess problems. It didn't seem much for the end of the working day, but, after all, he had had Phuong. Tucked away behind the anthology there was a paper-backed book called *The Physiology of Marriage*. Perhaps he was studying sex, as he had studied the East, on paper. And the keyword was marriage. Pyle believed in being involved. (28-29)

Greene, showing what the library contains, wants to portrait Pyle's character to the reader. This can be openly seen from Fowler's thoughts on Pyle's books. The first mentioned books are those upon which Pyle has founded his ideals, York Harding's. Even the order of Harding's books may be intentional. *The Advance of Red China* (danger), *The Challenge to Democracy* (be prepared), *The Role of the West* (action). Most of the books seem to belong to a man of mission and are not to be studied for leisure. Fowler even thinks that with *The Physiology of Marriage* Pyle 'was studying sex, as he studied the East, on paper'. The books look like they are for a strictly rational minded person. As we have seen in Phuong's case, Pyle's attitudes were very rational indeed when dealing with Fowler.

Fowler picks up Phuong's belongings and a book of Harding's, *The role of the West*, with Vigot's permission. Out of the flat he comes across with the American Economic Attaché. He takes a suspicious look at the box Fowler is carrying and asks what is in it. Fowler counts Phuong's belongings, omitting the book, and adds that there is no American aid in it. The American Economic Attaché says how terrible it is, meaning Pyle's death, and that he had to draft a cable home. Fowler asks what he had said in the cable.

He replied seriously and literally, "Grieved to report your son died a soldier's death in cause of Democracy." The Minister signed it.'

'A soldier's death,' I said. 'Mightn't that prove a bit confusing? I mean to the folks at home. The Economic Aid Mission doesn't sound like the Army. Do you get Purple Hearts?'

He said in a low voice, tense with ambiguity, 'He had special duties.'

'Oh yes, we all guessed that.'

'He didn't talk, did he?'

'Oh no,' I said, and Vigot's phrase came back to me, 'He was a very quiet American.'

'Have you any hunch,' he asked, 'why they killed him? and who?'

Suddenly I was angry; I was tired of the whole pack of them with their private stores of Coca-Cola and their portable hospitals and their too wide cars and their not quite latest guns. I said, 'Yes. They killed him because he was too innocent to live. He was young and ignorant and silly and he got involved. He had no more of a notion than any of you what the whole affair's about, and you gave him money and York Harding's books on the East and said, "Go ahead. Win the East for Democracy." He never saw anything he hadn't heard in a lecture-hall, and his writers and his lecturers made a fool of him. When he saw a dead body he couldn't even see the wounds. A Red menace, a soldier of democracy.'

'I thought you were his friend,' he said in a tone of reproach.

'I *was* his friend. I'd have liked to see him reading the Sunday supplements at home and following the baseball. I'd have liked to see him safe with a standardized American girl who subscribed to the Book Club.' (31-32)

We see here that it is not only Pyle that believes in *The Role of the West*. The American Economic Attaché also believes it when reporting on Pyle's death as a soldier's death serving the democracy, and he proudly adds that the Minister signed it. We see that The Economic Aid Mission of Americans has a different purpose. It is a cover up for The Role of the West in Vietnam. However, Fowler still believes that Pyle was a victim of others like Harding and The American Economic Attaché, he is sick of everything about the Americans. Yet, he is sorry that instead of choosing to follow Harding's theoretical ideals, Pyle could have had an ordinary American life.

The American Economic Attaché, Joe and Pyle are very interested in the war between the French colonial power and the north communist Vietnamese which is not going well for the French. At the Continental, the Economic Attaché waits for the journalists from the Press Conference to arrive in order to collect news about the war. Pyle is there too. When an American journalist, Granger, arrives the Economic Attaché asks how the war is going. Granger sums up the French forces' great victory. He jokes that the French have not been able to count their own losses but are able to know of the heavy Vietminh casualties. The American Economic Attaché tells as if it were true that the Vietminh have broken into Phat Diem, burned the Cathedral and chased out the Bishop. Granger responds that that French would not tell this to them unless it was a victory. Granger explains how the news was delivered to them by the French. The news they cable back home is censored and he does not care a bit. "It's only a damned colonial war anyway. Get me another drink. And then let's go and find a girl." Granger says. (36) Fowler wonders if there is anything in the rumor about Phat Diem. Pyle says that if it is important he can go and find out. This surprises Fowler.

'Important to the Economic Mission? '

'Oh, well,' he said, 'you can't draw hard lines. Medicine's a kind of weapon, isn't it? These Catholics, they'd be pretty strong against the Communists, wouldn't they? '

'They trade with the Communists. The Bishop gets his cows and the bamboo for his building from the Communists. I wouldn't say they were exactly York Harding's Third Force,' I teased him. (36)

Pyle is looking for candidates for his Third Force. Again Fowler tries to show him how complicated the situation is in Vietnam, that real life cannot be grasped through York Harding's book. He does not know yet how serious Pyle is about his Third Force. As they leave the Continental to the Chalet to have

dinner, Fowler sees a French armored car go by. He thinks there is trouble probably with a private army again. The scene is of Europe in the Middle Ages. He has difficulty to understand what were the Americans doing in Vietnam. They, Europeans, are already stuck here, but what about the Americans? What there is for them, he does not understand. Fowler finds himself looking after Pyle when he follows Granger to a dangerous place called the House of Five Hundred Girls. He needs protection, thinks Fowler.

That was my first instinct - to protect him. It never occurred to me that there was greater need to protect myself. Innocence always calls mutely for protection when we would be so much wiser to guard ourselves against it: innocence is like a dumb leper who has lost his bell, wandering the world, meaning no harm. (37)

As he concludes above, a few months later, Fowler learns that Pyle, with his innocence and good intentions, is the biggest threat both to his private life and to the people in the country.

Fowler goes to Phat Diem to see if the rumors are true that it has been captured by the Vietminh. From the bell tower of the Cathedral he thinks how the battle is picturesque. "The war was very tidy and clean at that distance." (46) But it is not picturesque in reality. The war is not tidy and clean and certainly not beautiful once one gets closer.

In its strange medieval way, under the shadow and protection of the Prince Bishop, it had been the most living town in all the country, and now when I landed and walked up to the officers' quarters it was the most dead. Rubble and broken glass and the smell of burnt paint and plaster, the long street empty as far as the sight could reach, it reminded me of a

London thoroughfare in the early morning after an all-clear: one expected to see a placard, 'Unexploded Bomb'.

The front wall of the officers' house had been blown out, and the houses across the street were in ruins. (46-47)

The situation in Phat Diem is an example of the hidden war since no one from the press was allowed to see what is happening there. "This was a defeat: no journalists were allowed, no cables could be sent, for the papers must carry only victories." (48) As with all the wars, they have more than one front being fought, at least one at the battlefield and one at home. Fowler joins parachutists in the streets of Phat Diem.

Nobody paid me any attention when I joined them. One man, who wore the long antennae of a walkie-talkie, said, 'We can move now,' and everybody stood up.

I asked them in my bad French whether I could accompany them. An advantage of this war was that a European face proved in itself a passport on the field: a European could not be suspected of being an enemy agent.

'Who are you?' the lieutenant asked.

'I am writing about the war,' I said.

'American?'

'No, English.'

He said, 'It is a very small affair, but if you wish to come with us ...' (50-51)

Nobody pays attention when Fowler joins them. Even if he had not asked to accompany them, it seems that the French would not be concerned about his presence. 'An advantage of *this war*...' His face was an advantage because the war was not fought just between the French and Vietminh. If the European face is itself a passport and identification, the war must be between the races of

'white' and 'yellow'. All the non-Europeans may be enemy agents while all the Europeans are easily trustworthy. We see the importance of the geography here. Fowler may mean something else here when using the analogy of face with the passport. If a passport is something that is required of him (and soon the Americans) in a foreign country, then they are strangers in Vietnam. Thus the war itself becomes questionable.

Fowler's party comes across a canal full of dead bodies while trekking through enemy territory. He absurdly thinks Pyle was saying:

'This isn't a bit suitable.'

The canal was full of bodies: I am reminded now of an Irish stew containing too much meat. The bodies overlapped: one head, seal-grey, and anonymous as a convict with a shaven scalp, stuck up out of the water like a buoy. There was no blood: I suppose it had flowed away a long time ago. I have no idea how many there were: they must have been caught in a cross-fire, trying to get back, and I suppose every man of us along the bank was thinking, 'Two can play at that game.' (51)

Fowler is reminded of an Irish stew containing too much meat as the canal is full of bodies. Humanity is stolen from them. The real victims of the wars are the ordinary people. It is not known by whom they have been killed but the result is horrible. Bullets and bombs do not discriminate.

Fowler follows the French troops in the once enemy territory, waiting the whole time to be shot at. It is not death he is afraid of but being caught unprepared by death. They hear two shots fired from somewhere and when Fowler and a lieutenant check, they find a woman and a boy were killed.

There was a gnawed piece of loaf under his body. I thought, 'I hate war.'

The lieutenant said, 'Have you seen enough?' speaking savagely, almost as though I had been responsible for these deaths. Perhaps to the soldier the civilian is the man who employs him to kill, who includes the guilt of murder in the pay-envelope and escapes responsibility. (53-54)

It becomes very difficult for Fowler to observe all those deaths around him. A head with flies on it in the street, countless human bodies in the canal and now a boy with a gnawed piece of loaf under his body. He is disgusted by the brutality of the war. And the last one is even more tragic than the others. It is a child, a hungry child killed while eating a piece of loaf. And the lieutenant's question, like an accusation, is almost the same as when Fowler gets angry with the American Economic Attaché about Pyle's death.

When night comes, Fowler lies on the floor and before sleeping, wonders if Phuong was at the flat. He thinks;

The possession of a body tonight seemed a very small thing - perhaps that day I had seen too many bodies which belonged to no one, not even to themselves. We were all expendable. (55)

Fowler, that night, dreams of Pyle at the Chalet dancing by himself with his arms extended, holding an invisible partner. He suddenly wakes up at three in the morning and finds Pyle in the doorway. Pyle comes to see Fowler without thinking of the risk of being killed on the way to say that he fell in love with Phuong. He wants to protect and look after Phuong since Fowler will leave her behind when he leaves for England. They argue for some time whether Phuong needs protection or not, Fowler angry with the suggestion and Pyle's very

rational attitudes. After some weeks Fowler finds his meeting with Pyle fantastic, hardly believable. But in Saigon Pyle comes to Fowler's flat this time to talk to Phuong about his feelings toward her. Fowler translates Pyle's words into French and her words into English. Again they start to argue between themselves about what is good for Phuong and who can provide more security and safety, who can better look after her. Phuong, at the end rejects Pyle's marriage proposal even to Fowler's surprise.

The next time Fowler and Pyle meet is at the Caodaist festival, at the Holy See in Tanyin, in the north-west of Saigon. Fowler is there to interview the Pope's deputy. He asks about General Thé. The only reply from the holy man is 'A rash man' reply. He then listens to him about how inclusive Caodaism is. Fowler thanks him and gets up to leave.

'God's blessing on your work,' he said unctuously. 'Remember God loves the truth.'

'Which truth?' I asked.

'In the Caodaist faith all truths are reconciled and truth is love.'

(85)

Outside Fowler sees Pyle trying to start his car and a Caodaist commandant talking to him. Fowler recognizes the man as one of the former assistants of General Thé.

'Hullo, commandant,' I said, 'how's the General?'

'Which general?' he asked with a shy grin.

'Surely in the Caodaist faith,' I said, 'all generals are reconciled.'

...

'I interrupted you.'

'Oh, it was nothing,' Pyle said. 'He wanted to know how much a Buick cost. These people are so friendly when you

treat them right. The French don't seem to know how to handle them.'

'The French don't trust them.'

Pyle said solemnly, 'A man becomes trustworthy when you trust him.' It sounded like a Caodaist maxim. I began to feel the air of Tanyin was too ethical for me to breathe. (85-86)

Pyle tries to talk causally. The commandant is only there to ask Pyle how much a Buick costs. There is no reason for Fowler to suspect Pyle's words. Pyle for the first time openly says what he thinks about the French. According to him, if the French knew how to treat people properly there would not be a problem now. They do not know how to handle the Vietnamese. He makes a very broad generalization why there is mutually no trust between the French and Vietnamese. There is a hint here that Pyle, or the Americans, have begun to collect the fruits of their way of handling the people where the French have failed.

Pyle's car does not start and Fowler invites him to his car for the ride. On the way to Saigon they run out of gas and since it was getting dark they decide to take a shelter in one of the watch towers. With a thought-freezing fear, Fowler ascends the ladder of a watch tower, expecting to be shot anytime. He finds two guards staring at him as scared as himself. "I was glad that the color of my skin and the shape of my eyes were a passport - they wouldn't shoot now even from fear." (92) Fowler is thankful for his skin color for the second time. As with the French parachutists, his color of skin (passport) has shown its value with the two guards, too. It is the guards who are afraid of him. When Fowler calms them down, he calls Pyle to come up. When they settle, Fowler looks at the guards and feels sorry for them.

The writer, Greene, chose this watch tower as a battle ground for two of his main characters, Fowler and Pyle. So far, they were respectful to each other. Other than Pyle's love for Phuong, we have not seen what they think of each

other. It is Fowler we know more about. He is a reporter and not pleased with what he sees because of the war. He is against and hates this meaningless war. Even Fowler claims that he is not involved; he is actually deeply involved in many ways if not directly. He loves the country and wants to stay here with a girl he has had a relationship with for two years, at least. He thinks of this country as his home and does not want to return to England. Because of his age he is very scared to die alone. Thus Phuong, he believes, is his only salvation. She is the most important person in his life as we have seen previously. So Greene let us know many things about Fowler so far, but Pyle is still the black box. Other than some basics, we do not know him well. He is a young American, works for Economic Aid, has a great respect for York Harding and knows his books by heart, is very rational about almost everything but falls love with Phuong, and is a very serious type, etc. But still we do not know what he is actually doing in Vietnam or why he is in Vietnam. We only know some fragments of his thoughts.

Here, in the middle of two fronts, in a watch tower with two native guards who do not know French or English, Fowler and Pyle have to wait until sunrise. There is nothing they can do but talk, and they do talk.

Fowler, observing the relaxed guards and forgetting to be an objective reporter who does not get involved, talks to them with Pyle. What differs between them is that Fowler talks from the facts he has so long observed and experienced while Pyle talks with abstractions and concepts mostly borrowed from York Harding. It is Fowler who starts the conversation.

I said to Pyle, 'Do you think they know they are fighting for Democracy? We ought to have York Harding here to explain it to them.'

'You always laugh at York,' said Pyle.

'I laugh at anyone who spends so much time writing about what doesn't exist - mental concepts.' ...

'You and your like are trying to make a war with the help of people who just aren't interested.'

"They don't want Communism.'

"They want enough rice,' I said. 'They don't want to be shot at. They want one day to be much the same as another. They don't want our white skins around telling them what they want.' (93-94)

Fowler wants Pyle to understand that there is a huge gap between the mental concepts and life in reality. Harding is just an example he uses to show Pyle what is so obvious for him. A man writing theories from his home in America, and here, two poor guards are expecting, hoping every night to see the other day. The war is not theirs but they die in it. Pyle insists that they do not want Communism, again using mental concepts. Harding is hard wired in him; concepts versus reality. He learns about life from books, not from the experiences, as he is now blind to the two guards.

'If Indo-China goes . . .'

'I know the record. Siam goes. Malaya goes. Indonesia goes. What does "go" mean? ...

"They'll be forced to believe what they are told; they won't be allowed to think for themselves.'

"Thought's a luxury. Do you think the peasant sits and thinks of God and Democracy when he gets inside his mud hut at night?'

'You talk as if the whole country were peasant, what about the educated? Are they going to be happy?'

'Oh no,' I said, 'we've brought them up in *our* ideas. We've taught them dangerous games, and that's why we are

waiting here, hoping we don't get our throats cut. We deserve to have them cut. I wish your friend York was here too. I wonder how he'd relish it.' (95)

Pyle says, as a proved fact: 'If Indo-China goes . . .' It is very common rhetoric for the Americans and the Westerners after WWII. He uses this American theory as a known fact and urges Fowler to accept this danger. Pyle goes from one abstraction to the other but has no answer when Fowler asks "What does 'go' mean?". As Kerr points out "...a discourse of Western 'knowledge' about what Vietnam was really like, and what it really needed, was being constructed, and this knowledge had already had deadly consequences and would lead to more" (Kerr, 100). It is even ironic when Pyle claims that people will be forced to believe what they are told. He is even not aware of the irony that it is they who are now telling the people what to believe and forcing them to fight against what they think is dangerous, telling them what is at stake, what has value to fight for, what is good and what is bad and so on.

"They think we are French,' I said.

'That's just it,' Pyle said. 'You shouldn't be against York; you should be against the French. Their colonialism.'

'Isms and ocracies. Give me facts. A rubber planter beats his labourer - all right, I'm against him. He hasn't been instructed to do it by the Minister of the Colonies. In France I expect he'd beat his wife. I've seen a priest, so poor he hasn't a change of trousers, working fifteen hours a day from hut to hut in a cholera epidemic, eating nothing but rice and salt fish, saying his Mass with an old cup - a wooden platter. I don't believe in God and yet I'm for that priest. Why don't you call that colonialism?'

'It *is* colonialism. York says it's often the good administrators who make it hard to change a bad system.'

'Anyway the French are dying every day - that's not a mental concept. They aren't leading these people on with half-lies like your politicians - and ours. I've been in India, Pyle, and I know the harm liberals do. We haven't a liberal party any more - liberalism's infected all the other parties. We are all either liberal conservatives or liberal socialists: we all have a good conscience. I'd rather be an exploiter who fights for what he exploits, and dies with it. Look at the history of Burma. We go and invade the country: the local tribes support us: we are victorious: but like you Americans we weren't colonialists in those days. Oh no, we made peace with the king and we handed him back his province and left our allies to be crucified and sawn in two. They were innocent. They thought we'd stay. But we were liberals and we didn't want a bad conscience.'

'That was a long time ago.'

'We shall do the same thing here. Encourage them and leave them with a little equipment and a toy industry.'

'Toy industry?'

'Your plastic'

'Oh yes, I see.'

I don't know what I'm talking politics for. They don't interest me and I'm a reporter. I'm not engage.'

'Aren't you?'Pyle said.

'For the sake of an argument - to pass this bloody night, that's all. I don't take sides. I'll be still reporting, whoever wins.'

'If they win, you'll be reporting lies.'

'There's usually a way round, and I haven't noticed much regard for truth in our papers either.' (Greene, 95-96)

When Fowler says the guards think they are French, Pyle gets excited since he feels he has found just the right support for his (Harding's) mental concepts. The French and their colonialism are responsible for everything wrong in Indo-China, according to him. Again, Fowler asks for the facts. Since Pyle does not have his own thoughts, he says that Harding says good administration often makes it hard to change a bad system (colonialism). According to Fowler, the mental concepts are still worse. He accepts the French are exploiting people in their colonies but they are also dying for it, and they do not lead people with liberal lies as they did in Burma. Fowler does not support colonialism or exploitation but he finds the French are at least straight at it and paying for it to some extent. To a certain degree, it seems, Fowler agrees with Harding about what is a bad system. But he thinks liberal thoughts are even more successfully disguised than the pseudo good colonialism. After all his opinions, Fowler still insists that he is not involved. Actually he is consistent in this thinking because what is important to him are facts and action. The only thing he thinks he is doing is reporting. And with the 'toy industry', Fowler thinks he only jokes about Americans not knowing yet what Pyle is up to.

'So you think we've lost?'

'That's not the point,' I said. 'I've no particular desire to see you win. I'd like those two poor buggers there to be happy - that's all. I wish they didn't have to sit in the dark at night scared.'

'You have to fight for liberty.'

'I haven't seen any Americans fighting around here. And as for liberty, I don't know what it means. Ask them.' I called across the floor in French to them. '*La liberie - quest ce que e'est la liberie?*' They sucked in the rice and stared back and said nothing.

Pyle said, 'Do you want everybody to be made in the same mould? You're arguing for the sake of arguing. You're an

intellectual. You stand for the importance of the individual as much as I do - or York.'

'Why have we only just discovered it?' I said. 'Forty years ago no one talked that way.'

'It wasn't threatened then.'

'Ours wasn't threatened, oh no, but who cared about the individuality of the man in the paddy field - and who does now? The only man to treat him as a man is the political commissar. He'll sit in his hut and ask his name and listen to his complaints; he'll give up an hour a day to teaching him -it doesn't matter what, he's being treated like a man, like someone of value. Don't go on in the East with that parrot cry about a threat to the individual soul. Here you'd find yourself on the wrong side - it's they who stand for the individual and we just stand for Private 23987, unit in the global strategy.'

'You don't mean half what you are saying.' Pyle said uneasily.

'Probably three quarters. I've been here a long time. You know, it's lucky I'm not *engagé*, there are things I might be tempted to do - because here in the East - well, I don't like Ike. I like - well, these two. This is their country. (97-98)

Pyle says the Vietnamese have to fight for liberty (again concepts have more value for him). As all the other mental concepts, Fowler dismisses it as nonsense and turns to the guards, asking in French if they knew what liberty meant. The guards, eating rice, stare back and say nothing. The fact is they are hungry and scared. Furthermore, he still does not claim to be a hundred percent sure, or mean to understand what is going on in the East. "Fowler thinks York Harding's political theory has no attachment to the complex local realities in which he himself is experienced, but indeed he inhabits a universe in which writing in any case has a weak grip on reality" (Kerr, 97)

Next in line is individuality, as if one by one all the American and Western values are put to test in the conversation. Pyle hopes that at least individuality is important for Fowler as it is for him and of course for Harding. It is threatened now (by communism) and something must be done to defend it. Fowler finds this, as all the other mental concepts, absurd and a part of liberal propaganda which has nothing to do with the people in the 'paddy field'. It is the political commissioner who treats 'the man in the paddy field' as a man, as an individual. He warns Pyle not to go to the East with 'that parrot cry' of individuality.

Pyle has difficulty believing what Fowler says and expects half of it is not his real thoughts. Fowler draws a line between him and Pyle saying that he does not like Ike (Eisenhower, the first US president cited the 'Domino Theory') in the East but he likes the two guards sitting before him. Fowler, however he claims he has not involved, confesses that he might be tempted to do something about 'things' he does not like to see in the East. Shortly after, he wants to say that Americans have no business in the East.

It is a night of confrontation for Fowler and Pyle. They start to talk about Phuong as they talked about the East, as if Phuong were the East. Pyle wants to save Phuong from insecurity, offering protection, and is willing to wait for Phuong's love; a very rational behaviour. Phuong is like a child and he can look after her interests. Fowler, like the French exploiters, does not care about Phuong's interests and he wants her because he needs her. He is ready to do everything to keep her, no matter the cost. It is a challenge between the 'dollar love' and the 'sterling quality'. Other than being the object of the discussion Phuong, is invisible here and has no voice of her own.

At some point during that night the watch tower comes under attack and both of them run away without being killed. Fowler injures his leg and survives only with Pyle's help. He hates Pyle for saving him.

One day, Dominguez, Fowler's assistant says that he wants Fowler to meet a friend of his who has a story to tell. Since Dominguez is ill, he writes down a Chinese name for Fowler to find him. Before Fowler leaves he asks how much he know of his friend Pyle and what job he does. Then Dominguez tells that he heard Pyle talking to a visiting Congressman at a party.

'He was talking about the old colonial powers - England and France, and how you two couldn't expect to win the confidence of the Asiatics. That was where America came in now with clean hands.'

'Hawaii, Puerto Rico,' I said, 'New Mexico.'

'Then someone asked him some stock question about the chances of the Government here ever beating the Vietminh and he said a Third Force could do it. There was always a Third Force to be found free from Communism and the taint of colonialism - national democracy he called it; you only had to find a leader and keep him safe from the old colonial powers.'

'It's all in York Harding,' I said. 'He had read it before he came out here. He talked about it his first week and he's learned nothing.'

'He may have found his leader,' Dominguez said. (Greene, 124)

Even with some interest, Fowler still does not take Pyle seriously and does not recognize his role in this business. It is only Pyle's repetition from Harding's books again. Pyle, on the other hand, seems to conclude from the conversation with Fowler at the watch tower that America has a good chance to win the war against communists here with the help of a Third

Force. They just need to find a leader and keep him away from the old colonial powers (in this case it is the French). This also means that France is not an ally anymore (if not an enemy), but an obstacle between the Americans and their national democracy.

Fowler goes to see the Chinese man, Mr. Chou, Dominguez asked him to see. Instead, another man claiming to be Mr. Chou's manager, Mr. Heng, welcomes Fowler and takes him to the warehouse to show him a small iron drum made by a company named Diolacton. Mr. Heng says that the drum came from a man's garage whose wife is a relation of General Thé and then shows a mould to Fowler. Mr. Heng says that a man came and looked for the drum. The owner of the garage personally called the American Legation and asked for Pyle.

'If anything unpleasant happens here in Saigon, it will be blamed on us. My Committee would like you to take a fair view. That is why I have shown you this and this.'

'What is Diolacton?' I said. 'It sounds like condensed milk.'

'It has something in common with milk.' Mr Heng shone his torch inside the drum. A little white powder lay like dust on the bottom. 'It is one of the American plastics,' he said.

'I heard a rumour that Pyle was importing plastics for toys.' I picked up the mould and looked at it. I tried in my mind to divine its shape. This was not how the object itself would look: this was the image in a mirror, reversed.

'Not for toys,' Mr Heng said. (129)

Fowler still cannot make the connection between all these plastic things and Pyle. Mr. Heng only wants Fowler to remember what he saw there because one day he may have a reason to write about it. And Fowler forgets all about this plastic business until one day Mr. Heng wants to meet with Fowler again. When they met, police are collecting bicycles from the

streets and just then a fountain explodes. Nobody is seriously hurt. Mr. Heng shows his bicycle pump and asks if it reminds Fowler of anything and then goes. Sometime later Fowler understands that a half section of the pump looks just like the mould he has seen in Mr. Heng's warehouse. Lots of bicycles go off that day in Saigon and Fowler tries to make it news, relating the incidents to General Thé without success. All press blame communists for the explosions. He himself does not see the incidents as being very serious. Thinking of Pyle and his interest in Phuong, he thinks it is not very bad. "Let him play harmlessly with plastic moulds: it might keep his mind off Phuong." (143)

Left by Phuong, Fowler goes to the Pavilion for a glass of beer. It is a coffee centre for European and American women, so he is confident that he would not see Phuong there, who, as a habit, always goes to a milk bar for her chocolate malt. He drinks his beer and looks around to pass time. Two young American girls eating their ice-cream attract Fowler attention. He thinks, as Pyle, the young girls do not belong here. They are so different that he finds it impossible to conceive them a prey to untidy passion when suddenly two mirrors on the wall of the Pavilion explode. "Another joke with plastics: what does Mr Heng expect me to write now?' but when I got into the Place Gamier, I realized by the heavy clouds of smoke that this was no joke." (160) He remembers that Phuong would be in the milk bar. In panic, he tries to reach to the other side of the square but police do not let him pass. He looks for his press card but cannot find his wallet. When he turns back to look for his wallet, he sees Pyle standing there. He asks for his Legation pass, urges him that Phuong is there in the milk-bar. Pyle says she is not there because he warned her not to go there. Fowler, not hearing Pyle, asks again for his pass.

I turned back to the policeman, meaning to throw him to one side and make a run for it across the square: he might shoot: I didn't care - and then the word 'warn' reached my

consciousness. I took Pyle by the arm. 'Warn?' I said. 'What do you mean "warn"?'

'I told her to keep away this morning.'

The pieces fell together in my mind. (161)

Fowler still in shock looks around. There are dead everywhere, the police and doctors are helpless. Fowler sees a woman sits on the ground with what is left of her baby in her lap.

Pyle said, 'It's awful.' He looked at the wet on his shoes and said in a sick voice, 'What's that?'

'Blood,' I said. 'Haven't you ever seen it before?'

He said, 'I must get them cleaned before I see the Minister.' I don't think he knew what he was saying. (162)

When Pyle says 'It is awful' one may think that he is talking about the incident but it is blood on his shoes he is talking about and he even does not recognize what it is. He is the innocent one.

I forced him, with my hand on his shoulder, to look around. I said, "This is the hour when the place is always full of women and children - it's the shopping hour. Why choose that of all hours?'

He said weakly, "There was to have been a parade.'

'And you hoped to catch a few colonels. But the parade was cancelled yesterday, Pyle.'

'I didn't know.'

'Didn't know!' I pushed him into a patch of blood where a stretcher had lain. 'You ought to be better informed.'

'I was out of town,' he said, looking down at his shoes. 'They should have called it off.'

'And missed the fun? 'I asked him. 'Do you expect General Thé to lose his demonstration? This is better than a parade. Women and children are news, and soldiers aren't, in a war. This will hit the world's Press. You've put General Thé on the map all right, Pyle. You've got the Third Force and National Democracy all over your right shoe. Go home to Phuong and tell her about your heroic dead - there are a few dozen less of her people to worry about.' (162)

Fowler is more in despair than furious about Pyle and he knows that talking to Pyle is a hopeless and lost cause. If soldiers were killed at the parade as they had planned it would not be a problem at all.

'What's the good? he'll always be innocent, you can't blame the innocent, they are always guiltless. All you can do is control them or eliminate them. Innocence is a kind of insanity.'

He said, 'The wouldn't have done this. I'm sure he wouldn't. Somebody deceived him. The Communists

He was impregnably armored by his good intentions and his ignorance.

...

Hadn't Phuong been 'warned'? But what I remembered was the torso in the square, the baby on its mother's lap. They had not been warned: they had not been sufficiently important.

...

A two-hundred-pound bomb does not discriminate. How many dead colonels justify a child's or a trishaw driver's death when you are building a national democratic front? (163)

It is this incident that Fowler decides to do something about what he does not like to see, as he said in the watch tower. He goes to Mr. Heng and asks

what can be done to stop Pyle. In return, Mr. Heng asks if he is prepared to help restrain Pyle. He want Fowler to invite Pyle to dinner. When Fowler looks unsure: “‘Sooner or later,’ Heng said, and I was reminded of Captain Trouin speaking in the opium house, ‘one has to take sides. If one is to remain human.’” (174) He knows that he is already decided to get involved, but he has no courage admit it to himself.

Not absolutely certain what he will do next, he leaves a note at the Legation asking Pyle to come to dinner. Pyle comes on time and is glad to get Fowler’s note after his fury about the explosion. He says he took care of General Thé. Fowler, hopefully, asks if he has finished with him. Pyle says he cannot because General Thé in the long run is their only hope. As Fowler already knows, it is a lost argument but still he continues.

...‘That there’s no such thing as gratitude in politics.’

‘At least they won’t hate us like they hate the French.’

‘Are you sure? Sometimes we have a kind of love for our enemies and sometimes we feel hate for our friends.’

‘You talk like a European, Thomas. These people aren’t complicated.’

‘Is that what you’ve learned in a few months? You’ll be calling them childlike next.’

‘Well in a way.’

‘Find me an uncomplicated child, Pyle. (176)

It is normal for Pyle to think that these people are not complicated, or even childlike. Otherwise, they could not have claimed to protect them from the evils of communism, coming from the other corner of the world. Fowler, tired of arguing with Pyle, goes to his bookshelf looking for a passage to read. Pyle goes on talking about the explosion and says that after all Phuong is important and she is fine. Fowler says it is not so, not to him.

Fowler looks out the window and sees the trishaw driver raise his face to him. He holds the book to the last light of the day as Mr. Heng has asked from him if he decides to help them. He reads to cover up his action:

*I drive through the streets and I care not a damn,
The people they stare, and they ask who I am;
And if I should chance to run over a cad,
I can pay for the damage if ever so bad.
So pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
So pleasant it is to have money.'* (177)

Pyle finds the poem funny with a face of disapproval. It is not an accidently chosen poem. It sums up what Fowler thinks of the Americans and Pyle. Since it is still early, Pyle wants to talk as if this is their last talk. Pyle praises Fowler for staying neutral even after his leg was smashed the night they ran from the watch tower.

'There's always a point of change,' I said. 'Some moment of emotion . . .'

'You haven't reached it yet. I doubt if you ever will. And I'm not likely to change either - except with death,' he added merrily.

'Not even with this morning? Mightn't that change a man's views?'

'They were only war casualties,' he said. 'It was a pity, but you can't always hit your target. Anyway they died in the right cause?'

Would you have said the same if it had been your old nurse with her blueberry pie?

'He ignored my facile point. 'In a way you could say they died for democracy,' he said.

'I wouldn't know how to translate that into Vietnamese.' I was suddenly very tired. I wanted him to go away quickly

and die. Then I could start life again - at the point before he came in. (179)

Fowler, knowing it is pointless, still hopes to find something to hold in order to cancel his decision to help Mr. Heng's people. He sees that there is no way to stay out of it, not to get involved. It is pointless.

Later Fowler hears from the French police officer that Pyle has been killed on his way under the Dakow Bridge. He starts his life again, with his wife's blessing who decides to divorce him.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

It is not quite easy to sum up *The Quiet American* within the frame of Orientalism with just a few sentences. If a summary is required, maybe it is better to say that the book is mostly about Greene's philosophy of life. Almost every sentence uttered in the book by the writer has a controversial meaning. It presents a very personal point of view while blurring readers' mind using a reporter as narrator who consistently claims to be objective. It invites the reader to confusion at the beginning by throwing her/him in a world with a very complex situation and expects her/him to be an observer, then step by step he leads the reader to make a decision in which there is nothing to decide any more, no option but to get involved.

Although the book is ultimately about the war in Indochina, Greene tries to say more than that. For example, Kerr claims that "This is a novel much concerned with reading and writing and the relation of both activities to reality" (Kerr, 95). Yet, Gibson celebrates the book as "The 'epochal novel', then, and the 'blank space' of cold war narrative: *The Quiet American* seems to me precisely to seize the historical turning-point or geopolitical moment at which the world order of the old empires definitively cedes to that of what the novel itself refers to as American 'global strategy'" (Gibson, 289) Since the novel's time frame is set over approximately six months in 1951 and was written between 1952 and 1955 by Greene, some of the events in the book mentioned have fostered many discussions about what actually happened in Vietnam and what was only fiction: history versus novel (McInerney, 187-204; Gibson, 289-308; Kerr, 95-107).

Until the declaration of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the US's international policy was to support national rights to self-determination. Thus they were not interested in French success; on the contrary, they were against

the old colonial powers. After China's declaration everything had changed. 'Domino Theory', made famous by Eisenhower's in 1953, was the fear that led the US to act to stop communism in the region of South-East Asia. This is what Pyle believes and repeats to Fowler 'If Indo-China goes .. .' (Greene, 95). Pyle, as Fowler learns later, was playing dirty to create a third force to prevent what was feared by the US. The French, understanding this fear, tried to take advantage of this fear. By 1953, the US was paying 78% of the cost of the war." (Gibson, 293). Then Americans thought that the French were not capable of winning the war in Vietnam and decided to get involved themselves, first indirectly, then directly. Reading *The Quiet American* we see that Greene really was a very good observer, catching the shifts in international politics. This is why this book by Greene attracted so much attention since it foresaw the future of the American's 'dirty works' and their fate in Vietnam. It is not difficult to see the book in this perspective with so many examples, such as when Pyle dies; when supplying explosives to General Thé; when Fowler says to Vigot (the French policeman) "he got mixed up" (Greene, 20); when Vigot says "He was drowned in the mud. We found the mud in his lungs." (21); when Fowler looks at Pyle's library and finds "*The Advance of Red China, The Challenge to Democracy, The Role of the West*" (28); when Fowler asks Pyle if the rumor about Phat Diem was true that the French defeated there "Is it important? I'd like to go and have a look' he said 'if it is important.' 'Important to the Economic Mission?" (36); as well as the bicycle explosions (141-142), and the second serious explosion that kills many women and children (160) and so on. "The US Economic Aid Mission, of which Greene writes a good deal in the novel, arrived as early as February 1950. As Greene and the French themselves very quickly saw, the Mission was Janus-faced from the start; that is, it had more or less clandestine objectives that were quite different from its publicly acknowledged purposes. "The political analysis of the situation with which the novel provides us is impressively acute and sophisticated." (Gibson, 290, 293) Since Greene himself was in Vietnam in 1951 as a reporter, the contents of the novel have become more controversial. "Perhaps there is more direct reportage

in *The Quiet American* than in any other novel I have written', the author averred in *Ways of Escape* (164-5)" (Kerr, 103). If this is true, then what he wrote in the novel should be read differently. Since it is still a novel, as Greene himself calls it a novel, there must be elements of fiction too. This will inevitably lead to confusion about reality and fiction and also calls a question about the genre of novel too. "With a straightforward belief, Judith Adams, that Fowler 'sees and speaks what Greene saw and wrote in Vietnam'; she is impressed by the evidence that Fowler is given the name Thomas with which Greene was baptized as a Catholic, and Fowler too has been to Malaya 'and, like Greene, cares deeply about Vietnam'" (Kerr, 103-4) But Gibson thinks that "...it seems to me that *The Quiet American* also indexes the invention of, firstly, a rhetoric, secondly, a set of practices, and thirdly a structure of both relation and non-relation between the two". (Gibson, 291). As Gibson, McInerney also thinks that in the novel the distinction between the terms story and history was collapsed. "*The Quiet American* is a sort of history, a fiction of the actual past and the real future, a 'story' in place of 'history'" (McInerney, 187) Still, even Gibson too is not sure what in the novel is true and what is not. He says that the model for Pyle cannot be Lansdale (a CIA operative) because it was not possible for Greene to meet him before 1954. Yet he is surprised about the general accuracy of the events Greene writes of in his novel. "At all events, the point is really this: more important than any question of strict documentary accuracy is the fact that Greene so clearly recognized the geopolitical temper of the times, and the direction in which US policy and CIA practice were cumulatively and inexorably heading" (Gibson, 293)

Besides, apart from the real history question, some writers think that what Greene had written was seriously biased. He was openly hostile to the Americans.

According to one critic from *The New York Times*, the book was basically a political novel about the war in Indochina. "Graham Greene's new book is

quite different from anything he has written before. It is a political novel –or parable—about the war in Indochina, employing its characters less as individuals than as representatives of their nations or political factions” (Davis) And thus, the three main characters in the book do not represent the individuals as it seems, but their countries.

As the title suggests, America is the principle concern. The thesis is quite simply that America is a crassly materialistic and ‘innocent’ nation with no understanding of other peoples. When her representatives intervene in other countries’ affairs it causes only suffering. America should leave Asians to work out their own destinies, even when this means the victory of communism. (Davis)

Davis, while he might be correct in general in his reading of the novel, is himself clearly biased too. He is very sentimental about the Americans portrayed in the novel but, as can be seen from the paragraph, he thinks that the US had no choice but to intervene, otherwise the communist would have won. Communism is de facto evil and it must be stopped. And unfortunately there is only the US to stop the evil from spreading. Davis is also very upset about the stupidity of the Americans in the novel, including Pyle. “Pyle, the American, does not remind Fowler of the thousands of the individuals who make desperate escapes from Communist countries every week in order to lie as humans. He only replies uneasily, ‘You don’t mean half what you are saying’. There is no real debate in the book, because no experienced and intelligent anti-Communist is represented there” (Davis). This is maybe the case since Pyle usually talks from books. There are no original ideas that Pyle constructs by himself in the novel. Gibson finds a real intelligent American with Davis. Accepting Lansdale could not be the model Greene used for Pyle. Gibson describes Lansdale as a future model of Pyle but a worse one that Davis might be proud of.

Even Sherry, who is inclined to 'find the good' in Thé, conveys the impression that he was what the French thought him, a monster and 'murderous reptile'. Lansdale simply remarks that 'I found myself liking him instinctively'...Lansdale is jovially but bleakly, brutally, chillingly shrewd. Pyle is decidedly not...Lansdale knows the real name of the game, and knows very well what he and the US are up to. (Gibson, 308)

Jason and James point out a different bias about the Vietnam War in narratives. They compare the Vietnam War with WWII and conclude that there is a very serious difference between them that is ignored by the writers, in terms of documentation. In WWII, they say, it was not only the Americans documenting the war but Berlin and Tokyo too. The entire world was aware of the causes and the consequences of the war.

The Vietnam War, on the other hand, has still not been adequately studied from the 'enemy' side: and the question of how far it was initiated by decisions taken in Hanoi remains extremely controversial. It has therefore been easy for majority of American writers –'hawks' as well as 'doves'- to assume that the effective decision making was all on the side of the United States. North Vietnam tend to be seen as the authentic representative of Vietnamese 'nationalism' whose leaders did nothing more than respond to 'aggressive' moves by the United States. (Jason and James, 133)

Even what is argued by writers above has some merits; it does not give an answer to what the US was doing in Vietnam in the first place.

The book is also not free from orientalist and colonialist perspectives. Sometimes hidden and sometimes not, Greene portrays a strong orientalist view

of Vietnam in *The Quiet American* intentionally or not. According to Pursell “Consciously or not, Greene draws upon and extends a tradition of Western literary representation, which features and constructs the Orient” (Pursell, 3). Following Edward Said, Pursell claims that the entire text (*The Quiet American*) is an Orientalist product. Still, this does not essentially mean that the novel is a bad one and the Vietnam War issue is canceled out, but, nevertheless there is an orientalist language heavily used in it. Discussing about the ‘auto-critique of discourse’ Kerr says that:

This matters, because the reality in question-Vietnam in the 1950s-had a serious political dimension: in the classic pattern that would be described by Said in *Orientalism*, a discourse of Western “knowledge” about what Vietnam was really like, and what it really needed, was being constructed, and this knowledge had already had deadly consequences and would lead more. (100)

Edward Said’s choice of epigraph from Karl Marx’s (“They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented.”) *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* is incredibly up for us to discuss the Orientalism in *The Quiet American* novel. But before that, defining Orientalism Said says:

...Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient- dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over Orient. (Said, 3)

In *The Quiet American*, perhaps the most apparent aspect of Orientalism is about representativeness. Firstly, although there are three main characters in

the novel, almost only Fowler and Pyle really exist. The third character, Phuong, is almost always invisible to Pyle and Fowler even when she is present and the men talk about her and for her. Pyle, defending himself for the explosion in Saigon, says “Why, she’s the most important thing there is. To me. And to you, Thomas” (Greene, 177). She is very important but it is very seldom that she talks for herself, while Fowler and Pyle only ask her opinion if they need her reply. For example, they discuss in length that who is best for Phuong without asking her a thing and only when the conversation comes to a dead end does Pyle ask “...Phuong, will you marry me?” (78). Pursell, in his article, describes Phuong’s situation as doubly Other. He says ‘The representation of Phuong evidences an intertwining of landscape and racial imagery, embodying the notional existence of the exotic which lies at the heart of Orientalist discourse.’ (Pursell, 4).

The representativeness problem is not just about the individuals either. All the country is itself missing from a representativeness perspective too. Fowler and Pyle, or Fowler and the French officers, constantly discuss the Vietnamese people between themselves. Pyle wants to bring freedom and democracy to them, and Fowler says “...They don’t want our white skins around telling them what they want” (94). They have different agendas in their minds about what is best for the Vietnamese people but it is they who talk. The two Vietnamese guards with them are eating their rice. In the entire book, there are two places where we see that the Vietnamese too have a voice. The first time is when Mr. Heng (a communist in the South) gives clues about what Pyle is actually doing in Vietnam (124-130) and the second is when Fowler asks Mr. Heng what to do about Pyle (172-174). In both of the times there is no deep conversation between Fowler and Mr. Heng. The matters are merely more about practical matters. As in Phuong’s case, this is what Said calls ‘having authority over Orient’. It is not only Phuong the two men have authority over but they have an authority unmistakably over a whole country.

Secondly, there is a problem of distortion of reality in Orientalism.

“The longing for an exotic and alluring alternative –one that was free of politics- to the predictabilities of everyday life, produced, insofar as these poets at least are concerned, a detachment from the home values that opened a space...Orientalism overrode the Orient...This process of falsification is precisely what made the Orient remote and seductively exotic to the western mind.” (Sharafuddin, vii, xv)

Again we have to look at relationships between the characters to understand how an Orientalist view takes place within the novel. The roles of the characters give us a good starting point. Turning to the second page of the novel, we will see where Phuong is standing. Fowler and Phuong go home and Pyle is late.

I took off my tie and my shoes and lay down on the bed. Phuong lit the gas stove and began to boil the water for tea... I shut my eyes and she was again the same as she used to be: she was the hiss of steam, the clink of a cup, she was a certain hour of the night and the promise of rest. (Greene, 12)

Fowler is happy now that Pyle is out of the way, Phuong, once again belongs only to him. Phuong knows very well what to do once in the flat and Fowler can relax. He shuts his eyes and “The longing for an exotic and alluring alternative” (Sharafuddin, vii) is just there. Perhaps the main reason why Fowler is so fond of Phuong is because he is a runaway. He escaped from England for reasons that he hopes will not be a problem in Vietnam. When Vigot interrogates him he uses a threat that he cannot leave Vietnam. Fowler says “Do you really believe, I said, 'that I want to go home?...I like it here. At home there are - problems.” (Greene, 30) We learn what the problems are at home when he

writes to his wife in England and from what he escapes. (80-1) To sum up, he is scared to be an old man and of dying alone. He confesses later to Pyle that he ran away from his lover for fear of losing her love. (103) Phuong, on the other hand, is a perfect woman to love or to have that can only be found in the Orient: "...she was a certain hour of the night and the promise of rest." (12) With Phuong, all of his fears can be defeated, i.e. love, old age, loneliness. "Is he still in love with you, Phuong?" asks Fowler about Pyle, 'In love?' -perhaps it was one of the phrases she didn't understand. 'May I make your pipe?' she asked. (12-13) Fowler also finds a way to control the love; he loves Phuong but does not expect her to love him. Thus he does not have to fear losing her love because "Love's a Western word..." thinks Fowler. (133)

They love you in return for kindness, security, the presents you give them - they hate you for a blow or an injustice. They don't know what it's like - just walking into a room and loving a stranger. For an aging man, Pyle, it's very secure - she won't run away from home so long as the home is happy.' (104).

According to Prussell this type of thinking belongs to a superior colonialist mind with an authority and experience of inheritance... 'befitting the fact that he is the representing subject who writes (and is thus superior to) the represented Other' (Prussell, 5).

There is no need to worry about being old too. After smoking some pipes (prepared by Phuong), Fowler advises Phuong to make Pyle smoke a pipe if she wants him to return every time.

'You ought to make him or he won't come back.' It was a superstition among them that a lover who smoked would always return, even from France. A man's sexual capacity

might be injured by smoking, but they would always prefer a faithful to a potent lover (13).

So, when he gets old, she will still be with him. They (Oriental women) “...always prefer a faithful to a potent lover.” Greene makes it certain what he says is true about ‘they’ at the end of the novel. Loyalty is what matters, not youth or passion. When Fowler’s wife accepts to divorce him, he says “‘There was so much you could have done together. He was young.’ ‘You are not old.’” (189). This is just what Fowler expects, what he wants to hear. As long as the home is happy, she will be faithful and loyal to him; age does not matter. His dream is fulfilled; his escape from England is justified.

Perhaps as important as Fowler fears about the future is that Phuong’s character itself has a great value for Fowler. How she responds to Fowler’s wishes is an important aspect we have to mention here in terms of the Orientalist view.

‘Kiss me, Phuong.’ She had no coquetry. She did at once what I asked and she went on with the story of the film. Just so she would have made love if I had asked her to, straight away, peeling off her trousers without question, and afterwards have taken up the thread of Mme Bompierre’s story and the postmaster’s predicament. (116)

Obedience without question is one of the often implied characteristics of Phuong throughout the book. She knows very well what is expected from her as a woman and she always obeys Fowler’s wishes. It often seems that she does not have her own thoughts. Fowler is very well aware of this. When they are at Chalet, Fowler thinks after answering one of Pyle questions about dancing with Phuong. “One always spoke of her like that in the third person as though she

were not there. Sometimes she seemed invisible like peace.” (44). It is not always apparent like this but hidden within the dialogues. She talks mostly only after something is asked directly. Davis, in his criticism of the novel, summarizes the relationship between Fowler and Phuong:

...yet Phuong, the comely Vietnamese, the only person in the world who means anything in his life, show few qualities beyond self-interested compliance. She prepares his opium pipes and allows herself to be made love at his convenience. She says nothing of interest, takes her rewards in bright-colored scarf, and pores over picture book of the royal family. (Gibson)

But there is something about Phuong that makes her not so open or completely accessible, a part which has not been conquered yet. Kerr explains this part within the language domain. “For her inner life is a blind spot to these Western men, a linguistically impenetrable hinterland that is beyond representation. She is a bird who escapes the net.” (Kerr, 100) “I wanted to read her thoughts, but they were hidden away in a language I couldn’t speak” (Greene, 140). This only makes Phuong more desirable, not less. A place that has not been explored yet. That is why he makes love to Phuong savagely. “Even my desire had been a weapon, as though when plunged one’s sword towards the victim’s womb, she would lose control and speak” (134)

Pyle’s relationship with Phuong seems less complicated than Fowler’s. He is a new guy in town. He is not very interested in understanding Phuong. As he tries to create a third force to save people from the evil of communism, he also wants to save Phuong from Fowler and from the poor conditions of the country (the old colonial powers, the British and the French). He sees Phuong as a child and believes that she is acting on false evidence. They argue about Phuong’s interest: “She’s a human being, Pyle. She’s capable of deciding.’ ‘On faked

evidence. And a child at that.” (133) As Marx said “They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented”.

Pipe smoking, another way of escape Fowler uses often is another Orientalist image we see Greene employed in the novel. Even the most serious problems seem to be solved or lose their importance for Fowler after the second pipe. And Phuong is always there to prepare a pipe for him. “In went the needle and I took my second pipe. As I laid it down, I said, 'Nothing to worry about. Nothing to worry about at all... What a fuss we Europeans make about nothing. You shouldn't live with a man who doesn't smoke, Phuong.” (14) “All one could do was try to make the future less hard, to break the future gently when it came, and even opium had its value there.” (63) “I like films with happy endings best,' Phuong said. 'Are you ready to smoke? 'Yes.' I lay down on the bed and Phuong set to work with her needle.” (187) And the pipe smoking inserted in the lines of the book was not only working for Fowler. It was a common practice in the East. “The doctor says it will do him no good, but Mr. Chou feels much happier when he smokes. I made an understanding grunt.” (127)

As a result the novel has many things to offer to its readers and most of the readers will find what they are looking for. “It considers and exemplifies different genres of writing- such as news reports, political journalism, poetry and private letters- and different genres of speech- such as debate, gossip, courtship, interrogation, and confession.” (Kerr, 95). How these taste are up to the readers themselves. But using many different genres in one book makes it very difficult to analyze, especially for the students of social sciences and literature studies. For careful eyes, Greene wrote a very complex but at the same time a very consistent book in which reality and fiction melt into one. There are many instances in the novel that will lead us to think that Greene’s language is a heavily Orientalist one but there is still a risk in prematurely labeling it as such. Studies of Orientalism in recent years (at least beginning from the publication of Said’s *Orientalism* in 1978) have been hugely influenced by Said’s works. Thus, there is a risk for one to find Orientalism in a book while it is actually absent

must be considered. Sharafuddin has pointed out this risk in his book of *Islam and Romantic Orientalism*. "...with some obvious exception on both sides, poets and other creative writers should not be limited to one mode of perception by their readers, nor to one single ideological interpretation...Unfortunately, Said has cast the shadow of his own skepticism, both political and spiritual, over the possibility that some conscientious and high-minded writers may be born out of a society that has been defined as imperial" (Sharafuddin, viii-ix).

Orientalism and post-colonial theories are also difficult to talk about as agreed upon by everyone in literature. As Neufeld explains, post-colonial theory is far from being a one-piece, complete theory. There are even some important contributions that were made by Spivak, Bhabha and Said. With some commonalities, there are also some important internal differences (modernist, postmodernist, and feminist forms of theorizing). Moreover, the works of Spivak, Bhabha and Said are not free of criticism. For example Dissanayake argues that the above theorists are mostly engaged with the '...discursive production of colonialism, linguistic constitution of subjectivity, deconstruction of easy binarisms such as colonized and colonizer, dismantling of master narratives of imperialism...At the same time one sees a tendency to downplay material dimension of textual production.' (Dissanayake, 2). Accepting their works as important about post-colonialism and Orientalism, he draws attention to the shallow politics and the absence of sense of history and day-to-day problems experienced by colonized people in their struggle to survive. In this respect we may give credit to Greene that in his novel he did not neglect the ordinary Vietnamese people. He not only portrayed a beautiful oriental country full of beautiful colours, but also people suffering from hunger, fear of death, hard and honest work in rice fields, and victims of super powers.

Although some critics like Davis in *The New York Times* find Greene's book very biased, his selected title for the review seems to be accurate to repeat here: "In our time no man is a neutral".

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