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GRAHAM GREENE'İN *SESSİZ AMERİKALI* ADLI ESERİNDE ORYANTALİZM

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ÖZ

Modern Batı bakış açısına göre dünya yalnızca coğrafi olarak değil, kültürel, ekonomik, politik ve hatta dilbilimsel olarak da ikiye ayrılmış durumdadır. Bu iki farklı alan genellikle Doğu ve Batı olarak adlandırılır. Bu ikilik bağlamında Edward Said, Oryantalizm kavramını ortaya koymuştur. Said, Doğu ile Batı arasındaki farkı yalnızca bir coğrafya meselesi olarak değil, her şeyden önce bu iki bölgedeki insanların dünya görüşleri arasındaki bir karşıtlık olarak kavramsallaştırır. Ayrıca Batı'nın Doğu üzerinde hakimiyet kurma arzusunu vurgulayarak bu ilişkinin özünde dengesiz olduğunu belirtir. Bu durum, Doğu ile Batı arasında temelden eşit olmayan bir ilişkiye yol açmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, 20. yüzyıl İngiliz yazarı Graham Greene'in Sessiz Amerikalı adlı romanında Doğu-Batı ilişkileri temasını incelemektir. Greene'in eseri aşk, kişisel ilişkiler, savaş ve sömürgecilik gibi dinamikleri ele alarak Doğu ile Batı arasındaki etkileşimlerin doğasını ortaya koyar. Bu anlatıdan çıkan temel sonuç, Batı tarafından kurgulanmış bir Doğu imajının varlığıdır ve Edward Said bu imajı Oryantalizm olarak adlandırmaktadır. Graham Greene'in Sessiz Amerikalı adlı eseri, Doğu-Batı ilişkilerinin, çağdaş politik çatışmaların ve oryantalist düşüncenin bir araya geldiği unutulmaz bir edebi eserdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Oryantalizm, Said, Doğu, Graham Greene, *Sessiz Amerikalı*

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ORIENTALIMS IN GRAHAM GREENE'S *THE QUIET AMERICAN*

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ABSTRACT

According to the modern Western perspective, the world is divided into two parts—not only geographically, but also culturally, economically, politically, and even linguistically. These two distinct spheres are commonly referred to as the East and the West. In relation to this dichotomy, Edward Said introduced the concept of Orientalism. Said conceptualizes the differences between East and West not merely as a matter of geography, but primarily as a contrast in worldviews between the people of both regions. Moreover, he emphasizes the West's desire to dominate the East, reflecting an inherent imbalance of power. This leads to a fundamentally unequal relationship between the two. The study's objective is to explore the theme of East-West relations in *The Quiet American*, a novel by twentieth-century British author Graham Greene. Greene's work portrays the dynamics of love, personal relationships, war, and colonialism, ultimately revealing the nature of interactions between the East and the West. What emerges from this narrative is a critique of the constructed image of the East by the West—an image that Edward Said defines as Orientalism. Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* is a memorable literary work that intertwines the themes of East-West relations, contemporary political conflicts, and Orientalism, offering a nuanced depiction of cultural and imperial entanglements.

Keywords: Orientalism, Said, East, Graham Greene, *The Quiet American*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* is widely recognized as a compelling intersection of literature and politics, intertwining personal drama with a trenchant critique of Western intervention in Southeast Asia. While the novel follows the interpersonal entanglements of three central figures—a weary British journalist named Fowler, a young American named Pyle, and a Vietnamese woman named Phuong—it is ultimately a broader meditation on the geopolitical tensions of the First Indochina War and the early stages of American involvement in Vietnam. Far from being merely a romantic or detective narrative, *The Quiet American* functions as a literary-political allegory that interrogates the ideological justifications of colonialism, modernization, and Cold War power struggles.

Set against the backdrop of a deteriorating French colonial presence and the rising influence of American foreign policy, Greene's novel captures a crucial historical juncture. The post-World War II landscape, marked by the global realignment of power and the spread of decolonization movements, transformed Vietnam into a contested space between competing ideological blocs. The United States, initially critical of European colonialism, shifted its stance in the face of perceived communist expansion, ultimately adopting the "domino theory" to rationalize escalating military intervention in the region (Mearsheimer, 2010; Brigham, 2006). Greene's portrayal of Pyle as the embodiment of American idealism and naivety reflects this transition, exposing the ethical and strategic contradictions of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War.

The novel's narrative structure, embedded in a real and politically volatile landscape, highlights the intersection of the personal and the political. Fowler's ambivalence toward intervention, Pyle's ideological zeal, and Phuong's symbolic position between them serve not only as character studies but also as representations of larger cultural and geopolitical tensions. As Gibson (2006) argues, Greene's novel is deeply attuned to "a determining historical, cultural and geopolitical moment," wherein novelistic realism is inseparable from political allegory (p. 1). The aim of this study is to examine *The Quiet American* within the context of colonial withdrawal, American ascendancy, and Cold War dynamics. It explores how Greene critiques the illusion of benevolent intervention and exposes the cultural arrogance that often accompanies foreign occupation. Drawing on historical accounts of the Indochina War, U.S. military escalation, and domestic opposition to the Vietnam War, this analysis situates the novel as both a reflection and a warning—one that remains relevant in light of ongoing debates about interventionism, national security, and the legacy of empire.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in postcolonial theory, primarily drawing on Edward Said's conceptualization of Orientalism as a discourse of power and knowledge that constructs the East as the West's inferior "Other." Said's Orientalism (1978/2003) critiques the ways in which literature, academia, and political discourse have historically depicted the Orient as exotic, passive, irrational, and in need of Western intervention. Through Orientalism, the West legitimates its hegemony by essentializing cultural differences and presenting its authority as a civilizing mission.

In *The Quiet American*, Graham Greene dramatizes this epistemic and ideological construction through the character of Phuong, who is rendered silent and symbolic—a passive object through which Fowler and Pyle project their conflicting worldviews. Pyle's naïve interventionism, masked as democratic idealism, parallels what Said calls the "manifest" Orientalism: a conscious and institutional mode of control disguised as moral responsibility. In contrast, Fowler embodies a more ambivalent yet complicit form of latent Orientalism, which passively sustains the binaries between East and West through cynical detachment.

The framework further draws on critiques of gendered Orientalism, as explored by theorists like Meyda Yeğenoğlu, who emphasize how Orientalist discourse feminizes the East. In this narrative, Phuong becomes the allegorical Vietnam—silent, desirable, and colonized—while the Western men debate her fate, mirroring imperialist contestation. The triangulated relationship among Fowler, Pyle, and Phuong functions as a metaphor for colonial possession, ideological rivalry, and geopolitical control.

This study also incorporates contemporary postcolonial discourse on liminality and hybridity, as theorized by Homi Bhabha. The "Third Space" in Bhabha's theory reveals how colonial subjects inhabit a liminal zone between cultures, where hybrid identities challenge essentialist classifications. Phuong, despite her silence, exists within such a liminal zone—her identity mediated, fragmented, and appropriated by both American idealism and British detachment.

Recent scholarship has extended this theoretical framework. For instance, Güven (2024) analyzes inherited trauma and cultural dislocation, emphasizing how liminal margins allow diasporic subjects to challenge imposed patterns of identity and belonging. Similarly, in his earlier critique of Said's work, Güven (2019) highlights the internal contradictions within Orientalism's definitions, cautioning against a reductive application of Said's theory without acknowledging its epistemological tensions. These insights urge a more nuanced application of Orientalism that

accounts for its ambiguities and limitations while recognizing its critical value in interpreting colonial discourse in literature. By synthesizing Said's Orientalism, Bhabha's hybridity, Yeğenoğlu's feminist critique, and the nuanced expansions offered by recent scholarship, this framework positions *The Quiet American* as a rich narrative site for interrogating the politics of representation, the gendered dimensions of colonial desire, and the ideological consequences of Western interventionism in the East.

3. CRITICAL ANALYSIS THROUGH THE PARADIGM OF ORIENTALISM

Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* constructs a love triangle that transcends interpersonal relationships, functioning as a symbolic microcosm of colonial power dynamics and Orientalist discourse. The characters Fowler, Pyle, and Phuong inhabit roles that align with classical Orientalist binaries: the rational West versus the passive East, the civilizing mission versus the colonized subject, and masculine agency versus feminized otherness. Through this triangulated relationship, Greene explores how both colonial nostalgia and emergent American interventionism reproduce a gendered and racialized fantasy of the Orient.

Phuong, whose name symbolically means "Phoenix," is introduced by Fowler with a tone of melancholic resignation: "Phuong," I said—"which means Phoenix, but nothing nowadays is fabulous and nothing rises from its ashes" (Greene, 1955, p. 11). From the outset, Phuong is deprived of interiority; her mythic name is stripped of symbolic potential, foreshadowing her function as a silent object of male desire. Within the narrative, Phuong exists less as a character and more as a signifier—an embodiment of the Orient through which Western anxieties about aging, desire, and cultural displacement are negotiated.

Fowler, the British journalist, and Pyle, the idealistic American operative, project competing visions of modernity and morality onto Phuong, who becomes the object through which each man seeks to assert his identity. As Edward Said (1978) argues, Orientalism is not merely a discourse about the East, but a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over it. In this context, Phuong is orientalized as a passive, sensual, and obedient figure—desired not for who she is, but for what she represents: youth, exoticism, and docile loyalty. Fowler often claims to know what Phuong wants or feels, without giving her space to articulate it herself. When he tells Pyle, "I only want her body. I want her in bed with me. I'd rather ruin her and sleep with her than… look after her damned interests" (Greene, 1955, p. 59), he reveals his awareness that his relationship with Phuong is underwritten by domination masked as affection. Phuong's minimal dialogue and constant third-person framing reinforce her status as a mute symbol—"invisible like peace," as Fowler remarks (p. 44). Meanwhile, Pyle presents himself as Phuong's protector, offering "security and respect" (p. 78), and promising to marry her. His language of protection invokes the civilizing rhetoric of the colonial mission—echoing what Said (1978) describes as the imperial belief in Western moral superiority. Yet Pyle's love is deeply commodified. He speaks of marriage in terms of medical certificates, income levels, and rational compatibility—what Fowler sarcastically calls "a dollar love" (p. 63). Through Pyle, Greene critiques American exceptionalism and its naïve belief in the universality of its ideals, including romantic love.

Phuong's near-total silence during scenes of negotiation between Fowler and Pyle further underscores her objectification. As the two men debate her future, Phuong is linguistically and emotionally sidelined, reinforcing what Meyda Yeğenoğlu (1998) identifies as the gendered nature of Orientalist discourse, wherein the Eastern woman is fetishized, controlled, and rendered voiceless. Her refusal of Pyle's marriage proposal momentarily disrupts this dynamic, offering a rare moment of agency. Yet even then, her motivations are inscrutable, filtered through the male gaze. Both men claim to act in Phuong's best interest—Fowler out of a fear of dying alone, Pyle out of a paternalistic impulse to "save" her. As Said (1978) asserts, the Orient is often imagined not as a self-determining entity but as a space to be spoken for and reshaped by the West. Phuong, seen through this lens, is a cultural territory to be claimed, a stabilizing domestic figure for Western men disoriented by geopolitical upheaval.

Fowler's evolving perception of Phuong—from sexual object to emotional anchor—reveals more about his own fears of obsolescence and isolation than about Phuong herself. "She always told me what I wanted to hear," he reflects (Greene, 1955, p. 115), suggesting that her function is to confirm his masculinity and alleviate his existential dread. As a result, Phuong becomes a palimpsest upon which Fowler inscribes his own fragility, much as the West projects its anxieties onto the East. Even in his moments of apparent honesty, Fowler reinscribes Phuong within Orientalist stereotypes. He asserts that she does not love "like that," referring to Western romantic ideals, and describes her affection as transactional, rooted in "kindness, security, the presents you give them" (p. 104). His commentary reproduces the trope of the Eastern woman as materially motivated and emotionally shallow—a trope deeply embedded in colonial narratives of cultural difference (Yeğenoğlu, 1998).

In sum, the Fowler–Pyle–Phuong triangle in *The Quiet American* dramatizes the structures of Orientalist power that continue to shape Western representations of the East. Phuong's objectification, silence, and symbolic function illustrate how colonial and neocolonial ideologies are sustained not only through military occupation but also through interpersonal and gendered dynamics. Greene's narrative, while critiquing American interventionism,

remains complicit in its failure to fully humanize the Vietnamese female subject. Through a postcolonial and gendered lens, Phuong emerges as the quintessential Oriental figure—desired, possessed, and silenced by the West. As the narrative unfolds Greene continues to interweave personal desire with political ideology, ultimately constructing a narrative where romantic rivalry and imperial ambition coalesce. The triangular relationship between Fowler, Pyle, and Phuong not only represents interpersonal conflict but also dramatizes a clash between colonial decline and American ascendancy. Fowler's psychological fragility, Pyle's political naïveté, and Phuong's silence are all refracted through the ideological lens of Orientalism, wherein Western subjects project meaning, identity, and morality onto an exoticized and feminized East (Said, 1978).

In a telling moment upon receiving a letter from his wife refusing to grant a divorce, Fowler lies to Phuong, claiming there is still hope. "I can't outbid Pyle," he laments (Greene, 1955, p. 120), a statement that reflects the commodification of Phuong and the transactional framing of their rivalry. The terms of the emotional contest are economic, paternalistic, and implicitly racialized. Pyle represents the future—youthful, wealthy, and ideologically committed—while Fowler embodies a waning imperialism, clinging to emotional stability in a world he no longer controls. Fowler's confession—"I want to keep her… at any cost to her" (p. 132)—reveals the fundamentally possessive nature of his attachment. This sentiment is echoed in his dismissive retort to Pyle's protestation: "'That's not love,'" to which Fowler replies, "'Perhaps it's not your way of love'" (p. 132). Here, love becomes a culturally loaded term, with Fowler invoking a form of emotional realism and embodied desire that stands in contrast to Pyle's moralizing and paternalism. Yet, both men disempower Phuong by rendering her an object of exchange rather than an agent of her own destiny.

Greene's depiction of Phuong frequently reinforces Orientalist tropes of passivity, docility, and inscrutability. "She was invisible like peace," Fowler observes (p. 44), a phrase that underscores her function as symbolic territory rather than a fully realized subject. Fowler later admits that he is "inventing a character just as much as Pyle was" (p. 134), acknowledging the epistemic violence inherent in their interpretations of her. Phuong becomes the site of a discursive struggle between two imperial masculinities, each projecting their values and insecurities onto her body and silence. Pyle's rationalist and bureaucratic approach to love—offering Phuong his blood type and marriage papers—further illustrates the way Orientalist patriarchy disguises domination as protection. As Said (1978) asserts, the West often justifies its control over the East through narratives of civilizing, safeguarding, and enlightening. Pyle's claim that he wants to "protect" Phuong (Greene, 1955, p. 132) is steeped in this paternalistic rhetoric, which simultaneously infantilizes and objectifies the Eastern woman. Fowler, though more emotionally complex, similarly reduces Phuong to a stabilizing force for his existential crisis: "I just don't want to be alone in my last decade, that's all" (p. 105). His desire for her is grounded not in love but in the alleviation of aging and alienation.

The conflict between the two men is not only romantic but ideologically allegorical. Fowler, the cynical British observer, clings to his detachment and resignation, while Pyle, the idealistic American, seeks to impose theoretical solutions onto Vietnam. The death of Pyle signifies not merely the resolution of a love triangle but the collapse of American innocence. Fowler's ambiguous complicity in Pyle's demise is marked by his famous utterance: "God save us always from the innocent and the good" (p. 20). Here, Greene critiques the deadly consequences of ideological certainty—a theme that resonates with Edward Said's (1978) critique of Orientalist authority, which often cloaks itself in benevolence while enacting structural domination.

Phuong's final responses—or lack thereof—are especially revealing. When asked whether she misses Pyle, she simply responds, "'Who?'" (p. 189), signaling the disposability of the Western man in her life, or perhaps the survival strategy of emotional elision. Fowler interprets her reaction through a lens of relief and possession, noting her excitement about his wife's divorce. Yet this final scene does not restore any authentic connection between Fowler and Phuong; rather, it confirms the Orientalist structure of the novel, where the Eastern woman remains an unknowable, malleable figure—subject to male desire, war, and geopolitical calculations, yet never fully speaking in her own voice.

The character of Thomas Fowler emerges as a critical observer of American intervention in Vietnam. His encounter with the American Economic Attaché after Pyle's death underscores the ideological machinery that underpins U.S. foreign policy. The Attaché's official cable, stating that Pyle "died a soldier's death in the cause of Democracy," reflects the internalized rhetoric of the West's civilizing mission. Fowler's ironic response—questioning the legitimacy of this military language applied to a civilian aid worker—exposes the duplicity of such ideological formulations (Greene, 2004, pp. 31–32). Fowler's indignation crystallizes when he accuses Pyle of being "too innocent to live," highlighting how American idealism, divorced from on-the-ground complexities, becomes not only naïve but dangerous. He indicts those like York Harding and the Economic Attaché for feeding Pyle a sanitized narrative about the East, one rooted in abstract theories rather than empirical realities. Pyle, shaped by these discourses, becomes the embodiment of Orientalist innocence—well-meaning, yet fatally blind to the human cost of ideological imposition.

The portrayal of American involvement in Vietnam through characters like Pyle and the Economic Attaché reveals the covert function of institutions such as the Economic Aid Mission, which, far from being neutral humanitarian bodies, serve as instruments of geopolitical influence. At the Continental Hotel, the interaction between Pyle, the Attaché, and the cynical American journalist Granger underscores the performative nature of wartime propaganda. Granger's sarcastic commentary on the French inability to count their own casualties, contrasted with official claims of Vietminh losses, reveals the manipulation of truth in colonial warfare (Greene, 2004, p. 36). Pyle's unwavering search for a "Third Force," inspired by York Harding's theoretical musings, further reflects the disconnection between Western intellectual abstraction and Vietnamese socio-political realities. Fowler's ironic remarks, pointing out that even the Catholic Bishop of Phat Diem trades with the Communists, attempt to shatter Pyle's binary worldview. The battlefield, metaphorically and literally, becomes a site where ideological fantasies collide with material devastation.

The scenes in Phat Diem, described with vivid imagery—rubble, shattered buildings, and corpses filling a canal—disclose the brutal reality of a war sanitized in Western reports. Journalists are excluded from the scene, reinforcing the theme of censorship and managed perception. Fowler's reflection that "a European face proved in itself a passport on the field" indicates the racial dimension of trust in colonial warfare: whiteness becomes a marker of safety and legitimacy, while local identities are rendered suspect (Greene, 2004, p. 51). This racialized epistemology resurfaces when Fowler and Pyle take shelter in a watchtower. Their discussion becomes a philosophical confrontation, revealing their divergent worldviews. Fowler dismisses Harding's abstractions, claiming that the Vietnamese peasants desire not democracy, but rice and safety. Pyle, steeped in American ideological discourse, cannot comprehend this. Fowler's indictment of liberal interventionism draws on historical analogies, invoking British betrayal in Burma and critiquing the West's moral duplicity. His reflection that "liberalism has infected all the parties" is an implicit critique of post-war Western conscience, which cloaks exploitation in moral righteousness (Greene, 2004, pp. 95–96).

Fowler's refusal to align himself politically—his claim of being "not engagé"—is belied by his actions and emotional entanglements. His affection for Vietnam and his relationship with Phuong signify a deeper involvement than he admits. Pyle, on the other hand, represents the rational but emotionally sterile American missionary impulse—viewing Phuong, like Vietnam, as a subject to be protected, instructed, and 'liberated.' The metaphorical overlap between Phuong and the East becomes evident in their final confrontation. Pyle's belief that he can offer Phuong security mirrors the American justification for intervention. Fowler, by contrast, acknowledges his selfish attachment, reflecting the conflicted position of the European colonial remnant. Phuong, significantly, remains voiceless in this exchange—a silent object of desire and projection, reinforcing Said's (1978) notion of the Oriental woman as passive and knowable.

This dialogue encapsulates the central ideological tension of the novel: the American project of liberal universalism versus the cynical realism of European decline. Pyle's ideals, abstract and utopian, are challenged by Fowler's empirical, disillusioned sensibility. As Kerr (1992) argues, the novel critiques the West's presumed epistemic authority over the East, exposing how such knowledge is not only constructed but operationalized with fatal consequences. In *The Quiet American*, Greene constructs a sophisticated allegory of imperialism, where innocence is not redemptive but lethal, and where the real victims—ordinary Vietnamese civilians—are silenced beneath layers of foreign ideology, military rhetoric, and Orientalist fantasy.

The tension between innocence and complicity culminates in a series of events that force Thomas Fowler, the novel's narrator, to abandon his passive neutrality and make a moral decision. After surviving an attack on the watch tower with Pyle's assistance, Fowler is physically wounded but increasingly disturbed by the ideological implications of Pyle's actions. His resentment towards Pyle deepens—not because Pyle saved his life, but because his intervention symbolizes the inescapability of American involvement in a conflict that Fowler would rather observe from the margins. Fowler's growing awareness begins when Dominguez, his assistant, hints at Pyle's deeper political involvement. Dominguez recounts hearing Pyle speak at a party, promoting the idea of a "Third Force"—an indigenous alternative to both communism and colonialism. Pyle, echoing York Harding's theoretical framework, argues that a democratic national movement, untainted by colonial powers, could succeed in Vietnam. Fowler remains skeptical, dismissing Pyle's convictions as derivative, stating, "It's all in York Harding… he's learned nothing" (Greene, 2004, p. 124). However, it is only after a series of incidents that Fowler begins to understand the gravity of Pyle's actions. A visit to Mr. Heng, a local operative who introduces himself as a manager for Mr. Chou, exposes Fowler to a suspicious American-made plastic drum. Mr. Heng subtly links this material to clandestine activities involving General Thé and suggests Pyle's involvement. Though Fowler initially shrugs off the implication—interpreting Pyle's use of plastics as harmless, even trivial—Mr. Heng insists that he may one day wish to recall what he has seen.

The realization dawns on Fowler only after a series of bombings erupt in Saigon, one of which occurs near a milk bar where Phuong, Fowler's partner, frequently visits. The explosion, which injures civilians and children, shatters Fowler's illusion that Pyle's actions are benign. When Pyle admits to having warned Phuong not to go to the milk

bar that day, Fowler connects the pieces: Pyle was aware of the impending violence (Greene, 2004, p. 161). Pyle's response to the aftermath—expressing concern about the blood on his shoes rather than the victims strewn across the square—epitomizes Greene's critique of American innocence. "He was impregnably armored by his good intentions and his ignorance," Fowler reflects (p. 163). The distinction between moral intent and consequence becomes blurred as Pyle's idealism produces unintended but catastrophic results. His comment that the victims "died in the right cause" reveals the dangerous abstraction of political rhetoric, where human lives are reduced to collateral damage in service of ideological goals (p. 179).

Fowler, now burdened by a moral dilemma, confronts the necessity of action. Mr. Heng's question—whether he is prepared to help "restrain" Pyle—is framed as a call to ethical engagement. This moral awakening echoes an earlier conversation with Captain Trouin: "Sooner or later, one has to take sides. If one is to remain human" (p. 174). Fowler's internal conflict culminates in an invitation to Pyle for dinner, an act of complicity that initiates the final chain of events leading to Pyle's death. During this final conversation, Pyle maintains his ideological certainty. When confronted by Fowler, who asks whether the deaths of innocent civilians were worth it, Pyle responds with chilling conviction: "They were only war casualties… they died for democracy" (p. 179). Fowler's sardonic reply—that he would not know how to translate "democracy" into Vietnamese—reveals the cultural and moral disconnect between Western ideological imposition and local realities.

The eventual murder of Pyle is not described in explicit terms, but Fowler's involvement is strongly implied. The French police officer later confirms Pyle's death beneath the Dakow Bridge. This moment of narrative closure, however, does not offer triumph but melancholy. Fowler's "return to life" is shadowed by moral compromise. Though his wife agrees to divorce him, allowing him a future with Phuong, the reader is left to question the ethical cost of his renewed stability. In *The Quiet American*, Greene critiques the naïve idealism of American foreign policy through the character of Pyle, whose belief in abstract principles like "national democracy" and "Third Force" justifies violence and erasure. Fowler's reluctant transformation from detached observer to morally responsible agent reflects the novel's central tension: in the face of injustice, neutrality is itself a form of complicity. Ultimately, *The Quiet American* portrays innocence not as a virtue, but as a dangerous form of ignorance, and calls for a sobering reckoning with the real consequences of ideological intervention.

4. CONCLUSION

Summarizing *The Quiet American* through the lens of Orientalism reveals a complex narrative that critiques colonialism, American intervention, and the illusion of neutrality. Greene's novel operates as both a political allegory and a personal account, centered on Fowler, a British reporter who gradually abandons his claims of detachment. The novel's setting in 1950s Indochina becomes a backdrop for exploring the moral ambiguity of Western involvement in Southeast Asia. The figure of Alden Pyle represents American ideological optimism—his belief in a "Third Force" reflects the Cold War's abstract commitments, which ultimately lead to violent consequences. Fowler initially ridicules Pyle's idealism but is later forced to confront its tangible harm. As Pyle's complicity in bombings becomes apparent, Greene underscores how innocence and good intentions can become instruments of destruction. Orientalist dynamics permeate the novel, particularly through the character of Phuong. She is consistently objectified, spoken for, and denied interiority, symbolizing both the silenced East and the Western fantasy of exoticism and submission. Fowler and Pyle both claim to act in her best interest, yet neither truly hears her. This imbalance reflects broader patterns of representation in Orientalist discourse, where the East is observed, categorized, and managed by the West. Despite its engagement with Orientalist tropes, the novel also critiques them. Greene acknowledges the limits of Western knowledge and exposes the contradictions in liberal interventionist rhetoric. While some critics have accused the novel of anti-American bias, its enduring power lies in its unflinching portrayal of ideological naivety and the ethical burden of political action. In the end, *The Quiet American* challenges the possibility of remaining neutral in a world shaped by imperial ambitions. Through Fowler's reluctant transformation and Pyle's tragic end, Greene presents a haunting meditation on complicity, representation, and the human cost of geopolitical abstraction.

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ÇALIŞMANIN ETİK İZNİ

Bu çalışma edebi metin incelemesi olduğu için herhangi bir kurumdan etik izin onayı almaya ihtiyaç duyulmamıştır

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