Part Two: Rearticulations of Sex/Race
The triangle is useful as a figure by which the “commonsense” of our intellectual tradition schematizes erotic relations, and because it allows us to condense in a juxtaposition with that folk-perception several somewhat different streams of recent thought.

—Eve Sedgwick, Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire (1985)

The love triangle, as Eve Sedgwick notes in the epigraph, is an excellent literary vehicle to represent the complexity of human desire. Graham Greene’s The Quiet American (1955) and Chinua Achebe’s A Man of the People (1966) convey different views of the colonial and postcolonial situation using the very model of triangulated desire that is the focus of Sedgwick’s work. Like Sedgwick, Greene and Achebe recognize the love triangle’s ability to ‘schematize’ and ‘juxtapose’ theoretical relationships—a perfect device to both reinforce and displace colonial structures. In the following analysis, I will intersect Sedgwick’s queer theory with postcolonial theory to make legible the reality of the power struggles that underlie both Greene and Achebe’s texts. I will examine whether queer theory mapped onto postcolonial theory can allow the love triangle, an age old literary device central to the European novel, in fact to be decolonized.

Mapping Desire: The Postcolonial Possibilities of the Love Triangle

Sedgwick’s theory of triangulated desire builds upon Rene Girard’s argument in Deceit, Desire, & the Novel (1976). In his classic text, Girard explains that a plot involving a “literary love triangle” situates a mediator between a subject’s desire for