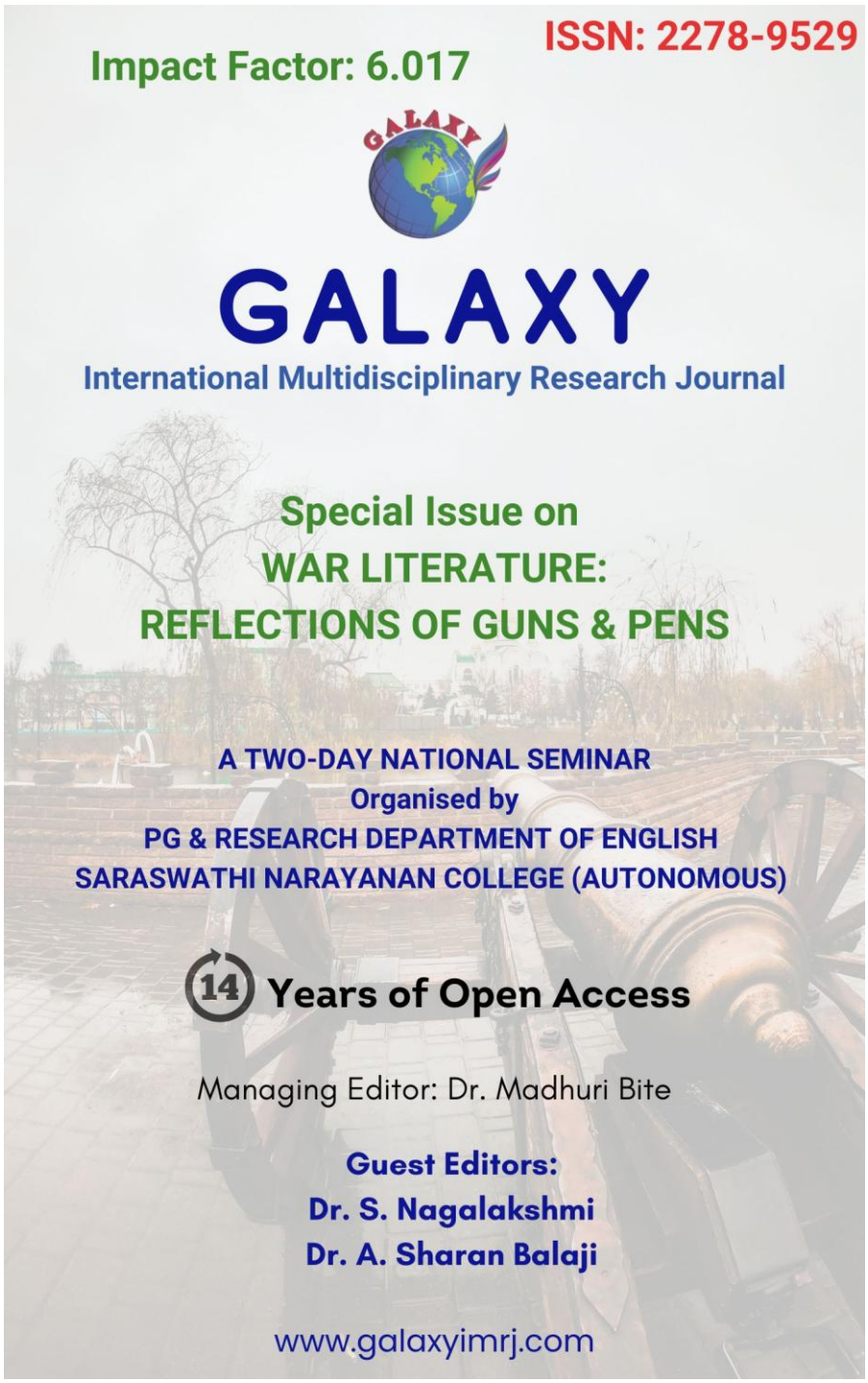


About Us: http://www.galaxyimrj.com/about-us/
Archive: http://www.galaxyimrj.com/archive/
Contact Us: http://www.galaxyimrj.com/contact-us/
Editorial Board: http://www.galaxyimrj.com/editorial-board/
Submission: http://www.galaxyimrj.com/submission/
FAQ: http://www.galaxyimrj.com/faq/

A Historian's Perspective: Decoding the Secret War in Roger Warner's *Shooting at the Moon: The Story of America's Clandestine War in Laos*

Dr. D. Soundarapandi
Assistant Professor & Head,
Department of English,
Government Arts & Science College,
Srivilliputhur.

Abstract:

The main purpose of this paper is to look at Roger Warner's *Shooting at the Moon: The Story of America's Clandestine War in Laos* using historical methodological analysis to figure out how Warner put together his story, which reveals the CIA's secret actions during the Vietnam War. Warner's work is important to history because it brings attention to the little-known Laotian war zone that had a big impact on the conflict in Southeast Asia at the time. The study looks at how Warner combined historical records and how good he was at combining different historical accounts into one complete story. The paper looks at Warner's methods for reconstructing events to find out how he planned to study a secret war. Warner talks about the main characters in the story and how he thinks important decisions were made during the war. He also looks at how military actions affected the people of Laos. This paper also looks into Warner's view on the moral issues connected with 'black operations' while he talks about how the US uses 'proxy troops' and 'strategic information deception' techniques.

The study looks at Warner's story in light of what was going on in history at the time it was written and what it adds to our understanding of the Cold War and shadow war. By questioning the usual Vietnam-centered views, *Shooting at the Moon* gives important of new information about US foreign policy in Southeast Asia. Warner looks at how covert warfare works and how it continues to change social structures through his study into the past. The

main goal of the study is to understand the complicated secret war in Laos by looking at it from a historical point of view, as this helps to show how Warner's story has lasting meaning.

Keywords: historical perspective, war fare, secrecy, foreign policy, social structure.

Introduction

Roger Warner's work *Shooting at the Moon: The Story of America's Clandestine War in Laos* tells the story of three important parts of history: Fear of the Cold War spread around the world, and politics changed at a time when regional tensions were growing in Southeast Asia. One need to know about the complex forces that were at work in the area from the 1960s to the early 1970s in order to fully understand Warner's story. After the French left Indochina, the Geneva Accords of 1954 set up conditions that made the area more dangerous without meaning to. Because it was strategically placed, Laos was in the middle of China, North Vietnam, and Thailand. When the Geneva Accords of 1962 stopped working, both superpowers destroyed Laos's neutrality because they wanted to rule the area during the Cold War.

The US government believed in the domino theory and was afraid of communist growth, so it saw Laos as an important land mass to protect itself from North Vietnamese attack. The United States used a lot of military power against the Ho Chi Minh Trail because it was the main way for the Vietnamese to get supplies into eastern Laos. The supply network was an important way for the Viet Cong rebel forces in South Vietnam to get important military support, so Laos became an important but secret place to operate. The Central Intelligence Agency worked in secret to carry out US policy in Laos by sending armed help to Hmong groups fighting Pathet Lao communists and North Vietnamese forces.

The United States military planned the Laos war's 'hidden operation' as part of a full strategy. Washington pretended it wasn't fully involved to escape criticism from other countries, even as they grew their operations. The fact that operations were kept secret had very bad effects on the people who were touched. The world didn't know about American activities, so the Laotians were the ones who had to deal with the worst effects of the war. Laos was hit by constant bombs and had to move its people around, while its society fell apart in a way that most of the world didn't know about.

The main war in Vietnam was linked to the conflict going on at the same time in Laos. Laos was a place where the strategic need to cut off the Ho Chi Minh Trail, Cold War political concerns, and the personal risks of secret military operations all came together. Warner's story is both an investigation into history and an active look at the moral and ethical problems that come with running secret military operations. Warner's study of the secret war in Laos gives us important historical information about the Vietnam War era and shows how countries' attempts to gain power in other areas can lead to bad results.

Roger Warner's *Shooting at the Moon* takes place in a time period that is made up of three main parts: the anxiety of the Cold War, the acts of great powers, and the growing conflict in Southeast Asian territories. To fully understand Warner's story, one need to know about the complicated relationships that ruled the area as the 1960s turned into the early 1970s. When the French left Indochina, the Geneva Accords of 1954 created a situation that made peace less likely. North Vietnam, Thailand, and China all wanted to attack Laos because it was in the middle of these three countries. The fragile structure of neutrality in the 1962 Geneva Accords was destroyed by the Cold War superpowers in order to gain more control over Laos's territory. Because of the domino theory, the US kept its place in Laos as an important geographic defense line to stop the spread of communism that it saw coming from North Vietnam. Since the United States set up its network of supply lines through

eastern Laos, the Ho Chi Minh Trail has become a major military target. Viet Cong rebels in South Vietnam got help from civilian areas in Laos. Because of this, the supply line was an important but hidden operational theater. The hidden CIA was in charge of US policy in Laos. They trained Hmong tribal people to fight the communist Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese troops as 'proxy forces.

There was a reason why the war efforts in Laos had to stay secret. Washington wanted to stay out of sight for both its own people and people from other countries while its troops got more involved. It was a conscious choice to keep operations secret, which had very bad effects. Laos suffered the most from the war because the truth about what the US was doing was kept secret. Everyone else didn't know about the bombings, population transfers, and other damage that Laos' society went through, so it was hidden from view. The war between Vietnam and Laos was more than just a sideshow to the Vietnam War, these operations were still closely linked. Laos's most important military goal was to block the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Its covert war was driven by both Cold War politics and secret activities. Warner uses his story about history to look at the moral problems that come up with secret operations during wartime. Warner's research into the secret operation in Laos gives us a new and important understanding of the Vietnam War and shows how countries following geopolitical goals can destroy things. In addition to military histories, the book gives a smart look at secret battle strategies, geopolitical games, and the terrible human costs of hidden wars. Warner breaks down his story into three parts that show how the US got more involved while looking into strategic reasons and showing how it hurt the Laotian people.

Warner's study is mostly about how the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) handled the secret conflict. By saying they supported neutral Laos, Warner does a lot of study to show how the CIA became the main group in charge of US policy in the area. The work is mostly about how important proxy troops were to US operations, especially the Hmong hill tribes.

Warner shows how Hmong people were taken advantage of, by friendly powers, which led to the loss of their tribal lands. Warner says that the Hmong fighting groups decided to fight, but they didn't know that they would be pushed into a huge war. The phrase shows that Hmong people were ready to defend their places even though the war was having terrible effects on their lives.

The work goes into great detail about the Ho Chi Minh Trail's strategic importance. This trail is a key supply line for North Vietnam. The US knew that Laos was an important front that needed to be messed up in order to cut off North Vietnam's supply lines. As a main theme throughout the story, aerial bombardments were done in secret and all the time. Warner shows how destructive the bombing operations were by showing how much damage they did to the people and surroundings of Laos. According to his record, the constant air attacks turned large parts of the country into land that looked like the moon. This language and images are used to show how the war killed many people and hurt the environment. Warner carefully handles the many political issues that come up in the fighting. All sides didn't care about the complicated rules set out in the Geneva Accords of 1962, which made Laos a neutral country. The story also looks at the complicated political rivalries and relationships that shaped the war. White House boasts about US neutrality stayed the same, even as more help was given to stop the spread of communism around the world. Warner says that duplicity is the most important part of his critical study of the whole story.

The story spends the whole thing talking about how terrible the secret war was for different people. As Warner describes, the work shows how the people of Laos, especially the Hmong, went through a lot of trouble during those times. Warner paints a vivid picture of what happened, showing destroyed towns, people being forced to move, and many people dying. Warner said that the war destroyed the Laotian national spirit in a way that could not be fixed, and that the healing process would take many generations. The sentence talks about

how the war changed Lao society in a way that will not go away. He also looks at the moral issues that come up in covert war tactics. A lot of research is being done on the war's secret forces, lack of information, and lack of care for civilian deaths. It also looks at how it's hard to tell what is right and wrong when wars are fought in secret, creating moral misunderstanding and a lack of responsibility. Throughout the work, the authors look at how the secret operations in Laos were connected to the bigger war in Vietnam. Warner claims that the two wars were linked by the conflict in Laos, which was an important part of the US strategy in Southeast Asia. His study shows that decisions made in Laos had a direct effect on how the Vietnam War went, and how the war went had a big effect on decisions made in Laos.

Warner's presentation goes against the historical stories about the time of the Vietnam War. This author adds to our knowledge of the war by talking about important parts of US foreign policy that had not been talked about before. The fact that covert actions were found out shows that secret operations hurt democracy systems and lead to unexpected results, even though their goal is to do nothing. The work also looks at how the ongoing, secret war still affects life in Laos. Unexploded bombs that were dropped from the air over Laos set off other dangerous weapons that put people's lives in danger. Laos is still dealing with a lot of natural damage caused by the war, even though the fighting is over. Laotians are still dealing with the effects of the mental stress they went through as children. What *Shooting at the Moon* does is very important for academic research about the time of the Vietnam War. Warner shows that he knows a lot about the hidden Laos conflict during the Vietnam War by doing accurate study and writing interestingly. His writings describe the complicated nature of secret warfare, the lives lost in these fights, and the lasting effects of American involvement in Southeast Asia. Warner's work does a better job of showing why foreign policy should put an emphasis on openness, moral choices, and fair ways of holding people accountable.

Conclusion

Shooting at the Moon by Roger Warner goes beyond just repeating a historical event. It gets to the heart of what it means to fight and how it affects people for a long time. Warner shows important secret information about the CIA's spy operations in Laos during the Vietnam War. Because of political campaigns that put pain of people before principles, his writing forces us to face the harsh realities of covert warfare. It also shows how weak and dangerous activities can be found and when there is too much secrecy, *Shooting at the Moon* it is important record to history. Warner's writings demonstrate that looking only for strategic advantages without considering moral issues can lead to terrible outcomes. In times of global rivalry, his work shows how the Hmong people were hurt by interference from superpowers. These groups are amazingly strong considering how much pain they have been through in battle. They show us how wars continue to affect communities that are left open to injury. Warner's story makes people think again about how they usually think about the Vietnam War. Warner gives us a better and more complex understanding of history by showing how the wars in Vietnam and Laos were connected. High-level worries about the Cold War in Laos led to important decisions that still have an impact on society today.

This work not only just tell you about the past; it also uses a warning to shed light on the present. By talking about it, one can see how foreign policy causes moral problems that need to be dealt with in a clear and responsible way when making political decisions. Warner's study shows that protecting national defense means putting human rights first and following the rules of international law. Warner's work gives us important information about modern war and the long-term effects that come from battles that we don't know about yet. The work makes the case for tighter security checks and a close look at the country's defense choices, showing that the costs of war go beyond combat zones and into the years after the war

Works Cited:

Blum, William. *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*. Common Courage Press, 2004.

Branfman, Fred. *Voices from the Plain of Jars: Life Under an Air War*. Harper & Row, 1972.

Hamilton-Merritt, Jane. *Tragic Mountains: The Hmongs, the Americans, and the Secret Wars for Laos, 1942-1992*. Indiana University Press, 1993.

Karnow, Stanley. *Vietnam: A History*. Viking Press, 1983.

McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade*. Lawrence Hill Books, 1991.

Prados, John. *The Wars We Lost: Containing Violence, Counterinsurgency, and the World Order*. New Press, 2018.

Stuart-Fox, Martin. *A History of Laos*. Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Warner, Roger. *Shooting at the Moon: The Story of America's Clandestine War in Laos*. Steerforth Press, 1996.

Hersh, Seymour M. *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House*. Summit Books, 1983.

Young, Marilyn B. *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990*. Harper Perennial, 1991.