FAMILY MOTIF IN KHAI HUNG'S NOVEL *GIA DINH* FROM THE THEORY OF CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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Abstract: *Khai Hung is one of the outstanding novelists of the Tu Luc Van Doan group. The novel Gia Dinh by him is considered one of the typical works. The novel reflects cultural tensions between traditional and modern values in Vietnamese society during the early 20th century. The family motif not only mirrors social structures but also reveals internal conflicts, particularly intergenerational tensions. This article analyzes the components of family motifs and examines processes of cultural transformation. Through that, we analyze the conflicts between generations as well as the consequences and causes of cultural transformation. Some methods are used such as: historical - social method, interdisciplinary method, reflexivity method. In terms of theory, the article contributes to the application of the theory of cultural anthropology to the study of Vietnamese literary works. This contributes to the debate on cultural aesthetics. The analysis reveals three primary components of family motifs (generational structure, power dynamics, and educational paradigms) and identifies two major cultural transformation patterns in the novel (progressive types of people, pseudo - Westernized types of people). In terms of practice, the article can be used as a reference in the research and teaching of literature and cultural studies.*

Keywords: *Cultural anthropology; cultural transformation; family motif; Gia Dinh novel, Khai Hung.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural anthropology (also known as socio - cultural anthropology, social anthropology, ethnology) is a field that studies human cultural activities such as: how society organizes activities, comparing different forms of human society [1, p.16-17]. This theory provides the basis for studying cultural and human issues in literary works. International scholarship has extensively applied cultural anthropological approaches to literary analysis, including seminal works by Clifford and Marcus (1986), Angelis (2002), and Grochowski (2012). However, such interdisciplinary approaches remain underutilized in Vietnamese literary criticism. The works of Huynh Vu Lam [5], Le Minh Hue [6], Mai Anh Tuan [7] and Ho Thi Van Anh [8] are recognized by us for applying cultural anthropology theory to literary composition research. Through that, we carry out this work with the desire to contribute to the application of cultural anthropology theory in studying literary works.

Tu Luc Van Doan novels functioned both as realistic representations and as forums for expressing ideological and cultural conflicts during Vietnam's period of Western cultural influence. One of the categories that contributed to this function was *the family motif*. Among the group's works, the novel *Gia Dinh* by Khai Hung is considered a work that represents the spirit of the group. The work both recreates the traditional family model and puts it in a crisis situation. This study deeply depicts the process of changing human perception and re - evaluation of social values.

From that awareness, the study of the family motif in the novel *Gia Dinh* from the perspective of cultural anthropology not only contributes to clarifying the artistic ideology of writer Khai Hung but also contributes to identifying the position of the Tu Luc Van Doan group in the process of modernizing Vietnamese literature. At the same time, the study of this work under the theory of cultural anthropology represents the act of re - evaluating the work. This is associated with the need to pay attention to and study Vietnamese literature under modern theories.

This study addresses three primary research questions:

(1) What are the structural components of family motifs in *Gia Dinh*?

(2) How do these motifs reflect cultural transformation processes in Vietnam from 1930 to 1945?

(3) What cultural anthropological insights can be derived from analyzing intergenerational conflicts in the novel?

2. THEORETICAL BASIS

2.1. Cultural anthropology terminology

Cultural anthropology is a modern science associated with names such as: Morgan and Boas (USA), Tylor and Frazer (UK), Mauss and Lévi - Strauss (France), etc. However, the recognition of the role of philosophers Herodotus (5th century BC) is essential to this field. With his records, descriptions and analysis of different cultures, he can be considered the world's first anthropologist.

In the 13th century, between 1245 and 1247, Giovanni da Pian del Carpine was considered a pioneering ethnographer with his work documenting Mongol culture [10]. Cultural anthropology was widely recognized in the 19th century when Tylor's works *"Anahuac: Or Mexico and the Mexicans, Ancient and Modern"* [10], *"Primitive Culture"* [11] were well received. This was the first work written about cultural anthropology in a systematic way. He gave his assessment through his trips to Mexico and neighboring regions. Besides, the integration of education with cultural relativism was also mentioned by him. This experiment shows the contrast between his views on anthropology and those of *"Armchair Anthropology"*.

In general, through the above outline, we perceive that cultural anthropology originated from the recording, description and analysis of different cultures by Herodotus and Tylor who laid the essential foundation for the field. The field has the task of finding out the causes leading to similarities in thinking and action of nations, researching and explaining world culture, thereby drawing conclusions about humanity. Based on this historical development, this study defines cultural anthropology as the systematic investigation of human behavior within specific cultural contexts and environmental conditions.

2.2. Motif terminology

The interpretation of the term *motif* is complex. In the scientific process, this term is interpreted in an unstable way because of the continuous development of the scholarship on *motif* . Some researchers have tried to expand the scope of the motif, that is, to move it away from the scope of folklore , and others have tried to preserve its scope. The term *motif* is often placed next to the concept of *type*. In *"Standard dictionary of folklore, mythology, and legend"* [12], Taylor & Leach refer to Thompson's argument about *motif* and *type*. They argue that folklore researchers are unified in using Thompson's view, *type* is an independent narrative unit and *motif* is a unit under *type*. Therefore, *type* can contain many *motifs*.

In folklore, the concept of *motif* is commonly used. It is a combination of many elements that form patterns, allowing researchers to describe, analyze and interpret differences between cultures. According to Thomson, *"a motif is the smallest element in a tale having a power to persist in tradition"* [13, p. 415].

In 1920, Russian formalists considered *motifs* as the smallest unit but they had difficulty explaining the minimality. In addition, they also connected the problem of *motif* with linguistic form. Therefore, Equations relating *motifs to* established propositions and two types *of motifs* proposed by Tomaševskij, including: *dynamic motifs* - this type can change the narrative situation, they make it develop, and *static motifs* - this type can not change the narrative situation . Besides, he

distinguishes between *fabula* (tentatively translated: myth) and *story* (tentatively translated: story) [14, p. 04]. In our opinion, this activity of his shows the positive spirit of taking *motifs* out of the concept of folklorists. According to Propp, Tomaševskij's *motifs* should be replaced by the term *narrative function* [15]. In 1962, Dundes proposed to use the term motifeme to replace Propp's term *narrative function* [16]. *Motifemes* are specific forms of *motifs* in stories. In 1972, Dolezel brought *motifs* back into literary text analysis. He proposed three levels: *motifeme, structural motif* and *texture motif* [17].

In addition, from the perspective of modern narratology, *motif* is perceived as *"a minimal unit that "concretizes" the themes"* [17, p. 55; 18, p. 237]. However, like Russian formalists, modern narratologists cannot explain the problem of the minimal unit.

In general, from a literary perspective, we believe that *a motif* is a structure of elements belonging to the content and artistic form that are reused many times in a discourse or different discourses. In other words, *a motif* is *an "artistic algorithm"* that is reused many times in the creation of discourse.

It is *"an algorithm"* - a set of variables that serve as constituent elements, functioning to determine analogous family structures.

3. METHOD

To approach and analyze the family motif in the novel *Gia Dinh* by Khai Hung, we collected and analyzed data. Text analysis involved systematic coding of family - related passages, character interactions, and cultural references. A total of 11 textual segments were analyzed using thematic coding principles derived from cultural anthropological frameworks.

In addition, we used several of the following research methods:

Historical - social method: This method enables analysis of historical factors and social contexts influencing Khai Hung's literary production. These factors influence Khai Hung's creation. Thereby, the mechanism of *motif formation* as well as the causes leading to cultural transformation and re - evaluation of cultural values are analyzed.

Interdisciplinary method: Cultural anthropological theory is applied to analyze power structures, cultural paradigm shifts, and ethical transformations depicted in *Gia Dinh*. This theory serves as the foundation for all our research activities.

Reflexivity method: This method focuses on our awareness of the research action. The awareness that the information about the motif collected through survey and statistical activities can be biased by the political views and ideologies of Khai Hung or us. Therefore, the research and processing of *"real life mapped through the human brain"* needs to be carried out accurately.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 . Components of the family motif

Table 1. Components of the family motif

	Generational Structure	Single generation	1 generation	Zero
		Multi-generational	2 generations (16 families)	Mr. and Mrs. An Bao's family ; Mr. and Mrs. Am's family/An's family; Mr. and Mrs. Dang Dinh Phong's family/Viet's family ; etc
			3 generations (1 families)	Mr. and Mrs. Tham Toan's Family/The Hac Family
	Power Dynamics	Male	Decision making power	Mr. An Bao; Mr. Dieu Van; Mr. Dang Dinh Ta; Viet; Mr. Tham Toan; Hac; Mr. Huyen Linh; the