

Distortion of Marxism in Duong Thu Huong's *Novel Without A Name* and Kim Echlin's *The Disappeared*

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ABSTRACT

In *Novel Without A Name* (1996) and *The Disappeared* (2010), the brutalities of the Vietnam War and the Cambodian Civil War are depicted vividly. The implementation of suspect Marxist doctrines and ideologies is portrayed as the main factor that led to such atrocities. Thus, the central issue or theme of these two novels is the distortion of Marxism. This is foregrounded not only through incidents that take place on the battlefield, but also through the relationships between characters. The latter are not much explored by scholars to examine the main theme, the distortion of Marxism. Hence, this study investigates the importance of relationships in reflecting and developing the theme, the distortion of Marxism, as depicted in Duong Thu Huong's *Novel Without A Name* and Kim Echlin's *The Disappeared* via the concept of Marxism. By referring to the true set of Marxist ideologies, the distorted Marxist doctrines implemented in the Marxist regime depicted are shown. This paper reveals that the distortion of Marxist doctrines has a negative impact on the relationships depicted in *Novel Without A Name* and *The Disappeared*. There are three main types of relationship portrayed in the novel, namely love, siblings and friendship. All these relationships reflect the theme of both novels, the distortion of Marxism, because all of them are broken or severed at the end of the novels due to the distorted Marxist ideologies and doctrines implemented in the regimes depicted.

Keywords: Vietnam War; Cambodian Civil War; Marxism; relationship; distorted ideologies

1. INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the importance of three different relationships, love, siblings and friendship, in developing the theme, the distortion of Marxism, as depicted in two novels, Duong Thu Huong's *Novel Without A Name* and Kim Echlin's *The Disappeared*, by applying the concept of Marxism.

1. 1. *Novel Without A Name* by Duong Thu Huong

During the Vietnam War, twenty-year-old Duong Thu Huong led a Communist Youth Brigade (Phan and McPherson). She was not a soldier but a performer who performed in tunnels and huts on the frontline (Harris 8). At the end of the war, she was one of three survivors out of forty volunteers. As she turned to support democratic political reform, she was expelled from

the Communist Party in 1989. Also, all her works are banned by the Vietnamese government, including *Novel Without A Name*.

This depicts the emptiness of the Liberation War, also known as the Vietnam War (Banerian 653). Rather than describing battles and the triumphant march of the People's Army toward Saigon, Duong Thu Huong depicts incidents that question the worth of the Marxist-led struggle.

Hence, it is evident that Duong Thu Huong's aim in writing this novel is to point out the faults of the communist leaders and system, as well as to reveal the brutality of the Marxist regime.

1. 2. *The Disappeared* by Kim Echlin

Kim Echlin is a Canadian. After completing a doctoral thesis on Ojibway story-telling, she travelled to several countries in search of stories ("Kim Echlin – Penguin Books Authors"). When she travelled to Cambodia with a medical research group, she was moved by the memorials to those lost thirty years earlier during the Khmer Rouge rule ("Ask An Author: Kim Echlin"). Thus, in the novel *The Disappeared*, Kim Echlin penetrates to the aching core of the Cambodian genocide (Moher B.3).

She depicts the lingering stench of death in Cambodians as well as the skulls and bones in the killing fields created by the Khmer Rouge (Sofer, "Love in the Time of Genocide" BR.15). Nevertheless, Kim Echlin foregrounds the impotence of foreign-aid workers unable to help, as well as the banal indifference of backpackers in Cambodia. In trying to tell more people about the horror the Cambodians went through under the Khmer Rouge, indirectly, Kim Echlin reveals the villainy of the communist regime.

1. 3. Reasons for Novels Selection: Themes and Motives of Both Authors in Portraying the Relationships between Characters

Since both novels depict atrocities caused by suspect communism ideologies, these two novels have the same theme, the distortion of Marxism. This is apparent as both novels are full of horror brought by about distorted communist policies and doctrines. Sharing a theme is the main reason for selecting these two novels in this study. The second reason for choosing them is the authors' similar motives in portraying the relationships between characters.

This can be seen by comparing the similar relationships depicted in both novels. For instance, love relationships are foregrounded by Quan and Hoa in *Novel Without A Name* as well as Anne and Serey in *The Disappeared*. And sibling relationships are reflected in *Novel Without A Name* by Quan and Quang, as well as in *The Disappeared* by Serey and Sokha. The third relationship portrayed by both authors is friendship. In *Novel Without A Name*, the friendship between Quan and Luong is depicted; in *The Disappeared*, that between Anne and Will is portrayed.

All these relationships are ruined and fragmented at the end of the novels. Hence, it is evident that both authors share the motive of using relationships to foreground the savagery of doctrines and policies implemented by Marxist followers. Since both novels embrace the same theme and each author has a similar motive in depicting the relationships between characters, *Novel Without A Name* and *The Disappeared* are selected for this study.

2. DISCUSSION

2. 1. Historical Background

In this section, the history of the Vietnam War and the Cambodian Civil War are documented. These two historical events are recorded here because the two novels selected for this paper are set in these eras.

2. 1. 1. *Novel Without A Name: Vietnam War*

Novel Without A Name by Duong Thu Huong is set towards the end of the Vietnam War. It is hard to determine exactly which year the war broke out. The struggle began in the 1940s, when the communists in North Vietnam started fighting French colonial power (“Vietnam War Fast Facts”). This led France to establish the State of Vietnam in the southern half of the country in 1949. While China and the Soviet Union offered weapons to the communists, the United States aided the French (“A Vietnam War Timeline”). In 1954, French colonial power was defeated by the communists led by Ho Chi Minh. As a result, Vietnam was divided into the communist north and the pro-American south (“Vietnam War: History”). The communists in the north, the Viet Minh, and the communists in the south, the Vietcong, then launched guerrilla attacks on South Vietnam. Driven by concerns about the spread of communism and the domino theory, the United States began its military intervention in Vietnam in 1965. Thus, heavy fighting between the communists and the United States broke out and continued until 1973. Then, the United States and the leader of the communists in Vietnam, Le Duc Tho, signed a cease-fire agreement in Paris. After the American troops left, the fighting between North Vietnam and South Vietnam resumed. After two years, the communist forces swept through South Vietnam, which surrendered in 1975.

2. 1. 2. *The Disappeared: Cambodian Civil War*

The Disappeared, by Kim Echlin, is set in the bones and ashes of the Cambodian genocide that took place between 1975 and 1979 (Sofer, “Love in the Time of Genocide” BR.15). In 1953, Cambodia gained independence from France and became the Kingdom of Cambodia (“Cambodia Profile”). Prince Sihanouk, the head of state of Cambodia in the 1960s, during the Vietnam War, allowed the communists from Vietnam to set up bases in Cambodia. Because of these communist bases, the United States military began bombing Cambodia heavily in 1969, even though Cambodia remained neutral (“Independent Lens: War and Cambodia”). This situation weakened Cambodia and made it vulnerable to a coup led by Prime Minister Lon Nol in 1970.

When Lon Nol proclaimed the Khmer Republic after overthrowing Sihanouk, he joined the Khmer Rouge, a communist party. In 1975, as North and South Vietnam reunified, the Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot took control of Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge coined the term “Year Zero” and forced all city dwellers to move out to the countryside and become agricultural workers. Starvation, disease and exhaustion killed many people. Also, hundreds of thousands of the educated middle classes were tortured and executed. In 1976, Sihanouk resigned and Pol Pot became the prime minister.

Two years later, the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia and deposed the Khmer Rouge. Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge fled to Cambodia and the Thai border in 1979. The total death toll during the Khmer Rouge’s rule is estimated to be at least 1.7 million. As the People’s Republic of Kampuchea was established in 1979, elements of life before the Khmer Rouge control were re-established.

2. 2. Concept: Marxism

The concept that applies in the present paper is Marxism. The focus of Marxism is the economic reality of human culture (Tyson 53). Marxists believe that the real forces that generate human experience are the economic systems that structure human societies. That is why Marxists regard acquiring and maintaining economic power as the driving force behind all political and social activities.

In more detail, Marx believed that, in a capitalist society, there are two social classes, the capitalists and the proletariat (Castle 108). The capitalists control the world's economic, natural and human resources, while the proletariat are the majority population that live in substandard conditions and perform manual labour (Tyson 54). The capitalist class owns the means of production and buys the proletarian class's labour power for profit (Eagleton 3). However, there is a difference between the value of workers' labour and their wages (Castle 109). According to Marxism principles, the workers in a capitalist society are underpaid. This affects commodity values in a capitalist society. Marxists propose that commodity values in a capitalist society do not depend on *use value*, which derives from the labour used in creating a commodity. Rather, a commodity's value depends on other commodities or the money it can be exchanged for (*exchange value*) and the social status it confers on its owner (*sign-exchange value*) (Tyson 62). Besides the relations of production between the two social classes, the capitalists and the proletariat form Marx's notion of 'the economic structure of society' (Eagleton 3).

The basis of this structure is economics, with the political, social and ideological realities, the superstructure, being built on top of it (Tyson 54). By picturing this structure, one can see that economic power always involves political and social power as well. This is evident as the superstructure, which emerges from the economic base, has certain forms of politics and law that function to legitimate the power of the social class that owns the means of economic production. Moreover, the superstructure also comprises social and cultural institutions that promote the ruling class's ideologies (Castle 110). These are the beliefs and ideas that serve as guidance for the sociocultural elements of the superstructure. Similarly, these ideologies are then used to legitimate the power of the ruling class. Thus, the dominant ideology of a capitalist society is the ideology of the ruling class. However, not all ideologies are desirable because some ideologies promote repressive political agendas (Tyson 56). By disseminating these undesirable ideologies as natural ways of seeing the world rather than regarding them as ideologies, the masses are then able to accept them. This is why Lukács claims that ideology is a form of *false consciousness* (qtd. in Castle 110). The real purpose of presenting an ideal is as a mask to hide the failure of an ideology or the fact that it is a false ideal intended to promote the interests of the ruling class (Tyson 58). In short, Marxism works to reveal that the masses are continuously subverted by the ruling class because they have been blinded by the economic structure of society as well as the undesirable ideologies promoted by that class (Tyson 57).

Given these characteristics of capitalist societies, Marx aimed to establish a classless society (Coby 22). In such a society, everyone enjoys more or less the same power and wealth (Trainer). This is evidenced through the term "comrade" in Marxist terminology. "Comrade" connotes "an equality tending to sameness" (Coby 31). With this meaning, comrades, especially the leaders, dress in "plain, drab army fatigues ... to symbolize their shared hope in a classless society" (Coby 31). Also, the equality of everyone's position in society and collective achievement are emphasised by Marxists (Hermkens and Boerman 203). Hence, Marxists are outraged at and aggrieved by social injustice (Coby 26). As a result, the heroic act of self-sacrifice in setting the world right is significant in Marxism. However, Marxism claims that not only are the benefits to the community, but also to individuals, taken into account (Coby 28). This is because rather than being more liberal, Marxism tends to be more individualistic. Marx

further explained that human labour is universal, conscious and free, unlike the animal's labour, which is unconscious, determined and not free, for it is directed by instinct. In brief, Marxism calls for a classless society, in which individuals are free from capitalism.

2. 3. Analysis

Three types of relationships are depicted in *Novel Without A Name* and *The Disappeared*. These three relationships are love, siblings and friendship. Each of these relationships is negatively affected by suspect Marxist doctrines and policies. Thus, each of these relationships develops the shared theme of both novels, the distortion of Marxism.

2. 3. 1. Love Relationships

Love relationships are foregrounded by the protagonists in both novels. In *Novel Without A Name*, Quan has a love relationship with Hoa, whereas in *The Disappeared*, Anne has a love relationship with Serey.

In *Novel Without A Name*, Quan and Hoa love each other and plan to marry; however, this love relationship not only never becomes a husband and wife relationship, but is ultimately broken. When Quan is back in his hometown after ten years he is conscripted; he reminisces that both he and Hoa "...love each other" (Duong 142). Also, Quan always remembers that before he is conscripted, he promises to marry Hoa as soon as he is back on leave,

I'll always remember the night we crossed the rice fields together just before I enlisted ... "I'll come back on leave as soon as possible. We'll get married very simply, according to the Party's new custom." I caressed her arms: "You'll wait?" She nodded. "I'll wait for you." (Duong 142-143)

However, later, Quan does not want to get married in the middle of war because he believes that "[i]t won't lead to anything. Just a lot of suffering for the woman" (Duong 138). Nonetheless, Hoa still suffers from the war and thus Quan is overwhelmed with despair, "Ten years had passed. *I'll wait for you*. It was just the murmuring of a wave at the bottom of the sea. In the end, the girl I had loved had been cast out..." (Duong 143). This is due to the fact that while Quan has left her behind for ten years to fight the so-called Liberation War introduced by the Marxist regime, her life is ruined by the village Party committee, that promote Marxist ideologies,

[I]ast year, the village Party committee drafted her. Poor girl. By the end of the year, she was pregnant. No one wanted to claim the child. She refused to denounce the father. Shamed, her parents threw her out. She's taken refuge in an old hut over there, on that barren hill, near the farms, at the river's edge. (Duong 139)

Although the Party committee are people that uphold Marxist ideologies, Hoa is treated according to a capitalist ideology, that is, Hoa is treated as a commodity with exchange value. The Party committee degrade Hoa into a sex object that can be taken away from her family and serve the Party. As a commodity or object, Hoa's exchange value is the safety of her family members as well as patriotism. By serving the Party, Hoa and her family are safe and regarded as loyal to the Marxist regime. This reflects "the wretched failings of communism" (Banerian 653). Such weaknesses of the Marxist regime are also pointed out by Mr. Buu,

[n]ow the ones who hold the reins are all ignoramuses who never even learned the most basic morals. They study their Marxism-Leninism, and then come and pillage our vegetable gardens and rice fields with Marx's blessing. In the name of class struggle, they seduce other men's women ... generals ... know how to take advantage of a situation. Wherever they go ... they make sure they have plenty of women. In the old days they had concubines; now they call them 'mission comrades.' It's still the same thing. (Duong 133-137)

Apparently, the Party officials are not implementing Marxism, but exploiting it. This is because these Marxist followers are creating social injustice by applying distorted Marxist ideologies, rather than fighting against social injustice with the correct form of Marxist ideologies. Their exploitation of Hoa breaks her relationship with Quan,

Never. We never forget anything, never lose anything, never exchange anything, never undo what has been. There is no way back to the source, to the place where the pure, clear water once gushed forth. The river had cut across the countryside, the towns, dragging refuse and mud in its wake ... this swollen belly reminded me of another man. The beautiful dream that once bound us to each other had died. (Duong 148-149)

As a result, Hoa and Quan cannot resume their relationship from before the war. In short, their relationship is severed due to the implementation of distorted Marxist ideologies.

On the other hand, in *The Disappeared*, Anne and Serey meet and fall in love with each other when Cambodia's borders are closed due to the Khmer Rouge rule, but in the end they are separated forever due to the implementation of contorted Marxist ideologies. Anne is a sixteen-year-old high-school student in Montreal, Canada when she meets Serey, a Cambodian five years older than her (Sofer, "Unfettered Love among the Bones and Ashes of Cambodia" 12). They fall in love and spend lots of time together, "[e]very day we invented ways to be alone behind the closed door of Bleury Street" (Echlin 37). Also, they check out the events in Serey's country, Cambodia, including the closed borders, Year Zero and the sufferings of people in the country,

[t]here was no one to ask how the borders of a country could close ... We read *Year Zero* by a French priest ... He described people pushing hospital beds, women giving birth in ditches, a cripple with neither hands nor feet writhing along ground like a severed worm to get out of Phnom Penh. (Echlin 39-40)

Thus, for four years, Serey could not contact his family in Cambodia, "APRIL 16TH, 1975, BORDERS MAY CLOSE. DO NOT COME BACK UNTIL I CALL. FATHER. This is their last words ... Four years ago" (Echlin 51). When "the Vietnamese invaded" and "[t]he border is opening", Serey has "to go back [and] ... find [his] family" (Echlin 54). "Eleven years after [Serey] left", Anne goes to Cambodia to find him (Echlin 64). They reunite and live together. However, explosions during "[a] speech at the National Assembly" separate them again (Echlin 194). Serey is neither injured nor among the dead, but he has disappeared. By using money, Anne buys information regarding Serey's whereabouts,

[a] young soldier slipped into the shadow of a side street beside me and whispered in my ear, I know where he is. Do you have money? ... I unfolded an American twenty inside my pocket, pulled it out and put it on his palm. He

eyed the bill and slipped it into his pocket. He said, They took him to Ang Tasom. (Echlin 203)

Even though soldiers at that time were under a Marxist regime, the young soldier still sees information about Serey's whereabouts as a commodity with exchange value. The young soldier believes that information regarding Serey's whereabouts can be exchanged for money. That is why the soldier sells the information to Anne. This situation reflects how capitalist ideologies are still being applied in a Marxist regime. Thus, the Marxist regime applies inconsistent ideologies that are not purely Marxist. This inconsistency in ideologies is again foregrounded by Ma Rith and other polices in Ang Tasom. First, they stop Anne from looking for Serey in Ang Tasom. Ma Rith, who is "...the district chief of police", speaks "...formal, educated..." Khmer

... in a reasonable, persuading voice, You must understand that you cannot come to Ang Tasom and ask people to talk about things of which they know nothing ... Our leaders must have the loyalty of the people. There can never be order without this. We are rebuilding our country and creating democracy. (Echlin 237-238)

In the name of creating democracy, the police forbid Anne to find out exactly what has happened to Serey. It is apparent that it is a form of social injustice, which Marxist supporters should agitate against. Furthermore, it is only because Serey took "pictures of the grenade throwers" who caused the explosions in the National Assembly that he is shot (Echlin 243). What is more, due to his connections in the West, the police do not want his body to be found and throw it into a canal. Secondly, the police treat Anne badly only because she wants to bury the skull of Serey, "They locked me in a cement block room ... How did I offend? I only wanted to knit you back into the earth. How could it be right for pigs and dogs to tear at the skin of your face but not right for me to bury you?" (Echlin 254). All these portrayals of Marxist followers show that rather than fighting against social injustice, they are generating it. In order to cover up the truth, these Marxist followers implement a totally deformed version of ideology. Thus, it is evident that the distortion of Marxism has killed Serey and separated Anne from Serey forever.

2. 3. 2. Sibling Relationships

Sibling relationships are depicted by Quan and his younger brother, Quang, in *Novel Without A Name*, as well as by Serey and his younger brother, Sokha, in *The Disappeared*.

In *Novel Without A Name*, Quan and Quang's sibling relationship ends when Quang dies worthlessly due to false ideologies spread by Marxist representatives. Quan argues that the reason he himself is conscripted is "[t]o do [his] duty for the country" (Duong 123). Since he is "...the eldest. It was [his] duty to leave. But for [Quang] it was different. He is brilliant, had won second prize in the provincial mathematics competition. He wanted to study computer science" (Duong 123). Quan believes that Quang does not have to join the army but can continue to study because "[s]o few people had a memory like his ... [He] had been intelligent. There would have been a place for him in a society at peace" (Duong 123-124). Hence, Quan is furious with his father who not only urges Quang to enlist, but "...even attended the Party meeting that decided to mobilize him" (Duong 123). Quan believes that Quang's "...fate had been sealed the second [his] father raised his hand at that Party cell meeting: "I promise to convince my boys to enlist"" (Duong 124). Additionally, Quan also thinks that Quang has been

influenced by his father, “...father’s ambition had overcome him: He too had wanted to reserve his place at the victory banquet...” (Duong 124). However, Quang does not survive the war but dies. His death is caused by the ideology of “[t]his war [that] was ... our chance for a resurrection. Vietnam had been chosen by History: After the war, our country would become humanity’s paradise” (Duong 31). It is a false ideology that has been spread as a natural way to build the Marxist regime. Both their father and Quang have been blinded by this false ideal promoted by the Marxist representatives as a true ideal. The Marxist representatives use this ideology to get more people to enlist and fight for them. For example, Mr. Ly asks Quan “to speak with the Party members, then with the villagers ... Speak ... about ... victories. It will inspire the people for the next harvest season” (Duong 131-132). The Marxist representatives apply the method used in capitalist societies, which is directing the masses to accept ideologies that promote repressive political agendas. Thus, it is evident that the Marxist regime portrayed is applying distorted ideologies. In short, these distorted ideologies cause Quang to die worthlessly and end Quan and Quang’s sibling relationship.

In *The Disappeared*, Serey and Sokha’s sibling relationship is severed due to false ideologies promoted by Marxist followers to legitimate their power. Sokha used to be very close to Serey, “Little Sokha was [Serey’s] shadow. [Serey] made Sokha do his chores for him and ... Sokha wanted to please him” (Echlin 128). However, after the Khmer Rouge rule, Sokha changes tremendously, “[Serey] was a stranger to him” (Echlin 143). Sokha cannot recognise Serey when Serey “...found him by [his] old front door” until Serey asks about their mother (Echlin 143). Also, Sokha cannot speak when Serey hugs him as if he is one of “...the torturers, the prison guards, the soldiers” in the Khmer Rouge because “[f]or them there was no exhilaration in language. Virtue is terror, terror virtue. Without slogans, they found themselves speechless” (Echlin 145). This is true for Sokha for he has been “...put in a kang chhlop band to spy”, practises cruel ideologies taught by Angka and always repeats the Angka’s slogans. The ideologies the Angka teaches include “[I]ive or die for the greatness of the revolution. Expel all enemies ... those who spoke a foreign language. Those who played music. Those who read and studied. City people. Monks” as well as “[b]etter to kill an innocent person than to leave an enemy alive” (Echlin 148-149). Most importantly,

One time [Sokha] had nothing to report ... [he] pointed across the circle at one of the weakest boys and [he] said, I heard Heng singing an anti-revolutionary song ... A few nights later Heng was pulled out of his hut. The next day at dawn the children were planting rice and two soldiers came by and threw a boy’s body parts into the paddy where they worked. Fertilizer, they said. (Echlin 156)

The excerpt above shows that Sokha has started to live with the ideologies instilled in him by the Khmer Rouge. This is reinforced when Sokha does not want stay with Serey but goes “... back to the army in Pailin” after the Khmer Rouge rule is halted by the Vietnamese invasion (Echlin 164). Sokha’s reasons for going back to the army include not only “[i]f [he] does not obey [he] would die” but also he believes that “[t]he party ... never made a mistake” (Echlin 164-165). As a result, Serey’s “... life and Sokha’s was a single stream that divided around a rock, one part falling into thin air over a precipice and the other meandering along the earth in a different direction” (Echlin 147-148). By looking at the false ideologies instilled in Sokha and what Sokha believes to be right, one can see that those false ideologies are used by the Marxist leaders to legitimate their rule and conduct. By controlling the minds of children like Sokha with their ideologies, these children are blinded to continue carrying out the missions given to them. This condition contradicts Marxism, for Marx stated that, “truly human labour

is free, conscious, and universal” (qtd. in Coby 28). Sokha and other children are not working with a free conscience free but are controlled by Angka. Hence, the contorted set of Marxist ideologies spread by the Marxist leaders to make sure children follow their orders have severed the sibling relationship between Serey and Sokha.

2. 3. 3. Friendships

Friendships are portrayed by Quan and Luong as well as Anne and Will in *Novel Without A Name* and *The Disappeared*, respectively.

In *Novel Without A Name*, as the difference in rank between Quan and Luong widens, they seem to have a class difference which distances their friendship. During childhood, Quan, Luong and Bien

... used to dive together into the same river, splashing the sun into a million shards on the surface of the water. Once [they] had measured [their] penises with blades of glass to see who had the longest. Luong, Bien, and [Quan] – [they] all had penises the size of chili peppers. Childhood. Time of friendship, time of equality. (Duong 262)

All three of them are equal as children. However, after they join the army and have different ranks, a class difference is created between them, especially between Luong and Quan. Both of them join “...the army the same day. Ten years later, Luong was a staff officer. He was three grades higher than [Quan] in the army hierarchy” (Duong 27). By foregrounding the fact that both Quan and Luong enlist on the same day, the author again reinforces that they are equal before they join up. There is no class difference between them until it is introduced by the army that implements Marxism. The class difference between Quan and Luong is further emphasised by the author in two ways. The first is depicting Luong with luxurious items and food. One example is “...a battery-powered lamp – a luxury in the army” owned by Luong (Duong 32). Another example is a can of meat, which “...is a real luxury for an ordinary soldier”, given by Luong to Quan (Duong 34). Luong even stops Quan offering the can of meat to his soldiers for “...it wasn’t considered normal to offer such fare to foot soldiers” (Duong 43). Hence, Luong as “...an officer at division headquarters, deputy to the commander”, who should uphold Marxism correctly and strongly, still believes and practises class difference (Duong 28). The second method applied by the author is depicting Luong as having information that could not be told to Quan, who is of lower rank. For instance, when Quan asks Luong,

“The war ... It’s going to be a long time, isn’t it?” Luong didn’t answer. [Quan] pleaded with him; “It’s just you and me. Tell me.” Luong stood without moving or speaking for a few minutes. Then he turned and started walking away. (Duong 33)

All these depictions of Luong reflect that “[t]ime had slipped between [Quan and Luong]; [they] were no longer little boys, naked and equal. That time had passed, the time for diving headlong into rivers at dusk, for shouting and swimming, for splashing little girls” (Duong 33). This is why for Quan, Luong “...could no longer be the friend he had once been” (Duong 207). The main reason Quan and Luong’s friendship does not last long is the loss of equality between them, which is introduced by the Marxist regime. A classless society and the idea that everyone is more or less the same in terms of power and wealth are not implemented in this Marxist regime. Such distortions of Marxism lead to the breaking of the friendship between Quan and Luong.

In *The Disappeared*, the absolute power of the ruling class has generated fear in Will and makes him unable to help Anne, which then leads to the breakup of their friendship. Will is not someone who is indifferent to the sufferings of the Cambodian people. When a man is shot by Sokha and his comrade on the road

... Will stayed and knelt by the man in a wreath of blood ... He cradled the back of the man's head, laid his other hand over the wound, murmured to him ... Will bent lower and slid his palm to the man's face ... When the motorbike stopped and idled beside the dying man, Will looked up and said over the engine noise, You fucks. (Echlin 184-185)

The excerpt above shows that Will wants to help those who suffer under the Marxist regime but as someone without power he is unable to help. Similarly, when Anne asks him to accompany her to Ang Tasom, to find Serey, Will joins her, even though he knows it is dangerous,

Anne, two tourists got pulled off a train and shot in Kep this week. People are going missing. The embassies won't help ... I'm not screwing with this government ... Will shrugged, said, Wait a minute. He packed ... He said, There are things people regret not doing. I don't think this would have been one of them. (Echlin 209)

Also, when Anne is approached by two police officers in a hotel in Ang Tasom, Will tries to protect her, "Will came into the hall, said, What's going on? He put himself between [Anne] and the men..." (Echlin 236). In addition, Will helps Anne to find Serey's remains in the canal, although he knows they are putting themselves in danger,

... [Will] search[ed] deliberately in the chill dark. Over and over, he squatted, neck deep in the water, dipping one shoulder down below the surface, turning his face to the side to breathe, arm tugging, back covered with water hyacinths and slime. (Echlin 247)

When they are found by the police, Will still tries to stop them being killed, he

... grabbed [Anne's] arm and dragged [her] up from the bank shouting at [her], Pretend you're afraid of me, then he threw [Anne] down on the bank and turned to the men with guns, his palms pressed together, fingers up, in front of his chest, begging. (Echlin 250)

Will always tries to help Anne, the only time he is angry with Anne is when she still wants to get Serey's skull after being threatened, "It is the only time I ever saw Will angry. He said, It is time to stop, Anne. It is finished. We're getting the christ out. There won't be any more chances" (Echlin 253). Will refuses to help this time because he believes there is no chance to stay alive anymore if they try to get the skull again and he is almost right. Anne, who goes back to the canal, is locked up by the police in a cement block room and treated badly. In the end, she is sent back to Canada. Anne is angry with Will who refuses to help her, "[she] refused, for years, to see Will when he travelled through Montreal ... [she] remembered how much [she] had once liked him" (Echlin 277-278). However, Will's refusal is not due to his own will but to his fear of the police's absolute power. Rather than complying with the true Marxist ideology, of evenness and fairness, which emphasises the equality of everyone's position in society, the

Marxist regime depicted gives absolute power to the ruling class, while those being ruled are totally without power and helpless. Such a huge gap in terms of power between ruler and ruled causes Will to be helpless and makes Anne unable to forgive Will for not helping her to get Serey's skull. Thus, the class difference as well as the power difference between the ruling class and those being ruled break the friendship between Will and Anne.

3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, three types of relationships are depicted in *Novel Without A Name* and *The Disappeared*, namely love relationships, sibling relationships and friendship. These relationships are portrayed in *Novel Without A Name* by Quan and Hoa, Quan and Quang as well as Quan and Luong, respectively; in *The Disappeared*, these relationships are represented by Anne and Serey, Serey and Sokha as well as Anne and Will, respectively. All these relationships are important to develop the theme shared by both novels, the distortion of Marxism. This is because all these relationships, which are broken and severed at the end of the novels, reflect the impact of distorted Marxist ideologies and doctrines implemented in the Marxist regimes depicted.

Biography

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