

NATIONAL CHARACTER IN THE VIEW OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

Nguyen Vu Hao^(*)
Nguyen Quynh Huong^(**)

***Abstract:** In the current context of globalization, when humanity is gradually moving towards a flat world, besides that common trend, each nation - state still retains its own national characteristics. Those are the typical and unique features that each community contributes to the cultural heritage of humanity. In that sense, the character of each nation - expressing its identities, personalities, and identities - has always had a strange attraction for researchers. However, national character is a rather vague concept, difficult to grasp, both relative and universal, so it is also an open concept, open to different approaches of psychology, sociology, ethnology, anthropology, value studies, cultural studies.... National character is seen as an iceberg, in which the part that emerges that we consciously perceive only accounts for a small part, while most of the other parts remain unconscious. Therefore, the approach to studying the national character from a psychoanalytic perspective can be considered quite unique and advantageous and cannot be taken lightly.*

This article can be considered as an attempt to study the national character expressing the unique identity of a nation-state under the new perspective of psychoanalysis, from which it is possible to make comments on the national character of some nation, including Viet Nam.

***Keywords:** Psychoanalysis; national character; social character; psychology - anthropology.*

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^(*) Prof. Dr., Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, VNU Hanoi.

^(**) Lecturer, Faculty of Political Theory, Thuongmai University.

nation - expressing its identities, personalities, and identities - has always had a strange attraction for researchers. However, national character is a rather vague concept, difficult to grasp, both relative and universal, so it is also an open concept, open to different approaches of psychology, sociology, ethnology, anthropology, value studies, cultural studies... National character is seen as an iceberg, in which the part that emerges that we consciously perceive only accounts for a small part, while most of rest parts remain unconscious. Therefore, the approach to studying the national character from a psychoanalytic perspective can be considered quite unique and advantageous and cannot be taken lightly.

1. What is psychoanalysis?

When talking about psychoanalysis, it is impossible not to mention the founder of psychoanalytic theory, Sigmund Freud. Psychoanalysis emphasizes the influence of the unconsciousness on behaviors. Freud believes that human personality consists of 3 components: the Id, the Ego, and the Super-ego. The Id consists of

primordial desires. The Ego is what must face reality. The Super-ego contains all the ideals and values that we absorb from education, from our parents and society. The interaction of these three components leads to complex human behaviors. It always prompts the ego to find ways to satisfy needs and desires. Meanwhile, the Super-ego suppresses those needs and desires and tries to make the Ego act according to certain moral standards given by cultural traditions, including customs.

Psychoanalyst Erik Erikson then extended Freud's theory and emphasized the important role of development in human life with the psychosocial stage theory of personality. Psychoanalysis was criticized by Freud's theories for overemphasizing the role of the unconscious, sexuality, aggression, and childhood experiences; the claims made by psychoanalysts are difficult to verify; Most of Freud's ideas are based on case studies and clinical observations rather than on scientific, experimental studies.

2. National character

The concept of “national character” in some translated

NATIONAL CHARACTER IN THE VIEW OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

documents is also translated as “national character”, “ethnicity” or “national personality”, which refers to the universal character representing people in the category of national category - nation. This concept is exemplified by two famous cultural anthropologists, Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead. The method of studying national character focuses on investigating the basic attitudes and values that are characteristic of a homogeneous society, or in a heterogeneous society consisting of occupational groups, social classes, regions. domain and ideology.

Benedict made the monograph *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Chrysanthemum and the Sword, 1946) on the Japanese personality, mainly researching from secondary sources, which are articles on Japanese life as well as conducting interviews. Japanese immigrants in the US. However, when later re-evaluated, most of her views about the Japanese have proven to be well-founded and correct, such as discipline, militarism, and wisdom. aesthetic, both rigid and adaptive, conservative and open to new things. Margaret Mead, under the

assignment of the American Tactical Operations Service (OSS), studied the national character of the British, with the aim of clarifying the personality of the British, and at the same time clearing the misunderstandings of the British. British to Americans. Through studying the family context, especially the father's role in the US and UK, she found out what encourages ostentatious attitudes in Americans and arrogance in Britons. This approach was also used by Geoffrey Gorer to study the Russians, and Weston LaBarre to study the Japanese.

Ethnicity can be understood as salient features of a community of people who share a common territory, language, way of working and political rules over a long history. National character is “repeated features that make up the mental image of a nation”.

Nationality is both a theoretical concept and a manipulative concept. It is not an assembly of two separate components, personality, and ethnicity, but an inner unity. Nationality, perhaps, is like an iceberg, the part that emerges that we can see with the conscious mind

only accounts for a tenth, while the other nine is in the unconscious. Thus, a rather interesting approach to national character is from psychoanalysis.

3. National character from the perspective of psychoanalysis

Modern studies on national character have been oriented from the beginning by the psycho-cultural theory of national character. The central concept of personality has been used as a model in defining the concept of national character.

Since 1942, in a publication by the British psychologist Ginsberg has emphasized the ambiguity of the concept of “national character”, when it is only the entire characteristics of each ethnic group in the whole. their own, sometimes only a mode of distribution of basic behavioral traits that are characteristic of a group of people. This ambivalent meaning actually corresponds to two theoretical orientations, with the two currents of analysis of the Modern School of national character: *the anthropological* and *the socio-psychological*.

* *Psycho-anthropological models*

The central idea of the psycho-anthropological movement of the Margaret Mead School, made up of cultural anthropologists and cultural psychoanalysts, is that each national culture has a unique collective personality, a “typical personality”, whose different elements determine the individuality of each member, to varying degrees. The integrity of the national culture and the coherence of the elements of national character are the two basic postulates of this analytical movement. The psycho-anthropological approach to national character, in that sense, is an “organic” holistic approach (J. David Singer).

According to this view, the concept of national character is mainly defined as a set structured from collective personality traits, a basic personality, a common pattern that determines attitudes, ideas, and attitudes. opinions, behaviors, and cultural values of the ethnic group, by molding the individual personality of each member. But this general definition of the concept of national character covers two different concepts, two theoretical models derived from the two analytical paths of the Anglo-Saxon

NATIONAL CHARACTER IN THE VIEW OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

School of anthropological psychology. The anthropological model and the psychoanalytic model.

Firstly, the anthropological model: "cultural personality".

Originating from anthropological works on personality in primitive societies, the concept of "cultural personality" is used as a theoretical model in anthropological studies of the national character of complex societies. modern. It can be said that this concept performs a synthesis between the two most important cultural theories, the shape theory of R. Benedict and the basic personality theory of A. Kardiner and R. Lint. First of all, every society is seen as an integral shape, a whole governed by a common pattern. Second, every society is characterized by a permanent cluster of psychological traits that reflect the conditions of adaptation to the natural environment and the type of upbringing received. Typical researchers are: Margaret Gorer, Gregory Bateson.

Secondly, the psychoanalytic model: "social personality".

Anthropological and psychological analyzes of

personality regularize society into culture or determine how to psychologically organize society's internal organs, Anglo-Saxon culturalist psychoanalysts on personality Ethnicity has emphasized the importance of socio-historical factors and the role of socio-economic factors in the formation of the collective personality of societies. The rationalizing psychoanalysts (such as A. Kardiner, E. Fromm) define national character as a "social personality".

Typically, E. Fromm is the one who has clarified the foundations of psychoanalysis in socio-economic causes. Erich Fromm explores the German national character through the phenomenon of Nazism. His explanations of the psychological reasons (behind it socio-economic) led to fascism and the ascension of its leader, Hitler. Social character is the central basic concept in Erich Fromm's social psychology research. Fromm refers to a social personality consisting of a set of characteristics, which are the core of the personality structure of most members of a group, that have been formed because of basic

experiences. popular culture and lifestyle in that group (Fromm, 1942). That is, social personality is a personality structure shared among members of a group or community, individuals within a society or a class, shaped by their lifestyle, as well as common societal expectations or cultural conventions that require them to adapt their behavior. This adaptation is the result of the interaction between the individual and his social and cultural environment. Fromm uses the concept of social personality as the key to understanding and understanding an individual's social process, and also the key to understanding the spirit of a culture.

E. Fromm explains the unity of social consciousness in terms of social character: "In order to ensure the smooth functioning of a given society, its members must acquire a personality type that makes them want to act as a member of that society or of a class of it. They have to want to do it objectively"¹. In this sense, social personality functions to adapt individual desires to social needs; it creates a set of personality traits and cultural values that are absorbed by the members of the

group. In industrial societies, for example, social character dictates that individuals follow the direction of work and effort, discipline and punctuality, so Fromm discovered the personality structure of a modern worker in Industrial society is compliance, discipline and punctuality.

Also in this regard, David Riesman's analysis of national character makes sense for cultural sociologists using E. Fromm's psychoanalytic studies of social personality. In his famous work, *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), it was D. Riesman who took back E. Fromm's arguments about psychosis and the theory of instilling social norms through "social character". In that sense, he used the term "national character" to refer to all the elements of personality that individuals acquire through life training and play a decisive role in the maintenance of these social structure characteristics.

In general, the organic conception of personality, from the psycho-anthropological point of view, determines an overall approach to national character. With the concepts of "cultural

NATIONAL CHARACTER IN THE VIEW OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

personality” and “social character” as analytical tools, cultural anthropologists and psychoanalysts aspire to capture the cultural personality of social aggregates. heterogeneous societies in their totality, as well as the cultural assemblages of modern great peoples.

** Psychosocial models*

Also built from the basic culturalist hypothesis of personality, the research views of the socio-psychological movement are very different from those determined by the psycho-anthropological movement.

Firstly, the socio-psychological analysis of national character is based on a concept of personality that is different from that developed by psycho-anthropological analysis. Psychologists and sociologists have adopted a statistical conception of personality, based on the premise that there are many personality traits (and many cultural patterns) within each ethnic group, as opposed to a holistic concept. of cultural anthropologists and psychoanalysts based on the hypothesis of a personality common to all members of an ethnic group, having its own

particularity. Thus, they proposed a concept of “unified personality” - emphasizing the idea of the interconnectedness of many personality traits.

Secondly, the socio-psychological analysis of the national character shows that there are two closely related approaches. The personality of a social group is observed psycho-sociologically in two ways: as an object and as a subject, as a social fact and as an element of certain and relatively stable existence; On the other hand, the subject is understood as a reflection of a social reality. Thus, the socio-psychologist can discover personality in a set of attitudes and behaviors specific to the group being studied, as well as a subjective reality in the consciousness of individuals belonging to the group. which manifests itself in the form of social images and stereotypes.

From such a theoretical framework, we can find out the different characteristics of the peoples of the world. Here, let's go through a few ethnic groups to be able to clarify that national nature.

4. National character in some countries

With the diversification of culture, lifestyle, customs... - what makes up the identity, character (identity, personality, identity) of each nation. National character is a vague and elusive concept, it is both relative and universal. Whether this is one of the causes of the diversity of national identities, it is an open concept, open to all methods: psychology, ethnography, ethology, anthropology, culture...

Each nation has a different personality, science and art can complement each other, nothing is completely right or completely wrong. Therefore, understanding the national character in different countries will help us have a comprehensive view, so that they can intersect, intersect, maybe from that intersection, that intersection will find a correct and clear view of the ambiguity of the national nature.

** Russian national character*

To understand the soul of a nation, we need to penetrate the dreams of that nation. But the dream of the nation is epic, the fairy tale, the poetry of that nation. But dreams are very diverse, there are petty, lowly, evil, vile dreams, there are lofty, holy dreams. Like national

fairy tales, dreams do not choose what is most beautiful and noble, poets often do in their poems, but on the contrary, they are very real, even real in the infinite. his integrity.

In a report read at the Conference organized by the Italian Institute of Eastern Europe in November 1923 in Rome, published in the journal *Philosophical Problems* in June 1995, the famous scientist B.P. Vysheslavitsev went to find your Russian national character in dreams. Everyone has desires, needs, and aspirations, but not all desires are conscious, but sometimes it has been repulsed to the subconscious mind and unconscious. When we sleep, those desires, unguarded, have escaped into dreams. But even in dreams, these desires do not want to be discovered, so they must disguise themselves as magical images or stories. That is the mental life of an individual. In the life of an ethnic group, a nation, collective dreams are consciously and unconsciously embedded in myths, fairy tales and epics.¹ B. P. Vysheslavitsev finds the Russian character as a mystery in Russian fairy tales and epics, genres "created in centuries past

NATIONAL CHARACTER IN THE VIEW OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

that reveal the authentic, age-old spirit of the nation”².

Russian fairy tales and epics realistically represent the Russian character, its strengths and weaknesses, its desires and its fears. The first is the fear of hard work, which in Russians is sometimes as great as the fear of suffering. Russian fairy tales show very clearly what Russians fear, that is, poverty, even more, hard work, and what they fear most is suffering. Yet suffering seems to love to come to him, as if they come at his official invitation. There was a poor guy on his way home from your friend's house; Due to being angered, he tried to sing to calm down. He sang alone but heard two voices. He stopped and asked: “Sorrowful, is your family parodying me?”. And Suffering replied: “Yes, sir, that's me”. “Now, Suffering, let's go together”. “Yes, boss, I won't leave you now”. And Suffering led his master from one suffering to another, from one pub to another. When he drank to the last coin, the young man refused. “No, Suffering, my reason, I have nothing left to hold.” “Why is there nothing left? Your wife has two dresses left:

leave one and take the other to exchange for wine”. The boy took the dress to change wine. Finished drinking and he thought: “That's what the tea is! There's nothing left of the soil that sticks to my clothes, and neither does my wife!”³.

Therefore, the Russians are always looking for another life, another kingdom where there is enough strong wine, fat goats can eat as much as they want without having to do anything. To get this “eternal bread”, they create wish books, “scientific wisdom”, “milkfish”, magical birds... and to get “public works”. To reach those strange new distant kingdoms, the Russians can sacrifice all their possessions, their neighbors, even their own flesh and blood (like the story of the Magon bird). In Russian fairy tales, prophecy, messianism and idealism are everywhere. That is the strength and weakness of the Russian character.

The epic of the Russian heroes tells us another aspect. Russian knights are the elite people of the people. Their hands were the ones who protected the court and the church, defeating the invasions of the enemy. But just because they

were not invited to a certain party, they were righteously angry, and those same hands raised their bows and shot down the roof of the church, destroying the palace they had built and protected. The destructive power in the people is terrible whenever this instinct is awakened. What can be seen clearly in riots, even in revolutions⁴.

But in the Russian personality there is also a boundless love for beauty and wisdom. This is symbolized by the fairy as the wise Vasilisa. This is the fiancée that many Russian boys dream of. And fairy tales say, living with her will make them happy and forgetting her will make them unhappy. The love of Russian beauty also reveals a deep and sad love for the vast and mysterious Russian nature and loves the (clear) souls as bright as a “silver plate” not only in the gentle Russian girls but also in the Russian girls. even in space...

In short, spontaneity, love of beauty, wisdom, suffering, God, holiness... as well as prophecy, idealism are bold features, strong beats in character. Russian way. This is deeply expressed in the writings of Gogol and especially of

Dostoevsky. But, as an old saying goes, that sow an action, reap a habit, sow a habit, reap a character, sow a character, reap a destiny, the Russian character has created Russia's destiny. And history has witnessed it more than once, when those dreams, as fairy tales foretold, turned into reality. Those are the highlights that make up the Russian national character.

** Japanese personality*

When it comes to Japan, we cannot mention the brilliant achievements of economic and scientific development, which are worthy of respect. Those successes must have deep roots in the culture, from the national character of the Japanese. According to some research results, the characteristics of national character are classified according to the principle of “ethnic community - group of people - individual”.

The ethnic community.

The national characteristics of Japan are love of labor and enthusiasm in all fields of labor activities. The Japanese work selflessly, are excited, they show their inherent beauty even in the process of working.

NATIONAL CHARACTER IN THE VIEW OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

Japan has a special word *furu* (flowy). This word consists of two hieroglyphs, *fu*, which means wind, and *ryu*, which means flowing water. The concept of “wind and flowing water” expresses the aesthetic. According to the Japanese writer Tetsuzo Tanikawa, aesthetics is the core character of the Japanese nation. That is the most basic characteristic around which all the rest are gathered⁵.

Moreover, tradition or rather tradition has been deeply ingrained in the behavior, thoughts and aspirations of the Japanese nation, becoming a most important feature in the character of this nation. The traditions that have been formed in Japanese society both clearly show the ideology of inheritance in social activities and reinforce national, cultural and life factors. The Japanese have a respectful attitude towards the cultural heritage of the past, they protect the classical theatrical arts, tea ceremony, the art of flower arrangement (*ikebana*). It can be seen that in Japan today, people pay a lot of attention to tradition, to the ancient past, to ancient cultural relics. The Japanese have a special respectful attitude

towards the established way of life as well as to the cultural heritage, paying attention not only to the content of the manners, but also to the outward expressions, to the style of the people. treatment, thanks to which the Japanese treatment is unusually stable. The current situation in Japan demonstrates the vitality of traditions in Japanese political thinking and social behavior. The traditional character of the Japanese has influence in many aspects on the social and political activities of Japan.

The behavioral characteristics of a group of people.

Group of people, which is a collection of people according to different signs, for example by age, occupation, gender, etc. Social psychology considers a group as an organization in which people are aware of belonging to this organization, although the degree of that awareness may vary. The group of people here is considered as a “microenvironment”, which reveals very distinct characteristics. The same phenomenon is typical for any ethnic community, differing only in the degree of solidarity within each group. In Japan, that level of

solidarity is very high. In the system of group behavior characteristics in Japanese, the first prominent feature is discipline, loyalty to reputable people and a sense of duty.

The behavioral characteristics of the group are shown through discipline, loyalty to authority, sense of duty:

In Japanese interpersonal relationships, discipline manifests itself as a desire to achieve adjustment. This characteristic of them requires strict adherence to a prescribed order, conduct acceptable to others, diligent performance of their duties, disinterested respect for superiors and the elderly.

The Japanese are the most disciplined people in the world. They are extremely respectful of rules and principles. They do not break the law for fear of punishment or any other consequences. They respect the law simply because it is the law. The discipline of the Japanese is most evident in the sense of queuing. Wherever you go in this country, you won't see the jostling, jostling to get ahead. Everyone is queuing and waiting for their turn whether it is to buy a daily necessity or a high-tech product.

Even the whole world was amazed and admired the discipline of the Japanese when an earthquake and tsunami hit the coast of this country in 2011. Between life and death, people Japan is still lining up to receive each subsidized product⁶.

As for loyalty, as early as the Tokugawa period, the Japanese scholar Zoken Nishikawa wrote in his book *The Peasant Farm* (1721): "Because the lowest classes are incapable of playing a role. some roles in governing the country, so they have a duty to obey". In 1879, Interior Minister Hirobumi Ito declared that "giving many people political judgment means sowing disaster for the country". Submissiveness is associated with fear of authority: fear of the police, fear of government officials, and fear of the military. In the Japanese concept, government is "something long and solid". By educating the will to be "relied on something long and solid", the ruler has achieved submission and submission⁷.

Submission and submission to the authorities have become a feature of many Japanese, underpinning their unwritten code of conduct and blame the

NATIONAL CHARACTER IN THE VIEW OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

department for their failed code of conduct. That code is always reinforced by a sense of duty, by the correct observance of personal responsibilities, and all such principles are accompanied by elaborate, elaborate rituals. At present, these rituals have adapted to the new situation and occupy a great place in the ladder of human values as responsibility for acts that arise from a sense of duty.

Thus, the submissive spirit cultivated over the centuries has given the Japanese a certain type of psychological disposition. It's like pleasure.

About the personal.

In terms of characteristics in daily life, individuals will need to have politeness, punctuality, self-control, thrift, and curiosity⁸.

Politeness is one of the most important standards of daily life in the Japanese character, the basic thing in the Japanese way of life. Any words, gestures, and behavior of the Japanese, including urging, are also marked with politeness. For example, when entering a small mid-sized store that is usually empty, the salesperson may be hiding in a comfortable corner, the

buyer habitually reports his arrival by saying the following: Gomen kudasai" (Sorry!). Buyers can look at the goods for a long time, ask questions in detail and always receive a polite answer. Before holding something in their hands, the Japanese apologize and ask permission from the owner. Polite speech is an immutable attribute of communication and throughout relationships in Japan.

** Vietnamese national character.*

Objectively research on the personality of Vietnamese people is reflected in several research works on the psychology, culture and history of the Vietnamese nation.

Research on the Vietnamese national character can see that the personality of Vietnamese people always exists in the unity and mutual transformation between opposites. Characteristic traits that have been considered as traditional values of Vietnamese people such as the spirit of promoting the collective - community, respecting gratitude, and studiousness⁹.

The respecting the community.

Respecting the community has become a basic traditional characteristic of Vietnamese people,

a very basic value in the entire Vietnamese culture and personality, a starting point and a basis for the development of patriotism. country, solidarity, and national consciousness. With the condition that they must fight against natural disasters, a phenomenon that occurs every year, and they must fight against the enemy with foreign invasions much stronger than themselves, so the community element has existed for a long time in history. Viet Nam is in an area suffering from many natural disasters, the great damage and loss caused by floods, storms and droughts cannot be compensated for but love and help each other to overcome the consequences in the spirit of “good leaves cover torn leaves”, “a sick horse leaves the whole ship to leave the grass”. It is the community that has become a noble gesture, ready to help and share difficulties with people around. Vietnamese people are willing to sacrifice personal interests and interests to protect the interests of the community and for the community, there are many practical actions showing noble gestures. It is a fact that, when facing a natural

disaster, the people of the country always turn to people in the areas affected by flash floods, enthusiastically contribute and support with both material and spiritual values, with love of people in the same country.

Or in their survival journey, the Vietnamese always must face war and counter-invasion, with enemies hundreds of times stronger. A small nation like Viet Nam has relied on its strength of the spirit of unity of the whole people, strong patriotism, and a sense of national autonomy to fight against foreigners and against ideas of separatism and atrocities. This is a powerful weapon that the nation has used throughout the nation's history to build and defend the country. This solidarity is the clearest expression of community. The patriotism and national spirit of the Vietnamese community were more clearly and deeply portrayed in the modern period through the two resistance wars against the French and the Americans. It can be said that no nation in the world must deal with foreign invasions and powerful enemies as much as Viet Nam. Despite suffering great losses, sacrificing property and lives, and

NATIONAL CHARACTER IN THE VIEW OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

enduring all kinds of hardships, deprivations and hardships, the community's strength of solidarity is still sustainable, thereby creating a premise for promote patriotism and national spirit, defeat all brutal enemies, foreign annexation plots. It is solidarity and mutual assistance in difficulties that have become the starting point and the basis for the development of patriotism and national spirit of the Vietnamese people.

The respect of affection.

The attitude of respecting gratitude among Vietnamese people was recognized very early on and to this day, the elderly still regularly advises the next generation to keep this tradition of mutual affection. And the truth is that to this day, when the market mechanism has taken root in Vietnamese society, romanticism is still a method of behavior that still retains its traditional strength, has a positive effect, creates a The strength of community cohesion, the harmonious, open and humane lifestyle of Vietnamese people such as the spirit of “love people as if you love yourself”, “a horse hurts the whole ship to leave the grass”, “leaf

leaves”. heal torn leaves”; and indeed, this personality value also has its downside. According to Ho Si Quy, at this top value of the Vietnamese people, if we don't take into account the manifestations of its opposite value, which are contempt for morality, disregard for affection, etc., then the value itself. This still has quite obvious two-sided nuances and in many cases it can still be valuable but outdated. Respecting gratitude to the extent that “banana fish are immersed in their children”, “although they are different, they share the same truss”, “a drop of blood is more digging than a pond of water”, “father's bones and mother's skin” are of course not positive in all circumstances. Obviously, the Vietnamese people's sentimental value to the point of love is two-sided. The positive or negative character of this attitude is determined by the circumstances. In the practice of building a socialist rule-of-law state, so idealistic that it disregards the constitution and the law, “the king's law is inferior to the village's rule”, “one hundred reasons is not equal to a little love” is difficult to achieve acceptable and dominated by the “nepotism” and

“descendant” mindset has led to inequalities in the evaluation and use of people. In addition, idealism is also a barrier to the development of science, because critical thinking, even scientific and revolutionary criticism, can hardly be accepted in countries with this tradition.

The spirit of learning.

Vietnamese people are recognized by other ethnic groups as having a studious spirit, plus their “innately intelligent” nature and an education with a thousand-year tradition that Viet Nam should have had many famous names. world-class in the field of science. But in fact, the Vietnamese people are lagging behind in awareness and do not have world-class scientists like other studious nations. Thus, the

studiousness of Vietnamese people has its own limitations and negative sides. However, with the metaphysical and mechanical polarization in research, it is certain that studiousness is only recognized as one of the positive aspects of the Vietnamese personality.

5. Conclusion

Ethnicity and psychoanalysis may seem strange at first glance, having nothing in common in relation to each other. But the national character is ultimately governed by factors located in the collective unconscious. Therefore, studying the national character from the perspective of psychoanalysis helps us to have the most complete and multidimensional view. □

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NATIONAL CHARACTER IN THE VIEW OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

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