

DOCTORAL THESIS IN BRIEF

ĐỖ HẢI NINH. *The autobiographical trending of novel in Vietnamese modern literature*

Specialization: Vietnamese Literature

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In recent 30 years, the autobiographical trending of novels has become a new feature of the renewal in literature mind. Even not setting up a separate type, this kind of novel, based on inspiration and writing style, has appeared in many works of modern literature. Also, it is the increase in learning about this autobiographical trend in Vietnamese modern literature which related to the type and the fading border between types. This is exactly an opening direction which has slowly played a remarkable position and contributed to the successes of Vietnamese modern novels.

They are the reasons why Đỗ Hải Ninh has picked “Autobiographical trending of novels in Vietnamese modern novels” as topic his thesis, including three main chapters.

Chapter 1: *The birth of autobiographical oriented novels in Vietnamese modern culture.*

The autobiographical trending in novels has appeared in Vietnamese literature as an objective inevitability due to the following reasons: the demand on releasing personal ideas after being controlled by social characteristics since Revolutionary period in a long time, the demand on realizing the personal

existence due to historical changes, and the demand on setting up a position of individuals.

Up to now, the terminology of naming them as autobiographical oriented novel or autobiography has not been decided by researchers. In his thesis, this trend is summarized as a way to gather details in author’s real life and their personal experience as inspiration. The purpose of these novels is to describe their own feelings about themselves as well as the surrounding world through their narratives. The mixture between the reality of details and the unlimited fiction of novels has not destroyed these works of art but also created new ways of writing in art creation.

In Vietnamese modern literature, novel has two main trends as autobiography and unreal autobiography.

Those belong to the *autobiography* are: “Story of year 2000” by Bùi Ngọc Tấn, “Small family” by Dạ Ngân, “God has to smile” by Nguyễn Khải; *semi - autobiographical* (“Tough childhood” by Phùng Quán, “Chaise” by Mạc Can, “Destiny” by Đoàn Lê, “Life” by Phùng Khắc Bắc, “Times gone far away” by Lê Lựu); and the type which author told his story as “I”.

Those belong to the unreal autobiography have: “Angel” by Phạm Thị Hoài, “Chinatown” by Thuận, “When it comes to ash” by Đoàn Minh Phụng and “Blogger” by Phong Điệp.

Chapter 2: *Autobiographical oriented novels and the renewals of thoughts in Vietnamese modern literature.*

The growth of autobiographical novels is a proof of how the thought of Vietnamese literature has changed during the past 30 years. This trending has actually mentioned to the two most basic issues of modern literature: the individual and the reality – fiction in literature.

Here, the individual is to show his awareness of his self within the internal relationship with himself, to find the answer for question “Who I am.” Novels, which tend to autobiography, will analyze, explain the progress of creating a personality related to “Who I am in this life.” Characters in the stories, hence, are always aware of their ego. Author analyzes that ego is normally controlled by rules in the pre-modern art system. But now, ego is sure to be raised in the modern art system. The confirmation as “I am the only one, the unique one” has become ascetic sense of modern artists. The post modern art system, however, led to the break of previous art models as narration and primary narration. Somehow novels still have primary narrative features and readers can realize diversified feeling and conflicted flows with modern literature.

This literature trend contains fictional and non – fictional factors and requires authors to flexibly apply them for the best use. The transformation from author’s personal details into narrations which is full of art is a creative progress

which is not simple as taking note or telling story for readers’ curiosity.

It is essential to imagine the narrations in novels as a way of feeling about the world through personal experiences. It is also the method to fully understand the meanings of narration in modern and post modern art. The farthest pole is the appearance of unreal autobiography. It is a model which raised arguments with traditional sense of art, but also offered the adventure by which to express the personal strength as a life value which must be accepted by society and public.

Chapter 3: *Narrative art in autobiographical novels*

For these kinds of novels, authors even write based on the personal lives but it is better not to be limited or too rely on those details. It is important to create unreal circumstances or conflict views of relationships so that novels will be more attractive. This complexity is also applicable for multi – valued logic of modern life and art.

Materials also affect how to organize and tell story of novels. The subjectivity of applying viewpoints, pronouns or level of narrative tones also creates the features of this type of novel.

Observing viewpoints used in modern novels, most of autobiographical novels use third personal pronouns to tell story as other’s story. Author is even not directly in the story but it could be understood all viewpoints rooted from his ideas. The way of using first personal pronouns, however, is better when author wants to show his person directly. Author also set up those

viewpoints which have internal narration and ability to deeply analyze complicated psychology as well as express characters' desire. These internal viewpoints will be directly and positively presented. Only few of works applying the narration as first personal pronouns but it brings democratic conversations with readers through story teller's experience.

There are three story trends through analysis of tone and language used in autobiographical novels as following:

Proud tone and funny languages: The usage of ego in modern literature is a direct reason leading to the presence of various tones in which the humorous tone stands out the most. There is no place for comedic or tragedy feelings in the literature of resistance to the war period. This imbalance was only improved after 1975 when the awareness woke historical values up through critical viewpoints.

Lyrical and nostalgic tone with language full of expression: These types of novels tend to use personal story as a center object. This means the work's internal scale defined. There are events, characters, details, basic interactions of

novels happening inside characters' inner world. The tone and language, therefore, are more inner which is considered as lyrical, nostalgic tone with full of expression.

Contemplative tone and philosophical language: In artful documents, contemplative tone and philosophical language are created by positive or negative statements in order to express or strengthen a deep content or idea. These kinds of novels normally include many conclusions, summaries or contemplation from experience of the main characters.

The growth of autobiographical novels is suitable with the growth of a creative field of work as art. It is also the nature of language. Hence, these kinds of novels promise to open a new and premise outlook for authors as well as readers in the adventure of exploring novels' values.

The thesis was successfully presented before Thesis Examination Committee (Institutional level) hold at Institution of Social and Sciences – Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (2012).

Introduced by
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