

Translation of literary works and formation of translated literature in Vietnamese literature in the early Twentieth Century

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Abstract: *In the context of cultural exchange between the East and the West in early twentieth century, both familiar Oriental literature and unknown Occidental one were introduced and left their mark on the Vietnamese literature. Thanks to translation activities, translated literature and the translation of literary works have made an important contribution to the birth of Vietnamese modern literature. While their role has been acknowledged, it is commonly been considered an external factor that affected Vietnamese literature. Referring to poly-system theory in cultural and literary studies, the paper examines translated literature in Vietnamese literary poly-system, analyzing how translated literature formed a literary category and consequently affected the process of modernizing Vietnamese literature in those years.*

Keywords: Translation of Literary Works, Translated Literature, Vietnamese Modern Literature, Poly-system Theory

Introduction

The important role of translated literature and literary translation activities in the overall structure of literature is increasingly recognized among researchers of the humanities and social sciences. Itamar Iven-Zohar (2014: 149-157) has proposed to consider the study of translated literature as part of the target literature, the same way in which it constructs the category in the multi-system of indigenous literature. Vietnamese modern literature, i.e. literature written in the *quốc ngữ* script, arose in the late 19th century - early 20th century when Vietnam participated in the global

cultural exchange, is seen as an outcome of translation activities. There is even a complex of translation, from traditional literature in Chinese and Nom to modern one in the *quốc ngữ* script (and not so much in French); from foreign literary traditions (mainly French, Chinese and Japanese) to native Vietnamese; from the indigenous cultural traditions of (South) East Asia under the influence of India and Sinicization to a modern culture influenced by European and Western cultures and civilizations; even within the scope of literature, from classical written (*văn ngôn* - wen-yen) to vernacular written Chinese

(*bạch thoại*), and from poems written in the old way to poems written in a new way. Such an awareness shows that translated literature and literary translation activities, together with its category construction in the multi-system of Vietnamese literature at this period, play a very significant role in shaping the image of Vietnamese modern literature.

1. Translating and introducing Western literature

The translation of Western literary works has taken place in Cochinchina of Vietnam since the late nineteenth century. A survey by Nguyen Phu Phong (1997) shows that the earliest penetration of French literature into Vietnam through translation began in 1884, with the publication of the book “*The French Stories translated into quốc ngữ script*” (16 Fables of La Fontaine) by Truong Minh Ky. Three years later, Truong Minh Ky was also the first person to translate the French novel *The Adventures of Telemachus* by François de Fénelon into Vietnamese (1887). However, translation of French and Western literature in Vietnam only became popular later in Tonkin with the considerable contribution of Nguyen Van Vinh and Pham Quynh.

Nguyen Van Vinh was the first important translator who paved the way for the dissemination of Western thought, culture, and literature to the Vietnamese people. As an advocate of action, he enthusiastically participated in journalism, association, translation, and literary writing activities. He realized that the press and translation activities are the schools for the development of the national language script, the national culture, the foundation for citizen education, and nation-building.

In 1907, while working at the Chinese-Vietnamese bilingual newspaper *Đăng cổ tòng báo*, Nguyen Van Vinh and other prominent intellectuals in Tonkin asked the Governor General to grant permission to establish the Tonkin Book Translation Association (June 1907). He believed that “the record of the Association founders would be considered as a stele that you declared new learning in our country” (*Đăng cổ tòng báo*, No. 811, dated 1st August 1907). The first meeting of the Association was held on 4th August 1907 at the headquarters of the Société d’Enseignement Mutuel du Tonkin (Hội Trí tri), attended by up to 300 people (*Đăng cổ tòng báo*, No. 812, dated 08 August 1907), Nguyen Van Vinh gave a speech on *quốc ngữ* script, affirmed that it should be used to write “national literature”, and emphasized the dissemination of knowledge from books, *quốc ngữ* written books and the translation of foreign books into *quốc ngữ* script among the people. Moreover, he said that organizing book translation and publishing also helped prepare talents and resources for opening more newspapers, thereby promoting the printing profession of Vietnamese people. This speech was later published in two consecutive issues of *Đăng cổ tòng báo* (No. 813, dated 15 August 1907; No. 814, dated 22 August 1907), becoming one of the earliest documents to present Nguyen Van Vinh’s views on the importance of translation and publishing.

However, soon after, the colonial government tightened the civil activities of indigenous intellectuals after the dissolution of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc (Tonkin Free School). While Nguyen Van Vinh’s proposal to establish a Book

Translation Association was not approved by the colonial government, he kept working towards translation as a means to improve society. Later, Émile Vayrac, as Head of the Department of Indigenous Publications, said in a report on the activities of the French colonial government towards the provision of books to the natives in the years 1912-1937, that he was strongly supported by Nguyen Van Vinh (Vayrac, 2000). In the early years, Vayrac connected and inspired Francois-Henri Schneider to cooperate with Nguyen Van Vinh to establish the *Journal of Indochina* (1913), *Trung Bắc tân văn* (1915) - two important newspapers that published the translations of Nguyen Van Vinh and the local elite intellectuals of the time. In 1923, Vayrac was commissioned by the Tonkin Governor Maurice Antoine François Monguillot to establish *Lectures Tonkinoises* (Books for the Tonkin), Nguyen Van Vinh helped translate Vayrac's *Parfum des Humanités* (*History of Tsinghua*) into quốc ngữ script (1925). In 1927, the two were appointed by the Indochina Governor General René Robin to be the head of *La Pensée de l'Occident* (Collection of European thought), in which there were many translations of Nguyen Van Vinh that had been previously published in newspapers and books such as *The Three Musketeers* by Alexandre Dumas (1927), *The Adventures of Telemachus* by Fénelon (1927), *Gulliver's Travel* by Jonathan Swift (1927), *Fairy Tales* by Charles Perrault (1928), *Molière's Comedies* (including *The Imaginary Invalid*, *The Miser*, and *The Bourgeois Gentleman*) by Molière (1928), *The Fables of La Fontaine* (1928), *Donkey Skin* by Honoré de Balzac (1928), *The Adventured of Gil-Blas de Santillane* by Alain-René Lesage (1929), *Turcaret*

by Alain-René Lesage (1930), *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* by Plutarque (1930), *Manon Lescaut* by Antoine François Prévost (1932), etc. Nguyen Van Vinh also translated and published other translated books such as *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo, etc. He also translated *The Tale of Kieu* (*Truyện Kiều*) into French to introduce famous Vietnamese literature as well as provide reference materials on Annam's literature for students of French - Vietnamese schools.

Pham Quynh followed Nguyen Van Vinh as the second translator who played a significant role in conveying Western ideas and literature into Vietnamese. As early as 1913, Pham Quynh had literary and philosophical translations published in the *Journal of the Indochina*. By 1917, the birth of *Nam Phong magazine* provided Pham Quynh with a strong forum for the dissemination of Western cultural and literary thought. Translated literature and translation activities played an important role in this policy.

In the new political and cultural context, Pham Quynh often gravitated toward classic works, contributing to the codification of local intellectual life. In the new political and cultural context, Pham Quynh often gravitated toward classic works, contributing to the codification of local intellectual life. Similar to Nguyen Van Vinh, Pham Quynh directly translated many Western works, from ancient Greek and Roman philosophies (aphorism by Pythagore, Marc Aurèle, and Epictète, etc.), philosophical thought (the works of René Descartes, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Henri Bergson, and Auguste Comte) to literary works (plays of Pierre Corneille, stories of

Guy de Maupassant, poetry of Charles Baudelaire...). But most prominently, it was Pham Quynh's focus on essays, introducing French thought, culture, and literature. Most of Pham Quynh's translations and studies on Western thought and literature were published in *Nam Phong Magazine*, making it an important academic forum in Vietnam in the 1920s. Later, Pham Quynh selected from these articles to publish as a book in the Collection of Nam Phong books, or *Thượng chi văn tập (Collection of Essays)* (5 volumes; 1943-1945). In these essays, Pham Quynh has expressed his opinion-oriented views in the selection, introduction, and translation of foreign works and authors.

Phung Ngoc Kien (2016: 84) emphasized from the perspective of multi-literary systems that: "In fact, the introduction and research of foreign literature in *Nam Phong Magazine* was also part of a campaign, a larger and more ambitious overall project of Pham Quynh. That was to build a modern academic background (Vietnamese national studies) that could serve as a basis for preparation for political independence, if possible. There is no clear separation to this story, where political discourse is interwoven with literary discourse. Literature in the contemporary modern sense is part of literature, in the cultural sense. Therefore, the world's literary knowledge, mainly from France, is both a driving force and a model for contemporary Vietnamese culture".

It can be said that in the first decades of the translation time in Vietnam in the early twentieth century, Nguyen Van Vinh and Pham Quynh stood out as two pillars, but they were similar in terms of cooperation with the government, which on the one

hand created financial and legal favorable conditions for translation activities, but on the other hand, determined the ideological and artistic content of the works selected for translation. The works appear to be politically innocuous. However, it is not that contemporary indigenous intellectuals did not include their social perspectives in these translation projects. Culturally, as Phung Ngoc Kien points out, "what was introduced by Pham Quynh was based on contemporary French textbooks. The selection of textbooks as a basis for introduction is of great significance because it represents the need for a formalization that Pham Quynh would want to bring to Vietnamese literature as an attempt to build the foundation of contemporary academics". In terms of literature, "the magazines run by Pham Quynh and Nguyen Van Vinh also updated their critiques, written or re-translated with appropriate corrections. In terms of genre, the series of articles introducing the art of novels and plays by Pham Quynh in the twenties has outstanding significance" (Phung Ngoc Kien, 2016: 84). This has significantly contributed to the maturity of modern literary thinking in Vietnam by providing readers with ways to critique individual works and systematize new literary genres from the Western literary tradition that was being targeted by colonial intellectuals and writers.

After three exciting decades under the guidance of Nguyen Van Vinh and Pham Quynh, translated literature has initially formed a modern model in modern Vietnamese literature. Having greatly benefited from the literary translation, from the 1930s onwards, Vietnamese modern literature took root and quickly entered the

process of modernization. Literary activities played an important role and occupied the central position of the multi-literary system. Nguyen Duy Binh (2015) observed that the translated literature and literary translation have been maintained, but have been “marginalized” and “appeared to be scant with a sparse team of translators and a relatively small number of translation works”. This makes “the contributions and vestiges of translated literature still exist and are bold in Vietnamese literature, but the translating activity in the interlingual sense is somewhat rejected as if it has fulfilled its mission and it is time to cede the central position of the complex to the general literature” (Nguyen Duy Binh, 2015: 6).

Translation of Western literature in Vietnam in the first half of the twentieth century began to change in the early 1940s. At this time, there was a re-emergence of translations of Western literature, both classical and contemporary. For example, while the *Tự lực văn đoàn* group (the Self-Reliant Literary Group) advocated self-composed literature in Vietnamese, since 1942, *Đời Nay* publishing house organized a collection of books called “*Gió bốn phương*” to print foreign literary translated work such as *Demons Are Forever* by J.D. Kerruish, *The Painted Veil* by W. Maugham, *Anna Karenina* by L. Tolstoy, *Collection of short stories (Hương xa)* by several Western authors, *Collection of short stories and memoirs (Hoa lạ)* by female Western authors. It is worth noting that while *Đời Nay* publishing house published several Western classic works of literature such as *The Life and Most Surprising Adventures of Robinson* by D. Defoe, *Treasure Island* by R. Stevenson,

these two works were not classified in the category of “*Gió bốn phương*” collection as the above contemporary works. This shows that the *Tự lực văn đoàn* group formed a new perception of literature when they chose to translate Western works from the same time, thereby helping them recognize the presence of Vietnamese literature in comparison with others. In other words, they perceived that Vietnamese literature had matured, could “refer to” foreign contemporary literary experiences, instead of being receiving and studying Western literary models as before.

On the other hand, Phung Ngoc Kien (2016) pays attention to the role of *Thanh Nghị* magazine in this period, having published “research papers conducted meticulously on foreign literature, not just a review or criticism”, with “an ambition to emphasize the parity and similarity between two kinds of literature regardless of geographical and ethnic distance”. Like the writers in the *Tự lực văn đoàn* group, the intellectuals who contributed to *Thanh Nghị* magazine showed “a sense of catching up and harmonizing with contemporary world life, not just imitating and stopping at French literature” as in the period of translation and introduction of Western literature by Nguyen Van Vinh and Pham Quynh. That consciousness “represents the maturity of an indigenous literature as well as the independence of a culture” (Phung Ngoc Kien, 2016: 88, 90). Thus, a generation of young people who came from French-Vietnamese schools and were strongly influenced by the cultural projects of Nguyen Van Vinh and Pham Quynh has grown up and tried to negate the choices of their predecessors to assert their voice and sustain their generation’s new approaches

to cultural, social and political issues. However, to achieve such results in a very short time, the translation of literature in particular and Western thought, in general, is of considerable significance in fostering Vietnamese nationalism and literature, thereby deepening the souls and minds of generations of Vietnamese intellectuals who always strive to fight for the nation's independence and sovereignty.

2. Translating and introducing Eastern literature

Besides, the translation of Eastern literature into *quốc ngữ* script also had remarkable achievements in the literary life of Vietnam in the first half of the twentieth century. Changes in the translation of Chinese literature into Vietnam were marked by the emergence of the *quốc ngữ* script and changes in educational policy in Cochinchina in the second half of the nineteenth century. Previously, the government and academic education system only officially accepted books by sages, while entertainment literature was strictly forbidden. However, the French colonization of Cochinchina and the eradication of Sinology had a strong impact on the frame of mind of the Confucians. Tran Van Giap (1942: 14) in "A Brief Review of Chinese Novels" said that, at the end of the nineteenth century, "the remaining Confucian elders in Cochinchina at that time considered themselves unfit for the Thai Tay movement. It's also really out of season. Either for livelihood or because they are bored without work, they translated Chinese novels into *quốc ngữ* script. Publishers took advantage of printing for profit. Then from the Indochine to the Tonkin, bookstores bought translated works for rent, including the *Three*

Kingdoms, All Men Are Brothers, Conquer the East, Conquer the West (The Legend of Xue Rengui, Xue Dingshan), Judge Bao Zheng stories, The Voyage of Emperor Qianlong To Jiangnan, etc. At that time, *quốc ngữ* script was popular, so young people loved Chinese novels just as much as young people now love cinema" (Tran Van Giap, 1942: 14).

The translation of Chinese and Western books alike arose in the Cochinchina and was later followed by translators from the Tonkin. Tran Van Giap (1942: 14) further commented: "By the time of abolishing the academic examination system in Tonkin, the trend of the Cochinchina works gradually decreased. Unemployed Chinese-language writers in the Tonkin at that time also turned to translate Chinese novels, partly sold to publishers for profit, partly printed in extra pages of daily newspapers. Since there were translated works in the Tonkin, the trend of renting Southern ones was less popular because the Northern writing style is more suitable for Northern people".

A remarkable feature about the translation of Chinese stories in Tonkin is that the translators paid considerable attention to the popular "love stories" at that time, represented by Xu Zhenya from the Yuanhu group of writers. Nguyen Nam (2010) finds that "Xu Zhenya's novels were imported and translated into the *quốc ngữ* script quite early in the period when literature written in the *quốc ngữ* script was still in the process of developing, and not yet completely free from the influence of Chinese literature". In particular, "all the people who translated Xu Zhenya's novels came from famous Confucian families, and many of them have had academic achievements". Nguyen Nam's survey results reveal that

between 1923-1931, 23 of his works were translated into Vietnamese, including best-selling ones among female readers such as *The Jade Pear's Spirit (Yulihun)* and *Bloodstained Snow* (Nguyen Nam, 2010: 57-58). This number of translated works shows the great interest of Vietnamese translators and readers with this writer. Of course, that interest in the translation of Chinese novels had a strong impact on modern Vietnamese literature, which was in the process of being formed at that time. On learning about modern Vietnamese writers, Vu Ngoc Phan (1942) soon noted the outstanding contributions of Nguyen Do Muc as “the one who translated Chinese stories into Vietnamese the most”. The number of translations is remarkable, but more importantly, “his translated stories have been read by many people”. Moreover, these translated stories have emerged as “schools” for women. Vu Ngoc Phan said that in the early 1940s, a few decades ago, two books translated by Nguyen Do Muc, namely *The Wonderful Karma of Double Phoenixes (Shuangfeng qiyuan)* (1922) and *Reincarnation* (1924) were “common to the intellectuals, but once famous among women” and “there was no young woman who did not memorize characters named Chieu Quan and Manh Le Quan and their beauty and talents” (Vu Ngoc Phan, 1942: 69-70). They were thoroughly absorbed in reading this kind of erotic literature, which made Song An Hoang Ngoc Phach, after speaking out about “the harm of love stories to female students” (1920), also wrote the novel *Tổ Tâm* (1925) to warn them about it. Contrary to the welcome of “romantic” novels in Tonkin, Vo Van Nhon observed (2011) that in Cochinchina, “all kinds of

translated heroic and historical novels were more popular” because they were more suitable for tastes of local readers”. Among the several Chinese translators who emerged well-known during this period were Nguyen Chanh Sat, Tran Phong Sac, Nguyen An Khuong, Nguyen An Cu, Dinh Van Dau, Tran Huu Quang, Huynh Tri Phu, etc. They were inherently proficient in Chinese studies and knew about *quốc ngữ* script, working as editors or assistant editors for newspapers such as *Nông cổ mín đàm*, *Lục Tỉnh tân văn*, etc. The survey results of Vo Van Nhon (2011) show that, between 1905-1910, the massive translation of many Chinese miraculous and heroic novels in Cochinchina created a translation movement of Chinese stories. Nguyen An Khuong, Nguyen Chanh Sat, and Tran Phong Sac were rated as “famous translators of Cochinchina” by *Phụ nữ tân văn* newspaper, in which “Tran Phong Sac was the most famous one” with 29 Chinese novels.

In response to the strong but somewhat permissive interest in translated Chinese literature in Cochinchina, several writers composing in the *quốc ngữ* script advocated such “contemporary novels” in *quốc ngữ* script as a form of “their resistance to Chinese novels”. Vo Van Nhon (2011) commented that this awareness had motivated Cochinchina writers to launch a movement to compose the *quốc ngữ* novels built in the context of the Vietnamese country and people, especially historical novels to express the nation’s history. Notably, *Giọt máu chung tình (Blood Drops of Love)* (1926) by Tan Dan Tu held a special position. Vo Van Nhon shared his views with Bang Giang to emphasize that *Giọt máu chung tình (Blood Drops*

of *Love* (1926) by Tan Dan Tu opposed the movement of reading Chinese novels in Cochinchina at that time just as *Don Quichotte* by Cervantès fighting against the obsession with books of chivalry. The resistance to Chinese stories also took place in Tonkin. Nguyen Van Vinh, under the pen name Dao Thi Loan, warned about the harmful effects of translating Chinese novels in Cochinchina when he said that “studying in *quốc ngữ* script has not made any progress because there are too many Chinese novels that have been translated”, and then asked Nguyen Do Muc to write a review of best-selling *The Wonderful Karma of Double Phoenixes* to orient readers after completing his translation (Dao Thi Loan, 1916: 3).

It can be said that “Chinese novels” dominated the literary life of Vietnam in the first thirty years of the twentieth century. The Chinese translated novels not only affected public tastes and literary properties, creating “the harm of literature” as Hoang Ngoc Phach noticed (1920), but also had a strong impact on social life and society, including the issue of “suicide women” that Nguyen Nam (2010) pointed out. After this climax, however, the translation of Chinese and Western works alike was much less frequent in the 1930s. In the early 1940s, Vietnamese writers’ interest in Chinese literature had somewhat changed, turning to contemporary Chinese literature, most notably Lu Xun. For example, Dang Thai Mai not only translated and introduced Lu Xun in the press but also published his book *Lu Xun - Life and Works* (1944). Lu Xun’s presence in Vietnamese literary life helped create a closeness between the two revolutionary proletarian movements in Vietnam and China in terms of social

impact. More importantly, from the literary perspective, the translation of contemporary Chinese literature with the typical works of Lu Xun into Vietnamese plus the translation of Western contemporary literature has also made an important contribution to breaking the dependence of Vietnamese literature on the Western model, thereby indirectly establishing the independent and autonomous position of Vietnam’s fledgling literature.

3. Translated literature and literary translation impact on the modernization of Vietnamese literature

Before translated literature became popular and pervasive, the newly-published books appeared in Vietnam and inspired a revolution for the literary elite in the period between the 19th and 20th centuries. Thanks to these books, Western Enlightenment thought was introduced into Vietnam through the medium (language and culture) of Japan and China, significantly changing the perception of nationalist intellectuals who were suffering the failure of the feudal monarchy model before the power of modern Western hegemony.

Being influenced by the West colonialism but still having a profound cultural exchange with the East Asian world, translated literature in Vietnam in the first half of the twentieth century derived from two sources. *First*, Western literature, most commonly French literature, with authors and works ranging from classical literature to modern literature, was imported either forcibly or voluntarily along with the colonizers. The attractiveness of these new literary works inspired several writers, translators, social reformers, who wanted to spread Western culture and civilization

to modernize Vietnamese literature and society. *Second*, familiar Eastern literature was also gradually transforming before the wave of Europeanization. Translated literature presented both Chinese classical (with Tang poetry and Ming-Qing novels) and new literature characterized by popular entertainment novels with the modern writing style of Yuanhu group and its best-selling author Xu Zhenya. It also included the popular types of hero and swordsman stories before the lines of Chinese vernacular written and Vietnamese national and democratic revolutionary literature gradually became dominant. The fact that translated literature creates a category in the multi-system of modern Vietnamese literature must take into account the introduction, concession, and mutual influence of these imported trends, and about this particular literary space.

Translated literature strongly influenced the formation of modern Vietnamese literature and the process of modernizing Vietnamese literature. First of all, indigenous intellectuals either cooperated with the authorities or joined together at newspaper offices and civil associations to form organizational institutions for translation activities. Thanks to these institutions, many translators in the early days had access to financial and political resources to widely distribute their translations. Secondly, translated literature contributed to the birth of a new literary space, where the increasing presence of new social classes is recognized, especially prominent of the modern urban class. It was these people who became readers of new literature, benefiting from and demanding literary and artistic innovation and modernization efforts. Third, translation updated new genres into

the Vietnamese literary system, bringing it from the traditional Eastern to the modern Western model. Fourth, translation was an opportunity to share new themes and topics in literature and/or adapt to modern life and individuals. Last and especially important, translation contributed to the enrichment and development of the Vietnamese language, promoting the modernization of the literary Vietnamese language.

These effects were crucial to the formation and development of modern literature because the experience of medieval functional literature in Vietnam did not allow literature and writers to perceive the autonomy of literature when it saw literature only as a vehicle for educational purposes. The popularity of Western literature offered an entirely different experience. Besides, the popularity of Eastern literature at the turning point of the decline of Sinology both shown a similarity in the reception of Western culture and literature and appeared as an agent promoting the sense of “resistance” to foreign literature to create a national literature. Therefore, in the context of diverse interference in the early years of the twentieth century, Vietnamese literature gained new perceptions and experiences, promoting creativity and modernization efforts.

There is continuity between generations of foreign literature translators. Regarding Western literature, Nguyen Van Vinh has become a leading translator when advocating to translate Western thought, culture, and literature into *quốc ngữ* script. He was followed by Pham Quynh and his colleagues on *Nam Phong magazine*, who made an effort to build a new literary model with their introduction of Western literary genres and poetics. As a result,

his translation efforts made Pham Quynh the first to bring the modern model into Vietnamese literature. The translators then were real Western-educated intellectuals, who grew up mainly through studying abroad and from the French-Vietnamese school system, and translating modern literature that was compatible with their perspectives and tastes, constituted a turning point in reception compared to the tastes and attitudes towards classical values of previous translators. Thus, over two generations in about half a century, Vietnamese literature has been aware of several centuries of Western modern literature through translation activities. That fact makes it easy to understand why the process of literary modernization in Vietnam had such early, diverse, and crystallized results.

For Eastern literature, the first generation of translators such as Nguyen An Khuong, Nguyen Chanh Sat, Tran Phong Sac, Nguyen Do Muc, Phan Ke Binh, Nguyen Don Phuc, Doan Tu Thuat, Tan Da, Tran Trong Kim, etc. helped Vietnamese general readers know about the outstanding works of classical Chinese literature, the Ming-Qing classic novels and/or the Tang-Song outstanding poems and poets. Moreover, as scholars with a tendency to reform or to be both neo-renovative and conservative, these translators were also readers of popular novels that emerged in modern China's cities, which led them to join the next generation of translators such as Truc Khe, Nhuong Tong, to translate both works and authors of Westernized literature in China into Vietnam. Such a translation makes sense when it provides close translation references, thereby contributing to the rapid transformation of Vietnam's literature.

Conclusion

Translated literature first appeared in the *quốc ngữ* magazines as entertainment products and then connected by indigenous intellectuals to ethnic projects, quickly creating a category in Vietnam's new national literature. Thanks to the variety of translation trends, the succession of generations of translators, and the variety of experiences and reference models, translated literature not only identified its place in the overall structure of the new Vietnamese literature but more importantly, it had a profound impact on the process of modernizing Vietnamese literature. At the crossroads of cultures, it is easy to understand why, in the climax of literary modernization, Vietnamese literature both emerged modern novels up to the standard of the Western model such as the works by the *Tự lực văn đoàn* group, Vu Trong Phung, Nam Cao and characterized by the uniqueness of the model influenced by classical Chinese novels such as *Lan Hửu* (1940) by Nhuong Tong. It both emerged romantic poetry, even surrealist symbolism, influenced by Western trends such as The Lu, Xuan Dieu, Huy Can, Han Mac Tu, and there was the use of medieval poetic styles such as *Poems in Classical Style* (1941) by Guo Xun or the popularity of the translation and reception of the Tang poetry. Therefore, it can be asserted that without translated literature and literary translation activities (language school, genre, and literary experience), Vietnamese modern literature could not have achieved great success with new romantic, psychological novels, plays, and poems in the 1930s and 1940s, that is, after only a few decades of truly participating in the network of global cultural exchanges □

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