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SOUTHERN PEOPLE IN PROSE WORKS BY HO BIEU CHANH, BINH NGUYEN LOC, SON NAM AND NGUYEN NGOC TU

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1. Pham Thi Thu Thuy (2012), "Southern seal in the short story "Buffalo Boy" (Mua len trau) by Son Nam", *Literature Journal*, (3), pp. 112-116.

2. Pham Thi Thu Thuy (2012), "Characters in volume "Ca Mau Jungle Perfume" (Huong rung Ca Mau) by Son Nam from the angle of culture", *Hanoi 2 University of Education and Training Magazine*, (18), pp. 51-60.

3. Pham Thi Thu Thuy (2012), "Human fate in volume "Silence" (Tham lang), *Culture and Art Magazine*, (336), pp.103-106.

4. Pham Thi Thu Thuy (2014), "Sense of being lost in works by four southern writers", *Culture and Art Magazine*, (362), pp. 85-90.

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6. Pham Thi Thu Thuy (2015), "Southern people respect for affection and look down on lucre in works by Ho Bieu Chanh, Binh Nguyen Loc, Son Nam", *Hanoi 2 University of Education and Training Magazine,* (3), pp. 68-74.

7. Pham Thi Thu Thuy (2016), "Southern people during reclamation and land protection in works by Binh Nguyen Loc and Son Nam", *Science and Technology Journal - Hue University*, (2), pp. 37-49.

8. Pham Thi Thu Thuy (2016), "Southern people in works by Nguyen Ngoc Tu", *Culture and Art Journal*, (387), pp. 74-77.

INTRODUCTION

1. Reasons for the topic

1.1. Writing career of an artist in general and literature works in particular are strongly influenced by the environment (the times, hometown, family conditions, etc.). Each writer has his / her own *"literary plots"* and distinctive literary atmosphere. In these literary plots, the artist is excited to explore the hidden beauty of the people in his passionate, engaged and nostalgic hometown. People in Vietnamese literature, beyond the common determiner of territorial integrity strip, are also featured with each regional distinctions. Basic character traits of people in different regions of the country are often discovered by the *"outsiders"* but it has been ingrained in the artists' flesh and has become their self-conscious or spontaneous own demand, reflecting their perceptions and human expression.

Through the study of the human figure carrying regional identity in literary works, we determined the extent of human figure's dominance, expression, explaination at different levels and of different dimensions, thereby, the contribution of the authors and his / her works to the national literature history can be assessed.

1.2. The Southern region is a new territory. From the basic culture of the Vietnamese immigrants, young Southern region full of creative potentials receives the whole *"endogenous"* and *"exotic"* experience to become a colorful and multi-valued culture. A lot of artists and scientists have regarded the South as a source of rich and fertile themes and limitless mystery, surprise and attractions to discover. Southerners in literary works have gradually appeared over time as a historical subject, with their own local and common traits, contributing a beautiful portrait to the cultural identity of Vietnam.

In the study *"Southerner people in prose works by Ho Bieu Chanh, Binh Nguyen Loc, Son Nam and Nguyen Ngoc Tu"*, we approach and explore the Southerner figure from the cultural perspective to affirm the human beauty in cultural depths and explain the root causes of the density of cultural existence in the literary characters of each writer.

1.3. Despite conflicting opinions about whether or not there is Southern literature, and about the position of the Southern literature in the process of national literature, its presence and spread remains a vivid reality. Southern writers have been and will try their best to contribute their distinctive features to the national literature. Ho Bieu Chanh (abbreviation: HBC), Binh Nguyen Loc (abbreviation: BNL), Son Nam (abbreviation: SN) and Nguyen Ngoc Tu (abbreviation: NNT) are four of the many writers born and live in the South and write about the South. In other words, they are the "*true*" Southern authors. Each person has struck his talent in Southern literature differently, if HBC successfully wrote about the Southern land in the transitional period, BNL - a typical writer of city dwellers and SN - a special writer of the river garders in the occupied Southern period, NNT was considered the most successful writer of realistic Southerners in the reunified, innovative and integrative era. Their works

sufficiently *"draw"* a literary history through their awareness, expression of Southerner icons.

When selecting this subject, we would like to clarify the diversity and advocacy of human images in the four Southern writers' works representing important stages of Southern prose in particular and the development of Southern literature from pre-modern time to contemporary period in general.

2. Subjects and scope of the research

2.1. Research Subjects:

The research is aimed at studying Southern people reflected in the prose works of HBC, BNL, SN and NNT.

2.2 Scope of the research:

The authors of the study subjects have voluminous documents, so priority was assigned to the works that portrait Southern people most prominently. On the other hand, due to difficulties in finding some novels and short stories published a long time ago and the missing original versions, in some specific cases, material sources are taken from some websites.

3. Research purpose and tasks

3.1. Research purposes

The thesis aims to:

- Confirm Southerners in typical Southern writers' works embody the Southern culture and society;
- Recognize the Southerners' types clearly shown in each writer's works at each particular stage in the history;
- Overview the movement of literary thinking revealed in the observation and expression of the Southerners in the past century of the literary history.

3.2. Research Tasks

The thesis is to solve the following tasks:

- Describe the Southern cultural and social conditions which led to the formation of the Southern personality;
- Outline the movements of the human figure in the modern Southern prose works;
- Explain the factors affecting the creative minds of HBC, BNL, SN and NNT;
- Analyze the characteristics of the typical Southerners and the portraying art in the works by HBC, BNL, SN and NNT;
- Compare and contrast Southern people shown in the works of four writers and compare, contrast the human figure embodied in the Southern, Northern and Central literature;
- Assess the distinctive features of the concept of human and human image building art of the 4 writers, clarify their contribution to modern Southern prose works.

4. Research Methodology

Based on the determined subject and research tasks, the following specific methods have been used:

- Interdisciplinary method (ethnography, psychology, local - culture ...)

- Literary history method
- Literary genres' features analysis
- Analysis - synthesis method
- Comparison - contrast method

5. Contribution of the thesis

- Confirm the potentials of cultural research study for typical literary phenomenon.

- Find out how the Southern people are reflected in HBC, BNL, SN and NNT's prose works by analizing and evaluating the various and unique manifestations of people in the Southern regions in the works of typical writers during each history stage, as well as clarifying the connection and mobilization of Southern people icons in the literary history process.

- Provide useful reference for the study and teaching of modern Southern literature in general and the works of HBC, BNL, SN and NNT in particular.

6. Thesis structure

Besides the preface and conclusion sections, the thesis is divided into four chapters:

Chapter 1: Research overview and precondition for Southern people's behaviour

Chapter 2: Moral human in works by HBC

Chapter 3: Reclaimer in works by BNL, SN

Chapter 4: Wandering human in works by NNT

Chapter 1

RESEARCH OVERVIEW AND PRECONDITION FOR SOUTHERN PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOUR

1.1. Research overview

1.1.1. Researches on Southern people in Southern literature since the early twentieth century until now

Research on human Southern literature in the South since the early twentieth century to now is a quite attractive approach for many works, articles, and conference speeches. We inductively get resources into the following groups:

- ***Before 1945 period: Comment puller works Criticism*** (1933) by Thieu Son, ***Vietnam general literary history*** (1941) by Duong Quang Ham or ***Modern Writers*** (1942) by Vu Ngoc Phan... just mention a few typical writers of Southern literature as Truong Vinh Ky, Dong Ho, HBC, Mong Tuyet... especially HBC.

- From 1945 to 1975 period:

Due to the special historical circumstances, studies on the Southern literary in the North and South were inconsistent.

In the North, Southern literature received little attention and the assessment was not right with its stature and value. Although Nguyen Dinh Chu in ***Vietnam Literary history curriculum***, Volume IV (1962), Phan Cu De in the ***Modern***

Vietnam novel (1974) mentioned some of the HBC's works but the Southern novels were still looked down on. The study of Southern urban literature from 1954 - 1975, ***First thinking about the literature in the other half of the country: The Arts of the South*** (1969) by Tran Hieu Minh, ***Humanism and some public literary dispositions in temporarily occupied area of the South*** (1972) by Nguyen Duc Dan... strongly criticized, denied parts of urban Southern literature, given that it was influenced by neo-toxic colonial.

In the South, the number of research projects was richer and followed two extreme trends: or disregarded as Pham The Ngu in ***Vietnam literature using new simplified border Convention*** (1965), or enhanced as Nguyen Van Xuan in ***When the new migrants come back*** (1969). These subjective conditions have limited the identification of the objects. The book review formats as ***Introduce Wild Flatform of Nhat Tien*** (1961) by Thu Trung, ***We read "Those who stand aside" of Nguyen Dinh Toan*** (1964) by Dang Tien ... though just at the introductory level, but they partly valued the humanity through the works through the social picture and affirmed the human problems in literature to some extent have been discussed.

- ***After 1975 period***, the country was unified and innovated, creating more conditions for the researchers to make more objective and fairer recognition of a literary entity which has at times been considered as having no past. Southern people issues, thus, are also concerned and get more attention.

Southern prose continued to become the object of study of many works. But the human aspect was not noticed. In ***Records of 6 Southeastern provinces*** (2015), Nguyen Van Trung indirectly mentioned Southern people when discussing Southern literary language.

Reviewing Southern urban literature from mid 80s onwards has gradually been calmer and less strict. The studies respect the criteria of a work of art. Overseas, the Vietnamese community is also very interested in urban Southern literature.

The development of Southern literature in rennovation period is alive and has been the subject of several studies thesis and dissertation. Besides, there have been articles on generalized scales such as ***Few thoughts about Mekong Delta literature*** by Man Tue, ***Mekong Delta's Prose Appearance*** by Hien Nguyen, ***Southeastern literature Space and reality of life or life mood*** by Nguyen Mot.

In summary, although there may be possible inadequacies and extremes, the works and articles mentioned have directly or indirectly confirmed what Southern writers have always tried to reflect facets of human with characterized fates, personalities and regional features. Those works and articles have more or less given us valuable clues to implement the project *"Southerner people in prose works by Ho Bieu Chanh, Binh Nguyen Loc, Son Nam and Nguyen Ngoc Tu"*.

1.1.2. Researches on Southern people in prose works by HBC, BNL, SN and NNT

HBC, BNL, SN and NNT are the internal-forces writers of prolific literary, with durable deep love and understanding of nature and people in the new land.

Their works provide readers with multifaceted perspectives on Southern way of life. That is also something that many researchers and critics concern.

- ***HBC*** is one of the few Southern writers mentioned thoroughly several, independent works in literary history as ***Ho Bieu Chanh Portrait*** by Nguyen Khue, ***A few human feelings when rereading novel's Ho Bieu Chanh*** by Tran Huu Ta, ***Ho Bieu Chanh - bridging traditional values with modern humans*** by Hoai Anh, ***Readers tastes and modern issues in Ho Bieu Chanh's novels*** by Tran Van Toan, ***The continuity and renewal of the human concept in HBC's novels*** by Huynh Thi Lan Phuong... All of these works have shown the characteristics of HBC's works when describing Southern humans in the transitional period.

- ***BNL*** is a contemporary Southern writer period 1954 - 1975 who received a lot of attention of public opinion both at home and abroad. All the articles and critical works confirmed that BNL *"awakes"* readers' mind the innocence, simplicity, gratitude and honesty of the people born in the new land as in ***The hometown in Binh Nguyen Loc's works*** by Huynh Hoang Anh, ***Binh Nguyen Loc and the Land*** by Nguyen Vy Khanh, ***Binh Nguyen Loc, country and people*** by Thuy Khue, ***Binh Nguyen Loc's works from the cultural perspective*** by Pham Phu Phong, ***Southern people and Southern culture in Binh Nguyen Loc's short stories*** by Nguyen Thi Thu Trang...

- ***SN*** has been considered by critics and researchers "*a Southern scholar*" because his work are rich with cultural imprints of the new areas of the country, which is expressed through his rich knowledge in history, geography; human understanding of the South; typical Southern style. These include articles by such authors as Vien Phuong, Hoang Phu Ngoc Phan, Van Gia, Huynh Cong Tin, Le Thieu Nhon, Tran Phong Dieu, Vo Van Thanh...

- ***NNT*** is the young Southern writer who has received most attention over recent decades. Her works, either short stories or novels are echoic, creating a multi-dimensional public opinion. Researchers agreed NNT is the writer of people with small fates and simple but profound life philosophy in the society. Especially, the sensitivity in analyzing the value of NNT literary works by such authors as Tran Huu Dung, Nguyen Trong Binh, Van Cong Hung, Tien Van Trieu...

Thus, all the typical works and articles affirmed that Southern man is the object that HBC, BNL, SN, NNT earnestly grasp and successfully expressed. The thing is they have not put it in the process of literary history, and have not clarified the connection as well as differences in studying HBC, BNL, SN and NNT. In the process to implement the project *"Southerner people in prose works by Ho Bieu Chanh, Binh Nguyen Loc, Son Nam and Nguyen Ngoc Tu",* we would have selected and filtered those recommendations by predecessors to deepen and clarify this movement, with the hope to contribute a scientific basis to occupy a precious cultural heritage of the nation.

1.2. Southern cultural - society roots, precondition for Southern people's behaviour

1.2.1. Natural environment nourishing the liberal spirit and the desire for exploring and assimilation

1.2.1.1. Wild and hard nature

During the early seventeenth century, the Vietnamese migrants first arrived in Ba Ria, Dong Nai reclamation, construction village, facing a vast nature filled with potential dangers of thick forest, humid swamps, dangerous tigers and crocodiles. Southern regions are surrounded by the sea with the length of about 600 km, the delta is relatively flat, just above sea level from 80 cm to 100 cm, which leads to soil salinization phenomenon.

Monsoon mechanism is isolated, distinct and very harsh. Southwest monsoon causes rain from May to October, with rainfall accounts for 80-90% of annual rainfall leading to continuous floods from June to December 10. When the monsoon Southwestern stop blowing, the northeast monsoon begins, the dry season starts. From November onwards, the water of the rivers dries up, and in April, it reaches the minimum level and fresh water becomes scarce.

1.2.1.2. Fertilizing Nature

The South's wild, unspoiled but harsh nature could not prevent the footsteps of migrants. With average annual water volume of about 4,000 billion cubic meters, shipping nearly 100 million tons of silt, the Mekong river has created numerous large and small islands, new long and large coastline, flaps along the fertile alluvial rivers, coastal sand dunes and alkaline soil salinity in low-lying sedimentary layers... Over time, it has become an extremely rich ecosystem, especially suitable for agricultural cultivation. The species of mangroves play an important role in the process of reclamation, erosion limitations; species of fish, shrimps, turtles, snakes; sanctuaries with tens of thousand birds; precious rice varieties are known by *"she"*; delicious fruits... are the source and pride of the Southern region.

Three sides are surrounded by the sea, densely covered with rivers, canals, bridging East-West and North-South regions, the South quickly builds the largest commercial, bustling and crowded port.

Compared with other regions, the South is home to a relatively stable climate, balancing the two continuous seasons with steady circulation. Flooding usually occurs in cycles but also bring great benefits such as providing land mud to regenerate depleted land due to intensive cultivation, eliminate fertilizers redundancy, maintain and develop biological richness.

1.2.2. Social environment: the particular historical variability

1.2.2.1. Exile, migration and mission of the land exploring

The first migrants to arrive in the land of the South carried on their shoulders a historical mission: the mission of land widening.

Their first job is mining wasteland, struggling with the waves and confronting evil beasts. They also organized life in village units. The village landscapes are spacious, open, and clung along the canals or the traffic lanes.

Choosing the appropriate living space, land reclaiming people made irrigation system, rice and crops cultivation, fruit trees, livestock, fisheries,

handicrafts. The people used subtly grass rather harrowing to utilize the soil fertility and avoid alkaline soil tillers; selecting appropriate plants for the soil to produce a unique city like Cai Mon rambutan, Sa Dec tangerine, Gia Dinh areca-nut. In the South, villages were soon formed as Lo Voi neighbors, Chieu neighbors, Dau neighbors, Chi neighbors, Lo Gom neighbors...

Rich and abundant products quickly promote the formation of commodity economy. Market shops, commercial centers spring up.

Economic development along with cultural development, schools building was paid special attention. In late eighteenth century, Nguyen Anh placed officials of schools, promulgated school rules and examinations. Southern intellectuals also actively translated Western books on techniques, mapping, shipbuilding and weapons...

1.2.2.2. The "exchange" of different cultures

The Southern region is a melting pot of many cultures from many different ethnic groups. The cultures interact with each other, self-select and self-adjusts to the symbiosis of a uniformed multicultural identity.

The majority of the population continued to cultivate rice, people in Southern Vietnam have found new farming methods with a high technical level. Vietnamese people bring to the southern land an ancestral and mother worship tradition. The *"symbiosis"* in their new environment makes them more open and sociable to be able to live in harmony with the new religions. Vietnamese migrants hearted family roots, when living among strangers they were prone to loneliness. They sung melodies for heart ease. Deep conscious roots are the foundation of the love of the motherland. These men never yield to the enemy. The Vietnamese are sentimental. When going South, facing natural disasters, predators, they are more beloved their friends, neighbors, not narrow with peers. Southern people are not conservative but actively absorb, learn from others to mature. They easily converted unique dishes of Chinese, Cham; costumes from Western communication to perfect life itself.

In addition to Vietnamese culture, the South also converge multiple cultural nuances, especially Chinese culture, not the rigid institutional culture, stereotypes existing through the feudal dynasties but is popular culture-by-step migration to the South. At the first stage, the Southern Chinese cultivated agriculture. Then, they quickly moved on to trade, which is their strength. With the Chinese, the family, clans, countrymen, colleagues ties are particularly valuable and sacred.

Khmer Southern live mainly on cultivation and breeding. They live in the hamlet. Khmer Southern are honest, upright, moral respect and loving, helping others. They have a lot of traditions, festivals such as the racing boats, tunes of Cheay, Ramvong dance, the massive instrument sets,... The rhyming prose, fairy tales, stories of their history have had a unique means of cultural exchange with the community of peoples, constitutes diversity, cultural richness for Vietnamese people.

South Cham people live mainly on farming, textile embroidery and trafficking. They have a higher collective consciousness, self-awareness and

concerns of jammaah common tasks, such as picking out the organizers, managers of community activities, supporting each other in life. Cham culture in the South has its own distinctions. The cathedrals are in unique architecture, influenced by the Arabic, Indian styles, but with adjustment.

In addition, the integration of cultural values in the South is not only from residents of the ethnic community but also from many other cultures outside the South and Vietnam. If from the mid-eighteenth century, the French conducted colonial exploitation in the South, then the years 50-60 of the twentieth century, US imperialism assimilated the Vietnamese people with both progressive and hybrid ideas. But with unyielding bravery, people of Vietnam in general, people in the South in particular know how and what to select, struggle with subjugate culture and take from Western culture values necessary for their development.

Thus, we can preliminarily confirmed the complexity of natural conditions, the vicissitudes of history, diversity of subjects of the home cultures formed the *"common denominator"* of the Southerners' personality. They are those who dare to take adventure, to be pioneers in the opening of the border, for the chance to change their life. They are outspoken, forthright, heroic, noisy and generous. They work flexibly and creatively. However, the *"common denominator"* is not an identity, unchanging identity, but tectonic. It is *"restructuring"* constantly in the process of expanding and developing the Southern lands, as *"links in the community or residential collide with neighboring ethnic groups"* (Nguyen Manh Tien). Moreover, *"the common denominator"* Southern man do not *"differentiate"*, unfamiliar with Vietnamese characteristics, which are resident in many places of *"property"*, *"share"*, except that it is *"sharper"*, more *"outstanding"* than in the pristine natural environment, harsh but fertile, in the social environment has many unique historical variability of the Southern lands.

Personality of the people in the new land has been explored charmingly by several generations of writers which has brought about aesthetic richness in human values.

People often mention typical Southern models as courageous, persistent, active in discovering the wild and doing business in the composition of the HBC, Phi Van, BNL, SN, Anh Duc, Nguyen Manh Tuan...

Southern modern prose also impresses the readers with typical characters who *"respect for affection, look down on lucre"* in the works of Nguyen Chanh Sat, HBC, BNL, SN, Doan Gioi, Nguyen Thi, Da Ngan,... They are ordinary workers but are generous, willing to help others, tolerant, traditional values cherished, honest.

Readers are also very interested in adventurous characters who engage in life drift uncertaintly in novels, short stories by Phu Duc, HBC, BNL, SN, Doan Gioi, Nguyen Quang Sang, Tram Huong, NNT... Although the root causes of every wandering journey are not the same, the common point of human wandering in modern Southern prose is not to deny the past and find their roots and sources.

Southern authors have not only explore human inspiration in the new land with unique and applealing characters, but they also unrelentingly concern about

the human fates in general. Referring to the human fates - a forever, eternal problem in artistic creativity, Southern writers have touched *"big road trail"* (Le Nguyen Can) of Vietnam's culture.

Overall, the image of the Southern people with diverse personalities, characteristics have been portrayed in the works of the writers, and become the *"typical model"*. However, due to the subjective and objective conditions, some *"models"* are bold in this work; with other *"models"* are repeated and cited in works and writing careers of other writers. Survey works composed by four typical Southern literature writers for each stage, it is noticeable that besides exploring, expressing the *"models"* character with common characteristics as mentioned above, each author is also obsessed, driven by a *"model"* custom character. It is the image of the people preserve religion in the prose of the HBC; people opening land in the great mission of BNL prose, SN prose; people carrying heavy sense of wandering, lonely but still craving the beauty, the humanity in the prose by NNT. The diversity of the Southern personality vividly manifested in the creation of every writer has perfected and brightly portraited man in the new land and also formed the Southern literary appearance.

Chapter 2

MORAL HUMAN IN WORKS BY HO BIEU CHANH

In 1884, the French colonist divided Vietnam into three main administration units (the North, the South, and the Centre) for easy rule. With the aim to make the South a springboard to conquer the North and the Centre, the French actively built ports, rail ways, and factories to enhance the enonomy of the South, leading to changes in the South. New social strata appeared with new aesthetic and thought trends.

The French colonist removed the Chinese examination system, brought many youngsters to France to study, and taught the Vietnamese Roman alphabet to the people, etc. Pressing and journalism started to develop making the Vietnamese Roman alphabet popular quickly, making great contributions to popularizing literature works to the public and motivating writers (Nguyen Kim Anh). The role of leading the community thought was transfered from the feudal intellectuals to the petty bourgeoisie intellectuals, the people who were sensitive to the changes, had chances to access advanced thoughts, and were keen on pprotecting the great traditional values.

Under changes in the politics, economy, society, and culture, Southern literature, especially Southern national language prose was formed and gained remarkable achievements. Truong Vinh Ky, Nguyen Trong Quan, Truong Duy Toan, Huynh Tinh Cua, Nguyen Chanh Sat, and Le Hoang Muu are the founders of Southern national language prose with a series of outstanding works. Other people like HBC, Phu Duc, Pham Minh Kien, etc had enormous and long-lasting creativity over periods of literature. They followed three main branches of historical novels, detective and crime novels, and social-moral novels. Many writers gained fame from competitions including Tran Quang Nghiep, Phan Huan Chuong, Phi Van, etc. In parallel with the legal literature segment, the revolutional patriotic literature segment consisted of writers who were also Minh Tan patriotic group soldiers (the beginning of the 20th

century), the revolutionary patriotic group with democratic and leftist tendency (from the 1920s to before 1945), the revolutionary patriotic group under the leadership of the Indochina Communist Party with soldiers like Tran Chanh Chieu, Suong Nguyet Anh, Nguyen An Ninh, Tran Huu Do, Nguyen Van Tao, Tran Van Giau, etc.

Remarkably, characters in Southern national language prose were heroes who fought for the national independence, smart and talented detectives, poor farmers, or boys and girls who were looking for freedom in love. Whatever kind of characters they might be, they expressed the beauty of Southern moral human that was best portrayed by HBC. This could be seen as the southern identity that was shaped from the cultural social origin of the new land. It has become a literatural classic reference in the novel Luc Van Tien by Nguyen Dinh Chieu with no regard of the current society's chaos.

2.1. Moral human - a classic reference in Southern literature since the end of 19th century

The nature and the formation of the new land of Southern Vietnam shaped and transformed the typical characterstics of people - Southern culture subject. They were straight-forward, generous, heroic, and clear in love and hatred. They were able to filter the refinements of the Confucianism and evaluated justice. In exposure with others' culture, each community was alert not to be assimilated. One of the bases to resist the risk of losing its identity are the forerunners' moral values and standards. This is the real rationale of Southern moral literature trends.

Nguyen Dinh Chieu (1822 - 1888) was one the most famous authors and a pride of Southern literature. His literature value was concentrated in the moral strength. The characters acting by their moral and faithful tradition and bravely fighting against the bad and the evil in his works became a literatural classic reference for the precesdent writers to inherit and promote. In fact, the moral human does not only exist in Southern literature. They do not only appear in works by Nguyen Dinh Chieu either. However, due to the regional social and cultural features, it stood out as the typical characteristic of Southern people; that is, only here is this feature popular. Moreover, due to specific writing situations and artistic philosophy, the type of moral human is repeated in works by Nguyen Dinh Chieu.

In ***Luc Van Tien*** (1850s), right in the lead-in, the writer considered *"loyalty and filial piety"*, *"virgin"*, *"morality"* the nation's moral basis. ***Luc Van Tien*** is a song of the good people, of the fight for morality by Southern people. ***Luc Van Tien*** is also the self-expression of Nguyen Dinh Chieu in front of the miserable fate.

Luc Van Tien has a system of characters who respected affections and disrespected property. Van Tien, Nguyet Nga, Hon Minh, Tu Truc, Tieu dong, Quan, Ngu, Tieu, etc. did not only teach their forerunners' good traditions but also traveled to help others. They behaved transparently as the clear and straight-forward characteristic of Southern people. They fought fiercely as they were not alone or separated from the energetic desire and the long-lasting life of the people.

In Nguyen Dinh Chieu's works, the beauty of people living to moral moral standards was expressed in many aspects. People showed their filial piety to the ancestors, loved and held gratitude to teachers, kept prestige with friends and good relationships between boss and workers, and faith between husband and wife, etc.

Considered from different angles, the moral human in works by Master Chieu had a beautiful soul attracting generations of readers. They followed the philosophy of Confucianism but not extremely but flexibly, showing the humane philosophy of normal people.

Reading ***Luc Van Tien,*** it is easy to recognize the strong movement of morality in the whole development of the story. Morality is the centre, the sould of the work. From the pages, moral people walked in to life, dominating the soul of the readers and becoming great examples for generations (Dang Thai Mai).

Until now, normal Southern people still find Luc Van Tien and Kieu Nguyet Nga specially appealing, and researchers consider that a classic reference in literature which is worth being preserved by the current and future generations (Nguyen Hung Quoc).

2.2. Moral human in works by HBC

2.2.1. Highly appreciating moral standards

HBC inherited and developed the moral human in works by Nguyen Dinh Chieu. However, Nguyen Dinh Chieu's heroes focused on *"loyalty"*, *"filial piety"*, *"virgin"*, and *"morality"* while HBC's morality keeping characters were described in many aspects and relationships: king and peole, friends, neighbors, grand father and grand children, father and son, brothers, husband and wife, etc. Besides, Nguyen Dinh Chieu gathered a lot of characters in the same work. Whilst, HBC let them appear alone; even they were quite lonely sometimes. Also, HBC did not make his characters dogmatic missioner of morality but he combined the new and flexible abilities of the modern autobiography to express the beauty in the soul of Southern people through the lives and fates of particular characters.

2.2.1.1. Behavior in family

Being a writer who took morality as his essense, family as his model, honesty as the core of every thing in life (Vu Ngoc Phan), HBC contributed really moving works about relationships between parents and grand parents with children, between brothers, and between husband and wife (***Ai làm được***, ***Cha con nghĩa nặng***, ***Lời thề trước miễu***, ***Đóa hoa tàn***). Those relationships were considered carefully not to be dogmatic but gentle and lively. HBC's moral characters belonged to different classes of the society from the poor to the rich, the blue-collar to white-collar, both in the countryside to the urban (***Con nhà nghèo***, ***Con nhà giàu***). The stories he told always revealed a bright future where the good people enjoyed happiness despite many challenges (Nguyen Van No, Huynh Thi Lan Phuong).

2.2.1.2. Behaviour in community

In terms of the neighbourhood, people in HBC's works helped and protected each other willingly without consideration of benefits. They were so heroic to help others without gaining anything in return. Their actions were not really great, but they followed the characters in ***Luc Van Tien*** (***Đại nghĩa diệt thân***, ***Ngọn cỏ gió đùa***, ***Ông Cử***). Not only mentioning the pure and heroic relationships between people, HBC paid much attention to the attachment between people and their habitat (***Con nhà nghèo***, ***Ý và tình***). His characters were content with the freedom of the countryside to do what they loved.

2.2.2. Serevely fighting against the bad and evil

In the 19th century, Nguyen Dinh Chieu stated that hatred also meant love. Love and hatred are the two opposite but dialectic emotional states of human which have become different strengths of different writers. Under obvious Confucian influence, HBC respected the people who were moral and would not give way to the bad and the evil.

2.2.2.1. Criticizing money slavery

In the society of transition, under effect of the bourgeoise lifestyle, the destruction of money was more serious than ever. On the one hand, HBC successfully created characters who would do anything to make money. On the other hand, he lively portrayed the strong Southern characteristics that strongly condemned the deterioration because of money (***Chúa tàu Kim Quy***, ***Thầy thông ngôn***). Especially, some characters in HBC's novels stated positive point of view from thoughts on money (***Tiền bạc, bạc tiền***, ***Tại tôi***).

2.2.2.2. Disgusting deviousness and dishonesty

HBC drafted the image of the people who had faulty soul and personality - the errors to be removed in a healthy Southern body (***Ngọn cỏ gió đùa***, ***Nhân tình ấm lạnh***). The moral human in HBC's works chose to behave decisively giving no way to the mal-actions in the society (***Ai làm được***, ***Khóc thầm***, ***Ông Cử***). That fight of morality showed the writer's factual, strict, and multi-dimensional look at life. His characters were not only keen on tha nation's beautiful and sustainable cultural values but also able to perceive and get rid of the darkness in human relationships and souls.

2.2.2.3. Criticizing deteriorated and unfair society

In works by HBC, the evils are popular. He used a lot of stories about rapes, affairs, whores, etc. as evidnece of the dark reality (***Chúa tàu Kim Quy***, ***Bỏ vợ***, ***Nợ đời***). The deterioration made a lot of exchange students concerned. They wanted to do something to revive the culture. Especially, HBC put that responsibilty on women. In his novels, there were strong and confident women with bold thinking, persuasive words, and decisive actions (***Đoạn tình***, ***Khóc thầm***, ***Tân Phong nữ sĩ***).

At the early 20th century, in the south there still existed a lot of inequality. The writer expressed his wish to change the society through several exchange students who had talent, enthusiasm, and desire to be useful to the society (***Ý và tình***, ***Khóc thầm***). Although they had subjective viewpoint of the social changing, most characters brought to the current literature a new and fresh air and the uniqueness of the self.

2.3. Art of portraying image of moral human by HBC

2.3.1. Putting characters in challenging situations

In writing about Southern people in fighting the charm of money to live morally, HBC usually pushed them into accumulated problems, sudden disasters, incomplete affairs, getting lost and wandering (Nguyen Khue) to highlight the beauty of southern soul and characterstic. His characters kept facing challenges forcing them to have actions and words that revealed their nature (***Chúa tàu Kim Quy***, ***Ngọn cỏ gió đùa***, ***Cư kỉnh***). That is a tactic to increase the appeal of the story to the readers.

2.3.2. Attentively describing character's body, appearance, actions, and words

HBC was quite *"cumbersome"* in introducing the origin of the moral people in the folk style of fulfilment. In essence, the moral human in HBC's works had normal origin

who appeared at their natural size close to the life reality, decreasing the the nobleness of the ideal character as normally seen in traditional literature (Tran Van Toan).

Due to the philosophy "good people have good appearance", HBC described his characters' appearance quite carefully. Besides several characters with ideal beauty, he respected the agreement between the appearance and the living environment, the characteristics, and the fate of people (***Đoạn tình***, ***Ông Cử***). The writer also prioritized the description of actions, through which he developed the story and revealed the characteristics. However, different from the people of "loyalty", "gratitude", "virgin", and "morality" in ***Luc Van Tien*** who had great actions whose influence was beyond the limitatin of time and space, the moral human in works by HBC was weaker and more limited in their action strength (Trần Văn Toàn). They could only help someone in a short period of time. Their lives contained so much pain, so they used to cry and wander (***Cay đắng mùi đời***, ***Chúa tàu Kim Quy***, ***Tiền bạc, bạc tiền***).

Highly evaluating moral standards and criticizing the bad and the evil, the moral human in works by HBC often quoted idioms and traditional parallel constructions. On the other hand, in their talks, his moral character used popular phonetic and intonation variables in the new land to make their conversations normalized and plain so that the characters' moral philosophy in the works would not be so strange but as natural as the breath of life.

To sum up, having close connection to his fatherland, HBC had put all his talents and enthusiasm, which he perceived from the western - eastern, traditional - modern culture and education, into graphically and successfully portraying the moral human in the south of Vietnam. They were the people who always respected and maintained traditional moral values, hatred for the bad and immoral. They were the continuation of the moral human in the works by Nguyen Dinh Chieu but they also had their own distinct characteristics which were typical for a specific historical period. They were placed in difficult, unexpectedly challenging situations; their body, appearance, activities and words were attentivelly described. It became typical in works by HBC, helping *"the present readers to regconize the people of an era"* (Nguyen Vy Khanh). Inheriting and promoting the image of moral human in works by HBC, Thoi Xuyen also presented his novel ***Người vợ hiền*** (in Journals for women - 1929) and Phan Huan Chuong presented his novel ***Hòn máu bỏ rơi*** (in Journals for women - 1933). Both works drew the special attention from the public; ***Hòn máu bỏ rơi*** was awarded by the Duoc Nha Nam newspaper, because it affirmed the good humanity behaviors of people in the new land in the family and social relationships. The image of moral human was also described by other Southern writers like BNL, SN, Da Ngan, Ly Lan, NNT, etc. Though these images were not abundant, direct as those in works by HBC, they were very impressive. These writers, together with HBC, specialized the characteristics *"respect for affection and disrespect for property"*, making them become the unique characteristics of the southern culture.

Chapter 3

RECLAIMER IN WORKS BY BINH NGUYEN LOC, SON NAM

The achievements of Southern Vietnam's national language prose at the beginning of the twentieth century had great effect on the artistic ideal of the descendant writers including Tran Bach Dang, BNL, Ly Van Sam, SN, etc. - the people who at the same time inherit and innovate them to create the new look for southern literature post-1945.

In the early years of the Revolution, most Southern writers participated in the National Resistant Literature and Art Association, then Branches of Southern Resistant Literature and Art or local Literature and Art groups. Hard as the war might be, Southern literature activities were not quiet. Pressing and publishing developed at a fast pace. Literature competitions were organized regularly. A number of literature works got fame. Several young writers started to shape their own styles.

From 1954 to 1975, the writing force of southern prose developed in its quantity and complexity. Many writer traveled to the North for the big army gathering. Others stayed in Sai Gon as assgined by the Communist organization to maintain their work in press and literature. Among the Nothern writers traveled to the South there were famous writers and young talents. Their team were added with writers from central provinces and young writers.

Reflecting the chaotic and unusal reality of the war, Southern prose in the period 1954 - 1975 makes deep impression with its quantity and quality. A score of literature works and journals publicly claimed for political negotiations and general election for the country's unification against the puppet authorities, and criticized the current society. Several works tended to praise the beauty of southern people in the time of reclamation, expressing the harassed feelings of the migrants of their origin. Some characters wanted to break the boring and limited life but ended up with bore and exhaustion. Besides, quite a few works bore political prejudices for the psychological war by the puppet authorities, accepting to be hack writers rather than serving the art. However, the time and the public is still selective to sort them out.

However, despite its variety, in the main stream, the image of Southern people was described honestly and humanely including the suffering people, the insurgent people, and the patriotic people, etc. With their sincere love for their hometown and country, BNL and SN calmly went throught a stormy times with works eliciting the national pride and reminding of the hard but great reclamation of the forerunners in the South.

3.1. Reclaimer - literatural image showing love for fatherland of BNL and SN

Due to their special origin, writing about the reclaimer is the natural demand of BNL and SN. BNL was born in Tan Uyen Village, Chanh Mi Trung District, Bien Hoa Province which was enriched by Dong Nai river. His family had lived in Tan Uyen for dozens of generations, but he was always aware of tracing back the origin. SN was born in Dong Thai Village, An Bien District, Rach Gia province, the border of the country. SN stated that the sense of reclamation had soaked his body. His father and great fathers were reclamers themselves.

Praising the reclaimer is also the artistic philosophy and writing purpose of BNL and SN. BNL told Nguien Ngu Y that for him, alluvial was a big dream to be realized in his career and at the same time a spiritual debt to be repaid however long it might take (Vu Thi Xuan Khang quoted). In ***Memoir of 20 years living in urban***, SN also confirmed that to understand the nation's soul, the reclamation must be considered with folk cultural centres, and that literature must be connected to history and geography.

Reviving the imge of Southern people in such hard but glorious time was also the way BNL and SN avoided the strict control of the puppet authority and helped the southerners better understand the land where they are living, making contributions to creating the connection between people and the land, raising patriotism and looking forward to the revolution of many youngsters living in southern cities before independence (***Memoir of 20 years living in urban***).

All the above mentioned were the reasons for the image of Southern reclaimers to be repeated so many times in works by BNL and SN, one of the contributions of the two writers to the modern southern prose.

3.2. Great mission of reclaimer

The history put big missions on the shoulders of the migrants. Pioneering required non-stop efforts by the cultural subjects to creat the values suitable to the life reality in a new and changing time and space. However, despite the joy of commitment, people could not forget their origin and break the connection between the past-present-future. They maintained and promoted the great traditions of their ancestors. BNL and SN portrayed the image of the reclaimer on that basis.

3.2.1. Creating cultural values

3.2.1.1. Conquering nature

How people coped with and took advantage of the nature was clearly shown in works by BNL and SN. The forerunners were patiently and bravely doing any thing they could to defeat wild animals, preserve jungles and the sea; cultivate and exploit fauna and flora sources; and trade between communities, etc. (***Bắt sấu rừng U Minh Hạ*** - SN, ***Rừng mắm*** - BNL). Knowing how to make use of the natural sources, the reclaimers did a lot of jobs to survive in the land (***Hương rừng***, ***Chuyện rừng tràm***, ***Cây huê xà*** - SN). Southern people took control of the wide rivers by building houses along the banks to live, buying boats for travel and earning a living, and for accommodation (***Không một tiếng vang*** - BNL, ***Vẹt lục bình*** - SN).

3.2.1.2. Building relationships in community

Southern Vietnam is the co-residence of many ethnics. They came to this land for various reasons. At first, groups of Viet, Hoa, Khmer, and Cham people inevitably held doubts and hesitance to each other. However, the reclamation helped them understand the importance of cooperation to harmonize the internal and external strengths (***Lò chén chòm sao***, ***Cô Hời bán thuốc*** - BNL; ***Ông Bang cà ròn***, ***Ngó lên sở thượng*** - SN).

Inheriting and promoting the image of moral human in HBC's novels, the reclaimer in works by BNL and SN respected affections, hated betrayers, loved their friends and neighbors, and criticized sweet talks. They lived faithfully with desire for happiness and positive affections (***Xô ngã bức tường rêu*** - BNL, ***Con Bảy đưa đò*** -

SN). Southern people would be ready to help the weaker in need (***Đảng "Cánh buồm đen"*** - SN). They criticized arrogant behaviours using arguments to analyze the good and the bad to make the evils stop (***Đại chiến với thầy Chà*** - SN).

3.2.1.3. Self-awareness

The remarkable value of the reclaimers was their desire for sacrifice and willingness to take risk. They had to face with the loneliness of the migrants, the insecurity of the unstable future as they identified their mission of pioneers (***Rừng mắm*** - BNL, ***Hương rừng*** - SN). Characters in works by BNL had early awareness of their fate. They knew who they were and they accepted their fate not to be imaginative (***Cây đào lộn hột***). They suffered from the pains of their fate, of generations strieving to survive in the new land (***Người chuột cống***). SN analyzed thoroughly the fight to win the self of the reclaimers. The writer put them before choice of lifestyles with pressures not from the outside world but from their personal demand and self-identity (***Ruộng Lò Bom***, ***Đảng "Cánh buồm đen"***). The beauty in the souls of the reclaimers were understood and nominated by other people (***Bốn cái ngu***).

3.2.2. Improving cultural values

3.2.2.1. Origin forward

The reclaimers suffered from the pains of parting with their fatherland. They respect the traditions of worshipping, a sustainable cultural behavior that connected generations and attached human to human and to their field and land. They expressed their gratitude for the ancestors through (usually) big parties to celebrate their funeral which were not aimed to show off but to show the emotional relationships between villagers and to compensate for their pains of reclaimers (***Phân nửa con người***, ***Chiêu hồn nước*** - BNL; ***Con sấu cuối cùng***, ***Miễu Bà Chúa Xứ*** - SN). The Souther people also wished to rebuild their ancestors' traditions and religions. Temples and pagodas sprang up along with the reclaimers as villages, temples and pagodas are the structure of the agriculture civil, the strongest spiritual source (***Thần thánh Sài Gòn***, ***Chùa chiền, đền miếu*** - BNL; ***Con cháu Thần Nông***, ***Lá xâm số 58*** - SN).

3.2.2.2. Evaluate ancestors' achievements

During their reclamation, characters in works by BNL and SN were gradually aware of the country's long history. To the Southern people, the desire for reclamation became a moral belief to be continued and promoted. They showed their gratitude to the forerunners by continuing their work in reclaming and choosing the faithful lifestyle (***Rừng mắm***, ***Đất không chết*** - BNL; ***Bắt sấu rừng U Minh Hạ*** - SN). They respected physical and spiritual values handed down by forerunners (***Nỗi buồn của người sắp chết*** - BNL, ***Thơ núi Tà Lon*** - SN).

3.2.2.3. Selecting way to be optimistic and positive

In the reclamation, people did not only care about the harsh nature but they also enjoyed its poetic beauty and could live in harmony with the nature (***Những hàng me Sài Gòn*** - BNL, ***Mùa "len" trâu*** - SN).

The Southern people pay much attention to spiritual joys. They consider singing in dark woods or on wild rivers a way to defeat the fear for the nature, to show their soul to partners, and to ease their thirst for origin. In BNL's works, folk songs appeared plainly and naturally like the breath of life (***Rừng mắm***) while SN explained with

passion the origin of Southern music styles with his wide knowledge of the cultural identity of the new land (***Hát bội giữa rừng***, ***Ngày xưa tháng Chạp***, ***Câu thai đố***).

The love for the country of Southern people is expressed at different levels in works by BNL and SN. BNL's characters, whatever situation they might be, were mentally attached to their hometown and maintained memories of the time living in the nature (***Những ngôi mả tổ***, ***Thèm mùi đất***). SN tactfully showed the national pride through the non-cooperation with the enemy, through the innuendoes of the duties of people living in the war time, and the belief in the country's future (***Con ngựa đất***, ***Con Bảy đưa đò***, ***Miễu Bà Chúa Xứ***).

3.3. The art of portraying reclaimer of BNL, SN

3.3.1. Building nostalgic situations

BNL often put migrants in situations that caused strong spiritual vibration. It could be a circumstance that reminded of the once wild space so that people could trace back their memory to the history, highlighting the mood of a person who was eternally loyal to the countryside (***Rừng mắm***, ***Lửa tết***, ***Con Tám cù lần***, ***Về làng cũ***).

What makes each of SN's stories attractive is the insertion of anecdotes, making chances to look at human from different angles and connecting their present with the past and future. Anecdotes portrayed the hard but heroic life of southern people and their innocence and bravery at the same time (***Kho vàng***, ***Đảng "Cánh buồm đen"***). Those anecdotes act as the leverage so that the Souther people, given their gratitude for forerunners, could normalize challenges to create new anecdotes. Each of SN's works is a new and interesting story that has been handed down from generation to generation. Especially, SN was able to select and describe unique artistic details to make the anecdotes more appealing and obsessive (***Một cuộc bể dâu***, ***Bác vật xà bông***).

3.3.2. Greater attention to psychological human besides action human

Still close to the image of sacrificing and acting people in works by HBC, in those by BNL and SN, the characters were equipped with the ability to infer and judge to make the right belief. This was due to the fact that the cultural and aesthetic background at BNL's and SN's time had changed compared with HBC's. The artistic point of view had moved from the outside to the inside reality. Besides the acting characters, the two authors paid much attention to the "*inner person*" with their mysterious and multi-dimensional psychological changes. Examples were the young woman (***Căn bệnh bí mật của nàng*** - BNL), Tấn (***Chiếc khăn kỉ niệm*** - BNL), Cả (***Cô Út về rừng*** - SN), Tư Có and the correspondent (***Tình nghĩa giáo khoa thư*** - SN).

Consisting of both the acting and psychological person, the characters in works by BNL and SN used simple but philosophic language. Their names and accommodation places belong to the plain and wild life with the harmony between people and rich lands with a lot of untapped natural seas, islands, and channels. The migrants also used southern dialect in 3 aspects of phonetics, lexis, and syntax with phonetic variables, use of local words, a combination of the Northern, Thanh Nghe, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai accents besides Cham, Khmer, Chinese, and French languages; a combination between short and plain sentences and long sentences with complex explanation. On the other hand, people's experiences of the reclaimers were expressed deeply but reasonably by

BNL and SN through a expressive dailylife language with a lot of idioms and proverbs. In BNL's works, in each specific situation, people withdrew a meaningful lesson and knew how to express it with subjective philosophy, so they are not trite and hollow at all. In the mean time, SN was good at using idoms and proverbs to describe the characteristics of Southern people. Besides characters' words, at the end of several stories, SN purposedly added marginal romantic anecdotes so that when the story was closed, it could still inspire.

Thus, under the effect of particular historical contex, many southern writers in the temporarily dorminated areas described the social situations with breaks-losses, doubts - boredom. However, BNL and SN with the simple writing styles described southern people who were thirst for widening their fatherland, conquering the new land, forwarding their origin but they were fully aware of their present situations and tried to select ways to be optimistic and positive. The pride on the Vietnamese soul and mind inside the southern people was the great passion for BNL and SN to overcome the difficulties in the hard time that was in deep in the southern modern prose after 1945.

Chapter 4

WANDERING HUMAN IN WORKS BY NGUYEN NGOC TU

The victory on 30th April, 1975 unified the country and opened a new phrase of Vietnam in general and Vietnamese literature and Southern prose in particular.

Being an inseparable part of the unified literature, over the past 40 years, the force of Southern prose writers have had remarkable contributions. First in the list are famous writers in the American resistance war, then authors growing up during the 1980s and 1990s of the 20th century. After, young writers have had their own discoveries and shaped their own style.

The changes of the country's life post-war had great effect on Southern prose. Memory of the just-gone war, the joys when the country was united, difficulties in building the country, new challenges, etc., have all become sources of inspiration, a rich land for writer creation. Noticeably, although the margin of topics has been widened, most Southern writers' works are particularly regional.

From a general look at Vietnam's literature after 1975, NNT is one of the most outstanding writers. Among different writers from all regions in the country, she is the most Southern specific writer. Patiently pursuing the journey to discover the life in the new land in the almost one century flow of literature, her works attract a lot of attention of readers. Living with NNT's works, people are obsessed by characters who had migratory lives but still looked forward to life values. The type of Southern people with obvious sense of being wandering became an aesthetic sign making the difference between NNT's works with other writers', a sculpture of the uniqueness besides the characteristic of respecting affection and disrecpecting property, the creativity, and the flexibility of southern people.

4.1. The sense of being wandering shows signs of traditional Southern culture and post-modern culture at the same time

Being wandering here means that someone, for some reason, is separated from his familiar residence, thrown in a new and strange place, and becomes lonely. Being wandering is also the feeling of someone who resides in one place but always think about another place cause he couldn't find the meaning of existence.

The works by previous souther writers including HBC, BNL, SN, etc. are all spread with sense of being wandering. The sense of being wandering, in the first place, the particular psychology of Southern people expressed in literature. It impressed on the migrant fates. It is reflected through wide water space, the floating boat-houses, wild jungles, damp ponds, etc. It also reminded of sad guitar jingles by actors of the reformed theatres wandering about.

The sense of being wandering was concentrated from the writer's own experiences. HBC, BNL, and SN were all separated from their hometown. Like previous writer, NNT was born in Bac Lieu province but lived in Ca Mau province, the border of the country. At the age of 15, she left school to help her parents make a living, facing the changing reality. Being wandering is an instinct deep in her subconscience.

NNT created in the context of post-modern literature which had more or less penetrated into Vietnam. The war, migration, environment pollution, social evils, etc. had put people in from of challenges. Inevitably, people sometimes find themselves like machines which can not take control of their own lives. Information boom makes the reality inflated. Media are even more diversified, making people more far away and separated. Technocracism threatens to delete personal characteristics, turning people into identity-wandering codes. People are migrants in their own hometown. Peole are pushed in many ambiguous directions.

NNT is a so feminine writer. She is sensitive to the vulnerable. Through some epigraphs, she revealed her feelings of being small and lonely in life. She thinks of life as journeys that never reach destinations. Being wandering has become an obsession in her works.

4.2. People bearing deep sense of being wandering in works by NNT

4.2.1. Harassed of migration

4.2.1.1. Migration for living

Southern people in works by NNT, in the first place, migrated for living. To survive, a series of her characters had to experience wandering days. How southern migrants make a living in works by NNT are typically Southern cultural. They sang in bars, sold lottery tickets, sold cotton products, raised ducks, etc. They wandered along rivers, on fields, etc. Their lives were temporary and unstable. Examples could be made including Doi and his wife (***Đời như ý***), Chin's family (***Nhớ sông***), Phi (***Biển người mênh mông***), etc.

Migrating for living, NNT's characters continuously harassed. They remember the past; they wished the connection; they were tired, etc. The sense of being wandering is a chronic feature deep inside the migrants affecting their behaviours and moods.

4.2.1.2. Migration for special situations

Quite popular in NNT's works are migrants under difficult situations. Each fate had it's own challenges which are conditions for personal characteristics to expose themselves. Although the characters were not in the same position, all chose migration as a solution to overcome the difficult situation (Nam Nho in ***Cải ơi***, Tu Phuong in ***Nhà cổ***, Nuong and father in ***Cánh đồng bất tận***, the duck man in ***Cái nhìn khắc khoải***). Migration is like a need of NNT's characters. They often migrated without thoroughly consideration.

Migration brings to southern people in NNT's works an unstable and lonely life without normal communication and feeling exhaustion. Their journey did not have a destination. They made friends with animals. They refused human languages. Bang (***Thềm nắng sau lưng***), Nuong and her sister (***Cánh đồng bất tận***), the man (***Cái nhìn khắc khoải***), *"she"* (***Gió lẻ***), etc. are such characters.

4.2.2. Harassed in search

4.2.2.1. Search for beloved

A lot of NNT's characters, to earn a living or in special situation, had to migrate leaving an emptiness in the souls of their beloved. Southern people are emotional and faithful; they couldn't let it be as their family members had to migrate. Their non-stop search is obvious and understandable.

On the contrary, when the society wasted its ignorance and saved love, many characters had to draw attention by *"deleting"* themselves as a try to see if their disappearance would make somebody interested (Sinh - ***Biến mất ở Thư Viên***, Boi - ***Sông***). They were afraid that without such reminder, they would be deleted from existence. Migrating and disappearing was both their fate and their fight against being forgot. The disappearance of the characters encouraged others to search and be searched. It is like the non-stop hide-and-seek game between the people who had obsessive sense of wandering from the past and the wandering of insecurity in reality.

The search for their beloved of the characters in works by NNT lasted over the time and space. More obsessively, there was the search in mind. Many of NNT's characters wandered to the limit of guess and imagination (Di - ***Khói trời lộng lẫy***, Hao - ***Biến mất ở Thư Viên***). That limitless search relfects the strong characteristics of the people in the new land.

4.2.2.2. Search for self

Southern people in NNT's works continuously looked for answers for the key questions *"who am I?", "where am I from?", "where am I going to?"* though they knew that journey is so difficult and sometimes hopeless. Her characters longed for search for self as they were sceptical and lonely facing a chaotic and increasingly changing reality (Soi and *"she"* (***Ấu thơ tươi đẹp***); *"she"*, *"he"*, Du (***Gió lẻ***); Xu, An (***Sông***).

To pursue what they loved to the whole heart, the characters decisively threw themselves in the search though they did not know what's waiting ahead; for example, Chin Vu (***Cuối mùa nhan sắc***), Vinh (***Sầu trên đỉnh Puvan***), etc. The decisive leave for the passions that NNT's characters pursued was reminder of the free-spoken Southern people who inherited the dream of adventure from the previous reclaimed

people. Herein being wandering is the environment for the exposure of self, the process of testing one's personal experience in front of complex and mysterious reality.

In their search for the meaning of existence, many of NNT's characters chose to die. Southern people accepted the death quite peacefully both as the end of a life and the destination of a journey, for they consider death and life the common sense. They left the *"permanent living place"* by disappearing into the smoke or the flowing water (Di - ***Khói trời lộng lẫy***, An - ***Sông***, Nhan - ***Tro tàn rực rỡ***). That manner is impressed by the countryside and water civil. In NNT's works, death is not the close of personal fate. The desire to search for the meaning of existence still stirred in the souls of other people like an effort to defeat the emptiness and boredom of life.

4.3. Art of portraying image of migrants by NNT

4.3.1. Push characters to migration situation

NNT was good at creating story situations. There is the combination between difficult and psychological situations. She also created some symbolic situations. To portray the sense of being wandering, NNT put her characters in the situations in which they had to leave and wander. Sometimes there was a migration situation inside another. At other times, several migration situations may occur at the same time.

Reading her works, readers find a number of co-existing migration situations. Wandering seemed to be the common fate of modern people, especially in the common residence of the migrants. Through such situations, readers may feel that the migration trend is increasing, and one's migration is another's reason for migration. ***Cánh đồng bất tận*** is a good example. It shows the obsession of the sense of being wandering in the soul of Southern people.

If the construction of a migration situation (or the combination of several migration situations) is mainly to portray the image of migrants wandering for living due to the difficult circumstances, the technique of multiplying the migration situation describe the harassing search for self of the characters.

However, in general, the migration situations in NNT's works are not severe but often built up from familiar details and things in the life of Southern people. Broken loves, abandoned lives, losses become an artistic mode of NNT which is both familiar and new.

4.3.2. Repeat particular artistic space and time

4.3.2.1. Space of river, field, and road

Writing about Southern people with sense of being wandering, NNT usually put them in the space of a river, field, or road. This is not ony a regional cultual feature but also the station of the wandering fates.

Southern Vietnam is covered with rivers and streams. Rivers bring to and take things away from human. Rivers are in the view and close to their house, so facing difficulties, Southern people immediately think of leaving. The river space invites and encourages the raise of the sense of being wandering in many NNT's characters.

Appearing with low frequency, space of field and road helps to highlight the embittered heart of characters in NNT's works in their wandering. Many of Southern people raised ducks in fields. They walked their ducks from the just-harvested fields to fields to be harvested. Fields were their sources of living, but they are foreign as they

awere reminded of their migrant status with the thirst for origin. For characters who were not typical farmers but the products of urbanization, the migration space is the road. Each road bore different feature, but they are windy. The winds strengthened the loneliness of the traveller. There are no two same lives. They just went, and the road helped to lengthen their journey to eternity.

4.3.2.2. Co-reappearing time

Each wandering journey is not limited in a certain space like the river, the field, or the road but is edged in certain time. NNT used the co-reappearing time to portray the image of Southern people with sense of being wandering.

Co-reappearing time is the time in which the writer put her characters in the overlap of the past-present-future. From the current story, the characters recalled the past and forecast the future. That makes a random endless circle which reminds of the changing life. *"The time in the story becomes the nomadic season"* (Nguyen Thuy Trang).

However, before ***Cánh đồng bất tận***, time bypasses in NNT's works had been monotonous, and the world inside the characters had been complex but still lacked the depth and the strength. Only after ***Cánh đồng bất tận*** could the mysterious changes of time really promote their effects highlighting the wander and unstability of mind, of the wandering life. The stories were moved along the zigzag time axis making them impress on the reader's mind as chaotic but separated reality, as hard and harassed search. From the present, the characters traced back the time to find the answers to the questions *"who am I?", "where am I from?", "where am I going to?",* with the repetition of words like *"before, past, ago, that, when"*. During their journey, Southern people in NNT's works also had afflatus of the future through dreams and subconscience. Afflatus of the hard future made people's journeys even darker at a standstill. They find themselves wandering from the kind and family.

4.3.3. Fluent use of the lively and emotional folk language

NNT's characters were put in the migration time with motivating dimensions, so they used language in two contrary extremes: still plainly and straight but it is sometimes ironic and sharp, sometimes so sad, sorry, and nostalgic that it is to some extent melodramatic. In their wandering journey, Southern people witnessed and experienced ruthlessness in the overfloated reality. They often cited the current cold and harsh classic references surrounding their lives. In the other extreme, effort to look for happiness and search for self, NNT's characters often used words expressing the sorrow and the bitter. At times, the characters' words or thoughts were expressed in the form of a folk song which is mild, musical, and poetic.

In general, with the talent in writing, the kind heart under the effect of the regional and social features; NNT had created sophisticated works about the southern people who had a great sense of being lost when they had to migrate for living or in special situation. They felt doubtful, pessimistic because of broken loves, broken belief, abandoned lives, feeling sorry for losing self. On the way of migration, leaving their fatherland, though sometimes they got stuck, they always strived to resist the situation in order to live a meaningful life. That flow had been inspired by the old generation leaving and conquering new lands, to help them not to be *"uprooted"* from the root, to

get lost with their old tradition and culture. This is a fundamental progress of artistic conception and human conception from HBC to NNT with the complex but interesting expression.

CONCLUSION

1. Portraying the human image with the culture sign is the prominent need of the artist especially writers who are always aware of the connection to their fatherland. Under the law of creation, the image of Southern people in modern Southern prose is always the central objects to be described. It is not blurred but increasingly sharper, thicker and multi-dimentional with the dominant regional characteristics. This means in the times of integration, it is the uniqueness that is highly appreciated. Be aware of oneself to better understand others to develop in the right and sustainable direction. That is the core value that the mankind in general and art in particular constantly look forward.

2. The South of Vietnam is a new land in the country's history with a wild but fertile natural environment. It challenges and invites thirst for conquering and discovery. At the same time, it generously endows the migrants with precious gifts. Through historical and natural changes, generations of reclaimed peoples went through exposure with different cultures, and they successfully accomplish their mission in creating their identity. Southern culture and peopole inherit not only promote the beauty of Vietnamese soul but also show the unique identity of the people who sacrificed themselves for happiness in a hard environment. The process of exploring the Southern people is also the journey back to the historical and cultural origin. Looking at people in and through culture is an intensive approach of literature research as culture is anthropology.

3. Living and writing in different periods of history, HBC, BNL, SN, and NNT - typical Southern writers - were all patiently and passionately portraying the image of Southern people. That is the respect for affection and disrespect for lucre, the bravery and creativity, the sense of being wandering that became the common fate and also the key features to identify the superiority and style of Southern people. The mission of reclaiming and creating culture shaped the respect of affection and disrespect of property in Southern people. The generosity and willingness to help, hatred for the bad and the evil is consider a principle of life, a moral standard. Being wandering is the common sense of modern people, but in the works by the four above mentioned Southern writers it becomes an obsession of the fate. These characterstics are neither fixed nor distinct, but they are popular, outstanding, and typical of the new land owners. Under the effect of particular historical and social context, and the durable strengthof the Vietnamese nature, the image of Southern people in works by HBC, BNL, SN, and NNT is described in its complex and multidimensional form enough to portray the basic movements of the modern history-literature. In HBC's works, Southern people in the transition time always believed and respected traditional moral values, but they had started to fight to loosen the control of the feudal rites, showing their ability and personal desires. In the war, Southern people in the works by BNL and SN were able to

choose a way to survive in front of the difficult situations, get over the challenges, respect and show gratitude to the reclamation of the forerunners, and to secretly express their love for the hometown and the country. Once the post-modern culture had penetrated enough to be identified in life, it impressed the image of human by NNT. They are hopeless people stuck in the journey searching for the meaning of existence but still making efforts to identify personalism and keep personal beliefs. These are the real contributions of the four Southern writers in portraying the image of people in the South in over one century. Together, they afirmed that human is always the centre of artistic creation. The human image in literature is a focus to identify the culture of a times, a community.

4. Due to different characteristics personal artistic viewpoints, and times, each writer had their own contributions in exploiting the autobiography. Being successful in novels, HBC had the chance to describe human in detail from the biography to the appearance and actions. He also created situations to test good people who would end safe and sound like in the national moral stoeis. Being positively assessed in short stories, BNL and SN attentively analyzed the psychological changes of Southern people in nostalgic situations. More or less under the effect of post-modern culture, NNT repeated particular artistic space and time to create the comlexity and mystery in the characteristic of the people put in migration situations. All the four writer were able to promote the advantages of the typical Southern language. However, in HBC's language, there were many ancient words combined in the rhythmic, plain expression while in works by BNL and SN, the language showed the co-existence and exposure of various cultures and is philosophical and empirical. NNT succeeded in using words with sensual nuances, adding and transforming proverbs, and mentioning classic references of the current time combined with the melodramatic language. The variety of the literatural language partly shows the originality in the characteristics of Southern people over the past century.

5. Research on Southern people in modern Southern prose (through works by HBC, BNL, SN, and NNT in particular and writers in general) should be continued from other angles as human characteristics always evolve and are not united. In each period of the literature, those characterstics are looked at from new angles. The characteristics of Southern people are like mines. The more they are exploited and explored, the more interesting things are discovered.