MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

HANOI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION

-----✍📖✍-----

MAI ANH TUAN

APPROACH TO WRITINGS OF NGUYEN HUY THIEP FROM CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Speciality: Vietnam Literature

Classification: 62.22.01.21

ABSTRACT OF THESIS DOCTORATE OF LITERATURE

Hanoi - 2017

Thesis was completed in:

Hanoi National University of Education

Advisor: **Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Nguyen Thi Binh**

Reviewers 1: **Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Bien Minh Dien**

Vinh University

Reviewers 2: **Assoc. Prof. Le Duc Tu**

Institute of Literature - Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences

Reviewers 3: **Assoc. Prof. Tran Van Toan**

Hanoi National University of Education

The thesis presented at Library of Hanoi National University of Education

At…….., date…….., month……., year 2017

The Thesis can be found at:

- National Library of Hanoi

- Library of Hanoi National University of Education

SOME RESEARCHES OF THE AUTHOR RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION

1. Mai Anh Tuan (2015), *Body narrative genre in Nguyen Huy Thiep's writings*, Literature Research Magazine (ISSN 0494-6928) s.10, 10/2015, p.75-91.
2. Mai Anh Tuan (2016), *Anthropology in literary research*, Military Letters and Arts Magazine (ISSN 2354-1296), s.840, 3/2016, p.98-104
3. Mai Anh Tuan (2016), *From different private experience to self-consciousness: Nguyen Huy Thiep as a new type of writer*, Summary record of the National science conference titled *Generation of writers after 1975*, Publishing House of the Writer Association, Hanoi, p.396-418.

INTRODUCTION

1. Reasons for choosing the subject

1.1. The keyword "Nguyen Huy Thiep phenomenon" not only belongs to the Doi Moi literature phase but also appears now in many modern Viet-studies from literary, culture to social-politics.

1.2. As a factor in a system, literature brings important data to the cultural anthropology in order to analyze and provide a multidimensional insight into human.

1.3. Select the approach to Nguyen Huy Thiep from the cultural anthropology in order to comprehensively describe the human in the widest meaning in close connection to pain, illness, death, myth and belief, family and kinship, marriage and residence, power and livelihood.

1.4. Approach to writings of Nguyen Huy Thiep from the cultural anthropology originates not only from the fact that there are changes in the viewpoint of using literary theories in the world but also from the expectation of experiencing local anthropological knowledge.

2. Objects, tasks, scope of research

2.1. Objects of research

- Writings of Nguyen Huy Thiep
- Cultural anthropology at introduction level.

2.2. Tasks of research

- Briefly relate, briefly introduce key viewpoints, characteristics of the cultural anthropology and the cultural anthropology in literary research.
- Analyze insights of the author into the human condition and religious consciousness.
- Analyze descriptions of Nguyen Huy Thiep about blood relationship, residence, power and livelihood; then, look back particularly on the reality of Vietnamese society.
- Survey the refashioning of memoirs writing style, syncretism and use of folklore motif as a typical, outstanding feature in the style of Nguyen Huy Thiep.

2.3. Scope of research

- Writings of Nguyen Huy Thiep: short story, novel, literary drama, interview answers, critical essays, and miscellaneous literature.

- Documentation of the cultural anthropology: not most comprehensive but selective within the narrow searching scope of the writer.

3. Research methods

The dissertation applies some following basic methods: Interdisciplinary method; Historical method; Comparison method; Analysis method.

4. Contributions of the dissertation

4.1. Initially obtain basic concepts, contents of the cultural anthropology and place it in Vietnamese literary research.

4.2. From the angle of application, the dissertation selects some key issues and categories of the cultural anthropology in order to analyze, interpret the writings of Nguyen Huy Thiep.

4.3. Re-reading the writings of Nguyen Huy Thiep in particular and Vietnamese contemporary literature in general somehow results in new conclusions which are different from familiar judgments.

4.4. Provide some more information about the context of Vietnamese literary culture from the Doi Moi period (1986) to now.

4.5. Establish the chronological table for the writings of Nguyen Huy Thiep.

5. Contents of the dissertation

Chapter 1: Overview on research situation and viewpoints, approaches of the dissertation

Chapter 2: Reality of human condition and religious consciousness in view of Nguyen Huy Thiep

Chapter 3: Kinship, residence, power and livelihoods in description of Nguyen Huy Thiep

Chapter 4: Anthropological writing in the literary style of Nguyen Huy Thiep

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW ON RESEARCH SITUATION AND VIEWPOINTS, APPROACHES OF THE DISSERTATION

1.1. Overview on research situation

1.1.1. Researches on Nguyen Huy Thiep

a. Evaluation, perception of domestic readers and researchers:

- Tend to seek for and prove “truths” (social, history); then, criticize, censure the writer for abusing historical materials, outraging national heroes and having pessimistic, ruthless view on the human and the reality of life.

- Analyze, comment about thought, contents, writing style of Nguyen Huy Thiep. The majority affirm important contributions of the writer in three aspects: 1/ democratized view in historical approach; 2/ special humanitarian inspiration in describing bad, corrupted, ruthless, immoral people; 3/ ability of artistic creation brings new features, even a turning-point in the process of Vietnamese contemporary prose.

- After criticisms on newspapers settled down (1987-2000), perception of Nguyen Huy Thiep appeared in intensive researches, theses, dissertations. Changes in reading style and critically theoretical knowledge about Nguyen Huy Thiep show that he is an author of Vietnamese contemporary literature, who can be open, challengeable and achievable towards many Western critical theories (for example: postmodernism; intertextuality; ecocriticism…)

b. Acceptance, criticism of Vietnamoversea and international researchers:

- There are many interesting articles about Nguyen Huy Thiep’s works in criticism of Vietnamoversea: Tran Dao ("*Tướng về hưu", một tác phẩm có tính nghệ thuật*, 1988), Van Ngoc (*Cái mới của truyện ngắn Tướng về hưu*), Thuy Khue (*Sử quan trong văn chương Nguyễn Huy Thiệp*; *Nguyễn Huy Thiệp: Sự bất nhân trong nhân tính*, 1998), Lieu Truong (*Hiện tượng liên văn bản trong truyện của Nguyễn Huy Thiệp*, 2002; *Tuổi hai mươi yêu dấu của Nguyễn Huy Thiệp hay một giải thoát cho con người*, 2003), Đoan Cam Thi (*Văn chương và triết học – Nghĩ về Nguyễn Huy Thiệp và Francois Jullien*, 2008) , Nguyen Vy Khanh (*Nguyễn Huy Thiệp: những chuyện huyền*

kì, núi, sông và nước, 1997), Truong Hong Quang (*Mười lời bình về truyện ngắn "Phẩm tiết" của Nguyễn Huy Thiệp,* 1989), Đao Trung Đao (*Một vài vấn đề phê bình văn chương từ những tranh luận về Nguyễn Huy Thiệp*, 1992), Nguyen Đinh Đang (*Nhà văn Việt Nam của tôi*, 2004)…Basically, writings of Vietnamoversea people about Nguyen Huy Thiep focus on 3 points: 1/ deeply discuss about a series of quassi-historical fictions to affirm the unique creation of the writer; 2/ refer the writings to the contemporary living context; 3/ agree with the writer's viewpoints about the nationalism, the history.

- Within the scope of approach to researches on Nguyen Huy Thiep in English, we considered the following essays as the most prominent and having the most suggestive value: Greg Lokhart (1992), "*Nguyen Huy Thiep and the Faces of Vietamese Literature";* Peter Zinoman (1992), *"Nguyen Huy Thiep's "Vang lua" and the Nature of Intellectual Dissent in Contemporary Vietnam* trên *Vietnam"* in *Generation Journal and Newsletter*; Peter Zinoman (1994), "*Declassifying Nguyễn Huy Thiệp"* in *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique;* Keith W. Taylor (1998), *"Locating and translating boundaries in Nguyen Huy Thiep's short stories*" in *Vietnam Review*; Tuan Ngoc Nguyen (2004), "*Socialist Realism in Vietnamese Literature: An Analysis of the Relationship between Literature and Politics"* (Victoria University); Nguyen Nguyet Cam and Dana Sachs (2003), *"Introduction"* in Crossing the River; Christophe Robert (2014), "*Landscapes of Memory in Nguyễn Huy Thiệp's Short Stories*" in *Spirits of the Stream.*

- The above researches tend to push texts into the issues of culture, social institution and tradition of Vietnamese literature. Then, focus on analyzing the following issues: 1/ Explain why Nguyen Huy Thiep's view on the history raises many arguments. As Peter Zinoman, "A trademark of Thiep's historical fiction is the way his depictions of well-known figures violate official assessments"; 2/ which knowledge is necessary to understand the country, the nationalism, the heroism which formerly were discourses introduced in books and inserted for a long term in the consciousness of readers; 3/ appearance of Nguyen Huy Thiep and outstanding voices in the Doi Moi movement of literature (Nguyen Minh Chau, Ma Van Khang, Pham Thi Hoai, Bao Ninh, Ta Duy

Anh, Phung Gia Loc in prose; Nguyen Duy, Thanh Thao, Y Nhi in poetry) made typical features of socialist realism literature become dim. As Nguyen Ngoc Tuan, Nguyen Huy Thiep "has become well known as new talent, and furthermore, as the best writer of his generation, the pioneer of the attack on socialist realism and "doctrinaire-ism" [...]. With a starkly simple and chilling style, Nguyen Huy Thiep pitilessly uneiled all the misery, degradation and ridicule of humankind and the collapse of morals in society". And as Greg Lockhart, Nguyen Huy Thiep phenomenon "marked a rare moment in the history of Vietnam since the revolution, when an unusually powerful and compelling picture of society turned the faces of Vietnamese people towards a better future".

1.1.2. Cultural anthropology in Vietnam

- The cultural anthropology is mainly introduced in Vietnam by cultural researchers and in two basic forms: 1 - translation of writings mostly separate and not systematic of two foreign authors related to the cultural anthropology; 2- compilation, introduction of the cultural anthropology in the overview of the cultural studies, anthropology.

- In the literary research, Do Lai Thuy may be the first person mentioning this terminology and somehow approaching to the spirit of the cultural anthropology in the work titled *Ho Xuan Huong, hoai niem phon thuc* (1999). The second person mentioning and spending more time in introducing, applying the cultural anthropology to study literature is Tran Nho Thin with the work titled *Văn học trung đại Việt Nam dưới góc nhìn văn hóa* (2003, 2008).

- In our opinion, the path of the cultural anthropology in researching Vietnamese literature focuses mainly in folklore literature at different levels and reaches achievement early. A tradition of taking folklore literary data to consider characters, soul of the human as well as ways of organizing the social life is started by French scholars, typically G. Dumoutier (1850-1904), L. Cadière (1869-1955), etc. Next, it is the voice of local intellectuals such as Pham Quynh (*Người nông dân Bắc kỳ qua tiếng nói bình dân*, 1943); Truong Tuu (*Kinh Thi Việt Nam*, 1940) and Nguyen Van Huyen (*Hát đối của nam nữ thanh niên ở Việt Nam*, 1934). After that, we can

mention Hoa Bang (*Dân tộc tính trong ca dao*, 1952); Doan Quoc Sy (*Đi tìm dân tộc tính trong những truyện cổ tích Việt Nam*, 1956); Nguyen Sy Te (*Thần trí và hồn tính của dân tộc Việt Nam*, 1957); Nguyen Hong Phong (*Tìm hiểu tính cách dân tộc*, 1963)… Recently, Nelly Krowokski (*Thầy thuốc và y học trong truyện cười Việt Nam*, 2010) and Nguyen Tung (*Sự "lăng phạm" trong truyện tiếu lâm Việt Nam*, 2010) also suggest more directions of researching folklore literature based on the anthropology.

Looking back on the above works, we can draw out some conclusions: - Firstly, there is no work introducing particularly, thoroughly about the cultural anthropology as a knowledge system and a method for the literary research; - Secondly, research works mainly focus on one or some factors in the cultural system (religion, morality, politics, history, etc.) and the basic success is to solve the relationship between such factor with the literature; - Thirdly, all research works focus on Vietnamese medieval modern literature.

1.2. Viewpoints and approaches

1.2.1. Nguyen Huy Thiep as a new type of writer

- Nguyen Huy Thiep has different individual experience from many writers of the same generation: 1/ his fund of proverbs, folk verses, folk-songs since he was a child creates a firm core of knowledge; 2/ living for a long term in the Northern rural villages makes Nguyen Huy Thiep's descriptions about rural area, peasants close to ethnographic descriptions with concerns about traditional natures, typical features of villages; 3/ the people who consult Nguyen Huy Thiep's literature are mainly great authors of Vietnamese medieval modern literature and the European writers-philosophers in the 18th, 19th centuries and then he relies on the background of the classical literature to reverse disadvantages in writing; 4/ abundant retrospection from the forest of death affected the trend of narration in many pages which are full of memory of Nguyen Huy Thiep. In conclusion, one might say "The influence of this long period in the remote countryside may be seen in such Thiep stories as *The winds of Hua Tat* and *Love Story Told on a Rainy Night*, in which the author employs the oral traditions of the Thai and Muong minority communities to poweful, and somewhat eery, effect" (Nguyen Nguyet Cam and Dana Sachs); 5/ being absent and

insignificantly affected by lethal weapons on the battlefield make Nguyen Huy Thiep stand apart from topics about wars and soldiers written by writers of the same generation.

- Nguyen Huy Thiep is also a symbol of self-conscious authorial type in the Doi Moi period of the literature. After all, sexual desire, the evil and religiously sensitive consciousness in Nguyen Huy Thiep's opinion on the literature is the violation of taboos which used to exist in Vietnamese literature in the latter half of the 20th century. It is also the result of self-understanding.

1.2.2. Cultural anthropology as a science with high applicability

1.2.2.1. A short introduction to the cultural anthropology

- In the narrowest meaning, anthropology is the study of human.

- Two subfields of the anthropology is the biological anthropology, also known as the physical anthropology and the cultural anthropology. The cultural anthropologists pay special attention to specific domains in the cultural activities of the human. To be wider, they proceed to description, analysis, interpretation of the similarity and difference among different cultures and societies.

- Holism and comparative are two basic features of the cultural anthropology. The goal of seeking for the actual people of the cultural anthropology is used to both explain and understand agents towards life, changes, invariability or accumulation of the culture.

1.2.2.2. Cultural anthropology in literary studies

- In accordance with Grzegorz Grochowski, the anthropological bases in literary analysis are really obvious in a series of concepts of Mikhail Bakhtin. Researches on the cultural anthropology quickly discover from Bakhtin a chain of concepts about festivals, rituals, custom and eating and drinking, excretion, sexual desire, playing, etc. The tradition of combining the literature and the anthropology is regularly maintained in France: the combination from linguistic, literary theories of Roman Jakobson and anthropological, ethnographical knowledge of Claude-Lévi Strauss, or afterwards, in discoveries of René Girard, Roger Caillois, and Georges Bataille.

- The holism of the cultural anthropology allows an overall imagination of the

reality of the human condition: the past, the present and the future; biology, society, language and culture. Although the typical feature of literary writings is fictional, they are still considered as pieces in a common picture of the human condition.

- Anthropological theories go abreast tightly, even in the same viewpoint genealogy with literary theories. Literary critical theories on “archetype”, “myth”, “ritual”, “symbol”, etc., in the opinion of J. Schlaeger, can be considered as the “anthropological turn” in the literary research.

- Some genres like ethnographic novels, crime novels, travel fictions; autobiography; drama, etc. can be completely considered as ethnographic notes because they show the reality. In article *Between anthropology of literature and literary anthropology*, Anna Lebowska points out: 1- Anthropology as literature or the literariness of anthropology; 2 - The Anthropology of Literature or Literary Studies as Anthropology; 3- Literature as Anthropology. In conclusion, she say: “[…] the anthropological perspective of literary studies should extract literary anthropology from literature. Such an approach would allow for an escape from the threat of reducing literature to a handbook like description of reality. In this context, a chance emerges to actualize various anthropological objectives: aiming for an understanding of man, an interpretation of the world, the subject, and otherness”.

1.2.2.3. Perception of cultural anthropology by the dissertation

- Analyze details, events, behaviours, custom, rituals, and myths of the culture which are inserted, converged in the writings in order to understand how the actual people are built.

- Select viewpoints of the cultural anthropology about marriage, family, kinship, and religion to interpret views of the writer on the reality of Vietnamese human condition after wars.

- Select viewpoints of the cultural anthropology about the relationship between the culture and the personality, the self; between the culture and the natural-social environment to review the writer’s viewpoints when he mentions the turning-points in the women’s role, the implicit conflict among cultural regions, symbols, beliefs, power and livelihood.

Conclusion of Chapter 1

-Humanities scholarship from the late twentieth century up to now has witnessed interpretations and analyses of literary texts based on the knowledge of cultural anthropology as well as the emergence of interdisciplinary approaches to literary texts in which literary texts have no longer been limited into the so-called- “literariness”; rather, they are put in comparison to the texts of other fields.

- In Vietnam, many scholars try to apply the knowledge of cultural anthropology to dealing with different literary issues.

- The cultural anthropology is the source of knowledge with broad amplitude, accumulating much interdisciplinary knowledge and intersecting the literary research.

- Nguyen Huy Thiep, one of Vietnam’s foremost and most contronversial contemporary writers, has developed a stunning literary reputation both at home and Vietnam-oversea.

- Nguyen Huy Thiep’s writings suggest an anthropological reading style because his experience from the human condition connects closely to a particular social-historical phase. The attention to notes, descriptions in his stories originates more or less from his urges, observations - participations and “field-work".

Chapter 2

REALITY OF HUMAN CONDITION AND RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS IN VIEW OF NGUYEN HUY THIEP

2.1. Reality of human condition in the restraining ring of disease and death

2.1.1. Bodies suffering from disease, covered death

- Since 1980s onward, in many strories (*Tướng về hưu – The General Retires*, *Không có vua – Without a King*, *Chảy đi sông ơi – Run River Run*, *Tâm hồn mẹ - A Mother's Soul*, *Thương nhớ đồng quê – Remembrance of the Contryside*, *Chú Hoạt tôi – My Uncle Hoat…*), Nguyen Huy Thiep showed various types of diseases, sickness and death which had not been present in the Northern literature of the previous period.

- Clear return of such aggregate of sick people who are suffering from illness, deformity, physical and mental defects is noteworthy, making typical references regarding the normative system for assessing people be changed.

- Through description by the writer, it can be seen that focal point that threatens human condition deviates to the underdog places, the small and weak persons, lack of capacity to safeguard, although their moral qualities or personalities are not at all inferior.

- Animal-human characters with both physical and personal symptoms are not excluded in view of Nguyen Huy Thiep (It is, for example, very explicit in *Cun*; *The General Retires*, *My Uncle Hoat*). This process represents a social value leading to civilization, tolerance and harmony.

2.1.2. The behavior etiquette in chaos and despair

- In the Doi Moi period, belief and ritual and religious practices were reborn after a long time of being limited during socialism construction.

- Nguyen Huy Thiep further engraved the disintegration of public relations which had been agreed and mounted long before, but on the other hand, he was more open to new emerging moral expression. According to Peter Zinoman, "While's Luong's conclusions may not allow for a comprehensive redering of the contemporary Vietnamese socioeconomic condition, they do help expalain Thiep's

dersive preoccupation with the growth of a distinct consumer culture in Vietnamese society".

- Receiving a death like a subjective issue, with altitude of legitimizing it to life, is also a method to settle between secularity and religion and faith. More noteworthy, thanks to it, when Nguyen Huy Thiep's works are translated into English, international readers may recognize Vietnam fully as compared with available narrative method.

2.2. Secularity in the shadow of gods

2.2.1. From secular life agnosticism

- Desiring and trying to perceive the world is an outstanding feature of the characters in Nguyen Huy Thiep story.

- With the writings of Nguyen Huy Thiep, the "meaninglessness" of life is mentioned again, signaling a turn towards judgments, fantasies, understanding intrusive ways with emotions which are ambiguous, uncertain and lack of reasonable arguments.

- In the English translation of Nguyen Huy Thiep story, "meaninglessness" ("[…] Again, the limitless mystery of the universe had made me acutely aware of the meaninglessness of my own life and death" - *Lessons from the Country*), "emptiness", "pain" ("[…] I wanted to cry out in pain. I was overwhelmed by the emptiness of my life. The black bufaloes of my youth, where were the now?" – *Run River Run;* "I gave a painful laugh" – *The Water Nymph;* "I only paid attention to the photo of a man with bright eyes and a rather concentrated look, both tense and pained" – *My Uncle Hoat* ; "…A few minutes later, the sky grew cloudy. Everything returned to its former landscape. I shivered in pain, reconnizing that the world around me was so pale and pitiful. I had to stand still for a long time before I recovered"– *Lessons from the Country*] and "loneliness" ("[…] But Chuong, do you think anyone besides yourself can you see your loneliness and impotence? What did anyone do? And what did you do? For what kind of love? […] Hunger. Cold. Loneliness whipped against my face like a stiff wind. An anxious restlessness, someshow connected to Me Ca the water nymph, gnawed painfully at my heart. Who are you, my lady?" –

The Water Nymph; “Walking along the base of the moutains, we seemed so small, so lonely, so daring, so helpless, and even meaningless” - *The Woodcutters;* **“**In our country, to make oneself lonely was the cheapest and safest way to create the illusion of freedom*”*- *Love story Told on a Rainy Night*) attract the attention of international readers because they are new key words, indicating a self-disclosure, an inner voice.

- Together with "meaninglessness", "bitterness" and "pain" are the resurgence of partial consciousness that are deemed covered after many years where only macro and comprehensive detections with tending to praising and confirmation are mentioned.

- In the background of Vietnam after 1975, the writer said about agnosticism that was also confession of his embarrassment, vagueness and confusedness when observing and explaining the fact.

2.2.2. Necessity for presence of spirit people

- Nguyen Huy Thiep's characters often direct to spirit and belief; during the process of adapting with living environment, the support from God, from the natural mother is the very high-dose spiritual remedy so that the characters do not fall into nihilism or despair realms of existence.

- In the opening-door period, the uncertainty of livelihood and new opportunities in entrepreneurship further push secularity toward almost all religious practices. According to Philip Taylor, “this religious decentering has occurred in tandem with the state’s own policies of economic and social decentralization and its loss of its monopoly over the means of symbolic reproduction”.

- Nguyen Huy Thiep selected dream, imagination to create the myth story about Me Ca (*Con gái thủy thần – The Water Nymph*). Me Ca can be considered as the mother personifying the natural world that was automatically recognized by Chuong and was a subject to be doubted, hunted and discovered.

- "Water" factor embodied with specific locations (Noi bank, Cai river) by writers are noteworthy. It mentions the past of the Mother River Delta (Cai River/Red River) which was surrounded by the system of Gods of water. Me Ca was quickly recognized as a spiritual being, evoking the absolute belief-in. As a result, in the meaning of Chuong’s life, Me ca is supernatural.

- In his understanding, the writer does not support but still consider belief-in and spiritual being as a remote people reassuring method, a hope to bring about human security that his class itself is also eagerly waiting.

Conclusion of Chapter 2

- Bodily experience is both of each individual and the community and hence its discovery and descriptions in literature and art, as any other documents, are more specific for view on human and the human world in every period of history where it belongs. We can say that the writings of Nguyen Huy Thiep Thiep, from capability of noting status of the secularity to philosophical sense about the body, are significant contribution to the modern literature of Vietnam.

- In Nguyen Huy Thiep story, boundary between the real world and supernatural beings is always present to get insight of the logic of life: the deity is the shade of the secularity. The journey to find Me Ca, discussion about religion, the emergence of beliefs about God and the deity in many stories of Nguyen Huy Thiep were parallel to the "renaissance" period of religious practice in Vietnam after the Doi Moi.

Chapter 3

KINSHIP, RESIDENCE, POWER AND LIVELIHOODS IN DESCRIPTION OF NGUYEN HUY THIEP

3.1. Re-awareness on personal people in kinship and residence environment

3.1.1. Personal voice in group of people

- Pham family in Ke Noi (*Giọt máu – A Drop of blood*) is manner the writer recalls one of typical organizing methods of Vietnamese villages, especially in the traditional Northern villages.

- After family, clan, a small unit as family are also been included in many stories of Nguyen Huy Thiep. Gathering mixture details between the economy, crises and old order and discipline is as a product recording a stage of pulling, unceasingly changing in rural Northern families in mid-1980s.

- Especially with Thuy (*Tướng về hưu - The General Retires*), we see a traditional female general who manage finance and do small trading but they are disregarded as a result of patriarchal lifestyle and prolonged war. When the innovation occurs, woman returns to themselves, "small business woman". Moreover, Thuy, with her material-focused lifestyle, liberal emotion, keen business and beneficiaries, confirmed the re-appearance of the urban middle class that had almost disappeared in the revolutionary literature in the previous period. Thus far, Thuy's strong role in *The General Retires* is too complex to be simply a masculine construct.

- The small family model of Nguyen Huy Thiep is a series of stories about living and organizing life that are very interesting, attractive and funny. They bring to readers multi-nature appearance when desiring the traditional recentering and timely keep pace with new lifestyle of Vietnamese family in the post-war period.

3.1.2. Identifying latent antagonism from living area

- Considering rural area as basis, destiny of residence and culture that was maintained by Vietnamese community itself, Nguyen Huy Thiep did not hesitate to point out the gradually weakened class of such core when the outer waves of chemicals, mainly from cities/municipalities, are more absorbing more deeply according to the follow of is socio-economic reforms, and especially when the

characteristics of dispersion - inherent focus of the village have opportunity to collide with immigration policy, or life development and modernization policy.

- Nhai hamlet appeared in *Những bài học nông thôn* (*Lessons from the Countryside*) can be considered as typical sample of landscape and group of population that was very popular in northern villages. The norms of ethnography perspective has brought a relatively clear visualization of village space that is very familiar in the Delta.

- The idea about good nature in the countryside of Nguyen Huy Thiep is not too new but so rich in convincing because it is somewhat close to the conclusion of human geography. According to Pierre Gourou, in *The peasants of the Tonkin Delta*, peasants are living in an environment that has brought them thousands of pleasant and satisfied things.

- Seeing the anonymous condition of being in the countryside after rural goods after Doi Moi ("My countryside is anonymous. The place where I stand is anonymous" - *Remembrance of the Countryside*), Nguyen Huy Thiep avoid the habit of reflecting temporary social reality to think more deeply on the internal factors, the internal structure of the countryside.

- Mountainous/upland areas are also residence region in focal point of observation and reconstruction of Nguyen Huy Thiep (*The Winds of Hua Tat: Ten Stories in a Small mountain Village*; *Love Story told on a rainy night*; *The Salt of the Jungle*; *Life is easy*…). He reveals the direct reaction to all ethnic prejudices, distorted and wrong thoughts about mountainous/ upland areas.

- The first significant concerns of Nguyen Huy Thiep are fragments of myths, stories, beliefs and mythical events which are still stored in the mountainous area and ethnic groups.

- Discrepancy between mountainous areas and cities, as for Nguyen Huy Thiep, is perceived in literature as self-reflexiveness for the imbalanced and ecological modernization and development.

3.2. Anxious distressedness about authority and livelihood

3.2.1. Sample of authority person or aspiration of reaching to an ideal social model

- Nguyen Huy Thiep creates sample of authority mixed with honorable, heroic and revolutionary men of Eastern society, monarchs in pre-modern Western society.

- Thanks to overturning, "rewriting" historic characters, heroes who used to make the society "more active", the writer gradually provides a detailed portrait of authority men who are crossed from a point of reference, fall into the dilemma of personal and social values, between the good and the wrong/the evil, between patriotism and hegemonic plot.

- In fact, in the writings of Nguyen Huy Thiep, heroism would is not surely "died" as recognized by K. W. Taylor but it is still reborn in more romantic, humane and tragic manner.

- From the common aspiration of the community, the writer still dream of a "benevolent rule" political institution in which the goodness, tolerance and non-violence are considered as core. Accordingly, human nature is developed with altruistism rather than slid under the anarchist status.

3.2.2. New occupation or livelihood distressedness

- In his writings, Nguyen Huy Thiep particularly paid attention to interaction between livelihood and nature and quality of human; between the market economic society and stylist, conception on human dignity and life value.

- Nguyen Huy Thiep's pen does not mostly omit any livelihood in the transited society. New occupations with full of uncertainty act as backgrounds for stories and thorny and multi-dimensional characters to appear.

- The loss of livelihoods leading to crime is a fact that many writers have mentioned. For Nguyen Huy Thiep, it is also an importan theme to analysis.

Conclusion of Chapter 3

- The descriptions, which are careful, lively but objectively, particularly in the phase of setting up landscape, appearance or reproducing method of organizing, surviving and transformation of the ethnic groups by kinships and place of residence, whether superficial but surprised because of realism, pushes the story of Nguyen Huy Thiep closer to literary anthropology.

- Nguyen Huy Thiep recentered tradition in conscious awareness about the triumph of the socio-economic reform which penetrated in all available concepts, moral values, lifestyles and behavior.

- Nguyen Huy Thiep is the writer who maintained inspiration, wondering, permanent thoughts about politics, the nature and the ideal possibility of authority, about the relationship between leaders/ governing authorities and the people.

Chapter 4

ANTHROPOLOGICAL WRITING IN THE LITERARY STYLE OF NGUYEN HUY THIEP

4.1. Practicing minimal writing style

4.1.1. Introduce about minimalism

- Minimalism implies restricted use of material to create the most effective desire.

- In the East, the idea of minimalism appeared in the traditional Japanese art, but more deeply, in Lao Tzu philosophy. Vietnam medieval literature was somewhat influenced by this style of writing.

4.1.2. Minimal expression in Nguyen Huy Thiep style of writing

4.1.2.1. Refashioning the style of writing of medieval life stories

- When Nguyen Huy Thiep appeared with "quasi-historical" story (*Kiếm sắc - A Sharp Sword*, *Vàng lửa – Fired Gold*, *Phẩm tiết - Chastity*), readers encountered vaguely with silhouette of collected biographies and life stories which were absent for long.

- Refashioning is understood as sense and effort of renewing on basis of available form and dimension.

- Types of characters in the writings of Nguyen Huy Thiep are quite diversified. From the hero, businessman, employees, knightly persons to thugs and hoodlums. They leave behind strong inspiration with their desire for life, not resigning, disobedience and often finding deliverance even though in such downgraded and despite life.

- When building a character, Nguyen Huy Thiep also chooses an interpretation quite similar with style of memoir: chronicles, character behavior over linear time and historical time. Thus, he gives no much effort to introduce the characters, while they are easily lodged in readers' memory thanks to full biography of the characters.

4.1.1.2. Category syncretism

- Poem in the story, the story was transcribed into drama, kung fu novels, essays-custom pen ... are important points.

- Stories will also be loosened again when transforming to drama.

- Critical essays are also featured with multiple voice and language of short story somewhat blur concepts and terms.

- The process of category syncretism of Nguyen Huy Thiep is also close to reality which is also increasingly revealed of the contemporary art of Vietnam.

4.2. Reusing some moulds and motif of folklore

4.2.1. Reusing moulds of language, folk game story

- That he returns to find inspiration and gets folk wisdom is firstly in terms of words, nothing else, satisfying the prerequisite of expression in concise, accurate and implied manner.

- The writer has solidly supported "folk thinking" when developing language of characters generated from the countryside or farmers.

- In the writings of Nguyen Huy Thiep, there is language considered vulgar, non-aesthetic. Here, we can see an intrinsic logic of this phenomenon when reviewing the folk language thinking. On the other hand, sensory sensitivity to parody laughter, including parody language in Nguyen Huy Hiep works, has strengthened further the spirit of "transgression" toward the default prohibition.

- If folk expressions refers to as building the wording, folk games story which

are inherent rich and prolonged with the history of delta region will bring to Nguyen Huy Thiep some plot materials *Trương Chi, Tuổi 20 yêu dấu* (*Truong Chi, Beloved Age 20*), in particular, folk game story returned him back to old Cheo *Vong bướm* và *Truyền thuyết tìm vua* (*Butterfly soul* and myth of finding the King)

4.2.2. Reusing motif of festival and tet holiday, river and change

- Returning to traditional recentering is a chance for "basic culture" to become creation materials. In writings, the class of endogenous culture is focused on exploiting public holidays and Tets, rituals, and water views from which life and the Vietnamese community nature are seen.

- Analysis on feast image in Rabelais of Bakhtin may lead us to think more about eating, drinking and feast in Nguyen Huy Thiep's writings: it is the mentality, culture of Vietnamese ethnic groups in eating and drinking.

- Another motif reused by Nguyen Huy Thiep is water view.

- The characters and structure of Nguyen Huy Thiep's works can be reviewed from the five elements; from development, proliferation, evolution of "one generates two; two generate three, three generate all things" (Lao Tzu).

Conclusion of Chapter 4

- The new, the attractive and fundamental differences in the writing style of Nguyen Huy Thiep generate from the process of refashioning the writing style of the medieval literature, the classical literature and re-using motifs of traditional culture.

CONCLUSION

1/ The appearance of Nguyen Huy Thiep right at the Doi Moi period of the literature not only makes natures and process of Doi Moi become excited, diversified but also contributes necessary data to the understanding of the society and Vietnamese contemporary literature. Therefore, perceiving and evaluating Nguyen Huy Thiep result in broader reference, comparison, especially in reference to the literature in the period 1945-1975.

- It can be said that the major success of Nguyen Huy Thiep in the Doi Moi high tide of the literature is the status of a social historian, even an anthropologist who writes about daily reality, update different colours of the civil life. He gradually

rewrote subjects, themes (evil, sexuality, religion) to better understand the post-war human situation as well as the complex aspects of human personality in the face of changing economic-cultural.

2/ His broad observation, feeling (rural area, mountainous area, urban area) helped Nguyen Huy Thiep receives abundant data about residence ways, people group; implicit cultural contradictions; forms of power; forms of livelihood, etc. In some cases, the writer is closed to an anthropologist for his ability of recording ethnographic description particularly, closely and attractively.

3/ The traditional tendency of re-homesickness of Nguyen Huy Thiep is clearer and more typical when he turns back to fork literature and classical literature. To be accurate, it is the reactivation of models and traditional value which are transferred through many generations.

4/ Approach to Nguyen Huy Thiep's writings from the cultural anthropology is only meaningful when we find out the right object to develop. We attach special importance to "thick description" of texts, interpretation and analysis of implications inserted by the author. Considering the writer as an observer-participant, we read Nguyen Huy Thiep's writings with the target of bringing as widest perception as possible.