



FEMALE CHARACTERS IN NGUYEN HUONG DUYEN'S SHORT STORIES

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Abstract:

Female writer Nguyen Huong Duyen is a member of the Vietnam Writers Association. As a writer who has appeared on the scene for about 15 years, her work has given off new and different vitality in the way she looks at life and people, especially in women. Therefore, changing the taste is something people are still interested in in a fairly familiar menu. Her works have been received by the public and literary critics in many different ways. The scope of this study includes three collections of short stories by Nguyen Huong Duyen: "The arduous waiting wharf" (2006), "Among men" (2015) and "Writing to you from this kitchen" (2020). The theoretical research of the thesis is the theoretical issues of short stories, generalization of short stories by Nguyen Huong Duyen in the flow of contemporary short stories and regional prose of Central Province of Quang Binh, Vietnam; salient features of the character's world, and modes of expression. From there, readers can see the contributions of writer Nguyen Huong Duyen to the development of female short stories in particular and contemporary Vietnamese prose in general. The study explores and clarifies the characteristics of female characters in both aspects of *content* and art of *characters* portrayed in the short stories by Nguyen Huong Duyen. On that basis, it shows the writer's creative characteristics and places her short stories in the flow of contemporary female short stories. It can be said that the female character in Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories has left a deep impression on readers. Each female character appears with different life paths and identities, but they are similar in one point: they all have an insatiable desire to find self. Approaching Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories, the researchers hope to contribute to understanding and identifying the characteristics of the female character, the research object that creates the appearance of

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Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories while also recognizing the writer's contribution. This is in the context of contemporary female short stories in particular and prose in general.

Keywords: female characters, short story, Nguyen Huong Duyen, the University of Cuu Long

1. Introduction

In a volatile social and cultural context, with increasingly innovative and democratic thinking, Vietnamese female writers have promoted the strengths of the short story genre, quickly approaching, exploring, and expressing new content of love - marriage - family in contemporary times. In the movement of literature, female short story writers have deeply explored and expressed stories of love, marriage, and family from an exploratory and experiential perspective, bringing new aesthetic perceptions. From the perspective of experiencing and understanding countless different situations and turning points, short stories by female writers have created deep sympathy in readers with the fate of women when facing and escaping the situation.

Among the modern female writers of Vietnam today, the iconic writer called Nguyen Huong Duyen is being noticed by the literature with short stories about the status of women in contemporary society. In particular, with the process of experiencing life in the journey of love and life, Nguyen Huong Duyen has brought readers contemplations about the female status. These are stories about love and the condition of a woman rich in humanity, which must be written by the woman herself to empathize and express deeply, in the true nature of a woman. Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories pay special attention to the female characters.

With deep introspection, "women-writers" have experienced new insights into the issues of love, marriage, and family of modern people. Each story of Nguyen Huong Duyen is a situation, an identity, a human life, a lost boat with no wharf. Not only lonely in love, the female character in her work is also lonely among relatives, lonely in the very land and family where she was born. Each person born into society is a separate puzzle piece, the life cycle of human life is the process of assembling appropriate puzzle pieces. In the study with the topic "Female characters in Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories", the authors want to contribute to understanding and identifying the characteristics of female characters, that create the appearance of Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories and at the same time notes this writer's presence in the context of contemporary female short stories in particular and prose in general.

2. Literature review

2.1 Short story concept

Up to now, there have been many research works and opinions expressed by writers and critical researchers who are deeply interested in "*short stories*" and have provided readers

with the theoretical and practical basis of creative writing, a fairly comprehensive and objective view of this small-sized narrative genre. According to the Dictionary of Literary Terms (p.371): "Unlike the novel, which is a genre that occupies life in all its fullness and integrity, *the short story* often aims to portray an image, discover an essential feature in human relationships or the life of the human soul." At the same token, the editors of the book "Literary Theory" (p.397) said: "The real short story appears relatively late in literary history. Short story authors often aim to portray a phenomenon, discover an essential feature in human relationships or the life of the human soul." Thus, if the definition of the short story is based on the correlation between the short story and novel, the short story is unique in building story situations, characters, and themes, in which, short story works often have in common. The nature is narrative. This makes the line between short stories and novels quite thin, not highlighting the nature of short stories. Many researchers have commented that short stories are "having more or less the characteristics of novel thinking" (Lai Nguyen An, 2011), "part of the novel" (Bui Viet Thang, 2000), "a form of special fiction." (Vuong Tri Nhan, 2001).

Currently, there are short stories close to poetry, very short stories, that are close to drama, novelized short stories. Writers can combine short stories with other genres to produce works with unique features. different characteristics. Readers get poetic short stories that give prose a warmer, softer touch; with dramatic short stories that help the short stories become sharper when reflecting social issues; or very short stories that are really suitable for modern life but still convey human emotions from many different angles.

Therefore, by studying some concepts of short stories from domestic and foreign writers and literary critics, the researchers realize that the short story is a genre whose "form is small" but "does not mean that the content is small." It can be said that the short story is an art form that best expresses modern life. Short stories are becoming more and more attractive to readers and no less attractive to writers because of the genre's ability to expand and change constantly.

2.2. Short story characters

Any literary work has an important element: character. The character always plays a very important role in the specific content of the work, having the basic historical function of generalizing the human personality. Therefore, literature cannot lack characters because that is the basic means for writers to visualize reality. Each writer exploits a particular aspect and the main character is the one who leads the reader into the personal world of that writer's life in a certain period of time. Writers immerse themselves in life, observe reality, bring people from reality into writing, fall from lines of writing, readers bring characters into life, immersing in the chaotic and life path, dynamic.

Characters occupy a significant position in short stories. In the book Introduction to Literary Research, Pospelov, G. N. (1983, p.75) (translated by Tran Dinh Su, Lai Nguyen An, Nguyen Nghia Trong) defines, "Characters are the most important means of realizing ideas in narrative works. It is a means that can the first quality in the form of that work largely determines both the plot and the choice of details, the dialect, and even

the structure. When composing short stories, the writer recreates life because people, in the synthesis of social relationships, not only express themselves through their appearance, gestures, words, and thoughts. The characters in the work are even more clearly described through their actions, that is, the actions of the character. The character's actions are not only a necessary element to reveal the development process of his or her own personality, but also an indispensable element in a short story. The character will determine the form of the work from the choice of narrator, structure, and plot to artistic measures, language, and tone. If we remove the character from that artistic body, there will be no more work.

However, unlike the fully built characters in the novel, the characters in short stories are often bold and condensed sketches. As Nguyen Minh Chau (2002, p.27) believes, "If in the novel, the character is depicted in the course of a person's life in the relationship of many events, many overlapping and interwoven issues, then in the short story the character only clearly shows himself in a situation where he has to reveal the most inner part, the most hidden part, even sometimes it is a moment containing a whole human life, a human life. The character must be placed in a specific situation, both universal and unique." In the short story, Vuong Tri Nhan (2001, p.34) wrote "A character is a small piece of the world, embodies a state of social relations, social consciousness or a state of human existence, speaking directly. or indirectly for the writer's thoughts." It can be concluded that characters in short stories must be built in connection with special situations, creating an impression with a series of dense details of life. The character's life in the sense of a human life, if any, is just simple sketches, and especially focuses on an unexpected moment, that is the moment the character discovers who he is, creating a vortex in the reader's mind.

2.3. Some outstanding features of contemporary Vietnamese women's short stories

In modern society, the image of women has many innovations in accordance with the pace of modern life. Tran The Hung (2001, p.56) commented, "Women are half of the world, they make a great contribution to perfecting the world with an important role in many fields of economy, culture, politics, and spirit, in which artistic creation, especially literature, is one of the sensitive fields that easily catch up with hot issues of life, but now has also opened its doors to welcome newcomers. female pen". Therefore, contemporary Vietnamese literature is still diligently exploring and portraying the image of women in terms of appearance, personality, fate, bearing the characteristics of social history and each period.

2.4. Short stories about female writer -Nguyen Huong Duyen

Nguyen Huong Duyen was born on July 16, 1977, and grew up in the land of Central Province of Quang Binh, Vietnam. Her homeland is a land with a rich history and culture, hidden human and natural beauty with indigenous characteristics, which are increasingly being discovered and discovered. Those are important factors that create creative inspiration for writers. It was the most beautiful feelings about the land and the people here that made the writer pick up the pen to write and discover that he has a bit

of literary talent. Although life is hard, Nguyen Huong Duyen still "lulls" herself with haunting and tormenting stories about the pain of women's status in the genre of short stories.

Not coincidentally, the critic- Hoang Thuy Anh (2015, p.3) commented, " Nguyen Huong Duyen is a person who "settles pain". It is because the female characters in the writer's short stories always appear with different "black and white lives", each with an insatiable desire to find self. It can be said that Nguyen Huong Duyen's writing pages are the author's process of finding his ego, as the writer himself expressed, "The fate of a woman always haunts me. Writing about them, having feelings I experienced myself, of course not many but most of them came from compassion. Faced with an unhappy life situation, a mixed fate, I often put myself in that situation and ask myself: If it were me, what would I do? Am I as weak as this woman or can I be as strong as that woman?"

As the poet Hoang Vu Thuat (2000, p.7) once commented, "Quang Binh literature is swimming in a calm lake. It should have been tossed around in a stormy environment, subjected to shock and jostling, to find a way out. That way out is your (her) own creative path, no matter how unsteady, ups and down, or multifaceted it is." Among these people, many people have overcome, literature has an open and violent part, or is deep, quiet, and grim, such as Nguyen Huong Duyen, Doan Ho Le Anh, Nguyen Thi Le Na, Le Kieu Anh, Phan Van Chuong, Pham Phu Thiep, Nguyen The Nhan to name a few. With a special love for literature, along with a process of hard work and creativity, Nguyen Huong Duyen has released several collections of short stories, namely "The arduous waiting wharf (2006), Among men (2015), Two sisters (2020), and Writing to you from this kitchen (2020)".

Nguyen Huong Duyen's works always receive the attention of readers and high appreciation from experts and critics. On her creative journey, Nguyen Huong Duyen has made significant contributions to the development of the province's literature with the short story collections mentioned above. As writer Huu Phuong (2001) commented, Nguyen Huong Duyen came to literature as an experience of love, and then with her delicate feelings, creativity, and innovation in expression, she is a young author who has blown the A breath of fresh air into the literary life that is so familiar with names "nailed" for a long time in the minds of readers in the province has gradually expanded its reach to readers nationwide. With abundant creative energy, being at the "mature" of literature, Nguyen Huong Duyen will continue to expand the list of works and extend the list of admirers of her works.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research objectives

The study explores and clarifies the characteristics of female characters in two aspects of *content* and art of *characters* created in three collections of short stories, namely "The arduous waiting wharf" (2006), "Among Men" (2015), and "Writing to you from this kitchen" (2020) by Nguyen Huong Duyen.

3.2. Research instruments

To accomplish this study, the researchers applied the following research methods:

3.2.1. Biographically, it is to learn the biography of writer Nguyen Huong Duyen to understand the influence of the writer's life, career, and creative style on his works.

3.2.2. Comparatively, it is to compare the female characters in Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories with contemporary female writers and some works of other writers to see similarities and differences between female characters in short stories. by Nguyen Huong Duyen.

3.2.3. Statistically and classifiably, it is to help survey and analyze female characters in the writer's works in many aspects, from which to classify the characters and learn about them, more thoroughly the characteristics of the female character as well as the methods of character expression.

3.2.4 Analytically and synthetically, it is to both delve deeply into research and analyze specifically the characteristics of female characters in Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories, as well as systematically and synthesize the results, thereby proving the main arguments of the study.

4. Findings and discussions

The content and art of characters created in three short stories were summarized as follows

4.1. Types of female characters by Nguyen Huong Duyen

4.1.1. The female character with an unfortunate fate

When thinking about the unfortunate fate of a woman, the first thing that readers imagine is that women have to endure a life of suffering and deprivation both emotionally and materially. That's why, right in her first work, Nguyen Huong Duyen did not hesitate to portray the type of character who suffered many disadvantages and misfortunes in the collection of "*The arduous waiting wharf*" (2006). In this short story, the writer borrows the perspective of the child character to portray a poor single mother who has to raise her two children alone without the support and help of her husband. Through the story of the girl's character, the reader sees the hardship and hardship of a woman because of a moment of weakness in the past.

Over time, it became her own secret, not easy to reveal to anyone: "Mother's shadow was silent, looking across the flowing river, her eyes were sad and sad. I cherished my mother's eyes until I became a young woman. Father hasn't come back yet. Day after day, my mother was still wilting with a secret that she couldn't find the words to tell me. I resent my father. Mother cried: "Don't! It's my mother's fault, it's not my father's fault." I cried angrily, "But why, Mom?" Mom was silent and didn't answer, her

eyes were dark and sad." (p.82). The mother character in the short story appears as a patient woman, resigned to being abandoned by her husband, raising her children alone and even remaining silent and resigned when her own children blame them for their mistakes. Besides, in the story also appears the image of a girl who, because of her parents' mistakes, has a life of deprivation both emotionally and materially, "That stormy afternoon is deeply engraved in my memory. Knocking on the door of my dream that kept coming until the day I grew up. Father hasn't come back yet" (p.84).

The identity of that teenage girl also endured injustices that she did not cause and then became rebellious, leading to the same consequences as her mother, continuing to shoulder the harsh fate because of the wrong moment. Unfortunately, society is not tolerant towards women. In this short story, two female characters, one life before and the other, both have an unhappy fate, suffer a lot because of their own mistakes, but do not receive a sympathetic view from their families and society. It is a lament for the small status of women in poor neighborhoods and villages. It reflects the unfortunate fate of short women who cannot overcome social prejudices, binding them to a "the arduous waiting wharf" associated with their status.

Following the flow of inspiration, the writer continues to express the status of a married woman who takes upon herself the burden of making a living with many hardships and sufferings. In "*Old stories told*", Hue is a rural girl who was married to an urban man in the hope of changing her life, but it turned out that she was married to a useless, lazy and clumsy "old man, not a real man" so that his old mother and wife have to support him. Even though she has two children, for Hue, her married life is truly unhappy as she cannot receive "standard" love from her husband. Even though he knew his wife was in her prime, looking towards another man. He has everything that Hoan (Hue's husband) doesn't have. And he loved her, felt sorry for her burden - the kind of pity that Hoan never had, Hoan only knew how to "act out sick jealousy" and "also just a cowardly expression - whining, complaining, gritted her teeth and cried like a weak woman. He begged her not to leave him. Actually, women don't have that kind of boring jealousy. In short, even when you're jealous, you don't dare to be jealous "because you're used to being dependent and you're afraid your wife will leave you." (p.112).

The story "*At the end of the street*", appears on the black, dirty background of "a small, deep alley with a black sewer on one side and a towering wall on the other. People still call it the "fresh fish" street - the street of people like Hoe (p.118). That is the fate of dark, miserable lives. Hoe accepted the humiliation of being a prostitute to take care of her husband's paralyzed legs and her two children's education. Hoe's tragedy makes us think and reconsider the problem, because somewhere in this life, not all prostitutes are bad people and are condemned. They have their own sad feelings. Hoe doesn't want to go down this path, but if not, how can she support her family when she doesn't have any money.

The woman in the story "*Eva's pain*" was unable to have a son after an accident that caused her and her daughter to always be rejected and ridiculed by her mother-in-law and husband. She had to swallow the bitterness of seeing her husband having an affair and having a child with another woman. Thuy's mother in the story "*Clouds flew*

across the sky" also had to accept the bitterness when her husband followed another woman. Han (a female) in the short story of the same name could not bear the sight of Nguyen's adultery (her husband) and had to go away for a while hoping to dispel the sadness in her heart. Thuy in the story "*Vast as Smoke*", knew that the man had a wife and children but still loved her passionately, and accepted to be his mistress. Once when she witnessed him having an accident at the hospital, Thuy was pained when she couldn't do anything for the person she loved because his wife and children were always by his side, taking care of him. By accepting the love of a married man, Thuy not only lost her daughter's life but also became a thief of other people's happiness.

Through the fate of the female characters in Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories, readers can see that the writer does not use any stereotypical models to express the unfortunate fate of women. The unfortunate fates of these characters are all different, suffering different pains but still have the same origin, caused by their own husbands, by their own prejudices about the status of married women in society. The writer's penmanship also changes with each collection of short stories as the woman's unfortunate fate is described more and more harshly. From the women who suffered a lonely and painful fate in the story "*The arduous waiting wharf*" to their quietly bitter fate in the story "*Among Men*" to the extremely fierce and brutal fate in the story collection "*Writing for you from this kitchen.*" It can be said that Nguyen Huong Duyen has felt and expressed the misfortune of women in a multi-dimensional way in her compositions.

4.1.2. The female character from mental and physical pain

In the story "*Falling leaves season*", the character is an old woman who still cannot find a husband, becoming a thorn in the side of her family and elderly parents. To please her father, she had to accept being the second wife of a man old enough to be her father who was both rude and an alcoholic. It was because of the decision to please her parents and also to escape the gossip of the world that caused this character to endure so much pain both physically and mentally: "She stood up for him to beat, enjoying the idea of I think one day he will realize that he beat her to death. Unfortunately, she didn't die, but he beat her and fell asleep" (p.116).

If in the short story "*Falling leaves season*", the physical and mental pain of the female character described is just the beginning, then in the story "*Just do as you did, Quynh*", Nguyen Huong Duyen clearly and thoroughly expressed the physical pain. The body and soul of the character Quynh make readers understand more clearly the hidden corners of today's married life. Under the pen of Nguyen Huong Duyen, the character Quynh is a gentle woman with a stable career and a pure soul, but the reader cannot help but be shocked when this character has to endure physical pain and humiliation first. The husband has a habit of masochism. Invisibly, they become sexual victims of their own husbands: "Every time he gets close to me, Nam (Quynh's husband) bites me and bruises my whole body. It seems to Nam that the more pain he feels, the more pleasure Nam feels. The days 'I am having menstrual periods' he did not let go. I refused even worse. All attempts to make Nam change have failed. I am exhausted both physically and mentally." (p.238).

Through the emotional and physical pain that the female characters have to endure in Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories, readers can see that the main factors causing that unhappiness are men and their needs. The female characters have all experienced physical pain before and from those misfortunes created pain in their souls. Each character with different circumstances chooses to face the other heartbreaking pain differently, but even if they overcome that unfortunate moment, they all carry wounds that can never be healed in their minds. Nguyen Huong Duyen's voice also changes with each character's story, sometimes sad in the short story "*Falling leaves season*", sometimes fierce in the short story "*Just do as you did, Quynh*" or extremely calm in the short story "*Young's tomorrow*" make readers feel the thoughts of the characters themselves and thereby empathize more with their pain. It can be said that the writer succeeded when she did not hesitate to raise a sensitive but quite common topic that has caused pain both physically and mentally for women in today's life.

4.1.3. The female character looking for happiness

The desire for love and a happy life is a basic need that every human being wants; however, for a woman who is sensitive to love and the desire to pursue happiness, this becomes even stronger. and more clearly. This type of female character is not new in literature when it is deeply portrayed by many writers in their work, but it becomes attractive and different from the perspective of writer Nguyen Huong Duyen. In her stories "*Fragile memories, Waiting for each other at the end of the sky, or Two sisters*" readers do not encounter teenage girls embracing a pure love of students or strong women who dare to find love and happiness for yourself. The female characters who yearn for love and happiness in Nguyen Huong Duyen's stories are often married but unhappy women who yearn for true love with another man who can share or empathize. with their plight, turning them from "a married woman to a young woman who begins to love, passionately and passionately." (p.186). These female characters all have a strong desire for happiness, but the sense of gender and motherhood is intertwined and bound, forcing them to "return to love and duty", so they have to "waiting for each other at the end of the sky".

4.1.4. The female character with feminine beauty

In their creative sense, female writers in general and Nguyen Huong Duyen in particular not only realizes the fracture of human values, shaking ethical standards in modern life, but also Therefore, their lives do not become pessimistic and gloomy. Behind the worldly feelings, worries and concerns still reflect faith and hope about good human values derived from feminine beauty. Writing about their own world, female writers have understood better than anyone the value of making bright spots in their work. The beauty of female nature is expressed first of all in a woman's kindness and compassion.

Nhung in the short story "*Fires on the beach*", the eldest sister in the family, voluntarily sacrificed her own happiness to take care of her mother and younger siblings. "I want my mother and sister to suffer less. I want Linh to have things that I don't have today." (p.74). Nhung did not choose the man she loved and also loved her to marry a

man with a position in society so that she could provide for her sick mother and her younger siblings with school books. As soon as her mother passed away and her children grew up, she returned home. She spent the rest of her life living a quiet and peaceful life. However, she is not only introverted but also extroverted. Every night she guards the sea, bringing her strength to help people in distress at sea. As an ordinary woman in everyday life, Nhung, with her kindness, takes care of housework and also knows how to take care of community affairs.

In the short stories of Nguyen Huong Duyen, the kindness and tolerance of women are shown in a variety and rich ways. First, their kindness and tolerance are always for their families when readers clearly see that the female characters in the stories always act for the happiness of their loved ones. Next, tolerance and compassion are extended to those around them and even to those in need of their help in society. The writer has shown in a colorful way the tolerance and kindness of women in today's society, really impressing readers.

4.2. The Art of portraying female characters in Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories

The world of characters in Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories is the status of women in modern society with specific lives and fates. They have to face the unique difficulties of women, which, thanks to the writer's art of character building, elucidates and creates sympathy for the reader. It can be said that Nguyen Huong Duyen's works have created sympathy with readers when diving deeply into discovering the thoughts and feelings of women, to the world of the character's souls.

4.2.1. Describing the character's appearance

Describing a character's appearance through different points of view is one of the prominent techniques that writers often use. From the perspective of different narrators, the writer will provide information about the character's appearance to help readers predict or partly grasp that character's circumstances and personality. The external appearance of the female character in Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories: *Just do as you did*, *Quynh*, *Young's tomorrow*, *Waiting for each other at the end of the sky*, *Chrysanthemum flower*, *The arduous waiting wharf* are all like instructions to help readers understand more about psychology, personality and can even be used to explain the character's actions in the storyline later.

Nguyen Huong Duyen uses many different perspectives in describing the female character's appearance, but the writer's method of expression is still to integrate the description of appearance with story details and thereby portray emotions, the character's thoughts. Because the art of depiction tends to be emotional, a woman's inner world is revealed very honestly and naturally. There are short stories that focus on characters who are considered bad by social prejudices, such as married women who have thoughts of adultery, girls who foolishly get pregnant before getting married, or even women who are unfaithful, "a prostitute." At that time, by revealing their appearance to express their emotions, the character becomes closer because they have the opportunity to explain and justify themselves. Thus, through the way she describes her

female character, Nguyen Huong Duyen did not directly express her opinion about the fate of women in miserable circumstances, but let the character convince the reader by herself. their perspective on life and people. By describing details about the female character's appearance to express the character's hidden feelings, it makes readers feel the female character more realistically and vividly. It is the choice of perspectives to describe the character's appearance that helps the writer convey his thoughts and opinions about women's status to the reader in an objective way, without constraints or constraints.

4.2.2. Describing the character's inner thoughts

In a literary work, especially a short story, portraying the character's personality and psychology is extremely important. Building a character with a unique personality is creating the shortest way to convey to readers the content the author wants to express through his work. To do this, the writer used methods of psychological description, portraying the character's inner thoughts, to express the emotional states, thoughts, moods, and psychological reactions that the character must be expressing attitudes towards situations they have witnessed or experienced in life. To portray a character in its integrity, in addition to describing appearance and actions, Nguyen Huong Duyen also focuses on the art of depicting character psychology, especially for characters with unique personalities with a rich inner life. When describing a character's psychology, writers often pay attention to details that show the character's inner personality. In Nguyen Huong Duyen's works, the art of depicting the character's psychology is clearly shown through moods, thoughts, and concerns, showing the deep and complex inner life of the character.

All of the three forms, including the use of direct descriptive language, internal monologue, and internal dialogue, help Nguyen Huong Duyen express all the hidden concerns and thoughts of the characters that are difficult to talk about. female object. The reasonable and profound expression of the character's psychology has greatly contributed to the character's vitality. Through the art of describing the psychology of the characters, readers can see that Nguyen Huong Duyen has skillfully described the moods, emotions, thoughts, and concerns in the psychology of each character. By deeply exploring the psychology of the characters, Nguyen Huong Duyen helps us understand that behind each character's appearance is a rich, extremely complex inner world. They help readers look deeply into the characters' hearts, sympathize and share with the weak status of women in society. Accordingly, from describing the appearance to exploring the psychological life of the character, Nguyen Huong Duyen has built female images in their integrity. And it is that character's world that contributes to conveying the writer's artistic intentions as well as his aesthetic point of view.

4.2.3. The art of building story situations

In the works of Nguyen Huong Duyen, situations are often created from conflicts between the will and reality of the characters, such as situations in short stories: *Waiting for each other at the end of the sky*, *Falling leaves season*, *Fireworks*, *Smoky* or *Old stories told*.

However, there are also situations created from the emotional repression in the characters themselves, creating a highlight for the work such as short stories "*Sweet fruits on high, Writing to you from this kitchen or Among men.*" The characters in the writer's short stories are often not divided between good and evil, but are characters placed in the collisions of everyday life. These are very ordinary, small situations that force people to think, express themselves or change themselves.

4.2.4. Cognitive situations

Self-awareness situations allow writers to place their characters in different situations so that they can become self-aware and draw the right lessons and life experiences for themselves. That is also the philosophical depth in cognitive situations in Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories. In the short story "*Sweet fruits on high*", the character is an old woman who, with the desire to have a husband, endures a man who only depends on her money and care. Things continued like that until the character's tolerance reached its limit in the face of the man's unreasonable demands and extremely cold and indifferent attitude, causing the character to begin to feel the pain of suffering. Is it worth it to endure to have such a husband? The character's psychological transformation and self-awareness are clearly shown, "He was always like that, calm as if nothing happened after hurting her. Why do you always act like a child at such a young age? (p.42). It was the self-awareness of her situation that helped the character wake up, appreciate herself and give up the dream that had made her life miserable for so many years. Nguyen Huong Duyen chose a situation to condemn and oppose the old idea that a woman needs a husband and that a woman needs to endure suffering just to have a husband. Through the character's self-awareness process, readers share and sympathize with what the character experiences and decide their own life.

4.2.5. Psychological situations

Reading Nguyen Huong Duyen's stories, it is easy to see that most of the psychological situations come from tragic situations to portray the unfortunate fate of female characters. These are often tragedies of love, happiness or tragedies of lonely lives, broken families. In the short story "*Young's tomorrow*", the writer has put the girl's character in a tragic story situation to describe the psychology of a girl who was sexually abused as a child by her animal stepfather. The story begins with a family breakdown that causes the girl's mother to move out with her two children, turning the girl's life upside down. The difficult material life was still not enough to defeat her, when tragedy struck when her mother went halfway, bringing a strange man to share a room with her brothers. The tricks and ruthless calculations of the stepfather were gradually revealed, culminating in a double sexual assault with his wife's daughter. But the irony is that the mother defends her husband and does not believe her daughter. Only when the girl committed suicide did the mother understand and come to her senses, "How will she face life tomorrow? How will life continue, when the memory of the dark days will never stop clinging?" (p.77). The tragic situation caused only a few short sentences to express the pain and humiliation of the little girl character in the story.

4.3. Literary art represented in language

As Nguyen Minh Chau (2002, p.57) commented, "Literature is the art of words, because language is the main material, the typical means of expression of literature. Without language, literary works cannot exist. Readers come into contact with words first, then characters, situations, plots and also through language, the writer's content and ideas are deeply conveyed to the reader."

Each short story writer tries to express a unique style of language. If Pham Thi Hoai's writing has a mocking tone, full of artistic personality; Da Ngan's writing is profound and acrid, while Tran Thuy Mai's writing is sweet and lyrical, Ly Lan's writing is lively, while Nguyen Huong Duyen's writing is quiet, silent yet intense, somewhat fiercely illuminating the character's innermost mood with a sense of coldness and binding the cracks of happy love between couples in contemporary life. The writer's literature is said to be close to everyday language, updating new words of today's modern life. It can be said that language has been turned into a tool by the writer to successfully convey thoughts about the life of modern women.

4.3.1. The language of everyday life, idyllic

Nguyen Huong Duyen's short story works have a simple storytelling style, using everyday language but still having their own sound. In the short story "*Two sisters*", the writer uses very simple yet profound language, "The bright, white grapefruit clusters under the moonlight embalmed the hair and shoulders of Duong and her with an ecstatic scent, relief, a feeling of extreme relief made both sisters feel like they wanted to disappear into the void of heaven and earth!" (p.151). Coming into contact with the text in terms of language, the reader finds that the words the writer expresses are always careful and elaborate, but not aloof and cliché. With this everyday style of speaking, Nguyen Huong Duyen has contributed to truly recreating the current state of women's lives with a new perspective, expressed quite diversely and vividly on her writing pages.

4.3.2. The language rich in poetry

One of the linguistic nuances imprinted in Nguyen Huong Duyen's literature is poetic language. In addition to the simple, everyday literary materials used by the writer in the dialogues and narratives of the characters, there is the language of describing scenes and emotions, using nature to express the character's mood. Nguyen Huong Duyen uses it quite effectively in her compositions. That is the nostalgia of a woman in love with many entanglements and obstacles in space and time: "Remembering Tho, I often wander alone. Wandering with nostalgia playing with and tormenting. The afternoons of late spring and early summer pass slowly. I have a habit of going to cafes alone to read books in the soft sound of instrumental music. I love that quiet and spacious space, a few small rattan tables and chairs overlooking the clear river surface, thin purple wild water lilies rising in the middle of the still water." (p.29).

4.4. Literary art represented in tone

Tone is an aesthetic category of literary works that plays a huge role in creating a writer's style. With any literary genre, tone is always one of the characteristics that create the unique mark of each writer. If the author does not have his own way of speaking, he is never a writer. In Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories, nuances of tone stand out: the voice of confession, confession, and the loving lyrical voice of bold femininity.

4.4.1. Confiding tone

The tone of confiding here is understood as a direct expression of the writer's feelings about the world, human life, with the tender and compassionate feelings of women.

Nguyen Huong Duyen is often associated with a view of a woman's life and status in the depth of her soul. Being a woman and writing about a woman's status, the writer has many advantages in expressing the deep inner feelings of the character, especially in revealing the attitudes, feelings, and thoughts of women to the very end. female. The discovery of women's spiritual world is expressed in all aspects, from their emotional state, emotions to their desires and passions. The writer used a tone to express his delicate mood in the short story "*Eva's pain*" with the feeling, "She woke up by the pitiful cries of stray cats. My family has a red-haired cat. At night, the cats in love season roared, bit each other, and fell on the roof with a thud. They call each other, curse each other, or confess their love to each other with loud sounds like babies crying. She sat with her knees up, staring at her shadow cast by the nightlight on the wall. Her hair was loose, flowing into a long, dark streak. It's so lonely." (p.106).

4.4.2. Lyrical and loving tone

The lyrical, loving voice in the writer's short stories has partly deepened the difficult emotions of the character, but clearly shows the reader the fluttering moments in the woman's soul in the middle of the chaotic flow of current life. The writer always delves into the personal lives of different women's lives and often describes them through a tender lyrical voice. In the short story "*Waiting for each other at the end of the world*" when the writer described the anxious mood waiting for the female character's love signal, "She realized how happy she was when her phone alerted her with a message, and how sad she was when she received a message. That message is not from you. As each day passes, the longing grows more intense. I called her in the middle of a quiet night: I miss you I can't sleep, just look forward to the day we meet, hold you in my arms, kiss your soft lips, and melt into each other. She felt her heart swell with trembling excitement. Missing and hoping for you makes my stomach churn. She longs for him every hour, every minute. The married woman becomes a young woman who begins to love, passionately and passionately." (p.186).

With a passionate lyrical voice, Nguyen Huong Duyen has expressed the character's silent nostalgia, but full of desire to meet. Through the passage, the reader feels a lyrical, poetic, and feminine voice of Nguyen Huong Duyen's pen. Therefore, even though the writer's content and thoughts are always directed to describe the difficult and

painful lives of different women, the writer's pen is still very soft and flexible with the quality of tender life with a lyrical voice.

5. Conclusion

During the movement of prose in general and short stories in particular in Vietnam from after 1986 until now, there has been a notable phenomenon regarding the team of authors, which is the appearance and maturity of a series of female writers. After the famous writers such as Y Ban, Nguyen Thi Thu Hue, Vo Thi Xuan Ha, Phan Thi Vang Anh, Do Bich Thuy, and Nguyen Ngoc Tu are Tong Ngoc Han, Phong Diep, Nguyen Thi Kim Hoa, Nguyen Huong Duyen, Nguyen Thi Le Na, Nguyen Hai Yen, and Trac Diem have brought to contemporary literature the flavor of feminine, tolerant souls. A meeting point for female writers is that their works are often directed at issues related to marriage and love, family life and women. Among them, the presence of writer Nguyen Huong Duyen with 4 collections of short stories presented with literature achievements "The arduous waiting wharf (2006), Among men (2015), Two sisters (2020), Writing for from this Kitchen (2020) has attracted the attention of critics and contemporary readers, including two collections of stories that have won local and national literary awards.

As a writer born and grew up in the Central Province of Quang Binh, Vietnam Nguyen Huong Duyen's works carry the breath of people and the spiritual land of outstanding people, becoming a familiar face of the province's literary life. But with the maturity of her inspiration and writing style, her compositions in recent years have become more and more widespread and widely covered throughout the country. In the works of Nguyen Huong Duyen as well as other female writers of the same time, it is "like running from the sun", no matter what, they must aim at love, marriage, and family happiness. Therefore, in everyday life, the writer always looks towards people of the same gender, as she expressed, "the identity of a woman always haunts me."

In Nguyen Huong Duyen's short story, a world of female characters is presented with a "medley" of fates bearing personal tragedy, suffering physical and mental pain but not giving up but always struggling to find happiness. with bravery and faith to return to themselves, creating ontological values. Women who have gone through ups and downs have voluntarily shouldered their responsibilities: being a mother, being a wife, and creating a family. The woman in Nguyen Huong Duyen's short story "cosmetized the pain" to maintain her pride, "If you lack anything, you lack pride and you can't live well." (p.140). To highlight content issues, Nguyen Huong Duyen consciously made a breakthrough in the way female characters are expressed in all aspects: from sketching appearance to portraying the inner self, exploring the outside world. The inside of the character shows the movement and transformation in the character's perception and psychology. The introspective attitude that governs the way of speaking with simple yet poetic language nuances, blending the confiding tone with the loving, deeply feminine lyrical voice, makes Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories full of emotion, heartfelt, honest and humane. It can be said that, from women's issues, Nguyen Huong Duyen's short stories contain messages about culture, era, and profound feminist ideology. In her

efforts to innovate herself as a professional writer, Nguyen Huong Duyen's work is increasingly imbued with its own identity from the topic of composition, reflective content to writing techniques. fresh, modern. Those are the writer's remarkable contributions to female short stories in particular and to contemporary Vietnamese prose in general.

Acknowledgements

To have this study done successfully, first of all, the researchers would like to express their great thanks to the teaching staff from the University of Cuu Long (Mekong University), Ho Chi Minh City University of Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi, School of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSSH), School of Education (SoE) and School of Foreign Languages (SFL), Can Tho University (CTU), Vietnam for their teaching, research supervision and enthusiastic supports to their paper to be published in an international journal. Second, their respectful thanks to all the teachers at Literature Department, Dam Doi High School, Ca Mau Province, who have created favorable conditions for the researcher to finish her postgraduate program. Thirdly, their sincere thanks would go to Nguyen Le Ngoc Anh, Thai Cong Dan, and Thai Phan Bao Han, English teachers, for their useful assistance with the entire paper proofreading, English modification, and format. And, last but not least, their respectful thanks would come to the *European Journal of Literary Studies Board* for this product to be published to the public worldwide, especially those interested in Vietnamese Literature teaching and learning at high schools and higher education institutions as well on the way to the regional and global integration through literary studies.

Conflict of Interest Statement

Both authors strongly agreed on the publication of this paper and there was no contention or rivalry during finishing the work. In other words, the authors declare no conflicts of interest in this article. Both authors are fully and equally responsible for the benefits and harms after this article is published. The authors, moreover, declare that the material presented by us in this paper is our original work, and does not contain any materials taken from other copyrighted sources. Wherever such materials have been included, they have been clearly indented or/and identified by quotation marks and due and proper acknowledgments given by citing the source at appropriate places.

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