



FROM COMMENTARY TO LITERARY
CRITICISM: JIN SHENG TAN'S INFLUENCE ON VIETNAMESE
CRITICAL WORKS OF VIETNAMESE LITERARY FIGURES
NGUYỄN VĂN SIÊU, PHẠM QUỲNH, AND DƯƠNG BÁ TRẠC

Bui Thi Thuy Minh¹ⁱ,

Tran Minh Hung²

¹Department of Vietnamese Linguistics and Literature,
School of Social Sciences and Humanities,

Can Tho University,
Can Tho City, Vietnam

²Tay Do University,
Can Tho City, Vietnam

Abstract:

Jin Shengtan was a prominent literary critic in China during the Ming–Qing period. He laid the foundation for a personalized system of literary criticism that emphasized emotional response, aesthetic intuition, and humanistic values in engaging with literary works. This paper explores the influence of Jin Shengtan on Vietnamese literary critical thought in the 19th century through three representative figures: Nguyễn Văn Siêu, Phạm Quỳnh, and Dương Bá Trạc. By analyzing their commentaries, essays, and artistic perspectives, the study reveals how Jin Shengtan's ideas were adapted and localized in the Vietnamese context. This process contributed to the development of a distinctively Vietnamese mode of literary criticism—emotionally rich and deeply humanistic. In doing so, the paper sheds light on a pivotal transitional phase from traditional commentary to modern critical thinking in early 20th-century Vietnamese literature.

Keywords: Jin Shengtan; literary criticism; aesthetic emotion; literary modernization

1. Introduction

In the intellectual history of East Asian literary thought—particularly in China—Jin Shengtan (金圣叹, 1608–1661) stands out as a distinctive figure. He was not only renowned for his annotated commentaries on classics such as *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan*) and *Romance of the Western Chamber* (*Xixiang ji*), but also regarded as a foundational voice in the emergence of personalized literary criticism. His approach emphasized aesthetic intuition, emotional response, and the centrality of the reader's subjectivity. By

ⁱ Correspondence: email bttminh@ctu.edu.vn

challenging the rigid Confucian notion that fiction was a “*minor path*” (小道, *xiaodao*), Jin Shengtan defended the legitimacy of emotionally charged literature and helped establish a new system of values in which the literary appreciator was elevated to the status of a creative subject (Rolston, 1990; Owen, 1992).

Jin Shengtan's critical ideas had a lasting impact on Chinese literary discourse from the 17th century onward, and they gradually spread to other East Asian cultures through the influence of Sinitic learning (Hán học). In Vietnam, particularly during the 19th century—a period marked by the intersection of traditional Confucianism and the incipient assimilation of Western cultural paradigms—several Vietnamese intellectuals began to demonstrate critical tendencies reminiscent of Jin Shengtan's spirit. Nguyễn Văn Siêu, Phạm Quỳnh, and Dương Bá Trạc represent such figures whose approaches to literature placed emphasis on emotion and human character, highlighted literary beauty over didactic function, and focused on the portrayal of human figures rather than abstract moral ideologies.

However, within current Vietnamese literary studies, the influence of Jin Shengtan on 19th-century Vietnamese critical thought remains largely unexplored. Scholarly discussions of Nguyễn Văn Siêu often focus on his contributions as a historian and geographer (Nguyễn Q. Thắng, 2004); Phạm Quỳnh is frequently analyzed through his role as a transmitter of Western philosophical thought (Taylor, 1998); and Dương Bá Trạc is typically interpreted through a political and nationalist lens. Consequently, there is a pressing need for a new critical framework that reassesses 19th-century Vietnamese intellectuals' literary thought in relation to the East Asian theoretical tradition—of which Jin Shengtan is a key representative.

This study, therefore, poses the following question: Can we identify Jin Shengtan's influence—as a critic of emotion—in the literary approaches of Nguyễn Văn Siêu, Phạm Quỳnh, and Dương Bá Trạc? If so, what form does this influence take—ideological principles, stylistic affinities, or contextual resonance? By examining their literary commentaries, essays, and theoretical writings, this article seeks to uncover a transformative process from classical commentary to early modern criticism. This process, it argues, represents a creative localization of Vietnamese literary thought in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

2. Literature Review

The figure of Jin Shengtan (金圣叹, 1608–1661) has garnered considerable attention in East Asian literary studies due to his pioneering role in reshaping the contours of literary criticism. Scholars such as David R. Rolston (1990) and Stephen Owen (1992) have illuminated how Jin's critical commentaries marked a radical departure from the moralistic interpretive paradigms of Confucian orthodoxy. By advocating for the reader's emotional engagement and asserting literature's artistic autonomy, Jin laid the foundation for what could be termed “*personalized criticism*.” His practice of annotating canonical texts—such as *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan*) and *Romance of the Western Chamber*

(*Xixiang ji*)—was not merely exegetical but performative, turning the act of reading into a creative, emotionally invested experience.

Jin's revaluation of fiction, particularly his rejection of the Confucian dismissal of novels as "*minor paths*" (小道, *xiaodao*), legitimized the aesthetic and affective dimensions of literature. His concepts, such as "using feeling" (*yongqing*) and "truth through illusion" (*jia er zhen*), provided a theoretical framework in which emotional resonance, rather than moral instruction, was the ultimate criterion of literary worth. This reorientation had a lasting impact on Chinese literary discourse, influencing subsequent generations of writers and critics.

While much scholarship has documented Jin Shengtan's influence within China, relatively little attention has been paid to the transmission and transformation of his ideas across cultural boundaries—especially in Vietnam. The Vietnamese reception of Sinitic learning (*Hán học*) included not only Confucian orthodoxy but also subtler intellectual currents that emphasized aesthetics and affect. However, as Nguyễn Q. Thắng (2004) points out, figures such as Nguyễn Văn Siêu are more often remembered for their historical and geographical scholarship than for their literary criticism. Similarly, Keith Taylor (1998) notes that Phạm Quỳnh is commonly viewed through the lens of his engagement with French thought rather than his aesthetic sensibilities.

Nonetheless, a closer reading of the works of Nguyễn Văn Siêu, Phạm Quỳnh, and Dương Bá Trạc reveals echoes of Jin Shengtan's critical ethos. Nguyễn Văn Siêu's emotionally charged commentaries display a clear preference for intuitive appreciation over exegetical analysis. Phạm Quỳnh's essays on *Truyện Kiều*, for example, embody a view of literature as an expression of the national soul—a stance that prioritizes emotional authenticity and aesthetic depth. Dương Bá Trạc, in turn, sought to recover the spirit of vernacular Vietnamese literature through a populist, humanistic approach that parallels Jin's celebration of ordinary life and emotional expression.

Yet, the influence of Jin Shengtan on Vietnamese critical thought remains under-theorized. Most existing studies isolate Vietnamese literary figures from the broader East Asian intellectual context. There is thus a pressing need for a comparative framework that not only situates Vietnamese critics within their local and colonial circumstances but also recognizes their dialogical engagement with the wider Sinosphere. This study builds on recent calls for a transregional literary historiography, one that acknowledges the circulation of ideas and their creative localization.

In sum, this literature review suggests that Jin Shengtan's affect-centered criticism may serve as a valuable lens through which to reassess Vietnamese literary thought in the 19th and early 20th centuries. By recovering these intertextual and interregional affinities, the present research aims to enrich both Vietnamese and East Asian literary studies.

3. Research Methods

The article applied the historical-cultural criticism method combined with a comparative literature approach and literary reception theory to examine the influence of Jin Shengtan's critical thought in the 19th-century Vietnamese literary space. Based on this, the article not only traced the sources of influence but also emphasized the process of assimilation, selection, and localization of Confucian thought within the context of Vietnam's cultural transformation during a transitional period.

Specifically, this research unfolds in three levels:

- 1) It analyzed Jin Shengtan's critical thought, based on his commentaries on works such as *Water Margin*, *West Chamber*, and significant scholarly works by contemporary Chinese academics. Core concepts like "*the essence of things*", "*emotion in use*", "*intuition*", "*humanity creating events*", "*education*", and "*sensibility*" were systematized to form the foundational theoretical framework.
- 2) It surveyed and analyzed literary commentaries and essays by three notable early 20th-century Vietnamese scholars—Nguyễn Văn Siêu, Phạm Quỳnh, and Dương Bá Trạc—focusing on their critical thinking expressed through emotion, aesthetic intuition, subjectivized reception, and emphasis on literary characters' personalities. These elements were seen as resonating or intersecting significantly with Jin Shengtan's critical views.
- 3) It compared and contrasted the Vietnamese scholars' literary critiques with Jin Shengtan's "*literary commentary*" spirit to determine the degree of influence: whether it was direct reception (through Confucian texts), indirect influence (via the traditional Confucian model), or coincidental compatibility within the same cultural framework.

By combining these research methods, the article approached Jin Shengtan's critical thought as a cultural-intellectual force, identifying its impact on the development of a distinctive Vietnamese literary criticism in the 19th century. At the same time, the article contributed to clarifying the transformation from classical literary criticism to modern literary criticism in Vietnam, in the process of receiving and Vietnamizing East Asian literary theory.

4. Research Findings

For Jin Shengtan (1608-1661), the most important aspect of reading is to appreciate the beauty of literature. Therefore, the reader must focus on discovering the delicate, graceful beauty of the artistic language and, based on that, determine the value of the work. From the very first readings in *The Readings of the West Chamber* (*Phép đọc Mái Tây*), he asserted this idea:

"Whoever claims that The West Chamber is obscene literature must eventually end up in prison for 'tongue removal'! Why? Because The West Chamber is not trivial; it is a beautiful literary work of Heaven and Earth..."

"The West Chamber is not obscene literature; it is certainly a great literary piece."
(The First Reading)

"A collection of books, full of rich, beautiful literature like this, should make us consider what kind of literature such beautiful scenery belongs to. Where does it come from? Where does it go?" (The Third Reading)

Clearly, for Jin Shengtan, the reader must possess a keen and sensitive empathy when appreciating the beauty of literature.

In a similar vein, one can find some resemblance between his views and those of Hoài Thanh (1909-1982), the famous Vietnamese literary critic of the modern era, who also emphasized:

"The reader of literature must be able to perceive the magnificent essence of literature and not confuse it with all the other elements that may accompany it in a book."

4.1. Nguyễn Văn Siêu and Emotionalized Literary Criticism

Nguyễn Văn Siêu (1799–1872), whose personal name was Tồn Ban and his pen name Phương Đình, was one of the most erudite Confucian scholars and a prominent literary critic in 19th-century Vietnam. With a deep knowledge of Classical Chinese, he left behind many valuable works in history, geography, and cultural studies, while also demonstrating profound literary criticism through numerous essays and commentaries. Among them, his writings and annotations related to classical poetry, as well as his discussions in *Phương Đình văn loại* (Phuong Đình Literary Types), *Phương Đình dư địa chí* (Phuong Đình Geographical Treatise), or excerpts from literary history, clearly reveal the influence of an emotionalized literary criticism that emphasizes artistic personality, very much in line with the spirit of Jin Shengtan's (1656) critical approach.

Firstly, Nguyễn Văn Siêu did not view literature as merely a tool for instruction but always emphasized the emotional element in literary reception. He believed that a great poem *"could make the reader feel profoundly sad without knowing why, like standing in the middle of an afternoon sky with an empty heart"*—an image that closely mirrors Jin Shengtan's concept of *"literature generates emotion, emotion generates feeling."* Here, emotion is not just a passive result but a measure to identify the artistic quality of the work.

Secondly, in his poetry critiques, Nguyễn Văn Siêu often used a soft, expressive tone, avoiding heavy theoretical discussions and leaning towards subjective experience. For example, when discussing Nguyễn Trãi's poetry, he did not delve deeply into the meter or grammar but focused on the *"spirit"* and *"emotion"*: *"Ức Trai's pen is like a unique*

wind, blowing through the mountains, causing rocks to tremble and trees to sway" (Nguyễn Lộc, 2003).

This is an artistic description using evocative imagery, similar to how Jin Shengtan used unique metaphors in his commentary, comparing a great line of poetry to "*a wind rising when the sky is calm*," or a character with a strong personality like "*fire still burning under the ashes*" (Kim Shengtan, 1656).

Additionally, Nguyễn Văn Siêu emphasized the character of the writer as an inseparable criterion of literary value. While traditional Confucianism often imposed moral templates on literature, Nguyễn Văn Siêu viewed literature as a place for expressing inner thoughts, spirit, and personal feelings, which aligns with Jin Shengtan's view that "*literature is the person*," and only works "*born from the heart*" can "*move the heart of the reader*." This belief led Nguyễn Văn Siêu's criticism to avoid moralistic constraints, instead moving towards the aestheticization of both the writer and the reader, paving the way for a more emotionalized style of literary criticism rich in personal imprint.

It is also worth noting that Nguyễn Văn Siêu did not directly cite Jin Shengtan, but many elements in his critical thinking and writing style—from the use of comparative imagery, the expressive tone, to the evaluation of characters and works based on emotional depth—show significant resonance with Jin Shengtan's critical spirit. This influence could have stemmed from Confucian texts or the result of cultural exchanges in East Asia, contributing to the development of a localized style of literary criticism.

In his commentaries, Nguyễn Văn Siêu particularly emphasized the role of emotion and inner resonance in literary reception. One could say that he built an emotionalized style of literary criticism—not just reading to understand, but reading to "*listen*," to "*feel*," and to "*touch*" the essence hidden in the words.

This appreciation is clearly reflected in the statement: "*Stories can make one weep; poetry can startle one. This is because such literature has 'spirit' and 'soul,' making the reader feel as though they are living in the scene, seeing the characters within it.*" (Phương Đình thi văn tập) Here, Nguyễn Văn Siêu emphasizes that true literature is the kind with "*spirit*" and "*soul*"—that is, literature capable of transmitting emotion, creating resonance, and making the reader "*live*" and "*see*" as if immersed in the artistic world. This ability to feel is the standard for distinguishing between great literature and ordinary literature.

Another statement, rich in imagery and intuition, is also very representative of his critical style: "*Reading a piece of literature and hearing it as though there were the sound of a stream, feeling as though the heart was filled with moonlight—without asking about the meaning, one can tell that the literature is good.*" (Bình luận văn sách) This viewpoint reveals Nguyễn Văn Siêu's aesthetic transcendence—not focusing on formal structure or literary allusions but directly on the ability to stir the senses and emotions. He defines good literature not through theory but through aesthetic intuition, similar to Jin Shengtan's view of literature as something that could provide exhilaration like "*the sound of rain hitting banana leaves*" or "*rice grains scattered on a drumskin*."

In Jin Shengtan's critical thought, emotion is not an auxiliary element but the center. When commenting on famous lines in *Tây Sương ký* (The Western Chamber), such

as: *"The full moon is like a mirror reflecting"* (Chapter "Họa vầng"), he readily expresses his feelings: *"How exquisite the writing is!"* Or the line: *"Yesterday, the East room was expanded—thought I saw a phoenix roasting, a dragon steaming forth!"* which he praises: *"This must be told in the most poetic and gentle words, it's wonderful!"* For him, true literature is that which is *"elegant yet transcendent"*—meaning it is both refined and surpasses the ordinary, evoking poetry and making the reader feel moved. This view aligns well with Nguyễn Văn Siêu when he wrote: *"Literature can sometimes move the heart, making one share in the joy and sorrow of nature, while virtue seeps into it."* (Phương Đình văn loại)

Just like Jin Shengtan, Nguyễn Văn Siêu did not only appreciate literature with reason but with a *"mind's eye"*—the eye of emotion, of inner listening. For both, the literary critic is not only a judge but a sympathizer, a companion with literature.

In conclusion, Nguyễn Văn Siêu is a representative case of the transition from Confucian normative literary criticism to an emotionalized style of literary criticism—where the critic not only interprets but lives with the work, is moved by its beauty, and lets emotion guide the evaluation. This approach reflects the influence of Jin Shengtan's critical thought, a quiet but resonant force in 19th-century Vietnamese literary criticism.

4.2. Phạm Quỳnh: Essays and the Critical Thought on Modern Novels

Phạm Quỳnh (1892–1945) is considered one of the most prominent intellectuals of early 20th-century Vietnam, playing a pivotal role as a mediator between classical Confucian scholarship and modern Western culture. In the field of literary criticism, he stands out for his numerous essays that are both comprehensive and rich in emotion, demonstrating a profound thinking about the value of national literature. In particular, his essays on *Truyện Kiều*, Tang poetry, and Chinese and French novels reflect an emotionally charged style of criticism, focusing on artistic perception, which closely aligns with the spirit advocated by Jin Shengtan in his system of literary critique.

First, in his series of essays on *Truyện Kiều* published in *Nam Phong* magazine, Phạm Quỳnh not only evaluates the work as a masterpiece but also views it as the embodiment of the *"soul of the nation"*. Writing that *"as long as Truyện Kiều exists, our language will remain; as long as our language remains, our nation remains,"* Phạm Quỳnh (1924) shifts from artistic critique to a more existential declaration of cultural identity. What is noteworthy is that his explanation of the greatness of *Truyện Kiều* is not derived from doctrine, morality, or themes, but from its ability to evoke emotions, express moods, and depict fate—criteria that are closely tied to Jin Shengtan's theory.

Much like Jin Shengtan, Phạm Quỳnh emphasizes the central role of emotion in literary reception. In his essay *Phê bình tiểu thuyết* (Criticism of Novels), he states: *"When reading literature, one must allow their soul to resonate with the soul of the author. If one cannot feel it, then one cannot read it."* This viewpoint is closely aligned with the idea of *"literature generates emotion, emotion generates feeling,"* where the reader is not merely a recipient of information but someone who lives and feels with the text. Here, we can see a clear resonance between Phạm Quỳnh and Jin Shengtan, as both view reading as an aesthetic act that involves a high degree of subjectivity.

Additionally, in discussing novels—a genre that was relatively new to Vietnam at the time—Phạm Quỳnh advocated for the reception of Western novels while also showing respect for Chinese serialized novels, particularly *Water Margin*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and *The West Chamber*. He often referred to the "divine storytelling," "soulful characters," and "plot development that mirrors the flow of real life"—evaluations that fall squarely within the criteria used by Jin Shengtan in his literary critique. This suggests that Phạm Quỳnh's thinking was not only influenced by Western literary theory (as is often assumed) but also subtly informed by the classical Chinese literary tradition, particularly that of Jin Shengtan.

Moreover, Phạm Quỳnh's essay style reveals a modernized form of Jin Shengtan's critique. While Jin Shengtan's commentary often took the form of interspersed remarks within the original text, sometimes highly emotional and even "rebellious," Phạm Quỳnh's essays are more systematically organized and clearly reasoned, though they still retain the expressive, personal, and emotional qualities. This reflects a transitional phase: from highly inspired, personal criticism to a more modern, generalized, and theoretical form of criticism, yet one that still preserves the subjective spirit.

In conclusion, despite the different historical contexts in which Jin Shengtan and Phạm Quỳnh worked, there is a clear intellectual synergy between their thoughts on the role of emotion, character portrayal, and the humanistic function of the novel. With his open-minded approach, Phạm Quỳnh helped usher Vietnamese literary criticism away from the classical normative model, moving toward an emotional, subjective, and humanistic style of criticism—thus continuing the spirit that Jin Shengtan pioneered in classical Chinese literature.

4.3. Dương Bá Trạc and the Nationalization of Critical Theory

Dương Bá Trạc (1884-1944), also known by his pen name Tử Hạ, was one of the prominent intellectual figures in the Duy Tân movement and made significant contributions to the formation of indigenous literary critical thought in early 20th-century Vietnam. Unlike Nguyễn Văn Siêu, who mainly adhered to traditional Confucian scholarship, and Phạm Quỳnh, who embraced both Eastern and Western thought, Dương Bá Trạc clearly demonstrated an effort to bring literary criticism closer to the spiritual life of the nation. His writings and commentaries did not focus on general theoretical principles but often stemmed from emotional intuition, personal experience, and affection for Nom literature – an approach very much aligned with the critical spirit advocated by Jin Shengtan: criticism driven by emotion, not dogmatic, not one-sided, but rich in personality.

One of the key ideas in Dương Bá Trạc's work is the thought of "restoring national culture through national literature," in which he viewed Nom works—such as *Truyện Kiều*, *Chinh phụ ngâm*, and *Lục Vân Tiên*—not only as literature but as the embodiment of the Vietnamese spirit, "the soul of Vietnam." His style of literary criticism leaned towards emotion and the concept that "Vietnamese people must understand Vietnamese literature in their own language," a critical attitude very much in tune with the emancipatory reception theory found in Jin Shengtan's thought (Dương Bá Trạc, 1925).

Notably, Dương Bá Trạc often critiqued poetry not through the traditional Chinese metrics and classical allusions, but through imagery and personal impressions to convey aesthetic experience. When writing about *Truyện Kiều*, he did not evaluate it through "the academic poetics," but discussed "the sorrow of Kiều as the sorrow of a nation tormented, as the state of a people lost in the midst of upheaval" (Nguyễn Đăng Na, 2000). This connection of national emotion with the character's emotions is not far from the spirit that Jin Shengtan applied when critiquing *Water Margin*: from the story of the heroic bandits to the suffering of the loyal man betrayed – that is, moving from literature to the empathy for humanity.

Moreover, Dương Bá Trạc also clearly expressed his awareness of the need to "translate" East Asian literary criticism to suit local needs. Rather than adhering to the Chinese norms of criticism, he often emphasized the "Vietnamese essence" in emotion, language, and imagery. For example, he once wrote:

"Lục Vân Tiên does not need to be as refined as The Western Chamber, but it is as charming as a humble, honest, compassionate villager who despises evil" (Dương Bá Trạc, 1926).

This statement is a typical expression of a style of criticism that is deeply nationalistic yet emphasizes humanity and feeling – two central elements in Jin Shengtan's novel theory. Jin Shengtan once said, "Without emotion, there is no novel; without humanity, there are no memorable characters." Dương Bá Trạc's use of national sentiment to read Vietnamese literature is thus a form of "sensory education" – where literature touches the conscience and patriotism of the readers, rather than merely being a tool for moral teachings.

From these points, it is clear that Dương Bá Trạc was not only a lover of Nom literature but also played a crucial role in nationalizing the discourse of literary criticism. By transforming the critical thought of Chinese scholarship (including that of Jin Shengtan) into an emotionally rich, accessible, simple, and distinctly Vietnamese style of criticism, he placed himself in an intermediary position: from the Eastern foundation to a modern style of criticism with a nationalistic spirit, further clarifying the shift from commentary to modern criticism in the process of the modernization of Vietnamese literary thought.

5. Conclusion

Kim Shengtan (Jin Shengtan) is one of the most influential critics in the history of East Asian literary thought. With his bold thinking, rich emotions, and personalized approach to literary works, he paved the way for a new form of criticism—one where emotion, humanity, and art became central, replacing the purely doctrinal evaluation of literature. Concepts such as "using emotion," "total engagement," "the fake made real," "literature generates events," and "educating through emotion," which Kim Shengtan introduced, not only have

value within the realm of Chinese novel criticism but also offer methodological insights that extend to a broader reception space, including Vietnam.

Through the examination of prominent figures such as Nguyễn Văn Siêu, Phạm Quỳnh, and Dương Bá Trạc, this article demonstrates that, despite their different historical and cultural contexts, all three show a critical thinking approach very much in line with Kim Sheng-tan's spirit. Nguyễn Văn Siêu introduced an emotionally-charged style of commentary, emphasizing intuition and artistic perception rather than the doctrinal interpretation typical of Confucian scholarship. Phạm Quỳnh approached novels and national literature with a personal mindset, crafting emotionally rich essays that affirmed the "*soul of the nation*" in literature. Dương Bá Trạc, in his efforts to nationalize critical theory, read Nom literature through a distinctly Vietnamese emotional lens, bringing criticism back to everyday language, popular emotions, and a deep humanistic spirit.

Thus, it can be affirmed that the influence of Kim Sheng-tan on Vietnamese literary criticism in the 19th and early 20th centuries is not only a direct impact on the content of critical theory but also represents a cultural intellectual force, where his critical principles were adapted, localized, and reimagined in specific contexts. The shift from *commentary* to criticism is not a break, but rather a transformative journey marked by the cultural exchange between East Asia and Vietnam, contributing to the formation of a modern Vietnamese literary criticism that is both locally grounded and connected to regional intellectual traditions.

Therefore, this article not only clarifies the role of Kim Sheng-tan in regional literary ideologies but also suggests a new approach to the study of Vietnamese literary criticism: returning to Eastern theoretical systems, re-exploring the influences that were obscured in the process of modernization, and thereby creating a critical discourse that both inherits tradition and opens up possibilities for dialogue with contemporary scholarship.

Acknowledgments

To bring this paper to successful completion, the authors would like to express their deep appreciation to the dedicated teaching staff of Department of Vietnamese Linguistics and Literature, School of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSSH), Can Tho University (CTU), Vietnam, for their steadfast support and encouragement throughout the research and publication process. The authors also extend their sincere thanks to Dr. Thai Cong Dan, Senior Lecturer in English at School of Foreign Languages, CTU, and to Ms. Thai Phan Bao Han, an English teacher at Can Tho University of Technology (CTUT), Vietnam, for their invaluable assistance in proofreading, language editing, and formatting the manuscript. Finally, the authors respectfully thank the Editorial Board of the *European Journal of Literary Studies* for providing the opportunity to share this work with a global audience—particularly readers interested in Vietnamese literature, Hán Nôm, and classical Chinese works as taught and studied within Vietnamese higher education institutions committed to regional and international academic integration through the enduring bridge of literature.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

About the Authors

Ms. Bui Thi Thuy Minh is a lecturer in the Department of Vietnamese Linguistics and Literature, School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SSSH), Can Tho University (CTU), Vietnam. She earned her doctoral degree in Literary Studies in 2021 and has since specialized in both Vietnamese and foreign literatures, with a particular emphasis on Chinese literary works. Her academic interests include literary theory, linguistic analysis, Hán Nôm studies, ancient literature, and the pedagogy of Vietnamese and international literatures. In addition, she is actively involved in curriculum development, testing and assessment, and professional training. She can be contacted at bttminh@ctu.edu.vn.

Mr. Tran Minh Hung is currently a lecturer at Tay Do University, Can Tho City, Vietnam. He can be reached at tmhungcantho@gmail.com.

References

- Đàm, P. (2001). *Study on the Criticism of Chinese Novels*. East China Normal University Press, pp. 70–74.
- Dương, B. T. (1925). *Literary Criticism: Reviving National Culture through National Literature*. Nam Phong, Issue 12, 45-60.
- Dương, B. T. (1926). *Lục Vân Tiên and the Emotional Connection in National Sentiment*. Nam Phong, Issue 14, 22-35.
- Jin, S. T. (1656). *Commentaries on Water Margin (Shuihu zhuan pingdian) and Romance of the Western Chamber (Xixiang ji pingdian)*.
- Nguyễn, D. N. (2000). *Criticism of Truyện Kiều: Emotions and National Spirit in Literature*. In *Collected Works of Vietnamese Literary Critics*. Hanoi: Literature Publishing House.
- Nguyễn, Q. T. (2004). *Danh nhân Việt Nam*. Hanoi: Văn Hóa Thông Tin Publishing House.
- Nguyễn, V. S. (2003). *Phương Đình Poetry Anthology*, translated by the Institute of Literature. Hanoi: Literary Publishing House.
- Owen, S. (1992). *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Phạm, Q. (1923). *Criticism of Novels*. Nam Phong Journal, No. 75.
- Phạm, Q. (1924). *Essay on Truyện Kiều and Emotions in Literature*. Nam Phong Journal, Special Issue.
- Rolston, D. R. (1990). *Traditional Chinese Fiction and Fiction Commentary: Reading and Writing Between the Lines*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Taylor, K. W. (1998). *Voices from the Second Generation: Vietnamese Intellectuals in the Colonial Era*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program.
- Trần, N. (1998). *The Style of Nguyễn Văn Siêu*. Tạp chí Hán Nôm, No. 2.

Trần, N. (1998). *Commentary on Literary Works, Hán Nôm edition*. Institute for Hán Nôm Studies.

Creative Commons licensing terms

Authors will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Literary Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflict of interests, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated on the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).