

## IMPACT OF RESEARCH WORKS IN THE WORLD TO LITERARY THEORY IN VIETNAM

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**Abstract:** The article focuses on renovation and the development of literary theory in Vietnam, due to the influence of the translations, introducing the scholarly thought of famous scientists in the world. After 1986, the policy of opening up and integrating with the world has led to a great innovation in the composition, research and criticism of Vietnamese literature. The research both directly and indirectly related to literary theory of Lu. M.Lotman, P.ricoeur, A. Compagnon, J. Derida, U. Eco, R. Barthes, H. Jauss, W. Iser have been widely translated and introduced to Vietnamese researchers and readers, therefore help them obtain a more general view of research ideas and trends in the world. By the comparison method, collation and system method, this articles specify the translation and introduction of research, theory of foreign has contributed greatly to forming, changing and shaping new research methods and theoretical of criticizing literature in Vietnam.

**Keywords:** new literary theory, readers, reception aesthetics, and literary

### INTRODUCTION

After 1986, the policy of opening up and integrating with the world has led to a great renovation in the composition, research and criticism of Vietnamese literature. The research both directly and indirectly related to literary theory of lu.M.Lotman. P.Ricoeur, A.Compagnon, J.Derida, U.Eco, R. Barthes, H.Jauss, W.Iser... have been widely translated and introduced to Vietnamese researchers and readers and therefore help them obtain a more general view of research ideas and trends in the world. This has made a great contribution to forming, changing and shaping new theories in Vietnam. National scientists such as Nguyen Ngoc, Tran Dinh Su, Truong Dang Dung, Do Lai Thuy, Nguyen Van Dan, La Khac Hoa, Tran Ngoc Vuong, Trinh Ba Dinh, Loc Phuong Thuy and Dao Tuan have selected, translated and introduced valuable works in various fields. Therefore, this scientist works help Viet Nam obtain a more general view of research ideas and trends in the world. This has made a great contribution to forming, changing and shaping new theories in Vietnam.

### Content

R.Barthes, in *Writing Degree Zero* (translated by Nguyen Ngoc, Association of Writers, 1997) (1972) (*Le Degré zéro de l'écriture suivi de Nouveaux essais critiques*, Editions du Seuil: Paris) has shown the agreement between the society - the reader and the author when he claims that novel writing style is "the possession of the society toward its past and ability" (1). The author points out that the mechanism of literature, the writing style history is an attempt to get away from history to reach the "writing degree zero". However, it is tighter. Accordingly, it can be seen that the role of writers has not covered the whole world any longer because after putting an end to the text of a certain work, a new complication, a new existence would immediately appear beyond the writer's intention. It is "the second memory that will mysteriously last among new meanings" and depends on the reception of the readers and society.

Not the writer as a thinker who suffers much torment that gives meaning to the work, but rather the opposites, movements and semantic antagonisms that produce meaning (2). R.Barthes, in his works introduced in this article, also states that "meaning can be understood as a process" (3). In addition, the works of Tzvetan Todorov also express the movement in the process of creating the work's meaning from reading.

In *The Structure of the Artistic Text*, University of Michigan, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures (translated by Tran Ngoc Vuong, Trinh Ba Dinh, Nguyen Thu Thuy, National University of Hanoi, 2004), the issue of the reader is addressed as the interaction between the transmitter and the receiver in the decoding of the text. Thus, there may be a

similarity when the receiver and the transmitter use a common set of codes, or the receiver tries to decode the text with his own set of codes which is different from that of the creator. In fact, the reader may try to assign his own language of art to the text, or try to receive the text in his own familiar way. As a result of that, there is a struggle between the reader and the author. When the reader wins, the writer's language will be exploited and become the recipient's tool for modeling life (12). Similarities and differences in creativity and reception are also addressed by Lotman in entropy quantities of the artistic languages of the author and the reader, structures outside the text and so on. Lotman's *Analysis of the Poetic Text* (translated by D. Barton Johnson, 1976) is also influential and featured in the work *Tracking giants' footprints* (by Do Lai Thuy, Culture and Information Publisher, 2006) (13).

*Realism in the Balance* is a 1938 essay by Georg Lukács (German literary journal) introduced and translated from Hungarian by Truong Dang Dung in *Journals of Foreign Literature* Vol. 5 (October 9, 1998) and Vol. 6 (1999). The work focuses on the issue that "the work of art helps us appear in the form of an object itself – solely in its form, and not in itself, according to precise meaning of this concept" (11). In 2001, in the work *The Literary Work of Art* (1973, Publisher, Northwestern University Press) introduced and translated by Truong Dang Dung, Roman Ingarden clarified the notion of literary work which has its own existence via the reader. This is one of the important issues of reception aesthetics with great impact in Vietnam.

Hans Robert Jauss's reception aesthetics thoughts were translated and introduced by Truong Dang Dung in *Literature history as provocation for literary science* (*Journal of Foreign Literature* Vol. 1/2002). The work introduces a new research trend - viewed from the reader rather than viewed from the author and his work. The key concepts of reception aesthetics have been translated and introduced quite carefully, bringing about a necessary knowledge base for literary theory in Vietnam.

Also in 2002, Lai Nguyen An translated and introduced *Reception Aesthetics* by A. Danov (*Journal of Literature*, Vol. 3). The work introduces the origin of reception aesthetics (the response to intrinsic aesthetics, to the narrative of the work, reception aesthetics originates from explanation, Russian formalism, Structuralism of the Prague school, sociology of literature... (7). The work also mentions that the essential thoughts of reception aesthetics derive from the conceptions of Gadamer, Jauss and W.Iser in *Waving Structure of Text...* This is a rather useful source of information for theorists who study reception aesthetics domestically. It can be seen that in the early 21st century, the movement of translation of Western theories strongly developed, including the theory of reception, bringing about a new academic atmosphere for the study of literature in Vietnam.

The work *Le Démon de la théorie* by Antoine Compagnon (Seuil, Paris, 1998) was translated by Le Hong Sam and Dang Anh Dao (*The Demon of Theory* by Antoine Compagnon, Hanoi National University of Education Publisher). In this work, there are two issues related to reception aesthetics, namely the reader and the history: "The experience of reading, like all human experiences, must definitely be dual, ambiguous and torn between understanding and love, literal and implicit meanings, freedom and constraints, attention to others and concern for oneself" (5). At the same time, the author also defines basic concepts of literature such as literature, intention, expression, reception and style. "History of literature ... is the connection, combination of separated texts and discourses associated with chronicles with extremely small variants... some are more literary, though are they also the challenges of traditional norms? (6). The author argues that "the journey of theory is a relativistic and awakening doctrine". Thus, reception aesthetics with its intrinsic and extrinsic aspects, gains and failures has been thoroughly introduced in this work. Like all other relativistic theories, reception aesthetics is an attempt to add a new dimension to text decoding. That's the important thing.

In *From Text to Action* (*Du texte à l'action*, Le Seuil, 1986.) by Paul Ricoeur (translated by Truong Dang Dung, *Journal of Foreign Literature*, Vol. 4, 2005), the concept of literature, which has long been identified with the work, has been clarified in a new, modern and explicit vision. Literary text is the labyrinth of all links, creating meaning non-stop. The text is, as complete and self-contained as it ever was, capable of being interpreted in thousands of ways while its unique and unrepeatable feature keeps unchanging.

With *The role of the reader*, Umberto Eco's *A Theory of Semiotics* (Indiana, 1976), *The Name of the Rose*, *Finding the Truth of Laughter* by Umberto Eco (translated by Vu Ngoc Thang, Association of Writers Publisher, Ha Noi, 2004), the openness or artistic works is said to be an essential aspect: "Openness is the condition of all aesthetic enjoyment and all forms, if they have aesthetic values, are open". Therefore, it is difficult to achieve the purpose of accessing a literary work as it is, and every assessment as well as differences in opinion about a work is related to the types of reading. Literary works are not identical with reading.

*The Work* by Martin Heidegger (translated by Truong Dang Dung, *Journal of Foreign Literature*, Vol. 1, 1999) outlines the philosophical thought of this phenomenologist as a new discovery from the notion of Greek and Western classical metaphysics. This is the exact basis of understanding in the reception of literature, under the most general and persuasive view, the narrative of understanding - as a subsistence of the reader in the reception of the text of the work.

The work *The Death of the Author* by Roland Barthes (The essay's first English-language publication in the American journal *Aspen*, Vol. 5-6 in 1967) translated from Russian by Tran Dinh Su shows important issues that have a great impact on the reasoning thinking of researchers in Vietnam. This is the consequence of changing the perception of the work and the reader of the researcher. The author is also considered as a kind of modern reader, a "writer" - born of his or her own text, does not exist before or beyond writing.

In 2012, La Nguyen translated *The Concept of a Text* by I.U.M.Lotman ([lythuyetvanhoc.wordpress.com/Languyen.vj](http://lythuyetvanhoc.wordpress.com/Languyen.vj) - *thế-của-văn-học-trên-sân-chơi-văn-hóa*).

From textual categories including expression, demarcation, structure, textual hierarchical order and language shaping signs, the translation has introduced characteristics of artistic texts with both intrinsic and extrinsic conceptions. Here, the relationship between the "structures of the speaker" - **the author**, and the "structures of the listener" - the reader, with all of its complexity is considered as an inevitable consequence in art. The work *Mythologies* (Seuil: Paris, 1957) was translated into Vietnamese by Phung Van Tuu and *Writing the Reading* by Roland Barthes was translated from the original French *E'crise la lecture* by Ly Tho Phuc (*Le bruissement de la langue*, Seuil, 1984, pp.33-36, R.Barthes; [phêbinhvãnhoc.com.vn/vietrasudoc/](http://phêbinhvãnhoc.com.vn/vietrasudoc/)). R. Barthes poses the issue of reading, denying traditional reading "seeking to establish what the author wants to say, not what the reader understands". It is a reading born of trans - individual which are originated from letters of the text, codes, languages, semiotics, truth of games... Through reading, the reader "will engrave in the text a certain posture, by which the text has its existence" [[phêbinhvãnhoc.com.vn/vietrasudoc](http://phêbinhvãnhoc.com.vn/vietrasudoc/)]. Thus, R. Barthes points out the reader's independence of the author's creative intentions, the reading is not governed by any truth but the truth of the game. Also in 2012, Ly Tho Phuc translated *On the Reading* by R.Barthes (*Sur la lecture* - 1984, pp. 37 -38), (4). Here, R. Barthes presents his concept of reading as a way of positioning and understanding: What is reading? How to read? Why to read? According to him, the reading includes three categories. The first category is the importance. It refers to the choice of perspective, interrogation, analysis of language and is governed by the desire of the reader. The second category is the pent-up. There are two types of pent-ups. One is duty of digging up the humanistic values and duty of individual values that each person perceives in today's society. The other is the pent-up from the library - a debt the reader needs to pay. The third category is the lust, the e'rotisme of reading (in reading, it refers to the desire to be with its object). The author also points out the characteristic of removing the outside world, identifying himself with the charm and mystery of reading - where the harmony between the reader and the image occurs - i.e. Book, where three reading pleasures occur. The fourth category of reading is the subject. The reader is considered a character of fiction and/or that of the text. The author concludes "It is difficult to reasonably hope in a science of reading, in a signal of reading, unless we understand that... there may be a science of endlessness, of infinite movement. Reading is the energy that cannot be exhausted - where structures become crazy. Thus, the role of the reader and the reading is thoroughly discussed in this work, the author has identified the basic characteristics of the reading and the ability to "wave into the endlessness" of reading. The ability to break the textual structure and inexhaustibility of the reading that R.Barthes poses are the basic foundations of reception aesthetics.

Harvard University Press (1989) published *The Open Work of Umberto Eco* (translated by Nguyen Van Dan, in *Chapter 1: The Poetics of the Open Work – Journal of Foreign Literature, Volume 7 – 2011*). This is a typical article for the open work theory of Umberto Eco, closely related to his concept of the reader and the semiotics. Here, Eco argues that the reader should base on the discursive structure to interpret a work. This structure consists of seven elements: basic dictionaries, reference rules, contextual and situational choices, supercoding, inferences based on common scenarios, inferences based on inter-text and idea super-coding. From those interpretation codes, Umberto Eco thinks that there are two types of text: closed and open. Closed text is a type that receives different decodings and is likely to have “misinterpretations”, which is out of the author’s intention. Open text is the type that is capable of “guiding” the reader to the right intention of its intrinsic structures. That means people read the text as if they want to use it.” Open work is not a kind that the reader can arbitrarily apply personal interpretations (10). Therefore, it can be said that Umberto Eco’s concept of the reader, reading and open work have asserted that the reader’s roles and positions do not exist independently or arbitrarily, but depend on the value of the work and the author’s intention.

It can be said that the translation and introduction of new Western theories into Vietnam plays an important role for the transformation of the country’s literary paradigm. There may exist some limitations; however, this is a quick and effective way to help the country’s literary theories catch up with the world.

Translation projects focus mainly on introducing key and fundamental ideas; and the heart of reception aesthetics such as texts, open works, and readers. Previous readers who only existed in the intention of the writer were given and taught by the author’s original thoughts, but they now interpret a text as co-creators. It is reading that is an act of creativity. While reading, people bring their own experience, knowledge, and culture to the journey with the author, and it is the reader’s expectation that decides the value of the text.

Those translation projects have contributed to the formation of new knowledge and concepts in the history of the contemporary literature, and have had a profound impact on both authors and readers and researchers. This is the way which Foucault calls the “formation rules” of discourse: the formation of objects, modes of discourse, the formation of concepts and strategies [[dichthuattinviet.vn/index.php/translation-instant-translation/](http://dichthuattinviet.vn/index.php/translation-instant-translation/)]. It is from these works that new terms, concepts, and methods are widely disseminated, creating a new atmosphere for the literary life. Texts, works, open works, readers, ranges of expectation... are new issues for critics. Some old classics have been demolished, creating new classics; thereby choosing a stance, a research viewpoint to establish a trend in research and critical thinking is a necessity for the research of the country’s literature.

From then on, new and modern ideas have been introduced and positioned in the literary life. The ideals of modernism to postmodernism are introduced through translation projects. Truong Dang Dung, Do Lai Thuy are pioneers in introducing the ideas of E. Husserl, phenomenology, concepts of object - subject, role of language, and intent meaning of literary texts. Meanwhile, Martin Heidegger’s ideologies with new concepts about the world, time and language are also new recommendations in literary research. He says that “time is something that structures human life before it is measured. This means that time is a characteristic of any being foundations”. Translators have also selected, translated, and introduced Heidegger’s key ideas about language. Language is the house of being. Language exists with human life, and the first to create the world” (Heidegger). Thus, it can be seen, the translation works have shown the role of Heidegger toward the reception aesthetics. He was the first to raise his understanding from a new angle: the philosophical hermeneutics. Hans Georger Gadamer and *The Philosophical Hermeneutics* were also introduced and translated in Vietnam with issues of the meaning of the text, the intent role of the writer in the meaning of the text, the understanding of the works which are strange to the reader in terms of history and literature. Those understandings may be objective or depending on a particular historical situation. These are the key issues of literary theory, which are not easy to find the right answers. From these, Gadamer’s conceptions of the text, the meaning of the work, are also explained. Especially, the idea of literary interpretation has also been introduced in the translation works of Zhang Darling: unlike physical phenomena, the work exists only if there

is understanding and interpretation of it. This means that only instant play makes a game exist and vice versa.

## CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, it can be seen from a variety of points of view, both inside and outside that scientists have translated and introduced research and studies on reception aesthetics, contributing a relatively complete view of the theory in terms of both accomplishments and limitations. Reception aesthetics, despite its shortcomings due to extremes and extrinsic, has still proved to be 'a great effort in the assertion of an important aspect in the whole literature process, the aspect that has long been neglected, or not well-acknowledged; the aspect of reception and the aesthetic effect, along with the aesthetic manufacturing and distribution aspects, will make the literature process a complete system' (15). Hence, the role of translating and introducing global literary theories is undeniable. It has contributed significantly to literary research and development, both in the fields of composition, research, theories, and critics. This is a great contribution of scientists, translators, and researchers to the country's literature. Because: 'Today's theory of reception liberates readers' creativity, opening the door to more multifaceted criticism, but also requiring ever more caution. It extinguishes the thought of only cultivating some of the so-called powerful writings, although talent is not something that is equally shared for all people.' (14)

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