

Chinese-Vietnamese Cultural Intersection in the 1930s: Personal Pronouns and Imagery in Symbolistic Poetry

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Abstract

Review Article

This study compares the characteristics of Sino-Vietnamese symbolic poetry texts in the 1930s from the perspective of personal pronouns and gender expression. Chinese poetry uses first and third person pronouns to construct personal consciousness and gentleness, inheriting the tradition of Wen-Li poetry. Vietnamese poetry uses the kinship form of address “anh/em” to increase lyrical interaction, placing gentle beauty in the masculine narrative axis. This difference reflects the divergence of literary modernization: China is influenced by the Western concept of “ego”, Vietnam combines indigenous culture to express “individual liberation”. The study affirms the unique role of pronouns and gender as cross-cultural symbols, expanding the approach to the study of modern East Asian poetry.

Keywords: symbolic poetry; personal pronouns; gender perspective; Sino-Vietnamese comparison.

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INTRODUCTION

Personal pronouns, as an important symbol in social communication, are a key perspective to explore the relationship between characters and their dialogue, and also contain strong human subjective consciousness. Personal pronouns are not only essential communication tools in life but also participate in literary texts as an important linguistic element, helping to build a complete literary structure and express the author's deep subjective consciousness. In textual discourse, many personal pronouns may appear, thereby highlighting the issue of which pronoun is the real subject of the poem. In addition to the relationship between the author and the protagonist, the reader also becomes a third role outside the text, able to receive the change of pronouns in the text. Many times, the reader will have a deep sense of role-playing, creating a triangular interaction between the narrator (author or protagonist) and themselves. At this time, the literary construction function of personal pronouns will be clearly demonstrated. In the next part, the author wants to analyze the use of personal pronouns in the new symbolic poetry of Vietnam and China in the 1930s, the reasons behind it as well as the poetic construction that personal pronouns bring.

Sino-Vietnamese Symbolic Poetry in the 1930s from the perspective of personal pronouns

Chinese Symbolic Poetry - First Person and Third Person

Since the Pre-Qin period, the system of Chinese personal pronouns has been established and has constantly changed and improved. During the Pre-Qin to Han period, the first person pronouns included: I (我), I (余/予), Wu (吾), and Yu (鱼); the second person pronouns: Nai (乃), Er (尔); the third person pronouns: Phu (夫), Bi (彼), Chi (之), and Tha (他). During the Wei-Jin, Six Dynasties, and Tang-Five Dynasties periods, the first person pronouns appeared with words such as Nong (农), Nhi Gia (儿家), Lao Tu (老子); the second person pronouns: Jun (君), Tuc Ha (足下), Tien Sinh (先生); the third person pronouns: Y (伊). From Jin-Yuan-Ming-Qing to the present, the first person pronouns included: Tan (咱), I (我), Nhan Gia (人家); the second person pronouns: Nhi (你), Nin (您); Third person: other (他), other (人家).

Starting from the Vernacular movement of the May Fourth period, the use of traditional pronouns was broken. Vernacular grammatical thinking required literary texts to shift from elegance to popularity. Many pronouns such as king (君), gong (公), er (尔), and khanh

(卿) gradually disappeared. The increased use of the plural suffix “们” and the new meaning of the word other “她” became a breakthrough in Vernacular communication and literary composition. From after May Fourth to the 1930s, the pronoun system gradually stabilized, in new poetry mainly used “我们”, “你们”, “他/她/它们”. The Modernist poets of the 1930s were no exception, but there were slight differences. According to the author's statistics, although the second person pronoun appears in Modernist poetry, the frequency of first and third person in symbolic poetry is still dominant. Statistics of 50 poems by Dai Vong Thu and Phe Danh show that:

Phe Danh: All 50 poems use I (我); 14 poems use third person pronouns such as y (伊), tha (他), ta (它).

Dai Vong Thu: 42/50 poems use I (我)/nga mon (我们); 23 poems use “它”, “他”, “他们”, “她”.

The second person pronouns “你”, “你们” appear rarely: Dai poetry about 10 poems, Phe poetry only 2 poems. As for the reasons for the high frequency of the first and third person in Dai-Phe poetry, first, as mentioned, Chinese pronouns change over time. After the May Fourth period, the vocabulary and pronoun system in poetry gradually became standardized. In this context, Modernist poets actively used them. Second, the high frequency of the first and third person is related to subjective consciousness. The first person ego (我) represents a deep personal consciousness, influenced by Western literature — which emphasizes the “self” and the conflict between personal consciousness and society/nature. The “small self” (small self) is considered the foundation of individual existence, so poets intentionally emphasize the emotions of the “self”. For example, the character tha (她) originally meant “old women” in Shuowen Jiezi and Huainanzi, but was redefined by Liu Bannong into a female third person pronoun. The use of this pronoun became popular in modern literature. The Influence of Pronouns on Modern Symbolic Poetry is also not small: 1. Lyrical subject: Pronouns meet the need to express emotions, reflecting the poet's subjective consciousness. For example, in Dai Vong Thu's Te Nhat:

*"I did not know where his wife and children went,
I did not dare to think about them, dare to ask him, even in my dreams,
Of course they did not live happily,
Like me, like all of us."*

"I" is the emotional subject, "they", "he", "we" support the expression, but each pronoun emphasizes the release of personal emotions. 2. Modern grammar: Modern Chinese is freer than ancient Chinese. For

example: - Ngo (吾), nhu (汝) are used for the subjective and genitive cases; nga (我), nhi (尔) are used for the dative and accusative cases. Modern triune pronouns can not only be used in the accusative case (I am the one who dissipates sorrows, dissipates joys" — Hoàng Hôn Hạ), the accusative case (The bright moon comes to visit me — Hải Hoa), or the predicate case (Thương Đế creates the world, but I think that God cannot know — Y). 3. Tolerance: Ancient pronouns carried the meaning of class (for example: tram (朕) for the emperor, thiep thân (妾身) for women). Modern Chinese has eliminated this, triune pronouns can refer to many subjects, increasing flexibility and imaginative space for readers.

Vietnamese Symbolic Poetry – First and Second Person

The formation of modern Vietnamese pronouns is also closely linked to the development of the National Language. In 1652, Alexander de Rhodes compiled the Annam-Portuguese-Latin Dictionary, marking the success in creating the Latinized National Language. Then, through the process of perfection by the 18th century priests, the forced imposition of the 19th century French, and the widespread popularization in the 20th century, the basic system of modern Vietnamese personal pronouns was formed. In modern Vietnamese grammar, the expression of triadic pronouns (tam than) is richer than in Chinese. On this basis, Vietnamese people often use kinship terms to replace triadic pronouns in both oral and written communication. For example, “chị”, “anh”, “em”, “ông” can be used to replace the first and second person; combining “chị”, “anh”, “em” with “ây” refers to the third person. In some special poetic contexts, “ông” can also be directly considered the third person. “Ta” in a specific environment can completely replace the meaning of triadic pronouns, that is, it can be the first person, the second person or the third person. The Vietnamese address table is extremely complicated, due to the limited scope of the article, only explaining the cases that appear in Vietnamese symbolic poetry texts.

According to the author's statistics, the frequency of using the first and second person in Vietnamese symbolic poetry occupies a high position. The article lists in "Vietnamese Poet" a total of 44 typical poems belonging to the symbolic schools: Loạn Thơ, Đài Đêm, Xuân Thu Nhã Tập and poets deeply influenced by symbolism. Of which, 34 poems appear in the third person. The first person is used in all poems. The second person appears in 13 poems. The third person only appears in 1 poem. There are 13 poems using “anh” and “em” to refer to the first and second person, the assignment of the second person is mainly done by “anh” and “em”. The author sees two reasons for the high frequency of first and second person in Vietnamese symbolic poetry in the 30th century: First, the appearance of the consciousness of “I” in the literary world. Poet Hoài Thanh in the article Vietnamese Poets

pointed out: "The New Poetry movement reflects the strong demand for freedom and self". Before that, literature only existed for the mass 'we', but now the liberated individual 'I' has begun to appear. When the word 'I' appeared in Vietnamese literature, it was as strange as a wanderer in another land. Because 'I' brought a concept that had never existed in this land — 'individual'." After "I" appeared in New Poetry, it brought many new values, representing the innovation of Vietnamese poetry. New Poetry poets all intentionally built an independent "I" entity that could not be copied. The consciousness of "I" also brought diverse forms of expression. "I" is the subject, an individual with normal personality and instincts, not an entity that is imposed and burdened with many obligations. Second, in the Vietnamese triadic pronoun system, the vocabulary expressing the connotations of the first and second person is much richer than that of the third person. This is beneficial for the language design and literary creation of poets. Poetry requires concise language but contains rich emotions, so the choice of words must be extremely precise, trying to achieve "practicing ideas with words". The vocabulary referring to the third person in Vietnamese is limited, and some words have negative connotations. For example, "he" in the concept of modern Vietnamese people, although it means "he", but it contains contempt. Symbolic poets always avoid reality, escape social responsibility, and immerse themselves in a dream world — where there are no human conflicts, only love sorrow and monotonous life. Therefore, they rarely use third-person pronouns with a contemptuous tone, but prefer to choose rich first- and second-person vocabulary to build their self-esteem world of poetry.

Personal pronouns also influenced the construction of poetics in Vietnamese symbolic poetry in the 1930s. Firstly, Vietnamese and modern Chinese grammar have many similarities, so the use of Vietnamese pronouns helps to increase the freedom and subjective consciousness of New Poetry — this does not need further discussion. Secondly, in the Vietnamese vocabulary system of personal pronouns, words with the meaning of "I" all have a certain nuance of social status, but this status symbol is different from the concept of male superiority and female inferiority, high and low nobility and low in ancient times. It is almost like a form of kinship, which can increase the interaction of lyrical subjects in poetry. For example, "anh" and "em" are two opposing pronouns, but they can simultaneously represent both the first person and the second person. In poetry, one side can be identified based on the other, when "anh" is the first person, "em" is often identified as the second lyrical subject in the poem. This strengthens the stability of the lyrical subject in poetry, while providing readers outside the text with a clear lyrical subject structure to penetrate into the text. For example, in Huy Can's poem "Ngâm ngụi":

"Em ơi! Hãy ngủ... anh hầu quạt đây.

Lòng anh mở với quạt này,
Trăm con chim mộng về bay đầu giường!"

Of course, the emotional nuances that Vietnamese personal pronouns carry also contribute to promoting emotions in the new Vietnamese symbolic poetry of the 1930s in a suitable way. "Thở ngôn chí, thơ duyên tình" is also a consistent tradition of Vietnamese poetry. The biggest difference between poetry and other literary genres is lyricism. Vietnamese symbolic poetry in the 1930s completely served the poet's spiritual world, in which the theme of love occupied a dominant position. The role of "anh" (referring to "me" or "you" male) and "em" (referring to "me" or "you" female) in the theme of love at this time became extremely important. When the author intentionally used "anh" and "em", the spread of emotions was done from the first step. "Anh" and "em" not only appeared with high frequency in symbolic poetry but also appeared very commonly in modern new poetry texts, especially love poems. This is enough to prove the importance of personal pronouns in building the poetic nature of the work. Perspectives on the Author's Image in Vietnamese and Chinese Symbolist Poetry

Chinese Symbolist Poetry - Gentle Femininity

The spiritual world of modernist poets in the 1930s was basically divided into three main areas: youthful melancholy, deep nostalgia for their homeland, and the plaintive sounds of the mundane world. The poetic realm they created was splendid, refined, and luxurious, while their poetic personalities and emotions were all inclined toward gentle, gentle beauty. Especially the group of poems that advocated emotions, their poems lacked argumentation and rationality, but the expression of emotions flowed like a flood. Therefore, from a gender perspective, modernist symbolist poetry in the 1930s had strong characteristics of feminine writing.

The poetry of Wen Tingjun and Li Shangyin expressed the delicate and sensitive psychological emotions of women. For example, in the poem "Ca Vu", the entire poem is written from the perspective of a dancer, expressing the obsession and importance of love of women. Vuong Mong once commented: "Li Shang Yin's creative mindset, his gender consciousness and gender psychology are worth studying. Sometimes he even has a bit of gender disorder, I highly doubt this [1, p.11]. "Wen Tingjun is good at writing about resentment in the boudoir, the image of women in his poems is often described directly and brilliantly. For example, in the poem "Nam Ca Tu • Tay cam chim anh vu", Wen Tingjun deeply portrayed the love desire of a resentful woman. The gentle temperament in the poems of Li Shang Yin and Wen Tingjun is a bit different. Li Shang Yin often plays a role in the poem, using the soul of a woman to describe the image of women in the text. Meanwhile, Wen Tingjun used a male soul to tell the resentment of women, from a male perspective to

describe their lives in detail. However, regardless of the author's gender perspective, their poetic images all show a gentle tone with women as the center. When receiving the poetic art of Wen Tingjun and Li Shangyin, modern poets also inherited this point, especially poets belonging to the sentimental group such as Dai Wangshu and He Qifang, whose feminine writing style is even more obvious. Dai Wangshu once used pen names such as "Mong Du", "Tin Phuong", "Tran Ngu Nguyet", "Thuong Nga", these pen names all have feminine meanings, showing that Dai Wangshu has a part of feminine feelings. In his poems, the image of women is often the main subject, or is composed from a woman's perspective. His poems are filled with romantic melancholy, loneliness and ambiguity. Readers of Dai Vong Thu's poems are often drawn into the gentle, feminine atmosphere, from which they can feel the romance of flowers and plants and the freedom of the soul. For example, in the poem "Dream autumn dream":

*"The distant shepherdess's sheep bells,
Falling the leaves gently.
Autumn dream is so gentle,
It is the graceful shepherdess's love.
It is my dream that comes quietly,
But carries a heavy past.
Oh, now, I feel cold,
A little cold, and a little sad."*

In the poem, the shepherdess is the central character, she is young and graceful. The entire autumn dream is the shepherdess's dream, her dream makes the poet recall the heavy past, perhaps remembering the past love, or lamenting the fading youth. That past makes "I" become sad and miserable. The female image is the "thread" that guides the emotions of the whole poem, "I" in the poem evokes sadness because of the shepherdess, "I" at this time is weak and sensitive. Dai Vong Thu controls "I" in the poem, so "I" also conveys Dai Vong Thu's sadness, he finds sympathy in the female image.

Another example is the poem "Tears of withered flowers", in the poem, "withered flowers cry in front of butterflies", this is a very delicate detail, reflecting the gentleness and deep feelings in Dai Vong Thu's heart. "Kieu le", "kieu phuong thoi", "huong le", "y diem" are a series of adjectives often used to describe women. Dai Vong Thu uses these images to describe herself, showing gentleness and weakness, this is the important basis of feminine writing. "Hoa tan" is "me", "buoc" is you. "Me" here is sadly crying, lamenting about the fading youth, pitying her own desolation, while you fly away, infatuated with someone else. A series of laments from "me" is like a woman who has been hurt by her lover, while her youth fades, she also loses the sweetness of the past.

Ha Ky Phuong's feminine writing style is generally very close to that of On Dinh Quan. Ly Kien Vu once commented that his poems are "mostly delicate

and have a bit of lingering" [3, p.88.], which is similar to the sophistication, splendid and meticulous in the poetry of Wen Tingjun. Jiang Ruo Shui also said that He Qi Fang had "heterosexual feelings". [4, p.171.] His early poetry had a very clear feminine image, some poems were composed with male main characters, but this male image often had a weak and lonely look, a feminized male image.

The female images in He Qi Fang's poetry, although there are resentful female characters in "Quan Son Nguyet", "Huu Tay Hong", but in the symbolic poems, the image of romantic young girls is portrayed more. For example:

*"Placed on a small grave,
Flowers blooming in the deep valley are the
most fragrant.
The morning dew that no one remembers is the
brightest.
I said you were happy, Tieu Linh Linh,
The stream has never reflected its clear
reflection.
You dreamed of green vines growing into the
window,
Small yellow flowers falling on your hair. The
story that the rain on the porch tells moves me,
I love loneliness, the lonely starlight.
I have tears like pearls of a young girl,
Often flowing out of nameless sadness.
I have days so beautiful that it makes me sad,
I have a death that is even more beautiful."*

The whole poem revolves around the image of a girl named "Tieu Linh Linh" who has passed away. "Flowers in the valley", "morning dew light", "clear stream" contrast with the "small grave" at the beginning of the poem. Ha Ky Phuong does not focus on the gloom of the grave, but everything he describes is bright and clear. This beauty and "Tieu Linh Linh" are a unified entity, only a pure and innocent girl can harmonize with the surrounding scenery. In the following verses, small yellow flowers fall on "Tieu Linh Linh", this image further highlights her innocence and loveliness. "Tieu Linh Linh" also has "tears like pearls", even her death is beautiful. "Tieu Linh Linh" is sentimental, but also lovely and pure, this is a self-feminized image in Ha Ky Phuong's imagination, related to closely related to the writing style about youth in his early poetry.

In the poem "Lac Sam Oan", Ha Ky Phuong's love for "my nhan phuong thao" is expressed more clearly. The main character in the poem compares himself to "a silk shirt", clearly "I" is a "I" with strong feminine qualities. "I" carries the mark that "you" left, those days were filled with sweetness and gentleness. However, in the end "you" took off "I", the sad and confused self almost forgot that winter was coming. Although we do not believe in your sweet words, but through the whole poem, we can feel that "you" are still

in "me". The image of the woman in "Lac Sam Oan" is also the feminized image that Ha Ky Phuong imagined, using the voice of a woman to express the sadness in love.

Whether it is classical poetry influenced by the tradition of classical poetry, or new poetry with the color of Western symbolism, it is always there is always a melancholy feminine breeze. Why does this happen? In the author's opinion, it is influenced by their own growing environment and the interplay between Eastern and Western poetic art, perhaps also influenced by the social environment. In ancient society, women had a low status, and were seen as the weaker side by men. When they encountered emotional sadness, they often faced it alone, daydreaming and imagining to comfort themselves. Meanwhile, men needed to be rational and tough. Therefore, when modern poets felt sad, perhaps they could only express their emotions from a feminine perspective to hide their inner weakness as men. The feminine writing style of "beautiful herbs" became a spiritual medicine to comfort their souls.

Vietnamese Symbolic Poetry - Lyrical Masculinity

Yin and Yang is an important category that explains the opposition and growth of all things in the ancient universe. The Book of Changes. He Ci Shang wrote: "The Book of Changes has the supreme ultimate, which gives birth to dual forces. Dual forces give birth to four images, four images give birth to eight trigrams." Lao Zi also said: "The Tao gives birth to one, one gives birth to two, two gives birth to three, three gives birth to all things. All things depend on Yin and contain Yang, and the energy flows together to become harmony." Modern Vietnamese linguist Tran Ngoc Them in his book *The Foundations of Vietnamese Culture* emphasized: "On the basis of clear opposition, from division and unification, Southeast Asians have expanded their thinking, taking Yin and Yang as the essence to establish opposing concepts and things. This process leads them to perceive the duality and transformation between Yin and Yang. [7, p. 56]". Influenced by China, Vietnam especially values the concept of Yin and Yang, especially in literature, the idea of Yin and Yang – hardness and softness is clearly expressed. Thai Huyen•Van pointed out: "Yin collects the substance, Yang disperses the text, the text is even, all things shine." The ancients emphasized the combination of softness and hardness as the foundation of excellent literature, but throughout the history of Vietnam and China, many poets leaned towards the gentle or strong style. The gentle style tends towards femininity, often choosing female images or love themes to portray gentle, weak beauty. Gentle poetry focuses on personal emotions, taking "small love" as the starting point, different from strong beauty – which emphasizes social responsibility.

In the realistic context of the 1930s, Vietnamese symbolist poetry deliberately avoided society, pursuing emotional freedom and portraying the pain or happiness of love. Taking "small love" as the center, symbolist poetry of this period is full of gentle beauty. For example: Bich Khe in *Tranh Loa The*: "Are you snow or your skin is covered with snow? / Are you a scent or a beauty that is fragrant? / Your eyes are shining with pearls, shaking with strange waves; / Tears are about to fall like jade chopsticks. / The dark night dreams on your hair. / A few drops of drunken moonlight linger on your lips."

Also like: "On that path, in disarray, - You already know - / Loves fade, dreams are shattered. / On that path, from the bottom of a thousand graves, / Old love will rise up to hold me back. / No, my dear, I have no more courage! / No! the source of love, the stream of tears has also dried up, / Please burn for me, in the fire of my eyes, / The little worries left on my lips." And Nothingness reflects loneliness: "The other night I stayed awake, alone in pain, / Hearing the sound of the hour passing, my heart was sad. / My friend was by my side, only a small flame / The lamp struggled against the deep night. / I trembled like a leaf, pale as winter, / My forehead was dripping with sweat, my eyes were bulging with tears. / Years passed, months passed, I arrived / Before the cold shore of nothingness".

Unlike China – where poetry often uses a feminine tone, Vietnamese symbolic poetry mainly takes the male perspective as the narrative axis. As scholar Dong Tieu Anh analyzed: "The narrator's words always contain a second literary subject or constantly change – it can be the hidden author, or the dialogue character [10, p.106]". Theorist Mikhail Bakhtin divided the author-character relationship into three types:

- i. The character controls the author: The author observes the world through the character's eyes.
- ii. The author controls the character: The character reflects the author's emotions and will.
- iii. The main character is the author: The unity between two subjects.

Applying Bakhtin's theory, it can be seen that Vietnamese symbolist poets often construct a masculine perspective as a means of reflecting the desire for "individual liberation" in the colonial context, while maintaining the dialogue between reality and fantasy. Let's look at an excerpt from the poem "Xa cach" by Xuan Dieu:

*"Let's put our heads together! Let's put our breasts together!
Let's mix our short and long hairs!
Our arms! Let's wrap our shoulders tightly!
Let's pour all our love into our eyes!
Let's hold our lips tightly together
Let me hear your pearly teeth;
In ecstasy, I will tell you: 'Closer! It's still so far away!'"*

This poem describes the attitude of men and women towards love, they are passionate, bold and liberal. The poem "Xa cach" clearly takes "he" as the narrator and also the main character of emotions. The main character is a young man, in "Distant", he pursues "self-liberation", trying to escape from the constraints of worldly love, which is consistent with the desire for a new life of young people under the influence of the new wave of Western thought. Xuan Dieu through the character "he" to observe social changes in the objective world. At the same time, the bold and liberal expression in the poem indirectly reflects Xuan Dieu's deep acceptance of the concept of "openness" and "freedom" in the new poetry movement. Xuan Dieu, as a young man and also a male poet, the relationship between him and the main character is a perfect combination of Bakhtin's first and second conclusions.

For the case where the main character is the author, we can analyze the poem "This is Vy Da village" by Han Mac Tu:

*"Why don't you come back to Vi village?
Look at the sunlight on the areca trees, the new
sunlight.
Whose garden is so lush, green as jade
Bamboo leaves cover the square face.
The wind follows its own path, the clouds follow
their own paths,
The water is sad, the cornflowers sway
Whose boat is moored at the moonlit river-
bank,
Will it bring the moon back in time tonight?"*

In "This is Vy Da village", the narrator is an invisible "I", from the perspective of "I" describing the beautiful scenery of his homeland and missing "you". However, the main character in the poem is "you", and "I" is just the narrator. When considering the author's biography, Han Mac Tu's real name is Nguyen Trong Tri, his ancestors' surname is Pham in Thanh Hoa, later because of committing a crime, Han Mac Tu's grandfather Pham Boi had to move his family to Hue and changed his surname to Nguyen after his mother. Later, Han Mac Tu's father, Nguyen Van Toan, got married and gave birth to Han Mac Tu. When he grew up, Han Mac Tu followed his parents to many places such as Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh. Living in such circumstances, Han Mac Tu's feelings for his homeland were naturally very deep. Vy Da village is in Hue, and Hue is Han Mac Tu's hometown, but the time he spent in his hometown was too short, he could only express his feelings through poetry. "You" in this poem is the image of the author, so the main character is the author. Homesickness is

genuine, is a genuine memory. Han Mac Tu, as a male poet, observed and recorded the homeland scene from a male perspective, bringing nostalgia and homeland scenery into poetry, in a feminine melancholy mood, the feelings of a man wandering far from home.

CONCLUSION

Sino-Vietnamese Symbolist poetry in the 1930s showed clear cultural differences in the use of personal pronouns and gender expression. Chinese poets, through the continuous use of the first person "I" and the third person "she", projected personal emotions onto the feminine image, forming a poetic tradition imbued with "gentle femininity". Meanwhile, Vietnamese poets built a gentle beauty from a masculine perspective through the "you/me" dialogic structure, both reflecting the indigenous kinship culture and expressing the aspiration for "individual liberation" of the New Poetry movement. This difference not only stems from the characteristics of the language system (such as the richness of Vietnamese pronouns), but is also associated with the path of receiving modernity of the two countries: China was directly influenced by Western individualism and the Vernacular reform, while Vietnam harmonized tradition with modernity, indigenous with foreign in the colonial context.

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