



Research Summary

According to the intended research concept, our project will consist of 2 parts: translation and Comparative study of *Shōsetsu Shinzui* (*The Essence of the Novel*) by Tsubouchi Shōyō and *Discourse on Novel* by Pham Quynh.

In the first part, *Shōsetsu Shinzui* has been translated into Vietnamese from the 130-page English version, *The Essence of the Novel*, by Nanette Twine. In addition to the most faithful conveyance possible of both content and attached notes in the English text, we have also added necessary notes and annotations suitable for Vietnamese readers.

Moreover, we have compared the translation with the original Japanese version 小説神髓 to make sure that the translation of terminologies and idioms can be closest to the meanings intended by the author.

Furthermore, in light of the discovery of a Chinese translation by 刘振瀛 in 1988 (first published in China in 1991, reprinted in 2010 - 人民文学出版社, 出版年: 1991年; 上海译文出版社, 出版年: 2010年4月), the Vietnamese translation has also been edited based on comparison with this valuable material - this was not included in the original plan.

The second part presents the following issues:

1. Tsubouchi Shōyō between/in/and a period of reform in Japan.
2. *Shōsetsu Shinzui*: main content and what contributes to its place in the history of Japanese literature
3. *Discourse on Novel* (*Bàn về tiểu thuyết*) by Pham Quynh: the author and the context in which the work was born.
4. *Shōsetsu Shinzui* and *Discourse on Novel*: intersections and differences.
5. Some explanation in lieu of Epilogue

On the basis of contents comparison between the two essays, our research indicates that with regards to the novel genre, two authors Tsubouchi Shōyō and Pham Quynh share a special interest, a notion of the position and the special role of novels in social and literary life. According to them, a new model of the novel can only materialize in the future when writers succeed in creating the appropriate modern style and prosody.

However, specific historical circumstances of each country, as well as personal experiences, have created differences. Tsubouchi Shōyō does not have a fixed definition of novel, but many variations: from the general development history of art, from comparisons with poetry, music, painting, and theater. The main difference, in our view, between *The Essence of Novel* and *Discourse on Novel*, is the way in which novel is viewed. Separating novel as an art form from novel as a tool of social morality, Tsubouchi has the basis to penetrate into deeper aspects of novel-writing techniques. Requiring novel to be a true art according to his proposed method has provided it with the passport to enter society in a stronger position. At the same time, looking at novel from the development perspective of different art genres also allows Tsubouchi to break out of the core understanding of novel based on formal length (short novel, romance) as viewed by Pham Quynh and Chinese writers in this period. Tsubouchi sees novel as a progress of human art, enhancing the spiritual value of humanity. This is not only a renewed understanding of the nature of this genre in Japanese tradition, but also the spotlight in Japan's way of looking at novel in comparison with other countries in the same cultural region at the time.

Current data has not been sufficient to warrant a direct influence of *Shōsetsu Shinzui* on *Discourse on Novel*, but with the aforementioned similarities and differences, it can be said that the renewal of national culture and literature following Western models was the general trend of East Asian countries in the late 19th and early 20th century. A new literary paradigm was formed based on the principle of constructing a completely Westernized model but with a harmonious East-West combination on secondary levels such as the concept of beauty, literary genres, writing skills In this new model, novel is an utmost essential genre.

Sharing a common concern, Pham Quynh and Tsubouchi Shōyō bestowed upon later generations two valuable works: *Shōsetsu Shinzui* and *Discourse on Novel*. Both are seen as the first modern literary critiques, and hold special value for the development of modern novel in each country. At the same

time, our research also reaffirms the impacts that historical, social, cultural, and educational frames have on the level of intellectual awareness of each critics.

The entire findings of this study will be published in 2012 in the form of a 350-page book, consisting of:

- The Vietnamese translation
- The research
- Appendix: a scan of the Japanese text

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

- Pham Quynh's Concept of "Novel" seen from the recognition of the literary genre in modern Eastern Asia. Paper for the International Conference *The Process of Literature Modernization of Japan and of Countries in the Area affected by Han Characters and Culture: Vietnam, China and Korea*. Held by University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, in Ho Chi Minh City, on March 18-19, 2010 (supported by Japan Foundation).
- The Shift in Idea/Thought of Novel/Fiction in Modern East Asian Literatures. Lecture for Graduated Classes in University of Social Sciences and Humanities (National Universities in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City, and in Thai Nguyen) in 2010, 2011, ...

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

Book will be published in 2012