

Vietnamese Reportage in the Period 1932-1945 Viewed from the Case of Trong Lang



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ABSTRACT: As a genre located between literature and journalism, with its special advantages, reportage has delved into the most updated, pressing, and painful issues of the hustle and bustle of contemporary and fast-paced life. quickly created a vibrant, loud, and widespread reportage writing movement from South to North. Among the team of talented and dedicated pioneering journalists, Trong Lang is the most typical pioneering reportage writer of the period 1932-1945. Through his writings, readers can imagine the picture of Vietnamese society before the August Revolution. With that meaning, the article focuses on clarifying the content of Trong Lang's reportage, thereby affirming his contributions to the reportage genre and affirming his position as a foundation builder for journalism and literature Modern Vietnamese studies.

KEYWORDS: reporter, Trong Lang, Modern Vietnamese literature, period 1932-1945

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of reportage in the development of Vietnamese literature from 1930-1945 in general and critical realist literature in particular is important. With the sharp and alert gaze of journalists, reportage has actively and promptly provided literature with valuable documents from which writers can create valuable works of art.

As a genre located between literature and journalism, with its special advantages, reportage has delved into the most updated, pressing, and painful issues of the hustle and bustle of contemporary and fast-paced life. quickly created a vibrant, loud, and widespread reportage writing movement from South to North. In particular, among the team of talented and dedicated pioneering journalists, we cannot forget the face of Trong Lang, who has been devoted to the reportage genre all his life. He is the most typical pioneer reportage writer of the period 1932-1945. Through the author's pages, readers can imagine the picture of Vietnamese society before the August Revolution.

With that meaning, the article focuses on clarifying the content of Trong Lang's reportage, thereby affirming his contributions to the reportage genre and affirming his position as a foundation builder for journalism and literature Modern Vietnamese studies.

2. CONTENT

2.1. Background of Vietnamese reportage in the period 1932-1945

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, due to contact with the West, a system of printing houses and publishing houses appeared in Vietnam... It was these modern printing means that made an important contribution. in promoting the birth and rapid development of journalism. This is also a favorable condition for reportage to arise and become a large movement. But the development of journalism in general, and reportage in particular, in the period 1932-1945, was not due to technical reasons but mainly due to political, economic, and socio-cultural conditions. festival.

Regarding politics and society: After taking over all military power, the French colonialists established a harsh rule regime, based on the power of violence and a policy of ignorance in our country. The millennia-old feudal regime has been replaced by a semi-feudal colonial regime. The ruling apparatus of the French colonialists was present everywhere, while the class of kings and mandarins were essentially just puppets, nominal and insubstantial, obeying the control of the French colonialists. In the 1920s, in our country, smoking parlors, brothels, and casinos sprang up everywhere. People's lives are already deadlocked, and people around them are even more cramped and stuffy. A society with traditional values is suddenly disturbed and turned upside down. Following the invaders' heels is the new lifestyle of Westerners. They are excited and happy to participate in the youthful and vibrant Europeanization movement with bicycle racing, sports competitions, beauty contests...

In short, Vietnamese society in the 1930s was filled with events and incidents in all aspects, manifested in all forms. Providing up-to-date, accurate information is not the forte of novels, poetry, or plays. Only reportage can cover a wide range and

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delve deeply into hot and pressing issues that are the center of attention of public opinion and suit the tastes of the majority of Vietnamese readers who are familiar with the issue with literary and artistic works. Therefore, reportage was born.

2.2. Author Trong Lang and the position of the reportage writer in the Vietnamese literary and journalistic village in the period 1932-1945

Trong Lang's real name is Tran Tan Cuu, born in 1905 in Hanoi. Before the Revolution, he wrote newspapers and essays. During the resistance war against the French, he lived in the temporarily occupied area in Hanoi and was a collaborator in newspapers: Democracy, New Day, Thoi Thoi, For the Country, Today, Phong Hoa, Hanoi Tan Van... After 1954, he migrated to the South, living in Saigon. Trong Lang is a writer specializing in reportage writing with typical compositions:

- Running in the village, Today newspaper, Hanoi 1935.
- Hanoi is miserable, Today newspaper, Hanoi 1937.
- Being a citizen, Today newspaper, Hanoi 1938.
- Making money, Today newspaper, Hanoi 1939.
- Traditional healer, Hanoi Tan Van newspaper, Hanoi 1941.
- Tet in people's hearts, Hanoi Tan Van newspaper, Hanoi 1941.
- Sticky rice with meat, Today newspaper, Hanoi 1945.

Among the team of people who built the foundation for modern Vietnamese literature in general, and for the reportage genre in particular, it is impossible not to mention Trong Lang - a pioneering reportage writer, and a journalist specializing in writing reports and stories. is a person who has a sense of humanity very early. In the article Trong Lang, a pioneer reportage writer, Tran Thi Tram commented: "Trong Lang is the most typical journalistic face of the period 1932 - 1945, in the true sense of the word, because, through his writing pages author's work, posterity can see all the characteristics of the reportage of that time" [6, p.274]. His reports delve into many thorny issues, the dark side of social life in urban and rural areas: the problem of youth debauchery, the dirty tricks of mandarins, and the evil of theft. hooliganism, corruption, gambling, smoking... are reflected from different perspectives. His reports are panoramic pictures, revealing the current situation of many pressing and vibrant issues that are at the center of public opinion. With enthusiasm and love for his profession, with tenacity and hard work, Trong Lang has left behind valuable writings.

2.3. Content of Trong Lang's reportage

2.3.1. *The miserable and dark life of miserable people*

If the writers in the Tu Luc Van Doan group tend to poeticize reality, or avoid reality with dreams, longing for a once glorious past, or falling asleep in love, intoxicated with religion realistic writers, especially reportage writers, have always sought to approach and receive all the complex sounds of life. Trong Lang is one of the pioneering and proactive journalists on this issue. His reporter's lens often scanned quite widely and described in detail the misery and suffering of miserable people.

Reading Trong Lang's reportage, one encounters many, many miserable people who are impoverished. These are children to old people, women or men, from the poor driver to the mischievous prostitute, the character of Uncle Th in "Be a people" (Làm dân), Nhieu Tr, the Slut in "Doctor" (Thầy lang) to those who don't names like the two boys in the work "In the running village" (Trong làng chạy) to eat the stolen cakes or the boy doing circus acts like a strange human-animal... Each person has their situation but they all share the same thing. poverty, poverty to the ultimate level of destitution. Characters in all of Trong Lang's reports are always chased to the end by poverty. They go "from one hungry place to another". No matter where they go, they cannot escape poverty and suffering. "Their life is a long hunger" [5, p.203]. In the reportage "In the running village", the reader cannot forget the sight of a child "about thirteen or fifteen years old, ragged, hungry and miserable" [5, p.555]. Even when they were so fragile, they had nothing to wear. "Two beggar children, a girl, at least ten years old, whose dirty clothes could have scored a feat of mending, and a boy, about the same age, naked."

With Trong Lang, he not only paid attention to the character's appearance but also paid attention to the details and events, and they all seemed to speak. As an enthusiastic, aggressive writer with a sense of responsibility towards his profession, the author always discovers: the suffering and misery of people deprived of food and hunger appear clearly. These are people living crowded and shaky in cramped slums, wandering around the muddy, dirty, dark corners of the suburbs. They live from all kinds of jobs: working as hired laborers, selling baskets, selling water, rice, pho etc to people who, because they are so hungry, have to process clay, jackfruit peels, areca stems, longan seeds etc can fill your stomach on flooded days. All are the embodiment of poverty, hunger, and suffering. Impoverishment has made people alienated, standing precariously between dangerous boundaries on the edge of the abyss. Because of extreme poverty, dogs were beaten to death, people buried them, but people still took them away for meat because this dog was "lucky" and not "poisonous". Obviously, being too hungry turned into an overdose. And Mr. K, who almost followed the author throughout the journey, said more clearly: "Nhieu Tr's dead beef, my dead dog's meat is still fresh meat. The dead buffalo meat was buried a day ago, but they still dug up the ground to find a leg to bring home to cook and eat plums for a few meals." [5, p. 292]. Another child of a first lady in a relationship. After being a prostitute, his mother left him for a maid, "so he lived all day long, lacking food and clothes. The maid kept leaving the door open, leaving him alone with the dog,

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or sending him to her Neighbors. Then he got used to it: eating dirt, chewing bricks, catching cockroaches, catching grasshoppers, biting dogs" [5, p.349]. Because of hunger, people do not care about anything There is nothing to eat to survive. The thin border between humans and animals seems to no longer exist. In Hanoi's miserable situation, many children are thrown out on the streets, living in the streets, without anyone to care for them squirrels, no one to protect or protect them. Their stomachs "do not contain rice, but contain worms. They eat indiscriminately, whatever they see, as long as their stomach is always empty.

In short, describing the miserable fate of the working people through food, hunger, and poverty, Trong Lang's reportage has denunciation value, a picture of the people's life and reality labor before the Revolution. This is reflected realistically, vividly and attractively.

2.3.2. *Exposing evils in society*

Trong Lang's reportage not only describes and reflects the miserable and poor lives of working people, but he also points out the reasons why people fall into the extreme situation of having to live a temporary, shaky life, and sometimes even die. Because poverty is the harassment and "dirty eating" of officials. In the report "Being a people", Trong Lang paid attention to "the price of degrees". If you want to get a signature on the ID card, if you have money, "about five cents, that ID card is lucky to be on top." The ID card from the "bottom" position suddenly moves to "top" which is a "lucky" thing for the client. [5, p.41].

Stealing what is available is not enough, the ruling mandarins also seek to blatantly exploit the people to create reasons for their gain. The character Nhieu Tr in the reportage "Hon Dat" or Huong Dinh was just caught stealing corn and had to be punished. Knowing that Nhieu Tr was wronged, the elders still punished him so they could have fun. Because "the elders first think about sticky rice and meat and then think about stealing" [5, p.59]. With power in their hands, people can change white for black. An entire machine chained together, relying on common blood and food, together they exploit innocent people. Thus, along with the ruling class, mandarins, servants, and soldiers at mandarins and public places, they have contributed significantly to pushing people into miserable and destitute situations. Up to now, corruption is still a wake-up call for the whole society, not just a problem of one time.

Trong Lang is not the leader in exposing the evil nature of contemporary society, but he knows how to direct his pen to describe and reflect the painful evils in life that destroy every hour and minute. people, destroying society through the depiction of the evils of drug addiction. Anyone who wants to smoke must at least have a coin. "Five cents a pill to cook, and one cent to pay for lamp oil. Sometimes two guys pay each other three cents a month and make a few temporary cigarettes to ease their addiction" [5, p.240]. If you don't have enough money and you're in a pinch, you'll have to temporarily drink a bowl of "nectar" water. It's a soup made with lampshades, candlestick rags, broken pipe pieces, and uncleaned boxes of mussel intestines etc. In general, "dirty things of the table with opium vapor".

Trong Lang's reportage delved deeply into the fate of each person caught in the evil of drug addiction. To get money, they go begging. Mr. T went to beg and was given a lot of clothes, beautiful hats, and beautiful scarves. Because of his addiction, he sold everything to smoke [5, p.233]. As for Mr. H, just because he had no money to smoke opium, he forced his wife to go to a brothel to work as a prostitute to get money to buy drugs to satisfy her addiction. It is opium that makes people miserable and miserable. They no longer think about personality or love, they only selfishly think about their feeling of euphoria and happiness when "letting their souls go" in the white smoke. Old people smoke, and young people, men, and women also smoke opium. Even monks, representing Buddhist teachings, are also caught up in these evils: "Alcohol is absorbed, drugs brought him back to the human realm. The skin on his face has stretched out. He was cheerful and easy-going like a carpenter. There was still a little bit of "the sadness left behind" when he took off his coat and threw it in a corner. Especially when he pulled out two small bottles containing a black substance from his pocket and solemnly placed them at the top of the lamp tray. Alcohol combines with opium in the bloodstream, exerting a power equal to that of a revitalizing drug. His half-closed eyes and two long tails indicate that he wants to appreciate his human life [5, 301]. At this time, the character, virtue, and standards of a normal person are gone, leaving only the gestures, actions, and words of the brown fairy's loyal disciple.

In short, with the urging of his heart, enthusiasm, and passion of a reportage writer, Trong Lang focused on countering the dark reality of contemporary society. He has impersonated all kinds of human lives, incarnated in all dark caves and alleys. The scenes of life that appear one after another in the newspapers are the direct product of a feudal colonial society with cruel exploitative policies that pushed people into impoverishment. His reports contain a truly vast amount of reality that can be said to be equal to many reports of other authors combined. He mentioned almost every problem and evil happening in society. His writing pages are filled with the breath of life. Those are sharp indictments filled with the humanitarian spirit that Trong Lang reflected in the period 1932-1945.

3. CONCLUSION

Regarding literature and journalism, Trong Lang contributed to laying a solid foundation for the development of the next generation. With selected topics and reflections, Trong Lang has greatly enriched the content of reportage from the period 1932 - 1945. On the other hand, Trong Lang's contribution is that he always has the attitude of looking straight at the truth. Therefore, his reports are often highly combative. Trong Lang did not hesitate to expose the evil nature of society at that time. The events, the

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issues he raised, the miserable scenes of life, the straying, the deceitful tricks, the blatant acts of "day robbery" form a chain with very tightly connected links. Together with Ngo Tat To, Vu Trong Phung, Nguyen Dinh Lap, Trong Lang forever deserves a glorious position in the team of pioneering reportage writers of the early 20th century, who contributed to building the foundation for journalism. and modern Vietnamese literature.

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