

The Role of Literary Books in Protecting the Party's Ideological Foundation and Preventing Wrongful and Hostile Views

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Abstract: *Today in Vietnam, literary books account for a large share of the market and are accessible to a wide range of readers. However, they also may contain sensitive political, moral, religious, and aesthetic issues that are cleverly set up under the “veil” of words. Editing and completing literary book manuscripts is of great significance in popularizing and orienting cultural and ideological work, helping to protect the Party’s ideological foundation and preventing wrong and hostile views.*

Key words: *literary books, the Party’s ideological foundation.*

As a form of social consciousness, literature reflects vivid aspects of life. Literary reception also holds an inevitable rule: a text is considered a true literary work only when it is materialized and reaches readers’ hands. The truth of literature does not rest in the authors’ consciousness. Literary books are therefore born to meet the inevitable demands of society, to convey content related to literature and to serve different readers.

1. The role of literary books in social life

It can be said that literary books play an important role in social and cultural life. Literature inspires thinking among its audiences, affecting readers mainly through emotion, aesthetics, and sometimes through the direct inspiration of images. Literature is a creative product of a subject who has voice, and a cultural and psychological identity of his country. Each author can use literature as a tool to reflect on his or her nation in the most profound and impressive way. Literary books therefore may not only have a positive influence on an individual, but they also have the potential to preserve the values that constitute the identity of a community.

From literary works, readers can, for instance, gain rich scientific knowledge about history, customs, geography, the environment, and social life, especially about people in different countries. Balzac’s *Lost Illusions* (in Vietnamese “*Tan Tro Doi*”) provides a panoramic overview of 19th-

century French society. Lev Tolstoy's novel *War and Peace* demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the social and spiritual history of Russian people. The *Tale of Kieu* by Nguyen Du, considered a great collection of Vietnamese literature in the 18th century, provides a profound picture of society and the people under the old regime.

Literary books not only help increase readers' understanding of various topics, but also offer everyone the opportunity for escapism from their very different lives. When an individual experiences the colorful aftertaste of fates in literary works, their personal life can become richer as a result. For example, through different works of literature, we know the Russian people and their country are warm-hearted and open-minded; the Chinese people are portrayed as quiet and profound; The Vietnamese people are kind and self-forgetful, and such. Literature has the power to change human thoughts and emotions. It can bring the sharing of ideas, encouragement, and many aspirations to the soul. It can also enrich people's emotional life. Therefore, literary books can help people understand and live with life's spectrum of emotions. When we read a good book, we may love life more, understand and sympathize more with the people around us; we may get angry and condemn the bad and learn how to purify our souls. Literary books become a source of positive energy to motivate people, guiding us to truth, goodness, and beauty in life.

Currently in Vietnam there are many agencies and businesses involved in publishing literary books, including a number of specialized literature publishers such as: Writers Association Publishing House, Literature Publishing House, Ho Chi Minh's City Arts Publishing House, Youth Publishing House, to name a few. Some publishers are also interested in developing literary books in their catalogues, such as: Labor Publishing House, People's Public Security Publishing House, Women's Publishing House, Kim Dong Publishing House, etc. In addition, several companies and bookstores are also engaging in literary books such as: Alpha Books, Nha Nam Books, and Thai Ha Books. Many private companies have cooperated with publishers to exploit the copyright, edit and grant publishing licenses for literary books. It is impossible not to mention that some magazines and newspapers also indirectly participate in the publication of literary works (by publishing poems, short stories, and memoirs for instance) such as: Military's Arts magazine, Youth's News, and Tuoi Tre Newspaper.

Thus, the participation of many agencies and units in publishing literary books will create diversity in the book market, since they occupy a significant

market share in publishing activities, becoming a type of commodity that is attractive and has a large and diverse number of potential customers.

2. Literary books indirectly express political views

Each type of book has different political manifestations. *Scientific and technical* books contribute to fulfilling political requirements in the economic and technical fields because economic or technical development is also one of the urgent tasks of our Party and State. *Political and policy* books refer to political viewpoints, principles, and measures to directly serve the struggle on the ideological front, lead and determine models and goals of social development according to politically oriented *Literature and art* books, often through artistic images, which may indirectly express political views and orient public opinion to follow the path that the author called for. In literary books, the author does not “straighten out” their political views, but use the polysemy and symbolism of artistic language to express an idea. Literary books therefore do not always promote loud words that are dogmatic, rigid, and blunt about political views, but can be in favor of covert communication through images and sophisticated metaphor.

Nguyen Dinh Chieu emphasized the role and responsibility of the writer in the midst of chaos through his buoyant poems:

*How many Daos (morality) are carried, the boat is not shabby
Stabbing some crooks, the pen is not evil”*

(Exclamation on Dao)

To Huu praised the revolutionary ideals and enlightenment of the communists with clever and powerful metaphors:

*From then on, I was filled with summer sunshine
The sun of truth shines through the heart
My soul is a flower garden
Very fragrant and full of birds singing*

(From that moment)

The characters in Trang The Hy's works, from Thu in *Warm Rain* to Chau in *The Thirteenth Wound*, Loan in *Short Flight of a Cycle of Reincarnation* are all women who represent the sacrifice of life and personal interests for a great cause and to contribute to the country. They endured brutal torture, but their patriotism remained unwavering: “On the face full of bruises, a strand of tangled hair was still stuck to the left cheek with a smear of dried blood that had turned brown. On that face, the eyes did not emit vision but emitted sparks of hatred and icy streams of contempt” (*Short Flight of a Cycle of Reincarnation*).

Under the pen of Nguyen Ngoc Tu, war is not recreated fiercely or majestically from an epic perspective but is gently mentioned as a return of a bygone era, a mark of tradition and fire of patriotism that is passed from generation to generation. In the short story *The Unextinguished Lamp*, Mr. Hai Tuong is invited to the Committee every year to tell stories about the war, stories that are so repetitive that his granddaughter knows every little detail by heart. Many people around him said Mr. Hai was “crazy”, but to his granddaughter, he was the embodiment of history, a witness of what had passed. The granddaughter accepted his stories consciously and excitedly: He told her that the reason why the mud of this country is salty is because a lot of the blood and bones of uncles, aunts, and uncles have been spilled. Certainly, there is also the blood of the teacher and the uprising brothers. He told her how to live like a mangrove tree with its chest out in the middle of the swamp and talk about it. Tuoi feels it is her duty to remember what her grandfather said. When he passed away, she volunteered to narrate, naturally and clearly, the war stories that he told. Reading these pages of Nguyen Ngoc Tu’s writing, we see that a strong patriotic inspiration has been aroused, like a lamp that never goes out and is passed down from generation to generation.

3. The work of editing literary books is to protect the Party’s ideological foundation and prevent wrong and hostile views

In fact, hostile forces often take advantage of the multifaceted nature of literature to set up reactionary ideas, attack our Party and the regime and spread false information through two-faced images. The line between wrong and right, uniqueness and political loopholes is often fragile. That creates considerable challenge and pressure in the work of editing literary books. Without understanding the characteristics of literature, editors may easily fall into individualism, arbitrarily make inferences, and impose on the author, or editors carelessly ignore works that propagate deviant political views. The book *Farm Stories* contained deviant ideas and implicitly opposed socialism and was revoked in the Soviet Union. Recently, this book was translated and published in Vietnam and received positive reviews. The publication of this book is an act of deliberately propagating hostile and false views. The book was withdrawn shortly after its release. Do Hoang Dieu’s *Sleeping Shadows* borrowed the polysemy of literature to promote distorted ideas about national culture, promoting the mentality of weakness and reliance on other countries. Initially, the book was praised and paved the way by a number of famous writers, causing a lot of mixed

opinions. After some time, discovering errors in this work, the Publishing Department quickly issued a decision to recall and ban circulation. The book *Tay Hung Vuong* defamed leaders and high-ranking officials of the State, as a way to secretly sabotage the leadership apparatus, and was also quickly banned from circulation.

Thus, literary language with its polysemy and connotation can make it difficult for editors to identify and separate “problematic” details and words. At that time, the editor needs to be very alert and sensitive to cross out inappropriate passages and make suggestions for changes to the author.

In short, to protect the Party’s ideological foundation - protecting the Party’s soul and lifeblood, the propaganda/protection and struggle front according to Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW is identified as an important leading task of the entire Party, entire army, and entire people. Literary book publishing activities also play a significant role in the struggle and rejection of wrong and hostile forces and viewpoints. Literary book editors need to have the correct literary concept based on the combination of the Party’s ideological guidelines and the true artistic content value of the work. That is the guideline for them to carry out all activities in all stages of the publishing industry./.

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