



The Impression of Existentialism in Nguyen Quang Thieu's Poetry from the Artistic Perspective

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Abstract. This article studies the influence of existentialism in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, especially the characteristics in the way he exploits the issues of freedom, loneliness, and human inner conflicts. Through images, symbols and language, Nguyen Quang Thieu depicts a world full of instability and contradictions, where people have to face the presence of death and the meaninglessness of life. His works reflect existentialism not only in content but also in artistic form, with special poetic structures, the use of metaphorical and symbolic language. The article also points out that, through poetry, Nguyen Quang Thieu not only shows the influence of existentialism but also shows a humanistic view of humanity, with efforts to find meaning and hope in a complex and challenging world.

Keywords: Existentialism, Vietnamese Poetry, Nguyen Quang Thieu.

1 Introduction

Existentialism, with its focus on freedom, loneliness, and human inner conflicts, has had a profound influence on many fields of art, including literature and poetry. Nguyen Quang Thieu, one of the representative writers of contemporary Vietnamese literature, has shown clear traces of existentialism in his works, especially in poetry. His works often focus on questions about the meaning of existence, the confrontation with death, and the precariousness of humans in the modern world. This article will analyze and clarify the traces of existentialism in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry in terms of art, thereby exploring the depth of thought and emotion that he brings to readers.

2 Research Methodology

The research is carried out based on the combination of three main approaches, aiming to clarify the presence and expression of existential thought in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry.

- Text analysis method: The focus of the research is the analysis of Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetic works in terms of poetics, with special attention paid to language structure, artistic images and thematic systems. This analysis aims to discover and explain the expressions of existential thought through thematic content and art expressing human existence, existential anxiety, death and the sense of absurdity.

- Theoretical approach: The research applies the fundamental concepts of existential philosophy as a theoretical basis, mainly from the thoughts of Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus and Martin Heidegger. Existential philosophical categories are used as an analytical tool to compare with corresponding manifestations in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, thereby determining the level and form of reception of existentialist thought in his works.
- Comparative method: To strengthen the argument and highlight the unique characteristics of Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, the study conducts selective comparisons with a number of contemporary poets or poets with a tendency to create works influenced by existentialism. This comparison allows to identify similarities and differences, and at the same time contributes to clarifying creativity and personal identity in the process of assimilating philosophical thought into poetic practice.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Theoretical basis of the topic

Vietnamese poetry has been the subject of research interest of many scientific works. The system of monographs, reports, scientific articles, theses, dissertations... on this subject is very rich. In general, these works mainly focus on researching the stages of development of Vietnamese poetry, its outstanding characteristics (in terms of concept, inspiration, poetics...) and focus on studying some typical authors and works. In in-depth research works on poetry such as *Vietnamese Poetry: Research and Innovation (1975 - 2000)* (Nguyen Viet Chien, 2007), *Modern Vietnamese Poetry, Process and Phenomenon* (Nguyen Dang Diep, 2014), *Some Issues of Vietnamese Poetry 1975 - 2000* (Pham Quoc Ca)... we see that researchers mainly evaluate the achievements and contributions of modern poets, including mentioning Nguyen Quang Thieu's works in terms of content or art, studying Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetics. Most comprehensive works on modern Vietnamese poetry, when summarizing the appearance, achievements, and characteristics of modern Vietnamese poetry, mention the presence and affirm the achievements of Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry. Existentialism became a popular ideological trend in Germany in the 1920s of the 20th century. It was not until the mid-1940s that the term "existentialism" was first used by the French philosopher Gabriel Mareet. Then, it was used by J.P.Sartre, a typical existentialist philosopher, in his speech on November 29, 1945 in Paris. From the book *Existentialism is a Humanism* by J.P.Sartre, existentialism became famous and spread quickly, attracting the attention of intellectuals and literary forums at that time. The birth of existentialism is said to have originated directly from the contradictions of capitalist society. The capitalist mode of production pursuing maximum profit has pushed people into a state of alienation. The devastation of the world war along with the negative aspects of society have pushed people into a deep crisis in their spiritual life (Aristotle, 2007). On the other hand, the fact that Western countries attach importance to the role of science and technology has caused people to fall into a state of abandonment or underestimation of the spiritual life. Existentialism takes the central object of reflection as the social existence

of the individual human being, and is concerned with the fate of human beings in modern society. That is what has made it quickly attract the attention of scientists. In Vietnam, existentialism appeared and had a popular and lively life in both reality and literature in the South in the 60s of the 20th century, and has truly become a trend that is still being interested in research activities today. In the North, before 1986, existentialism was only mentioned as an object of criticism on the level of life, philosophy, culture or literature. Since 1986, we have witnessed the emergence of existentialism as an irresistible necessity of the existential spirit in social life, in human thoughts, and in literature. The existential spirit has become an entity in contemporary Vietnamese poetry. This is clearly shown in the works of poets such as Nguyen Quang Thieu, Mai Van Phan, etc. When going through war with losses and injuries, the need to find oneself, to find true freedom is an endless desire of people in the consciousness of digging deep into the ego. People express their anxiety, torment, and worry about their fate as the awakening of personal consciousness, the desire to find the essential self. Researcher Tran Hoai Anh (2009) affirmed that the essence of the existential tendency in Vietnamese literary creation in general and in poetry from the renovation to the present in particular is literature in search of the lost self, the main content of which is the anxiety and torment about fate thanks to the awakening of personal consciousness, the desire to find the essential self. And poetry explores human beings in a complex and mysterious depth, so poetry is suitable for the mission of affirming the ego. It can be seen that the ego of contemporary poetry is the ego. Especially when people are conscious of their ego, they worry more about the absurdity of life, and feel the loneliness in life more deeply. And as a matter of course, the more aware of loneliness, the more they desire to rise up. Many contemporary Vietnamese poets are interested in private life, delving deeply into discovering the laws and manifestations of human destiny in everyday life. After 1986, a series of poets appeared who innovated and dared to speak up the truths that are sometimes naked but related to human destiny. With categories such as loneliness, essence, nothingness, sexuality... being expressed by contemporary poetry. This has brought a new look to Vietnamese poetry and demonstrated the influence of the existentialist poetry movement in the world. This has given Vietnamese poetry a new look and demonstrated the influence of the existentialist poetry movement in the world.

Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is a manifestation of existential thought, concerned with the fate and thoughts of people in specific situations, helping people understand themselves, escape the harsh limits of monotony and meaninglessness to find the meaning of life. Along with the appearance of poetry collections from the early 90s, poet Nguyen Quang Thieu's style has gradually been shaped through efforts to create a unique world of poetic art. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is a special phenomenon. For readers, including the majority of creative circles, his poetry is difficult to understand. Therefore, the artistic innovation in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry has been recognized through extremely rich writings. The debates and comments on the special poetic phenomenon of Nguyen Quang Thieu have formed a group of quite interesting articles.

Along with the harsh reviews, there were a series of articles encouraging the exploration and discovery of poet Nguyen Quang Thieu. The appearance of the poetry collection

The *Insomnia of Fire* in 1992 created a strong influence. Through verses with new modern poetic characteristics, Nguyen Quang Thieu boldly broke the familiar path, opening a new path, the content that poet Nguyen Quang Thieu reflected clearly expressed the consciousness of the times. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry expressed the spirit of innovation, the source of new and creative modern poetic aesthetics. When looking at Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetic journey, we see that the poet not only brought to poetry-loving readers concerns about human affairs, but above all, it was "luggage" in approaching the world of modern poetic art through creative poetic innovations. The systematic and objective view of many literary critics has made a general assessment of the characteristics of Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry and affirmed the poet's own position in the hearts of readers.

Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is considered the "starter" for a new direction in the Vietnamese poetic river. Poet Nguyen Quang Thieu's efforts to explore and experiment are expressed through many poetry collections. That creative journey has created a unique style that Nguyen Quang Thieu has received public attention for mainly because of his unique voice, which is difficult to confuse with others. We can discover the strong inner strength in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetic thinking in that he is a prolific poet, with a wide scope, and can change his writing style. With his talent, Nguyen Quang Thieu has established a position in the poetic world by opening up the range of imagination in the unique world of poetic art, struggling to find his own language to express. In the article *Nguyen Quang Thieu: Water, fire, fields and rivers*, literary critic Nguyen Dang Diep (2014) listened to the echoes from the "word slopes" on Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetic river and had quite sharp comments on the right direction of innovation. Accompanying the aesthetic source in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, the researcher has summarized the innovations in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry. For Nguyen Quang Thieu, innovation in poetry is first and foremost innovation in emotions. Innovating on the solid foundation of traditional poetry, Nguyen Quang Thieu has brought to readers the beauty of the "Delta" alluvium heavy with life and has left his mark in the process of innovation in poetry, contributing to bringing Vietnamese poetry one step further on the path of modernity. Among the poets with great influence in contemporary poetry, Nguyen Quang Thieu's success has created a strong resonance, the resonance spread by the sincere emotions that the poet conveyed through creative language experiments. Along with the generation of poets who matured in their writing after 1975, poet Mai Van Phan commented that Nguyen Quang Thieu brought to Vietnamese poetry a new poetic structure. Many articles have given general overviews of the innovations in the poetry of Nguyen Quang Thieu, a poet who is passionate about researching and innovating poetry. However, the new works only identify Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry in some aspects of ideological content and some forms of expression in language, tone, images, and symbols. It can be seen that the study of Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry has attracted the attention of researchers, however, these works only mention a few aspects, or stop at making general comments, without in-depth, systematic research to prove and fully explain the existential imprint in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry.

3.2 Overview of existentialism

Existentialism, also known as Existentialism, Existentialism, Existential Philosophy or Existentialist Movement, is an irrationalist philosophical movement that developed strongly in Europe after World War II. This development took place very quickly and became a fashionable trend, reaching its peak about twenty years after 1945. According to Tran Nhat Thu, the term existentialism was first used by French philosopher Gabriel Marcel and then introduced by Jean-Paul Sartre, published in a book titled *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* (Existentialism is a humanism). According to philosopher Martin Heidegger, the core problem of philosophy is to find the meaning of existence (sein), not just to study the existence or object (seinde). Only humans have the ability to perceive and pose the question of the meaning of existence. The concept of existentialism (ex-sistenz) is related to humans' awareness of their own existence. This self-awareness is the condition for existence to appear in consciousness. Existentialism focuses on the study of human existence as a true existence (existenz/existence) and analyzes that existential state. Le Cong Su explains that the term Existentialism comes from Existence, which means existence or existence. Existentialism studies humans in their state of existence, in the process of living and confronts questions about the meaning and value of existence. According to the book *150 literary terms: Existentialism is a philosophical trend formed before World War I in Russia (L. Lshestov, N.A. Bedyayev), after World War I in Germany (M. Heidegger, C. Japer, M. Buber), during World War II in France (J.P. Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, A. Camus, S. de Beauvoir), then popularized in other countries in Europe and in the United States. [17; 75]. Starting with Husserl's pure phenomenology, followed by M. Heidegger's existential phenomenology and then J.P. Sartre's existential philosophy. Philosophers had a new view of man as a subject in relation to the object.*

Existential philosophy appeared as a reaction to the crisis in many areas of life in the West. Formed in a social context with great upheavals, existential philosophy mainly focuses on people and the meaning of their existence. Although inspired by phenomenology, existential philosophy has developed into a theoretical system with profound humanistic views on people, encouraging people to actively engage in life to overcome anxiety and insecurity in an irrational world. Existential philosophy points out that anxiety and alienation are inseparable phenomena, they exist in parallel. Human anxiety and fear originate from increasingly deteriorating social relationships. Existential philosophy is considered a field of cognition close to artistic creation. Rational reason cannot fully explain the nature of people and their existence, so representatives of existentialism often present their views through works of art such as novels and plays, instead of systematically structured philosophical essays. Existentialism was particularly prominent during the period of social crisis with two main branches: theistic existentialism and atheistic existentialism. In literature, existentialism became a strong trend in France during the period before and during World War II, as well as in the post-war years. J.P. Sartre was one of the people who popularized existentialism. William F. Lawhead's research on existentialist philosophers such as S. Kierkegaard and F. Nietzsche analyzed and clarified the development of existentialist views from theism to atheism and their influence. Existentialism is concerned with human destiny, asserting that humans

do not have a ready-made nature but create themselves through actions and choices. This is a philosophy of man and can be considered a humanism.

Existentialism was introduced to Vietnam, especially in the South, and had a profound influence on literature as well as the spiritual life of society. Studies by Huynh Nhu Phuong, Tran Thai Dinh and many other authors have examined the emergence and development of existentialism in the South from 1954 to 1975. Tran Thai Dinh paid special attention to typical representatives of existentialism such as Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre and Marcel as well as different branches of this ideology. In contrast to systemic philosophy, existentialism focuses on individuals and their private, existential problems in this world. Existentialist literature during this period reflected the spiritual crisis of people, especially the youth of the South, who lived in the context of war and social upheaval. Existentialist literary works were not only limited to books and newspapers but also had a strong influence on life, especially for those who felt confused by reality. In fact, existentialism fits the mood of people, when they are looking for a way to look at life in a time of war and instability. Existentialism has strongly returned after 1986, when the country transformed in the renovation period. This is the time when writers and intellectuals began to reflect on life, on the absurdity of current life. Literary works have not only reflected epic issues but also addressed personal, moral and personality issues. Existentialism in Vietnamese literature has focused on themes such as loneliness, anxiety and personal crisis in an unstable world. Existentialism has had a clear influence on Vietnamese literature over the past decades, especially in the post-war period and during the renovation period. Existentialist studies and literary works have contributed to enriching the depth of literature, thereby helping readers to have a deeper understanding of themselves and the society around them. After 1986, along with the changes in society and life, many authors had a more thorough view of existentialism. Theses and dissertations began to research and re-evaluate Southern urban literature, including poetry. One of the notable works is Nguyen Van Dan's research on Absurd Literature, in which he pointed out the mark of existentialism in Vietnamese literature. Although Vietnamese writers cannot be considered existentialist thinkers, they still absorb and incorporate some ideas from this ideology into their works. Therefore, it is impossible to ask them to have a unified system of ideology. However, many researchers have chosen existentialism as a philosophical and aesthetic theory that has had a profound influence on the theory and creation of Southern literature in the period 1954 - 1975. This is a philosophy about human beings, emphasizing the uniqueness and absoluteness of each individual.

Contemporary Vietnamese poetry has many works strongly influenced by existentialism. Creative practice shows that authors clearly express existential feelings in their works with the characteristic nuances of this ideology.

The birth of existentialism reflects an inevitable social phenomenon, when the issue of human destiny, the relationship between the individual and society, between freedom and necessity... becomes necessary in the research context. Existentialism introduces concepts such as existence before essence, subjectivity, freedom, absurdity, other people... all of which emphasize the importance of the individual as a subject of thinking, acting and feeling. Existential people have the ability to reflect and be proactive, no

longer threatened by supernatural forces. They are interested in the true meaning of each thing and phenomenon, not just pursuing abstract concepts. Existentialism appeared in Saigon in the 1950s, although originating from the West, it was received and transformed to suit the social context of the South. In particular, the years of war and turmoil created a suitable foundation for existentialism to develop, especially among young people who were searching for freedom and meaning in life. With themes of absurdity, loneliness and human tragedy, existentialism quickly found a common voice with the people of the South, especially the young. After the war ended and the country was unified, the changing social context led to a deeper interest in the human condition in literature. Literary works of this period not only viewed people in new dimensions but also explored the depths of human nature. In the context of social innovation, Vietnamese literature began to delve into issues such as the absurdity and meaninglessness of life, especially when people were not able to live true to their nature. Writers delved into exploring issues such as absurdity and loneliness in life. Existentialism has helped young people reshape their views on life and their awareness of their responsibilities to society. Social changes after 1986 have created a new cultural space, opening up opportunities for existentialism to return and strongly influence the thinking of writers, especially in understanding human nature and their lives.

Studies on existentialism have been approached from many different angles. Some critics have strongly criticized existentialism, arguing that it reflects the loss of faith in people and is a manifestation of decadence in literature. Some views hold that existentialism is the ideology of the bourgeois class, not bringing faith or hope in real life. For example, critic Do Duc Hieu (2000) believes that existentialism has a pessimistic color, leading to the birth of people with a weak and mentally weak lifestyle. On the contrary, there are also calmer and more objective views when approaching existentialism. Huynh Nhu Phuong evaluates the way authors perceive and absorb existentialism, and believes that this ideology reflects the sadness and reactions of intellectuals and artists to reality. He asserts that existentialism is a humanism because it is concerned with human destiny. After 1986, with the transformation of society, authors began to have a deeper insight into existentialism. Many research works have re-evaluated southern urban literature, including poetry. Nguyen Van Dan, in his work *Literature of the Absurd*, mentioned the mark of existential literature in Vietnamese

literature. Although Vietnamese writers are not yet existentialist thinkers, they still want to incorporate existentialist ideas into their works. Contemporary Vietnamese poetry shows a clear tendency to express existentialist thought, which is a deep concern for people and awareness of self. Poetry reflects loneliness, sadness before absurd reality, human commitment and rebellion. Human fate in war becomes fragile and tragic, when life and death are always intertwined and values seem to be reversed. Existentialism has helped people find solace in life, when people feel the meaninglessness of life. In the years 1954 - 1975, existentialism became an important part of literature, especially in literary works reflecting human suffering and deadlock. After the war and after the Doi Moi period in 1986, Vietnam witnessed great changes in society, economy and politics. In this context, existentialism reappeared and penetrated deeply into literary life. Contemporary poets such as Nguyen Quang Thieu, Mai Van Phan, Truong Dang

Dung (1998) have brought existentialism into their works, creating a new, modern poetic trend. These works reflect changes in the concept of human beings, of reality, of artistic thinking in the context of contemporary society. Existentialism from the West has penetrated Vietnam. Contemporary Vietnamese literature, especially poetry, has received and expressed these ideas in a new way. Poets have combined existentialist ideas with inspiration from contemporary life, creating a new look for contemporary Vietnamese poetry. Changes in social circumstances and historical contexts have created a foundation for existentialism to develop in Vietnamese literature. Contemporary poets have brought about innovation in artistic thinking, clearly expressing concepts about people and reality in the modern world. Poets have deeply contemplated the absurdity, meaninglessness and boredom of life, especially people's inability to live true to themselves. After the war, despite the development of science and technology, people have not yet been able to find solutions to all problems. Contemporary Vietnamese poets, through their works, express their concerns about human fate, about the absurdity and contradictions of life. Existentialism has become an indispensable part of contemporary Vietnamese poetry with profound thoughts on existence. Themes such as loneliness, absurdity, commitment, rebellion, etc. have appeared in many works, each work expressing a different level of existentialism.

3.3 Nguyen Quang Thieu's profound philosophical thinking and unique creativity in expressing existential philosophy through tone and language

In contemporary Vietnamese poetry, Nguyen Quang Thieu is considered an innovative poet who has created heated debates in the literary world. Nguyen Quang Thieu's works have quickly attracted attention and generated many discussions on literary forums. However, to accurately assess Nguyen Quang Thieu's influence and his contributions to Vietnamese poetry, a comprehensive and objective view is needed to clarify his style and the values he brings. Nguyen Quang Thieu is one of the leading innovative poets of his generation. In addition to poetry, Nguyen Quang Thieu also made important contributions to prose, essays, translation and especially in promoting Vietnamese literature to the world. Nguyen Quang Thieu's artistic works express his deep exploration and concern from life and his desire to create. The real experiences from the hometown of Chua village and the trips have created a rich and attractive artistic journey, providing answers to the eternal questions of people and life. This has created a unique and creative poetic style of Nguyen Quang Thieu. Rain near morning is a typical poem: The cold air of the rain near morning / The water snake slithered over me / The dream still lingers / On the leaf of memory / In the garden of time / Forever remembering the distant dream / The days when mother was still alive / The childhood of the wild fields / The boy stood silently / Time also stopped / The marigold flower swayed gently / The cemetery echoed the voice of the ancients / Mother wiped away tears for her child / On the border of autumn with white clouds / There was a child who called out to his mother and grew up / Suddenly grew old in the dark chrysanthemums of the afternoon. (Rain near morning - Nguyen Quang Thieu). The house of seventeen years old is a collection of poems with lyrical songs, reflecting love for the homeland, memories and simple desires in life. Although there were initial contemplations on life, Seventeen-Year-Old

House was mainly an introduction, not enough to shape a great name in poetry. The two poetry collections *The Insomnia of Fire* (1992) and *Women Carrying Water from the River* (1995) continued Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry with the tracing and re-enactment of the cultural values of the countryside. Nguyen Quang Thieu was not only proud of traditional beauty but also saddened when witnessing their disappearance in the face of urbanization. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry expressed the loss of spiritual and cultural life in modern consumer society, where material things become a measure that changes spiritual values. Existentialism, a prominent philosophical and literary school of the 20th century, always placed humans at the center of existential problems, with questions about freedom, the meaninglessness of life and loneliness. In Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, the mark of existentialism is not only expressed in the themes of human destiny but also in his poetic tone and language. These elements not only reflect the confrontation with absurdity and loneliness but also express a desire to find meaning and liberation for people in the contemporary world. The tone in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry bears the mark of contemplation, concern about existence and anguish about the self. This tone expresses a melancholy, anxious mood, an insecurity, expressing the deep inner conflicts of the lyrical character.

The existential nature in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is a battle between the desire to live and the awareness of the meaninglessness of life. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry often has a quiet, contemplative tone, sometimes anxious, immersed in thoughts about people, about fate, about life and death. Frequently appearing in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry are open questions, without clear answers, creating a vague, hazy atmosphere, a characteristic of existentialism. In *The Insomnia of Fire*, Nguyen Quang Thieu's tone expresses the frustration and fatigue of people who cannot escape. All these concerns are expressed by Nguyen Quang Thieu through a philosophical and sometimes desperate tone. The tone in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is also not lacking in satire and sometimes dialogue with oneself. This is clearly shown in the way Nguyen Quang Thieu raises skeptical questions, making readers feel the contrast between the harsh reality and human aspirations and dreams. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is like a continuous communication between the individual self and the outside world, between the inner self and reality: I think about the ocean/ The half-dark earthenware jars/ The marinated fish./ Have sighed, have sung, have spread their fins splendidly/ Have joyfully departed, the stream of eggs gushing like/ lava/ warm and endless ocean currents./ Now beside the grains of salt filled with/ memories of the sea./ The motionless fish/ My thoughts echo with the waves/ The rocking earthenware jar/ The marinated fish/ gushing streams of eggs/ hatching fish in the endless ocean currents of my thoughts. (*The Marinated Fish* - Nguyen Quang Thieu).

The language in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is rich and diverse, combining deep emotions and sharp philosophical thinking. The mark of existentialism is clearly shown through Nguyen Quang Thieu's use of language as a tool to explore, explain and sometimes express helplessness before the meaninglessness of life. Language in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is not only a means of expression but also a form of profound reflection of psychological states and conflicting emotions of people in the contemporary world. One of the outstanding features in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetic language is the use of unique metaphors and symbols. These images do not stop at description

but also have philosophical nature, creating deep layers of meaning that readers can feel. The language in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry also shows ambiguity, vagueness, and unclearness. This reflects the spirit of existentialism, where everything can change and there is no exact answer. The sentences in his poems are often fragmented, incomplete, creating a feeling of precariousness and uncertainty, especially when talking about topics such as death, meaninglessness, or loneliness. In addition, the language in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poems is also very expressive, profound, and powerful. Nguyen Quang Thieu's choice of delicate and poetic words to describe deep emotions not only shows his talent in choosing words but also reflects his sophistication in exploiting existential themes about people. The tone and language in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poems are not only tools to express human existence problems but also a means to express the confrontation with the meaninglessness of life. The contemplative, anxious, skeptical tone along with the language rich in images and symbols help readers easily perceive the profound existential issues that the poet wants to convey. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is not just simple verses but also vivid philosophies, reflecting the special spiritual states of people in the modern world. The imprint of existentialism in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is clearly shown through tone and language, opening up a vast artistic space for readers, where all things and phenomena can be viewed from a new perspective, full of skepticism, full of discovery and full of concern about human existence in this universe. Nguyen Quang Thieu is a poet with a deep awareness of his vocation and the role of poetry in society. Poetry for Nguyen Quang Thieu is not only to impress readers but also works that force readers to ponder and face the great problems of life. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry tends to delve into exposing reality through a compassionate but also sorrowful and questioning perspective.

Nguyen Quang Thieu leads readers into strange spaces, with many different nooks and crannies and moods, creating a multidimensional effect, inviting those who want to explore and discover. Along with the trend of alienation, Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry also has the characteristic of freedom in the form of verses. This is a remarkable poetic feature, helping him easily convey messages about reality in a rich and specific way. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is not only a comparison, but also carries within it profound contemplation, raising issues that are both familiar and new, both specific but have alienation elements. It is these characteristics that have created Nguyen Quang Thieu's unique style in contemporary Vietnamese poetry. The philosophy in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is often paradoxical but reasonable oppositions; Sometimes, there are unexpected contrasts that are not in the memory of people, but they show up as reflections and reflections on other relationships in life: We often take care of graves/ with fear and regret/ But few of us see/ the splendid hearse/ In the jubilant sound of drums/ Even the god of death is free from sorrow. Yet the names of the deceased are solemnly engraved in stone: And our names are engraved/ On the silent stone/ Sparkling and solemn/ Like the names of saints (Instead of prayers). The lyrical self of private life in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry expresses a diverse range of emotions, from subtle vibrations to profound feelings. Love is no longer innocent moments but turns into numbing and painful sadness. He wrote: Your ten fingers are painful in ten directions/ Like the claws of a golden oriole/ Grasping me like grasping a dry branch, expressing the pain of love. And then, he continued to describe the pain even more deeply:

I anxiously imagine your face but cannot remember / Only the fish gills breathing heavily make my chest choke / Only the soft fish tail splashing the water makes my face burn (Eleven Emotions - VII). These verses express the torment, the suffering of an unfulfilled love. However, later on, the love in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry has become more mature and grown-up, because he has overcome the experiences of youth to open his soul to face the vast world, with the collisions and challenges of life.

Love in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is not only a personal feeling but also associated with deep thoughts, joys and sorrows of the world. The lyrical self in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry does not stop at personal feelings but also focuses on humanity, exploring and explaining life. Love of life, the desire to communicate with the surrounding world is an indispensable part of Nguyen Quang Thieu's philosophical and contemplative self. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry always bears the mark of role-playing, where he blends into nature to express his profound thoughts. Each time he plays a role, it brings Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry a new depth and a subtle connection with the surrounding world. The philosophical and contemplative lyrical self in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is not easy to grasp. Nguyen Quang Thieu expresses these emotions through a rich and flexible artistic sense, demonstrating the combination of sharp intelligence and subtle emotions of a poet. Nguyen Quang Thieu has recognized the profound transformation of both the reality of life and human psychology in contemporary society. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is a true and vivid reflection of the contrasts and collisions, while at the same time discovering new things in life.

3.4. Symbols and images expressing existential thought in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry

The term symbol, in Chinese, means: to show, to present, a sign to recognize something; to image is an image. A symbol is an image that is displayed to become a sign, a symbolic symbol to express an abstract meaning. From the perspective of research in aesthetics, literary theory and linguistics, symbol has a broad and narrow meaning. According to the Dictionary of Literary Terms, in the broad sense, symbol is a characteristic that reflects life through the images of literature and art. In the narrow sense, symbol is a meaningful way of conveying the meaning of words or a special type of artistic image that has great expressive ability, both generalizing the nature of a certain image and expressing a concept, an idea or a profound philosophy about people and life. It can be understood that symbols in poetry are images that are implied and conceptual. Constructed with language and special techniques, they go beyond concrete, surface-feeling images to become symbolic images that contain the author's concepts and creative thoughts. An image only becomes a symbol when it is systematically repeated in many of the poet's works. Creating symbols is a basic method of poetry.

Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is not only unique in form but also stands out with a rich and diverse system of symbols, expressing profound thoughts about people, the universe and the world. The system of symbols in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry can be considered one of the important characteristics, making his works unique and different. The symbols in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry not only have aesthetic value but also bring depth of thought, creating layers of meaning for the work. The symbols in

Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry are not only simple images but also have profound expressive values, reflecting the author's views on life and the world, especially existentialism. These symbols are effective tools for the poet to express profound thoughts about the meaninglessness of life, human loneliness and inevitable death. In Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, symbols such as the river, the field, the sky, and the empty house all play a role in constructing and conveying existential thought, reflecting the state of human crisis in an uncertain world. In Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, the river often appears as a symbol of the indefinite flow of life, a journey without a stopping point, without a clear destination. The river in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is not a romantic or vibrant image, but on the contrary, it has a quiet, soulless look, symbolizing the meaninglessness of time and the passing of human life. The river has no beginning, nor a clear end like human life, uncertain and ungraspable. Therefore, the river is a powerful symbol of existential thought in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, expressing the idea that humans cannot change the flow of time and life, but can only accept that meaningless passing. The fields in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry are a frequent image to express loneliness and emptiness in life. The vast fields seem to reflect the loneliness of people in a meaningless world. The fields are also a symbol of people's hopeless desires in finding meaning in an indefinite space. These fields, with their silent beauty, seem to contain the sadness and helplessness of people in their journey to find identity, to find direction in a world that itself lacks meaning. The sky in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is not only a part of nature but also a symbol of eternity and infinity, but at the same time it also shows the distance and impossibility in which people can find peace and answers to questions about life and death. The sky is vast but always out of reach of people, just like people's wishes and desires are always far away, never to be achieved. The feeling of being lost and lonely under the vast sky is one of the strong elements that depicts existentialism in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, expressing the helplessness of humans before the meaningless universe.

The empty house in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is a symbol with a strong existential imprint of absence, loss and emptiness in human life. The house is a safe place, a warm home for each individual, but when it becomes empty, without human presence, it is not only a physical space but also a symbol of the absence of relationships, of breakdown. The empty house also reflects the lack of meaning in life, when people cannot find a place to stand, cannot find a place to belong. In this empty house, there is not only the absence of people but also the absence of hope and dreams, when everything becomes meaningless and undefined. Symbols such as the river, the field, the sky and the empty house not only act as images in the poetic space but also carry deep ideological values. These symbols contribute to reflecting and clarifying the existential themes in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry: the feeling of being lost, loneliness, the meaninglessness of life and the helplessness of people in finding a clear purpose in life. Through these symbols, Nguyen Quang Thieu expressed the crisis and hopeless search of people in a world where the eternal laws of the universe seem unable to explain or give meaning to human life. These symbols become tools for the poet to convey messages about life, about people and about the complex concepts of existential thought. Nature is one of the main sources of inspiration in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry and through that, he used natural symbols to reflect existential philosophies, thoughts about

life and society. Fields, rivers, trees and familiar images of the countryside become symbols with strong symbolic meaning. The river is not simply a natural image but also carries the meaning of the flow of time, life, change and impermanence, symbolizing the connection with the land, with the origin and traditional cultural values.

People in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry are often depicted through symbols representing different lives and destinies. Poet Nguyen Quang Thieu builds images of family, parents, grandparents, and children to reflect close relationships. These images are often accompanied by pain and loss, but at the same time they are symbols of the strong vitality and resilience of people in the face of events. Nguyen Quang Thieu also uses symbols to reflect fragile lives that are easily swept away in the cycle of life. Nguyen Quang Thieu uses free verse, not to narrate, but to convey ideas. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry contains profound implications and multiple layers of meaning. The Day River is a typical poem: The Day River flows into my life/ Like my mother's heavy burden turning into the alley after each hard afternoon of work/ I rub my face against the sweaty back of a cool river at night/ Years of living far from home, I am like someone who has lost his way/ The dream echoes with the sound of fish flopping on the hook like a sob/ Silently breaking inside me, silently breaking at the source/ Radiating down my pain is my mother's hair waiting on the worn wharf/ A dry, skinny corn plant at the end of the season/ All my life, sad in the sound of rustling leaves./ On afternoons far from home, I wish the river would rise to the sky so I could see it/ So that my longing eyes would be like two holes in the ground on the bank, where the gobies come to make nests, covered with river rainwater./ Oh Day River! This afternoon I return/ The fairy sails have flown away with a sorrow/ You brought your ripe mulberry lips to the ferry on a day when the river was empty/ I only saw white corn husks on the shore/ I remember your shirt slipping off on the closed wharf on a moonlit day./ Oh Day River, oh Day River... this afternoon I return/ My mother has aged like the sand on the shore/ Oh the smell of dry sand, the smell of my mother's hair/ I knelt down and scooped up sand to cover my face/ I cried./ Sand flowed from my face down the stream. (Day River - Nguyen Quang Thieu).

Time in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is expressed through symbolic images. Time is not only an abstract concept but also associated with memories, with reflections on the past and present. Time in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is often connected with feelings of loss, nostalgia and questions about human existence in an ever-changing world. Besides, space in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is not simply physical space but also has a profound philosophical meaning about the relationship between humans and the universe, between the self and the surrounding world. In Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, spiritual and supernatural elements are exploited and used as an indispensable part of the symbolic system. Images of death and the soul are not only symbols of brokenness and loss but also reflect reflections on existence after death, on the intersection between the material world and the spiritual world. Nguyen Quang Thieu uses these symbols to depict a mysterious world, where the boundaries between reality and illusion, life and death, present and past are always blurred, creating a vague, metaphorical space. One of the important symbols in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is constant change and development. Change in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is not only the change of nature but also the change of people, of society, of life values in a modern

context. The system of symbols in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry not only plays the role of artistic elements that help enhance the aesthetics of the work but is also a powerful tool to express thoughts and philosophies about human life, the universe, and time. These symbols are all polysemous, profound and full of metaphors, requiring readers to have a subtle perception and understanding of existential philosophy to be able to fully understand the artistic value that Nguyen Quang Thieu wants to convey. The image of Chua village, the birthplace of Nguyen Quang Thieu, is one of the most haunting images in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry. For the poet, Chua village is not only his homeland but also a profound symbol of affection and a sacred command. Chua village becomes the fulcrum for many poetic images, from gardens, grandparents, parents, the animal world to trees, flowers, and the Day River flowing in his mind. This is a realistic world vividly depicted in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, associated with cultural values, customs and sadness - the treasures of his homeland that Nguyen Quang Thieu always cherishes. The river, especially the Day River, is an important symbol, present in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry as an image attached to his homeland, both a concrete image in his sacred relationship with this land and a symbol in his mind. The river is sometimes a real river, sometimes a river in the subconscious, and sometimes fragments of the poet Nguyen Quang Thieu's mood. The river becomes the place where Nguyen Quang Thieu searches for traces of his loved one: In the sigh like a dry river / In the cough like a bumpy road / I go looking for you (The Sail). The Day River is truly connected to Nguyen Quang Thieu's memories and thoughts, carrying with it the sadness that cannot be forgotten.

The symbol that appears quite often in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is the fields. The fields are not only physical space but also carry the Mother principle, a place that contains vitality, the close relationship between people and their homeland. Besides these symbols, Earth and Fire are also very prominent images in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry. Earth is not only a symbol of origin, but also an image of constant change and movement. Earth can evoke the end and rebirth, as he wrote: The Earth will end by peeling itself off / My son, you will be born again on the same day as your father (The Last Words of the Future). Fire, an ancient symbol of humanity, in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry has both the meaning of destruction and the symbol of rebirth, enthusiasm and belief in a new life. Another notable image in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is the grave. This symbol is closely related to the obsession with death, the dissolution of life and the endlessness of time. The grave is a presence of pain and loss, and at the same time a place where people can find comfort in their memories. In addition to the symbols of homeland and land, the image of the lyrical self in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is a journey to find oneself, reflecting the sentiment of the community in a true and noble way. In Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, the self is not only loneliness, anxiety but also the confrontation with life and profound philosophies about life. Nguyen Quang Thieu always seeks the connection between the personal self and the origin of national culture, expressed in emotional verses about homeland, love, loss and harmony with life.

The tone in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is very diverse, sometimes lyrical, sometimes confessional, sometimes tormented and critical, but mainly a contemplative, logical and nostalgic tone. With this tone, Nguyen Quang Thieu depicts thoughts about the

past, about the memories of Chua village and the human world. His poetry is not only the voice of the heart, but also contains questions, strong criticisms about life and people. It is this combination that has created a unique poetic style, making Nguyen Quang Thieu's tone always imbued with emotion and contemplation. In addition, in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, the comparison method is also used creatively and philosophically. Nguyen Quang Thieu often compares things and phenomena to express deep thoughts about life and people, making the poetic ideas become vivid and multi-layered. These comparisons not only enrich the poetic images but also help readers feel more deeply the philosophies of life that Nguyen Quang Thieu wants to convey. The artistic methods in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry are very diverse and rich, expressed through language bearing his own unique creative mark. Poet Nguyen Quang Thieu has flexibly applied artistic techniques, thereby creating breakthroughs in creative thinking. The reality of life and the reality of mood are expressed by Nguyen Quang Thieu through poetic forms such as free verse and prose poetry, along with new, multi-layered and polysemous structures. From his constant efforts to innovate language and tone, Nguyen Quang Thieu has brought about a crystallization of profound thoughts and reflections on personal life and world affairs. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry returns to the familiar countryside through a system of symbols and unique rhetorical devices. All of these elements are closely linked to Nguyen Quang Thieu's living environment, consciousness and conception of the world and life.

In terms of form, Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is strongly modern but the content is imbued with national identity. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is always filled with images of the countryside and love for the homeland. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry also reflects many concerns, worries, sorrows and emotions imbued with the Vietnamese soul. Nguyen Quang Thieu writes about fields, rivers, rice fields and about family, about death anniversaries, Nguyen Quang Thieu is one of the sensitive poets and is successful in creating new steps forward. Nguyen Quang Thieu's artistic concept is always flexible, in line with his poetic aspirations. Nguyen Quang Thieu harmoniously resolves the relationship between the reality of life and reality in poetry through the artistic consciousness of the creative subject. With a new way of thinking, suitable for the psychology of modern people, and the skillful use of prose poetry, Nguyen Quang Thieu has succeeded in expressing the image of the lyrical ego of private life, romance, as well as the lyrical ego of citizens, world affairs, with many levels of emotions, many relationships and moods, especially the image of the lyrical character - the poet who is always attached to his homeland. Reminiscing about ancient cultural values is also an important part of Nguyen Quang Thieu's works. Although influenced by the West in his creations, Nguyen Quang Thieu still pays great attention to preserving the value of traditional poetry. Nguyen Quang Thieu builds familiar images, symbols and symbols to convey messages about love and aspiration. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry integrates sounds, colors and images through a powerful and changing world of words. Nguyen Quang Thieu's works are realistic, romantic, symbolic, surreal, emotional and rational. Later, the spiritual and psychedelic elements were also enhanced, creating a strange artistic whole, whose meaning is difficult to grasp immediately. However, this writing style sometimes makes it difficult for readers to keep up with the structure of the work.

Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry combines tradition and modernity, stability and innovation, both breaking and changing. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry creates many reading styles and many texts in reception. Some opinions support the innovation of Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, but there are also opinions that are concerned about its artistic integrity. In fact, Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry does not simply criticize material civilization but also expresses concerns about human degeneration in the face of material life. With a unique creative style, Nguyen Quang Thieu deserves to be a typical face with many innovations in contemporary Vietnamese poetry. In Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, existentialism is not only expressed through content but also through many artistic elements, making the existential message and inspiration profound, clear and multidimensional. Symbols and images in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry are important tools to convey existentialism. Symbols such as rivers, fields, sky, empty houses often appear in his works, reflecting the meaningless state, loneliness and helplessness of humans before the uncertainty of the universe. These images not only symbolize natural elements but also penetrate the inner world of humans, expressing the feeling of loss and crisis in life. Nguyen Quang Thieu's use of familiar images such as the vast sky, immense fields, or flowing rivers always exudes a sense of meaninglessness and endless drifting that humans cannot grasp or change. These are images associated with existential ideas about the passing of time, the meaninglessness of life and the desire to find meaning.

In Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, there is a combination of realistic and surreal elements, between everyday images and symbolic, absurd elements. The appearance of images beyond the limits of reality, such as distorted landscapes, mysterious symbols or surreal elements, expresses anxiety about the obscurity of the surrounding world and the search for meaning in a meaningless universe. These surreal elements are also an important part in conveying the feeling of loneliness, the deadlock of people when facing unanswerable questions with the confrontation between the finite and the infinite, between life and death. This is one of the important characteristics of existential thought, when people have to find meaning in meaninglessness, facing a world that cannot be explained by pure reason. In Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry, themes such as death, loneliness, the meaninglessness of life, and human crisis are the main issues exploited. However, instead of providing explanations or definitive answers, Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry often only raises big questions about human destiny and the meaning of life. This clearly demonstrates existentialism, when people cannot find a perfect answer but can only face and accept the paradoxes and internal contradictions of life. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is not only a reflection of the reality of life but also an inspiration for philosophical thoughts about life and human existence in a meaningless world. Through that, Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry opens up a philosophical artistic space where people can contemplate the nature of life, loneliness and death. Nguyen Quang Thieu's *Delta* is a collection of verses bearing the mark of complex, expressive thoughts (or associations) in the style of Nguyen Quang Thieu: The darkness of the night near dawn is like a giant velvet cat walking gracefully/ Its soft tail touches me, waking me up/ I move like a young bud opening its leaves/ Thoughts smile clearly before the dawn (Bang mai); The dog licks and licks his chest/ Its tongue is like a small flame carrying the warmth of steam/ The dog's gentleness makes him cry (Dream); The

old spider rushes out from a crack in the window/Grabbing my thoughts (Obsession); Father opens his life like opening a mattress/ Wrapping his child and holding him up (My daughter); The rice fields are both pregnant and lamenting/ With the tilapia fish longing to grow legs (Song); The clouds are discolored by the wind/ The sails of suffering tear and mend themselves/ The river gobies, the golden keys, are opening the door (River); The mouse of time comes every night to gnaw/ The skinny dream of not having clothes to wear on me (The Letter); And that is the moment when there are rivers in the world/ The water never flows again/ There are cities and their inhabitants buried forever deep in the ground/ That is the moment when life and death/ Change places as gently as shuffling cards (The Dog and the Stars); A snake burrows into your hair and lies down with your exposed tongue/ It wants to kill you when your first drink explodes (The Navigator)... These are poetic lines that both evoke and create torment, sympathy and obsession in the style of Nguyen Quang Thieu: I am sick and sitting coughing by the door/ Where are the sick boats/ Mother, bring me a shirt and let me go to the water's edge/ So that the boats will be less cold, less coughing/ I have no shirt but I have my mother/ The boats sleep on the drifting water (The Boats on the Day River); The tender morning rays stretch themselves (Ban Mai); I knelt down and scooped sand to cover my face/ I cried/ Sand flowed down from my face (Day River); Thirty years old, sitting alone in silence/ The birds' cries pierced my flesh and skin/ Oh bird, why don't you cry out/ Just once to ease your sorrow/ Why do you sob so hard that your lungs are scarred/ Why do you cry so much that you drain your life (Listening to the Cuckoo's Call); The imprisoning shirts flap their wings and fly away (The Shirts)...

Another artistic element in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is the contrast between the finite and the infinite, between man and the universe. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry often places man facing the vast universe with the meaninglessness of life and inevitable death. Existential thought in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is expressed through the contrast between finite elements (human life, time, space) and the infinite (universe, nature), thereby reflecting the smallness, loneliness and impasse of man when facing eternal concepts. Artistic elements such as symbols, language, tone, structure of works, the combination of realism and surrealism and the expression of human themes have helped Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry clearly express the mark of existentialism. Through these elements, poet Nguyen Quang Thieu not only reflects the loneliness and meaninglessness of life but also depicts the contradictions and profound thoughts about life and death, depicting a world in which people must search for meaning and accept the uncertainty of the universe. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is a unique artistic whole, rich in images and philosophies about life and people. The symbols of the homeland, such as Chua village, river, field, fire, land and grave, not only reflect personal feelings and memories but also carry profound cultural and humanistic values. The image of the self in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is not only a search for self but also a connection with the community, with the homeland and with the sacred things in life.

4 Conclusion

The article has affirmed that the existentialist imprint in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry is clearly present through a rich and polysemous system of symbols. The use of symbols in poetry is not only an artistic tool but also a means for the author to convey profound philosophies about life, death, loneliness and freedom, creating new depths of perception for readers. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry not only contains subtle metaphors but also opens up a vast space of contemplation, full of philosophy, requiring deep and subtle perception from the reader. By skillfully combining language, images and tone, he has successfully portrayed existential colors in Vietnamese poetry, thereby creating works of artistic and ideological value. These contributions of Nguyen Quang Thieu have created a special mark in contemporary poetry, worthy of recognition and further research in the future. This article studies the imprint of existentialism in Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry from the perspective of expressive art. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry uses symbols to bring readers to perceive many new and creative ways of understanding, helping to expand the scope of reflection of the work. By conveying profound philosophies and hidden meanings, symbols bring profound polysemy, Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry attractively conveys sublime philosophical meanings. Nguyen Quang Thieu's poetry contains many rich and interesting symbols, requiring the reader's ability to deeply perceive. Nguyen Quang Thieu builds symbols and images that broadly generalize existential philosophy. The use of diverse poetic forms, languages and polysemous symbols strongly reflects the existential philosophy in his poetry. The author also exploits rich nuances of tone and harmoniously combines philosophical colors in poetic language. With its own creations, Nguyen Quang Thieu's existentialist poetry has achieved remarkable achievements in Vietnamese poetry.

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