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Visible Invisibility: Case of the Indians in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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The “Indians” include people, who are (descendants of) those who, since the second half of the nineteenth century, migrated from French-British India to then-Indochina-Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Although the Indians have been in Vietnam for generations and have participated in economic and political revolutions of Vietnam, they have always been perceived by ethnic Vietnamese as "kẻ hút máu" [bloodsucking beings] -- unwelcome migrants who are materialistic, exploitative and most of all foreign. Many Indians have become Vietnamese citizens; arguably, they do not belong to any categorized ethnic groups of Vietnam.

This dissertation assumes the virtual invisibility of the Indians in Vietnamese writing and society originates in the way Vietnamese nation-makers have made these persons visible in the wake of the formulaic metaphor "bloodsucking Indians" and the quest for national sovereignty and prosperity since the colonial time. The metaphor refers to the imagined association of the Indians with colonialism and capitalism – identified as "non-socialist" and "non-hegemonic" state structures of Vietnam. The dissertation suggests a

complex view on colonial legacies in Vietnam: Vietnamese nation-makers retain the metaphor in attempts to retain the overriding socialist and independent goal of historically differing Vietnamese nationalisms and the concurrent invisibility of the Indians; as such, the remains of colonial knowledge are the strategic choice of Vietnamese nation-makers. Moreover, in making visible the Indians by presenting how they have been made invisible, the dissertation critically addresses current debates about postcolonial scholarship and the Others' visibility and audibility and about complex associations of literary studies, diaspora studies and ethnic studies with nationalism.

The choice of Vietnamese writing as the primary source of this dissertation stems from the scholarship on the performativity of language and the Vietnamese traditional belief in writing as a sharp weapon in national and class struggles. Interview is also a source essential in examining material impacts of the metaphor of bloodsucking Indians in Vietnamese nation-building. The dissertation develops into seven chapters, analytically centering on the formation and continuation of metaphoric associations of the Indians with capitalism and colonialism, the main causes of the virtual invisibility of these people in Vietnamese writing and society.

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INTRODUCTION

The “Indians”, a small and marginalized group in Vietnam, include people who are (descendants of) those who, since the second half of the nineteenth century, migrated from French-British India to then-Indochina- Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Although the Indian population has been in Vietnam for generations and has participated in the economic and political revolutions of Vietnam, they have usually been perceived very negatively by ethnic Vietnamese as "kẻ hút máu" [bloodsucking beings] -- unwelcome migrants who are materialistic, exploitative, and most of all, foreign. Many Indians have become Vietnamese citizens; arguably, they do not belong to any categorized ethnic group in Vietnam. To be precise, ethnic Indians have not been categorized as one of the ethnic minorities since the socialist Vietnamese government's systemizations of the "ethnic composition of Vietnam," initiated in 1958. They do not fit within the term "Vietnamese" that is used in the expression "fifty-four Vietnamese nationalities" (54 dân tộc Việt Nam). Members of the fifty- four ethnic groups, as described in the portal of the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs, share common blood ancestors. Accordingly, all ethnic minorities are counted as "younger brothers" of ethnic King, the oldest brother, in the "brotherhood of fifty-four nationalities" in “the nationally extended Vietnamese family" (đại gia đình các dân tộc Việt Nam). As the myth suggests, they are "descendants of Lạc Long Quân and Âu Cơ, hatching out of a hundred eggs, half of them following their mother to the mountains, the other half accompanying their father to the sea" (Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs’ Portal). This criterion of family relations among ethnic minorities does not work for many (descendants of) of those who migrated to

Vietnam from British and French India. Moreover, participation of the Indians in Vietnamese revolution and nation-building has not given them the status of being members of "the great family of Vietnamese nationalities" either; the Indians are not categorized as an ethnic minority group within "the nation." The invisibility of "Indians" in Vietnamese society is even more questionable, given the fact that ethnic Chinese (Hoa) became one of 54 ethnic minorities in Vietnam, following Kinh, Tày and Thai with the announcement of Decision 121 in March of 1979 (Pelley 290; Salemink, *The Ethnography of Highlander* 270). This questionable invisibility is the more intriguing given that the Chinese, similar to Indians, were categorized as "foreigners" in colonial Vietnam and as "Hoa kiều" (overseas Chinese) in postcolonial Vietnam (although this population received a good treatment in North Vietnam during the Vietnam War). All these ethnographic results suggest a certain attempt of nation-makers not to categorize Indian/Indian descendants as a separate ethnic group in Vietnam's ethnic minority family in particular and to make invisible this population in the Vietnamese public in general.

This dissertation attempts to answer the question of why the Indians have been made invisible in the Vietnamese society and historiography. It will offer a complex view on the ways that colonial legacies were retained in the postcolonial nation-building of Vietnam, associated with works of making a specific ethnic group and an attached knowledge visible and invisible. In looking in Vietnamese writings for the Indians in colonial and postcolonial Vietnam, the dissertation assumes that the virtual invisibility of the Indians in the Vietnamese society originates in the way Vietnamese intellectuals and literati have made these persons visible, in the wake of the formulaic metaphor

"bloodsucking Indian" and the quest for national sovereignty and prosperity. The metaphor "bloodsucking Indian" refers to the association of the "Indians" with unwelcome migrants, colonialism, and capitalism – identified as "non-socialist" and "non-hegemonic" state structures of Vietnam. This association is metaphoric, largely maintained and constructed in colonial and postcolonial administrative, literary, and journalistic writing and in orally transmitted accounts since colonial times. Examining the recurrence of the metaphor "bloodsucking Indian" and attached nationalism in Vietnamese portraits of "Indians" suggests a virtual invisibility of the Indians in Vietnamese historiography and society. More importantly, this invisibility is potentially indicative of the complexity of the widely perceived colonial legacies in postcolonial Vietnam: the metaphor of Indians as vampires (or bloodsuckers) forms a discursive practice that Vietnamese intellectuals -- nation-makers – take to retain in the public minds the overriding socialist and independent goal of historically differing Vietnamese nationalisms and the concurrent invisibility of the Indians. As such, the remains of colonial knowledge in Vietnam are, in this case, a strategic choice of Vietnamese intellectuals in their tireless participation in the struggles for the national sovereignty, unity and modernity.

Institutional and academic discourses about Vietnam agree that postcolonial nation-building of Vietnam relies heavily on colonial knowledge. Specifically, recent local and foreign studies on the cultural and economic links between India and Vietnam (Trung 2009, Thục 1965, Doanh 2006, Kam 2000 and Śarma 2009) largely echo earlier publications by Parmentier (1909), Maspero (1928) and Cœdès (1968) as well as the

Bulletins of the Hanoi-based French School of the Far East (EFEO). In these studies, 'India' remains primarily an Orientalist construction, one often presented as a spiritual power in decline and of marginal importance in colonial projects of modernization. Presented in this way, the Indians are reduced to migrants whose contributions to colonial and postcolonial Vietnamese society can be disregarded. Publications about the Indians in Indochina (Thomson and Adloff 1955, Schrock 1966, Osborne 1979, Brocheux 1995, Brun 2003 and Pairaudeau, *Mobile Citizens* 2016) aim to deconstruct such colonial and postcolonial marginalizations by providing archival narratives on prosperity and political influence of this population in non-socialist Vietnam.

This dissertation aims to make visible the Indians in Vietnamese history and society through an analysis of colonial and postcolonial construction of this population as the unwelcome migrant and the imagined target of national and class revolutions of Vietnam. While existing scholarships largely search for the visibility of the Indians in French archival discourses, which brings a completely different picture of this population, this dissertation largely focuses on images of the Indians as constructed in colonial and postcolonial Vietnamese writing. In other words, while more research attempts to reconstruct the prosperity of the Indians as a fact in some pre-socialist Vietnam, this dissertation emphasizes the visibility of Indians as bloodsucking creatures, an imagined target and enemy of class and national revolutions in (post)colonial Vietnam. To be precise, the "Indian" as a research subject of this dissertation is metaphoric; it appears in colonial and postcolonial writings (and orally transmitted accounts) as subjects of colonialist and particularly nationalist projects. This portrayal is indicative of the

attempted invisibilization in the first place of the Indians in Vietnamese historiography and society regardless of the availability of portraits of these people in Vietnamese writing. Moreover, the Indians' visibility as a bloodsucking entity shapes the public perception and practice of colonial and postcolonial nation-building.

This dissertation relies on the scholarship of the performativity of language: the metaphoric association between the Indians and the colonialism and related capitalism forms a cause of the invisibility of this population in the Vietnamese society and historiography. Marx and Engels write, "The problem of descending from the world of thoughts to the actual world is turned into the problem of descending from language to life" (118). Language, in its "very broad and inclusive way...[including] any sound, word, image or object" (Hall 18-19) is no longer a tool to reflect and inflect "a reality which once existed," "the thing that has been there" (Tagg 1) and the truth is out there. Language constrains itself "according to institutionalized formal rules... in certain contexts... on the basis of historically established conventions" (Tagg 2). In other words, language has the power of creating and maintaining a reality. Herbert P. Philips has suggested that written sources are "embodiments of culture," "integral to social processes, as both historical precipitant and product" (3); accordingly writers are "key informants" whose work reflects and inflects the worldview, value system, and social change of their societies (3-4). According to Marian Tyler Chase, words form and preserve community because words carry from generation-to-generation common cultural codes that hold individuals of different times and spaces together (ix-12). The metaphor of "bloodsucking Indian" used in this dissertation also functions as a "word" or

a"(re)presentations" that has flowed through generations of Vietnamese writers and audiences, helping to maintain Vietnam as a solid nation of the Vietnamese people who share common knowledge and fear about the imagined association of the Indians with colonialism and capitalism. As will be indicated in this dissertation, the metaphoric association of Indians with colonialism and capitalism with bloodsucking has been used as a "language" by Vietnamese authorities – nation-makers – in their work of mobilizing the masses for class and national struggles.

Particularly, the dissertation's assumption on the material impact of the literary image of the Indians upon the absence of the actual Indian migrants in Vietnam relies on the Vietnamese belief in words on paper as "a special, autonomous power to alter reality" and "to stipulate a sweeping transformation of society" (Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial* 336). Vietnamese literati have appreciated the reflectivity and the performativity of writing in connection to the material reality in which that writing is born. As for the reflectivity, Đinh Cửng Viên in the thirteenth century wrote, "no one in this world knows all about change and destruction. That pen without mouth is still able to speak about emergence and collapse." Nhữ Bá Sỹ, a literati of Nguyễn Dynasty, emphasized "writing is the reality of the time out of which it was born" (văn chương là hiện trạng của một thời làm nên nó). As for the performativity of writing, Nguyễn Trãi, writer and official of the Lê dynasty (1427-1789), announced that his "đạo bút" (moral of pens) aimed at contributing to the pacification of the northern invaders and the protection of the southern country. In the nineteenth century, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu, a celebrated southern author, challenged the colonial regime by his writings: "stabbing many dishonest guys, the pen is

still not blunt" (đâm mấy thẳng gian bút chẳng tà). Phan Châu Trinh and Phan Bội Châu, famous patriots of the early twentieth century, respectively declared: "pen and tongue want to turn around flood flow directions" (bút lưỡi muốn xoay dòng nước lũ) and "a three-inch tongue is like sword and gun; a pen is like battle drum and gong" (Ba tấc lưỡi mà gươm mà súng, một ngòi lông vừa trống vừa chiêng). Particularly, since the 1920s, when Marxist-Leninist doctrine and related "Chủ nghĩa hiện thực phê phán" (realism criticism) was introduced in Annam, Vietnamese intellectuals have increasingly believed in the material impacts of writing upon class and national struggles. For long, Vietnamese intellectuals have believed in writing as a weapon in national and class struggles. High school students learned by heart the rhythmic sentences by Trường Chinh, a revered revolutionary character:

Using pen to put upside down the regime
Each poetic verse [is] a bomb and bullet [able to] destroy power and authority
(Dùng cán bút làm đòn xoay chế độ.
Mỗi vần thơ bom đạn phá cường quyền)

Hồ Chí Minh also taught Vietnamese writers and artists: "The pen is a sharp weapon [used] in a career of supporting goodness and eliminating badness" (Ngòi bút là vũ khí sắc bén trong sự nghiệp phò chính, trừ tà) and many generations of Vietnamese students have memorized this sentence. Backing the nationalist urge by using a discursive weapon was one way to subvert colonial political power. Vietnam was a relatively small country, lacking modern weapons and machines compared to its colonial enemies. But, as generations of Vietnamese intellectuals have been taught, Vietnam has had an exceptional strength of will, heart, and mind. This strength has historically helped the

nation kick out foreign invaders including China in earlier centuries and France and the United States in the twentieth century. Language (in written and oral forms) is considered as a main "food" to grow this vital will of the masses. And, the construction and continuation of the metaphor "bloodsucking Indian" in colonial and postcolonial Vietnamese writing form a means of Vietnamese intellectuals in their work of mobilizing the masses for the sake of class and national revolutions.

The material impact of the metaphor "bloodsucking Indian" in actual colonial and postcolonial nation-building of Vietnam and, the concurrently virtual invisibility of the actual Indian migrants required a critical and selective reading of writings (particularly literary, journalistic and reporting accounts) as the main method of this dissertation. In addition to writings, ethnographic findings form an essential source. The author of this dissertation carried out fieldwork in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi at Indian religious centers and private houses with descendants of the Indians as well as with Vietnamese authorities in charge of managing this population. Ethnography means getting closer to Indian individuals to observe their daily political, economic and cultural practices and their ideas about their invisibility. The identity of the Indian individuals is formed not only through discourses about them but also through their socially produced activities including their "doing, seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, and touching" (Mbembe5). Thus, ethnography is one effective way of collecting data about immediate experiences of the Indian migrants and their offspring. Additionally, ethnographically focusing on the Indian individuals' "meaningful human expressions" helps deconstruct derogative Vietnamese discourses about them. Not only being derogated, the presence of the Indians in

Vietnamese history and society has been ignored. Writing about their experience is a way to have them documented and presented, thus visualized. Furthermore, Indian individuals' discourses could help to critically examine the discourses about them, constructed by grand narratives. Writing about direct expressions of individual Indian descendants provides alternative ways of presenting histories of these marginalized people and the Vietnamese nation-state as well: not the stories of data, report forms, and scholarly discourse but personal, divergent and fragmenting narratives. Moreover, given the fact that human thought and the world "we live in" are "imprisoned" in language, an idea of language developed by the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (Pupavac 81; Pradhan 172), interviews of the Indian descendants and Vietnamese nation-makers do not go beyond boundaries of their external world with a specific system of language. Thus, Indian individuals' discourses also reveal long-standing Vietnamese nationalism, which points at the collective effort of Vietnamese intellectuals in constructing a hegemonic and democratic figure of the Vietnamese nation.

Above all, the multi-disciplinary approach of this dissertation is shaped by the scholarship of discourses, in particular, by notions of dialogics and polyvocality –the heterogeneity of language and languaging as developed in the Bakhtinian School. Each presentation of reality carries on continual and constant conversations with other presentations. They talk to each other in implicit or explicit ways, so to speak. They are mutually comparable and communicable representations. Placing writings and ethnographic findings in mutually dialoguing positions helps to bring to the surface ways

through which Vietnamese intellectuals have invisibilized the Indians for the sake of the visibility of the national hegemony and prosperity.

This is not a conclusive and comprehensive examination on the subject of the Indians in Vietnam. In a way, this limitation is historical, stemming from the Vietnamese government's censorship of certain publications in particular and of certain discourses in general. Specifically, library and archive sources that have been used were limited to those that were available for public access from Summer 2013 to Summer 2015. Interviews with people of Indian descent were sometimes conducted in the "random" presence of Vietnamese authorities; the other main informants of this researcher were Vietnamese officials, who are in charge of managing the Indians and have a knowledge of living Indians that remains limited to those who are living in cities and are primarily associated with Indian religious centers: those are the place where dynamic relations of the government and the Indians are still going on.

In general, writing this dissertation has been inspired by notions of particularities and specificities; or to paraphrase the words of Georges Condominas in his introduction to the book *We Have Eaten the Forest: the Story of a Montagnard Village in the Central Highland of Vietnam* (1977): the data of this dissertation were collected in a specific time, by specific people and through specific writings (xviii-xix). All these specificities form a specific body of knowledge consonant to a particular configuration of power, as suggested by Ann Laura Stoler (87). In a way, following mainstream Vietnamese knowledge of Indians, embodied in historically available library, archival and ethnographic resources, has led to certain incompleteness, inevitable and dynamic, in this

dissertation. For one, it is unclear if there are Indian descendants living elsewhere rather than in cities and around religious centers, and a description of their specific lives could lead to other pictures of this small group of Indian descendants. Perhaps, following a specific public body of Vietnamese knowledge about the Indians is itself indeed a method that brings evidence of how a specific knowledge about the Indians is made at a specific time for specific national projects of nation-building of Vietnam. To put it differently, an analysis of public knowledge is essential in understanding the association of the (in)visibility of the Indian migrants with Vietnamese nationalism.

The dissertation consists of seven interconnected chapters; they center on the historically different discursive formations of the Indians in Vietnam, and their close associations with capitalism and colonialism, the main cause of the virtual invisibility of this ethnic group in Vietnamese writing and society.

Chapter 1 defines what “Indians in Vietnam” is and why the definition matters in understanding the complexity of colonial legacies, ethnicization, and nationalism in colonial and postcolonial Vietnam. The chapter suggests that the categorization of “Indians” in administrative reports is concurrent with the invisibilization of these people; the chapter also suggests the need of going beyond bureaucratic data and descriptions for further reasons why the Indians are made invisible in Vietnamese society and history.

Chapter 2 examines literary and journalistic formations of the “bloodsucking beings,” a metaphor of Indians as enemy subjects in anti-colonial nationalisms in colonial Vietnam. Allegorically, these formations are attempts of Vietnamese intellectuals at constructing targets of the class and national struggle in colonial Vietnam.

Chapter 3 examines the continuity of the metaphor of bloodsucking Indians and the emergence of the metaphor of Indian guardians in Vietnamese writing published in South Vietnam. Historicizing these literary figures in the Republic government's national projects will provide more evidence of the virtual invisibility of the Indians in Vietnamese historiography and society. Indian figures are totally presented as imagined enemies and embodiments of the ongoing class, and national struggle in South Vietnam confronted with the United States' neo-colonialism.

Chapter 4 examines attempts of socialist nation-makers (writers and administrators) at transforming images of the Indian migrants into subjects of the socialist revolution; proletarianization would end the visibility of the Indian population both physically and ideologically: many Indians actually left northern Vietnam and those who remained became members of the proletariat. The chapter suggests that the colonial category of the Indians as bloodsucking entities still functions as an imagined cause of the actual invisibilization of the Indians in the socialist nation-building of Vietnam.

Chapter 5 analyzes images of the Indians in post-1975 Vietnamese writing inside and outside Vietnam in aims at further revealing ways through which the population of Vietnam is subjected to nationalism of Vietnamese intellectuals. The emergence of new presentations of Indian friends and Indian revolutionary heroes further indicates the invisible status of the Indians in the national historiography. The writings of Hồ Anh Thái and other socialist writers show that the metaphor of bloodsucking Indians does not only exist to glorify and sustain the triumphant Party in leading the people in a socialist,

nationalist revolution; it also shapes the anxiety of contemporary Vietnamese intellectuals about postcolonial nation-building of Vietnam, still lingering on colonial legacies.

Chapter 6 examines contemporary Vietnamese accounts about the new Indians – members of the third wave of Indian migration to Vietnam to further explain how the old Indians -- members of the second wave (main subjects of this dissertation) -- are marginalized from mainstream Vietnamese historiography and society. In addition to economic, cultural and political disadvantages of the old Indian migrants and their descendants, the remains of the metaphor of bloodsucking Indians make these people unfit for the revised notions of "Indian" as well as notions of "industrialized Vietnam." In these notions, the new Indian migrants are seen as useful, thus they are made visible in public discourse whereas the old Indian migrants are seen as useless, thus they are made more invisible. Old Indian migrants belongs nowhere in the contemporary ethnic, national landscape of Vietnam.

Chapter 7 examines oral and written Vietnamese discourses about Indian food practices and preferences, further deconstructing the complex relations between the absence of the ethnic Indians in the Vietnamese history and society and the rise of various projects of Vietnamese nation-building. More precisely, Vietnamese writings about Indian food and eating practices only aim at constructing a target and an instrument in national and class struggles of the Vietnamese. Understanding cultural practices of Indian descendants will provide more evidence of this population's assimilation into Vietnamese historiography and society. This assimilation indicates the haunting and

strategic remains of the Indian bloodsucker (vampire) metaphor in present-day
Vietnamese nationalism that is still holding on to goals of class and national revolutions.

Chapter 1

Categorization of “Indians” in Colonial and Postcolonial Vietnam

Chapter 1 defines what “Indians in Vietnam” is and why definition matters in understanding the complexity of the colonial legacy, ethnicization, and nationalism in colonial and postcolonial Vietnam. The chapter suggests that categorization of the “Indians” in administrative reports is concurrent with the invisibilization of these people; the chapter also suggests the need of going beyond bureaucratic data and descriptions for further reasons why the Indians are made invisible in Vietnamese society and history.

1. Categorization of “Indians” in colonial Vietnam

People from the Indian subcontinent migrated and continued to migrate to the area, presently called Vietnam, since the beginning of the Christian era (Coedès 11-48); this population occurs in pre-modern stories about Buddhist monks of the country named “thiên trước/thiên trúc” (Buddha’s place of birth)¹ such as those in *Thiền uyển tập anh* (1337)² and *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* (1479).³ People migrated from this subcontinent must also have been among those who came from “Chà và” or “Đồ Bà” – some southern archipelago – and traded with kings and court officials as described in royal historical

¹Thanh Nghị. *Từ điển Việt Nam*. Saigon: Thời thế, 1958, p. 1319. Thanh Nghị defines that thiên trúc is an ancient name of India originated from Chinese texts.

²Read Lê Mạnh Thát. *Nghiên cứu về Thiền uyển tập anh*. First published in 1976, reprinted in [TP. Hồ Chí Minh] : Nhà xuất bản Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, [1999], p. 104-105

³Read Ngô Sĩ Liên, Đức Thọ Ngô. *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư: dịch theo bản khắc in năm chính hòa thứ 18 (1697)*. Hà Nội : Khoa học xã hội, 1983. p. 219

accounts such as *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* (1479) and *Vân Đài loại ngữ* (1773) (Nguyễn Thị Phương Chi, Nguyễn Tiến Dũng 443-447; Laffan 17-64). In these Sino-Chinese writings, pre-modern Vietnam emerges as results of the dynamic interactions among individuals and groups (Dutton 174-175; In-sŏn Yu 118-120; Salemink, *The Ethnography of Vietnam* 31). Nevertheless, such dynamic images were stifled by fixed ethnic categories as results of what Salemink called “tribalization” or “ethnicization” of the French colonial administration since the mid-1800s. This “classificatory regime” aimed at knowing and controlling the colonial population subjects; accounts about colonial Vietnam by Western ethnographers, missionaries and travelers fixed “a field of fluid and multilayered interrelations into a mosaic of discrete, static and singular identities” (Salemink, *The Ethnography of Vietnam* 26). In this context, the world of people associated with some southern archipelago – called “chà và” in Vietnamese -- was fixed in the solid category “Malaisie,” “Java” or “Malacca” (Bon, *Manuel de conversation Franco-Tonkinois* 29; Vallot, *Dictionnaire franco-tonkinois illustré* 403; Vallot, *Grammaire annamite à l'usage des français* 106). Jean Bonet in *Dictionnaire annamite-français: (langue officiellement et langue vulgaire)* (1899),⁴ providing the Annamite word “chà và” of Java or Malay, contained a comment that “Cochinchinese wrongly used this term [chà và] to denote Indians” (66). The administrative perception of “Chà và” as Malay and Java was at the time more associated with inhabitants of Chà bàn – a Hindu state (Coedès 93-96), commonly seen to have once had brisk intercourses and trading relations with archipelago in the South. These inhabitants belonged to Champa minority,

⁴ This is the first Annamite-French dictionary that included the term “Chà và.”

one among many ethnic groups in the Central Highland that colonial administrators, missionaries, travelers, and ethnographers attempted to define in the nineteenth century (Pétrus Jean-Baptiste Vĩnh Ký, *Cours d'histoire annamite à l'usage des écoles* 28; Aymonier 19-21; Paris ii, 93-94; Salemink, *Vietnam's Cultural Diversity* 65; Salemink, *The Ethnography of Vietnam* 35-45). People who are descendants of those, which Reddi V. M defines as the first wave of Indian migrants to “Vietnam” (155) still form an ethnic minority in Vietnamese administrative writing about “the great Vietnamese family” (Palley 374-391; Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs’ Portal); in postcolonial Vietnamese textbooks, this ethnic minority is seen to follow Indian cultural practices and is supposed to look like “Indians.”⁵

Parallel to the process of ethnicizing people in the highlands, colonial writers also classified the lowland population as objects to be ruled (Salemink, *The Ethnography of Vietnam* 26). “Indien” or “Malabar”⁶ in French and the alternative *quốc ngữ* term “Thiên

⁵. High-school textbooks on geography published in 1962, 1964 in the Republic of Vietnam describes Chăm as one of the ethnic minorities in South Vietnam. Nguyễn Văn Mùi, author of *Địa lý Việt Nam, lớp đệ tứ* (. Saigon: Khai Trí, 1962) even gave a note on a photo of Chăm people that “their faces and outfits had some features of Indians” (92). In 19 Descendants of the second-wave of Indian migrants do not belong to any ethnic groups in Vietnam. Trần Hữu Quang in *Việt-nam: hình thể, nhân văn, kinh tế lớp đệ 2* (Saigon: Nguyễn Du xuất bản, 1964) gave a neutral comment that Chăm once had a glorious civilization that was influenced by Indian civilization (117).

⁶ Contemporary Englishmen criticized the French’s definition of any Indian as the Malabar as “willful carelessness, amounting to contempt” because it merely counted on race and previous Turkish mistakes. While Englishmen used the word “Malabar” to refer languages from southern India to differentiate them with Hindustani, the French used it to denote the country, the people and the language of its domination in India (“Coromandel coast and Tamil country”). This so-called habitual mischief with Indian names had led to sequential wrongs, as seen by colonial Englishmen: in French colonies, the name was given to Indians of coolie class and Eurasians, colons as well as French settlers with Indian blood. Arthur Mayall (“The Widow of Malabar.” *Notes and queries; a medium of intercommunication for literary men, general readers etc.* London: Office Bream's Bouldings. 1902; pp. 446). Nevertheless, from other sources, the term Malabar among Englishmen was not always neutral. Sir John Barrow (1764-1848) in his travel logs to Cochinchina (published in 1809) explained the Malabar as a passive, mild creature who betrayed their “Hindoo” origin

trúc/thiên trước,” “Ấn Độ” and “Chà và” frequently appear in earlier colonial ethnographies about people from the Indian subcontinent living in the lowland of Annam. Early French-Annamese dictionaries adopt the terms “thiên trước/thiên trúc” to translate the terms “Inde” or “Indien” (*Manuel de conversation Franco-Tonkinois* 29; Vallot, *Dictionnaire franco-tonkinois illustré* 404; Ravier 262). The term “thiên trước/thiên trúc” as “India” or “Indians” appears the most frequently in *Sử ký đại nam việt quốc triều* (1885), an account of Nguyễn Ánh's attempts to regain power with assistance from the French government. Although “Ấn Độ” is the official term for “India/Indians” in postcolonial Vietnamese writing, it appeared late and is less common than the term “thiên trúc/thiên trước” in colonial texts: *Dictionnaire annamite - Đại Nam quốc âm tự vị. Tham dụng chữ nho, có giải nghĩa, có dẫn chứng, mượn 24 chữ cái phương Tây làm chữ bộ* (1895) by Huỳnh Tịnh Paulus Của (1834-1907), a “massive and authoritative *quốc ngữ* dictionary of the Vietnamese language” (Jamieson 70), is the first that contains the term “Ấn Độ” and uses the term “thiên trước” to explain it.⁷ The term “chà và,” despite the geographic incorrectness as emphasized by French scholars, was still used to refer to the subject of the French term “Indien” or “Malabar” in early colonial administrative, journalistic writings in *quốc ngữ* such as *Lịch nam thuộc về sáu tỉnh Nam Kỳ. Tuế thứ kỷ tị* by Trương Vĩnh Ký (1868, p. 42-43) and *Lịch Annam thông dụng trong sáu tỉnh Nam kỳ: Tuế thứ Kỷ Mão* (1879) by Huc F (1879, p. 62).

and were like black slaves (Read Sir John Barrow; Truter J Medland. *A Voyage to Cochinchina in the Years 1792 and 1793*. London: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1806; pp. 240.)

⁷ Thanh Nghị's dictionary (1958) defines “Ấn Độ” is a newer term compared to Thiên trúc/tây trúc that all refer to India/Indians (ibid., 42)

In attempts to aggregate people into an “identity of type” for ruling purposes, colonial ethnographers of the late nineteenth century emphasized racial characteristics and professional differences to construct ethnic identities of the “Indians,” “thiên trước” or “chà và.”⁸ In the use of the term “chà và” to refer to “Indien” or “thiên trước,” earlier colonial authors maintained the black skin as a racial characteristic of this population (Truong, P. J. B. Vĩnh Ký, *Cổ phong Gia định phong cảnh vịnh* 11; Émile 367; French Indochina, *Manuel opératoire franco annamite* 65). The term “thiên trước” also referred to black skin and other supposedly racial "strangeness," such as big earlobes with enormous earrings (Huỳnh Tịnh Paulus Của, 325; French Indochina, *Manuel opératoire franco annamite* 65). On the other side, earlier colonial authors seem to have paid more attention to business activities of the “Indien,” given the availability of many accounts about this people’s way of earning a living in Annam. In the Geography Society’s *Bulletin* (volume 2, 1882) and in *Revue de l’Anjou* (1899), people from the Indian subcontinent were described as the fourth populous group in Saigon following Annamites, Chinese and French; Malabars worked as public horse drivers, cow herders, guardians (policemen) and money lenders.⁹ Particularly, these ethnographic writings

⁸ Salemink and Pels emphasize that it is impossible for ethnographers to be detached outsiders in relations to contemporary institutionalized knowledge formed from sources of missionary rather than scientific societies, colonial rather than metropolitan bureaucracies, commercial rather than intellectual economies, a military rather than research engagement" (Pels and Salemink, "Introduction: Five Theses" 1-34; Salemink, *The Ethnography of Vietnam* 8).

⁹ As described, the Malabar lent their money to the Chinese. If the Chinese did not repay on time, they would be forced to compensate the Indians with their houses and lands. Moreover, with a simple loan procedure, the Indian could still win more customers, regardless of their high interest. Meanwhile, French bankers required complicated procedures such as committed estates, property, and intermediate agencies, which resulted in their difficulty in developing banking business in the region (Société de géographie de Lille. *Bulletin* (vol. 2). Lille : Imprimerie L. Danel, 1882)

coined the term “cinq - six; dix – douze”¹⁰ which referred to Indians’ usurious rates and has kept the same meaning in present-day Vietnamese about Indian money-lenders.¹¹ The chapter “Bản các xe chà và” in *Lịch nam thuộc về sáu tỉnh Nam Kỳ. Tuế thứ kỳ tị* (1868), for instance, details chà và’s horse driving services.¹² Besides, the dictionary of Huỳnh Tịnh Paulus Của (1834-1907) contributes to solidifying the association of the Indian population with the money-lending business by providing the idiom “Nó có hỏi bạc Chà và thì là có vay bạc chà và” to explain the term “bạc” (438); the idiom can be translated as “he asks for silver from Chà và, which means he borrows silvers from Chà và.” Additionally, by providing the idiom “may vải thiên trước” (sewing textiles of thiên trước) to expand meanings of the term “may” (sew), this dictionary emphasizes textile related-businesses as a professional typicality of the “Indien” population (534). In *Recueil des compositions données aux examens de langue annamite et de caractères chinois au Tonkin* (1899), Chéon Jean Nicolas also describes textile selling as a typical business of "chà và" (4). In a way, colonial writers codified professions including money-lending, driving service, cattle herding, guarding, and textile business as ethnic particularities of the Indian population living in Annam.

¹⁰ This means “Lending 5 taking back 6 and lending 6 taking back 12” Vietnamese have been still using this formula, in the version “xanh xít đít đui,” to refer to Indian moneylenders (chettians) with derogatory connotation (Nguyễn, Hữu Phước. *Tiếng Việt ngoại quốc*. [U.S.] : [Nguyễn Hữu Phước], 2006, p. 141).

¹¹ I learned this term "cùng sít đít đui" from Mr. Mouttaya and his son in our personal communications on July 23, 2013.

¹² As recounted, Customers who did not use service up to one hour still had to pay for one-hour fees; customers still had to pay two-way round even though they did not take the return.

What is more important is that this ethnicization leads to a more concrete meaning of the colonial use of the terms “Indien /Malabar” and “Chà và”/thiên trúc/Án Độ.” These terms only refer to the Indians who do not hold French citizenship. To explain, in the second wave of Indian migration to Vietnam that as defined by Redd V.M began with the establishment of French rule in Indochina (155), there are two main groups of people migrating to colonial Vietnam from the Indian continent. The first group includes Indians who gained French citizenship by renouncing their native laws or through French Indian paternity. The French of Indian origin largely worked in the French colonial administration, in French firms, and in the French military, as tenders, running commercial enterprises, tax collectors and teachers (Brocheux, *The Making Delta: Ecology, Economy and Revolution* 103-104; Pairaudeau, “Indians as French Citizens” 85-127; Marie-Paule H 103-104). In 1880, the French migrants of Indian origin obtained the Ministry of Colonies’ approval to receive benefits similar to French bureaucrats in the colony; this approval also defined that the Indian French were not the same as the natives in particular and as Asians in general (Peters 201). The second group mainly includes British Indians and French subjects of India, who refused to renounce their native laws; this population mostly ran their own businesses in Indochina (Pairaudeau, “Indians as French Citizens” 14-18; Chandra 31-32). The French terms “Malabar/Indien” and the associated *quốc ngữ* “Chà và/thiên trúc/Án Độ” of earlier colonial ethnographies obviously did not include any professional details of French citizens of Indian origin. Instead, earlier colonial writers used those terms exclusively to refer to Indians without French citizenship, people who alongside the Chinese formed the most powerful

obstacles to the French domination of the colonial economy. The economic power of Indians who were not within the colonial system as Indian Frenchmen must have made the French administrators decide to identify them as a separate ethnic group.

As observed by Charles Reboquain in *The Economic Development of French Indochina* (1939), the number of Indian migrants was negligible, less than one percent, compared to Chinese. However, in Saigon, before 1939, Indians owned one third of the main shopping streets in Saigon and occupied the large piastres advanced as credit by non-governmental agencies in Indochina. In its early colonization, the French introduced a number of policies to compete with Indians and Chinese in colonial Vietnam. Concurrent with Reboquain's account, the Vietnamese historian Nguyễn Khắc Đạm in the textbook *Những thủ đoạn bóc lột của tư bản Pháp ở Việt Nam* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản văn sử địa, 1957) insists that the French government in its first step of colonizing Indochina issued policies to compete with “tư bản Ấn kiều, Hoa kiều” (overseas Chinese and Indian capitalists). One of the most important policies was the establishment of the Indochina Bank in 1875 and of other banking organizations in consecutive years (217). In 1887, to defeat Chinese and Indian businessmen who succeeded in selling goods from their own “countries,” the French authorities initiated the import tax system which gave a high tax for goods from countries other than France (see more in Nguyễn Văn Khánh 31-32; Ngô Vĩnh Long, *Before the Revolution* 89; Brocheux, *The Mekong Delta* 70-105; Thompson and Adloff, 130-131; Hue-Tam Ho Tai 123).

Demographic calculations and designs form a crucial instrument in constructing and maintaining the economic and political dominance of ruling groups (Hirschman 555-7). Demographic reports, presently stored at the Archive Center I (Hanoi), indicate the French government's attempts to categorize the Indians who do not hold French citizenship as a single group different from those with French citizenship. The census report "Protectorat de l' Annam et du Tonkin"¹³ (April 9, 1890) categorizes the Malabar along with Tonkinese and Chinese under the umbrella label "indigenes"¹⁴ The 1896 census report classifies the Indians of non-French citizenship in the group "foreign Indian" among other ethnic foreigners: 67 Indian males, 9 Indian females and 9 infants. These reports reveal the colonial administration's definition of the "Indiens" as one among groups that are more invisible than and particularly separate from "us" -- the French and the Indian French. This practice of ethnicizing non-French citizens of the Indian continent is without French administrators' effort of knowing, dealing with and controlling their economic opponents to maintain the French domination over the colony (c.f Salemink, *The Ethnography of Highlander* 26; Cohn 16-50).

The so-called modern governmentality, implied in colonial ethnicization of "Indien," "thiên trước/thiên trúc" and "chà và," is more exhaustive in texts in colonial Vietnam since the early twentieth century onwards. In later colonial accounts, the non-French citizens of India gradually transformed from people with a certain association with other

¹³ Philippe Papin in the chapter "Hanoi À l'Heure Française" (*Histoire de Hanoi*, Paris: Fayard, 2001; pp. 238) says there were 23 Indians in Hanoi in 1890.

¹⁴ Philippe Papin in the chapter "Hanoi À l'Heure Française" (*Histoire de Hanoi*, Paris: Fayard, 2001) listed that there were 23 Indians in Hanoi in 1890, 75 in 1913, 238 in 1930, 375 in 1930 (238).

ethnic groups into a singular foreign population. For example, colonial reports issued in Tonkin at the turning point of the century disclose French administrators' further invisibilization of non-French citizens of India by ethnicizing these people as discrete, static, fragile and controllable Indian foreigners. In the 1900s, colonial administrators implemented the category "Asian foreigners" to categorize the Indians; numbers of this population are usually small:¹⁵ in 1902, number of "Indian strangers" was 50 while there were 120000 Annamese, 1900 Chinese and 51 Japanese;¹⁶ the "Indien" (thiên trúcthiên trước and chà vậ) was seen as one among foreign Asians. In 1904 and 1905, the colonial administration apparently continued to separate the "Indien" in Annam from "us;" presence of this foreigners are recorded as negligible: numbers of "indigenous French subjects" (French subjects) were 37 and of "indigenous foreign subjects" (British Indians) were 71 (69 males, 1 female, and 1 infants); in 1905, the category "Indian non assimiless" appeared with the numbers of 106 males and 5 females. In 1910s, colonial authorities also grouped "Indiens" among other "foreign Asians" including Annamese (Central Vietnamese), Cochinchinese, Japanese, Laos and Cambodian. The number of Indian subjects is still seen as insignificant: in 1910, there were 170 Indians (89 men, 33

¹⁵ The article "French Indo-China: Demographic Imbalance and Colonial Policy" (*Population Index*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Apr., 1945), pp. 68-81) contains the point that demographic projects of Indochina were not trustful before 1936. Dennis J. Duncanson further asserts that no proper census was ever taken to be confident about provided number of population in colonial Vietnam between 1870 and 1950 (*Government and Revolution in Vietnam*. London: Oxford U.P., 1968, 104).

¹⁶In 1902, the colonial governor initiated a new format of reports of residents in Tonkin that followed four categories: French, European, Asian strangers and indigenous. However, the actual census reports of this year did not follow that design.

women, 48 infants); in 1911: 46 (37 men, 2 women and 7 infants),¹⁷ in 1912: 25 (15 men, 7 women, 1 boy, 2 girls),¹⁸ in 1913: 75,¹⁹ and in 1918: 41.²⁰ On the base of this number, apparently, the French could safely assume that the Indians were invisible, thus were not competitive in the economic exploitation.

Journalistic, ethnographic and literary writings of this time confirm the difference and separation of the “Indien” in the public minds. In major *quốc ngữ* journals including *Nông Cổ Min Đàm* (1901-1923), *Lục tỉnh tân văn* (1907-1921), and *Nam Phong tạp chí* (1917-1934), the perception of “Indians” as those who do not participate in businesses of

¹⁷ In 1911, the Indian was put in different categories. The Table I “population” counted Asian strangers (Indian : 37 men, 2 women, 4 boys and 3 girl along with numbers of Cambodians, Chinese and Japanese) and of Métis. The total of Asian stranger is 51897 in which Chinese is the largest proportion. Another report dated 9/2/1911 in handwriting counted asiatique strangers that there were 2048 Chinese, 106 indians (72 men, 24 women and 10 infants) and 83 Japanese. This report is a supplement to the Table 1. The table X, “indigenous population” counted 46 Indians (37 men, 2 women and 7 infants), Chinese (1088, 208, 339), Japanese (35, 26, 5), Cochinchina (34, 51, 45) and Annamite. It is interesting that Chinese and Indian were the first categories of the group indigenous population in this Table.

¹⁸ In 1912, the category of “Indian” was in two tables. Table I has European, indigenes (protected French and French subjects) and Asian strangers. The last category included 25 Indian (15 men, 7 women, 1 boys, 2 girls and the total is of 25), Cambodian (2 men, 1 women and three girls), Chinese (1568 men, 435 women, 554 boys, 2908 girls) and Japanese (33 men, 33 women, 1 boys and 3 girls). Table X, “indigenous population” has empty data about the Indian. The table XII indicates that there was one Indian infant died in the year.

¹⁹ The statistic of Indians in Hanoi in 1913 is from Philippe Papin, “Hanoi À l'Heure Française” (*Histoire de Hanoi*, Paris: Fayard, 2001; pp. 238).

Nevertheless, 1913 French statistics, stored at the National Center of Archive 1, are the most troublesome. There are four different reports providing different statistics. Out of four, three documents share the same format but give different numbers: one notes that there are totally 7 Indians (3 men, 4 women); the other one has the number of 75 Indians (43 men, 5 women, 15 boys and 12 girls); and the other has 25 Indians totally (15 men, 7 women, 1 boys and 2 girls). Among these three documents, only the one with the number of 7 Indians has stamp “Residence Mairie de Hanoi.” The French scholar Philippe Papin in his book about the history of Hanoi did not use this stamped statistic. Instead, uses the number 75 of a unofficial-looking document. The fourth document provides the number of 110 Indians in which there were 30 French subjects and 80 non-French subjects.

²⁰ The report is followed: Annamite (99896), Cochinchinese (141), Japanese (77), Indian (41), Chinese (3271), Laotien (?). This statistic is from the Center Commission of Police.

the colonial government is sharper. These journals provided accounts of techniques in money-lending, real estate, trade and even r   cake and soup selling of a group of people interchangeably named “ch   v  ”, “  n   ” and “thi  n tr  c/thi  n tr  c.” The colonial ethnicization of the Indians is more intensive in these journals: contributors circulated slogan-like phrases such as “B  n ch  , b  n ch  t,” “đ  nh th  ng ch  t, đ  o  i th  ng ch  ” (hit the ch  t, expel the ch  ), and h  a Ch  t, h  a Ch   (the catastrophe of Ch  t and the catastrophe of Ch  ) parallel to creative accounts of rich, successful and restless money-making “ch   v  ” – they all emphasize the status as “them” of the “Indian” people in Annam (Ph  m Qu  nh, “Ph  p du h  nh tr  nh nh  t k  y” 345-67; Paireau, “Indians as French Citizens” 223-224). The use of the term “Ch   v  ” in the emphases on the foreignness of the Indians in this time must have echoed colonial French scholars’ interpretations of pre-modern Sino-Chinese writings by Vietnamese royals. Colonial ethnographers, in addition to pointing out the geographic incorrectness of the Vietnamese use of the term “ch   v  ,” explained that “ch   v  ” (or “Ch   b  ,” “đ   b  ”) in royal historiographies actually referred to people island in the South named “C  n L  n” who invaded Annam (Romanet du Caillaud 252-261; *Vari  t  s tonkinoises* 136; Maybon 91-93). The circulation of the term “ch   v  ” in accounts of the “Indians” of the early twentieth century strengthens their status as the unwelcome migrants or foreigners in Annam, giving normative associations, motives and characteristics of the term/name that have been constructed since the early colonial period (cf. Bhatia8).

Certainly, racial difference of the Indian population must have been emphasized in the continuing use of the term “ch   v  ” and “thi  n tr  c” in colonial writings published

in Annam in the early twentieth century. Emphasis on physical differences of Indians is the most obvious in the term “tây đen” (black westerner) in contemporary texts (Boutchet 59). Images of “Tây đen” or (chà và with dark skin) with white silver coins prevail in a number of literary works such as the novel *Hà Hương phong nguyệt* (1914) by the prominent writer L.H Muu and Nguyễn Kim Đính; the long Sino-Nom poem named “Chuyện đồng tiền” (“Story of Money,” 1918) by Nguyễn Trung Tín, and “Cô tây đen” (1918), a “sấm” lyric by Tấn Đà. These literary representations highlight the conflicting paradoxical image -- silver coins (money) and black westerners; black skin and pink cheeks (and pink thread); and bronze statue (euphuism of black skin people) and beautiful native girls. The resulting differentiation of “Indians” from “us” is clear: “Indians” are supposed to be associated exclusively with money-lending, wealth and particularly inferiority, given the contemporary textbook picture in the inherence of black race with low intellect and low morality (Trần Văn Thông 32). Earlier nationalists such as Phan Bội Châu, Trần Văn Thông, and Nguyễn An Ninh circulated the racist categorization of the non-French Indians in attempts of constructing yellow skin as a racial characteristic of the Annamese, an embodiment of a superior race compared to the Indians (Trương Bửu Lâm 87, 107).

Since the 1920s, writings published in Annam fixed images of British Indians and French subjects into identities of unwelcome migrants. Colonial demographic reports issued during the 1920s and the 1930s categorized the Indians under the singular label “Hindu,” which seems to have emphasized the status as foreign nationals of the Indians, given the rising Hindutva ideology in 1930s that advocated “a nation of Hindu race and

culture” (Bapu, *Hindu Mahasabha in Colonial North India* 180; Bapu, *Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags* 20). Under the new category, the number of “Hindu” was larger (217 in 1929, 238 in 1930,²¹ no data for the year of 1931 and 288 in 1932). The administrators were even able to count Indian residents living in specific locations of Hanoi.²² During the 1930s, colonial authorities also constructed accounts about the "Muslim Hindu" population and "Chettiar Hindu" population -- in Hanoi with details about their religious activities, incomes, and real estates.²³ During the first half of the 1940s, colonial administrative texts contained descriptions about Sikhism and Muslim associations’ legal obligations of receiving the “protection” of the French government, social responsibility of giving charity to the local population and cultural practices.²⁴ (Catholic Indians are

²¹ Philippe Papin also used this figure in his mentioned book.

²² In 1932-1933, 169 Indians lived at Hàng Đào; 21 at “Duc-Vien”, 10 at Hàng Tre, 10 at Hàng Bông, 9 in Hàng Da, 3 in Hàng Đồng, 2 at Hàng Lược, 3 at Hàng Than, 3 at Rue du Gand Bouddha et annexes (?), 1 at Nguyễn Thái Học, 3 at Lương Yên, 2 at “route de Sánh-Tu et annexes” 10 at Rue de Ngoc Thanh et annexes,” and 1 at “rue de Dong-tam et annexes.”

²³ In the report about religious associations in Hanoi issued on Mai 7, 1931 by the Commission Center and the Central Commission of Police, Muslim population occupied the Mosque located at 6-14 No Sông Tô Lịch street. The mosque was repaired in 1902; ownership of the mosque land was not in administrative charge yet. Head of the Muslim congregation was an Indian named Mohamed Said, living at 100 Street de la Soie. The leader of worshipping rituals was ABDEL MEDZIBE. He stayed in the mosque. In addition to the mosque, the Muslim association also owned a building at No. 1, street Papiers and two other buildings at 8 and 10 rue de la Poissonerie. Incomes from the property amounted to fifty dollars a month which will be used to cover ritual costs. The Muslim pray every day but the most important time of praying was on Friday.

File *Autorisation de fonctionner de l' association* (D62, dates extreme 1937-1939. No 2916) at the National Center of Archive 1 contains correspondence from 1937 to 1939 between Chettiar « Hindu » and local authorities on the establishment of the Indochina Association of Mattukottai Chettiars.

²⁴ Take the letter by the vice- president J.Kewalram of the Sikhism Association as one example. The later, dated July 9, 1945, had a criticism that the government did not protect Sikhism festival as it did for the Muslim Mosque which was protected by three policemen. Kewalram requested three policemen for his pagoda on July 10, 1945 in the morning to avoid possible disorders. Moreover, on Jul 23, 1945, a letter sent to the Police Department of Hanoi by the president of the Indian Association in Hanoi asking permission to organize a Mass on the street in one month of Ramadan, from August 9 to September 9, 1945. The letter

totally absent in colonial records about “Indien,” given that this population is largely French (Paireudeau, “Indians as French Citizens 53-60; 246-248; Phan Phát Huồn C.S.S.R 404)).²⁵ Moreover, every migration of individual Indians within, from and into Indochina was recorded in travel documents.²⁶ This bureaucratic scrutiny might reflect attempts of the colonial government at improving healthcare and tax collection of the region (Robson, Yee 6; Duncanson 135). This scrutiny might also mean more surveillance and control which the French administration imposed on the “Hindu,” particularly given the fact that during the years of Great Depression, many Indian money-lenders went bankrupt and failed to pay their debts to colonial banks (Gunn 36-38). And more importantly, the scrutiny solidifies the difference in cultural and material practices of Indian residents, a difference that highlights the status of this population as migrants or foreigners in Annam. Towards the end of the colonial empire (1945), images of non-Frenchmen of the Indian subcontinent tend to form a separate and foreign group. More precisely, later colonial accounts completed classifying non-French citizens of India as “foreigners,” or “migrants” in Annam, a status that would make their settlement in Annam and their

revealed that the Indian people had good connections to other ethnic residents. (National Center for Archive 1. *Autorisation de fonctionner de l' association*. D62. No 2916).

²⁵ This population must have been privileged and crowded so much that in 1932, as recorded by Phan Phát Huồn C.S.S.R in 1962, Wednesday lectures about the Virgin were organized only for “Ấn kiều” (404) in Saigon.

In another source, the Virgin related lectures in the Catholic portal *Đông Công* maintain a story about Catholic families and individuals in Central Vietnam in the 1920s who witnessed and received miracles from the Virgin (<http://www.dongcong.net/MeMaria/ThangManCoi/12.htm>) (I learned about this source through Natasha Paireudeau's dissertation).

²⁶ *Secimens des permis de sejour des asiatiques etrangers en Indochine* (National Center for Archive 1, No 3704. F73) contains applications for travels and travel cards of individual Indians who move through different areas in Indochina.

businesses illegitimate and vulnerable; this benefits the French attempts at achieving control over the resources of Annam and expanding their French economic and political power (Murray 101; Cooper 79-81; Wheeler 748-749).

Particularly, journalistic and literary writings during this time solidified the identity of the Indians as illegitimate residents in Annam with representations of exploitative, greedy “chà và,” “tây đen” and in particular “sét ty” (chét-ty; xā tri). Novels published in the 1920s and 1930s by Hồ Biểu Chánh (1884-1958), a southern author, about “bạc chà và,” or “vay chà và” (coins of “chà và”; borrowing money from “chà và”) and journalistic writings about “vay tây đen” (borrowing money from black westerner) by Vũ Bằng (1913-1984) and Nguyễn Đình Lạp (1913-1952),²⁷ northern authors, further strengthened and confirmed the image of Indians as greedy, exploitative migrants. Especially, the term “chà và,” as seen in Hồ Biểu Chánh’s novels, becomes a solid reference to greedy, dangerous money-lenders and debt-collectors, a signal of unavoidable bankruptcy of the Annamese people. In Hồ Biểu Chánh’s novel, “Chà và” do not talk; instead, they are pictured only as creditors. Their silence leads to the constant feeling of not knowing anything about them. The Indian migrants appear in the public mind only as signaling danger, greed and cunningness. For example, in the novel *Ở theo thời*, Nhất Phát says that he does not know why two “Chà và” people come to his house; Đốc học immediately responds in terror: “Did you borrow money from them?” Đốc học’s automatic reaction suggests that “Chà và” signifies nothing but avarice. More evidence arrives in the

²⁷ Most journalistic and literary works will be analyzed in Chapter 2. “In debt” to Chà và, as observed by J. Marquet in 1920, is the tip of the tongue, bizarre and repetitive, next to Annamese ears (in Phạm Cao Dương 85)

narration flow: leaving the conversation, nhất Phát comes back to his house where two “chà và” are sitting waiting for him. The narrator pictures the Chà và’s gestures, ignoring their conversations. In other words, the narrator reduces the “Chà và” into voiceless actors, thus highlighting their inhuman greed. The resulting image of the “Indians” is nothing more than the unwelcome migrants associated with what S. Muthiah, a leading journalist on the Chettiar topics, calls “a rare financial acumen” or “the innate financial sixth sense” (viii). This negative ethnicization is intensified in the Vietnamese authors’ construction of characters called “sét-ty.” “Sét-ty” is a Vietnamese pronunciation of “Chettiar,” name of people in the south of Tamil Nadu state, who are famous for numerous and marvelous Hindu temples and particularly for their talent of trading and financial lending. “Sét-ty” in Vietnamese writing in 1910s largely referred to the profession of “money-lending.”²⁸ Before Hồ Biểu Chánh’s novels, this term was defined with negative epithets similar to the term “chà và.” Hồ Biểu Chánh uses the term sét-ty interchangeably with “chà và;” his “sét-ty” characters possess the same moral qualities as of money-lending “chà và.”

Towards the late 1930s, the moral, political stereotypes associated with the term “chà và,” “sét-ty” and “Tây đen” -- as used in Vietnamese writing -- and the terms “Indien” and “Hindu” -- as used in French administrative record – become more fixed

²⁸In 6 1919 *Nam Phong Tạp chí* (volume 24), Hoàng Đạo also addressed chetty as a business: “À thôi! Có nghề này chóng giàu mà nhận: nghề “sét-ty”. (Oh no! There is a job that can be rich quickly, that is “sét-ty job”). Nguyễn Mạnh Bông (in the penname Nguyễn Song Kim), also wrote in *Nam Phong tạp chí* (volume 16, issued in 10.1918) that “Mấy bọn nhà dàu nghề sét-ty/Bo bo giữ của có làm chi? (Rich gangsters who hold the business of sét-ty; what is the meaning of just keeping on hold of their property?) (Also read in <http://tunguyenhoc.blogspot.com/2014/05/nghe-xet-ty-la-nghe-gi.html>)

than ever before. Recorded Indian individuals might have their own specific names, but they still bear unfavorable moral, political qualities that are stereotyped as associated with those terms. Not given names but categorized epithets matter in the public perception of “Indians.” The domination of this completed ethnicization is obvious in the story “Trước vành móng ngựa” (1938) by Hoàng Đạo (1907-1948), a core member of *Tự lực văn đoàn* (Self-Reliance Literary Group). His character has the name Singh; presentations of this protagonist tend to conform to contemporary categorized characteristics of “the Indian.” As narrated, Singh begins a lawsuit that his Vietnamese wife, Thị Nam, yanks some whiskers of him in a fight. In front of the judge, Thị Nam accuses Singh of having an affair and having kicked her out of their house; Singh insists that Thị Nam is not faithful and deserves bad treatments. Singh continues that despite the separation, Thị Nam keeps cursing him and even beats him, but he would not have sued his wife, had not she yanked some of his whiskers. The sarcasm is obvious: the Indian man is actually the subject of a game being played by members of the court and even by the narrator: Indians are ridiculous in characters and behaviors. Thị Nam makes the hilarious comment that although Singh loses half of his beard, he does not look different; and the judge assures him that the whiskers will grow again; Singh is a big boy, how he can allow a small native woman to take away his valuable beard. In response, Singh behaves in a feminine way: he sullenly looks at Thị Nam and says that his beard does not grow well particularly in autumn. More, the narrator explicitly makes fun of the name “Singh” -- “such a cute name” -- and adds: “this tây đên has a towel around his head like a pile of cloth, his face is like black bronze, his big bear almost covers his mouth... his

figure is like an elephant.” Words of Singh create another laugh: “my whiskers are very valuable.”²⁹ In short, Indians are ridiculous: the story reads like a summary of the colonial knowledge about the non-French population from India.

Colonial formation of knowledge about the “Indians” is the most evident in the ethnography *Túi Bạc Saigon* (Hanoi: Trung bắc thư xã, 1941) in which Vũ Xuân Tụ, a journalist, incorporates most of terms that have been used to name the Indians in colonial writing, but it discloses the rising common use of the term “Ấn” or “Ấn Độ” as a Vietnamese word for the Indian people. Particularly, the chapter named “Saigon với Ấn họa” (Saigon with Dangers of Indians) provides exhaustive portraits of cultural habits, social relations and jobs of different groups of Indians living in different corners of Saigon (Box 1),³⁰ ultimately constructing an identity of this population as being not only

²⁹ Quotes are from Trịnh Bá Đĩnh Ed. *Văn học Việt Nam thế kỉ XX- Tạp văn và các thể kĩ Việt Nam 1900-1945*, quyển 3, tập 2. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Văn học, 2007; p. 163

³⁰ The Indians entered Western villages (Dân Ấn Độ vào làng Tây): These people are from five French-colonized provinces of India. They went to Western villages, becoming soldiers and obtaining interests like those of French. Most of them work as “phắc to” delivering letters or offices of governmental sectors or in business companies; they reside separately in Lagrandière Street. - Gate Guarding Black Westerners (Tây đen gác cổng): They are Bengalese – the Saigonese usually call them “hạch-gác-dang” – who are professional in gate keepers in government offices or private houses. Their salaries reach 60 per month. Not only in Saigon but entire Indochine, are these people skillful in raising their credibility and reputation so that they are monopolistic in the gate keeping job. Few among them run the business of selling leather hats or rain coats. - Black Westerner selling textiles: Wearing “fez” hats on heads, they monopolize the business of selling textiles while these textiles are traded right in Saigon, of Dumarest, Frexor, and Pachod Frères branches. In sewing techniques, they usually make difficulty for shop runners when these runners run out of clothes products. They cooperate into inter leagues so that they can invest to gain bigger interests. Beside the Indians selling textiles in the Western Street, there are Black Westerners selling ba-da products and exchanging *piatres* for foreign currencies. - Bombay Indians: Bombay Indians sell silk near Bến Thành market. For current several years, Bombay products are frisky tradable. The Bombay Indians dare to give customers credits of thousand or to cede houses being in use to customers to open more shops.

- Chetties running business of money: Gangs (Túi) of chettiers (sét-ty) (also called xã-tri hay tào-kê) almost do not exist in Tonkin. At Chier Street, they erected a very big pagoda and construct rows of house around it. They lend money with very high interest with tricks skillful enough to avoid authorities’ eyes. For example, you are a governmental office or you have paddy land so your property are equal to 300đ you

separate from but also detrimental to “dân Việt Nam ta” (our Vietnamese population).³¹ It is an ethnicization that concurs with the colonial administration's’ attempts to single out the “Indians” from the rest of the population in Annam, which in turn would ideologically restrain the economic domination and even eliminate the presence of this group of people. In short, colonial knowledge has created the image of the Indians as unwelcome migrants; being made visible in such certain way, the Indians in colonial Vietnam are primarily absent in colonial writing.

2. Categorization of “Indian” and Postcolonial Nation-Building³²

Colonial visibilization of the “Indians” and other ethnic communities in Annam aimed at serving the organization and development of Indochina (c.f Salemink, *The Ethnography of Highlander* 178). Categorization of ethnic minorities in the highland and

want to borrow from chetties, you have to pay them in advance of 60đ. But in front of a legal representative, the chetties will lend you 360đ and make the business paper with interest that is in accordant to state decision based on such amount of money. Thus, you have more debts and bear the interest of your 60đ (Vũ Xuân Tỵ 22-28)

³¹“... Black occupants in Saigon are mostly Indians. They live *isolately*. Between them and Vietnamese, there are *a few* daily encounters. Even among their compatriots, they *scarcely* communicate with each other. They have a *separate* pagoda to worship; they have *separate* pubs and restaurants for eating and drinking; they have *separate* streets to reside and to do business. *Scarcely*, they ever gathered in *our* fun, music and singing selling places. Occasionally, there is one out of twenty Indians get married to a Vietnamese wife.” (Vũ Xuân Tỵ 22)

³² I am identifying the subject “Indians in Vietnam” in projects of nation-building of postcolonial Vietnam. Accordingly, data related to the Indians of this chapter are limited to their availability at archive centers of Vietnam including three National Archive Centers and the Archival Centers of People Committee of Hanoi and HCMC. At the National Center for Archive 2, there are no censuses of Indian residents under French government and the Republic of Vietnam although there are a number of documents related to economic activities of this population. Information about Indians in Hanoi after 1945 should have been located at the National Center for Archive 3, as announced in the Decision 13/QĐ-LTNN issued by the Ministry of State Archive (Cục lưu trữ nhà nước) on February 23, 2001. Nevertheless, the Fonds of Prime Cabinet, which potentially contains information about the Indian in northern Vietnam, is not yet “deconfidentialized,” thus not for public access. Most data about Indians in the North of this chapter are from the Archive Center of Hanoi’s People Committee.

lowland used the metaphor of the family to shape the idea of “ethnic solidarity,” in which all ethnic groups are seen as savage children of a civilizing French father; this ethnicization aimed at creating military and economic alliances and coalitions for the French colonizers in the face of constant resistance from the ethnic majority, the Annamese (cf. Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons* 320-326; Salemink, *The Ethnography of Highlander* 270). Whereas, colonial administrators and ethnographers categorize diverse highlanders and lowlanders into separate small ethnic groups in order to prevent them from being on the side of the ethnic Annamese and to make sure that they are loyal to the French, good example of a colonial policy of “divide et impera.” Reversely, the colonial ethnicization of the Indians (and in lesser degree Chinese) highlights their socially, politically and culturally single, migrating existence, eventually excluding this population from alliances with other ethnic groups. Specifically, the Indians (and Chinese) were not seen as members of the metaphoric colonial family, overseen by the Great French Mother. Prosperous, competitive and dominant Indians (and Chinese) formed obstacles to the French colonization of Annam. Moreover, postcolonial scholars and administrators of Vietnam adopt ethnographic data and categories constructed by colonial writers and administrators to form the essential unity and homogeneity of Vietnam and its indomitable resistance against foreign aggression (Pelley 374-391; Salemink, *The Ethnography of Highlander* 270; Chiengthong 153; Lentz 68-105). Accordingly, ethnic minorities categorized by colonial writers and administrators are included as younger brothers of ethnic Kinh in the metaphor of Vietnam as “an extended family of Vietnamese nationals” envisioned by successive

Vietnamese regimes (Salemink, *The Ethnography of Highlander* 270; Chiengthong 153; Lentz 68-105; Bộ phát triển sắc tộc 8). In this strategic “ethnic solidarity,” people that colonial administrators and writers categorized as unwelcome migrants are not seen as family members of Vietnam. Status as dangerous migrants or foreigners makes the Indians the targets of postcolonial Vietnamese nationalisms, projects of constructing a homogenous, sovereign and democratic figure of the Vietnamese nation. The consequence, as analyzed in this dissertation, is the gradual disappearance of the category “Indians” in the ethnic formations of postcolonial Vietnam.

In most administrative records of postcolonial Vietnamese regimes, the terms “Ấn Độ” (Indians) or “Ấn kiều” (overseas Indians) are used to address the people that colonial administrators categorized as “Indien,” “Malabar” or “Hindu.” The use of these terms emphasizes their status as foreigners, a status that signals their vulnerable residence and ultimate invisibility in the image of postcolonial Vietnam. Archived documents of *État du Việt Nam* at National Archive 2 in Ho Chi Minh City indicate the struggles of Indian residents in justifying their residence and employment in Vietnam during the first Indochina War. As recorded, on May 8, 1951, Indians in Saigon submitted a petition to the Director of Municipal Police to give legal status to the association of Indians called “Hội xá Ấn Kiều Trung ương,” an association that included Indians in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. The petition was denied, witness the letter sent on July 16, 1951 by the *Préfet* of Vietnam in Saigon to the president of *État du Việt Nam*. For the Vietnamese authorities, members of the group did not show any attachment and contribution to Vietnam: India has not recognized Vietnam; rights of Indians in Vietnam

are guarded by the Consul; and they only gather information useful for themselves and for Indian authorities.³³ Similarly, Indian residents in Hanoi asked permission to form an administrative office of Muslims: On March 29, 1952, Hadji Abdul Kader asked the President of État du Việt Nam for the legal status of “Hội Ái Hữu Ấn Kiều tại Hà Nội” (Association of Overseas Indians Friendship in Hanoi). The Préfet of Northern Vietnam, on April 30, 1952, issued a letter (number 5986/PTH/HC-1) to the president of État du Việt Nam urging for the agreement. The letter uncovers that Indians in Hanoi increasingly owned land, thus, a legal status of their own association would allow them to communicate with the local government about matters of territorial conflicts and taxes. The permission was not issued,³⁴ which indicates the vulnerable presence of the Indians in the national image of postcolonial Vietnam.

During the Vietnam War, the Indians gradually disappear from the ethnic categorization of postcolonial Vietnam. Demographic data about this population in mainstream texts published in South Vietnam tend to picture the Indians as foreigners as a certain fact, presenting the collapse of Indian presence in Vietnam. Textbooks on geography for elementary and high school students present the Indians as the third most

³³ Fond Phủ Tổng thống quốc gia Việt Nam, No 3013, National Archive Center 2, Ho Chi Minh City

³⁴ The latest letter in this file is dated July 5, 1952; it still contains requests of the Indians about the establishment of their association in Hanoi. As proposed, the association would be led by Hadji Abdul Kayder (20 du Hàng Ngang street Hanoi, president), Abdul Sahib (94 Hàng Đào street, Hanoi, member), N.Daout Maideeen (20 Hàng Ngang street, Hanoi, member), Abdul Wahab (30 Hàng Đào, Hanoi, member) and A. Abdullatif (30 Hàng Đào, Hanoi, member). (Read Fond Phủ thủ tướng quốc gia Việt Nam, National Archive Center 2, number 3434, Ho Chi Minh City).

Moreover, “Indians had small school “belonging to the church [?]” (phụ thuộc vào nhà thờ)” that officials of DRV, “at present, it is not clear about the condition” (Hanoi Center of Archive. Fond Sở ngoại vụ. Number 312, page. 14)

populous among foreigners in Vietnam, following the Chinese and French,³⁵ but the data about this population follows the same pattern: many in the past and very few at present. Nguyễn Văn Mùi in *Địa lý Việt Nam đệ tứ* [Vietnam Geography, fourth level] (Saigon: Nhà xuất bản Khai trí, 1962) affirms that there are very few Indians in Vietnam, they are scattered in big cities such as Hanoi, Hải Phòng, and Saigon and work as traders or moneylenders (83). And in *Địa lý Việt Nam lớp Đệ nhị* [Vietnam Geography, second level] (Saigon: Nhà xuất bản Sống mới, 1963), Tăng Xuân An provides students with the information that in 1953 there were 4299 Indians in Vietnam (3833 in southern Vietnam, 384 in Northern Vietnam and 82 in Central Vietnam), most of them were textile sellers and money lenders; some raised cows for milk or worked as guardians in night time at villas. After the Genève Conference (July 1954), 90% of the Indians left the North for the South “because they cannot live with the Communists” (120). Trần Hữu Quảng’s *Địa lý Việt Nam lớp đệ nhị* [Vietnam Geography, second level] (Saigon: Nhà xuất bản Nguyễn Du, 1964), similarly, asserts that there were many Indians in big cities such as Hà Nội, Hải Phòng and Sài Gòn, but presently there are very few left in southern Vietnam (2424 in 1959); they worked in businesses of trading, money-lending, cattle farming and gate guarding. Moreover, administrative records issued in the late 1950s and in the 1960s indicate that numerous Indians receive Vietnamese citizenship; this assimilation means the disappearance of “Indian” as an identity in the ethnic landscape of southern Vietnam.³⁶ Documents in the late 1960s and 1970s show many naturalized Vietnamese

³⁵ Read *Em học Địa lý lớp ba. Sách địa lý bậc tiểu học*. Saigon: Bộ giáo dục xuất bản. 1965; Thanh Giang. *Giúp trí nhớ địa lý lớp đệ tứ*. Saigon: Nhà xuất bản Bông Lau. 1963.

³⁶Fond Phủ tổng thống Đệ nhất cộng hòa, Number 5554. National Archive Center 2, HCMC

submitted requests to be able to have their original Indian citizenship returned and go to India: a vast number of Indians moved out of Vietnam during this time, in particular out of southern Vietnam.³⁷ Figures of Indians in these mainstream texts conform to the colonial concept of the “Indien,” “chà và,” “sét-ty,” or “tây đen,” particularly in terms of political status (migrants) and profession.

While the terms “Án kiều” or “Án ĐỘ” are commonly used in administrative documents, “Chà và” and “sét ty” exclusively appear in literary and journalistic writing to refer to Indians. “Chà và” and “sét ty” appear the most in southern writings about the Indians in Vietnam; they embody more than political status (migrants) and profession -- national attachment – as a prominent identity that makes this population unwanted and disrespected by the Vietnamese public. In other words, the categorization of Indians in South Vietnam tends to emphasize the lack of national belonging as an identity or ethnicity of this population, a lack, which is supposed to be associated with inhuman nature. Duyên Anh (1935-1997), “a well-known writer and journalist in South Vietnam” (Lek Hor Tan 27), is among southern authors who construct Indian characters as stateless and inhuman. In *Nước mắt lưng tròng* (1971), a novel about Indian guardians, the author defines “Chà và” as people not having a sense of nation and race. Educated “chà và” are scoundrels, smugglers, and cheaters and they are the one who betray their dads’ and moms’ homeland; uneducated “Chà và” are maquereau – embodiments of Indian guardians who are professional in beating and punching -- all do not need love, but only money. The more the homeland of their fathers or mothers abandons the Indians, the

³⁷Fond Phủ tổng thống, Numbers 20028, 20032. And 20601. National Archive Center 2, HCMC

more ruthless they become, and the more ruthless they are, the more violently they beat others (18). The narrator believes in national detachment as the origin of the uncivilized characters of this population, characters that have been constructed as including greed, cunningness, and savage since the colonial time.

The association of not belonging to a nation with being immoral is the most obvious in the dysfunction of the given name of Indian characters in the novel. At the climax scene – in the prison, one Indian guardian is killed by Vietnamese ethnic prisoners -- the “Chà và” guard screams in panic name of another Indian office “Ganesh Sang?!” when he realizes that the corpse, stuck to the detention ground at the far corner, is his colleague. The name “Ganesh Sang” shocks the detainees because they habitually call the Indian descendants “Chà và” in full or “Chà,” instead. However, hilarious laughs at and utterances of the name “Ganesh Sang” suggest that this name does not make any sense to the Annamese characters. In other words, this given name does not create other images of the Indians than images that are traditionally attached to the general name “chà và.” Accordingly, the Indians are depicted exclusively in the aspect of arts of torture: in the custody room, a “Chà và” guard puts out a burning cigarette on Đạm’s arms. This “chà” detainer fiercely twists Đạm’s hands continuously three times. Ignoring the detainee’s scream, the “Chà và” officer keeps doing his job quietly, patiently, and smoothly. The torture happens in a fixed order, as experienced by every detainee: the “Chà và” officer takes off his uniform, standing there half-naked with a chest full of hair. Then, he starts experimenting with his talent in torment. The detention room is empty and muted, thus highlighting sounds of hard punches and cries. Three other “Chà và” police take turns

persecuting dozens of gangsters. These mercenaries wrestle the victims with special torturing skills so they will not die or faint but writhe in agony. These sadistic interrogators enjoy watching and listening to their victims' pains and howls, seeing their suffering and cries as great achievements of long training and experience in acts of torture. For these "chà và" characters, torture is really the passion and the entertainment. In short, regardless the Indian name, figure of the Indian migrants is visible through epithets conventionally associated with the name "Chà và" such as savage, foreignness, and greed – all stems from the stateless status of this population.

This critique on national detachment as unwelcome characters of the Indians actually conforms to nationalism of the Republican government. Ngô Đình Diệm persistently strived to construct the economic, political and cultural sovereignty and unity of Vietnam embodied in his ideology of Asiatic Vietnam.³⁸ Among policies issued for the presided national image of Vietnam is the Decree 58 that prohibits foreigners in Vietnam from eleven jobs.³⁹ It would aim at limiting the dominance of foreigners, particularly Indians

³⁸More about Ngô Đình Diệm's attempts to construct a Vietnam as a nation of Vietnamese in Chapter 3.

³⁹ Diệm Decree 58 lists eleven businesses that foreigners are eligible to run. These businesses included fish and meat selling, "chạp phô" (grocery business), coal and wood, oil exploiting, pawnshop running, textiles selling (under 10.000 meters), metal and bronze selling, rice grinding, grain selling, bus, train or boats transportation and mediating agent (with interest). At the time, Chinese were the most dominant in running the listed business.

aimed to minimize at maximum foreigners' ownership of businesses that were essential to daily needs of Vietnamese population and to the national economy, promoting at best Vietnamese presence in all economic activities of the nation. The government must have implemented the decree so harshly that it occupied minds of contemporary people. Many Vietnamese people, aged around 60 to 80, from the South, immediately recalled the decree title and the number of forbidden jobs.

The historian Trương Võ Anh Giang, aged 80, could still fully list ten jobs that foreigners was banned from doing when I asked him why not his Indian father-in-law but his mother-in-law was the owner of the pawnshop located at the present-day Nguyễn Trãi street.

and Chinese, in essential economic activities of South Vietnam. The ultimate goal of this policy was to maintain the authority of Vietnamese in important economic sectors; this policy also aimed to force foreigners to confer Vietnamese citizenship, which also means the limit presence of the foreignness in the national image.⁴⁰ Actually, this policy initially aimed to attack overseas Chinese, who were seen to form a threat to South Vietnam security, supposed that this population occupied important businesses and included citizens of communist China. Not until the early 1970s, when the Indian government and North Vietnam came closer to each other politically,⁴¹ overseas Indians were seen as the most immediate target of nationalism in South Vietnam. This context resulted in the Republic government's categorization of Indians as the most threatening foreigners to the national economy and politics. A number of policies were issued in attempts of eliminating this supposedly threatening visibility. On May 22, 1972, the Prime Minister Cabinet asked the Ministry of Economy and of Finance "to search methods to limit the Indian residency in Vietnam" (No 6864/BTC/TV/M1). On June 12, 1972, the Ministry of Finance issued a three-page letter to the Labor Ministry and the Cabinet agreed with the scheme to restrict the presence of Indians in Vietnam.⁴² On January 24, 1973, the Vice-President sent a confidential letter to the President suggested: "Stop the immigrations by Indian citizens who want to come to Vietnam as owners of companies or by those who

⁴⁰ More in Chapter 2

⁴¹ More in Chapter 2"

⁴²In this letter, these governmental officials interpret the law on business operation payment in 1953 in the way that it can be coped with the scheme of limiting the immigration and presence of Indian people in Vietnam. The Ministry of Finance confirms that "The Ministry of Domestic Affairs completely has powers and tools to limit businesses of the Indian people, whether these businesses needed permissions or not" (No 074/BNV/XNDT/20/M dated on June 6, 1972)

are relatives of Indian owners in Vietnam because Labor Ministry eliminates these people from working in Vietnam” (No 21/VP/Ph.Th.T/TT). In general, the non-resident status of the Indians and resulting increasing disappearance of this population from contemporary South Vietnam benefit the national homogeneity and sovereignty as the foremost goal of nation building of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN).

In North Vietnam's texts, the migrant status of the Indians also caused the decrease in this group of people in the ethnic image of postcolonial Vietnam. In early days of constructing the independent, DRVN inherited perceptions of Indians from previous (pro-) French regimes, particularly in terms of categorization. A number of documents issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs about confiscations of houses and land in Hanoi in 1954-1955 further indicate the difference in categorizing the Frenchmen of Indian origin and citizens of British, French India.⁴³ In these documents, Indian French are included in the category “French” although they have Indian names and “present address” in

⁴³At the Archive Center in Hanoi, this file does not have number and stamp.

One of these documents is “Danh sách bất động sản của người Việt và ngoại kiều quốc tịch Pháp ở Hà Nội” (1954). As written, these individuals have a considerably large amount of land in Hanoi: 21 land pieces (houses) in Đồng Khánh, Hàng Ngang, Phúc Kiến, Phùng Hưng, Kỳ Đồng, Cửa Nam, Trần Quang Khải, Phan Huy Chú, Khâm Thiên and Phan Bội Châu. Data of this document were said to report by owners themselves.

Data collected by officials of DRV were presented in another document, also in 1954, titled “Danh sách bất động sản được xác định là không đúng như ngoại kiều Pháp đăng ký.” Data in this document were lower than the previous ones. For example, the land owned by an Indian-French at Phúc Kiến street was said to be “6 meters square instead of 25 like French documents noted” (Fond Department of Foreign Affairs, Number 413, page 53). Also according to this document, three pieces of land owned by Frenchmen of Indian origin were sold to Vietnamese in September 1954. Moreover, columns listing houses and land owned by the Frenchmen of Indian origin had a remark “in dispute of proprietorship.” UBND's announcement made an announcement on October 1955 that “The City's People Committee will be on behalf of owners to manage their houses if the ownership right is not clear and has not been judged by a judiciary office” (Hanoi Center of Archive. Fond Sở ngoại vụ, Number 691, pp. 1). This meant all houses in dispute would be owned by the state soon.

Pondicherry. These details suggest that recorded Frenchmen must have been Indians who renounced their cultural law to obtain French citizenship, who are not ever counted as “Indians” since the colonial time. Moreover, these documents remind that the perception of “Indians” in Vietnam since the colonial time exclusively refers to those who declined the renouncement law to keep Indian citizenship.

The continuity of this perception in demographic practices of North Vietnam is obvious in attempts of administrators in making statistics of the Indians less visible and replacing the dominant category of “Indian” with categories that are less associated with capitalist practices of colonial regimes and more associated with the socialist figure of the nation. To indicate, the first demographic record of Hanoi’s Administrative Committee (Ủy ban hành chính, UBHC)⁴⁴ that counts 210 Indians and 176 Pakistanis in Hanoi in 1953⁴⁵ was inherited from the previous (pro) French regimes.⁴⁶ This data shows a

⁴⁴ On the first days of "inheriting and managing the capital" (tiếp quản thủ đô), while clearing enemy remnants (pro-former government) out of the city and taking power over departments of Bảo Đại and French government, the new government, on October 9 1954, set up the Military Committee (Ủy ban quân chính) of Hanoi. This police and military organ was responsible for suppressing and eliminating all conspiracies against the new government, protecting the security and order of the capital. This committee was tasked to solve civil aspects of the new government (Ủy ban quân chính. *Decision 01/QĐ*. October 9, 1954. National Center of Archive 3. Fond Bộ Nội Vụ, 3627). When the military institution faced difficulty in realizing two tasks at the same time (constructing the city powers and solving administrative issues) the government set up another organ named The Administrative Committee (AC) on November 4, 1954. The Military Committee was tasked to protect the city, repressing anti-revolutionary power, anti-the people government, destructors of the city economy and the Armistice and solving important political and economic affairs of foreigners. The Administrative Committee was subjected to re-distribute offices, employees and property to appropriate offices, persuading French to return and commensurate for property they brought away or destroyed (National Center of Archive 3. Fond Phủ thủ tướng, number 99 in Trung tâm văn thư và lưu trữ nhà nước. Trung tâm lưu trữ quốc gia 3. Hà Nội: *Sự kiện-sự việc (1945-1954) qua tài liệu lưu trữ*. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản quân đội nhân dân; pp. 444).

⁴⁵ Specifically, there were 2 legal non-residents female Indians above 60 years old, 148 non-resident male Indians from 18-59 and 16 permitted non-resident female Indians of from 18-59. At the age of 15 to 17, there were 4 permitted non-resident male Indians and 2 females; at the age under 15, there were 17 males and 21 females. There were no Indians listed as “refugees permitted to temporarily reside in Vietnam with approved refuge cards.”

considerable number of Indians living in the North even after the Revolution. And, much lower numbers in sequent censuses of DRVN tend to indicate the evanescence of this population – an evanescence needed to depict the socialist figure of Vietnam.⁴⁷ Data from the 1955 census provides that there were 90 Indians, the third populous foreign group in Hanoi, following Chinese (9264) and French (120). This calculation relied on the Indians' residency registrations and their "family rice coupon" (thẻ gạo của gia đình).⁴⁸ The number of the Indian population in Hanoi in 1956 was 63, as recorded in the 1957 census conducted by Hanoi' Department of Police. Noticeably, the census does not mention private businesses (textile trading, cake shop, cinema running, and perfume shop)⁴⁹ as professions that a handful of Indians remained in Hanoi must have been attempting to retain.⁵⁰ Instead, the census lists professional statuses of Indians who were unemployed (36 out of which 20 are children), students (9) and superstitious practitioner (nghề mê tín) 1. The absence of private professions of remaining Indians reflects attempts of contemporary DRV government at transforming the North from an economy mainly

⁴⁶ The data is from the file "Công văn của Ty pháp chính về việc thống kê dân số Á kiều tại Hà Nội năm 1953." This means that this data was produced by the State of Vietnam. However, when being preserved in the archive of UBHC, it was put in the file which includes data produced by UBHC about all foreign population in Hanoi.

⁴⁷ Another information provides that there were 500 Indians in northern Vietnam after the Revolution. As soon as the Geneva Agreement in 1954 was signed, 400 Indians left the North for the South, Laos, and Cambodia. In 1955, DRV forced to close sixty Indian firms in North Vietnam. (Chanda 33-34).

⁴⁸ Hanoi Center of Archive Fond Sở ngoại vụ, Number 312.

⁴⁹ Thirteen Indian shops and one Indian cinema remained to be in Hanoi until late 1954 (Hanoi Center of Archive. Fond Sở ngoại vụ, Number 691; pp. 5). Unit 1957, reports on business incomes of Indian enterprises in January, March, June and July of 1957 still mention details about bakery industry and cinema run by Indians.

⁵⁰ Until June 1956, Department of Foreign Affairs recorded that several Indians attempted to sell their shops while most of them secretly sold their good and left for the South or Cambodia (Hanoi Center of Archive, Fond of Sở ngoại vụ. Number 312; pp. 26).

based on private ownership of means of production to a socialist economy based on “national ownership” and “collective ownership” (Lê Duẩn, *On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam*. Vol. 3 (“Reassessment of the Leadership”) 41; Doan Trong Truyen, Pham Thanh Vinh, “Completion of land reform” 55). And in this expected socialist figures of the nation, “class viewpoint” would be the driving ideology to set up power to secure the leadership and interest of the “toiling masses,” particularly, the working class. Without these classes, no material and technical bases could come into existence for the envisioned socialist country (Lê Duẩn, *On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam* Vol. 1 93-95).

This “class struggle” view must have resulted in the emergence of the category of “Ấn kiều” (Indian foreigners) as workers in censuses following years of the socialist nation-building.⁵¹The 1957 Report of Hanoi Tax Department about incomes of the Indian and other foreigner populations in Hanoi contains information about incomes of Indian enterprises in January, March, June and July of 1957. While bakery and cinema business maintains the word “Ấn Độ” in their branch names, these businesses owned by Indians are categorized in sectors of the socialist economic structures including “công nghiệp” (industry) and “dịch vụ” (service).⁵² On February 21, 1962, the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Domestic Affairs and Tổng cục thống kê issued the Instruction 03-LB/TT (thông tư) about “sample notebook of workers and officials” (mẫu sổ công nhân, viên chức) in governmental sectors. This instruction reveals that there were Chinese, “Ấn

⁵¹Hanoi Center of Archive. Fond Ủy ban hành chính. Number 1166.

⁵²Hanoi Center of Archive Fond Sở ngoại vụ, Number 312.

kiều” and French... working as "công nhân, viên chức" (workers, officers) in the North. As instructed, their identity as foreigners must be mentioned in column 4: ethnicity and religion (dân tộc và tôn giáo) (out of 23 columns about other aspects). The instruction for Column 4 reveals the foreign status of "Ấn kiều" and other non-residents is covered in the umbrella category "công nhân, viên chức," the ruling class in the socialist figure of Vietnam. This means that in principle, category of “Ấn kiều” (other foreigners living in the North) – embodiment of foreigners and capitalism⁵³-- is transferred into a more socialism-associated category "công nhân, viên chức.”

The 1973 police report about foreign residence provides a more systematic and descriptive picture of the socialist figure of Indians living in Hanoi. Thirty-six Indian individuals were living in Hanoi,⁵⁴ many of whom worked in the state’s industrial sectors. Six persons worked as painting workers (thợ sơn) at the Pharmacy Manufacture located at 1 Hàng Bột. One female worked as a worker (“công nhân”) of a Roneo machine manufacturer; another female tailed as a tailor worker at the Company of Tailor (Côngty may mặc) at 40 Hàng Trống, one male worked at the Collective Group of Hand-Made Noodle (Hợp tác xã mì sợi gia công). Two men were mechanics⁵⁵. One Indian male worked as a selling staffer (nhân viên bán hàng) at the miscellaneous shop. One Indian

⁵³ More in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4

⁵⁴The number of Indian residents in Hanoi was seen the largest in comparisons with French: 8; Japanese: 11; Thai: 8, Laos: 5, Soviet 3 only?? Documents in the Archive Center show otherwise!; Indonesia: 1; Kampuchea: 1; North Korea: 5; Rumania: 12.

⁵⁵ The interview with Mr. Cuong, one of two persons mentioned as an individual machine fixer, reveals that the report was not correct. Cuong said that he was not an individual car fixer but he worked as a trunk fixer in the company of sand investment. It was a governmental job. His older brother, the other person mentioned in the list was, truly, a car fixer. He was a member of a cooperative group. He was by chance hired by manufacturing companies to fix their cars or trunks.

female was a worker at the Manufacture of Icy Water. Three Indian males worked as “thợ nề” [bricklayer workers]. One person worked as “thợ mộc” [carpenter worker]. The term “thợ” (skillful) in work titles of these Indians was definitely in tune with the Party’s vision about workers, the leading force of the socialist revolution.⁵⁶ The term “thợ” attached to the jobs of the Indians indicates the ideological conformity of this population to socialist nation-makers’ projects of transforming people into masters of enterprises, mines, industrial branches, communications and transports, who could perform the transformation from manual labor to mechanization, the marker of “great industry with high technique” (Lê Duẩn, *On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam* Vol. 3 (“Reassessment of the Leadership”) 95; Lê Duẩn, *On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam* Vol. 3 (“We Must Foster New Thoughts to Build up Socialism”) 102-104).

Although the data probably does not record other Indians who are possibly still around in Hanoi,⁵⁷ they effectively portray the triumph of the socialist nation-building; the absence of demographic data, ethnic categorization and literary works about “Ấn

⁵⁶ Until 1969, Lê Duẩn still held on the idea of leadership of workers (Lê Duẩn. *Role of the Vietnamese Working Class and Tasks of the Trade-Unions at the Present Stage*. Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1969).

⁵⁷ There were foreigners who forged Vietnamese citizenship in order to avoid the government's restriction on their movability. The letter dated September 12, 1973, by Hanoi Department of Police, required a strict record of foreign identities of non-Vietnamese citizens in the city. The aim of this strictness was to ensure the security of areas that were not supposed for foreigners' accesses. The letter intensively ordered to fix Indian names and highlighted their foreignness. These foreigners must follow state regulations on their moving. Activities including coming to banned areas, going out of the city or going to provinces, changing living place and going to other places for a living must have the permission from the Hanoi Office of Foreign Affairs. Changes of jobs, working places and members in the family record book (such as marriage, giving birth etc...) must be reported to the Hanoi Office of Foreign Affairs. On February 28, 1973 and April 10, 1973, Department of Police criticized that local police wrongly issued Vietnamese ID cards to foreigners and asked for a strict record of foreign identities of non-Vietnamese citizens in the city. The Department suggested that for the best result of demographic surveys, it would send to posts of local police CVs of every foreign resident and lists with details about the non-Vietnamese citizens.

kiều,” who remain in North Vietnam regardless of all national revolutions, indicates the disappearance of this supposedly foreign population in northern Vietnam, which in turn will highlight the socialist form of postcolonial nationalism. This invisibility is also a principal ethnic characteristic of southern Vietnam resulted by the northern government’s implementation of the “people’s national democratic revolution” right after the Fall of Saigon.⁵⁸ This revolution aimed to “root out the comprador bourgeoisie in urban areas, and ‘abolish the feudal system of land ownership and putting into effect the slogan ‘Land to the Tiller’ whenever this agrarian problem is still pending in social life’” (Vo Nhan Tri, 60). Under this revolution, the time of overseas Indians (and overseas Chinese) who largely ran private ownership-based businesses ends (Chandra 36; Pelley 390).⁵⁹ The disappearance of the overseas Indians, once defined as “Ấn kiều,” “Chà và,” “Tây đen” or “Ấn ĐỘ” (and overseas Chinese) in post-1975 administrative, ethnographic and literary portraits of present-day Vietnam, conforms to the disappearance of foreign, capitalist population in the independent, socialist Vietnam.

Nevertheless, this very invisibility or disappearance could be questioned, given the undeniable, actual existence of the Indians and their descendants in contemporary Vietnamese society. Ethnographic research conducted from 2013 to 2015 reveals cases of Vietnamese citizens of Indian origin living in HCMC, Hanoi and elsewhere in Vietnam. They are descendants of the overseas Indians whose presence in Vietnam is supposed to

⁵⁸ More in Chapter 6

⁵⁹ More in Chapter 6

terminate with the end of colonial, capital regimes.⁶⁰ As noted in ID cards and house/land ownership certifications, this population has Vietnamese citizenship but carries “ethnicities” of the Indian subcontinent including India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Even more, this population can speak only Vietnamese; they do not practice eating and religious cultures supposedly specific of India.⁶¹ This population largely adopts the mainstream political practices of present-day Vietnam; “Indian blood flow” sometimes is brought up by this population as a strategy to secure some position in religious centers that the Vietnamese government attempts to maintain to perform “Indian-Vietnamese friendship” (Box 1).⁶²

More intriguingly, contemporary nation-makers of Vietnam are not ignorant of the actual existence of the uncategorized population of Indian origin: some members of this population are acknowledged to have participated in projects of “ethnic solidarity” held by the Party-led Vietnamese Fatherland Front (Box 2); contributions of some individuals to the Revolution are recognized nationally; they receive monthly supports from the state for their sacrifice to the national independence.⁶³ Moreover, “chà và” – a traditional reference to greedy, black and cunning “overseas Indians” that has been constructed in Vietnamese writing since the colonial time – is still lively in the sense that Indian

⁶⁰ More in Chapter 6

⁶¹ More in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7

⁶² More in Chapter 6

⁶³ A number of Indian descendants received the governmental honors for their sacrifice to the nation. Ngô Thị Bibi is a veteran; Nguyễn Tô Liên is a martyr; Năm Hà, who was an intelligence agent for North Vietnam during the Vietnam War, is “an imprisoned revolutionist.”

descendants and the contemporary general public are familiar with the derogative denotation of it.

On July 28, 2014, answering my question on what “Chà và” was, a Vietnamese woman working at an Indian religious center immediately recollected her “experience” about Chà và. Occupying her mind was the image of “Chà và” sellers who wandered like ghosts around corners of present-day Bến Thành ward, where she had been living for almost seventy years. In a panic facial gesture, she told:

These people had magic to make buyers unable to give up their debts. It is very terrible! These people were always willing to allow buyers to keep silk pieces for sometime without asking them for money right away. The buyers could pay money to “Chà và” anytime later. But, you know, how frightening it was! No one could quit the loan of “Chà.” I do not know why no one could cheat on “Chà.” They have some magic witchcraft that buyers, even the buyers of first time seeing and of homelessness, automatically looked for “Chà” to return them the loan.

On February 14, 2014, I asked a motorbike taxi driver who took me from Tân Sơn Nhất Airport to Cách Mạng Tháng Tám Street (District 3) that if he knew “Chà và.” Promptly, the man said that they were Indian people. He went on monotonously telling stories on how magical these people were. They were exceptional in making talismans. If we bought anything from them for later payment and planned not to pay it back, they would hide voodoo dolls in our stomach to torture us. Years ago, he said, in the daily newspaper named “Công an thành phố Hồ Chí Minh” (Police of Hồ Chí Minh City), there was a case of a man who was cursed by “Chà và.” This man was sent to the hospital Chợ Rẫy, because he had a severe headache. The doctor projected X-ray of his head and saw two needles in it. The man later shared with the doctor that he had a conflict with a “Chà và.” Probably, this Indian person execrated him by secretly hiding the needles to his brain. The male motorbike driver went further with his elusive but obsessive memories of “Chà và”’s medicine trading skills. He told that diseased persons could take medicine from Chà without paying money at the time of buying. The patients even did not have to pay the money back if they were not cured. However, those patients, who were recovered with Chà và’s medicine but quitted the debts, would be cursed. By some unknown whimsical ways, “Chà và” would plant a needle to the front chest of the cheating patients. Even more, “Chà và” would make dishonest persons’ stomach endemic and swell without seeing them in person. The motorbike taxi driver held on the details of amulet and needle throughout our around-thirty-minute-random talk.

In my meeting with Ms. Phuong on July 23, 2013, another female Indian descendant working in the Mariamman temple, I asked her if Indian origin-people, like her, were also called “Chà và.” She also seemed to have tried to push her uncomfortable feeling deep down to her chest. He saw her face lines tended to stretched. She lightly grounded her jaws together. Her eyes stopped looking at me as though she wanted to hide her discomfort. Patiently, she slowly and gently told me: “Chà và” is a bad term. It is like “mọi” “chệt” or “ba tàù.” Responding to my anxious face gesture caused by my ignorance of all these terms, she explained: “These terms are very offensives. They are used to insult people you hate. It is like your Kinh people who called Highlander savage. Like Khmer people called Vietnamese people as “yuon.” That was because Khmer hate Kinh people. Likewise, people call gangs of “ba tàù” or gangs of “chệt.”

All these ethnographic observations indicate a certain existence of the population with Vietnamese citizenship and Indian ethnicity in the present-day nation-building of Vietnam.

Nevertheless, the existence of the foreign ethnicities and nationals is a striking surprise because they do not appear in official documents about groups of overseas population in Vietnam from “đổi mới.”⁶⁴ Particularly, the ethnic Indians have never formed an ethnic minority in the socialist Vietnamese government’s constant systemizations of “ethnic composition of Vietnam” since 1958. More particularly, the absence of “Indian” as one ethnic group in national texts must be questionable in the context that in 1979, ethnic Chinese (as Hoa) became one of 54 ethnic groups in Vietnam, following Vietnamese, Tày and Thai with the announcement of Decision 121 in March of 1979 (Pelley 290). This questionable absence is more intriguing given that Chinese, similar to Indians, was categorized as unwelcome foreigners in colonial Vietnam and as “Hoa kiều” (overseas Chinese) in postcolonial Vietnam during the

⁶⁴ More in Chapter 6

Vietnam War (although this population received some good treatments from North Vietnam during the Vietnam War).⁶⁵ All these ethnographic results suggest a certain attempt of nation-makers not to categorize Indian/Indian descendants into a separate ethnic group in Vietnam's ethnic family in particular and not to broaden public aware of the actual presence of this population in contemporary Vietnam.

This dissertation looks forward to answering the question of why there are attempts to invisibilize actual Indians in Vietnamese society and writing. The observable small number of the population of Indian origin and particularly their assimilation to Vietnamese culture might form a reason of why nation-makers do not bother to make this population a separate ethnic category: this population with their Indian association will disappear soon, given social benefits that one regains if claiming Vietnamese citizenship.⁶⁶ But more, the invisibility largely comes from metaphoric colonial associations of this population to colonialism, associations that are constructed and maintained in and by writing. Answers that might be found will offer a more complex view on colonial remains in postcolonial nation-building of Vietnam associated works of making (in)visible a specific ethnic group and attached knowledge. The resulting complex view, in turn, will suggest the continuity of postcolonial nationalism in contemporary Vietnam.

⁶⁵ More in Chapter 4

⁶⁶ Ms. Lan keeps resenting her Indian husband, who claim Indian citizenship of their children which results in their limits of approaching educational and professional opportunities. Her children do not have money to go the school; they cannot study in free-tuition universities. Currently, they are working as street vendors of old mobile sellers (Personal communication, July 2, 2014).

In short, this chapter defines the Indians in Vietnam as a subject of this research: this is people that colonial administrators categorize as “Indien,” “Malabar,” or “Hindu” and that (post)colonial local authors call “Chà và,” “tây đen,” “sét-ty,” “Ấn Độ” or “Ấn kiều.” Historically, the population to which these concepts refer includes the British Indians and French subjects who do not hold French citizenship. This population has been constructed as unwelcome migrants associated with typical professional, moral and racial characteristics in colonial and postcolonial literary, journalistic writing. The status of the Indians as unwelcome migrants that this chapter identifies actually offers an explanation of why this population forms a target of being made invisible by postcolonial regimes of Vietnam. While contributing to solving the central theme of this dissertation – the questionable invisibility of the Indians in colonial and postcolonial society and writing of Vietnam -- this chapter further fosters the need of looking for more explanation of such invisibility of the Indians in Vietnamese writing by bringing up the contradiction of such ideological absence and the actual existence of the population of Indian origin in present-day Vietnam. While analyses of such disappearance in this chapter largely base on administrative texts; following chapters largely rely on other forms of writing (literature, journals, and archives with ethnographic reference in some cases), given that writing has been the ideological instrument of modern nation-building of modern Vietnam.

Box 1

Z is currently a high leader of an Indian religious center. As an unwritten rule: in order to hold the leading position, one must be a mixed Indian, must understand rules of the religion of the center, must be enthusiastic in improving his/her moral and must have Vietnamese citizenship. In a diplomatic voice, Z told me that he did not agree with the rule “having Indian blood” because most Indian descendants did not have a good education and good moral; they lack religious knowledge; and they are not moral. Morality and knowledge, rather than ethnicity and race, should be primary criteria, Z. asserted. However, Z. contrasted himself: he constantly attempted to perform himself as an appropriate leader of the religious center. He tried to impress public with his Indian blood connection with stories of his paternal and maternal lineages. In a formal interview, he said:

My maternal grandfather was a pure Indian. He ran a textile business with his older brothers. Later on, he opened wholesale stores of goat meat. He met with my grandmother, a Vietnamese, and married her. My paternal grandmother was a pure Indian. She had worked as a helper in a French family. She got married to a Pakistani. I was the third generation of a multiple Indian blood family.

When I tried to count how many percentages of Indian blood he had, he immediately jumped into my throat: “seventy-five percent!” with a smile impossible to be prouder. When we were still enjoying the concluded Indian ethnicity of Z., two other Indian descendants came in. Z. introduced me to them while giving a note that Ba, one of the two people, “just have only twenty-five percent of Indian blood” (emphasis added).

The identity repertoire of Z. is more visible when looking at how he performed his Vietnamese identity, which is also without economic, political objectives. Z. and his father have been performing as a loyal Vietnamese citizen. Not more than one year ago, at the age of seventy-five, Z.’s father joined the Fatherland Front. Z. told me that he must join the Front in order to hold the leading position.

Box 1 (continue)

Filling in the religious center's guest room, instead of images relating to the religion, were Vietnamese government's imaginary, historic and scholarly propagandas. There were four photos of President Tr. shaking hands of Z. and his father. The absence of time and date note impressed audience about their eternity and timeless value of the photographed events. Five other photos were about the mosque members' meeting with politicians from India. These photos were apparently deified: they were all put in gold-plated wood frames in 20cmx30cm and covered by glass pieces. They were all hung on top of a cupboard, which stood facing the main door. This decoration apparently aimed to catch minds and eyes of guests about the mosque's engagements to the state. In one section of the cupboard, the revolutionary books occupy the center position. The corner of the section is the book "Hồ Chí Minh, the Hero of National Freedom" (*Hồ Chí Minh, anh hùng giải phóng dân tộc và danh nhân văn hóa thế giới*). Next to it, on the right, is "Heroes Living Forever at the Age of 20" (*Những anh hùng sống mãi ở tuổi 20*). On the left is "The South, Twenty One Year of Resistance against Americans" (*Miền Nam, 21 năm kháng chiến chống Mỹ*). Covers of these books had figures of Ho Chi Minh and revolutionary soldiers. Lying on the section bottom were two books, one of which was about Communist party and Ho Chi Minh. It had a big photo of Ho Chi Minh, filling the entire cover of the book. Moreover, Z. and his father did not only perform their subjugation to the main political ideology and the mainstream histories of the state. But also, they presented their concern about the very contemporary regional disputes over the Parcel Island as well as the South China Sea. There are a number of photos about the island with flying official Vietnamese flags. The guest room's decoration projected ethnic and national repertoires of the Indian descendants, were ambitious to keep hold on leading the mosque. They legitimized their power over religious and economic center – the mosque - by actively conforming to mainstream national ideologies and causes. Indeed, the tactical repertoire of the national identity of Z. is more indicative of the evanescence than the liveliness of the Indian identity among Indian descendants.

Box 2

I visited J's house, located in the District 2, on an abnormally rainy and windy day in the late July 2014. J's paternal grandfather immigrated to Saigon in the early twentieth century from a place in the southeast area of India. J., her brother, and even their father could not recall this area's specific name. Her grandfather was born to a family that had a long tradition of trading textiles overseas. His father and uncles, owned, since before anyone could remember, big silk shops in Saigon. Later on (?), J.'s grandfather switched businesses and began running a halal wholesale butcher shop. J. also inherited her Indian blood from her maternal side. Her maternal grandmother had worked for a French family in Pondicherry. When this family moved to Saigon for work, she accompanied them. Later, she got married to a Pakistani man in Vietnam.

That was the first time I met J.. Our communications were rather diplomatic. With an alert gaze and slowly controlled speaking pace, J. focused on her contributions to the community. She actively participated in the project launched by Fatherland Front, entitled "ethnic solidarity." Every month, representatives of each ethnic group joined cultural reciprocities with members of the same ethnic groups from the other provinces. Additionally, the project aimed to promote cultural exchanges between ethnic groups by bringing numerous, diverse groups together to share cultural expressions. J.'s narrations turned reluctant and introspective when she talked about her interactions with other ethnic persons of the target provinces. "It is funny. My ethnicity is Indian. [Leading] people of FF did not find any Indian persons in provinces to match me with in our performances." Then, she smiled slightly, "it is very weird...It is fun, though. I joined groups of Bana, Jarai, Ede." I asked J. if people in provinces recognized that she was an Indian person. "Yes, they did. But they thought I was a foreigner." She seemed distracted, pointing out: "I have a Vietnamese ID card." When I asked about the ethnic (dân tộc) part of her ID card, she answered, "Indian." I broadened my eyes in surprise. Noting my reaction, she responded: "It is a surprise for me, too. No one knows that there is an Indian ethnicity within Vietnam. I usually have to show my ID card to officers when I fill out administrative forms." Without reluctance, she returned to her bedroom to get her ID card, which she allowed me to photograph while she continued with her narrations. By the end of the interview, she had revealed that all of her family members had a similar ethnic designation on their IDs.

Chapter 2

Constructing Enemies of the National and Democratic Revolution: Blood Sucking “Chà và,” “sét ty,” and “Tây đen” as Metaphors of Colonial Capitalists

This chapter examines the formation of the metaphor of “bloodsucking Indians” – vampires, or bloodsuckers -- in Vietnamese literary and journalistic writings during the French colonial period. Allegorically, this formation is an attempt of Vietnamese intellectuals at constructing targets of the class and national struggle in colonial Vietnam.⁶⁷

1. Constructing a Target of Reformist Anticolonialism: Modern and Foreign “Chà và,” “sét ty,” and “Tây đen”

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Vietnamese intellectuals dealt seriously with very “strange, momentous question of modernization and Westernization” (Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism* 5). These reformist intellectuals aimed at overturning French domination through modernizing the nation with the values of progress and democracy learned from the colonizer (Brocheux and Hémerly 292-298; Marr,

⁶⁷ The term “colonial” used here leans on Elleke Boehmer’s perception of colonial discourse in her book *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Boehmer emphasizes “colonial” as space and process in which voices of the colonized and the colonizer are interconnecting and communicable. The colonial discourse is characterized as an “interconnected inter-textual milieu” because it codifies all foreignness into its common codes; all foreign regions are made into planet joining into the orbit of metaphors, definition, images, interpretations, or views surrounding the attractable and original center– the colonizer. The world is unified under common codes originated from British. “Colonial spaces... became flooded with the same kinds of literature. The imaginations of readers across the British Empire were led along parallel grooves” (55).

Vietnamese Anticolonialism 1885-1925 204-206).⁶⁸ Although reformist intellectuals were open to using colonial liberal values in envisioning the modern figure of the Vietnamese nation, they never ceased to fight to overthrow French domination: reformist anticolonialism relied on traditional sentiments of “anti-foreigner” and the traditional response to foreign intervention (Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism 1885-1925* 5; Brocheux and Hémary 381-384). In other words, profiting from colonization did not stop native intellectuals from developing an awareness of colonial exploitation and initiating struggles for national independence as well as for “serious modernization” (Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism 1885-1925* 80-81; Duiker 104-105).

In this historical context, the literary and journalistic formation of images of Indians in the first two decades of the twentieth century is carried on two parallel intentions: first is the construction of “Chà và” characters as invading foreigners with the aim of publicly promoting in public anti-French colonialism and the image of self-governed community; second is the construction of industrial, wealthy “Chà và” – model capitalists --with the aim of highlighting the complex Vietnamese quest for modernity as a future of Vietnam

⁶⁸ Mainstream Vietnamese historiography devalues all forms of reformist nationalism, and it sees reformist nationalists inappropriate because they were "servants" of French "alien race." (Read Nguyễn Khắc Viện. *Tradition and Revolution in Vietnam*. Berkeley: Indochina Resource Center, 1974).

One of the central points of the communist Party since the time of its foundation in 1930 is "rally or draw rich peasants, bourgeois and middle capitalists to overthrow reactionary parties such as the Constitutional Party etc... Any part of them [rich peasant, middle and small landlord and Annamese capitalists] proves to be counter-revolutionary (the Constitutional Party etc... the Party must overthrow it]" (*75 Years of the Communist Party of Vietnam*. Hanoi: Thế giới Publisher, 2005, 101-102). Members of the Constitutional Party are all seen as reformists by the Communist Party.

“One fundamental premise for winning the population and to build a truly Bolshevik party is to intensify the struggle against nationalist reformist, particularly the ‘left-wing’ nationalist reformists” (*75 Years of the Communist Party of Vietnam*, 95).

and as a method of liberating it from the French oppression (c.f. Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism 1885-1925* 5). These two intentions perpetuate the tradition of Vietnamese writing, particularly literary writing, in which creating indirect meaning is often a way of criticizing governmental officials in the sake of a better society. Specifically, the indirectness is a literary tool that has been a tradition in Vietnamese literature of social criticism. Royal authors expressed their concerns about destructible kingdom and society through different types of the indirect figure including “ẩn dụ” (metaphor) and “hoán dụ” (metonymy) (Trần Đình Sử 35-50). Indirectness also forms a tradition of Vietnamese communication; this tradition refers to the way of addressing one thing in order to mean other things (Trần Ngọc Thêm 70-76). This indirectness is expressed in figurative idioms such as “vòng vo tam quốc” (meandering [as though running around] three countries) and “nói bóng gió” (insinuation). In writing, this tradition is embodied in literary devices including “hoán dụ” and “ẩn dụ” (Minh Đức Hà, Bá Hán Lê, Phương Lựu 192).⁶⁹ Economic dependency, political inferiority, and colonial government's censorship must have been the reason of reformist's indirect resistance against colonialism.⁷⁰ With the tradition of indirectness, Vietnamese intellectuals likely united the Vietnamese people in a common hatred for Indian migrants in the ultimate aim of fostering a common hatred for the French.

⁶⁹Nguyễn Công Khanh analyzes metaphors of Vietnamese resisting against the French's presence in Cochinchina in the documental post "Cha ghê, con ghê" (Stepfather, stepson) in December 5, 1907 *Lục tỉnh tân văn* (35-37)

⁷⁰ See Shawn Frederick McHale. *Confucianism, Communism, and Buddhism in the Making of Modern Vietnam*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004; pp 45-60 for descriptions of different methods and phases of the French State's repressions of Vietnamese publications that were seen to threaten the colonial regime's existence.

Two historical associations must have facilitated this move to associate the Indians with the French colonists. First, the historical association of Indian migrants/migration with French colonialism creates a condition for Vietnamese intellectuals to attack the French through attacking Indians. Specifically, the Indian migrants in Cochinchina were those who, as said in Chapter 1, were French citizens of Indian origin, obtaining French citizenship by renouncing their native personal laws, or by being recognized as having Indian paternity and Indian parentage. These citizens often served in the French administration in Indochina. Other migrating Indian groups included British Indians and French subjects of India, who declined the term of renunciation and maintained their native personal laws. They are largely involved in financial and trading activities, either private or French associated, which share the common objectives of exploiting the colonial population. The historian Phạm Cao Dương analyzes that the French colonial government developed Indian migration (and Chinese) to Annam to make them mediators in businesses, particularly money-lending and tax collection, to exploit the colony's population. Using Indians (and Chinese) as mediators, as Phạm Cao Dương argues, was French administrators' and businessmen's colonizing tactic: the French did not have to contact directly with "dirty natives," thus any possible resentment of natives towards material losses would be addressed to the mediators. This means that the French still looked good in the natives' eyes while they were still sucking the natives' material benefits; the Indians (and Chinese) would be the only ones who were seen as causes of the natives' bankruptcy and degeneration. Concurrent to Phạm Cao Dương, Geoffrey C. Gunn specifies that French banks and credit organizations did not directly deal with

locals, particularly second classes such as farmers and landlords. Thus, indigent farmers and landlords mostly borrowed money from Chettiars, who ran their business based either on their own savings or on loans from the colonial government's banks. The consequence was that the chettiars were commonly seen by locals to have formed the direct cause of native population's collapses. Here, the chettiars must have been seen to degenerate native population, which definitely made members of the mercantile clan in South India seen similar to the French colonialists (Gunn 137). Moreover, as Dương points out, the French gave the Indians (and Chinese) mediators certain privileges to run their own businesses in order to compete and thus to minimize native capitalists' economic potential, otherwise, the native capitalists would be strong and wealthy enough to govern the Vietnamese society, which would put French domination in danger (169-170).

This historical association facilitates the metonymic relations between images of Indian migrants and French colonizers in colonial Vietnamese writing: Vietnamese intellectuals used the figure of speech in which French colonizers are addressed as targets of anti-colonial sentiments by the name of Indian migrants. In addition to the metonym, the French forceful colonization must have also invented a kind of public metaphor for colonizers' economic exploitation and political domination. This formed a second historical basis that allowed the refusal of French colonialism through refusing the Indians' presence. While the metonymic relations between Indian migrants and French colonizers rely on supposed historical associations of the two parties, the metaphoric relations rely on the similarity between the two parties in supposed tactics and goals of

exploiting the natives. To be precise, in presenting Indians as economic exploiters and political dominants, Vietnamese intellectuals must have aimed at provoking in the public mind similar images of French colonizers, which would facilitate anti-French nationalism. The earlier generation of reformists exacerbated the Indians' presence in Annam lands, responding to the French civilizing phase of colonization (1870-1918).⁷¹ In this phase of capital accumulation, the French seized family individual and communal land to develop cash crops and to exploit local resources and labor (Ngô Vĩnh Long 3-42). Also for the purpose of land concession, the French government established Indochina Bank and other merchant capital activities in the colony, which forced natives into bankruptcy (Murray 100-117; Roberts 613; Morton 279). Colonial land grabbing and resulting peasantry collapses took place earliest, most forcefully and most massively in Cochinchina (Phạm Cao Dương 53-57; Nguyễn Khắc Đạm 68-70). Concurrently, resistance against the French presence likely never ceased since the earliest nationalist projects in the region.⁷² It is thus explainable why migrants, including Indians and Chinese, were depicted as the foreign and powerful migrants in Cochinchina and as such very "threatening." This depiction, to repeat, would effectively stimulate common

⁷¹ Nguyễn Văn Trung in *Chủ nghĩa thực dân Pháp ở Việt Nam: Những huyền thoại của chủ nghĩa thực dân* (Saigon: Sơn Nam, 1963) argues that the French colonialism based itself on euphemism (*huyền thoại*) to be succeeded. This kind of euphemism appeared in the French government titling its colonial policies as "mise en valeur" (khai hóa) and "French-Vietnam association" (Pháp-Việt đề huề). Trung compared the French government's euphemism in documents issued for Vietnamese audience and the French's rationalism in publications for the French audience. While the former attempted to impress local population with the French will of bringing them to the area of progress, the later frankly revealed the exploitation goal of colonial policies for the wealth of French nation.

⁷² The first Vietnamese newspaper *Gia Định báo* contained news and letters contributed by audience complaining and criticizing "nhà nước Lang Sa" (French regime). For example, the March 1, 1870 issue posted an anonymous letter collected by a local correspondent which used the image of a wild dog as a metaphor of white French soldiers. This letter also revealed the constant doubts and resentments by locals toward the French's presence which was believed just to grab Annamese girls and women.

resentment about the French regime, the conditional foundation of Vietnamese homogeneity.⁷³

The early volumes of *Nông Cổ Mìn Đòm* (1901-1923, *NCMD*), an early Vietnamese newspaper, portrayed Indians as those who do not belong to the supposedly coherent Vietnamese community. On August 8, 1901, August 15, 1901 and November 14, 1901, for instance, *Nông Cổ Mìn Đòm* published contributors' cries for Annamese as a national "we" and Chà/Chệt (Indian/Chinese) as a national "they;" "Chà/Chệt" was used interchangeably with "people of different countries" (Người nước khác), "people from a strange/different nation-state" (dị quốc), "people who travel afar from their homeland" (người tha phương), or "strange guests" (khách lạ). Meanwhile, "we" appeared in association with terms that provoke mystical national images and cohesion, including "people of our country" (người nước mình), and "together belonging to a same organization, state or gang" (đồng bang). From the turning point of the century until the 1910s, Vietnamese speakers began consuming modern nationalist vocabularies -- "ái quốc" (patriotism), "quốc dân" (nation), "compatriot" (đồng bào), "đồng tâm" (unity of hearts) and "đại đồng" (great unity), and along with these terms came into existence a national mind-set that looked forward to "an idealized total community" (Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial*, 119-120; Brocheux and Hemery 293). Exuberant depictions of the Indians as "foreigners" highlight the inappropriate presence of these

⁷³ As observed by Colonel Henri Frey and Dr. Jules Harmand the French domination would be constantly challenged by the natives because they had a long tradition of hatred of foreigners and patriotism. Possessing a traditional love for "homeland" would be the element decisively uniting Annamese together, which "constitutes a truly fearsome entity for a conqueror." (in Pierre Brocheux and Daniel Hémerly 381-384).

people in the Annamese nation; Vietnamese audiences would then continue their historical xenophobia and endless struggles against foreigners, of which the most recent were seemingly undefeatable French colonizers, and detrimental loses of local material and moral values (Cooper 30; Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism* 6; Phạm Cao Dương 171-228).

Issues that must be addressed are how should the presence of “Chinese” be read against the background of being made as migrants alongside Indian migrants, and how were the image of French colonizers possibly implanted in that process of creating national foreignness?⁷⁴ For the first question, the reformists’ emphases on the Chinese as “migrants” must have meant at triggering their Vietnamese audience’s traditional hatred of and memories of foreign invaders. Moreover, French administrators constantly perceived the Chinese as obstacles in their colonization of Indochina (Khanh Tran 1-70; Marsot 35-55).⁷⁵ Thus, coupling Indians to Chinese in the same category of nationally unwelcome foreigners would help drive French authorities’ attention away from hidden

⁷⁴ As shown in Chapter 1 “chà,” and “chệt” (Chinese) are usually coupled (see more in)

⁷⁵ French colonization was parallel to the process of driving out Chinese influences and the process of promoting French ones in the colony. Until 1905, the use of Chinese characters was only for patriotism and in oral. French was the main language. Quoc ngu and French was official language of Cochinchina. From 1905 to 1945, colonialist, collaborationist and nationalist exclusively promoted quốc ngữ. (John DeFrancis, *Colonialism and Language Policy in Viet Nam*. The Hague : Mouton, 1977). The French’s anxiety about the Chinese presence in colonial Vietnam is evidenced in ways that there were detailed descriptions about this diasporic population in the area. For example, a report published in *Population Index* (Vol. 11, No. 20, 1945) concluded that the most threatening opponent of France’s history of in conquering the “country of Annam” was Chinese, not any other groups. French and Chinese residents formed economic conditions of the colonial Indochina:

The history of the economic development of French Indochina in the last seventy five years is largely the history of the activities of the Europeans who constituted the small apex of a broad occupational pyramid, and of the Chinese middlemen , who organized and controlled the rice and made the subsistence grant to peasants” (72-3).

anti-French sentiments. For the second question, images of French colonizers were suggested not only through the constructed characters analogous to those of Indians but also through euphemisms: there were some attempts not to directly point to the French population in journalistic posts that listed unfavorable foreigners. Examples of this indirect anti-colonial sentiment are seen in the two following paragraphs:

For a long time, I have discussed with you, native friends, the fact that eight out of ten special indigenous species of our oceans and land belong to foreign guests. ...

Those from other countries (Người nước khác) such as easterners, Chinese (khách), Indians, and Chà temporarily settled in Annam to make a living. The diasporic people who came with empty hands, sold cakes, soups and bánhìmlón [?] for several years and later they were able to open companies and build high houses (July 27 1912).

Please all people from the same state/community (“đồng bang”), please have a careful look to see if it is correct that all benefits produced each year in this native land belong to the native as much as they belong to wandering people, who are Chệt [Chinese], chà [Indians] etc. (Phải học phép buôn, July 6, 1912)

The general term “foreign guest” must have implied French strangers. This suggestion obviously operated on the basis of metonymic relations between French foreigners and the group of foreigners. The suggestion is particularly sharp and effective because it referred to the Annamese as a race, as firmly asserted by Dr Jule Harmand in 1885 (in Brocheux and Hemery 183). Nevertheless, the influential shadow of French authority is obvious in the explanation of the term “Người nước khác.” The explanation, which listed only “westerners,” “Chinese” and “Indians” as foreign invaders -- a description that sounds intentionally general -- denoted attempts of removing the possibility of being misinterpreted by authorities. Similarly, in the second example, the hint of reference to the French must have been in the term “etc.” Obviously, the images of French colonizer

are not visible in words, but their silhouette existed with and above the text; such existence was provoked in the image of Indian foreigners as well.

Portraying the Indians as foreigners was actually a strategy for reformists to attack a central aspect of French colonialism: capital accumulation through land appropriation and high interest loans. Essays on *NCMD* issued in the 1910s exaggerate Indians' land grabbing. Measures of land lost to the Indians appeared in exaggerated terms, such as "eight out of ten ingenious special species of sea and land products belong to foreign guests" and "that all benefits produced each year in this native land belong to the native as much as they belong to wandering people." In addition to exaggerating the area of land owned by the foreigners, delving more deeply into the associated economic benefits also created more antagonism toward French colonialism. This is seen in the March 20, 1912 issue of *NCMD*, which reports that foreigners occupied raw woods and lumber mill companies. Additionally, for generations, Annamese inescapably consumed Chinese daily supplies and borrowed capital from Indian usurers, as described in the March 3, 1910 issue of *NCMD*.⁷⁶ These descriptions are obviously analogous to the method of accumulating capital used by the French regime. In other words, the exaggeration of Chinese and Indians' ownership of land, banking and production to the level of national monopoly only functions as a figure of speech; the exaggeration primarily refers to

⁷⁶ In the essay contributing to the column "Nông thương yếu luận" (Discussion about Agriculture and Trade), analyzes that it would go in vain of the natives' dream of operating supplies trading and money-lending like those respectively of the Chinese and the Indians to kick out these migrants out of the country. The reason is that the native would have to buy Chinese products for trade and would have to borrow money from *xã tri* for original capital. The only way to kick out these migrants is, as suggested, not consuming their products.

French colonizers: until the end of the colonial regime, the largest ownership of land and natural resources in Cochinchina belonged to the French (Ngô Vĩnh Long 3-42; Nguyễn Khắc Đạm 28-70). Not only that, the exaggeration of Indian land ownership that implies and provokes anti-French sentiment also operated in the mechanism of metaphoric speeches: the Chinese and Indians' monopoly of money and supplies was similar and ran parallel to the French capitalists' and government's exclusive control and possession of trade and credit activities in the colony. The French regime accumulated capital by expanding enterprises and investments into the colony, which made locals consumers of metropolitan products and capital (Henchy 121-138). Additionally, money-lending and trading activities by Chinese and Indians were subordinate to larger scale metropolitan export-import houses and to the French government's rule of capital loans (Murray 101-109, Phạm Cao Dương 169-170).⁷⁷ Thus, visibilizing the Indians as exploiters of land and money obviously aimed at bringing into the public's minds the land losses, starvation and hunger caused by the French regime's capital accumulation as well.

The telling example of imagined associations between the image of Indians and that of the French is the short story “Qui Táo Qui Ấn Độ” (Apple Devil, Indian Devil) by novelist and journalist Lê Hoàng Mưu.⁷⁸ The story, which appeared in the 20 April 1915

⁷⁷ Nguyễn Khắc Đạm is constant in his idea that the French establishing banking system aimed to compete with money-lending businesses of Chinese and Indians (*Những thủ đoạn bóc lột của chủ nghĩa tư bản Pháp ở Việt Nam*; pp. 211-218). The famous historian Trần Huy Liệu analyzed that French capitalists secretly lead most boycott Chinese products in Hanoi in 1910s (Trần Huy Liệu, et.al. *Lịch sử thủ đô Hà Nội*. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản sử học, 1960; 166-167).

⁷⁸ When Canavaggio left for France in 1913, he lent the newspaper to his compatriot, Lucien Heloury, director of the French title L' Opinion. Lucien Heloury started new editing board with the help of Nguyễn Kim Đính, the legal owner of *Nam Trung nhật báo và Đông Pháp thời báo* (Le Courier Indochinois). Nguyễn Kim Đính appointed Lê Hoàng Mưu to be the editor in chief. Lê Hoàng Mưu was an active

issue of *Nông Cổ Mìn Đàm*, depicts the tactical generosity that one Indian money-lender employs to gain the trust of local Annamese. The money-lender would take advantage of that trust to grab the locals' property, forcing them into bankruptcy. This generosity sounds similar to the humanist justification used when the French government established mutually beneficial financial organizations led by the Indochina Bank in Cochinchina. Muru's story has two layers of narrative. The first layer emphasizes the Indians' skills in making the locals sacrifice their property to the Indians. One day, as Muru narrates, an Indian chettiar visits rich men in a village, asking to borrow money. Quickly, everyone in the village trusts him with their savings. They even sign sponsorship contracts to legitimate the Indian chettiar's credit. With the collected money, the Indian moneylender disappears to Saigon as though "crocodiles return to the sea, lions return to forests... In Saigon, even in the daytime, many apple devils [Indian men] sit under the shadow of trees; we pass by but are not able to see them." However, emphasis on the foreigners' tactic of exploitation is more haunting in the second layer of the story. In the story, Muru describes how the Indian moneylenders cunningly use their souls and hearts to go into hearts and minds of targeted customers. Whenever being asked for money, the Indian chettiar immediately agree, just require small interest, or even waive contracts. Even sometimes, the Indian men generously offer to lend the locals their money; they lend others money easily, without asking for interest and paperwork. Even more, the Indian men seek out those who are not in need of borrowing money to turn them into their

contributor to *Matters of Agriculture* in 1915-1916, before the newspaper came back to its founder in 1916 and reinstated Nguyễn Chánh Sắt, an intellectual who was committed to modernization (Peycam 102-103)

customers. First, they visit rich men's houses, begging them to borrow money. If the rich men refuse the offer, the Indian chettiers would take a risk. They voluntarily leave the money with the locals, kindly saying that they could spend it anytime they need, or they could bring it back to the nearby market where the Indian men usually ran their businesses. With "honest souls" and "generous hearts," the Indian moneylenders gain the trust of their customers; in the process, the Indians gain a larger amount of money than they give. Obviously, the Indians' honesty and generosity are business techniques rather than moral practices: they are nice on the purpose of completing their business deal; their generosity plays the game of investment, which would later bring them larger interest. The narrator states, "If we give others our generous heart, all our desires will be realized." By uncovering the Indians' ways to success, the author must have driven his audience in seeing the similar tactics used by the Indochina Bank since 1913 in extracting capital from the local population. The Indochina Bank also utilized the flag of kindness to draw more loans by sponsoring and financing associations of mutual assistance in agriculture (e.g. Société de Credit Agricole). The members of the financial organizations, largely farmers and small traders, obligatorily deposited a small amount of money each month, but the Indochina Bank's financial resources dominated these associations' budgets. Once the Indochina Bank's generosity created trust among members, it would aggressively offer loans to its members. As a result, members ended up being long-time debtors of their associations or going bankrupted, which would ultimately enrich the Indochina Bank. The historian Nguyễn Đức Đạm argues that this strategic generosity

offered the Indochina Bank the most relaxing and easiest way of increasing its capital (214-216).

The Indian is made visible not only as exploiting foreign lenders but also as a model of modern characters in complex projects of national modernization in the early twentieth century.⁷⁹ In other words, the images of Indian migrants in early Vietnamese writings seem to urge the public to be cohesive in the common goal of embracing cultural and economic liberalism. In return, a modernizing nation would create the conditions to clear out the French domination in the nation, as reformists hoped (Marr 205; Duiker 47-54).⁸⁰ And, the French colonizers were not ignorant of the dangers of progress and development in their colony; they systematically prevented colonial subjects from pursuing “serious” concepts of modernism and modernity (Phạm Cao Dương 169-170; Nguyễn Thanh Đạm 148-149; Murray 101; Kelly, *French Colonial Education* 11-13). The authors of *NCMD* often took the Indian figure as a literary device to convey their ideas of modernizing the nation – the ideas, which, at some period, constituted a part of the dominant patriotic

⁷⁹ David Marr constantly uses the term reformists to address those who pursued ideological projects of modernizing Vietnam as a way of kicking out Western influences. He resists calling reformists of 1900s as nationalists because Vietnamese nationalism did not appear until 1920s when young petit bourgeois absorbed and attempted to implement modern concepts of nation-state (Marr *Vietnamese Anticolonialism* 6). Reformists largely targeted feudal culture and economy with models of modern culture and economy provided under the civilizing mission of the colonial French.

⁸⁰ The colonial regime attempted to abandon industrial compressive development in the colonial areas because this development would compete with cosmopolitan goods and capital. Furthermore, native becoming economically powerful would potentially become political leaders with the ambition of overthrowing the French domination (

: *Essays on Vietnam and West Africa*. Ed. David H. Kelly, New York : AMS Press, c2000)

movement, “Duy Tân,” led by Phan Bội Châu (1867-1940).⁸¹ In the first fourteen years, *NCMD*’s distributors constantly described rationality as a quality of modern subjects and a base of Indian and Chinese’s growing wealth. In many Vietnamese essays, Indians and Chinese appeared as successful merchants who created financial aid organizations and production/service cooperatives. Vietnamese intellectuals plant their reactions against colonial discourses about “uncivilized” native mentalities through creating an image of Indian merchants as rational and rich. In Nguyễn An Tâm’s essay “Khuyến người xét lại” posted in the November 22, 1910 issue of *NCMD*, there is a rhythmic prose that calls, in response, people of “đồng bang” (people of the same fetus) up to unite to do business together so that “Chà Chệt do not laugh at you,” and “different nationals like “Chệt Chà” do not look down on us.” The essay suggests that smart scholars, village officials and landlords should “take some little good will to unite for business... so that people from the same country share the same trading right.” And, in the first volume of *Lục tỉnh tân văn* (published in 1907), journalists called for the consolidation among natives to get rid of their inborn suspicions to compete with migrants’ businesses; later articles compared Vietnamese’ characters with Indian (Chinese) migrants’ characters: the migrants run big businesses, they trust and embrace each other; whereas, locals just run small and

⁸¹ Principle authors of the newspaper including Nguyễn Thành Hiến, Lê Quang Chiểu, Trần Quan Văn, particularly Gilbert Trần Chánh Chiểu financed Phan Bội Châu’s movement. *NDMD* also published authors’ collection of patriotic poems in Cochinchina (Nguyễn Công Khanh 31; Marr Vietnamese, *Anticolonialism* 136, 144-145). According to Nguyễn Q. Thắng, Nguyễn Chánh Chiểu and other southern intellectuals organized financial cooperatives and maintain running newspapers to seek for more financial resources to support students of Duy Tân movements (*Tiến trình văn nghệ Miền Nam (Văn học Việt Nam nơi miền đất mới)*. Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh: Văn Hiến, 1990. Pp: 251-252).

fragment business, they do not support each other, even they destroy each other.⁸² The Vietnamese reformists likely believed that Indian characters' modern merits would help natives to develop industries that would compete with the companies and merchandises of "dị bang" (foreign state) people. This would potentially result in the construction of national economic independence, which would constitute the greatest potential threat to colonization. So, metaphors, proverbs, and elegant comparisons: they are of a literary character, but they are also of an anti-colonial work: *NCMD*'s authors promoted the modern Indian business model to draw attention to contemporary efforts to finance political insurrections against the French destruction of rural lives. Also, as historically recorded, the writings of journalists of *NCMD* and other presses could be read as tools of revolutionary propaganda. They provoked their audience to strive to accumulate capital, which was critical for expanding the rising patriotic movement led by Phan Bội Châu (Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism* 144; Duiker 47-49).⁸³ And as said, the French were not unaware of the anti-colonial implications of *NCMD*'s essays: the newspaper was forced to close down in 1914, and the principal distributor Trần Chánh Chiếu was imprisoned (1908, 1913).

⁸² They were also called orientalist discourses, which depicted the Oriental as "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'" and the Occidental as rational, virtuous, mature and 'normal' (Said 40).

The pervasion of so-called orientalist discourses in French colonization was so much that David Marr, in his book *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920-1945* (1981), argued that the victory of Vietnamese nationalisms also includes a "full development of the individual's mental... and moral faculties" and "mastery over nature" (2).

⁸³ As David Marr describes, Trần Chánh Chiếu and many other southern intellectuals in Cochinchina cities opened commercial ventures to support students study abroad under Phan Bội Châu's patriotic program. The commercial ventures included running presses, founding hotel and industrial corporations. *NCMD* and other newspapers ran by Trần Chánh Chiếu including *Lục Tỉnh Tân Văn* and *Le Moniteur les Provinces* was led to post essays and articles on matters of agriculture aid groups and financial cooperatives to support political uprisings against the French's denial of fixing rural problems (143-145).

While urging the public to think about values of wealth or self-interest, Vietnamese intellectuals also, through the metaphor of unwelcome wealthy “sét-ty”, “chà và” or “tây đen”, presented the moral, social destructions of traditional Vietnam in the face of the modernization instigated by French colonizers. The stories about interracial marriages between Indians and native women in the mid-1910s are indicative for anti-colonialism in the form of anti-modern sentiments. Such presented interracial marriages brought to light moral and racial disasters supposedly caused by colonial modernity. Radical anticolonial movements in the mid-1910s arose as results of the French government’s policies of intensifying colonial exploitation to financially and materially prepare for the World War I (Trần Huy Liệu *Cách mạng cận đại Volume 3* 78-130). Images about Indians form a literary device for intellectuals to express their concerns about the moral destructions caused by “colonial modernization.”⁸⁴ The most obvious example of the anti-colonial suggestion is the “singing rhyme” (vè) “Vè giải oan cho vợ chệt, vợ chà.” Its author, the journalist Đặng Văn Chiêu (?-?) published this rhyme in the thin booklet titled *Vè giải oan cho vợ chệt, vợ chà. Phía sau có thêm vè bão lụt năm Thìn* (Saigon: Imprimerie De L’ Union, October 1915). This singing rhyme, in an allegorical way, points out the risk of losing the community’s sovereignty caused by materialism and colonial modernization. The Indian migrant, in this poem, appears as a foreign exploiter, with whom any intermingling was seen to be an unacceptable national shame:

Our land it came

⁸⁴ The term “colonial modernization” refers to project of modernizing colonies for economic development of colonizers – such understanding is borrowed from the theory of colonial modernization developed by Korean historians in the late 1980s (Read Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik ed. *Broken Narratives: Post-Cold War History and Identity in Europe and East Asia*. Leiden ; Boston : Brill, [2014])

Doing business of lending money
Saigon, Bình Tây
Chà Pagoda, Companies
Appropriating all
Annamese money
...
Six provinces, districts
People became exhausted
Love playing games
Not knowing business (4-5)

Additionally, the poem analyzes unpleasant racial points of having physical relations with the Indians:

Marrying Chà
Everyone knows
It is not as salty-plain [intimate] as
Our own people having sex
Although being stupid, dumb people
They know that Chà
Curly hair, black skin
Wearing blankets and turbans
Eating without bowls
Grabbing [food] strangely
Lying without beds
Crawling on earth floor
Ní ne quật quật [imitated speaking sounds]
Rude in debates
Marrying them
How can it be salty hot [intimate] (5-6)⁸⁵

The described political inappropriateness and physical unpleasantness of marrying an Indian apparently emphasized the unacceptability of any intimate relations with people from “different states” (ngoại quốc). This supposed unacceptability points to another nation-related danger: driven by the rising greed for money brought about by modernity,

⁸⁵ The poem has a longer part describing Chệt’s greed, who only thought of helping their Chinese relatives back in China instead of their Vietnamese wives.

Annamese women got married to foreigners at any price. This poem thus obviously signifies the danger of colonial modernization in destroying the racial and ethnic uniqueness of the Annamese nation. This theme of anti-colonialism/anti-civilization is also evident in the poem:

Cochinchina our area
Since the establishment
Displaying aspects of civilization
Many words for criticism and suggestion
...
Being born in Annam
Why love “different country people” (ngoại quốc)
Dare to lose virginity
Just because of money (1-4)

The poem thus definitely expresses the intellectual’s awareness about the economic exploitation of French colonizers in its civilizing mission.

The criticism of colonial modernization in the name of national identity is the most vivid in the debates about getting married to the Indians in *NCMD* in 1915. During that year, *NCMD* launched a series of idea exchanges on the matter of whether or not native women should get married to Indian men. The debate apparently promoted a convincing, analytical perspective at addressing the issue of unacceptable interracial marriages with the Indians. The first poem, authored by Cô Ba, from Trà Vinh province, explains the interracial marriage with the Indians on the ground of the utopian belief in love and fate.

It does not matter of “chúkhách” [Chinese] or anhchà [Indians]

I am happy to *fall in love [with them] and do not think too long* (I prefer to follow the *destiny of belonging* [to anhchà] to white silvers (Despite their skins being black, they are righteous and benevolent (nghĩanhon)

Surrendering my body [to anhchà] leaning on their shadow

Complaining about my fate is just a light wind
Whether anhchà is bad or good, God decides [me to get married with him]
I do not care about rice curry [Karini] (emphases are added)

The poem is full of lamentation that the female character is passive about her marriage life. As shown in emphasized sentences, the woman looks at the unknown “fate”: God decides for her to get married to the Indian man. She also looks at the elusive concept of love: love is not predictable; it can be overwhelming at first sight, so she cannot but marry the Indian man. Then, she looks at the moral issue: although they are considered avaricious and foul smelling, they embrace the good deed of “our” nation that is “nghĩa nhơn” (benevolent). Then, she brings up her own indifference and outrage: she does not care what others say about the Indian smell and immorality. The good deeds by Indian men (“nghĩa nhơn”) become isolated, not strong enough to protect the rightness of her marriage, as demonstrated in the poem filled with undeniable beliefs and concepts. Being continuously attacked by the community through a number of other poems and essays, cô Ba published another writing in which she analytically pointed out the goodness of Indian men. In this second publication, cô Ba first presents herself as a modernized woman, who is excellent in debating and arguing to defend her own rightness. She uses transition terms such as “first,” “second” and “third” to indicate her logic. She also directly addresses specific critics without relying in the correct socially appropriate pronouns to make her argument more objective. She exuberantly lists important morals that her husband possesses in order to convince the public about her right marriage.

I surrender my body to chà because chà know *cang thường chi đạo* [relations of king to follower, husband to wife, and father to son; loyalty and responsibility to parents; discipline, tenderheartedness, and trust]

I surrender my body to chà because chà know *ngôôngtúcnhuọc* [unfamiliar word]

I surrender my body to chà but I maintain *Tam Tông, Tứ Đức* [obedience to father, husband, and son; skillful housework, beautiful appearance, polite conversation and chastity]

I surrender my body to chà but I have all *Công dung ngôn hạnh* [skillful housework, beautiful appearance, polite conversation and chastity]

I surrender my body to chà but I am happy with a life of one wife and one husband [nuclear family]

In the matter of love, cô Ba also makes it concretely defined: she and her husband are like-minded; her husband maintains a peaceful and orderly environment in her family.

Thirdly, you said that no kind of “nghĩa nhon” is comparable to our “nghĩa nhon.” Dear Miss Liễu Xuân Hương, nobody can say that only Annam people have nghĩa nhon. Dear Miss, chà have very high nghĩa nhon. Miss, for example, my husband chà is “nghĩa nhon” to me... (*Matters of Agriculture*, July 21, 1915)

Intelligently, cô Ba twists the universal belief that Indian migrants’ nghĩa nhon is inferior to “our nghĩa nhon.” Cô Ba firmly talks back, “nobody can say that only Annam people have nghĩa nhon.” She cites her husband as an example of good Indian people. However, the long and turbulent essay remains to prevail in lamenting tones. Cô Ba cannot escape from the pervading tradition of believing in supernatural powers, which are anti-science and development. She grieves at being born as a female whose fate is decided by her parents. Whatever the fate is, “either pure or dirty,” she is willing to follow the destiny that is determined for her. This self-defined modernized woman sorrowfully admits that women cannot change their fate. Closing the essay, after presenting long enthusiastic arguments, Cô Ba returns to the point of fate – the fate of a pink cheek, a metaphor of beautiful female – who does not have right to choose their lives on their own: “I feel pity for my fate of being born as a pink cheek!” In the three points that Cô Ba summarized

from her essay, God's word is put in the first place to rationalize her marriage. In response, E. Tam, another author, who composes a poem about the topic of marrying Indian men, feels pity for cô Ba. She blames God for having given cô Ba bad advice of getting married to the Indian man. It is obvious that modernized women still abide by sentiments as the channel to communicate and understand each other. All argumentative and logical points become useless trying to gain the community's sympathies. Cô Ba has to return to the lamenting discourse of fate to win hearts. The debate, in which the lamentation and sentiment appear to be victorious, implies a conclusion: it is irrational, mentally weak to get married to Indians. This conclusion in turn definitely suggests a destructive consequence of the colonial modernization: locals would be willing to sacrifice their patriotism, the traditional hatred of foreigners, in the exchange of material fulfillment, and that is a serious threat.

The urge to deny modernity in the name of the nation, which was deposited in the discriminatory visibilization of the Indians, is more direct in the image of materialist "bảy chà" in the novel *Hà Hương phong nguyệt* by L.H Mru and Nguyễn Kim Đính. The novel was published in Saigon by Imprimerie Saigonnaise L. Royer, in November 1914. The central character of the novel is a beautiful married woman named Hà Hương. Because of lack of money, Hà Hương has to approach "Bảy Chà," an Indian money-lender, for help. "Bảy Chà" falls in love with Hà Hương; he offers her a luxurious life with jewelry and money to convince her to live with him. Hà Hương is reluctant because of her married status but agrees eventually given that she needs money for living. Living with "Bảy Chà," Hà Hương never stops feeling sorry for her Annamese husband, whom

she had married in accordance with traditional cultural customs. Although being offered more money from the Indian lover, she feels bad about her betrayal of the tradition of husband. In the end, she decides to take the Indian man's money and returns to her Annamese husband. Every day, she flirts with the Indian man to get secrets of codes to accessing places where he keeps his money. When the Indian man goes for a business trip, Hà Hương takes all his money to go see her husband. The story suggests the denial of modernity to maintain the traditional moral values, which would imply a denial of colonial modernization. In the spirit of this anti-colonialism, Indians in the novel are portrayed as greedy and materialist:

[Bây Chà convinces Hà Hương to leave her husband] You see although my face is *black* but I am full of *white* [coins]. Hữu Nghĩa [Hà Hương's husband], despite his white face, his age is *black* [bad fortune]. You do not know that wanting to seek for coins must look for black; wanting to avoid black will face white [a different connotation of unluckiness] (84)

The Indian character speaks philosophically; black and white refer to money and skin colors as well as the metaphors of misfortune. The speaking is thus able to haunt audiences about the Indians' greed and the metaphoric meaning of the cultural and moral destruction caused by colonialism. Here, the presentations of Indians rather conform to anti-colonialism instead of making them visible.

Similarly, in Tonkin, many Vietnamese writings of the same time ridiculed the image of wealthy Indians, aiming to deny their presence in Vietnamese society. In 1918, tây đen (black westerner) with white silver coins appears in Nguyễn Trung Tín's long Sino-Nom poem named "Chuyện đồng tiền" ("Story of Money"). The six-eight poetic lyric criticizes contemporary money-driven Vietnamese society, in which humans' bodies

and souls are sacrificed for business exchanges and money accumulation. The presence of rich Indians is seen to have contaminated Vietnamese blood; many Vietnamese women abandon their noble origin, offering their bodies to “black westerners” for money:

Nào người cháu dãi con dòng
Tây đen lắm chị đem lòng thân yêu
Chỉ yêu vì nổi tiền nhiều
Thấy đồng bạc trắng quyết liều môi son
[Many of those who were born in noble families
Become friendly with black Westerners
Just because they love excessive money ownership
Seeing white silver coins, determined to [sacrifice] their red
lips⁸⁶

Criticizing relationships between Vietnamese women and rich Indian men, Vietnamese authors must have consented to a supposed certainty that Indians with white coins belonged to the class that should be marginalized. In other words, the presence of rich Indians is seen as the presence of capitalism, which is in its turn viewed as destroying Vietnamese social harmony. Tản Đà, a prominent poet, similar to Nguyễn Trung Tín, in his *sâm* lyric names “Cô tây đen” (Black Westerner Miss), emphasizes the power of black westerners’ money. This Vietnamese writer believed that money, unfortunately, succeeded in driving Vietnamese women into accepting racial difference of black westerners:

Nước trong xanh lơ lửng con cá vàng,
Cây ngô cảnh bích, con chim phượng hoàng nó mới đậu cao.
Anh tiếc cho em phận gái má đào,
Tham đồng bạc trắng mới gán mình vào cái chú *Tây đen*.
Sợ tởm hồng ai khéo xe duyên,
Treo tranh tổ nữ đứng bên anh *tượng đồng*:

⁸⁶ Read Đoàn Thị Mai Hương. “Truyện đồng tiền.” *Tạp chí Hán Nôm*, volume 1 (50), 2002.

Chị em ơi, ba bảy đường chồng... (1918) ⁸⁷
 (Green pure water yellow fish suspending
 Ngô đồng trees emerald branches, phoenix birds stand on high
 I feel sorry for you, the fate of pink cheek women
 Greedy for white silver coins, surrendering your body to chú black Westerner
 Pink thread: who deliberately spun your *duyên* [pre-life attachment]?
 Hanging picture of a beautiful girl with image of bronze statue
 Sisters, three or seven ways of getting married)

Coupled contradictory images in the poems⁸⁸ apparently aim at emphasizing money forces in breaking social norms, national and family unity and racial purity. It appears that reformist Vietnamese intellectuals did not only demand material advantages but also attempted to hold onto sorts of traditional morals and cultures to maintain the sovereignty of their supposedly cohesive community of locals. This vision of national cohesion and autonomy, as recorded by French authorities, is an endless demand of local population

⁸⁷*Tuyển tập Tân Đà*. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Văn học, 1986; pp. 128-129. This poem first appeared in *Nam Phong tạp chí* with the title “Con cá vàng” (Yellow Fish). In this year, Tân Đà changed its name to “Cô Tây đen” (Black Westerner Ms) and reprinted in one of his collections, titled *Khối tình con* (*Small Love*). Later, the poem with the title “Cô Tây đen” appeared in another collection *Thơ Tân Đà* (Tân Đà Poetry, 1925). In 1932, in his self-established newspaper, named *An Nam Tạp chí*, Tân Đà return the name “Cô Tây đen” to the poem (Read Nguyễn Khắc Xương. *Tân Đà Tuyển tập*, Volume 1. Hà Nội. Nhà xuất bản Văn học.1986; 417-418).

The poet Vũ Chấn (1921-2006), from Hà Nội, published the poem “Cô Tây đen” in 1953 at An Phú Press. This poem imitates many details from “Cô Tây đen” by Tân Đà. It appears that the Vũ Chấn’s poem refers more to African soldiers than to Indians in Hanoi (Read Tây búi. Vũ Chấn (1921-2006). <http://taybui.blogspot.com/2009/01/v-chn-1921-2006.html>). However, the last six sentences of the poem still remind audience of rich Indians in Hanoi:

Tình thấy hơi đồng Cô lấy chồng Tây đen
 Người ta lấy chồng cho bỏ công má hồng
 Cho bỏ công tắm rửa bằng xà-phòng
 Ca-đum Mà sao cô lại đem tấm thân ngọc đứng bên ông tượng đồng

In these sentences, the images of a bronze statue, particularly of "hơi đồng" (money smell) are typical to the Indians who were seen to be stinking rich.

In southern Vietnam, there is also a folk-song that binds the image of black Indians with white silver coin: Anh bảy đen, đồng bạc trắng, Em ham chi đồng bạc con cò
 Đêm nằm với nó đen mò như cục than!
 (black Seven brother, white silver coins. You are greed for white coins which are like white storks. Sleeping at night with him, dark like coal pieces). (Read *Vòng quanh Việt Nam*. <http://vongquanhvietnam.com/xem-ca-dao/anh-bay-den-dong-bac-trang-em-ham-chi-dong-bac-con-co-dem-nam-voi-no-den-mo-nhu-cuc-than-6696.html>).

⁸⁸ More in Chapter 1

(Roberts 475-6). The resulting images of Indians are thus in tune with the relentless anti-foreign sentiments and the “idealized total community”-related ideas: images of wealthy, materialistic Indians in the two poems embody members of the capitalist class, a class that emerged as a consequence of the establishment of colonial capitalism in Vietnam. The image of Indians as colonial capitalists and associated feudal landlords will be analyzed in the coming section.

2. Constructing Enemies of National and Class Struggles: Formation of Greedy Bloodsucking “Chà và”, “Tây đen” and “sét ty” as Metaphors of Feudal Landlords and Colonial Capitalists

Afore mentioned depictions about the Indians as wealthy, modern “sét-ty”, “chà và” or “tây đen” actually reflected and contributed to the marginalization of these people from colonial Vietnam, a political ethnicization by colonial administrators and writers as discussed in Chapter 1. Since medieval times, Vietnamese literati have appreciated the reflectivity and the performativity of writing in connection to the material reality to which that writing is born. As for the reflectivity, Đinh Củng Viên in the thirteenth century wrote, “no one in this world knows all about change and destruction. That pen without mouth is still able to speak about emergence and collapse.” Ngô Thời Sĩ, a literati living in the eighteenth century, believed that “writing relates to the fate of its time” (văn chương có quan hệ với vận đời); Nhữ Bá Sĩ, a literati of Nguyễn Dynasty, emphasized “writing is the reality of the time out of which it was born” (văn chương là hiện trạng của một thời làm nên nó). As for the performativity of writing, Nguyễn Trãi, a

writer and an official of Lê dynasty (1427-1789), announced that his "đạo bút" (moral of a pen) aimed at contributing to the pacification of the northern invaders and protection of the southern country. In the nineteenth century, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu, a celebrated southern author, challenged the colonial regime by his writings: "stabbing many dishonest guys the pen is still not blunt" (đâm mấy thằng gian bút chẳng tà). Phan Châu Trinh and Phan Bội Châu, famous patriots of the early twentieth century, respectively declared: "pen and tongue want to turn around flood flow directions" (bút lưỡi muốn xoay dòng nước lũ) and "three-inch tongue is like sword and gun; a pen is like battle drum and gong" (Ba tấc lưỡi mà gươm mà súng, một ngòi lông vừa trống vừa chiêng).⁸⁹ And as David Marr argues, until the late 1920s, most Vietnamese intellectuals still believed that words on paper had "a special, autonomous power to alter reality" and "to stipulate a sweeping transformation of society" (*Vietnamese Tradition on Trial* 336). This belief must have been nourished during the 1920s, when Marxist-Leninist doctrine and communism-related news and essays were increasingly circulated among Annamese public (Duiker 191-194; Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial* 358-360).⁹⁰

In part, the idea of class struggle in Marxist-Leninist doctrine had a deeper impact on Vietnamese intellectuals' ideology around the time of Depression; the prominence of

⁸⁹ These quotes derived mostly from my memory; they appeared in repetitive courses in literary theory (college level) and literature (high school and college levels). Read more about these quotes and associated points about the tradition of patriotic literature in the textbook in literary theory of the Hanoi University of Education, Phương Lưu, et.al. Ed. *Lý luận văn học*. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản giáo dục, 1995. This is the fifth reprint of this textbook since 1985.

⁹⁰ In constitutionalists-led newspapers including *Đông Pháp thời báo* and *Thần Chung*, news about communist parties in France, and the Soviet Union appeared since 1924 (Nguyễn Công Khanh 53-110)

“chủ nghĩa hiện thực phê phán” (critical realism) in contemporary writings is an example of an impact of Marxist-Leninist in colonial Vietnam (Phuong Lữ 136-137). "Chủ nghĩa hiện thực phê phán" refers a type of realism promoted by Russian Marxists, particularly Maxim Gorky; this literary ideology emphasizes social conflicts between partisans and farmers on the one side and capitalists on the other side (Phuong Lữ 136-137, Lại Nguyên Ân 254-256). French “réalisme,” which exclusively highlights “expressions of a society,” is not suitable for Vietnam in the time of nation-building and associated class-struggles (Đặng Thai Mai, *Khái luận văn học* 75). Instead, "chủ nghĩa hiện thực phê phán," as believed among contemporary Vietnamese Marxists ("materialists"), underlines the material impact of forms of arts in the sense that art is a means to engineer the soul of the masses. Particularly, contemporary intellectuals emphasized that the work of engineering the soul must be subtle and indirect in order to stipulate mental changes in the masses and that this work must rely on the so-called objective reality instead of writers' subjectivities (Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial* 365). Thus, since the early 1920s, communist intellectuals strived to work from the Marxist idea of proletarianization, turning their mind to issues of class “origin, wealth or social status” (Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial* 31; 358-360; *Vô sản hóa* 1-10).

In this context, literary and journalistic constructions of images of the Indians as bloodsucking creatures – metaphor of landlords and colonial capitalists -- are indirect ways of provoking in public minds images of ruins supposedly caused by feudalism and colonial capitalism. To indicate, in the mid-1920s, the visibilization of Indians as bloodsucking creatures prevails in journalistic writings, implying attempts of

contemporary intellectuals at reminding the local audience about colonial exploitation. On February 13, 1924, *Đông Pháp thời báo* calculated that the Indians and Chinese brought back to their home country millions of piastre, which were exacted from Annamese flesh and blood. The Indians and Chinese' s bloody exaction is more specific in the March 18, 1927 issue of *Đông Pháp thời báo*: Annamese are getting more and more deprived; whereas locals are bony, Chinese and Indians are fat; whereas labor belongs to the Annamese, profit-eating belongs to the Chinese and Indian migrants; whereas starvation belongs to the local, prosperity belongs to the Chinese and Indians migrants. The way of presenting the Indian as a bloodsucking entity is more explicit in the case of Indian tax collectors. On January 14, 1928, *Đông Pháp thời báo* posted a story about a “xã tri,” tax collector, getting rich by exploiting poor people: The Vĩnh Châu district has a “xã tri” tax collector who collects taxes on time in January. However, he establishes a rule that people can pay tax in February or March, as long as they pay more. Anyone who does not pay this additional late fee would be imprisoned. This “xã tri” could exploit even more with their extortion tactics in land and boat taxes. When he is not a collector, he is very poor. Since he becomes “xã tri,” the extra income from late fees allows him to purchase a dozen houses and fields. He also takes part in financial cooperatives and sends his children to study abroad. The story demands: "Where does such big property come from? Are they from poor people's blood? Are they from tears and sweat of people?"

Until the late 1920s, the image of Indians as bloodsucking beings – exploiters of local resources -- seems to be very common among Vietnamese intellectuals, who were

in favor of the idea of class struggle: in 1929, members of Đảng Lao Động [Labor Party] confronted Rabindranath Tagore in his visit to Cochinchina: “You should have a look at the people who come to this land to suck blood [of Annamites]” and “you should have shown gratitude to Annamite [labor], who offered you a great reception.”⁹¹ These sayings attacked Tagore's indifferent attitudes towards peasants and workers – he would only give a talk to the low-class people if they came to his luxurious hotel; otherwise, he denied going the dirty port theater. In another essay, posted in the May 23, 1929 *Thần Chung* newspaper, the bloody image of an Indian tax collector appeared in a more direct anti-colonial sentiment. The essay opens with the short sentence: “such a blood sucking kind” and ends in a lamentation: “how miserable people from rural areas must be, they are sucked by many blood suckers.” The target on the colonial regime is potentially concealed in the use of the abstract term “many blood suckers.”

All those descriptions likely echoed the widespread view about the “vampiric nature” of capitalists and particularly colonial capitalists who crossed national borders for economic exploitation in Western literature since the early eighteenth century as Aimé Césaire (1955) once described. Particularly, the image of vampire is common in writings of Marxist theoreticians such as Frederick Engels and Karl Marx; particularly Karl Marx compares that French bourgeoisie who exploits labor of peasants and workers is like vampires whose living depends on blood of other beings (Neocleous 669-684; Melton 543; Robinson 107-108). Ho Chi Minh, in his Marxist analysis of French colonization, *Le Procès de la colonisation française*, published serially in France from 1921 to 1925, also

⁹¹“Ngoài cuộc tiếp rước thi si Tagore vừa rồi” [Anecdotes marginal to the ceremony to welcome Tagore]. *Đuốc Nhà Nam*, July 2, 1929. This is my translation from Vietnamese to English.

describes that the French capitalists gain their wealth through blood and sweat of the colonized population. In this essay, he compares colonialism with a leech with two suctions: one sucks blood of workers in metropolis and the other sucks blood of workers in colonies (Trần Văn Phòng 148). Copies of this pamphlet, as Charles B. McLane predicts, might have reached colonial Vietnam simultaneously, become an authoritative text of Vietnamese nationalists and stimulated public interest in Marxism (109). Although other bloodsucking creatures appeared previously – e.g. the image of lice in the reformist Phan Chau Trinh’s writings (Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism* 169-170) -- in local scholar’s subtle critiques on French colonization, the association of bloodsucking creatures with colonial capitalism is apparently the most obvious in Vietnamese writing since 1920s when Marxism is increasingly circulated. Given the fact that law for press freedom in Indochina did not come into effect until 1938 (Diệp Văn Kỳ 3-4); it is understandable that no Vietnamese source that used the image of vampire to describe the French capitalists found; instead, the resentment towards French colonialism is planted in creations of the association of the Indians with bloodsucking entities. The similarity between descriptions of bloodsucking works – exploitation of capital and land – of the Indians and those of French capitalists as circulated in contemporary Marxist writings published outside the colony must have evoked a public resentment towards the vampiric thirst of colonial capitalists, in which there must be French capitalists in Annam.⁹²

⁹² Image of bloodsucker is also associated with Jew (Andreas Musolff. *Metaphor, Nation, and the Holocaust: The Concept of the Body Politic*. New York : Routledge, 2010). The novel *Coco’s Gambit: A Novel* (Authorhouse, 2016), by Peter T. Treatway, provides that Chettiars is a version of Jew, money men, who are hated by everyone.

Moreover, the presentation of bloodsucking Indians – constructed associations of the Indian migrants and colonial exploitation – must have derived from rising hatred for “foreigners/or migrants” and from radical riots against the colonial regime around the time of the Great Depression (1929-1932) (Brocheux and Heessmeery 314-320; Duiker 214-227). Vietnamese historiography gives the name "the period of a high level fight" (thời kì cao trào tranh đấu) to the time in which farmers’ red Soviet upheaval in Nghệ Tĩnh and workers’ protests exploded, as well as the time when the Indochina Communist Party was founded (Trần Huy Liệu 40, 56). Under the dominance of Leninist-Marxist doctrine, Vietnamese intellectuals perceived increasing despair and beggar-hood of Vietnamese population as consequences of the worldwide capitalist economic system (Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial* 347-352). The concurrent circulations and codifications of the Indians as bloodsucking entities -- – colonial capitalists --must have embodied the class struggle idea and anti-colonial sentiments: the emergence of images of greedily blood sucking Indians was primarily associated with growing pauperization in rural and urban areas supposedly caused by the colonial capital accumulation shift targeting agriculture fields (Trần Huy Liệu volume 4 10-17; Murray 123-125). These circulations and codifications must have also functioned as a strategy of mass mobilization of members of the Communist Indochina Party in the late 1920s and the early 1930s, out of which “chủ nghĩa hiện thực phê phán” emerged: highlighting in public images of blood-sucking Indians, Vietnamese intellectuals must have aimed at “deepening” conflicts between partisans and workers on the one side and colonial capitalists on the other side in the sake of promoting interests of the workers and

peasants; that is a prolonged strategy of masses mobilization of Marxism-based Vietnamese nationalism (Brocheux and Hemery 318; Moise Edwin E.621-622). In detail, to “win over the masses,” intellectuals of the Party highlighted class differentiation, in which that peasants and workers fell into bankruptcy was seen to have been caused by greedy wealthy landlords and capitalists. Emphasizing this economic inequality, the Party’s intellectuals would be able to increase the masses’ discontent with the landlords and capitalists and thus would be able to sharpen the masses’ alliance with the Party. This masses mobilization strategy was asserted in “Theses of the Party’s Democratic Bourgeois Revolution, October 1930” and “Resolution of the First Congress of the Indochinese Communist Party 27-31 March 1935,” the earliest key documents of the Indochinese Communist Party (later Communist Party).⁹³ In these documents, communist leaders emphasized a critical need of incorporating interests (e.g. landownership) of the masses into goals of potential Marxist nationalism, which aimed at “overthrowing imperialists and feudalists and establishing a Soviet government”; without supports from and without interests of the masses, a national revolution is impossible and meaningless (*75 Years of the Communist* 96). This belief led Vietnamese Marxist-Leninists to seek to create and value new statuses for the impoverished, to encourage them to resist social degradation and to awaken them to their own “material self-interest” (Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial* 131). Contemporary Vietnamese Marxist-Leninists commonly

⁹³ In *75 Years of the Communist Party of Việt Nam (1930-2005), A Selection of Document from nine Party Congress* (Hanoi: Thế giới Publishers, 2005), the essay appears with a different translation “Political Theses of the Indochinese Communist Party” (pp. 106). Trần Phú (1904-1931), the thesis’ author, is the first general secretary of the party. He composed the thesis in according to the Center Committee of the Indochinese Communist Party’s order.

believed that the more oppressed the Vietnamese majority was, the more they would support a coming national revolution, and eventually side with the Party (Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trials* 352-359). In this context, Marxist-Leninists emphasized the excessive ownership of land and capital as politically sinful and presented those who were better off as national enemies (Marr, *Vietnam State, War and Revolution* 335-336, *75 Years of the Communist* 108-110). In the manner of characterizing capitalists as exclusively exploiting characters, the Party's intellectuals performed their attachment to the sufferings and material dreams of peasants and workers, which ultimately helped to consolidate the Party (Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trials* 386; Marr, *Vietnam State, War and Revolution (1946-1946)* 315; McHale 111). The visibilization of Indians as bloodsucking beings, embodiments of colonial capitalism, must have formed a way through which Vietnamese intellectuals upheld the national and class goal of a potential revolution.

The term "Indian capitalists" appeared first in "Theses of the Party's Democratic Bourgeois Revolution, October 1930," the first and the most important document of the Indochinese Communist Party. "Indian capitalists" mentioned here definitely referred to Indians who are traditionally seen as moneylenders in the name "sét-ty" or "chà và," those who accumulate financial ownership through charging high interest on loans, and thus, they, in mainstream Vietnamese historiography, belong to the group of "tư bản cho vay" (money-lending capitalists).⁹⁴ Accordingly, in the minds of Vietnamese Marxists,

⁹⁴ Institute of Linguistics's *Từ điển Tiếng Việt* (Hanoi: Social Sciences Press and Center for Dictionary Studies, 2004) defines the term "tư bản" as "those who possess capital, exploit labors" and the term "tư sản" (pp. 1034) as "those who belong to the class that occupied essential producing materials, live

“Indian capitalists” form the foremost, implacable enemy of the masses, supposedly the backbone of the Party’s strength. As seen in the document, other groups presented alongside the Indian capitalists include imperialists, other capitalists, landowners, and reformists. Presented in this way, the so-called “Indian capitalists” belong to firmly anti-revolutionary, anti-Party groups, and are different from the petty bourgeoisies (traders, intellectuals, and national bourgeois) who the Party hoped would provide certain cooperation in the future. Precisely, in categorizing the Indian migrants as “Indian capitalists,” the Party’s Central Committee made this population an immediate target of the national revolution: the Indian capitalists, alongside Chinese capitalists and landowners, are seen to financially assist the French industrial capitalists, the supposed imperialists (*75 Years of the Communist Party* 112).

Such way of perceiving “Indian capitalists” reflects the fundamental proletarian leadership of the Vietnamese revolution, which the document emphasizes in accordance with the contemporary Comintern’s affirmation on “communism of class struggle”

and enrich by exploiting hired labors” (pp.1035). The term “*tư bản*” (capitalist) is defined as those who own capitals (*Từ điển Tiếng Việt*. Hanoi: Social Sciences Press and Center for Dictionary Studies, 2004). *Đại từ điển Tiếng Việt* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Văn hóa) by Nguyễn Như Ý share a similar meaning of the term “*tư bản*” (capitalists) as those who “possess capital and exploit their hire laborers” (pp.1755).

Such definitions of the term “*nhà tư bản*” are similar to the common meaning of the term *sét-ty* (Chetty) in Vietnamese dictionaries: they are Indians who run the business of money-lending with (very) *high interest* (Khai Trí Tiến Đức. *Việt Nam Từ Điển*. Saigon: Mạc Lâm, 1931; Lê Văn Đức. *Việt nam từ điển*. Saigon: Khai Trí, 1970; Thanh Nghị. *Từ Điển Việt Nam*. Saigon: Thời Thế, 1958. Vũ Chất. *Từ điển Việt Nam*. (?); Đào Văn Tập. *Từ điển Việt Nam phổ thông*. Saigon: Nhà sách Vĩnh bảo, 1951; Nguyễn Như Ý, *Đại từ điển Tiếng Việt*. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Văn hóa, 1999; pp. 1848). The definitions about chetties that emphasizes their financial ownership makes them fit in the perception of *nhà tư bản* (capitalist).

The common definition of the term “*sét-ty*” similar to the definition of “*tư bản cho vay*” in *Từ điển Tiếng Việt* (Đà Nẵng: Đà Nẵng Press, 2007, pp. 1081) by Hoàng Phê. Accordingly, “*tư bản cho vay*” term refers to those who enrich themselves based on interests obtained through lending money.

(Marr Brocheux and Hemery 314; Kim Khánh Huỳnh 131-133).⁹⁵ In this historical context, literary representations of Indian capitalists and landlords form Vietnamese intellectuals' strategy of acquiring more support from peasants and workers – the most populous force – for national causes (c.f. Rato 326). Accordingly, images of bloodsucking Indians or “Indian capitalists” prevailed in the public discourse in colonial Vietnam, particularly about the time of Depression. Moreover, material collapses across population groups supposedly caused by the Depression and the French government's establishment of credit associations in agriculture facilitated the literary and journalistic presentations of Indian extortioners. In early 1930, facing bankruptcy, many Chettiers had to seize the property of their indebted farmers to pay off loans to the French agricultural banks and official credit organizations. This caused rising emotions running throughout farmers toward the chettiers. Instead of resenting French capitalists, local farmers would raise to hate the chettiers, who were seen as the direct cause of their losses (Gunn 36-38).⁹⁶ Thus Vietnamese intellectuals, in constructing images of bloodsucking Indians, “Indian capitalists,” definitely aim at expressing their sympathies for the masses.

⁹⁵ Peasant revolts in the late 1920s and early 1930s in Vietnam and the Leninist scheme of "bourgeois revolution" drove the Indochinese Communist Party members' commitment to "class against class approach" since October 1930. Meanwhile, Nguyễn Ái Quốc's approach advocated anti-colonialism revolution which would simultaneously be anti-feudal and anti-landlords, liberating "workers and peasants from the capitalist yoke" (*75 Years of the Communist Party* 101; Brocheux and Hémerly 316-318; Duiker.222-227).

⁹⁶ Contemporary news revealed struggles that Indian money-lenders faced to running their business. One example is the case of Chà xã tri (Indian chetty) Candassamy left Saigon secretly because of bankruptcy in the 1920s and early 1931. July 17, 1931 *Trung Lập* newspaper provided the news that Candassamy was a successful moneylender, for years, many Europeans had been deposited him their money for money interests, which were usually higher than the government bank. The economic crisis around the time of 1930 made Indochina currency's value fall; creditors of Candassamy were unable to return their debts. Candassamy fell into bankruptcy. The European depositors pushed him to pay their money back; even some of them threatened Candassamy with a gun. Candassamy had to escape from

Resulting presentations of Indians since 1930 onwards are allegories of destructible aspects of capital accumulation tactics. In the short period of its existence, *Thần Chung* focused on analyzing profit-making tactics by criticizing the image of Indian magicians. In mid-1931, *Trung Lập* posted a serialized essay, titled “Nên biết qua thuật dối đời của bọn Fakir” ([The public] should know gangs Fakir’s cheating techniques), excoriating the so-called cheating methods of the Indians, who earned their living through magic performances. The July 1 and July 2, 1931 essays criticized the public for fearing the Indians’ magical games with a justification that the games are just dirty mean tricks by the Indians. The essays listed magic games of the Indians: they can dance with a bamboo rod, but after being covered by a scarf, the bamboo turns into a mango rod; they can stand on their heads; flowers could grow on their feet. The newspaper also illustrates the narratives with images of Indians standing in the middle of numerous snakes or standing by a bamboo tree. The essay’s narrator asserted that these magic games were “artful tricks” of the Indians; he was determined, in “coming volumes” of the journal, to “bring into light” deceptions of the Indians so that audience "after reading this essay, would not

Saigon, hiding in his friend house. This story also appeared on August 6, 1931 *Phụ nữ tân văn* which added some other details. Actually, as narrated in the newspaper, Candassamy hid from creditors in his friend house. Getting to know that the creditors submitted a petition to bring him to court, he sent out a message that he did not intend not to pay back money; he was just trying to avoid the gun user. If creditors let him in peace, he would go out and try his best to return money to them. With the depositors' agreement, the court cleared the order of confiscating Candassamy's property and for Candassamy to gradually pay back the money. *Saigon Opinion*, as re-told on the July 29, 1931 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (1884-1942), gave prominence to the failure of the Hindu banker Candassamy. The bankruptcy caused the most terrors to European officials, circles, and functionalist. One functionalist, depositing 1000 piastres to Candassamy, threatened him with a revolver. In the Singaporean newspaper's retold story, Candassamy drank rum and attempted to shoot himself. However, he did not know how to load the revolver. At this time, his friend from Phnom Penh came in and took him to that town, from there, he would slip through to Siam

be cheated." The narrator presents his abhorrence for the Indians in a strong commitment to busting the Indians' so-called cheating ways of earning money:

Breaking rice cookers of a couple of cheaters to save the wallets of credulous people indicates our responsibility in protecting the common benefit of our society. We swear that whenever we have the chance [to break their rice cookers] we will never miss it.⁹⁷

The essay ends with the promise that the author will forever take any opportunities to stop Indians from taking money from his compatriots. Similarly, two months earlier, the April 9, 1931 volume announced that with efforts of staffers from *Lục Tỉnh Tân Văn* and *Trung Lập*, the Saigon government banned the game “thả vòng lấy rượu” (throwing circles to take wine) through which the Indians succeeded in exploiting much money of locals. In volume 5622, the newspaper published similar news about the Saigon court’s sentence to fine and strip all citizen rights from the four Indians who illegally “‘eat’ (ăn xói) money of Saigon city.” The newspaper also concentrated on news and stories that portray the Indians as “inhuman.” It circulated news such as “Chuyện chà và ăn thịt con nít đã ra trước vành móng ngựa” [Chà và Eating Kids Brought in Trial, June 3, 1931], “Vụ Chà và giết nhau” [Chà và kill each other, July 24, 1931?], and “Chà và đánh vợ” (Chà và heat wife, August 4, 1931). Delivering “news” about Indians is a way that Annamese journalists must have taken to demonstrate their national responsibility to

⁹⁷*Trung lập* July 1, 1931. The author explicitly expressed that he wanted to follow the French writer, named Paul Heuze, to destroy the Indians’ act of cheating his Annamese compatriots. According to the essay, in 1926, in Paris, the Les Éditions de France published the controversial booklet *Fakirs, fumistes & cie* [Fakirs are knavish people] by the writer Paul Heuzé revealing “roguish” skills that Kalfayan, a Fakir performer of magic, used to “foul” audiences in Paris theaters. This booklet caused Kalfayan to lose his means of existence, as no theaters in Paris wanted to hire him. Although there was a court held, Kalfayan failed to find Paul Heuzé and the publishing house guilty and to compensate him 500 000 francs. The essay’s author encouraged that the booklet, which recapitulated all business strategies of Indian migrants and interpreted them as tricky ruses, seems to have played the role of a guideline book that could be used to understand every Indian migrant everywhere

eliminate so-called cheating bloodsucking Indians. This responsibility is critical, as stated, to save money for innocent compatriots and to protect the fame of Saigon as the most civilized city of an imagined Vietnamese nation. These analyses allegorically aimed at attacking French administrators' increasing promotion of romantic, semi-erotic, superstitious publications and events. According to the historian Trần Huy Liệu (1901-1969), the French government supported publications about physiognomy, astrology, fortune telling and hypnosis and promoted entertainment activities in public. But a deeper motivation of journalist presentation of Indians' magic skills was to nourish in public minds an awareness of bloodsucking colonial capitalism and resulting dispossession of groups of population in urban and rural areas. In this historical context, presentations of the magic Indians as exploitative foreigners –bloodsucking Indians -- must have aimed at glamorizing populations' bitterness and anger that might provoke more resistance against the colonial regime (Trần Huy Liệu, Volume 6 30-31). And this choice of depicting the Indian magicians for the anticolonial theme was actually in response to the French regime's policies of tightening its control of intellectual activities more intensively since the 1930s (Trần Huy Liệu Volume 6, 30).

It is observable that literary imaginations of Indians in Vietnamese writings in the early 1930s onwards are getting closer to the theme of “class struggles” in Marxist-Leninist ideology.⁹⁸ This also means that images of Indians tend to be more antagonistic; Indians are primarily presented as causes of a rise in the pauperization of the Annamese

⁹⁸ Exchanges of newspaper between Hanoi and Saigon in the 1920s were described in details in the first volume of the long historical fiction *Tuấn, Chàng trai nước Việt, chứng tích thời địa từ 1900 đến 1970* (Saigon: Published by the author, 1970) by Nguyễn Vỹ (1912-1971).

population. The prominent author Nguyễn Công Hoan (1903-1977) is the most open and frank about how the Party's "class struggle" ideologies influenced his visibilization of sét-ty in northern Vietnam. In the memoir *Đời viết văn của tôi* (1971),⁹⁹ Nguyễn Công Hoan discloses what he calls his politically inappropriate obsession with "sét-ty" in his celebrated novel *Bước đường cùng*, published in 1938. Hoan admits that he had the intention to emphasize the landlord's labor exploitation -- which he sees as the "root of feudalism" -- so that the public would become more aware of their "social degradation." This shared awareness would then unite his local public as a solid group able to get rid of feudalism. His initial intention derived from his will to repay his gratitude towards his communist brothers, who had brought him to the light of Marxist-Leninism. This also means that Hoan planned to depict the landlord in accordance with the contemporary "communist principles of class struggle." However, Hoan concedes that, although he intended to attack landlords, his novel ends up with a particularly extortionistic moneylender as a prominent character, whom he calls "sét-ty," and who is a major cause of the pauperization of peasants. As Hoan acknowledges, instead of attacking the policy of "land tax" (địa tô) of the feudal regime, he blames the peasants' losses on money-lending with the chettiers as main culprits. He says, "due to my shallow understanding of feudalism, in *Bước đường cùng*, I did not properly beat the heads of the gang of landlords, but recklessly struck sét-ty" (Nguyễn Công Hoan, *Đời viết văn của tôi* 219). Hoan's admission reflects his attempts to follow the Party's 1930s proclamation, which

⁹⁹ The author drafted this memoir in 1957, completed it in 1969 and published in 1971 by Literature Press (Nhà xuất bản văn học). Read: Vương Trí Nhàn. "Nguyễn Công Hoan và cuốn hồi ký 'Đời viết văn của tôi'." *Vương Trí Nhàn*. <http://vuongtrinhan.blogspot.com/2014/03/nguyen-cong-hoan-va-cuon-hoi-ky-oi-viet.html>

depicted Indians as “capitalists,” a class target of the national Revolution. As evidence, *Bước đường cùng* presents the haunting presence of Indian chettiars in the northern Vietnamese public. His reader will be unable to find an Indian character or name in the novel, but the Indian figure appears in an anonymous character with darker skin, an abnormally tall figure and an abnormally stony, strange face. This character appears at the debtor’s house in a threateningly quiet manner, asking for the debt to be repaid.¹⁰⁰ Although this figure is not named as Indian, he appears in the novel in details that depict the Indian way of accumulating capital through lending money. Strikingly, this strategy was depicted by the authors of *NCMD*, as previously discussed.¹⁰¹ The village official character in Hoan’s novel obtains all the land of the villagers with the trick of offering to lend them money. Whenever farmers need money, the official easily and generously gives them money with a high-interest rate. This strategic generosity makes villagers gradually dependant to the official’s money. As described in the novel, the official suddenly forecloses all the land of the villagers, resulting in their “dead-end situation.” The official’s tricky trust is completely similar to the tactic that the Indian moneylenders in Cochinchina utilized to bring villagers to bankruptcy, as analyzed by the journalist Lê Hoàng Mưu in the piece “Red Apple Devil” published in *NCMD*. Nevertheless, Lê

¹⁰⁰ Again, the quiet, threatening and durable Indian sét-ty which appears in novels by Hồ Biểu Chánh and Marguerite Duras.

¹⁰¹ The term "sét-ty" has become a general noun referring to anyone who runs the business of money-lending. In his writing about Tú Xương, the researcher in Sino-Chinese Trần Khê quotes Xương's poem "Đầu năm bắt được đồng tiền" (picking up dropped money in the lunar New Year). The poem has the detail that Xương, fortunately, picked money dropped by some unknown and he wanted to spend the money to pay the debt to take back his foreclosed house. Trần Khê reads in this detail the fact that Xương's house was confiscated by "sét-ty Hai An." It is not clear Hai An was a Vietnamese or an Indian. (Read Trần Khê. *Nghiên cứu và Tranh luận (1965-1995)*. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Khoa học xã hội, 1996).

Hoàng Mru, like other Cochinchinese authors, somehow encourages the Annamese people to learn the Indian way of accumulating capital, whereas Hoan and other northern writers emphasize peasants' awareness of the exploitative nature of any type of capitalists, including Indian capitalists.¹⁰²

The cross-area circulation of news and discussions about communism allows a comparison between southern and northern authors in writings about Indian moneylenders. Nguyễn Công Hoan and Hồ Biểu Chánh (1884-1958) could be comparable, given that they are the most famous for writings about economic collapses in both urban and rural settings. The two authors engaged in contemporary nationhood formations through attempts at proletarianizing their own minds in relation to rural problems such as loans and land concessions. Hồ Biểu Chánh was the most prominent author who implies anticolonialist sentiments in constructions of hateful images of Indian moneylenders: images of Indians in Hồ Biểu Chánh are colonial capitalists. Hồ Biểu Chánh used alternative terms to refer to Indian moneylenders such as “xã tri”, “sét-ty” or “chà và” in many novels such as *Tiền bạc, bạc tiền* (1925), *Khóc thầm* (1929), *Con nhà giàu* (1931), *Một đời tài sắc* (1935), *Ở theo thời* (1935) and *Người vợ hiền* (?). The use of these terms apparently aimed at reminding audiences of the Indian migrants' foreign status and exploitative nature; Hồ Biểu Chánh's emphases on the colonial capitalist status of Indian migrants are more obvious in his narrators' comparison between locals and Indian moneylenders. In the novel *Khóc thầm*, for example, the main

¹⁰² Such as Vũ Bằng (1913-1984) in his journalist writings published in *Trung Bắc chủ Nhật* (Hanoi) in 1940, Vũ Trọng Phụng (1912-1939) in *Quý Phái* (1937).

character, “thầy hội đồng” (committee), a local moneylender and land leasing agent, claims that “xã tri” (chettians) do not sympathize with poor persons, they do not put any consideration on family and national origin, they are cold-blooded. This claim is to respond to Vĩnh Thái, the son who justifies his high interest in land leasing and money loans. In the novel *Ở theo thời*, another example, although using the term “Chà và,” the seemingly familiar name in Southern Vietnam, the narrator still reminds the audience about the colonial status of Indian moneylenders by providing their foreign names: Annouchetty và Ibrahimachetty. What matters is that in Hồ Biểu Chánh’s novels, the exploiting practices of chettians are restricted to village officials, instead of farmers. Hồ Biểu Chánh is more concerned about the pauperization of the higher classes (e.g. landlords, district heads, subsistence farmers, teachers, and village scholars) in the countryside. Hồ Biểu Chánh, similar to previous southern authors, also conveyed his anti-colonialism through portraying intellectuals as hostages of Western capital accumulation that is embodied in the image of Indian moneylenders. Whereas, Nguyễn Công Hoan, in literary ways, grouped Indian moneylenders in a class identified as the foremost enemy of the communist revolution: Indian moneylender is a class of people similar to that of feudal landlords. Therefore, images of Indians in Nguyễn Công Hoan’s writings and in mainstream Vietnamese writing at large are covered by names and categories of feudalism and colonialist subjects.

Totally, in the 1930s, intellectuals of Annamese areas concurrently portrayed threatening prosperous images of Indians: money-lenders cornered most of the farmland and houses; they did business in cities and ports; they occupied large-scale trades and

also penetrated their exploitation into remote rural areas; they were mediators between naïve rural population and clever urban traders, particularly in rice trading in Cochinchina. They had boats to convey rice; they had places to store rice; they had companies to pound rice; they had business branches everywhere to directly do business with landlords and farmers. It is a common economic method the Indians (and Chinese) practiced all over Cochinchina, as Phạm Cao Dương describes : they participated in local lives to create credibility, offering credit, advancing money to buy rice with low price and uniting to each other to keep hold on decided price (170). Emphasizing frightening growth of the Indian characters, Vietnamese intellectuals must have cautioned the public against growing colonial capitalism in contemporary Vietnam.

Notably, the ambiguous ethnicity of the “sét-ty” character in *Bước đường cùng* suggests the growing use of the Indian way of accruing capital in colonial Vietnam. In depicting the Indians’ tactic in this way, Vietnamese writers aimed at intensifying the antagonism between proletarians and capitalists. This would result in a shared will of uniting with the Party among the Vietnamese proletarians, becoming dedicated to the revolutionary victory and advocating for the formation of a socialist society. In the early twentieth century, the word “sét-ty” in northern writing referred to the business of making profits through money lending. Vietnamese money-lenders were called “sét-ty da vàng” (yellow sét-ty) in an antagonistic discursive style that is similar to the way of addressing Indian money-lenders as black sét-ty (or sét-ty).¹⁰³ Vietnamese writers were

¹⁰³ Lê Văn Đức uses term ““sét ty” da vàng” his dictionary *Việt nam từ điển*. Saigon: Khai Trí, 1970; pp 1289. Other northern writers, including Hoàng Đạo (1907-1948), a core member of Literary Group of Self-Reliance) and Nguyễn Mạnh Bồng used the term “sét ty” to refer to Vietnamese money-lenders. For

anxious about the economic collapse of the Vietnamese population as a consequence of the increasing Indian economic practice of occupying and accumulating land. “Vay tây đen” (borrowing money from black westerners) must have become a haunting term among Vietnamese low-income classes before the Revolution; “vay tây đen” connotes the inescapable pauperization of native peasants, workers, intellectuals and other low classes.¹⁰⁴ In the collection of stories titled “Thanh niên trụy lạc” (Depraved Youth) published in 1937 in *Ích Hữu* newspaper, the narrator, Nguyễn Đình Lạp (1913-1952), provokes in his audience’s mind the danger of the act of “vay tây đen.” The narrator “I” is a close friend of the main character, a city intellectual, who falls into debt because of his gambling addiction. This intellectual decides to borrow money from “tây đen” to continue gambling to regain his lost money. As soon as this character shares, “you know, this morning, I went to borrow money from tây đen,” the narrator immediately responds with terror, “Vay tây đen?” Additionally, when the character admits: “yes, he promised to lend me three hundred đồng in two days,” the narrator suggests:

You should not. You are not unfamiliar with this kind of sét-ty. It squeezes your anatomy and your neck [which means sét-ty take extremely high interest]. And, if you borrow, how will you repay them?

example, Hoàng Đạo, in 28-08-1938 *Ngày nay* newspaper, wrote “Lại một tên xét ty da vàng nữa bị tù tội. Đó là Lê Văn Huyền làm nghề cho vay nặng lãi ở Thái Bình.” (One more yellow chetty was imprisoned. That is Lê Văn Huyền, who worked as a heavy money-lender in Thái Bình province). In 6 1919 *Nam Phong Tạp chí* (volume 24), Hoàng Đạo also addressed chetty as a business: “À thôi! Có nghề này chóng giàu mà nhàn: nghề “sét-ty”. (Oh no! There is a job that can be rich quickly, that is “sét-ty job”). Nguyễn Mạnh Bông (in the penname Nguyễn Song Kim), also wrote in *Nam Phong tạp chí* (volume 16, issued in 10.1918) that “Mấy bọn nhà giàu nghề sét-ty/Bo bo giữ của có làm chi? (Rich gangsters who hold the business of sét-ty; what is the meaning of just keeping on hold of their properties?) (Also read in <http://tunguyenhoc.blogspot.com/2014/05/nghe-xet-ty-la-nghe-gi.html>)

¹⁰⁴ This phrase appeared again in Nguyễn Công Hoan’s memoir *Nhớ và ghi về Hà Nội* (1970). See Chapter 3

The conversation echoes a common fear about the certainty of losses when borrowing money from chetties. This journalistic writing concludes with the image of a homeless, collapsed intellectual.¹⁰⁵

“Vampire” is one of the most popular metaphors that highlight the so-called exploitative nature of the Indian *sét-ty*, and as previously discussed, this metaphor is indicative of Marxism-based anti-colonialism implied in Vietnamese presentations of bloodsucking Indians. Vũ Bằng (1913-1984) associated the image of vampire, a type of blood sucking creature with *sét-ty* in his journalist series about contemporary matters of Hanoi serially published in the newspaper *Trung Bắc Chủ Nhật*. The October 20, 1940 piece opens with full metaphors related to social exploitation; for example, “using flesh to eat people” (*lấy thịt xơi người*) refers to those who use their physical presence with the aim of obtaining ruling power over others. Particularly, the metaphor that people need blood not only for physical survival but also for wealth points to people’s financial losses without which *sét-ty* cannot enrich themselves. In other words, without exploiting people, *sét-ty* cannot be rich. To impress the high level of exploitation by *sét-ty*, Vũ Bằng even utilizes the direct meaning of the term “blood” as a material food of the moneylenders. He says, “it [animal blood] is not as nutritious as human’s blood is, the vampire only sucks human blood; even *sét-ty* suck bloods of debtors to be seen as round and fat.” The assumption that the *sét-ty* sucks the real blood of their victims emphasizes the rude, greedy exploitation of the Indian capitalists in relation to their labors (borrowers). This

¹⁰⁵Nguyễn Đình Lạp. “Thanh niên trụ lạc.” *Văn học Việt Nam thế kỉ XX. Tập văn và các thể ký Việt Nam 190-1945*. Ed. Trịnh Bá Đĩnh. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Văn học, 2007; pp. 99-184.

understanding is exactly in accordant with the Vietnamese Marxist Leninist definition of “capitalists” as those who maximize their financial interests through the exploitation of proletarians and peasants.¹⁰⁶

Vũ Bằng’s, Nguyễn Đình Lạp’s, and Nguyễn Công Hoan’s portraits of the Vietnamese population going bankrupt in concomitant relation to *sét-ty* making profit was actually the common situation of farmers and urban low- income residents under French colonialism, according to French accounts.¹⁰⁷ According to the historian Phạm Cao Dương (1966), cornering land through money-lending was “the most dangerous dilemma” that caused the degradation of farmers during French colonialism. In the face of increasing land losses to foreign and native landowners, farmers could not but borrow money with high interest rates from rich Indian and Chinese businessmen, which increased popular gambling debt and increased taxes. Dương points out two ways through which farmers borrowing money would definitely fall into bankruptcy: first is through the lenders’ requests for high interest and the other is through land and house mortgages. As for the first one, the Indian *sét-ty* usually made a contract for an amount of loan money that included the original desired amount for the loan and the portion of interest, this practice was constructed to hide the high interest from authorities. This way

¹⁰⁶ In 1960, a Sự thật Press in Hanoi published the Vietnamese version *Đông Nam Á sau chiến tranh thế giới thứ 2* (Southeast Asian post World War II) by the Russian scholar Galina Andreevna Martysheva. This book depicts “*sét-ty*” as giant capitalists who occupied all land in rural areas of Myanmar; *sét-ty* companies also invested to make interests in Myanmar. This publication apparently conformed to contemporary socialist nation-building of North Vietnam in which factors of capitalism were seen to be needed eliminating.

¹⁰⁷ See in Phạm Cao Dương, *Thực trạng của giới nông dân Việt Nam dưới thời Pháp thuộc* (Saigon: Nhà sách Khai Trí, 1967; pp. 83-99).

of making a profit was still more flexible than mortgages, which, Duong asserts, were the most effective at causing farmers' financial disaster. In this way, farmers usually had to agree to sacrifice their land ownership to sét-ty; or, they would just transfer their documents of land ownership to sét-ty, then keep cultivating on the deposited land and pay sét-ty taxes for land using and interest for the loan amounts. In general, the Indian way of making money, as Duong asserts, was "a form of exploitation, a form of making wealth on the bones and blood of the poor population" (Phạm Cao Duong 90). In short, Indian migrants are made visible in the way that they are similar to colonial capitalists, the enemy of national and class revolution. To repeat, "class struggles" is a means to realize the "national struggles," which means the national independence from foreign influence as Brocheux and Hemery suggests. Expressing concerns about fulfilling interests of "tillers" (through attacks against feudal landlords and modern capitalist) has constituted a method of the Party in its masses mobilization for struggles for the ultimate, overriding national sovereignty. The formation of greedy bloodsucking "chà vậ," "sét ty" or "tây đen" characters – metaphors of colonial capitalists and feudal landlords – conforms to both national and class tasks of the Party's ideology around the 1930s. The Vietnamese audience, experiencing the image of Indian exploiters, would stick together in a solid community that is dissociated from the national enemies and associated with the Party in the "material dream" that could be fulfilled after the national revolutionary victory.¹⁰⁸ Visibilized as subjects of class conflicts and of anticolonial projects, the actual Indians are not visible and audible in Vietnamese writing; and such form of

¹⁰⁸ David Marr, in his latest book *Vietnam: State, War and Revolution (1945-1946)*, critically examines the Party's officials' attempts to fulfil its promise to the masses (pp. 315-382).

invisibilization also signals the disappearance of the Indian migrants in future historiography and society in Vietnam, regardless of political regimes, that will be further examined in following chapters.

The chapter has just examined journalistic and literary constructions of greedy bloodsucking “Chà và,” “sét ty,” or Tây đen – metaphors of colonial capitalists and landlords. On the one hand, those discursive constructions contribute to institutionalizing the French colonialism in the sense that they conform to and benefit to colonial administrators’ attempts, as discussed in Chapter 1, to marginalize the non-French associated-Indian population for solidification of imperial power, settlements of territory and exploitation of resources. Anti-colonial constructions of bloodsucking Indians conform to and imitate colonialist formation of unwelcome migrants. Theoretically, the conformity and imitation must have stemmed from the intertextuality of discourses, either colonialist or anti-colonialist, within the “interconnected inter-textual milieu” of Great France (c.f Boehme, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* 53). On the other hand, the discursive formation of greedy bloodsucking Indian images is also the product of dialectic relations between colonialism and anti-colonialism (through literature) as Elleke Boehme suggests (*Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* 1-10). Presentations of Indians as bloodsucking beings aimed at developing and promoting targets (feudalism and French colonialism and capitalism) of national and class Vietnamese revolutions. Also, and this is historical: using and conforming to colonialist stereotypes to form bloodsucking “chà và,” “tây đen,” and sét-ty metaphors are strategies of nation-makers in making and highlighting imagined and material enemies – feudalists and colonial

capitalist – of the national revolution in the face of “contentious tradition of censorship and a shorter history of press freedom” of the colonial government (Diệp Văn Kỳ 3-4; McHale 46). Appearing primarily as the metaphor of the enemy of the Vietnamese national revolution, the Indians are invisible in colonial Vietnamese writing in the first place: images of this population are exclusive subjects of national projects of Vietnam intellectuals. Moreover, this imagined existence also, as will be examined in following chapters, is a prelude to a further invisibility of this population in postcolonial writing, a writing that is supposed to reflect and shape a Vietnamese national figure absent of colonialism and capital exploitation.

Chapter 3

Continuing Class and National Struggles: Bloodsucking Sét-ty and “Chà gác dân”

Metaphors in Writing of South Vietnam

This chapter examines the continuity of the colonial metaphor of bloodsucking Indian and the emergence of the metaphor of the Indian guardian in Vietnamese writing published in South Vietnam. Historicizing these literary figures in the Republic government's national projects will provide more evidence for how the actual Indians are made invisible, regardless of the Indian moneylender and guardian characters. The Indian figures are presented as imagined enemies and embodiments of the ongoing class and national struggle in South Vietnam confronted with the United States' neo-colonialism.

1. Bloodsucking Chetties (sét-ty): Continuing “Class Struggles”

Southern intellectuals continue using greedy “chà và” and “sét ty” metaphors to highlight imagined targets of the incomplete democratic revolution in South Vietnam. Independence was achieved, but class conflicts remained in South Vietnam: by 1961, 75 percent of the land in the South belonged to 15 percent of the population; farmland and the aid from the United States fell into hands of catholic bishops and military (Head 290; Jacob, *Cold World Mandarin* 2; Sanders 113; Scigliano 120-124) (Box 1). Contributors of the contemporary influential journal *Hành Trình* (1964-1966) asserted that South Vietnam retained feudal and colonial social structures (Nguyễn Văn Trung, “Lời nói đầu” 2), and a “revolution for impoverished people” was the last solution for the South in the face of more poor southerners siding with the communist government (Lý Chánh Trung

18-24).¹⁰⁹ South Vietnam's failure to complete the democratic revolution forms the historical condition in which the bloodsucking Indian metaphor re-appeared in the writings of prolific novelists Vương Hồng Sển (1902-1996), Thanh Nam (1931-1981), An Khê (1923-1994) and Xuân Phát (1932-2014). Indian landlord and moneylender characters are made visible to provoke public resentment about the Republic government being out of touch with the lower classes, particularly peasants and workers. For example, the hateful but rich sét-ty in *Cho mượn cuộc đời* (1965) allegorically addresses Ngô Đình Diệm's delayed, unaffected realization of economic reform and income taxes. Thanh Nam, the novel's author, is one of fifteen modern Vietnamese writers discussed in *Chân dung mười lăm nhà văn, nhà thơ Việt Nam* [Portraits of Fifteen Vietnamese Writers and Poets] (Westminster: Văn Khoa 1985) by Mai Thảo (1927-1998), a famous essayist in South Vietnam. In *Văn học miền Nam* [Southern Vietnamese Literature] (Westminster: Văn Nghệ, 1999), the most authoritative, comprehensive anthology of authors from South Vietnam, the exiled author Võ Phiến (1925-2015) recounts that Thanh Nam was widely known in the South; his books were reprinted many times. In *Cho mượn cuộc đời*, a sét-ty character causes the economic collapse of generations of Vietnamese; in the historical

¹⁰⁹ *Hành trình* is headed by Nguyễn Văn Trung and Lý Chánh Trung, two Catholic intellectuals who have influences on contemporary southern students' ideological debates. The first volume, in October, 1964, ran 500 copies; second in November 1964 600 copies; the third and fourth volume, February 1965: 500 copies (*Hành trình* February 1964, 115). This journal was banned in 1966 although some authorities in charge of the ban decision expressed their consents with the journal's contents (Read: Nguyễn Văn Trung. "Hướng về miền Nam Việt Nam." <http://nguyenvantrung.free.fr/> January-February 2003. Accessed December 31, 2015).

Lý Chánh Trung asserts that the southern government is merely of and for rich people makes the increasing growth of communist forces in southern Vietnam. It is critical to realize any type of revolution that sides poverty-stricken population. Trung brings up Gandhi as one example of a revolutionist who "sacrifices everything to stand on the same side with suppressed people including the suppressed Indian community in South Africa, peasants, boat mechanics, paria in Indian society and all suppressed Indian people under the British colonialism" (21)

construction of the novel, one sét-ty pushes the family of Năm Chà,¹¹⁰ a native female, into bankruptcy. An Indian man seizes Năm Chà family's property, which causes her father to commit suicide and her mom to die of grief. After the family's bankruptcy, Năm lives the life of a prostitute for survival. Then she meets another Indian sét-ty who falls in love with her. Taking advantage of this love, Năm Chà spends all property of the Indian husband with the aim of destroying him in the same way his fellow Indian destroyed her family. While the Indian man is responsively eager to fulfill any demands made by Năm Chà, she intentionally burns up his money in gambling; she also has sexual relationships with other men. Consequently, the Indian husband financially collapses, resulting in his suicide. Năm Chà happily sees him die in the same way that her father did. The novel addresses the continuity of destructive forces of capitalists and landlords in South Vietnam, confirming the association of the sét-ty character with the metaphoric greedy bloodsucking Indians in colonial Vietnamese writing.

Social conflicts and associated public resentment towards exploitative capitalists and landlords also form a theme around Indian characters in *Sài Gòn năm xưa* (1960) by

¹¹⁰ The female witch in the short story "Chuộc ngải" (*Văn hữu*, July 1960) by Hoàng Thu Lan also has name Năm Chà. She is believed to own a "Xiêm" charm, embodied in "ngải" (wormwood trees), which can heal broken couples. The Indian identity or association of this character is ambiguous: it is unclear if the term Chà in her name derives from her darker skin as describes or from her being associations with Muslim Chăm people. However, the detail about curry at the end of the story provokes in audience reference to Indian identity of the character: Năm Chà is discovered not to have any magic, she just cheats for money; people uproot all wormwood trees to cook curry. Curry in Vietnamese concept is a spicy typical for Indians. To illustrate, the term "cà ry" (curry) in Vietnamese language in southern Vietnam, as updated in 1970, was "Indian food containing animal meat with the spicy curry" (Lê Văn Đức, Lê Ngọc Trụ. *Từ điển Tiếng Việt*, quyển thượng. Saigon: Khai Trí, 1970; 151). With final detail suggests that Năm Chà, the subject of the attack, might bear some Indian association. This suggested meaning would contribute to the central theme of the story and the whole volume that is anti-superstition.

Vương Hồng Sển (1902-1996), a celebrated prolific author.¹¹¹ In this literary historiography, Sển views Indians as foreign and invasive newcomers, and emphasizes the Vietnamese and Chinese as the first inhabitants of Saigon. Sarcastic depictions of Indians emphatically provoke a public bitterness about the wealth of the newer migrants: “Chà đen cho vay bạc” (black chà lending money) and “chà bán vải” (textile selling chà) are overly proud of their prosperity, they own most of the land in Saigon: one “Chà và” selling milk feeds a herd of cows on his land in the city. In the past, this “Chà và” almost cried from being forced by the government to buy the land by Tân Sơn Nhất airport to feed his cows, but now, he happily laughs because the “defecating land” costs up to one or two silver coins per square meter; it is now more valuable than gold. The hilarious portrait of the fortunate Indian man obviously conveys and triggers public caustic bitterness about the prosperity of the migrant population. In second depiction of Indian migrants, a narrator exaggerates that the whole city’s capital belongs to Indian sét-ty; without these migrants, the whole city’s businesses would freeze. In addition to this exaggeration, the narrator describes the Indians’ religious practices: on the 15th of the first lunar month, the Indians burn lights and then they take the bronze Shiva statues “hanging around” (đạo chơi) throughout nearby streets. The use of the informal word “đạo chơi” for supposedly sacred statues is hilarious. The literary embellishment of

¹¹¹ Contemporaries’ published appreciations about Vương’s works were reprinted in *Sài Gòn năm xưa*, Second Edition, published by Xuân Thu (Saigon) in 1968. Present-day appreciations were collected in *Tuyển tập Vương Hồng Sển*. Ed. Nguyễn Quang Thắng (Hanoi: Nhà xuất bản Văn học, 2002). Quotes from Vương Hồng Sển in this chapter are all from *Tuyển tập Vương Hồng Sển*.

Indians' land and capital ownership highlights the continuity of the colonial condition (economic gaps and foreigners' economic domination) in postcolonial Vietnam.¹¹²

Vương Hồng Sên's and Thanh Nam's continuing use of the bloodsucking Indian metaphor for the purpose of social criticism creates room to avoid the Republic government's restrictions against political oppositions (Markham 275; Shipler 275-276; Võ Phiến, *Literature in South Vietnam* 53-55). The bloodsucking Indian metaphor was even widely used by administrators in South Vietnam when they dealt with actual Indians remaining in the country. In its early establishment, the authorities of the Republic of Vietnam repeated the metaphor in attempts to outlaw the interest charged on loans granted by Indian "sét-ty." During 1954-1956, this metaphor appeared in administrative minutes and meeting proceedings centering on conflicts between Indian "sét ty" and railway employees in Saigon. According to these documents, the number of employees working in the railway department was 450, all of whom bore the monthly interest of "400.000\$" total on loans that they took from the "sét-ty."¹¹³ The total number of employees of the railway and other business sectors in debt to the "sét ty" was 3000; the total of salaries that the debtors authorized to the sét-ty was "1.200.000\$" per month,

¹¹² This historiography of Saigon stipulated an anonymous woman, living in France, to write another version of Saigon, which "displays unflavored realities." This woman calls her writing as the genre of diary which provides, as openly emphasized, stories of Saigon that had no heroes and victories, instead, focus on the class conflicts and moral corruptions of colonial Saigon that push her in doing prostitute for survival. The woman narrates a number of her sexual relations, two of which are with Indians (Indian gate guardian – *hạch gác cửa* and Indian chetty). Notably, the anonymous author criticizes Sên's ignorance of class conflicts in old Saigon: landlord enriches on the back of tillers, capital of landlords is largely locked in metal box Bauche or Fichet, not going to hands of drivers and cooks. Vương Hồng Sên says that he receives this diary with the letter in 1979 and make it as the part 1 in his serialized book *Sài gòn năm xưa* per a require by the anonymous author (Vương Hồng Sên, *Tuyển tập* 189-192).

¹¹³ , Report on February 1956 by the Ministry of Public Administrative and Traffic (Number 120-CC/M, dated February 20, 1956)

meanwhile the per capita GNP of South Vietnam in 1969 was 240\$ and in 1972 was 200\$ (Nguyen Anh Tuan 221). Eleven percent of the debtors were high-position officials, 40 percent were middle officials and 50 percent were low-class employees.¹¹⁴ These governmental employees borrowed money from Indian “sét-ty,” authorizing them to take their salaries in case they could not pay their debts and interest on time. Even more, many officials and workers deposited their salaries ten years ahead to borrow money from the “sét-ty.” Consequently, “sét-ty,” accompanied by bailiffs, frequently brought salary documents to offices and companies of their debtors to collect their loans and interests. Government documents related to this issue circulate the “traditional” term: Indian migrants are vampires or bloodsuckers.¹¹⁵ The Minutes of the Inter-Ministry Committee Meeting (Ủy ban liên bộ) on April 27, 1956 has a sentence: “*for many generations, there has been a gang of foreigners who are heavy moneylenders... [they practice] contagious money lending*” (emphasis added).¹¹⁶ The recurrence of the metaphor in administrative and literary resources must have aimed at fostering in the public mind an actual and imagined enemy of postcolonial nationalism in South Vietnam, given that ethnic homogeneity and hegemony formed the central point in national projects of the republic’s

¹¹⁴ Report of Public Administrative and Traffic Number 372-CC/M, dated on May 26, 1956

¹¹⁵ Examples included the documents numbered 23 XH/PC/M by the Ministry of Society and Health on April 4, 1956, numbered 2979-BTP/NCPL by the Ministry of Judicial on April 3, 1956, and numbered 914/BTC/TN by the Ministry of Finance on April 9, 1956. All these documents were in response to the letters, marked “confidential,” numbered 222-CC/M by PAT on March 30, 1956 and numbered 120-CC/M, calling for together finding solutions to help officials and workers from borrowing money from the Indian with “too heavy interest.”

¹¹⁶ Another related document is the Meeting Minute on April 27, 1956. This meeting was called the inter-ministry committee (Ủy ban liên bộ) which included representatives of ministries of judicial, finance, treasure, society and health. This committee was formed in response to Ministry of Public Administrative and Traffic and Railway Department’s desperate calls for help from the debtors of the Indian diaspora in early January 1954

leaders. Ngô Đình Diệm continuously issued policies to construct a national figure that was entirely Vietnamese: the citizen should be spiritually, culturally, and morally Asiatic and humanist. His government limited foreigners from being involved in important businesses and from owning real estate:¹¹⁷ in addition to the Act that prevents foreigners from essential businesses (discussed in Chapter 1), Diệm issued Act no 26 on April 20, 1956, amended by law number 6/60 of November 28, 1960, which required that all foreign residents must obtain authorization from the President to acquire real estate, the amendment is, as explicitly stated, to make sure that foreigners' real estate ownership does not exceed Vietnamese's real estate ownership (*Eight Years of the Ngo Dinh Diem Administration* 344). In a number of his public speeches in Vietnam and abroad, Diệm constantly called for constructing a Vietnamese figure of the nation in term of Asian culture. Interchangeable terms such as "Asian civilizations," "Asian culture incompatible with atheist materialism," "reconstruction of Asia by Asians," and "authentic sources of Asian thought" etc. appeared constantly in Ngô Đình Diệm's public speeches (*President Ngo Dinh Diem on Asia*; Thien Phuc; "Diem Speaks" 77-86; Bouscaren 77-85). High-school textbooks in the Republic of Vietnam raised the "problem" of the excessive

¹¹⁷ According to observation by the Indian journalist D.R.Mankekar in 1956, Diệm followed the United States' "anti-Chinese measure" because Chinese migrants were part of the communist China, which was contemporary backing North Vietnam. The small 1500-Indian-community was seen by Vietnamese authorities as an upright community and assets of the nation ("South of 12 Parallel. Motivation of Policies." *The Time of India*. November 1, 1956 in Fonde ĐICH 22611). Until 1965, South Vietnam government still hoped to draw India to side with it in the anti-communist battle; Diệm looked at India as an ideal model of the balance between modernity and cultural thrive (Read D.R Mankekar "South of 17th Parallel. India Is South Vietnam's Ideal." *The Time of India*. November 7, 1956; *Speeches by his Excellency President Rajendra Prasad and his Excellency President Ngo Dinh Diem, March 19-March 22, 1959*. Saigon: Republic of Vietnam Presidency, Press Office 1959?; Priscilla Roberts. "India." *Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: a Political, Social, and Military History*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 1998; pp. 187-188).

ownership of important economic sectors by foreigners (Nguyễn Văn Mùi 113-114). This national imagination aimed at gaining the upper hand over the supposedly inhuman materialist and nationalist figure designed by the communist regime in North Vietnam. Moreover, this national imagination embodies a form of postcolonial nationalism in South Vietnam, in which the republican government attempted to clean up the image of colonial French influence, given that the foreign force mentioned includes the French, and “sét-ty” is both a metonym and a metaphor for the French colonizers (*Eight Years of the Ngo Dinh Diem Administration* 38).¹¹⁸ Thus, the recurrence of negative sét-ty characters conforms to the dominant ideology of nation-building. This conformity is essential, given censorship and particularly the high position of intellectuals such as Vương Hồng Sển (director of the National Museum).

This practical conformity does not prevent southern writers from realizing their role as intellectuals who function as the minds and conscience of the nation; the Indians are made visible in accordance with the formulaic metaphor of the bloodsucking Indians in the aim of indirectly criticizing incomplete democratic reform of the republican government. For southern intellectuals, indirectness is a principle of literature in reflecting and influencing life and society. Nguyễn Văn Trung (1930-) elaborates indirectness as a unique way through which literary writers realize their roles as national conscience and minds of their nation and time. Nguyễn Văn Trung had his postgraduate

¹¹⁸ From July 7, 1961 to July 7, 1962, there were 37 applications from French citizens in Vietnam to acquire real estate out of 70 applications from other nationalities. The second most application was from the Catholic church (9), the third was Vietnamese-born foreigners (6), the fourth was Indians (4) and the fifth Chinese and Japanese (3) (*Eight Years of the Ngo Dinh Diem Administration* 345).

degree in philosophy in France and Brussels during the first Indochina War; during the Vietnam War, he taught literature and philosophy at Saigon University of Literature, Dalat University, and Hue University. The three-volume *Lược Khảo văn học* [Review on Literature] (Saigon: Nam Son, 1963) was considered by contemporary intellectuals as the first systematic, comprehensive study of literary theory in southern Vietnam (Thụy Khuê 1; Nguyễn Văn Trung *Lược Khảo văn học* Volume 1 5-7). His academic contemporaries included this book in reading lists of courses in literature at many universities; it was widely read by the public so much that in 1967 and 1968, the Textbook and Document Center of the Ministry of Education (Trung tâm học liệu Bộ giáo dục) republished it in two volumes (Trần Văn Chánh 184-241). In this famous work, Nguyễn Văn Trung insisted on the social responsibility of authors, who must bear the mission of prophets of their time, public educators and soul engineers; writing is an act of engaging with and influencing reality. Trung particularly emphasized that maintaining the nation (its language and soul) is the undisputable, unchangeable mission of literature -- literature can serve a government only when that government justifies the nation's fate as its existence. Seen as a nation's soul and a state's awareness, authors must take social criticism as their essential responsibility, Trung asserted. He defined writing as an act of resistance and authors as subversives or "trouble makers" (người quấy rối) of a society; "whenever authors and other intellectuals – representatives of national conscience and mind – raise their voices, they aim to attack political forces, particularly a government" (Volume 1 174), and "a nation-state can only exist and a government can only remain in power when it dares to recognize the role of intellectuals and writers – a role of annoying,

discomforting, and hindering [a regime], but a necessary role” (Volume 1 174).

Particularly, Trung affirmed that authors realize their social criticism through a literary tool that includes indirect, suggestive presentations. Literary language is always indirect; the unspoken is the target of the spoken, Trung believed. “*Voicing through ways of not speaking, or what is told is just a signal for what is not told*; indirect language is suggestive; it is a voice through silence” (Volume 1 5; emphasis is added). Leaning on Trung’s elaboration of the indirectness and the association of literature with society, it is possible to see that Indian figures in southern writing constitute “the spoken,” which conveys “the unspoken” -- anxiety and criticism about lingering social inequality and pauperization. The class struggle was not put in constitutional consideration until 1971, under Nguyễn Văn Thiệu’s regime.¹¹⁹

Strikingly, the indirectness, as Nguyễn Văn Trung asserts, “in the modern context” is not literary but political; the indirectness in the literature indicates a political problem of a regime. More specifically, the indirectness is particularly necessary when authors are forced to perceive reality in a specific way and are unable to present reality in any other ways. “Present-day time is special... new people are being born out of dramatic transformations of the awareness of nation, of state, of politics, of being a human and of the public population” (Volume 1 222), Trung wrote. He asserted that this time “lacks

¹¹⁹ Nguyễn Văn Thiệu in his *Message of the President of the Republic of Vietnam, Delivered at the Joint Session of the National Assembly, November 15, 1971* ([Saigon] [1971?]) asserted that the “recent” land reform was “a most progressive agrarian reform in the world... We were determined to abolish the land tenancy system to help millions of farmers acquire property” (4). In this message, Nguyễn Văn Thiệu addressed ongoing dependence on foreign aids in southern Vietnam as “unusual” and a “problem;” he called for “the urgent need raised for the economic policy which we have to pursue.” That economic policy, as Thiệu asserted, aimed to “build real economic value for the country in the spirit of self-sufficiency and self-support” (5).

basic conditions for the existence of literature" (Volume 1 221). What Trung implies in the "suggestive, indirect" term "basic condition" is the freedom of and respect for intellectuals under a regime; the real existence of literature, as Trung always believed, lies in its function as a form of social, political criticism. It is possible to see in Trung's elaborations of the literary indirectness some implicit attack on the contemporary regime that restrained intellectuals from realizing their role as necessary, useful "trouble makers." This implicit criticism also subtly emerges in Trung's description on the contemporary absence of literature that directly conveys anxieties, worries, and doubts of people about a reality being destroyed. The literature of his time, as Trung portrayed, is not about the "new" – the present – but remains creating the old – the past; writers live today but write "very yesterday" (Volume 1 221). Based on Trung's descriptions, it is possible to speculate that the old metaphor of the "bloodsucking Indian" -- an embodiment of the colonial past -- would better protect southern intellectuals from being seen as anti-government. At the same time, the traditional belief in the indirectness of writing must have allowed southern intellectuals to convey through Indian characters subtle criticisms of the economic problem in South Vietnam. Additionally, by making the Indians visible in the form of bloodsucking creatures, southern intellectuals must have aimed at provoking a public resentment about the incomplete democratic revolution of South Vietnam and the physical presence of Indian migrants in the country at that time.

During the Second Republic of Vietnam (1965-1975), public resentment towards the incompleteness of the democratic revolution was more legible and audible, resulting in constant and fervent uses of the bloodsucking Indian metaphor in public discourses. The

historical context that facilitated such constant and fervent uses includes attempts of Nguyễn Văn Thiệu to reform land and the national economy to ensure national sovereignty.¹²⁰ Particularly, complex relationships between India and the two Vietnamese states also led to the fervent emergence of the metaphor of bloodsucking Indians in the southern public in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. As a postcolonial state and as a member of the International Commission for Supervision and Control, the Indian government generally favored Hồ Chí Minh's government and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam against the French, the Republic of Vietnam and the United States (Roberts, "India," 530-531; Thakur and Thayer 234-236). Moreover, the Indian government's international relations with China, the Soviet Union, and the United States in matters related to "the liberation" of Bangladesh and "the War with Pakistan" in the early 1970s must have affected its relationship with the two Vietnamese governments. At the United Nations in 1970, India, as usual, demanded the withdrawal of U.S troops from Vietnam. Since 1971, India sided more with China and the USSR for "the problem" of Bangladesh and Pakistan,¹²¹ which led to the Indian government's support of North Vietnam.¹²² Reactions of South Vietnam towards diplomatic improvements between

¹²⁰ See footnote 119

¹²¹ Bộ ngoại giao, Việt Nam cộng hòa. "Bảng liệt kê tài liệu tham khảo về các vấn đề do bộ ngoại giao đệ trình tại Hội đồng Tổng trưởng," August 9, 1974

¹²² The first action indicating the Indian government's positive will to North Vietnam was the invitation of Nguyễn Thị Bình and representatives of PRG to visit India in 1970. Nguyễn Thị Bình was the minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of North Vietnam-led Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam (PRG). This government, observed by the Republic of Vietnam, included "more than 80% of communists and almost communist officials settling in the Republic Vietnam." The PRG was the changed name of NLF, which organized the Tết offensive. Nguyễn Thị Bình was la leader of NLF and later PRG. (Read the Diplomatic Note, July 22, 1970 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sent to the Indian Consular in Saigon). The other event that worsened the relationship between RVN and India was

India and North Vietnam were literally violent (Thakur and Thayer 237; Das 37-70). The Vietnamese government issued a series of policies to limit the Indians' business in Vietnam;¹²³ fervent public violence arose against the Indian community throughout the southern provinces (Box 2).

These protests highlighted the migrating status of the Indian population in the country's quest of national homogeneity – a constant ideology of nation-building of South Vietnam. More importantly, these protests attacked the contemporary government's incomplete economic redistribution through the recurrence of the bloodsucking Indian metaphor in petitions, reports, letters and even slogans. A letter dated July 27, 1972 by students and young people of “Ủy ban thanh niên Việt Nam Ái quốc chống nhà cầm quyền Ấn Độ” (The committee of patriotic Vietnamese youth against the Indian government), for instance, addresses that the Indian population received “hospitality and gentleness of Vietnamese people”: they own “huge amount of land” and many other economic resources while “doing nothing for,” “contributing nothing to,” and “sacrificing nothing for” “Vietnam.” The letter apparently provided the public with very concrete meanings of the status of those Indian migrants as colonial bloodsuckers or vampires: those Indians only care about enriching themselves; they are

in 1972, the Indian governmental administration issued a decision to upgrade the Indian Consulate to Indian Embassy in North Vietnam.

¹²³ Since 1966, Indian diaspora became a more direct target of the revised Decree 53 which addressed that money lending was banned. The letter, dated October 27, 1966, by the Economic Department of Saigon, analyzed that money lending by the Indian people badly exploited poor people, offering the Department of Trading to stop giving the migrants permission to run this business. On November 7, 1966, the Economic Department, again, emphasized the worthlessness of Indian pawnshops, suggesting that Vietnam had budget enough to open popular pawnshops fulfilling money borrowing demands of mass people" (Document 1483/SKT/ [?]).

only busy with collecting interests off leasing lands, houses and money; they sell “green” and “red” USD notes; in general, they only exploit Vietnam’s economy. These capital accumulations were seen by the Vietnamese students as bloody exploitation with a further justification that the current wealth and independence of Vietnam were grown with flesh and blood sacrifices by many native men and women.¹²⁴ Moreover, slogans that call for the Indian government to stop siding with North Vietnam were also filled with the colonial metaphor of the greedy Indian migrants. In Vũng Tàu province, one hundred Vietnamese veterans and children raised six slogans requiring the government to "nationalize the property of the Indians in Vietnam" and asking "compatriots to stop paying the land lease and loan interest to the Indians" and to completely "boycott all business activities of the Indians."¹²⁵ These justifications while providing a material image of the Indian migrants sucking blood of the Vietnamese population disclose the unchanging economic inequality of postcolonial Vietnam compared to colonial Vietnam.

It is striking that slogans and letters of southern intellectuals are filled with Marxist-Leninist class-struggle views. In 1972, in a letter to the President Nguyễn Văn Thiệu, Phạm Giật Đức, a representative of the Farm Federal Union and the chairperson of the Committee against Land Exploitation of Gia Định province, addressed Indians as "landlords," a member of "the class of capitalist landlords." Another letter from the Provisional Committee of Propaganda to Establish the Association of Victims of

¹²⁴Fonde Phủ thủ tướng. Biểu tình và gây hấn tại Tòa tổng lãnh sự Ấn Độ tại Sài Gòn và ,Ấn Kiều ở các tỉnh xin bảo vệ an ninh năm 1970.Number 20601.National Center of Archive 2

¹²⁵ The letter dated July 27, 1972, by the President of Vũng Tàu to the General Minister of the Ministry of Domestic Affairs in Saigon

Overseas Indians, under the Party of Workers and Farmers of Vietnam, also asked the government to seize Indians' property. In a letter to the Cabinet Director, dated January 21, 1972, the committee openly promoted the slogan "Viet Land belongs to Vietnamese people and property of cunning and rude Indians should be Vietnamized." Noticeably, the letter's analytic language discloses colonial echoes in the contemporary public imagination of the Indian migrants: this Indian population imitates the French colonial regime by directly obtaining property, land and houses of the Vietnamese nation and using cunning schemes of heavy money lending to occupy the property of others. "They live prosperous lives on the back of blood and bone and wretched miseries of the Vietnamese compatriots." The repeated bloody images of Indians in the passage reveal that capital and land redistribution was not taken up effectively. It appears that the public resentment about lingering economic inequality leaned on the political tension between RVN and India. And, as traditionally occurred, the colonial figure of Indians was taken up and was seen as politically safe but effective enough to bring up in the public eyes the democratic goals of the national revolution.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ This cry was composed at the committee's office at 14 Lê Văn Duyệt, Saigon. The committee's members included deputies, congressmen, professors and labor union officials. This letter was filled with nationalist sentiments:

In politic aspect: the Indian people, in the name of "the International Committee" in Vietnam expressed their arrogance, looking down at the national pride of the Republic of Vietnam. The Indians did not complete their mission but delved more deeply into political imbalances, rudely trampled on the pride of the Vietnamese people of a nation-state, which was in favor of freedom and democracy. The Indian people disgraces bone and blood of many people who sacrificed their lives for the freedom and the nation on the Viet land. This is the time when the Vietnamese nation is no longer more tolerant, willingly uncovering all foxy and evil conspiracies of the Indian diasporas in Vietnam.

Actually, land reform and the associated class struggle were not initiated until the early 1970s when Nguyễn Văn Thiệu upheld policies to redistribute land and other social property. The letter issued on February 11 by Bộ Nội vụ (Ministry of Domestic Affairs) is indicative of the rising concerns about the government's interests in poor classes. This letter suggested the General of Minister Cabinet should be more serious and effective in limiting Indians' land ownership to realize the so-called "tillers' land ownership." The letter detailed: in current years, renters of Indians' land have expressed their interest in "privatizing the renting land" to become "owners of the land" that they have been renting...so that "tillers could own field lands." Similarly, the Ministry of Finance, in April 5, 1972 letter, also reminded the General Secretary that the policy of "tillers' land ownership" had not yet been applied to Indian landlords. The appearance of Indian landlords and capitalists in *Tình anh Bảy Chà*, a "tuồng cải lương" (classical opera) play written in 1971 by the famous playwright Xuân Phát conforms to Nguyễn Văn Thiệu's attempts' to reform the national economy. The play, performed by Dạ Lý Hương troupe, was launched on the South Vietnam Television on Sunday night, July 25, 1971.¹²⁷ Xuân Phát's construction of the character of Bảy Chà completely relies on the colonial metaphor of bloodsucking Indians: "Bảy Chà "is a heavy moneylender and a cunning, money-thirsty landlord, who lends his land to a female native landlord, Mrs. Ba, who then constructs houses for lease; most renters are poor laborers; they have lived on "Bảy Chà"'s land for generations. The play climaxes when "Bảy Chà" and Mrs. Ba plot to root

¹²⁷ I use the "text" *Tình anh bảy chà*" published by Lang Van Production (Westminster, 2005). Most stars of the performance are cải lương artists who migrated to the U.S; Diệp Lang played the role of Bảy Chà. The first artist played the role of Bảy Chà was Thành Được: unfortunately, I was not able to find the first performance of the play.

up all of the renters to build up high buildings for companies and foreigners to accumulate more capital; the renters collapse into a miserable condition: they have been in debt, hungry and sick for a long time, and now they are being forced to be homeless. The play ends in an event that signifies the possibility for capital redistribution: under pressure from his son, who is in love with a young local renter, “Bảy Chà” has to agree to take care of his future in-laws. The play is in tune with rising public concerns and hopes around Nguyễn Văn Thiệu’s economic reform policy, which might bring land to impoverished classes. Put it differently, southern intellectuals make the Indians visible, frequently in the form of bloodsucking beings, in attempts of highlighting the form of colonial exploitation remaining in Vietnam; in doing so, southern intellectuals practice social criticism – a work of those who see themselves as the minds and the conscience of the nation.

The presence of Indians as imagined enemies of class and national revolutions of the Vietnamese population is embodied in the way that these figures are attacked by native characters. In the novel *Tâm sự cô gái mù* (1969) by An Khê, the image of an Indian moneylender is filled with details associated with the bloodsucker metaphor. This Indian moneylender wanders around the city every day collecting interest and debts from borrowers; most pubs and shops in the city are in the hands of the Indians’ debtors. Another character in the story is a blind woman who tries to prevent her husband from having outside affairs. One day, she violently grasps and beats a person in a pub who, she thinks, must be her husband’s lover. Then, the victim pulls her hands back, yelling in a “Chà và debt collecting tone” (Chà và đi đòi nợ): “Hey Ram, this woman is very rude.

Extremely black Brother Bảy is sitting here; do not you have eyes to see that you are just constantly beating at anh Bảy?" A similar accident appears in the novel *Con Thúy: truyện dài* (Saigon: Tuổi Ngọc, 1972) by Duyên Anh. The novel's setting is the newly independent Vietnam, when the whole population of Thái Bình, a northern province, is seething with the return of the French in the support of British-Indian troops. At that time, the population everywhere, including Thái Bình province, completely trusted Ho Chi Minh's government, which led to revolutionary triumph. As depicted, the children of Kiến Xương, a district of Thái Bình, perceive anti-colonialist propaganda from the central government of Hồ Chí Minh in Hanoi. Their mood changes, either to hatred or to love, completely in accordance with calls from Hanoi. One day, the children learn that the British troops in Saigon include Indian soldiers and they really want to join battles to fight against these enemies. As a form of fulfilling the dreamlike wants of beating the invading troops, the children suddenly attack the Indian textile sellers nearby. In a minute, the Indian textile sellers, who have lived peacefully in the village for years, are seen to be associated with the Indian troops -- the invaders, the nation's enemy. The children throw stones at Indian shops; they beat Indian children. While attacking the Indians, the children "imagine that they are in southern battles [fighting against Indian British troops]" (104). The accidents that happened to the Indian characters in the two novels show that the invisibility of the Indians is made exclusively with the aim of promoting southern intellectuals' responsibility as the minds and conscience of their nation: they present the presence of the Indians to provoke and construct a public awareness about the incompleteness in the class revolution and even in the national

revolution. The Indians do not form the ultimate subjects of Vietnamese narrators; instead, they only appear in the form of imagined targets in the quest for the national sovereignty by southern intellectuals, given that the metaphor -- indirect presentation -- is always a politically and literarily needed tool that Vietnamese intellectuals use to realize their national responsibility. This is to say that, despite many “chà và,” “tây đen” or “sét-ty” characters -- Indians that are described following the formula of bloodsucking Indian metaphor -- the actual Indians are still absent in southern writing. Moreover, these literary Indian characters embody southern intellectuals and administrators' invisibilization of the actual presence of the Indians remaining in South Vietnam; audiences could no way obtain a “first hand” experience about these actual Indians, instead, their perception of these Indians is potentially driven by and through the dominant visibility of metaphoric bloodsucking Indians.

2. “Chà gác đản” (Guardian chà): Struggles against the U.S.’s New Form of Colonialism

The construction of Indian characters in southern writing undeniably implies national allegories. In other words, the quest for the Vietnamese national sovereignty remains the central theme in the image of Indian migrants in literary works of southern authors. Bình Nguyễn Lộc (1914-1987) is the frankest about this theme in his depiction of an Indian character. Bình Nguyễn Lộc is a senior author, who trained many young southern writers about writing skills; he is also a prolific author: until 1966, Bình Nguyễn Lộc published 820 short stories and dozens of long stories. Bình Nguyễn Lộc is also famous for his

passion for writing the origin of Vietnamese nation (Võ Phiến, *Văn học Miền Nam*, Vol. 3515). Literature and personality of Bình Nguyên Lộc in southern literature, as evaluated by the contemporary literary, political critic and writer Mai Thảo, form “the most complacent phase once existing in our literature” (*Chân dung mười lăm nhà văn* 62). In one of his novels, *Hoa Hậu Bò Đào: tiểu thuyết* (Saigon: Xuân Thu, 1963), Bình Nguyên Lộc constructs the character of a mixed Indian girl largely to promote the value of Vietnamese nationalism. The novel centers on two poor young, beautiful girls, Hiếu and Hoàng, who are gradually spoiled in industrialized Saigon. Hiếu is a Vietnamese girl, born to a family of typing worker; Hoang is a daughter of a bankrupted Indian cow milk supplier. The sisterhood of the two girl centers on a betting game: who can maintain her virginity in living in modernizing Saigon. The novel ends in Hiếu's and Hoàng's surrender to the circumstance, they give up their chastity: being unable to get a job, the two beautiful girls follow men for money. The constructed sisterhood reflects not only the rising impoverishment in modernized Saigon but also displays the sovereign image of the Vietnamese nation. While Hoàng experiments the Vietnamese national sovereignty, Hiếu plays the role of a controller who teaches Hoàng about that sovereignty. In two scenes of this novel, Hoàng introduces her identity, through which the narrative promotes the Vietnamese identity. In the first scene, when the two girls first meet, Hoàng introduces her name as Bi with the comment: “when I was small, people call me Bi. Bi is a noun of *us* (ta) to name all young Indians, do you know?” (29, emphasis is added). Apparently not waiting for the audience's interpretation, the narrative implies his nationalist sentiment in the voice of Hiếu: “naturally, Hiếu loves her friend because of the

sound of the emotional 'ta,' Hoàng knows her background but is determined to follow Việt [Vietnam]. That is why she uses the word 'ta'" (29). In the second scene, Hiếu corrects Hoàng when she talks bad about the Vietnamese nation. Hoàng sees her national pride in coupling with an old, rich married Vietnamese man: Indian men spend a lot of money on Vietnamese women, thus, Indian women must take as much as possible money from Vietnamese men's pocket to revenge. Reacting to this anti-Vietnamese resentment, Hiếu reminds Hoàng not to touch upon "nation" and advises her to play the role of a bridge connecting the two nations. Hoàng's discussion about her national identity instrumentally forms the ground out of which the nationalist voice, embodied in the image of Hiếu, occurs. The novel of Bình Nguyên Lộc provides one example of the association of Vietnamese nationalism with literary constructions of the Indian migrant: the Indian migrant images are constructed to highlight the dominance of Vietnamese identity in the figure of the Vietnamese nation-states. In other words, making the Indians visible in Vietnamese writing primarily aims at emphasizing such national dominance.

And for this dominance, Xuân Phát constructs the Indian figure that starts to disappear into Vietnamese society. In other words, his play denotes a coming evanescence of the Indian identity in the covering forceful Vietnamese identity. To illustrate, in the play, "Bảy Chà" keeps missing his beloved Vietnamese wife in addition to practicing Vietnamese cultural traditions (having Buddhist statue, praying ancestor altar and using incenses). His son, Tam bi, abandons him and stands on the same side with local laborers. And, as mentioned, in the end, "Bảy Chà" sacrifices his capital accumulation to save the future in-law family. All these details aim at signifying that the

Indians' economic power and their ethnicity as a race would disappear in the face of Vietnamese nationalism. The most convincing literary image that conveys Indians fading away is "Chà gác đan" or "chà và gác cửa/công" (Indian guardians) – the second haunting Indian figure in southern Vietnamese writing. This figure forms one of the central subjects in writings of the most three prolific, wide-read authors of South Vietnam: Thanh Tâm Tuyền (1936-2006), Duyên Anh/Vũ Mộng Long (1935-1997) and Vũ Khắc Khoan (1917-1986).¹²⁸

Duyên Anh published his first novel in 1964; until mid-1975, he had published not less than 50 novels in addition to a number of journalist essays (Võ Phiến, *Văn học Miền Nam* (Volume 1) 659-670). Different from Duyên Anh, Thanh Tâm Tuyền did not write much. Nevertheless, he is a special author: any publication of him stirred long, strong, quick reactions from the audience; his writings usually haunt audiences for a very long time (Võ Phiến, *Văn học Miền Nam* (Volume 3) 1403-10). The two authors were born in Northern provinces and migrated to the South in 1954. They belong to the third literary flow in South Vietnam - the flow of petty bourgeois and political theorists. This flow includes northern authors who migrated to the South after 1954. The second group contains pure southern authors, who were low-class people or high-class intellectuals,

¹²⁸ Indian guardian character also appears in Mai Thảo (1927-1998) with *Sau khi bão tới: truyện dài* (1968) and *Bản chú thư trên ngọn đỉnh trời, tập truyện* (1965), Nguyễn Lan Ngọc (1930-2007) with *Đường hay Pháo đài* (1969), Z.28/Bùi Anh Tuấn (?-?) with *Một Vụ Đánh Cắp Tài Liệu Nguyên Tử: tiểu thuyết trinh thám* (1965) and Sơn Nam (1926-2008) with *Người bạn triệu phú* (1971). In *Sau hi bão tới: truyện dài*, the image of Indian guardian is deadly immovable: in the night time, at the ladder of a collective building, the Indian quietly sat and tiredly slept like a cold statue. This image is in tune with the theme of lonely, failing young intellectuals who are aware of social dangers of prevailing western consumerism but fail to escape it. In *Người bạn triệu phú*, "chà gác đan" is an Indian guardian of a good storage near Saigon river; he is responsible for guiding customers to have a look in the storage.

presenting democratic values originated from the French revolution. The first group includes authors from the North and the Centre migrating to the South before 1954; they are inclined to present political revolutions and social freedoms (Nguyễn Vy Khanh, “Văn học Miền Nam tự do”).

Different from bloodsucking Indian money-lenders, Indian guardians, portrayed by the authors, are all destitute, neglected and inferior. In the short story "Người gác cổng" (1966) by Thanh Tâm Tuyền, the Indian guardian of a vehicle garage in Saigon is miserable: gambling for extra money, smoking old, smelly cigarettes and sleeping in the garage. The greatest misery of this character is the loneliness, or in different words, the social disintegration. As described, this fifty-year-old man has migrated to Vietnam for more than thirty years but he has had sex only once, which is with a prostitute. The man keeps dreaming about the intimacy although he is aware that he has to pay to have it. The desire for intimacy is not purely sexually oriented. Instead, it is the desire of being cared for. The narration goes on: when the young girl enters in his sleeping place, he does not rape her; instead, he just wants to smell her body; he only begs her to permit him to lie next to her. The ending of the story symbolizes the totally isolated status of this Indian man: finding out her boyfriend looking for her, the girl runs away from the Indian man. She tells her boyfriend that she did not voluntarily enter the Indian man's place; instead, she was forced to do so. Thus, the young boy beats the Indian man to death. To avoid law's punishment, the young boy plots to create a real raping case: he forces the girlfriend to throw her bra on the dead Indian body. The next event, untold but predictable, is the public loath over this Indian man: the Indian guardian rapes the woman, and he deserves

to die. The story symbolically closes in the end – the collapse of supposedly powerful, masculine Indians – and, the rising domination of the locals.

Other examples of the isolated, collapsed Indian guardians are from the novels *Áo vọng tuổi trẻ* (Saigon: Mai Anh, 1964) and *Nước mắt lưng tròng* (1971) by Duyên Anh. The Indian guardian in *Áo vọng tuổi trẻ* is particularly fragile. He is the guardian of Paris Bank, which is targeted by a group of gypsies in Saigon in a scheme to rob the bank. The Indian guardian, as constructed, writes some Indian letters on the ground at the gate while he is on duty; he is ignorant about the ongoing robbery inside the bank. Hearing the shooting sound, the Indian guardian immediately runs away; in the end, he is shot and fall down. But that is in the narrative's description. In media, as described, the Indian man easily collapses with only one very light hit from one robber. Not being fragile as such, the Indian guardian in *Nước mắt lưng tròng* acts like a killing machine, which also suggest their easily being knocked down. The three Indian guardians work for the governmental police; they guard the city prison. They all, as depicted, are the most skillful in torture art; they passionately torture detainees. More than that, torture is also their entertainment: the three Indian guardians feel pleasure seeing their victims' pains and howls, happily hearing victims' cries. However, it is because of these insensible characteristics that the Indians collapse. Thinking that all detainees are powerless and stupid, one Indian guardian confidently goes to the prison house by himself. As soon as he enters the house, the door closes and he faces a crowd of detainees, who are all gangsters and belong to one group. In a second, the guardian is beaten to death. Not only being beaten, the Indians are seen as being marginal to human society in general and

Vietnam in particular. As described, they are not more than the dregs of a modernized society: they cannot speak a civilized Vietnamese language. Whenever they open their mouths, curses come out. They spew saliva intensively, automatically and amusingly. Slang phrases such as “You are such an urchin!” (ôn con!) and “Scram!” (cút đi!), fill the foul-mouths of these Indians. They are fluent in the argot of uneducated and underground people in Saigon, most of whom either wander around streets of Saigon or go to jail (18).¹²⁹

Even more, the Indian guardian character in the drama *Những người không chịu chết* [People do not want to die] (Saigon: An Tiêm, 1972) by Vũ Khắc Khoan is a dying human being, a man of losses and failures. In this play, the Indian guardian embodies the collapsing phase in the life of the supposedly prosperous Indians. Vũ Khắc Khoan is the most important contributor to the development of Southern drama genre before 1975; he himself is the entire Southern drama from 1954 to 1975 (Võ Phiến, *Hai mươi năm văn học Miền Nam* 303; Võ Phiến, *Văn học Miền Nam Tùy bút Kịch* 2745). *Những người không chịu chết* is one of the major plays of Võ Khắc Phiến; it was staged first in 1970 at Viện Đại học Đà Lạt, one of the performance education institutes in South Vietnam. The play is set in a clothes store in a shopping mall located at the Center of Saigon. Main characters of the play are outlawed persons: a young, parentless, homeless Vietnamese

¹²⁹ Vương Hồng Sển describes his good impression about Indian guardian depicted in the memoir *Hơn nửa đời hư* (1992): when he stays at Chợ Rẫy hospital, one Indian guardian donates blood for him. However, when he expresses his gratitude, the Indian man says that he thinks that Sển is a high-profile official and as normal, he and another guardian are assigned to donate blood. Additionally, the Indian said, he already drinks all good wines of Sển while Sển cannot eat, so it is reasonable that he would give blood back to Sển (909).

jailbreaker; a mentally ill, motherless, homeless mixed Indian girl; and the lonely Indian guardian. The two Indian characters symbolize the collapsing, dying stage of the Indian migrants. Specifically, the Indian man is bankrupt because he offers his beautiful Vietnamese wife countless valuable gifts in exchange for her true love. The bankruptcy of the Indian man is even more critical when he lingers on constant fear and guilt of his accidental involvement in killing his wife: enraged at his wife having an affair, the Indian man hits her and not long after that, she dies. Although no one knows the truth about the cause of his wife's death, he is aware of the vulnerability of his freedom. This vulnerability is suggested in the scene where sounds of police jeep cars appear in concurrence with the Indian man's confession to his daughter about his wife's violent death. The secret presence of the jailbreaker in the scene also implies the not-yet-revealed illegality of the Indian guardian. The collapse of the Indian guardian is particularly critical with the occurrence of his daughter, a mixed Indian girl who is filled with the bitterness of being excluded by both Indian and Vietnamese people and with desperation for love and care from others. She reminds his father that both of them are rejected not only by Vietnamese but also Indians. This reminder highlights the inescapable, unsolvable guilt and loss of the Indian guardian man: he will never find a community to lean on to ease his regret and to retain his dignity. In addition to the characters, the setting of the play also emphasizes the desolate condition of the Indian guardian, who only appears in dead darkness; he, as described, constantly "alone silently walks at midnight along the long, deep balcony of the mall" (37); at midnight, he walks slowly and steadily, always with head down, habitually shaking the keys "while rain drops on

the metal roof” (37). In the imagination of his daughter, the scene is like a dark, stuffy train tunnel in which the speedily running train will threaten the life of her father. More, the image of numerous mannequins surrounding the Indian character suggests the devastation of the Indian man. In general, the play highlights the ghostly death that lingers on the figure of the Indian guardian.

Undeniably, pictures of failed, descended Indian guardians in writings by Duyên Anh, Thanh Tâm Tuyền and Vũ Khắc Khoan – prominent southern intellectuals – reflect and confirm public hope for the disappearance of the powerful but hated bloodsucking Indians – symbols of colonial capitalists -- in Vietnamese society. This is likely also to be meant to signify a public expectation for a new phase of postcolonial Vietnamese history, which would be eventually covered up by Vietnamese identity and power.

One question needs to be asked here: these collapsing Indians are real or like the bloodsucking Indians, metaphoric/metonymic? The answer could be both: These created Indian figures concretely as well as symbolically mark the evanescence of rich, rude, calculating Indian migrants from southern Vietnam. This answer is a possibility particularly in the public knowledge of “chánh trị Mác xít” (Marxist politics) in Southern Vietnam. High school students were taught history and Marxism in the major “Chính trị phổ thông” (Basic Politics); here, class conflict and economic determinism were emphasized (Trần, Đức An 50-65). In the history major, analyses on Vietnamese society during the French domination were based on Marxist views of class: capitalism causes the conflict of “cần lao” (tillers) and “trung lưu, trường giả” (middle/high classes) in the

city; feudalism maintains the conflict between “bần nông, tá điền” (tillers) and “địa chủ” (landlords) (Trần Hữu Quang, *Việt sử và thế giới sử lớp đệ tứ* 46-51). Moreover, Marxism still ran through contemporary literary criticism and creation, emphases on literature as an objective reflection of reality -- the reality of class struggles -- appeared in textbooks, newspapers and literary criticism. For instance, in 1956, Thế Phong proposed to teach the Marxist literary group "Chân Trời mới" and "Tam Ích" in six classes on Vietnamese history in the period from 1930 to 1950 (Thế Phong, *Lược sử văn nghệ Việt Nam, Nhà văn tiền chiến 1930-1945, Phê bình* 23-30). Thế Phong worked for the Information Ministry in the First Republic and had been a soldier of the Department of Political War (Ministry of Air Force) until the Fall of Saigon. In his other publication, titled *Lược sử văn nghệ Việt Nam tổng luận 1900-1956* published in 1965, Thế Phong also provided debates about Marxist themes in the short story “Truyện năm người thanh niên” [Stories about Five Young Men] by Phạm Thái. Although Thế Phong was not explicitly inclined to support Marxism, his writing about the history of Vietnamese literary criticism and literature shows that this ideology has been wandering around among southern intellectuals.¹³⁰

The Marxist presence in South Vietnam is the most obviously described in *Lược Khảo văn học* by Nguyễn Văn Trung. In Volume 3, particularly, in the chapter “Phê bình xã hội” (Social Criticism), Nguyễn Văn Trung describes that Trương Tửu’s Marxism-led literary criticism was widely read among students in southern Vietnam, and even

¹³⁰ Trần Trọng Đăng Đàn in his *Văn học thực dân mới Mỹ ở Miền Nam những năm 1954-1975* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản sự thực, 1988) sees Thế Phong as a servant writer of the Republic regime.

more, many students took Trương Tuu's books as bedside companions. In this chapter, Nguyễn Văn Trung analyzes Marxist principles of criticizing literature, which largely focus on the decisive role of material reality towards ideology. Specifically, he encourages critics that they should historicize their literary subjects and authors, looking into writers' class point of view and delving into class conflicts in literary works. Vũ Hạnh (1926 -), the leading theorist of the movement, in *Tìm hiểu văn nghệ* [Understanding Arts and Writings] (1970), severely asserts that authors must reflect reality; writers and journalists share the common responsibility of serving the society (79). Nguyễn Văn Sâm, a professor in literature of Saigon University, insists on the theme of class struggles in numerous southern literary works in his graduate student textbooks including *Văn chương đấu tranh Miền Nam* (Saigon: Kỷ nguyên, 1968) and *Văn chương nam bộ và cuộc kháng Pháp (1945-1950)* (Saigon: Lửa thiêng, 1972). Particularly, in the latter, Nguyễn Văn Sâm asserts that national independence does not always guarantee the disappearance of exploitation and economic difference; the foreign colonialists go away, domestic colonialists remain. Citing many contemporary discussions about literature and nation in South Vietnam, Nguyễn Văn Sâm concludes that Vietnamese literature should never stay away from nation's fate-related issues and never stay indifferent to the voice of exploited population. Many more other southern journals such as *Hành Trình* (1963) *Tin văn* (1966), *Đất Nước* (1967), *Tin Sáng* (1968) and *Đổi Diện* (1969) and *Trình Bày* (1970) share similar Marxist arguments on reality (of a nation) and literature.¹³¹ Duyên Anh, Thanh Tâm Tuyền and Vũ Khắc Khoan do not

¹³¹ This might indicate the rising infiltration of North Vietnam into South Vietnam, which is the

explicitly talk about Marxist echoes in their works; and in present-day mainstream Vietnamese history, these authors are seen as nationally betraying, hack writers, who ignore “class struggles” of the masses while selectively focusing on adventurous, luxurious petty bourgeois’ mentality. From this mainstream view, these authors supported the Republic’ free-class cultural policies that aimed at alleviating economic disparity and political conflicts in southern Vietnam (Trần Trọng Đăng Đàn 28-118; Trần Thục Nga 89-90).¹³² It is also true that the writing careers of the three authors grew out of contemporary rising professionalization of literary creativity¹³³ and increasing freedom

central theme by Nguyễn Văn Thiệu in his speeches since 1968 such as the one welcoming journal directors for meal on January 15, 1968 (Tổng thống Nguyễn Văn Thiệu và vấn đề chiến tranh hay hòa bình: diễn văn của Tổng thống Nguyễn Văn Thiệu đọc nhân buổi cơm. Saigon: Ministry of Information and the Directorate of Press of the Presidency, 1968) and the message to North Vietnam on December 12, 1972 (*Message of the President of the Republic of Vietnam Delivered at the Joint Session of the National Assembly*. Saigon: ?, 1972).

¹³² These mainstream authors see South Vietnam's western ideologies and characters such as existentialism, Fraud, hedonism, nationalism, "return to the origin" or "return to the nation's cultural tradition" belong to the Republic regime's scheme of driving public mind away from the most important nationalist objective: unifying the nation and realizing economic reform. Even the exploration of scholarship about archeology, history, and Sino-Chinese literature in the early 1970s, as seen, have been realized and published under the U.S aid and the Thiệu regime's growing scheme of drawing supports of intellectuals.

According to the critics Nguyễn Vy Khanh, the mentioned authors belong to the group of writers specializing in urban-related themes; their works met aesthetic views and lives of urban classes such as students, teachers and youth <http://www.namkyluctinh.com/a-tgtpham/nvkhanh/nvkhanh-ankhe.pdf>

¹³³ *Văn hữu* (1959-1963), a monthly journal of the Department of Culture (Ministry of Information), issued a special volume (5-1960) about “Phát triển văn hóa dân tộc.” This volume contains a series of articles and news about activities of improving productions and consumption of literature. These activities include government aids (through prizes, Credit Fund of Culture (Quỹ Văn hóa tín dụng)) and library establishments in every small town. Particularly, examples from how France improved the industry of literature were taken into account of most articles in the series.

Duyên Anh, in his memoir *Nhìn lại những bến bờ: Hồi ký văn nghệ* (Los Alamitos, CA: Xuân Thu, 1988), tells that he once dreamt that his publishing royalty would give him enough money for coffee. Duyên Anh’s novels about giang hồ (beatnik) were the contemporary best sellers. Duyên Anh took famous characters in reality to construct the world of beatnik, which would make his writing more salable. For example, the novel, *Điệu rũ nước mắt* (1965), takes Đại Cathay, the very well-known beatnik in contemporary Saigon, as a model. This novel later was transformed into a movie (Nguyễn Hồng Lam. *Người của giang hồ: truyện ký*. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản công an nhân dân, 2004, 137-139).

for journalism.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, it is also not less than true that Duyên Anh, Thanh Tâm Tuyền and Vũ Khắc Khoan strived to provoke in the public mind concerns about the impoverished classes' material struggles and particularly the nation-state's associated struggles for the ethnic and economic sovereignty, as will be discussed in the following.

First, the collapsed Indian figures function both as metaphor and metonym of the rising formation of "du đấng" (beatniks), a newly pauperized class in the South in the 1960s¹³⁵ (Nguyễn Hiến Lê 30-50; Võ Phiến, *Văn học miền Nam* (volume 1) 659-670; Nguyễn Hồng Lam 5-18).¹³⁶ The collapsing Indian characters share common characters of "du đấng": they are all unrestrained in having sex, drinking wine, using opium, robbing and killing. Moreover, the two are similarly homeless, parentless, and criminal and are eventually killed. In this so-called Marxist way of reading, the descending, failing

¹³⁴ Aid from and economic exchanges with the U.S improve material lives of the urban population, resulting in growing demands of newspapers and novels for leisure. The resulting publishing capital expanded; more and more individuals ran private publishing houses. Specifically, newspaper rise from the number of 9 under Diệm regime to 40 in 1964. Nguyễn Khánh issued the journalist Laws 2-65 and 10-64 that allowed all legal parties and individuals to run publishing houses. Particularly, Nguyễn Văn Thiệu issued Law 019/69 about Journalist Regulation (*Quy chế báo chí*) on December 30, 1969, eliminated Nguyễn Khánh's law points of censorship and predetermined capital. Every individual can run newspaper printing as long as they made report legally. Additionally, the law decides that closing a printing house must be brought to court not simply through fine. Consequently, printing industries developed the most in the period from 1965 onward (Bùi Công Hùng 268-305).

¹³⁵ The English translation is from Vị Hoài in "Hồ sơ thanh niên cao bồi thế giới" (*Văn hữu*, June 1960; p. 9.) This article provides names of du đấng in other countries, e.g. in England was "Teddy boys," France was Blousons Noirs or J3, in Poland was Houligans, in Germany was Demi-Sels and in Sweden was Raggare.

¹³⁶ Nguyễn Hiến Lê, *Hồi ký Nguyễn Hiến Lê, những nội dung bị kiểm duyệt*. The book is published online on September 15, 2015. The author of the dissertation accessed this book on books google on December 6, 2015, but has not been able to access it since late March 2016. This book is not available in print form.

Indian characters symbolize the struggle and rise of impoverished classes in southern Vietnam.

But in a more allegorical way of reading, this symbolic reference to the collapsing Indians and impoverished population of Vietnam is undeniably nationalist: presentations of Chà guardian indeed derived from southern intellectuals' anxiety about ongoing foreign intervention to South Vietnam and particularly cultural, social destructions caused by so-called America's "chủ nghĩa thực dân mới" (neo-colonialism) in South Vietnam. To be short, fragile, collapsed "Chà gác dan" is a symbol of the fragile, vulnerable figure of the Vietnamese nation, given that foreign products and businesses still dominated the national economy of South Vietnam. Contemporary intellectuals were aware that South Vietnam faced a rising "chủ nghĩa thực dân mới:" it depended on the United States and other foreign countries. More specifically, in 1964, Nguyễn Văn Trung published a long article analyzing what he called "chủ nghĩa thực dân mới" in the South. Trung explained that the term meant the continuity of South Vietnam's dependence on foreign businesses and aids. The author described: all southerners in the mornings turn on the light and wash their teeth while electricity and water are supplied by "a colonial company." More, all imported cars operate with American "ét xăng" (essence); all houses are rented or bought from "chà và"; all beer, wine and beverage pervading cities and rural areas are foreign branches; salaries are from American aid. According to this famous professor, this dependence is indicative of that the South is not fully independent

and such would threaten to the national sovereignty.¹³⁷ Even contemporary textbooks suggested the public awareness of the colonial nature of American aid in Saigon. Nguyễn Khắc Ngữ and Phạm Đình Tiểu in the textbook in geography for the 11th class *Địa lý Việt Nam (Dùng cho lớp mười một)* by (Saigon: Cơ sở xuất bản sử địa, [1969]) points out that the U.S finances Vietnam but in return the Vietnamese population is forced to buy foreign products that were recommended by the U.S. Moreover, dominance of the U.S supplies in essential goods such as wheat, cooking oil, paper etc., led to the contemporary critical collapse of agricultural commodities, particularly, rice quantity, in Southern Vietnam. What kept the southern intellectuals concerned the most about this economic dependence is that it resulted in cultural, social destruction of South Vietnam.

Ngô Đình Diệm's dedication to the construction of an Asiatic figure of the Vietnamese nation was indeed a reaction to growing consumerism in American products and "lối sống Mỹ" (American living style), supposed consequences of the U.S's economic intervention to South Vietnam. The evidence is that in the late 1950s, while giving speeches in international political stages, Ngô Đình Diệm constantly expressed his concerns about "the West" that has shaken the traditional coherence of the Vietnamese people (Bouscaren 77-85; Jacob, *America's Miracle Man* 253-62; Ngô Đình Diệm, *President Ngo Dinh Diem on Asia*). In memories of exiled southern intellectuals, the continuing U.S's involvement in modernizing the South also led to the emergence of drug

¹³⁷ Nguyễn Văn Trung. "Từ sự thất bại của các đảng phái quốc gia đến sự phá sản của tầng lớp trưởng giả thành thị trong vai trò lãnh đạo cách mạng xã hội trước áp lực thống trị của những chủ nghĩa thực dân mới." *Hành trình* Volume 1. October 1964. 4-36.

addiction, violent music, porn movies, striptease, gambling, and prostitute business – a lifestyle of “wild horses” (Võ Phiến, *Hai mươi năm văn học Miền Nam* 203-205).

And, the "du đặng" class embodies the best those depriving aspects of the "American lifestyle," the alleged symbol of a "modernized," "Americanized" society (Trần Trọng Đăng Đàn 90-97; Võ Phiến, *Hai mươi năm văn học Miền Nam* 203-205). Not only later opposite narratives but also contemporary mainstream documents of RVN itself criticized, despite in subtle ways, “chủ nghĩa thực dân mới” of the United States manifested in the rising, pervading “du đặng” class. Take *Văn hữu*, the monthly journal of the Department of Culture (Ministry of Information), as one example. The June 1960 volume provided a series of articles about "du đặng" among Vietnamese youth. In addition to a long introduction about the formation of "du đặng" in some western countries, the volume contained criticisms about American lifestyle, the modernity, embodiment of "neo-colonialism". Trúc Sơn described American beatniks, who choose to live underground to avoid exploitation and injustice of civilized societies. Trúc Sơn gave his “du đặng” subject a voice to express discontent with contemporary America: “when savage people occur at the margin of a civilizing society, this must have meant that the society itself has something insecure” (Trúc Sơn 41). Particularly, most articles addressed American intervention as the main cause of the emergence of this savage class in Vietnam. As pointed out by Nguyễn Khắc Hoạch, growing impoverishment plays a role in the growth of “du đặng” class. However, the essential reason lies in the incompatibility between speedily growing individualist “lối sống Mỹ” and retaining Confucianist beliefs in values of family and community. The growing American cultural

products including newspapers, movies and novels covered the minds of people in the South with beliefs in individual-oriented lifestyle. The conflict between modernity and tradition, as described, usually happens in families whose members have a career and education in the U.S. (Nguyễn Khắc Hoạch 61-76). In general, the article suggests that “du đặng” is the symbol and the product of America’s neo-colonialism in the way that “du đặng” members are the best consumers of American products and the best embodiments of the so-called American selfishness, the greatest danger to Vietnam’s sovereignty, thus the most beneficial to the American colonization: du đặng people do not care about nation-related matters but solely individual-related pleasures. They are “voluntary slaves” (người nô lệ tự nguyện), “proud slaves” (người nô lệ kiêu hãnh) and “mute and deaf bastards” (con hoang câm điếc) – a population without national pride and without awareness about threats from foreign troops (Trần Độ 11-29). Moreover, “du đặng,” the representative of bankrupted population, embodies what Võ Phiến describes as “làm rộng hơn phân biệt giai cấp” (increasingly widening class gap) in South Vietnam due to “the presence of the American people” (*Hai mươi năm văn học Miền Nam* 205). Võ Phiến, the most credible, prolific southern literary critic, claims that with the presence of American institutions, some associated Vietnamese people earned more than the others, which widened the existing gap between social classes and evoked more resentment among commoners. Consequently, traditional “óc bài ngoại” (anti-foreigner brain) of Vietnamese population was critically lost; many southern intellectuals were concerned about the rising phenomenon of “vong bản” (loss of origin) in Vietnamese society (*Hai mươi năm văn học Miền Nam* 203-206). In this historical context, “chà gác

dan” characters, presented as metonymical and metaphoric associates of du đấng characters, are used as a literary tool in the writings of Duyên Anh, Thanh Tâm Tuyền and Vũ Khắc Khoan to criticize cultural crises and economic disparity caused by growing American intervention.

Second, the collapsed Indian figures reflect an aspect of southern Vietnamese history during the Vietnam War: many powerful, wealthy Indians had to step down from dominating positions in businesses of Vietnam to give way to the locals. Not until the 1970s did the number of Indian residents in Southern Vietnam decline. Many Indians abandoned conferred Vietnam citizenship and returned to their country in the face of the government's law of "going to the battlefield" (đi lính).¹³⁸ In addition to that, taking up tradition of previous regimes,¹³⁹ the Republic of Vietnam constantly attempted to minimize the Indians' land and business occupation, leading the exodus of the Indians out of South Vietnam.¹⁴⁰ Not less critical is that the Indians disappear into the Vietnamese

¹³⁸ Vietnamese male citizens turned to 18 must join the national military (See documents 74565-BTP/HOV on December 30, 1966; 877-bTP/HOV, January 31, 1973; 3825-BTP/HOV on May 14, 1970; 3826-BTP/HOV on [May?] 24, 1970; 5895-BTP/HOV on July 20, 1970; 6060/BTP/HOV on July 27, 1970).

¹³⁹ See chapter 1, part 2

¹⁴⁰ The letter by DA addressed to the President Cabinet on April 10, 1972 exposed to the co-operations of different ministries in issuing laws to minimize the Indian people in the labor landscape of Vietnam. DA' agreed the Labor Ministry (LM)'s decision that "allowed the Indian people to immigrate to work in Vietnam" and "not extending work permit for temporary Indian residents in Vietnam." DA reported these decisions and its agreements to the Cabinet. The Cabinet quickly responded with agreements. (Number 156-PC1/1, dated April 12, 1972 and number 433-PTh.T/PC1/1-M on April 15, 1972). When coming to its turn, the LM wrote a letter to the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Finance on May 13, 1972 (Number 0722a/BLD/NNC). On the same day, it also wrote a letter to DA with the same content (Number 606-PTh.T/PC1/1-M) In addition to reporting decisions permitted by the President, LM asked to examine the existing labor law about the Indian diasporic workers in Vietnam. The law of not allowing immigrations and work permit extensions was only applicable to the Indian workers working at companies. They did not apply to those Indians who were owners, freelancers or even jobless. This "hole" would, as analyzed by DA, condition for the non-worker Indians to keep staying in Vietnam

society. This disappearance must have grounded on the historical context that the Indians had been living in Vietnam for long and that the Indian government in the 1970s declined its responsibility towards the Indian citizens in Vietnam.¹⁴¹ The letter by the Indian consul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on January 12, 1972 analyzed the disappearance of Indian identity among Indian migrants in Vietnam, which made them no longer a part of India: the Indian community in South Vietnam "is not foreign to this Vietnamese land in the strict sense of the term;" most of the Indians had been in Vietnam for generations; many were born in Vietnam; they were inter-married with Vietnamese nationals and are, therefore, fully integrated with the Vietnamese life and society. The letter also pointed out that many of them do not even speak an Indian language, but only communicate in Vietnamese (No.SAI/102(2)/72). Delineating cultural, blood and social ties of the Indian descendants to Vietnam, the consul suggested that this population then belonged to Vietnam, not India. Moreover, Indian members actively participated in the political life of the host country and assigned themselves to have the brotherhood with Vietnamese. On January 19, 1972, members of the Associations of Vietnam and India Friendship met

"running their own shops or being self-employed." Furthermore, the Indian workers, who were rejected to immigrate to Vietnam and to stay in Vietnam, would change to run their own shops so that they would extend their residency. The letter ended with calling for methods to limit permissions to the open companies and do freelances. The suggestion clearly wanted to put an end to the entire residency of Indian populations in Vietnam, regardless of economic sectors and social positions. This was visibly the comprehensive attack to the Indian people, ultimately kicking them out of the country.

More in Chapter 1, Part 1

¹⁴¹ Sudhir Devare in "Rising India and Indians in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam" (*Rising India and Indian Communities in East Asia*. Ed. K. Kesavapany, A. Mani, P. Ramasamy. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008, 287-300) provides an interesting statement that alongside the communist victory and the reunification of South and North of Vietnam (1975), the growing strength in relations between Vietnamese government and Indian government also constituted a cause of the exodus of Indians from Vietnam (and Lao).

at the memorial house Mahatma Gandhi, expressing their support of the Vietnamese government. The letter, regardless of its political objective, reveals that integration to Vietnam had been habitually practiced among Indian migrants:

RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE INDIAN COMMUNITY IN THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIET-NAM, AT THE MEETING HELD AT
MAHATMA GANDHI MEMORIAL HALL, ON 19TH JANUARY 1972, IN
SAIGON.

... We recognize the democratic form of Government in South Viet-Nam has allowed more than 2000 Indians the status and privileges equal to that allowed to our Vietnamese Brothers, such as" freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom of trade, etc... without any discrimination whatsoever.

Many of our Indians are married to Vietnamese and have resided in Vietnam for generations. We Indian living in South Viet-Nam always share with our Vietnamese Brothers, whether it be their suffering and sorrow as well as happiness.

...

Signed by: President, Bombay Silk Merchants Association
President, Muslim Community in Vietnam
President, Chettiar Association
President, Tamil Jan Sangam,
President, Sikh Association

The Resolution emphasizes the loyalty of the Indians to the adopted state and nation. The term "Vietnamese Brothers" capitalized implies the Indians' will of belonging to the Vietnamese nation and of accepting the protection and control of the Vietnamese government. In addition to the language, the Indian members also sacrificed their property for the national cause. In 1973, they donated 500.000 piasters to the Foundation of Soldier Seasonal Trees (Cây mùa chiến sĩ).¹⁴² The willingness to be part of the national

¹⁴² The document numbered 67/TCCTCT/UB,CMX dated on February 1, 1973 by the Ministry of Military confirmed the reception of 500.000 piasters from the Association of Indian Diasporas in Vietnam.

cause of Vietnam is also clear in the letter by members of the Overseas Indian Association, delivered at meeting with the vice-president Nguyễn Lưu Viên, on January 24, 1973:

We, small groups of Indian people, have been living and working in Vietnam for more than one century. The number never exceeds 2000 people, including businessmen and staffers working in trading centers of the Indians.

The Indian representatives also express their gratefulness for the government's special treatment and acknowledge the political goodness of RVN:

We are luckily enjoying South Vietnam and experiencing its freedom as much as Vietnamese citizens are in aspects of trading, religions, etc. We live peacefully with the Vietnamese nation. Therefore, we highly appreciate the caring treatments of the Vietnam government to us. We are always willing to take part in social works of Vietnam

All the quotes suggest the inescapable disappearance of Indian identity into Vietnamese society. The process of Indian migrants' integration into Vietnam must have echoed in Duyên Anh and Thanh Tâm Tuyền's construction of fragile, collapsed, failed Indian guardians. Even more, southern intellectuals perceive this form of disappearance at a more extended level: in 1969, Nguyễn Ngọc Lan, a southern professor and writer, exclusively uses the image of "Chà và" guardian as a metaphor for Catholic rules and rituals that maintain societies in a state of order.¹⁴³ In *Đường hay pháo đài* (Saigon: Trình bày, 1969), an imaginary, symbolic religious writing, the Indian guardian character

The document numbered 578-PThT/PC1/1, dated on February 13, 1973 by the Cabinet, recorded the cash issuance to the French-Asian bank cheque of 500.000 piasters.

¹⁴³ Nguyễn Ngọc Lan is a professor of literature at Huế University; a proactive catholic scholarly priest, and a chief contributor of *Đổi diện*, the journal that contains criticisms about American interventions, governmental limitation of speech freedom and workers' impoverishment in the South (Lê Quỳnh. "Một trí thức yêu nước lý tưởng qua đời." *BBC Vietnamese*. February 28, 2007).

appears in different forms: a subject similar to God that human beings are obligated to respect; a human being who preaches moral, religious lessons; a ticket person of a cinema; and a church guardian. All these forms refer to the preservation of rules, obligations, and restrictions of human being's behaviors and social organizations. As recounted by Ngọc Lan, the continuing existence of the figure of Indian guardians concurs with the morally collapsed condition of the Vietnamese society caused by neo-colonialism; and the presence of Indian guardians as a spirit of discipline will return Vietnam to morality and orderliness; when human being is self-controlled and well-managed, the figure of Indian guardian would vanish. Ngọc Lan's philosophical discussion about the image of Indian guardian embodies the tradition of making visible and invisible the Indians in Vietnamese writing: the visibility of the Indian character is totally created to function as a warning signal of collapsing societies and human beings and to present at best social criticisms of Vietnamese intellectuals. As such, the image of collapsing Indian guardian in southern Vietnamese writing indicates the disappearance of the Indians at best: national projects of southern intellectuals, instead of actual Indians, forms the most meaning of the figure of Indians; the Indian guardian image carries and provokes in the public mind the actual rising material and cultural disappearance of the Indian migrants from the Vietnamese history and society; the Indian guardian image suggests the unavoidable triumph of the homogenous, sovereign figure of the Vietnamese nation. By all means, the appearance of Indian metaphors in southern Vietnamese writing reflects and constructs the disappearance of the Indian migrants in

Vietnamese society in which the quest for national homogeneity and sovereignty is always the core (Rato 325).

Box 1

In August 1961, the monthly journal *Quê hương* (1960-1962) subtly criticizes Diệm's linger on feudal land ownership. Authors of the journal borrow the French colonialism to criticize the current government's policy on land reform. Nghiêm Phú Lưu's piece "Một vài điểm về tình hình nông nghiệp tại Pháp" recounts French farmers' protest against the French government, aiming to warn Diệm's indifference toward peasants' material needs. The journal's way of bringing back colonial French images to attack contemporary social matters was the most obvious in the recurrence of *sét-ty* character in Đào Quang Huy's article "Chế độ điền thổ và nguyên tắc tôn trọng quyền tư hữu." This article recounts that in 1938, in Thủ Dầu Một, a southern province, a native man fails to return a loan to an Indian *set-ty*. As a result, the native borrower has to sacrifice his land ownership to the Indian man. However, the land is also, in paperwork, owned by his son. This son litigates to take the land back, resulting in the *set-ty*'s loss of the land. Although the *Sét-ty* attempts to appeal to the Prime Court, he fails eventually. Recovering the case of more than two decades earlier, Đào Quang Huy in one hand eulogizes the progress of Diệm's law about landownership, which prioritizes family consents in any land exchanges and businesses. This means that Diệm government returns to values of family and community in the traditional Vietnamese society while the French worship the individual-interest sovereignty. In the other hand, the recurrence of the *set-ty* image associated with the French colonialism is a way to cover discontents with Diệm government's lingering on colonialism. As analyzed by Huy, accepting family involvement in landownership actually restrains land exchanges. Addition to limiting land exchanges, the constitution also decides that all land special for cash crops and castles must leave untouched; field land potential for growing cash crops must also be left empty. This restraint definitely results in the unchanging ownership of feudal landlords and capitalists, which ultimately would lead to more risky and problematic dependence on imported American products (Nguyễn Văn Thiệu, "Message of the President" 3-6; Trần Thực Nga 87).

Box 2

Public fervent actions against the Indian population in southern Vietnam so much that the government had to issue orders to protect the Indians at some time. On August 17, 1970, the Ministry of Domestic Affairs ordered all authorities of provinces and cities “throughout the country,” asking them to “implement every method to protect the Indian diasporas” (No 1408/BNV/10/M). The Letter no. 6335/CSDT/P2 by the Director of the Department of National Police, dated on August 7, 1970, ordered districts’ departments of police to increase numbers of police in duty in areas where many Indian people resided. The cities where protests against the Indians exploded included Saigon, Cần Thơ, Nha Trang, Quảng Ngãi, Đà Nẵng and Huế.

However, the government orders seem to be effective. The anger over the Indians emerged the most forcefully in Cần Thơ province. For example, on August 5, 1970, the Indian community in this province passionately wrote a letter to the Indian consular “begging the kind attention and immediate action.” As described, the situation was overwhelmed. On August 3, 1970, as written, a crowd of 200 people demonstrated over Hùng Vương Street, where there were 37 shops of “Indian National” located. All the Indian owners closed their shop, fearing the crowd’s impulse. The protesters knocked shop doors, pushing the Indians to open their shops. One shop, named Diamon Tailors, was damaged. The lost value was said “16 lakhs of piasters of merchandise and cash.” When passing by all Indian shops, the crowd shouted aloud anti-Indian slogans. One of the slogans was that the Indian people did not do any business since then. The rioters also gave the threatening note that they would take serious actions the following week. However, on a day later, when the Indian community in the province had finished his talk to the Secretary of the Indian consulate over “Trunk Telephone,” one hundred people “came in procession shouting anti-Indian slogans... they are going to attack the Indian when they come out.” The letter ended with the request the Indian consular to take up the matter to the Vietnamese government “immediately.” In response, promptly, one day later, the Indian consular sent a Note, numbered no.Sai/102(55)/70, to the Director of Cabinet, Nguyễn Quý Anh, re-narrated the destruction of the Indian shop in Cần Thơ with the detail of lost money amount.

Box 2 (continue)

In Saigon, there were also a number of continuous violent activities against the Indian community and the Indian consulate in order to push the Indian government to change its attitude toward North Vietnam. A report by Police Ministry of Nation on January 15, 1972 described that there were attempts to destroy the property of the Indian consul. These activities included pulling down the Indian flag at 9A.M on January 13, 1972 by forty people of the group, named “Vietnamese workers Loving for Freedom”; smashing the flag by fifty taxi drivers of the International Commission on January 11, 1972

At the same time, Indian shops, companies, and individuals also became the main attacking target. As the police’s report, on January 14, 1972, at 9:20, around 30 people, divided into small groups, demolished Indian shops at 73, 75, and 77 Tự Do Street, resulting in 30% of destruction. Two Indian people were injured. Students and high school pupils, as police report dated January 12, 1972, broke into and fired the Indian Consul, financial and trading centers of the Indian people. According to another report dated on the same day, the General Association of Vietnamese Wounded Veterans chaired by Nguyễn Đình ordered its branch associations in Saigon and Gia Định to gather and demolish the Indian Consul. These groups also petitioned the government to remove the Indians out of Vietnam, otherwise, they would “eliminate” (thanh toán) the Indians who walked separately on roads and would destroy private houses of these foreigners

It was Thông Tấn xã Việt Nam (Vietnamese News) that pointed to the historically lingering hatred over the Indians in contemporary violent activities against the Indian population and offices in South Vietnam. The issue published on January 13, 1972, in which the protest in front of the Indian Consulate appeared in detail, observed the long traditional indignation toward the Indians in the rising brutality over the Indian officials

The writer named Văn Chi, representative of the youth group, said that he had acted on behalf of a patriotic Vietnamese: since a long time, Vietnamese people have been the victim of several Indian co-operations who exploited [Vietnamese people] with activities of controlling and monopolizing lives of Vietnamese people

Chapter 4

Constructing a Socialist Figure of Vietnam: Proletarianizing the Indians

Perceived as imagined bloodsuckers in the Vietnamese public opinion and as actual capitalists in administrative policies (in the Party's documents and reports) as discussed in previous chapters, the Indian population must have been made invisible in the socialist figure of Vietnam and its socialist realistic writing. This chapter examines attempts of socialist nation-makers (writers and administrators) at transforming images of the Indian population into the subjects of the proletarianization of minds and bodies of the socialist revolution. The proletarianization would cease the visibility of the Indian population both physically and ideologically: many Indians actually left northern Vietnam and those who remained became members of the proletariat. The chapter suggests that the colonial category of the Indian population -- the greedy bloodsucking metaphor associated with migrants, foreigners, colonial capitalists, and feudalists -- still forms an actual and imagined target of the socialist nation-building.

1. *The Indians, Old and New, in Vietnamese Socialist Realist Writing (1954-1975)*

While greedy Indians are usually presented in the present tense in writing of South Vietnam, they are presented in the past tense in literary works of North Vietnam. For instance, in 1963, the image of thrifty, cunning sét-ty character reoccurred vibrantly in Nguyễn Công Hoan's *Đống rác cũ*, a thousand-page story, set in Tonkin:

But on three consecutive mornings, Ma-ri came and talked a lot with the sét-ty but the sét-ty did not change his mind.

Anytime, that black bronze statue guy (anh tượng đồng đen) tightly kept the metal box of coins to his body and shook his head:

Khôngr có đượcr.Nhiêur quạ.Hàngr chượcr thì đượcr.Hàngr trấmr đảr làr nhiêur.
Hàngr nghinr thì khôngr có đượcr! Khôngr có đượcr! Có r vãn tự nhà thì đượcr.

Vừar bà vayr, vừar bà giả gópr hang thangr. (No, no! Too much! A dozen is ok. Hundreds are too much. Thousands are not acceptable. No! If you have land documents, that will be ok. You borrow and pay in monthly installments).

Ma-ri attempted to be flirty:

- Three people including Mr. Bồng, Mr. Huyền, and Mr. Nhất can guarantee for me. I am also as credible as those Mr(s) are.

“Anh oản”¹⁴⁴ pulled his hands back:

- Those three are the same. None of them is credible. They have money, but they spend it playing cô đầu [type of geisa]; they do not return my money. I am a kind person; otherwise, I would have imprisoned them [the conversation is in Indian accent of Vietnamese speaking].

- If I have documents, will you help me?

- Yes.

Failing to flirt with the black sét-ty, Ma-ri borrowed money from yellow sét-ty.¹⁴⁵

The quote includes the sét-ty man and his customer, Ma-ri at the money-lending shop in Hanoi. Ma-ri is the main character of the story; she represents many young Hanoians who drown in the social problems of a civilized society in gambling, prostitution, black trade and fake professional degrees. The factor that helps maintain such social problems is the availability of financial resources from sét-ty people in the city, as the story tells. Losing all her property in gambling, Ma-ri learns from capitalists to borrow money from a sét-ty to start a business in real estate. Nevertheless, Ma-ri is quite aware the “black” “sét ty” is the most available but hardest financial source; without land and house documents, no credit loan can be approved. The bankrupted Ma-ri looks for a way to get access to the sét-ty. She observes that sét-ty are not religious, so she should not show how miserable she is. She also realizes that sét-ty do not dare to become intimate with women as they believe that sexual passion easily leads to the destruction of their business. However, she

¹⁴⁴ Oản refers to black people in general. Tô Hoài, in his memoir *Chuyện cũ Hà Nội* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Hà Nội, 2003; pp. 150), called Indian guards for French military bases in Hanoi in early Independent Vietnam as “oản Bô.” Oản Bô refers to Indians belonging to Chandra Bose troop, which is seen to the pro-Japanese fascist government.

¹⁴⁵ The quote is from the version *Đống rác cũ* (Volume 2) published in Hanoi, by Thanh Press, 1989 (67-68)

decides to utilize her beauty to allure the sét-ty for a loan and comes to realize that for Indian sét-ty, documents of house and farming land ownership and of salary increase are the only acceptable deposits, the very documents, she does not have. In the end, Ma-ri decides that she will ask some acquaintances to introduce her to the sét-ty and will attempt to look serious in negotiating with sét-ty for a loan. Ma-ri calculates that visiting the sét-ty in the mornings is more effective because people's minds are usually more comfortable at this time of the day: the sét-ty does not yet have many customers, so he will be able to spend more time with her while his relatives and employees of the sét-ty are busy with breakfast or shower and will not disturb their negotiations. However, Ma-ri's calculations are in vain in the face of the greed, toughness and caution of the sét-ty, as shown in the quoted paragraph. The paragraph provides intimate details about voice, figure and business belief of the sét-ty: improper Vietnamese pronunciation, greedy accumulation of real estate property and black skin. Noticeably, this thrifty, cunning image of the Indian in Công Hoan is similar to the way he is depicted in colonial Vietnamese writing. The narrator seems to use formula of imagining the Indians in the colonial literature: the sét-ty is still the foreign capitalist, speaking a strange Vietnamese, competing with native Vietnamese, and possessing land and houses.¹⁴⁶ This Indian character embodies exploiting ruling capitalists and landlords in the *old* society that the entire story aims to portray – and in documents of the Party since the Third Congress in 1960, the term “old society” stands for capitalist exploitation and feudal society (*Third*

¹⁴⁶The conversation reflects the Indians being cheated sometimes by native landlords and officials, the issue that the historian Phạm Cao Dương Dương describes in his book. Many rich rural landlords still borrowed money from Indian sét-ty with agreements on high interest. However, some landlords would legally transfer ownership of their property to others' names, which would make sét-ty be unable to ask for any interest back (*Thực trạng của giới nông dân Việt Nam dưới thời Pháp thuộc*; pp. 90-91).

National Congress Volume 1 37, 91). A prominent intellectual in Party-led cultural organizations and a leading revolutionary writer,¹⁴⁷ Nguyễn Công Hoan seems to have actively adopted the Party's ideology of his time. In his memoir *Đời viết văn của tôi* (first published in 1971), he describes how the thematic evolutions in his writing run parallel to and is derived from revolutionary work defined by the Party as representing historically different period. In other words, Nguyễn Công Hoan fervently strives to make his writings mirrors of national projects in the socialist revolution. Among these attempts, *Đống rác cũ* is a story about the *old* society, which is, as Hoan defines, “under the slavery [colonial] regime” in which commoners are corrupted in the face of colonial modernization and opportunistic financial capitalists have chances to more exploit them (219). Obviously, the old society, embodied in the image of sét-ty, in Nguyễn Công Hoan's writing is compatible with that society as defined by the Party.

Nevertheless, as a leader who actively carried out the Party's ideology in the fields of information, literature and education,¹⁴⁸ Nguyễn Công Hoan is indeed aware of “Cái mới” (the New) as the fundamental theme of dominating “văn học học hiện thực xã hội chủ nghĩa” (socialist realistic literature) of his time.¹⁴⁹ In 1958, the year of the DRV's

¹⁴⁷ After the Revolution, Nguyễn Công Hoan actively participated in “công tác cách mạng” (revolutionary works): Director of Hanoi Department of Journal Censorship and Vice Director of Tonkin Department of Propaganda. During the First Indochina War, Nguyễn Công Hoan join the military; then he held the director position at Trường Văn hóa quân nhân trung cấp (Intermediate School of Military Culture) of the Commander Ministry and the chief –editor of the newspaper Quân nhân học (Military Studies) of elementary and middle students. Nguyễn Công Hoan is the first president of the Association of Vietnamese Writers and consecutively held the position of leading member in Party-led art and cultural associations (Nguyễn Hoàn Khung. “Nguyễn Công Hoan” *Từ điển Văn học Việt Nam*.Ed. Đỗ Đức Hiểu et.al. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Thế giới, 2003, 1114-1117).

¹⁴⁸ See Footnote 147.

¹⁴⁹ According to Nguyễn Lương Ngọc in the contemporary textbook in literary theory, socialist realistic literature means

initiation of correcting land reforming errors and ending anti-Party literary activities (Porter 64-66; Moise, *Land Reform in China and North Vietnam* 237-268; Moise, “Land Reform” 621-622), the Party increased its control over literature as an ideological instrument in class and national struggles.¹⁵⁰ In this Report at the Third Congress in 1960, Hồ Chí Minh contended that “art and literature are occupying an important place in the socialist revolution in ideology, science and technique” (*Third National Congress*, Volume 1, 96) and that the revolution in ideology, “like the socialist revolution in economy, has been an integral part of the socialist revolution” (*Third National Congress*, Volume 1, 89). Also in this Congress, Hồ Chí Minh asserted the need to raise art and literature to the position of a “sharp weapon” of the national revolution:

Art and literary work must render efficient service to the revolutionary lines and policies of the Party and contribute actively to the formation of the ideology and sentiment of man and to his transformation along socialist lines, to the mobilization and encouragement of the people to deploy all their spirit and strength to achieve the revolutionary task put forward by the Party (*Third National Congress*, Volume 1 96)

the new in realistic socialist literature is different from realistic literature is that the former asserts the communism and revolutionary role of proletarians ; it believes in the certain formation of a society without exploitation between people and people while the latter contains only social criticism without asserting any ideology (Nguyễn Lương Ngọc. *Mấy vấn đề nguyên lý văn học*, tập 2. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản giáo dục, 1962. 176)

¹⁵⁰In February 1957, at the Second National Art and Letter Meeting (Hội nghị văn nghệ toàn quốc lần 2), participants received a letter from the Party’s Center Committee that defined artists as ideological educators. To complete this role, artists were asked, as shown in the letter, “to make efforts to study Leninist- Marxism, to learn the Party’s and the Government’s guidelines and to improve their [Marxist] ideological stance” (Đặng Thai Mai Volume 1 35). In this meeting, Hội Liên hiệp văn học nghệ thuật Việt Nam (The Vietnamese Association of Inter-Arts) was established, including associations of artists of all art types and provincial associations of letters and arts. The Association “played an important role in uniting different revolutionary groups of Vietnamese artists, in constructing a new art and literature that is thematically socialist and nationalist. The Association disciplined art and literature to conform to the Party’s art and literature policies and to actively participate in historically political works of nation-building: fighting against the America to save the country, liberating the South, unifying the nation, realizing socialism in the North and later entire the country” (Trần Hữu Tá. “Hội Liên hiệp văn học nghệ thuật.” *Từ điển văn học*. Volume 1. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Khoa học Xã hội, 1983, 320).

For literature to play the role of a “sharp ideological weapon” of the socialist revolution, the Congress proposed that writers had to master the “writing method of socialist realism.” Only with this method, writers were able to “honestly reflect *new* lives, *new* people to contribute to educating and encourage people to fight for the socialist revolution and the national reunification (Đặng Thai Mai, *Trên đường học tập và nghiên cứu* Volume 1 49-50, an emphasis is added).

The term “mới” (new) as a thematic and formic characteristic of the Vietnamese socialist realistic literature occurs repeatedly in speeches and documents of leading Party members.¹⁵¹ But what does the term “new” mean? This term primarily refers to the Party’s vision of the comprehensive “vô sản hóa” (proletarianization) that fundamentally aims to eradicate “from everyone’s mind ... of any desire to own private property or to pursue any private purpose” (Dunganson 173). Land reform and associated wealth redistributions must have formed initial steps in eradicating the mindset of private ownership, the supposed colonial, capital habits of thinking and acting (Dunganson 173; Marr, *Vietnam War, State and the Revolution* 374-375).¹⁵² The processes of material proletarianization are essential for the ultimate aim of the revolution –“proletarianization of the mind of the entire population” (Wang Henry 137). In the field of literature and art,

¹⁵¹ E.g. “We must foster new thoughts to build up socialism” – a speech that Lê Duẩn delivered at the meeting on March 10, 1961 to propaganda and educate cadres about political remolding drive (in Lê Duẩn. *On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam*. Volume 3. Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967).

¹⁵² Speeches by President Hồ Chí Minh, Deputy Prime Minister Phạm Hùng and Hoàng Anh (1912-1988) and the leading character in charge of agriculture Trần Hữu Dực (1910-1993) at the Third Congress emphasized the main objectives of the socialist revolution in North is to “advance the North from an economy based mainly on individual ownership of means of production to socialist economy based on ownership by the entire people and collective ownership” (Third National Congress of the Vietnam Workers’ Party Volume III 202).

since 1957,¹⁵³ the Party attempted to develop a new figure that is able to reflect, participate in and form what Henry Wang calls “public ownership of spiritual means of production” (137). The Party fostered the proletarianization of the mind of authors by integrating them into lives of workers and peasants. A decree, issued on January 6, 1958 by the Political Bureau (Politburo) of the Central Committee Communist Party of Vietnam, gave details of the new duty of officials in charge of art and literature management. The duty included organizing authors to do field works in factories and in soldier-worker-peasant bases and to participate in labor work so that authors would better understand and sympathize with the realities of lives of the masses. Particularly those who grew up in the colonial era such as Nguyễn Công Hoan, were seen to “remain city people” and petty-bourgeois. Seen as lingering on subjectivism and individualism, these intellectuals supposedly hardly saw a “political necessity of land reform” and empathized with “feelings and thoughts of the poor peasant who for the first time in his life owned a piece of land a buffalo himself” (Nguyễn Khắc Viện, Hữu Ngọc 143). Therefore, intellectuals growing up in “the old society” like Nguyễn Công Hoan were expected to become proletarians (Nguyễn Khắc Viện, Hữu Ngọc 144-146).

“Proletarianization” aimed at constructing a new mind for authors: empty of “lingering ideologies of bourgeois and petty bourgeois” and full of workers’ ideological stances and Marxist-Leninist revolutionary morals and worldviews (Đặng Thai Mai, *Trên bước đường học tập* Volume 1 37). The “workers’ ideological stance and Marxist-Leninist revolutionary morals and worldviews” refer to ideological public ownership and

¹⁵³ See Footnote 150

supposedly associated workers and farmers' economic interests. With proletarianized minds, the Party believed authors would be able to create *sử thi* (epics) about incredibly glorious works of proletarianization, what would form Vietnamese socialist realist writing.¹⁵⁴ Particularly, proletarianized minds supposedly formed a condition for the domination of “chủ nghĩa biện chứng” [dialectical materialism] in thematic developments of socialist realistic literature. The resulting socialist realist literature would end in the proletarianized – the victorious completion of proletarianization -- the newest, most advanced stage in the evolution of individuals and societies (Phan Cự Đệ, Hà Minh Đức 367-368; Phương Lưu, “Chủ nghĩa hiện thực xã hội” 138-140). This socialist realistic literature, as widely believed by the Party, would potentially create proletarianized minds, thus completing its position as a “sharp weapon” of the Party in the envisioned socialist revolution.¹⁵⁵ The socialist revolution was seen to be the ultimate objective of national

¹⁵⁴ “Cảm hứng sử thi” or “xu hướng sử thi” (epic tendency) is the common term refers to one of two principle characteristics (with romantic inspiration – “cảm hứng lãng mạn”) of the revolutionary literature during Vietnam War (Nguyễn Đăng Mạnh. Chu Văn Sơn. *Nguyễn Đăng Mạnh, tuyển tập*. Volume 2. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, 2006, p. 275-276). To be clear, the term “sử thi” in Vietnamese language and in studies about socialist Vietnamese literature contains a meaning that incorporates aspects of marvelous heroism and victory of historically, challenging but meaningful tasks related to fates of a nation or a community. The *Report* at the Party's 4th Congress, addressed that Vietnamese people wrote a wonderful epic of the Vietnamese revolutionary war with the victory of Hồ Chí Minh campaign while constructing socialism (*75 Years of the Communist Party of Viet Nam* 336). Literature that has “khuyến hướng sử thi” must have the tone of pride and compliment towards events and issues related to the national existence; this literature constructs characters that embody ideologies and morals of the community and that struggle for the nation (Nguyễn Đăng Mạnh Ibid.).

¹⁵⁵ In the latest version of Vietnamese dictionary of literature (2004), Lại Nguyên Ân explains the term “chủ nghĩa hiện thực xã hội” (realistic socialism) as the principle ideology of literature in communist countries particularly since 1945. This literary movement existed as a world-wide ideological opponent to literary movements in western countries during the Cold War (1945-1991). However, this principle no longer functioned as an ideological control in literature after the collapse of Soviet Union and particularly present-day (Lại Nguyên Ân. “Chủ nghĩa hiện thực xã hội.” *Từ điển văn học* Ed. Đỗ Văn Hiếu et.al.. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Thế giới, 2004, 286-288). Interestingly, while Lại Nguyên Ân mostly limits his description of the term in soviet literature, in the older version of the Vietnamese dictionary of literature (1983), Phương Lưu, explained with vivid indications from Vietnamese literature and insists that Marxist-Leninist ideology-based socialist realism is the most progress and scientific ideology (Phương Lưu. “Chủ

independence, at the time hindered by the colonial legacy and America's neo-colonialism. The Party attempted to create the comprehensively proletarianized figure of the North with the aim of modernizing the national economy to make the North a firm, strong base for the struggle for the national unity and sovereignty (Trường Chinh, "The Party's Ideological Work" 11; Lê Duẩn, *On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam* Vol.1 41). Accordingly, the Vietnamese socialist realism writing during the Vietnam War was without anti-American imperialism, supposedly embodied in individualism and hedonism,¹⁵⁶ as concluded in the Party's report at the 4th Congress (1976), this literature "is worthy to stand in the vanguard of the anti-imperialism cultures and arts of our time" (*75 Years of the Communist Party of Vietnam* 412).

Actually, the Party attempted to proletarianize minds' of Vietnamese intellectuals since the late 1920s to educate them about workers' points of view and struggles and to penetrate the Party influence among the masses. Male and female intellectuals were instructed to "đi vô sản hóa" (go to proletarianization) in French factories of coal mining, textile, beer and ship building.¹⁵⁷ Specifically, in the field of literature, the proletarianization was developed in two phases, from the phase of "dear to commoners and reality" to the phase of "dear to the proletariats." In *Văn học khái luận* (1944), Đặng Thai Mai, the first modern literary theoretician,¹⁵⁸ fervently renovated the concept of

nghĩa hiện thực xã hội chủ nghĩa." *Từ điển văn học*. Volume 1. Ed. Đỗ Đức Hiểu et.al. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Khoa học Xã hội. 138-140).

¹⁵⁶ See Chapter 3

¹⁵⁷ Read *Vô sản hóa*" (*Hồi ký cách mạng 8*). Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Thanh niên, 1972.

¹⁵⁸ Nguyễn Văn Trung said that Đặng Thai Mai was the first literary theoretician who explicitly announced the existence of literary studies as a science to challenge existing emotion-based appreciation of literature. Nguyễn Văn Trung only read Đặng Thai Mai's *Văn học khái luận* (Hanoi: Tân Văn Hóa, Tạp chí văn mới, Tập Mới số 36-36, June 25, 1944); scholarship of Đặng Thai Mai and of other northern theorists

literature to justify his call for the self-proletarianization of minds among authors. Given traditional literature is largely the voice of and for ruling classes due to authors' noble, rich dominating associations, Đặng Thai Mai asserted authors to step out of their position to sense the pity and misery of commoners and to capture the unavoidable evolving development of human life (61-68). Đặng Thai Mai's insistence on the attachment of authors to the social evolution aimed at asserting that authors must play the role of "vanguard forces" in an inescapable revolution that would break down the feudal and colonial system. Indeed, Đặng Thai Mai's point about authors and their attachment to the commoner's interests and to the social revolution conclusively theorized the contemporary blossom of so-called critical realistic literature. This literature particularly initiated from the late 1920s through the early 1940; it was in this literature that Hồ Biểu Chánh and Nguyễn Công Hoan explicitly depicted the Indians as colonial capitalists and feudal landlords (See Chapter 2).

After the Revolution, in the early time of anti-French Resistance (1946-1947), Đặng Thai Mai continued calling for the self-proletarianization of Vietnamese intellectuals. Đặng Thai Mai highlighted the use of literature as "a tool of ideology propaganda" contributing to the national project of "fighting against invaders and saving the country."¹⁵⁹ Authors, as defined, are supposed to write for all groups of population including soldiers, militias, intellectuals, businessmen, workers and farmers and all other forces as long as they, directly and indirectly, contribute to the Resistance. Writing is

during the Vietnam War were unreachable in the South; Trung only knew about northern scholarship through some brief review (Read Nguyễn Văn Trung *Lược khảo văn học* Volume 1. Saigon: Sơn Nam, 1963, 5-7).

¹⁵⁹ Most publication by Đặng Thai Mai in 1946-1947 was reprinted in *Trên đường học tập và nghiên cứu: phê bình và tiểu luận* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản văn học, 1969).

seen as aiming at explaining and educating people about military, society, economy and culture to gain lessons for national struggles; at consolidating entire population for the ongoing national resistance and for the upcoming nation-building; and at homogenizing public minds in a common belief in the nation-state (*Trên bước đường học tập* 115-116). Mostly, in this period, Đặng Thai Mai exploded the first phase of proletarianization of the mind that asked authors to step out of their economically privileged zone to stand alongside a vast range of commoners' interests and thoughts. In an article published in 1946, Đặng Thai Mai criticized a group of authors who appreciated literature that went beyond and away from a political association; he insisted on the social duty of authors as those of a Vietnamese citizen. Đặng Thai Mai quoted Gandhi's response to Tagore's anti-boycott English products to justify the certainty of proletarianization of intellectuals. In the words of Đặng Thai Mai, Tagore worried that many intellectuals, who were noble classes and who were not familiar with manual works, could not live without western materials that were made available by the colonial system. In response, Gandhi contended that poets also constituted a part of Indian people, thus, they should weave for clothes and should work for foods. Leaning on Gandhi's words, Đặng Thai Mai stresses that "we" are parts of the Vietnamese population who needs independence, food and clothe; poets, artists, and writers should not stay out of politics, stay afar social movements or stay above the masses to keep hold on the master position. Intellectuals, instead, should stand among and live with the masses (*Trên đường học tập và nghiên cứu* 76-77). These emphases mainly aim at drawing contemporaries out of their haunting associations with political, material comforts that are brought about by the old feudal, colonial systems.

Indeed, Đặng Thai Mai's theories conform to the Party's ever attempts to construct a new literature in particular and a new culture at large that could function as an ideological weapon in eliminating so-called colonial, feudal legacies from Vietnamese culture and instilling in this culture socialist realist principles. For such new literature and culture, in 1948, Trường Chinh, the Party's chief theoretician, developed further the concept of proletarianization of intellectuals that was closer to the class struggle view. In "Marxism and Vietnamese Culture," a report delivered at the second National Cultural Conference July 1948, Trường Chinh asserted socialist realism as a method that would ensure Vietnamese intellectuals to break up the old colonial, feudal culture to surge towards the "new democracy-culture."¹⁶⁰ Trường Chinh's definition aimed at making culture a part of class struggle: culture is supposed to serve the masses; intellectuals must play the role of "cultural fighters" or "cultural workers." This role requires intellectuals to learn from, to lead and to educate "workers, peasants and soldiers" so that these masses are able to raise their "cultural level" (literacy, science knowledge, national awareness). It is possible to see that Trường Chinh perceived the proletarianization of intellectuals in a narrower line that is dear to workers, farmers and soldiers instead of a vast range of population. Since the mid-1950s, perception of the Party about proletarianization of intellectuals clearly transformed into a second phase that was stricter Marxist-Leninist class view; proletarianization of intellectuals meant the advocacy for public ownership and proletariats' economic interests. The Party officially inaugurated this class view of

¹⁶⁰ The English version of this speech appeared in many publications. I use the quote from this speech from Dutton, George, Jayne Werner and John Whitmore Ed. *Sources of Vietnamese Tradition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

proletarianization of authors to construct a new literature, socialist realist literature, in the 2nd Congress in 1958, as afore discussed. The uplift of the so-called Marxist-Leninist class view is definitely to react to the historically urgent need of transforming the North into socialist society to ensure material supplies for the national struggles in the South. National sovereignty is still the ultimate goal of historically differing national projects led by Vietnamese intellectuals.

Nguyễn Công Hoan is famous for his literature's close attachment to historically differing tasks of the national revolution; during the Vietnam War, Nguyễn Công Hoan is nationally received as a leading, pioneer writer of Vietnamese socialist realism. So what is the meaning of Hoan's intentional construction of the *old* world in which the imagined *sét-ty* play the vibrant role? This question is more critical in the context that Indian migrants -- the metaphor and metonym of colonial capitalist exploiters and associated obsessions of land losses and impoverishment of the mass -- reappear exuberantly in other depictions of Hoan and other socialist authors about the *new* Vietnamese society. In Hoan's *Nhớ và ghi về Hà Nội* (first published in 1970),¹⁶¹ Hoan recalls that Indian businessmen once occupied the most trading and financial streets of old Hanoi before 1945. *Sét-ty* opened their shops mostly in Hàng Gai (Number 9, for example). Hoan particularly focuses on ways through which *sét-ty* occupied land and other property of the masses: non-employees had to mortgage their houses and land to borrow money from these *sét-ty* while employees had to mortgage their authorized salary documents. *Sét-ty*, as Hoan emphasizes, took very high interest, “vay tây đen (“borrowing money from

¹⁶¹ The text used in this chapter is reprinted by Nhà xuất bản trẻ (Hà Nội) in 2004.

black westerner,” the quoting mark is original) was very dangerous: most debtors of money-lending black westerners ended up in being bankrupt and destroyed. Another type of the “Indian capitalists” who formed the old world in Hoan’s writings was “Tây đen bán vải” (selling textile black westerner). As depicted, these Muslim textile sellers rented five or six houses in Hàng Đào Street; there was a big Bombay silk shop in Tràng Tiền Street. Many customers were attracted by the transparent, thin, elegant, silky, colorful Bombay textiles. The Indian bosses usually hired Vietnamese female laborers to serve Vietnamese consumers. In describing Indian textile sellers, Hoan subtly reveals their exploiting nature by exerting details about their bad treatment of native employees. As told, all employees “had to go out, standing at streets” while their bosses prayed at mosque on Fridays. These Muslim businessmen whenever going out would carefully locked their shops, keeping their employees outside. The narrator definitely attempts to picture the resentment of the employees, an embodiment of the masses, in terms of a command: “have to.” Particularly, a lively picture of cultural lives of the Indian settlers in Hanoi in Hoan’s memoir raises the question why vigorous Indian capitalists appear in his “epic” about the socialist Vietnamese society. It is strange that in Vietnamese socialist realist writings, the audience is able to imagine the Indian textile sellers in Hàng Đào as wearing white, wide clothes (national dresses) and sitting cross-legged position on a table. Meanwhile, Bombay Indians at Tràng Tiền Street wear European clothes; their parted hair makes them look more civilized. Moreover, Indian textile sellers in Hàng Đào usually locked their shops on Friday to pray at their Mosque [chùa Tây Đen (black westerner pagoda)], located at Tô Lịch River Street [presently Hàng Lược]. When

speaking Vietnamese, black westerners tend to add “r” to every word. Black westerners in Vinh (Nghệ An, Central Vietnam) speak in Nghệ tone; black westerners in Saigon speak in Saigon tone.¹⁶²

Not only Nguyễn Công Hoan, also other socialist authors such as Trần Huy Liệu (1901-1969) and Hoàng Đạo Thúy (1900-1994)¹⁶³ reconstruct the domination of the Indian capitalists in *Lịch sử thủ đô Hà Nội* (History of Hanoi Capital, 1960) and *Phố phường Hà Nội xưa* (Hanoi Streets in Olden Days, 1974), writings about old Vietnamese

¹⁶² The so-called Indian capitalist characters also appear in other writings of Nguyễn Công Hoan; they are also characters of the past colonial Vietnamese society.

I currently found in Nguyễn Xuân Hòe's poetic prose "Quà tết của cô Thảo" a bông-bay related detail that convinces me about Bông-bay textiles' presence in Northern Vietnam during the War. Nguyễn Xuân Hòe (1923 -) is a celebrated militant of North Vietnam's government. In this piece, in the teacher Thảo calls people to donate goods to present soldiers fighting in mountainous Sơn La frontline on the occasion of Tết. Thảo herself bought a chicken-oil colored Bông-bay scarf; she embroiders it with the sentence "em tặng anh chiến sĩ ở Sơn La" (I present it to Sơn La soldiers). This scarf is awarded to a soldier who obtains a gun from the enemy. This prize encourages the soldier to be more determined to sacrifice his life for the nation. In a battle, his hand gets injured, he uses the scarf to cover the wound. The story ends in the detail that the soldier wishes that if only the scarf giver knows his sentiments about the scarf and its first possessor (Read: Thế Phong. *Lược sử văn nghệ Việt Nam: tổng luận 1900-1956*. Saigon: Đại Nam Văn Hiến, 1965).

¹⁶³ Tú Mỡ (1900-1970), a famous satirists, wrote a satire poem, named ““sét ty” tự đại” [egotistic sét-ty]:

Bởi lòng thương xót bọn bần nhân
Phải bỏ tiền ra để đỡ đần
Một chữ làm tin cho đúng luật
Hai người bảo lĩnh gọi an tâm
Chẳng qua buôn bạc ăn đồng lãi
Nào phải lên người ních nặng phân
Ngán nỗi con đen lòng bạc béo
Qua cầu túng bần đã vong ân
(Due to pitying bankrupted people
Having to giving away money to help
One letter for deposition for legality
Two sponsors for peace of mind
It is just making interest by running money business
Not exploiting people every coin
Just being afraid black people who are betraying
Going through hard bridge and forgetting the help)

(Phạm Thế Ngũ “Cây bút trào phúng Tú Mỡ.” *Tiếng cười Tú Mỡ*. Ed. Mai Hương. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản văn hóa thông tin, 2000, 55). It is not clear when the poem was created but Tú Mỡ is widely acknowledged for his attacks against “old society” through satiric poems.

society. Particularly, Thúy describes how greedy Indians increasingly took over traditional textile businesses of the native: vivid, colorful silk of Hanoi was in disfavor since the introduction of French cloth that was promoted by the Indian textile sellers. At first, there was only one Indian shop selling French cloth in Hàng Đào Street, “then three, four shops. Then they threw money to rent houses, from one hundred to five hundred and several thousands. They also occupied some dozens of other shops ... As a consequence, noble Hanoi people were pushed to go back to countryside or to rent houses in other parts [of Hanoi]” (71).¹⁶⁴ The paragraph definitely echoes the familiar formulaic metaphor and metonym of the Indian migrants in colonial Vietnamese literature: Indian presence and growth are similar to and historically associated with the presence and growth of the French colonialism in Vietnam.

So, again, what do the depictions of old world – the world of private ownerships of dominating colonialist, capitalists and destructing natives -- play role in the socialist authors’ realization of the task of reflecting and creating the new world?

Actually, the imagined colonial world of Hoan and other socialist authors stem from their experimental implementations of the principle dialectic materialism in writing *epics* about the *new*, the supposedly proletarianized era of Vietnam. The old in socialist realistic literature, as instructed by the contemporary leading literary theorist, Đặng Thai Mai (1902-1984), must be seen in its evolution toward the new:

¹⁶⁴ In this text, Hoàng Đạo Thúy, a revolutionist, also recollects his memories about old Hà Nội in which black westerners open money-lending shop in streets Hàng Bông, Hàng Gai, and Hàng Đào. People called them "sét-ty." "Borrowing money from these gangsters are very simple but if you do not pay by the due date, you will be immediately imprisoned, which is called "ngồi tù nợ" (sitting in prison because of in debt)" (Hoàng Đạo Thúy. *Phố phường Hà Nội xưa*. Hà Nội: Sở văn hóa thông tin Hà Nội, 1974; pp. 115).

Our new life and new people have all aspects of tradition, presence and future. Our literature and art do not mean that you are not allowed to describe the old, but writers and artists must present the old in terms of the ideologies, emotions and forms of the new era.” (Đặng Thai Mai, *Trên đường học tập và nghiên cứu* Volume 1 59)

Criticisms of the old in *socialist realist writing* are necessary to make deeper of eulogies about the new (Phương Lưu "Chủ nghĩa hiện thực xã hội chủ nghĩa" 39). Accordingly, Indian bloodsuckers form negative, losing characters in epics about triumphant socialist Vietnam. Specifically, the lingering images of Indian migrants in epics of Hoan and others obviously embody the primitive level of the supposedly linear development of Vietnam toward an advanced level. That is the transformation of Vietnam from the savage to the modern, similarly, from the capitalist to the socialist, and from the colonialist to the nationally independent. As Hoan explicitly shares, his depiction of sét-ty, an embodiment of "the thick black shadow that made the [Vietnamese] society intolerable" aims at glorifying "the [savior] light of the Party" (Nguyễn Công Hoan, *Đời viết văn của tôi* 219). In other words, Hoan's and other authors' emphases on the vigor of destructing and exploiting Indian capitalists aim at highlighting the savoring power and the essential presence of the Party and the associated socialist national figure. In general, during the Vietnam War, there is no a northern novel, in which the Indian bloodsucker has "maximum contact with the present (contemporary reality) in its open-endedness" (Todorov 88). Instead, images of Indian bloodsucker only appear in forms of formula, metaphor or metonym, all suggest a contemporary new Vietnamese society beyond colonialism and capitalism. In other words, the Indian images purely serve as "a national past" – the colonial dead -- that helps glorify the proletarianization led by the Party. The

resulting practical impact of this literary glorification is, supposedly that it created more trust among public about the Party leadership, which would help strengthen the ongoing proletarianization in reality. And, as revealed by Hoàng Đạo Thúy, depictions of the old habitual private ownership -- embodied in the image of Indians -- potentially functioned as reminders by contemporary nation-makers of the lingering colonial legacy that had to be wiped out. Otherwise, Thúy is afraid, “our young generation will see it and carry it forward forever” (8). Therefore, it is socialist intellectuals’ self-assigned role as souls and minds of the nation, which make images of the Indians fixed in the bad and dead such as exploiting capitalists and colonialists. Moreover, contemporary intellectuals’ attempts at actually participating in the ongoing proletarianization must have also resulted in the disappearance of Indian characters in the present tense of Vietnamese socialist realist literature. Altogether, Vietnamese socialist realist writing makes the Indians invisible by way of making this population solely visible in the dead past and as the symbol of colonial capitalism, a target of the dominating proletarianization of Vietnam; it actively suggests the death of the Indians in Vietnamese historiography and society. Moreover, works of socialist authors participating in the proletarianization do not only create the dead Indians but also “honestly” reflect bureaucratic processes that socialist nation-makers followed to make this population disappear. That is the processes of proletarianizing the actual Indians remaining in Hanoi into a part of the envisioned socialist Vietnam, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

2. “Vô sản hóa” (Proletarianizing) “Capitalist Indians:” Indians as “thợ” in New Vietnamese Society

There is a consensus that the Revolution drove the Indians, particularly those with French citizenship, out of Vietnam, particularly northern Vietnam. Nevertheless, the exodus of the Indian population out of postcolonial (northern) Vietnam stemmed from a more complex reason; it did not happen as an immediate consequence of the emergence of the socialism-oriented government. The Vichy government took action to marginalize the Frenchmen of India from their positions in Indochina and excluded them from the area (Pairaudeau).¹⁶⁵ Moreover, in spite of perceiving Indian moneylenders and traders as “capitalists” since 1930, socialist nation-makers did show certain friendliness towards non-French foreign capitalists in early years of the postcolonial Vietnam (1945-1954). “Be friendly with Hoa Kiều and Ấn Kiều” was a point emphasized in Section “Domestic Affairs” of the Resolution of Đại hội toàn quốc Việt Nam dân chủ Đảng in 1946 (September 15-25), the first public meeting of the communist force in Hanoi. Until 1947, the Indian migrants, along with the Chinese, received sincerely thankful notes from Hồ Chí Minh’s yearly New Year greeting for “being ardent supporters of Vietnamese people’s Resistance [against the French] to save the nation.”¹⁶⁶ This friendliness was not without the aim of defending the infant, independent Vietnam from the return of French colonization: First, upon 1947, the communist nation-makers constantly sought helps from India in terms of following issues: recognizing the government of Democratic

¹⁶⁵ This chapter uses Pairaudeau ‘s manuscript about French Indians in Indochina from 1945-1954. This manuscript is supposed to a chapter in her forthcoming book *Mobile Citizens: French Indians in Indochina, 1858-1954* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2016). The manuscript is provided by the author.

¹⁶⁶ Học viện chính trị quốc gia Hồ Chí Minh. *Hồ Chí Minh – Biên niên tiểu sử*, tập 4. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản chính trị quốc gia, 2006, 37-39.

Republic of Vietnam, using influence at the United Nation to stop French reinforcements (SarDesai 61-80). Second, communist nation-makers strived to draw supports from all sources for the national cause. And it is this nationalist end that created the vast migration of the Indians out of the area. To indicate, the 1946 Resolution decided to urgently unify all groups, regardless of religious, ethnic and national differences to fight against pro-colonial French forces. Communist nation-makers even attempted to construct a mutual “love” and sympathy of Indian and Vietnamese nationals based on the idea of a supposedly common French enemy.¹⁶⁷ Indian individuals’ and companies’ donations of materials (cloth and money) to Việt minh in early days of the anti-French Resistance appeared in Vietnamese history (Marr, *Vietnam State, War and Revolution* 375; Thomson and Adloff 130).¹⁶⁸

But, provided that the friendliness was without the aim for the nation’s independent end, that attitude also suggests the marginalization of those who did not support the revolutionary force.¹⁶⁹ Thus, in spite of the euphoric terms such as “thân thiện”

¹⁶⁷ A document, named “Fighting Committee of the Revolutionary People of Southern Indochina” to Indians in the British army of occupation in Hanoi address that Vietnamese and Indians shared the same ideology of liberating India and Vietnam from a common enemy, so “we must love each other. We must not be divided by anyone” (quoted in Thomson, Virginia and Adloff, Richard. *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955; pp. 130).

¹⁶⁸ This is the Indian textile company in Nam Định province in David Marr’s description. In Trần Huy Liệu and other editors of the mainstream history book *Tài liệu tham khảo lịch sử Cách mạng cận đại Việt Nam. Thời kì Mặt trận bình dân* (Volume II, Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Văn sử địa, 1958), this company’s producing activities show exploiting nature of colonial bosses. Đạm describes that in 1935, like all other colonial manufactories, this company dramatically reduced salaries of workers and laid off a lot of employees, facing the French government’s demand of more monies to participate in the WWII (pp. 38).

¹⁶⁹ Hồ Chí Minh, President of Republic Democratic of Vietnam Government, in 1948 and 1949, issued two laws (SL-205, August 18, 1948 and 79-SL, July 14, 1949) on expulsions of foreigners. These laws decided that those who talked and acted in ways that were harmful to social security and the present Resistance of our nation-state must be expelled first.

(friendliness), “love”¹⁷⁰ and “trân trọng cảm ơn” (sincere thankfulness), Indian migrants were vulnerable in northern Vietnam. This vulnerability particularly arose when communist nation-makers initiated economic reforms to regain nation from America-backed colonialism. At the Second Congress (February 11-19, 1951), Hồ Chí Minh identified land reform as a step to prepare military and people forces for unavoidable “counter-offensives” against the French-American alliance (*75 Years of the Communist Party* 154). At this Congress, in *Political Report*, Trường Chinh described “Indian capitalists” as those who along with Chinese capitalists, “bullied the Vietnamese capitalists in both trade and money-lending... a number of them served as compradors of the French capitalists” (Trường Chinh, *Selected Writing* 309). Trần Văn Giàu¹⁷¹ in his textbooks for contemporary teachers, students and propaganda officers explained sét-ty as “tư bản cho vay người Ấn” (“Indian moneylending capitalist”) and described that Indians received privileges like French citizens; this Indian capitalist population could still use the government’s law force to seize land of their indebted farmers. Thus, farmers lost their land to sét-ty and local landlords, thus, they became tenants on land that used to belong to them (Trần Văn Giàu, *Giai cấp công nhân Việt Nam* (1957) 118-119; Trần Văn Giàu, *Giai cấp công nhân Việt Nam* (1961) 202-203; 265-266). These descriptions are definitely in tune with the Party’s contemporary economic reform implementations – implementations that resulted in the bankruptcy of many Indian migrants – supposedly moneylenders, real estate owners, and landlords. Particularly, these reforms, as realized

¹⁷⁰ See Footnote 164

¹⁷¹ Trần Văn Giàu (1911-2010) is a famous historian and politician; he was the first General Secretary of the Communist Party of the newly established Hanoi University of Education (1954) and then the Hanoi General University (former name of Hanoi National University); he taught history at both universities and was the first professor honored by DRVN.

after the year of the Congress, included reducing rents and interest rates and limiting exploitation on landlords. In 1953, to strengthen national resistance in which peasants are leading forces, the Party implemented economic reforms more strictly: it mobilized the masses in carrying out the land reform policy. Not only interest rates from land and house renting and money lending must be reduced but also former debts of peasants were cleared out and surplus rents were repaid. These economic reforms would help to develop resistance forces and lead to continuous victories over the French aggressors (Đảng lao động Việt Nam, *An Outline History of the Vietnam Workers' Party* 66-71). No doubt, these policies effectively resulted in economic losses of the Indian migrants, who mostly earned their livings by real estate.¹⁷² The Party ordered to restore materials and equipment of foreigners, including Indians. Private houses and buildings were quickly confiscated (Marr, *Vietnam State, War and Revolution* 374-375). These activities must have triggered the masses exodus of 400 Indians out of northern Vietnam in 1954. Around 100 Indians remained to stay on must also have struggled to escape from the area in the face of DRV's imposition of closing sixty Indian firms in northern Vietnam in 1955 (Chanda 33-34). In short, the Party's initiatives to defend and regain young, independent Vietnam drove most Indian migrants physically out of northern Vietnam.

Number of Indians remaining in Hanoi after Điện Biên Phủ Victory was obviously insignificant, but nation-makers made them visible in attempts of promoting and constructing the socialist figure of Vietnam. Specifically, this population was constructed

¹⁷² In Report "Implementing the Land Reform" delivered at the First National Conference of the Vietnam Worker's Party (November 14-23, 1953), Trường Chinh listed that foreign residents who did not have means of earning their living but could work would receive shares of land but they did not have right to give away, pawn, or sell those distributed land (Trường Chinh, *Selected Writing* 488).

as enemies of the socialist revolution, which would justify North Vietnam administrators' practices of proletarianizing them –which means making them actually invisible. The socialist construction of North Vietnam took from the Indians who left behind all ways of living, eventually transforming them into members of the working class, the proletariat. Since its second Congress, the Party was to consistently hold on national reunification as the foremost motivation and the last end of attempts at constructing the *new* socialist figure of northern Vietnam.¹⁷³ As said, this construction constantly centered on eliminating private ownership of spiritual and material means of production,¹⁷⁴ which would engender the working class, the supposedly essential force of the socialist industrialization.¹⁷⁵ In other words, proletarianization of the mind and body of the whole population constituted the core of the socialist nation-making. DRVN officials perceived the Indian migrants as a typical challenge to that process of nation-making: this population has always been uncatchable and unpredictable. This doubtful perception occurred in the very early report of the newly-established Committee of Hanoi City about

¹⁷³ The mentioned chapter manuscript of Pairaudeau emphasizes that international relations with Soviet Union world that had driven the Party into ethnically narrow national projects since the 1950s formed the main cause of the large Indian refugee outflows from Vietnam. This analysis appears to echo much scholarship that sees associations and commitments of the Party to the socialist world, particularly, to the Soviet Union as the main reason for the socialist transformation in northern Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

¹⁷⁴ At the 3rd Congress, Hồ Chí Minh asserted that the socialist revolution required socialist industrialization which prioritized heavy industry. Nevertheless, Hồ Chí Minh emphasized the urgency of realizing socialist revolution in ideology to eliminate remnants of capitalism and feudalism. These targets of socialist attacks definitely included ideological preferences on private ownership. Thus, the core of ideological revolution is the construction of "socialist consciousness" which means the cognizance of sacrificing individual-interests, "petty bourgeois" living, to the collectivism and the class solidarity (75 *Years of the Communist Party* 161-329)

Lê Duẩn (1961) emphasized the Party's urgent task of "staging an ideological revolution within the Party and among the people" (Lê Duẩn. *Ibid.* 53)

¹⁷⁵ 3rd Congress defined the necessity of carrying out socialist industrialization in northern Vietnam: giving priority to develop heavy industry, striving to develop agriculture and light industry, "stepping up the socialist revolution in ideology, culture and technology" (*An Outline History of the Vietnam Workers' Party (1930-1975)*. Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976, 92)

attitudes of populations towards DRVN's first entry to Hanoi on October 10, 1954 after Điện Biên Phủ victory. As recorded, while the Chinese contributed fifteen decorated cars to the welcoming ceremony, the Indian migrants, as recorded, "were "lẻ tẻ" (separating) and lẫn (fused) into people" (Cục văn thư và lưu trữ nhà nước 435). The terms "lẻ tẻ" and "lẫn" connote Vietnamese nation-makers' perception of the Indians as being distrust of the socialist Vietnamese government. This way of making visible the Indians reflected, predicted and actually helped the consecutive principle of socialist nation-makers to construct appropriate bureaucratic methods to further present the Indian migrants as lingering in colonial capitalist mindset and need comprehensively proletarianizing.

As stated previously in this chapter, socialist nation-makers paid special attention to identifying and then proletarianizing minds of population subjects in the construction of the socialist figure of Vietnam. This attention aimed at ensuring the objective of any nation-making that is "the fullest alignment of habitus, culture, attachment, and exclusive political participation" of the subjects of the nation (Anderson, *The Spectre Comparisons* 70). In addition to the general objective, the socialist nation-building in North aimed at making northern Vietnam a firm, strong material, spiritual base of national struggles in the South. In this process, the Indians who left behind in Hanoi were seen to have posed the most challenging case for the objective of wide alignment of socialist minds. Hồ Chí Minh after the 1947 New Year greeting no longer included Ấn Kiều (Indian foreigners, overseas Indians or Indian migrants) in any of his mentions about foreigners living in Vietnam, while "Hoa Kiều" still reappeared with much care and hope. In his last New Year greeting (1969), Hồ Chí Minh still sent his greetings to Chinese population in the

North and the South (Hồ Chí Minh 321). Moreover, many Chinese embraced “a status of privileged outsiders” in North Vietnam (Xiaorong Han 1). This special “lenient” treatment towards the Chinese population did not go beyond the longstanding quest for nation’s sovereignty: DRVN saw its good relation to Chinese residents as a strategy to ensure China’s aids in struggles against America (HanXiaorong 1-36).¹⁷⁶ Archived reports of the Hanoi People’s Committee disclose that RDVN officials continuously agitated about the Indian residents’ political ambiguity and indifference while the Chinese were definable and manageable ideologically.¹⁷⁷ In 1954, Ban dân vận Hoa Kiều (Department of Propaganda over Chinese migrants), under the Hanoi Committee, issued a series of projects and reports on Chinese migrants. As shown in these documents, Vietnamese intellectuals were able to categorize Chinese population’s ideology. For example, in the document named “A detailed policies towards Chinese migrants when “inheriting and managing” Hanoi city” (Chính sách cụ thể đối với Hoa Kiều khi tiếp quản thành phố Hà-Nội), Ban dân vận Hoa Kiều classified Chinese migrants in different groups: group of members of Quốc Dân Đảng, of non-Quốc Dân Đảng, of underground

¹⁷⁶ Trường Chinh in his Political Report at 2nd Congress (1951) criticized mistakes off Vietnamese "comrades" in dealing "the questions of Chinese residents." These mistakes included: forcing Chinese residents to renounce their Chinese citizenship and forcing Chinese residents to join Vietnamese mass organizations, to make contributions and perform military duties like Vietnamese citizens. "All these mistakes have had an adverse influence upon the friendly relations between Vietnam and China" (Trường-Chinh. *Selected Writings* (New Impression). Hanoi: The Gioi Publishers, 398).

Hồ Chí Minh in his Report at the Special Political Conference (Đại hội chính trị đặc biệt) in Hanoi in March 27-28, 1964, acknowledged Chinese residents "along our people actively contributed to constructing socialism in the North and helped tighten Chinese-Vietnamese friendship" (Hồ Chí Minh *Vì độc lập tự do vì chủ nghĩa xã hội*. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản sự thật, 1970).

¹⁷⁷ Sources of this section are all from the Archive Center of Hanoi's People Committee. Focusing on Indians in Hanoi from 1945-1975, I could only relate documents issued in the later half part of the 1950s, the late 1960s, and the early 1970s available. During this time, exclusively the Indians were addressed as "Ấn Kiều" (overseas Indians). There is no document during the period, addressing Indians as sét-ty or xét-ty

affiliates of Quốc Dân Đảng, of intellectuals who work for America, and of members of Lý sư hội.¹⁷⁸ Vietnamese officials were also able to gain specific information about a number of teachers, classes and students in Chinese and French schools in Hanoi.

Whereas, for Indians, Vietnamese officials had only one vague conclusion: “Indians have a small school depending on the church (phụ thuộc vào nhà thờ).” The conclusion of the Indian school presents the anxious impotent of communist nation-makers in understanding the Indian population: “at present, it is not clear about the condition.”¹⁷⁹ In these reports, Indians were seen as unknowable and unpredictable subjects.

More critically, socialist Vietnamese nation-makers made the very few Indians as prominently visible in Hanoi in attempts of problematizing remains of capitalist material and mental practices. Specifically, the few Indians were seen greedy and cunning. In a report dated Feb 1, 1955, the Vietnamese official exaggerated that the Indian were successful in making fraud of the Vietnamese state. As counted in the report, Vietnamese officials trust the Indian members who say that they bring their goods out of Hanoi so that they could pay debts of taxes to the Vietnamese government. However, in the end, these Indians betray their promise, gradually moving their goods out of Hanoi and never coming back. Vietnamese officers elaborated, “the Indian gangs are successful in realizing their scheme of moving their property away, causing a considerable loss of property of Vietnam.” Moreover, socialist nation-makers constantly used aggressive

¹⁷⁸ File number 319, “Project, Reports and Documents by the Department of Propaganda over Chinese migrants and activities of propagandizing Chinese during the time of inheriting and managing the capital, 1954” (Đề án, báo cáo, công văn của tiểu ban Hoa kiều vận Hà Nội về chính sách đối với Hoa kiều và công tác vận động Hoa kiều trong thời gian tiếp quản Thủ đô 1954), Department of Foreign Affairs, Hanoi Administrative Committee).

¹⁷⁹ *Fond Ủy ban Hành chính Hà Nội* (1954), Number 312.

terms such as “their attitudes are distrustful” and “they secretly uprooted from Hanoi with their woods and machines” to emphasize the unpredictability of the Indian migrants. This unpredictability was further appreciated as politically uncooperative and unsupportive attitude towards the new regime. The report, dated Feb 1, 1955, contains a number of the term “honesty;” this repetition shows the nation-makers’ tendency of making the Indians appear as unpredictable and thus dangerous:

The Vietnamese government respects the freedom of the choice of the Indian people about their living places and believes that not all Indians want to go. Only a few want to go, thus, we *honestly* solve with two parts of subjects including goers and stayers like discussed.¹⁸⁰ I hope that those Indians who *honestly* want to stay, please *honestly* go to Trading Department (Sở mậu dịch) for negotiation (emphasis added)

The fervently nagging tone of the paragraph is useful in highlighting the Indian migrants solely as forever dangerous. Moreover, administrators dramatized the so-called cheating nature of the Indians by repeating the superlative sentence “there is no deceitful phenomenon like what Indians did!” and the story: the Indians utilize importing-exporting license to move their goods out [of Hanoi] and gradually leave permanently although they did promise to come back and paid tax to the new Vietnamese government.¹⁸¹

It is apparent that North Vietnam’s nation-makers strategically created images of the very few remaining Indians as remarkably powerful foreign businessmen in the aim of

¹⁸⁰ In the meeting on January 29, 1955, KhuatDuyTien responded the issues asked by the consular: “for those who wanted to stay here doing business, the TD will try to buy several unmarketable goods and help them change their business by introducing and offering them marketable goods... For those who wanted to back to their country, which relates to the issue of property moving, [we] will do more research and answer you later” (page 12, Document number 489)].

¹⁸¹ Quotes are from *Fond Ủy ban Hành chính Hà Nội* Number 312, p. 33.

stimulating public awareness about the need of wiping so-called remains of colonial capitalism, the central task of the ongoing class revolution. Particularly, the Indians' supposedly political detachment to the new Vietnamese government helped nation-makers to raise the image of Indians with the exploiting, individualist nature of colonialist and capitalist. In a report, dated January 26, 1955, DM, a high official of the Department of Foreign Affairs,¹⁸² pointed out that the exploitation of natural and economic resources in the host country formed the only goal of Indians migrants. He quoted one saying from a leading Indian resident to show that exploiting nature:

Vietnamese businessmen can bring goods back from "Hai-phong" because this is *their country*, they can try to take goods back. Indians like other foreigners staying here are only foreign businessmen, if it is easy to live, they can stay here to do business; if it is difficult, they can choose their own way of living (emphasis in original)

In this quote, the Indians reacted against the DRVN's practices of preventing them from bringing goods, machines and money out of Hanoi. As shown in the report, a group of 9-10 Indian businessmen constantly tried to Vietnamese officials to permit them to sell remaining silks in Haiphong so that they would have money to pay tax. However, this request always was in vain. In quoting the response of the Indian group leader, DM highlighted the term "their country" as an evidence of the Indian residents' indifference towards the ongoing nation-building project of DRVN. DM concludes that the Indian residents never find Vietnam as "their country," but only as a profit-making place. There was not any, as exaggerated by the Vietnamese officials, emotional, moral and cultural attachment between this population and the host country. That means, to the host country,

¹⁸² Names of high Vietnamese officials and leading Indian residents are omitted for security reason.

the Indian migrants have no attachment except the goal of exploiting resources and capital accumulation.

Additionally, socialist nation-makers particularly paid a special attention to the Indians in the aim of attacking lingering private property and trading money -- embodiments of capitalism. Most reports seem to have tended to overemphasize the Indian migrants' tactics of maintaining their property in the face of DRVN's fierce, fervent campaign of eliminating private ownership. In reports of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) about general foreigners, the case of Indian migrants is usually discussed separately in the matter of money. A report in *Fond Ủy ban Hành chính Hà nội* (1954) Number 312 and Number 498 contains the terms "particularly" or "especially" to start details about Indians holding on their ownership of money and other property.¹⁸³ Accordingly, socialist officials depicted that Indians protect their property in very defensive and aggressive ways. The case of Chalandas Bhagwandas (26 Hàng Ngang) is an instance: he challenged that he only paid taxes for goods that are sellable and of Lalco (2 Hàng Ngang), who indigently combated with the state officials in terms of his products' price and tax payments, asserting that he only brought tax if the state paid his

¹⁸³The report dated February 8, 1955 mentioned that the Indian consular, in his meeting with the officials of DFA, asked about the case of one Indian who had been captured in November 1954. This Indian smuggled 812 dongs and was "done a favor" of being fined only 40% of the amount of money he smuggled (*Fond Ủy ban Hành chính Hà Nội* 498, p. 18- 19) This report put aside a note on the Indians: "Particularly, Indians have been running business of many French Indochinese piasters" (*Fond Ủy ban Hành chính Hà Nội* 498, p. 13).

The report in November 1955 had a particular note about the Indian residents, who resisted the state's order of money exchange: "Especially, Indians have been running businesses of many French Indochinese piasters" (page 13)." The term "especially" (đặc biệt) in the report indicates the state's lasting doubt that the race of Indians became fixing signifiers of money cheating.

in general, state officials remained to associate the Indians with money-lending business those who were symbolized as greedy and bloodsucking.

goods with a price that is higher than his recently obligated tax amount. According to a report on February 1, 1955, a group of Indians confronted the DFA officials, requesting to be allowed to go to “other regions” for business; they sharply analyzed unreasonable points in the state’s policy: although they have been living in Hanoi for a long time and have been doing business for dozens of years, they have never confronted the economic challenges like the ones they face with the rise of the new government. They accused the new state of making their goods unmarketable: their silk and leather are unusable because all potential customers leave Hanoi for other regions; more than that, their goods quality becomes worse whereas the state also bans them from importing more goods. The Indian residents insist on, as seen in the report, their distrust of the new government's ability and will to bring them into better lives although not much long time ago, they once trusted this new regime. All these details make the few remaining Indians remarkably visible and audible, but they tend to have retained the image of Indians as bloodsucking foreigners.

Socialist nation-makers also amplified the image of an Indian government official to the point where he was seen as the typical mind of capitalists: greed for money or self-interest.¹⁸⁴ Vietnamese officials complained that this man “is always asking us about currency, currency rate, and waves of currency rate,” which shows that this man “must have connections with other Indian residents in Hanoi in smuggling money.”¹⁸⁵ More specifically, Vietnamese officials filled their reports about six meetings between this high Indian official and DFA officials with details about aggressive demands related to money and property. A report, dated March 31, 1955, details a case of an Indian nun who asked

¹⁸⁴ Name of this person is omitted for security reason.

¹⁸⁵ *Fond Ủy ban Hành chính Hà Nội* 498, p.18.

to change money; in this report, Vietnamese officials predicted that the request must have involved money smuggling of which the Indian official must have been an actor. As described, the Indian nun was ninety years old, living in Hanoi for dozens of years. The Indian official conveyed her request of exchanging 200 thousand French Indochinese piasters to go back to India:

The Indian nun wants to change around 600 thousand bank-dongs [currency of the new state] to French Indochinese piasters to go back to India. To go from Vietnam to India, the nun will have to go through Hai-Phong-Saigon, Singapore, Calcutta, New-Delhi. One person will spend 200 thousand French Indochinese piaster. The bank currency that the nun is having will give only around 150 thousand French Indochinese piasters.¹⁸⁶

In this report, the Indian official's calculation is densely rendered: the visibility of the Indians does not go beyond the images of greedy Indian migrants. In making the Indian official visible, the nation-makers aimed at attacking characters of “calculating and not firming” and “particularly stingy and mean in matters of money” – characters of capitalists. Indeed, administrative documents about the battle between socialist nation-makers and remaining Indian migrants participate into the central battle of the socialist construction: attacking and eliminating private ownership-oriented thoughts and practices. The depictions of the Indian migrants actually formed and conformed to a typical contemporary discourse about the political unpredictability, suspicion, and vampiric greed of the capitalist class. This class, as widely believed, was solely concerned with their property and their families, and would constantly delay and even resist the model of cooperative economy: Many capitalists hid and smuggled their property; many divided their big businesses into smaller ones and withdrew registered

¹⁸⁶Fond Ủy ban Hành chính Hà Nội 498, p. 26

business capitals; they all aimed at maintaining their property in the face of increasing elimination of the private ownership of means of production. These supposedly typical characteristics of the colonial capitalists – bloodsucking creatures -- to which the Indian migrants are seen to belong and to be the symbol of, hindered the contemporary socialist construction (Văn Tạo, Đinh Thu Cúc 212-213).

That the socialist nation-makers generated images of Indian migrants as colonial capitalists actually transformed this migrating population into an immediate enemy of the socialist revolution. Thus, the immediate consequence would be the proletarianization (“vô sản hóa”) of the Indians. “Vô sản hóa,” in Vietnamese history and language, also means the bankruptcy of capitalists and landlords to eventually make them workers in socialist factories (Trần Văn Giàu, *Tuyển tập*, 724; Đặng Kim Sơn 54-60). But in this case, “Vô sản hóa” largely refers to various bureaucratic techniques that DRVN government took to extract property from Indian residents, clearing out their private ownership, ultimately converting them into members of the working class. House and land confiscation constituted a way of proletarianizing the capitalist Indians. DFA’s reports demonstrate a critical fall of real estate ownership of the Indian migrants. Descriptions by DFA in the years of 1954 and 1956 (without file number and stamp)¹⁸⁷ about real estate of Vietnamese and other foreigners with French citizenship in Hanoi listed that Indian migrants with and without French citizenship owned 21 land pieces (houses) in Đồng Khánh, Hàng Ngang, Phúc Kiến, Phùng Hưng, Kỳ Đồng, Cửa

¹⁸⁷ These reports were in large size, extremely old and blurred; the dates of these reports was negligible. The years were provided on the in the cover of the file.

Nam, Trần Quang Khải, Phan Huy Chú, Khâm Thiên and Phan Bội Châu. Out of these 21 lands, 7 belonged to one Indian owner without French citizenship. These numbers have decreased in a later report titled "the List of Immovable Property Defined not to be correct like what French foreigners" (1954), it discloses that three pieces of land were sold to Vietnamese at the time of the return of the communist regime to Hanoi in October 1954. The decrease of Indian migrants' house ownership largely stemmed from DRVN's claim on the so-called ownerless, empty houses. Specifically, in October 1955, the Administrative Committee (AC)¹⁸⁸ announced that "The People Committee of the City will be on behalf of owners to manage their houses if the right of property owning is not clear and has not been judged by a judiciary office."¹⁸⁹ In another document, AC listed 16 ownerless Indians' houses, 369 French and French on citizenship, 227 Chinese and non-citizenship. The number of the so-called "ownerless foreign houses" increased in another report of that year: Indian 22; French: 428, and Chinese: 322. The increasing number of

¹⁸⁸ On the first days of "inheriting and managing" (tiếp quản thủ đô), while clearing enemy remnants, DRVN, on October 9 1954, set up Military Committee of Hanoi. This police and the military organ was responsible for suppressing and eliminating all conspiracies against the new government, protecting the security and order of Hanoi. This committee also solved all civil aspects of the new government. On November 4, 1954, DRVN decided to set up Administrative Committee (AC). The Military Committee was tasked to protect the city, repressing anti-revolutionary power, anti-the people government, destructors of the city economy and the Armistice and solving important political and economic affairs of foreigners. The Administrative Committee was subjected to re-distribute offices, employees and property to appropriate offices, to persuade French to return and commensurate for property they brought away or destroyed. AC was also in charge of maintaining administrative security in the city, organizing sub-city governments, realizing the central government's policies regarding foreigners, and following all orders regarding the city from the Center for the city's spiritual and material improvement (Cục văn thư và lưu trữ nhà nước. *Hà Nội sự kiện- sự việc (1945-1954) qua tài liệu lưu trữ*. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản quân đội nhân dân, 2007, 432-434)

¹⁸⁹ *Fond Ủy ban Hành chính Hà Nội*, Number 691, 1.

Indian migrants' houses that are presented as "empty" signals the increasing condition of being nationalized, which would impoverish the Indians.¹⁹⁰

Property tax is another effective instrument that DRVN took to weaken the supposedly economic power of the Indian migrants, eventually "vô sản hóa" them. This tax policy was seen to be the best to educate the Indians about collectivism, which would lead to their sacrifice of private ownership for the sake of the national economy. As planned, DRVN would buy goods of the Indian migrants so that this foreign population could have sufficient money to pay the newly established tax. Nevertheless, in the deepest meaning, this tax policy aimed at nothing than completely taking property away from the Indian residents. A report dated February 1, 1955 by DFA shows that DRVN only bought the Indian residents' existing property with the condition that these Indian residents also purchased goods of DRVN. Moreover, DRVN officials only bought a certain amount of goods that would bring Indian people an amount of money comparable to their obligated tax payment. In other words, Vietnamese officials bought the Indian residents' goods with a price that was only enough for these foreign residents to pay the

¹⁹⁰ Actually, DRVN's appropriation of "empty" houses aimed to fulfill living spaces of growing migration to Hanoi of farmers, workers, soldiers and leading intellectuals from forest, mountain and countryside areas to the city – those who participated in the Resistance. This objective was open in a document of AC:

To make sure to fill demands of state offices, particularly, to fill the minimum needs of specialist comrades (presently, [staying places] of the comrades were very tight while a major number of specialists increase in coming time). The Center Committee orders Hanoi to take at any cost at least 400 hundred houses most of which are of gone foreigners... The immediate task is taking at least 400 houses in the period, from now to May 1956. To gain such a number of houses, we have to enumerate houses of absent foreigners in order to discover and evaluate the ownership rights. Obtaining this amount of houses does not only satisfy the needs of houses among Central offices but also helps us have a chance to continue improving the work of protecting absent foreigners' property to contribute to developing the city management effects. (*Ủy ban Hành chính Hà Nội* Number 981, 5).

new property tax. Therefore, money that Vietnamese government spent to buy the Indian goods would, as planned, eventually come back to the Vietnamese government. In the end, DRVN would remove the capital and property ownership from the Indian migrants, transforming them into members of the impoverished class and eventually “vô sản hóa” them.

In addition to taxation, DRV government also immobilized circulation of Indian products and deactivated their businesses. This method definitely aimed at eliminating private, individual production and circulation of goods, eventually tying the Indian residents into the ongoing collective, co-operative economy. In the report dated March 7, 1955 by DFA, the Indians are bourgeois and individualist. In the observation of DFA’s officials, in 1955, Indian traders and manufacturing owners were trying to move their goods, producing tools and finance out of Hanoi, either to India or to southern Vietnam. They did not show any wills to remain in Hanoi or to participate in the socialist industrialization: Those who ran leather businesses plotted to move to other regions. In this report, the Indians were still possessive: they even resist the new regime with the new economy structure. Specifically, some Indian residents successfully persuaded Vietnamese officials to approve their business of exporting goods to other regions through Haiphong port. Later on, the DFA discovered that the Indian gradually and secretly brought their property out of the socialist territory. These details would result in a stricter prohibition of the Indian residents from moving property out of the area. At the same time, remaining goods of the Indians were not marketable, useless and then gradually devastated. Therefore, DRVN’s attempts to prohibit the Indian businessmen

from taking producing instruments and goods out of Hanoi was apparently the Vietnamese government' strategy to occupy or destroy these materials. The expected result would definitely be that the remaining Indian migrants went into bankruptcy; they would have no other way to live than to find work in socialist factories, which meant they would become proletarians. This result was revealed in DFA's report in 1962 and 1973 that are discussed in Chapter 1: most Indian residents are working in state-managed industrial sectors; their professional title is "thợ" (workers).¹⁹¹ This transformation meant that the Indian residents fused into the working class of the ongoing socialist construction; the Indian residents are seen to be completely under control of the new government (Box 1)

Socialist nation-makers did not only proletarianize "material means of production," they also paid attention to proletarianizing "spiritual means of production" so that the Indians would identify with Vietnamese working class; this meant, the Indian residents would by themselves narrate their live stories in tune with the historiography of the socialist national revolution. Take the "Autobiographic statement" (Lý lịch) of Cao Văn Tây, an Indian descendant, who obtained Vietnamese citizenship (1959) through naturalization as one example. In RVN, the assimilation of the Indians and other foreigners to Vietnamese culture constituted important criteria of being granted the Vietnamese citizenship, as partly discussed in Chapter 3. Based on "Lý lịch" of applicants, Ngô Đình Diệm government would justify the level of this cultural assimilation. In this form, applicants report names, hometowns, addresses, and ages of

¹⁹¹ See more in Chapter 1

their parents and children; applicants have to self-assess their occupations, merits, properties, previous convictions, political behavior, health condition, education and preferred Vietnamese names. These criteria reveal that the republic government wanted to examine how much foreigners assimilated to the Vietnamese culture through adoptions of names, birthplaces, and addresses of three generations. Additionally, open criteria such as previous conviction, political behavior, health condition, and education suggest the government's interest in applicants' will and wish to share Vietnamese political, moral, education and cultural identity. Diệm government's attention to the cultural assimilation is more explicit in reports of the Ministry of Justice about applications for Vietnamese citizenship. These reports are usually addressed to the Cabinet of President; they break down applicants' ability to become Vietnamese into seven points: current residency, the length of stay in Vietnam, morals, political attitudes, Vietnamese cultural assimilation, health condition and Vietnamese names. Cultural assimilation occupies the largest space in these reports, which also have information about applicants' knowledge of Vietnamese, writing and speaking Vietnamese skills and Vietnamese cultural practices are provided.¹⁹²

Meanwhile, DRVN apparently watched out the class viewpoint of applicants. As expected, information about biological, economic and political aspects of applicants must ensure their alignment into the working class (either peasantry or worker). And "lý lịch" was exclusively the socialist tool of "classification to make the population legible through state categories of economic and political class" (Leshkovich 149). Cao Văn Tây

¹⁹² For example, the report dated on January 23, 1958 by MJ about the application by Abdul Hamid – document 976- to BTP.HOV-

(Moritam) is the only Indian descendant, who received a Vietnamese citizenship decree signed by Hồ Chí Minh and held many high governmental positions. DRVN's governmental officials mainly investigated how Cao Văn Tây's autobiographic statement of religion, family background and economic condition made him potentially belong to the peasant class – the most important class in the “high socialist’ years” of Vietnam” (Leshkowich 149). Having working on the side of the Communist Party since he was a teenager in the early years of post-revolution,¹⁹³ Cao Văn Tây must have sensed what would be the best way to get him through the state's procedure of citizenship. In the Personal Record filled on April 10, 1959, on the question about family background, he answered: "poor class in the city" (lớp nghèo thành thị); his father worked in a number of jobs including guardian and his mother was a food vendor in *old* society.¹⁹⁴ Language skills and other forms of cultural assimilation did appear neither in the required form of autobiographic statement nor in aftermath investigations of socialist officials and police. Moreover, Cao Văn Tây depicted himself as a communist soldier, who suffered severe torture from "nhà tù đế quốc" (imperial prisons) for the national cause. Other reports by police officers examine the personal history of Cao Văn Tây; these reports primarily detail how persistent Cao Văn Tây is in his loyalty to the Party: he did not surrender enemies even when being severely tortured; his political views – communist alliance -- are consistent.¹⁹⁵ DRVN's project of proletarianizing minds of the Indian residents must

¹⁹³ As an intelligence agent of the Communist-led Secret Task Agency in South Vietnam, Moritam travelled and visited agriculture institutions throughout India and Burma during 1948 to 1953, searching for fungus that could destroy entire rubber tree fields of the French in South Vietnam. Moritam was the specialist of Asian relations for the socialist Vietnam government during the Vietnam War

¹⁹⁴ Personal communication with Cao Văn Tây's family members, September 9, 2014

¹⁹⁵ National Archive 2, *Fond Phủ thủ tướng*, Number 14299

have resulted in the disappearance of Indian migrants from Vietnamese historiography and society: the Indians are visible as members of the working class – proletarians. In short, the strategic visibilization of the few Indians as dominant bloodsucking colonial capitalists created a condition for the subsequent proletarianization – the invisibilization-- of these migrating people in Vietnamese historiography and society.

Such administrative practices of visibilizing and then invisibilizing the Indians for the socialist revolution created a condition for the rise of images of obsolete Indian capitalists in Vietnamese socialist realist literature. In return, the imagined death of bloodsucking Indians in this literature definitely participated in and promoted such process of invisibilizing the Indians.¹⁹⁶ The images of obsolete businessmen in Vietnamese socialist realist literature must have functioned as reminders about the so-called bloodsucking tradition of Indians – nature of colonial capitalism – a belief that has been established since the colonial time. Thus, these images potentially stimulate public excitements and attempts in invisibilizing the Indians in order to construct a new society without capitalists and colonialists, a condition for the ultimate national reunification. And, the visibility of dead Indian capitalists in socialist realist writings of Vietnam

¹⁹⁶ There was a physical disappearance of the India migrants from Vietnam, too. The report, marked "confidential," by the Police Department of Hanoi (Ministry of Police), dated on January 19, 1957, counted that, there were fourteen Indian people receiving travel documents. Out of these fourteen Indian travelers, five were permitted to leave Vietnam permanently. The reason for the exodus was that their lives in Vietnam were difficult and they wanted to return their home country to look for other ways of living. Five Indians were provided with the document that permitted them to leave and to return Vietnam. The report also reveals the outlawed foreigners. In the part about law violations of foreigners, regarding the point on travel violations: one Indian was captured because he wandered purposelessly through different provinces ("Hai-phong," "Hai-duong," "Ha-noi"). The other reason for capturing this man was that he crossed the border out without permission.

derives from a long tradition of Vietnamese intellectuals' belief in writing as a sharp ideological weapon in class, national struggles, a point that has been partly discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Accordingly, Vietnamese writers supposedly do not stand above and outside political, military struggles of their time; writing traditionally plays the role of a force and a weapon of defending the nation and of nation-building. This tradition, as briefly mentioned, is recalled and reconstructed by Đặng Thai Mai in *Văn học khái luận* (1944), the founding scholarship on literary theory of Vietnam. Đặng Thai Mai emphasizes the traditional association of literature and politics to elaborate civil, military duties of writers in social conflicts and movements. Accordingly, proper writers must be deeply aware of dominating social movements of their time and must play the role of pioneer fighters (57-65). This theoretical point also echoes in later elaborations of Đặng Thai Mai and other socialist theoreticians about literature and its role in the construction of socialist figure of Vietnam. Thus, the resurrection of obsolete bloodsucking Indians in Vietnamese writing of socialist realism does not mean to make voices and images of actual Indians audible and visible. Instead, such resurrection (re-visibility) aims at reflecting, highlighting and cheering the socialist nation-makers' work of proletarianizing the Indians remaining in northern Vietnam; such resurrection also aims at complimenting triumphs of DRVN in constructing the socialist figure – projected to the eventual independent, united figure -- of the Vietnamese nation. Thus, with socialist realism in Vietnamese literature, regardless of the appearance of the Indian characters, the Indians is invisible, given the supposed success of the proletarianization. This disappearance of the Indians fostered in and by socialist realism, as said, conforms

to the task of modern Vietnamese writing that is to function as an important ideological weapon of various colonial and colonial nation-building projects. Moreover, strikingly, as can be seen through the remains of the metaphor of bloodsucking Indians in administrative and literary resources, the socialist nation-building in North Vietnam is still a form of postcolonial nationalism. This means colonial imaginations about the Indians – unwelcome migrants, colonialists, and capitalists – still function in socialist nation-makers' definition and construction of the socialist revolution, but in a negative manner.

Box 1

There is not a document about Indian residents in years of the 1960s. However, through ethnography, it is possible to resume on how some policies about foreigner during this period affected Indian residents. For example, Mr. Hùng revealed in an interview on November 22, 2013 that his mobility was very much restricted.

If I traveled more than 14 kilometers far from Hanoi center without permission, I could be captured. Within the city, anywhere, which has the sign of crossed C, if we accessed, we could be captured. This happens since 1964 when the war against America became intensive. Places like military camps, cannon battlefield, electricity post and post-offices all had the sign of C letter at their office. Foreigners, who wanted to crossed by, must get permissions from authorities. The state was afraid of being taken photos of and taking video of. Times ago, it was very backward, I was a Pakistani, but every time I went to the Pakistani embassy, I had to go the police office first”

This narrative echoed the Decision number 1038 QD/UB dated May 28, 1968 about the mobility of foreigners in wartime. For the aim of protecting foreigners in wartime, maintaining the city order and security, the Administration Committee decided that “all foreigners were allowed to travel freely within the city except areas including prohibiting sign areas, area around bridges, harbor, port and airport and the area which was being bombed, was after bombed and at the time of recovering.” If foreigners want to go to those areas, they must get the permission paper from the People Committee of the City, which assigned its mission to the Police Department. Foreigners who want to go out of Hanoi must get permission from assigned offices. The arrangement of clauses in the quoted sentences was tricky due to the contradictions of the meaning “go freely in the city” and “except listed areas.” The listed areas encompassed massive places; particularly, the list did not end at the bomb-related areas, instead, it kept going. The appendix of the Decision detailed areas where foreigners were prohibited to go even to areas without prohibiting signs. These areas included Yên Phụ area (inside areas of all streets including Quán Thánh, Hồ Nhài, Hàng Than, Yên Phụ, Hồ Trúc Bạch). More than that, there were clear instructions of specific routines that the foreigners allowed accessing. Foreigners were allowed to walk from Hồ Nhài to the corner of the street Hàng than and Phạm Hồng Thái but not to enter the electric and water fountains. The other area that foreigners were not allowed to enter was exterior Red River including the dyke surface. The bombed area was not for foreigners, either. Foreigners who had permission to go to other locations or vice versa were allowed to cross the prohibited areas without getting other permission but they were not supposed to stay or stand within the prohibited area.

Chapter 5

The Nation and Images of Indians in Post-1975 Vietnamese Writing: Dead, Voiceless and Haunting Remains

This chapter analyzes images of the Indians in post-1975 Vietnamese literature inside and outside Vietnam with the aim of further revealing ways through which the Indians have been subjected to the Vietnamese intellectuals' nationalism. The emergence of presentations of new endearing Indian friends and Indian revolutionary heroes in contemporary Vietnamese writing further indicates the invisible status of the Indians in the national historiography, their visibility is being limited to the metaphor of bloodsucking Indians. In the writings of Hồ Anh Thái and other socialist writers, this metaphor not only is used to glorify and sustain the triumphant Party in leading the socialist, nationalist revolutions but also shapes the contemporary Vietnamese intellectuals' anxiety about postcolonial nation-building of Vietnam, in which discursive and economic practices from the colonial period remain.

1. Becoming Beloved Remains of a Lost Nation: Unreal Images of the Indians

Vietnamese writing during the Vietnam War describes and evokes the decay and disappearance of the Indians. Strikingly, these migrants appear as vital and intimate characters in nostalgic writings about “the olden days” of southern Vietnam of many overseas Vietnamese authors. Regardless of being set in South Vietnam, the overseas Vietnamese depictions completely differ from pictures of evasive and fearsome Indians in southern writing produced during the Vietnam War.

The Indian migrants that emerge in writings of exiled Vietnamese authors are thriving and tranquil; they appear as a natural intimate part of the lives of southerners; many Indians are depicted as living the decent lives of rural southerners. They include a goatherd (Ông Bảy chăn dê– Nguyễn Xuân Phước), a school guardian (Ông Bảy Chà – Huỳnh Hữu Trí), and a curry vendee (Về Bạc Liêu, nhớ gánh hàng rong (Returning to Bạc Liêu, Remembering Street Hawkers)– Lê Giang Trần). “Về Bạc Liêu, nhớ gánh hàng rong” is a reflection of Lê Giang Trần about his lost homeland; this piece appeared in the February 16, 2015 issue of *Người Việt*,¹⁹⁷ a newspaper for overseas Vietnamese in the United States. Lê Giang Trần, a prolific overseas writer and playwright, a contemporary of southern author Mai Thảo, recalls an Indian curry vendee back in his old days in Vietnam, who perceives Bạc Liêu, a southern province, as his homeland; he is so deeply rooted in the cultural life of poor villagers that he knows the favorite taste of each family and adds spices appropriately. In return, villagers embrace this foreign character of the curry vendee: his high aquiline nose, dark skin, high figure, curry smell and extraordinarily big curry pot. Kids in the village at first like making fun of him, but they soon get bored of doing so. The Indian vendee just gently smiles at every teasing comment. People start waiting for “chú Bảy Chà” vendee every afternoon to buy curried goods for special dinners. In the mornings, “chú Bảy Chà” sells curry foods in Nhà Rộng market; people buy his curry powder or order curried chicken, beef and goat for their ancestor worship. The piece ends in nostalgia for the Indian man’s curry, the soul of the lost essence of homeland.

¹⁹⁷ This online newspaper cannot be accessed in Vietnam.

Likewise, the short story “Ông Bảy chăn dê” by Nguyễn Xuân Phước depicts the Indian cowherd as a lost soul and haunting spirit of a lost homeland. The Indian man’s voice, his gaze and his appearance seem to permeate into every tree and soil of a lost heaven land:

Occasionally, there were sounds of bamboo trees, which were not strong enough to break the dead quiet. Instead, the sounds even enhanced the wildness and emptiness of the sleeping landscape--the ideal place for imaginings about ghosts who were able to drive the village people to sit in the middle of bamboo bushes without being injured or to make people eat cow patties while believing they’re eating glutinous rice cakes. At the time, the sound “be be be...” echoed from some bushes and grass masses. Then ông Bảy [Mr. Seven] appeared, towering over the landscape with a sharpened tree branch in his hand. He swayed the rod through the empty air, crying out “hô hô” only loud enough to startle sparrows, who would shoot out of nearby bushes and higher into the trees Mr. Seven, who raised goats and cattle, probably crept back to secret bags of time. But for me, he did not only feed his goats but also fed sceneries at the empty river bank and even fed a part of my childhood with his gentle glances, the sharpened tree branches hanging over the air, and his cries of “hô hô” [as though] of shepherds (Nguyễn Xuân Phước)

The paragraph is filled with ghostlike images and echoing sounds, making prominent fanciful portraits of the Indian, which eventually make the recollected Indian goatherd ever more haunting. By the same token, in Huỳnh Hữu Trí’s memoir “Ông Bảy chà,” the Indian school guardian is a typical rural southerner: simple, frank and easygoing. The narrator and the Indian man once shared a strong sense of belonging to one neighborhood; they helped each other to go through a poverty-stricken time. As usually, Grand Bảy Chà, as far as Huỳnh Hữu Trí’s memory can go, wears a sleeveless shirt and crumpled shorts, carrying a heavy chain with many keys. He works as a guardian of Tổng Phước Hiệp high school in Vĩnh Long – a southern province of the Republic of Vietnam. “In the olden days,” the narrator was a destitute math teacher living in a thatched tent

erected on the school grounds. The Indian guard's family lives nearby. Undeniably, this Indian man preserves something supposedly typical for his ethnicity, e.g. he stays away from those who eat buffalo, dogs and cats -- as well his race -- at the age of sixty, he is able to carry a big table and a chair on his shoulders. Nevertheless, the lifestyle of this Indian man is obviously typical of a southern farmer. Every day at sunset, he brings a big bowl of fish-head soup along with a bottle of rice vodka to the thatched tent. On the crushed but cleaned mat, flattened on the earthen floor, Trí and Bầy Chà sip wine together, sharing soup and philosophizing about human lives. In Trí's memory, Grand Bầy's bottle of wine is incredible. The bottle contained what is called a pip banana in Vietnam; pip bananas are larger than conventional American bananas and have seeds similar in size to apple seeds. The pip banana had been in the wine for an unknown time. The banana ferments in the wine, which is supposed to be good for the health of the drinker and to enhance the flavor of the wine. The banana remnant is too big to be taken out of the bottle, so it remains there forever, acting continuously as a base for new wines. It is likely that time perception in narratives of both Huỳnh Hữu Trí and Nguyễn Xuân Phát is elusive, which makes their constructed Indians infinite but ever-present. The resulting Indian images seem to have never been foreign to the Vietnamese lands; instead, they have been there, like other indigenous land and beings, since the time immemorial.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸ In the collection of short stories *Sài Gòn cười một mình* [Westminster: Annam Printing; 1990], Nhã Ca, a famous author from RVN, uses the image of Indian guardian in Saigon to suggest the loss of South Vietnam and the aftermath destruction of this city under the new regime. In this collection, the Indian guardian only exists in the memory of the narrator, who is attempting to recollect lives of Saigon in early days of the post-1975 era. At a collective building, a woman stays under the ladder working as a

A more romantic nostalgia for Indians' presence in the lost homeland pervades the novel *Cô Ba Trà: tiểu thuyết* (Glendale, CA: Đại Nam, 1996) by the prolific writer Xuân Vũ (1930-2004). During the Vietnam War, Xuân Vũ worked for some newspapers of the American Embassy in Saigon; the celebrated memoir about crossing Hồ Chí Minh Trail, "Đường đi không đến," published in 1973, brought him the National Award for Literature of that year. After leaving the country and settling down in the United States, Xuân Vũ kept writing and published a total of 90 titles.¹⁹⁹ In *Cô Ba Trà: tiểu thuyết*, Xuân Vũ portrays Indian food as a savior. Trà, the main character, quits her unhappy arranged marriage, intending to jump into a river to end her life. On the way to the river, Trà happens to see the Chetty pagoda, where people are holding a festival. She is surprised at people praying in front of a cow; she is foreign to the idea that human beings worship a four-legged animal. The thought of a cow as a source of meat makes Trà feel terribly hungry. Unfortunately, Trà does not have much money; she has to buy a cheap, stale pastry with her last coins but immediately throws it away because it is completely rotten. Trà realizes that the pagoda is offering food to the public; although the spicy Indian food shocks Trà right to her tongue, her nose, her eyes and her brain, she keeps chewing, testing and tasting until she fills her stomach. Feeling fulfilled, Trà starts watching children play-fight for Indian food; they eat happily. Suddenly, Trà runs into her ex-lover, named Ân [Indian?], a resident of the Chetty village. Feeling sympathy Trà's

voluntary guardian, which means that she does not ask for salary in the exchange of the legal staying in the region. The narrator recalls that was the place where the Indian guardian stayed in the past.

¹⁹⁹ Read Viên Linh. "Nhà văn Xuân Vũ (1930-2004) đi tập kết, về giải kết." *Người Việt* January 4, 2012.

unhappy marriage, Ân persuades her to stay in his village: “Please stay here with us, do not bother to go anywhere. “Chà và” rice is spicy but you will gradually be familiar with it as long as you keep eating.” Trà follows Ân to his house. Children in the village bring in many offerings from the Chetty pagoda including rice, meat and fruit. Ân arranges the foods in a flat, big rock under the ancient porcelain tree. The children urge Trà to eat and remind her: “They [Chetty] pray to cows; they only eat pork and goat. Whenever you eat cow, please do not come to the pagoda... Eating cow before going to the pagoda, the temple guardian will kick you out immediately. I do not know how they can nose you out like that.” The narrative is concluding: eventually, Trà is acquainted with curry food and converts into a resident of the Chetty village. Xuân Vũ obviously provides a picture of a serene, credible Chetty village, a place that his compatriot, Vương Hồng Sển depicted as a symbol of greed, collapse and inhumanity before 1975.²⁰⁰ Xuân Vũ’s and other exiled authors’ intimate images of Indian migrants in the setting of “Saigon cũ” (old Saigon)²⁰¹ obviously, provide alternatives to the image of greedy, rude, and foreign Indian moneylenders and guardians in pre-1975 southern writings.²⁰² More precisely, pictures of

²⁰⁰ In *Sài Gòn năm xưa* (1960), Vương Hồng Sển, describes the insufferable chà smell, the smell of “nị” (curried rice). See more in Chapter 7.

²⁰¹ In present-day Vietnamese, the term “Sài Gòn cũ” (old Saigon) refers to Saigon under the Republic of Vietnam. Similarly, the term “chế độ cũ” (old regime) refers to the Republic of Vietnam.

²⁰² In our continuous conversations with Mariamman, aged 82, in July 2014, Mariamman said she did not feel any public discrimination against her under any regime although they were aware that she was an Indian descendant. In both regimes, she worked as a financier; similarly, her sister worked as teacher. Mariamman is very proud of her Indian beauty, which had attracted a lot of men in her young age. Her husband, a famous Vietnamese historian and translator, listening to our conversations, smiled happily as though he felt lucky to get married to her.

tranquil, intimate Indian characters in overseas writings call into question the images of decaying and bloodsucking Indians that once prevailed in writing of South Vietnam.²⁰³

The existence of decaying, fragile Indian migrants (guardian characters) in South Vietnam's writings becomes more questionable, given that in Vietnamese writings published overseas; this population is visible and endearing. Nguyễn Đạt, a former student of the Saigon University of Literature, published his essays and poems in overseas Vietnamese newspapers and forums that were recently banned in Vietnam, including *Người Việt*, *Da Màu*, and *Tiền Vệ*. In his short memoirs "Người Ấn Độ ở Sài Gòn" and "Quán Givral ở Sài Gòn nay đã khác" published in *Người Việt* on November 12, 2012, and December 28, 2013, respectively, Nguyễn Đạt imagines the history of Saigon as analogous to the history of Indian migrants living in the city. This means the collapse of Indians in Vietnam is parallel to the collapse of the democratic, liberal Vietnamese nation. In the first piece, Nguyễn Đạt recalls an Indian Bookshop located on the sidewalk of the famous Eden Corner. The bookshop has all sorts of cheap paperback books published in America at the same time. In the second piece, borrowing voice of

²⁰³ Also in *Người Việt* (June 20, 2011), Ngành Mai, a Vietnam War veteran, reminisces about a lively presence of Indian movies in Saigon in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. He says that "Indian movies fill all cinemas in Saigon, and in other provinces; everywhere people see Indian movie star figures in front of cinemas." What impressed audience the most, according to Ngành Mai's memory were snake characters and ways that the conversations and songs in the movies were dubbed with Vietnamese. Some female audience even got faint and abandoned Indian movies because their snake characters. However, the vigor of Indian movies lasted only for several years in the face of storm-like invasions of Chinese movies. He used the image "Mr. Ba threw Mr. Bảy to streets" to indicate the domination of Chinese movies over Indian movies. Not until 1971, the national television podcasted *Lễ Vũ Ấn Độ*, a film document about the ritual of sacrificing a young girl to God. It is apparent that for Ngành Mai, the decline of Indian movies derived from the growth of Chinese movies instead from North Vietnam's involvement.

Shantanu,²⁰⁴ an Indian descendant born in Vietnam who left for another country after the Fall of Saigon, Nguyễn Đạt depicts two periods of the Indians' decline in Saigon. The first is in 1945 with the Revolution: many Indians left for France, leaving empty the streets that formed the so-called Little India in Saigon, including Tôn Thất Thiệp, Hàm Nghi, and Catinat streets. The second period is in 1975: the Fall of Saigon terminated all sorts of the presence of the Indians in southern Vietnam, including Hynos toothpaste, Indian movies in Long Phụng cinema, Chà pagodas, Chà lands, Bombay silks, Chà curries, Chà spicy cakes and Indian gate guardians.²⁰⁵ This termination also means, as Nguyễn Đạt explicitly writes, the end of Saigon, the Pearl of the East, and the era of “freedom and democracy.” It is easy to recognize a nationalist sentiment in the author’s construction of the Indians’ previous visibility and their subsequent decline after 1975. Similarly, in memory of Nguyễn Xuân Phát, author of the drama *Tình anh bảy chà* (1972), the Indian textile sellers with darker skins and weird accents convey lovable, cute sounds. He recalls that, in his lost homeland in Central Vietnam, a number of bright black men with extremely white smiles stand inside luxurious textile shops; they look like the advertising image for “Hynos” toothpaste brand.²⁰⁶ Nguyễn Xuân Phát also recollects

²⁰⁴ This is probably Shantanu Srivastava, who had lived in Vietnam for thirty years until 2013, as the second secretary of Indian Embassy until 1989 and then a businessman afterward. Read *Sài Gòn giải phóng online* October 4, 2013. Authorized July 8, 2009. Accessed December 15, 2015.

²⁰⁵ The exiled journalist Phạm Kim Vinh also recalled about his peaceful moments with an Indian guardian of Legrand de Lalireray (Đất Thánh Tây), a cemetery for westerners, in his online history textbook *Đệ Nhất Việt Nam Cộng Hòa*. This harmless India guardian formed a forgettable part of Saigon land in the author’s memory (*Giao cảm <http://giaocam.saigonline.com/HTML-P/VSPhamKimVinh/PhamKimVinhTTTaiLieuDeNhatVNCH.pdf>*).

²⁰⁶ The figure of a black man with white teeth in Hynos toothpaste tube obviously pervades public space and advertising television Saigon. Hynos was a very famous toothpaste branch. There was a folk song about this product among Saigonese: "Your teeth, your teeth are white like ivory due to Hynos

images of female sellers, who are beautiful with broad eyes and constantly yelling, “It is very cheap! 35 dongs, 35 dongs per meter!” The Indian sellers have a weird pronunciation, Phát remembers; they speak Vietnamese without tones and incredibly speedily, as though they want to combine all words of a sentence into a multi-sound word. They usually secretly murmur some mantra while they advertise their colorful textiles to customers. Vietnamese children hilariously tie their shirt tails into pig ear figures, wiggling them in front of the Indian businessmen until the foreigners angrily cast them away.

As the stories indicate, Indian characters in exiled southern writers’ writings form an alternative picture of the Indian migrants in southern Vietnam in the olden days. This picture is tranquil, intimate and sentimental: it puts to the test the “factuality” of pictures of Indians that used to pervade in southern writing during the Vietnam War: in earlier literature, the Indians are visible solely in the forms of decaying guardians and greedy bloodsucking moneylenders. Nevertheless, in a way, the alternative depiction in recent writings by exiled Vietnamese writers provides even more stories to highlight the metaphors of Indian characters in southern writing during the Vietnam War. First, the invisibility of beloved Indians in South Vietnam’s writing suggests that the constructions of collapsing, rude, and greedy Indians in this writing are subjected to southern

toothpaste. I love you or I love the paste or I love brother black Bảy Chà. I love you, I also paste, I also love brother black Bảy Chà" (Răng em, răng em trắng muốt như ngà, nhờ kem Hynos mà ra. Anh yêu em, hay anh yêu kem, hay anh yêu anh Bảy Chà da đen. Anh yêu em, anh yêu luôn kem, anh yêu luôn anh Bảy Chà da đen... -May 31, 2015 *Sài Gòn Giải phóng* online <http://www.sggp.org.vn/vanhoavanngho/2015/5/385227/#sthash.aZ6dFWl2.9IpIkEdi.dpuf>) However, it is ambiguous if the figure was an Indian or an African although it is called Chà và.” The figure ethnicity is varied in authors.

intellectuals' national responsibility to mobilize the democratic revolution by criticizing people in power. In the context of slow economic reformation and overwhelming foreign dependence, provoking class and national struggles must be more urgent. Thus, images of Indian migrants as "bloodsucking" and "decaying" prevail in contemporary literature. According to the literary theoretician Đặng Thai Mai in the year of 1948, when Vietnam was not yet politically and geographically divided, writers sacrificed topics of their interest to focus on topics that were more politically urgent in their time. Đặng Thai Mai urges that writers terminate their passion for apolitical topics (e.g. individualism and romanticism) and write more immediate propaganda for the anti-French Resistance (139-151).²⁰⁷ Second, the invisibility of a beloved, vivid Indian population in South Vietnam's writing must have been related to the dominating political ideology of Vietnamese national homogeneity. As said in Chapter 3, Ngô Đình Diệm and the following republic regimes constantly aimed at national homogeneity,²⁰⁸ and in that prospect, depicting the Indian migrants as a dear, admirable population must have been seen as politically incorrect in the olden days, or conversely, construction of the image of Indians as bloodsucking foreigners indeed develops the public's awareness of national sameness and cohesiveness. Actually, the invisibility of a topic, and simultaneously the visibility of some other theme, is not new in the Vietnamese literary practices. Specifically, in

²⁰⁷ As said, Nguyễn Văn Trung explained in *Lược sử văn học* he knows pre-Vietnam War scholarship of Đặng Thai Mai and other northern intellectuals.

²⁰⁸ In the high school textbook *Giáo dục công dân, lớp đệ tam* (Saigon: Yên Sơn xuất bản, 1969), authored by Ngô Đình Độ and approved by the Ministry of Education, "nation" (quốc gia) was defined as a homogenous organization that was in tune and in similarity in terms of soul and situation. Specifically, people in a nation share the same historical condition, the same language, the same religion, the same customs, the same lifestyle and a same civilizing level, thus, they easily sympathize and love each other. Because of being completely similar to each other, people easily consolidate and help each other (9-10)

addition to the national responsibility of writers, the fear of the contemporary government censorship also forms a cause of such visibility and invisibility. This fear is elaborated in *Văn chương nam bộ và cuộc kháng Pháp (1945-1950)* by Nguyễn Văn Sâm (1972). Nguyễn Văn Sâm describes that Southern writing during the First Indochina War is filled with patriotic sentiments and anti-foreigner resentment while lacking the topic of class struggle. The national hegemony is the common goal of all parties who participate in the War, whereas that how economic reform and class struggle take place will depend on the party that would win and take power after the War. In the context of the existence of conflicting political parties (e.g. Cộng sản, Quốc dân đảng, Tân dân chủ, and Đại Việt) during the First Indochina War, nationalist sentiments would form the only safe choice through which authors could concretize their role as the minds and conscience of the nation. Similarly, the resulting ways of making the Indian migrants visible as bloodsucking beings and decaying entities in South Vietnam's writing is political; it is limited to a dominating ideology of Vietnamese homogeneity and hegemony.²⁰⁹ In this way, it is more possible to say that South Vietnam's writings further make the Indians invisible regardless of the images of them that prevailed in writing of that time.

More critically, images of Indians in overseas Vietnamese writing further confirm the nationalist sentiments of Vietnamese intellectuals in their constantly making invisible

²⁰⁹ This might be also the reason of present-day rising positive accounts about the Indian migrants in the past of Vietnam. In the memoir "Lá huyết thư" (1995) by the famous novelist Minh Chuyên, the Indian guardian appears as a good character. The memoir recounts about the nationally honored martyr Nguyễn Đình Chính, who was sentenced to death by the French government in 1949. In this memoir, the Indian character plays the role of a prison guardian where Nguyễn Đình Chính was imprisoned. This Indian guardian helps Chính to bring into prison a picture of Ho Chi Minh; this Indian guardian follows Chính's words, taking a series of photos of Chính lying down on the prison floor with the photo of Ho Chi Minh on the prison wall (Minh Chuyên. *Người không cô đơn*. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Hội Nhà văn, 1995).

or visible (eventually invisible) the Indians. Specifically, exiled Vietnamese authors – intellectuals of former South Vietnam -- create endearing images of Indian migrants to highlight their resentment about the loss, the death, the end of a beloved nation. More precisely, intimate images of Indians constitute soul and sentiment of the Vietnamese nation that no longer exists, exactly that lost to the communist government.²¹⁰ It is likely that these exiled intellectuals remain in the Vietnamese tradition of defining literature as a reflection, a reminder and a weapon in the national struggle. Vietnamese literary theoreticians contend that “good” literature follows, reflects and supports dominant political, economic projects and ideologies of the regime out of which it is born. Nonetheless, the fate of the nation, particularly national sovereignty and homogeneity, still constitutes the overriding, ultimate goal of “good” Vietnamese writers. Moreover, as suggested in Chapter 3, although South Vietnam government directed its public minds to anti-communist struggles, southern intellectuals constantly resented prevailing foreign intervention in contemporary economic, cultural life and believed that Vietnamese

²¹⁰ Duyệt Anh, in his memoir *Trại tập trung, hồi ký* (California: Xuân Thu, 1988), remembers a mixed Indian security guy, named Cung Cù Đậu, who worked for the re-education camp that the author suffered in the early 1980s. This Indian security was a former skydiving major of The Vietnam Air Force (Republic of Vietnam Military Forces). This Indian mixed security endlessly abused, beat and insulted prisoners, many of who were his former acquaintances in South Vietnam. This former military official grabbed foods and all other items of prisoners. Even Duyệt Anh narrates that this man one ate human livers. The focus on rude, corrupted Cung Cù Đậu is more the author's criticism of the rudeness and corruption of so-called re-education camps in particular and the new regime in general. In other words, the construction of wild, greedy, cunning Cung Cù Đậu, regardless having a real model Phạm Đình Cung), grew out of the authors' imagination of Vietnam's collapsing history since the time of the communist regime.

The narrative of Lê Giang Trần explicitly holds in the resentments towards the communist regime in the image of the old Indian vendee. In the piece, the narrator has a homologue that after the Fall of Saigon, whether his intimate, old Indian vendee registers to come back to India or stays on in Vietnam to "suffer" certain bad treatments of the new regime. The anxiety that centers on the fate of the Indian vendee suggests an obsessive fear and distrust over the current Vietnamese regime.

literature must remind Vietnamese compatriots of the nation's struggle for independence. Nguyễn Văn Trung attempted to synthesize, analyze and retain the traditional association of literature and nation in the literary life and education of South Vietnam. In *Lược khảo văn học*, he asserted that the nation assigns to authors the mission of preserving its soul and voice; the existence of a regime is always temporal, but the national soul stays forever; authors are responsible for maintaining the national identity (the language, sentiment (“tình tự”), and lifestyle); authors must serve the nation, its political sovereignty and cultural homogeneity, rather than a regime or a government (170-174). Additionally, regarding literary education, many southern intellectuals explicitly attacked the so-called “anti-nationalism” (phản dân tộc) of contemporary school syllabi. Nguyễn Văn Trung, in the journal *Tự quyết* (volume 4, November 1972), and Bảo Cự, in *Giáo dục Nguyệt San* (volume 57-58, April, May 1972), criticized the contemporary textbooks ignored all anti-French modern works and anti-Chinese medieval writing. Specifically, Trung and Bảo Cự commented that current literature syllabi just produced citizens who only desired luxurious, exotic goods and thus always felt inferior and slavish to foreigners; Bảo Cự fervently called for more literary works that were able to provoke patriotism and anti-foreign sentiment, demanding that education of literature must be a tool to feed and sustain in public the patriotism and iron wills of fighting and sacrificing for the nation.²¹¹ Carrying abroad earnest struggles for national sovereignty and homogeneity in the olden days of Saigon, exiled southern authors must have implied their national sentiments in the creations of endearing Indians. Tranquil and intimate images of

²¹¹ Read more in Trần Văn Chánh.

Indians reveal overseas intellectuals' worries about the national homogeneity that is seen to be in danger under the new communist government. Apparently, even in overseas Vietnamese writing, images of Indian migrants are made visible in attempts of exiled writers at taking responsibility for the purity and hegemony of Vietnam. The resulting images of Indian migrants in Vietnamese historiography are more metaphorical than actual. Put it differently, the actual visibility of the Indians is not the aim of literary descriptions about them; their visibility is raised solely for the visibility of Vietnamese intellectuals' national responsibility and in this way, the Indians are no way visible and audible in Vietnamese writing and society.

2. Becoming Hateful Vestiges of Decayed Colonialism vs. Patriotic Heroes of the Revolution: Dead, Voiceless Images of the Indians

Regardless of attempts to reform Vietnamese economy and politics, the Party's theoreticians still maintain in the so-called Marxist-Leninist ideology of literature; accordingly, literature is a form of the superstructure, and it is able to drive and be driven by the material conditions out of which it is born. In the 6th Party Congress (1986), the congress that lifted up reform policies, the Party asserted that no other ideological form other than literature could effectively foster "healthy sentiment" and "renew people's thinking habit [sic] and way of life" (*75 Years of the Communist Party* 744). The 7th Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam reasserted the material function of literature in its 4th Meeting on January 14, 1993. The meeting resolution, "Tasks of Literature and Culture in Coming Years" (04-NQ/HNTW), contains Hồ Chí Minh's

saying "culture and art are also a battle; artists are soldiers in that battle," which specifically emphasizes the "fighting capacity" of literature. The meaning of the term "fighting capacity" does not go beyond the traditional belief in the practical impact of literature on material reality and ideology. Particularly, the document insists that literature forms new Vietnamese people while fighting against any hindrances to the nation's socialist construction and independence (Đảng cộng sản Việt Nam *Văn kiện hội nghị lần thứ tư* 54-55). Alongside the Resolution 04-NQ/HNTW, the Resolution 23-NQ/TW, issued on June 16, 2008, by the Politburo, is the second important document since the time of Đổi mới in the Party's stance on literature as a sharp ideological weapon (Tô Huy Rúa 13-19). Accordingly, literature is expected to construct the Vietnamese people's morals to serve the "industrialization and modernization" of the country and to build as well as to defend the socialist Vietnamese nation. This expectation accords to economic and political challenges, as defined in the Resolution: for full industrialization by 2020, the Party, the state and the people have to fight against the "old," the "backwardness," "the bad" and "degeneration." The Resolution further argues that foreign enemy forces continue developing schemes of "Peaceful Evolution" to destroy the cultural, moral and political solidarity within the Party and the nation.²¹² In general, the quest for national sovereignty and homogeneity remains the central concern of present-day nation-makers in the face of the risks of foreign intervention and rising public distrust of national solidarity and the associated Party's sole leadership.

Accordingly, the nation-makers continue making literature an instrument of sustaining

²¹² This document is retrieved from the authorized website of the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism <http://www.bvhttdl.gov.vn/vn/vb-qly-nn/4/564/index.html>

public memory about victories of national and class revolutions associated with the Party's eminence.

In this historical context, Indians are made visible as “vestiges” of decayed colonialism in contemporary Vietnamese writing; they are capitalists and foreign invaders in the olden days of Vietnam when French colonialism still dominated and feudalism lingered on. For example, *Đường phố Hà Nội (Lịch sử - Văn vật – Thắng cảnh)* (1979) by Nguyễn Vinh Phúc²¹³ and *Bách khoa thư Hà Nội: Kinh Tế* (2006) by the Hanoi People's Committee offer lively images of bloodsucking Indian moneylenders in accounts of Hanoi in the colonial time. As the authors describe, at that time, Indian moneylenders promoted the accumulation of capital and land by French colonizers and native capitalists and landlords. In the olden days, Indian textile sellers intervened into the locals' thriving businesses of textile making and selling. Before French colonialism, as delineated, Hàng Đào was prosperous with abundant local silk shops; traditional silk villages around Hanoi were lively and rich; the public was fond of vivid, colorful textiles from those villages, but that prosperous life terminated with the coming of the French colonizers and concurrent domination of the Indian businessmen. In the publication of the Hanoi People's Committee, the growth of Indian businessmen is seen as a threat to the locals' businesses: at first, there was only one Indian shop of French textiles, and then two, three, and four Indian shops emerged; then they occupied dozens of shops (420).

²¹³ Nguyễn Vinh Phúc (1926-2012) is a famous historian about Hanoi; he is honored as “công dân thủ đô ưu tú” (excellent citizen of the capital).

Presently, a series of publications depict the figure of Indian soldiers of the “British Empire” in Vietnam during 1946 and 1947. Gurkha and “Chà chóp” appear as hateful foreign enemies in writings about anti-colonial struggles in southern provinces. These writings include: *Bình Xuyên (Người Bình Xuyên*, Nguyễn Hùng, 1988; *Bảy Viễn – Thủ lĩnh Bình Xuyên*, Nguyễn Hùng, 2004²¹⁴), *Thủ Dầu Một (Những năm đầu kháng chiến: hồi ký về chi đội 1 trung đoàn 301 và dân quân Thủ Dầu Một*, 1999) and particularly *Sài Gòn (Lịch sử Sài Gòn, Chợ Lớn, Gia Định kháng chiến, 1945-1975*, Trần Hải Phụng, 1994; *Ông họa Đồ Lanh*, Minh Kha, 2003; *Cuộc kháng chiến chống Pháp của đồng bào Gia Định*, Phạm Văn Chiêu, 2003 and *Xếp bút nghiên lên đường*, Huỳnh Văn Tiêng, 2002).²¹⁵ In these writings, the Indian soldiers are seen to serve the British army that supposedly supported the return of the French colonialism. The dominant scenes in these writings contain images of Vietnamese soldiers and commoners who struck, shot and grabbed weapons from “Chà chóp.” Obviously, the depiction of Indians as political enemies aims at glorifying Vietnamese soldiers’ and population’s brevity and patriotism; this depiction also provokes in the public mind the endless task of defending

²¹⁴ Interestingly, this historical novel contains details related to Hăm Hà, a famous intelligence of DRVN; in this novel, Năm Hà was a leader of a pro-communist big troop in Bình Xuyên (Bình Xuyên inter-area army). According to the historian Trương Võ Anh Giang, Năm Hà is one Indian descendant. Nevertheless, Năm Hà completely denies his Indian background. In a book about prisoners of colonial prisons, published by the District 10' People Committee, Năm Hà is depicted to have been captured in 1966 and sentenced 15 years in jails. He suffered severe tortures at the General Police Station and the Prison Côn Sơn until 1971, when he was released. The historian Trương Võ Anh Giang recalled that after 1975, Năm Hà worked for the Department of Personnel of the District 10. His relatives, who fled to France during the Saigon Fall, frequently sent him cloth, food, and domestic facilities. His "original hometown" (nguyên quán), as mentioned in the book, was Đà Nẵng, a province of central Vietnam.

²¹⁵ *Bình Xuyên People*, Nguyễn Hùng, 1988; *Bảy Viễn – Leader of Bình Xuyên*, Nguyễn Hùng, 2004²¹⁵), *Thủ Dầu Một (Early Years of the Resistance: Memoir about the Military Maniple 1 of Regiment 301 and people and militants of Thủ Dầu Một*, 1999) and particularly *Sài Gòn (History of Resistance in Sài Gòn, Chợ Lớn, Gia Định, 1945-1975*, 1994; *Đồ Lanh Painter*, Minh Kha 2003; *Anti-French Resistance of Gia Định People*, Phạm Văn Chiêu, 2003 and *Sacrificing Pens, Joining Battles*, Huỳnh Văn Tiêng, 2002

the nation. But, why do contemporary writers choose to revitalize the image of British-Indian soldiers in the present-day? The choice must relate to the special condition of Vietnamese history in its early infant phase of independence; as described by Nguyễn Văn Sâm, in addition to the communist Party, other political groups scheme to lead the coming independent Vietnam. Emphases on victories of communist soldiers over the Indian troops further assert the goodness and effectiveness of the Party leadership.²¹⁶ This political stance is made explicit in *Người Bình Xuyên*, a historical novel full of images of *Chà chóp* and *Chà* moneylenders: "for Vietnamese people, under the flags of socialism and nationalism, all other ideologies will lead to the abyss" (7).

Similarly, depictions of Indian migrants as capitalist exploiters and feudal landlords aim at imprinting in the public memory the role of the Party in bringing into existence the present-day independent, socialist Vietnam -- the Party-led Revolution terminates Indian capitalists' and other foreigners' economic domination in cities of Vietnam. In the encyclopedia about Hanoi, authored by the Hanoi People's Committee, places once occupied by Indian shops are replaced with "hiệu tạp hóa" [bách hóa] (grocery stores), the symbol of the socialist Vietnamese economy.²¹⁷ A celebratory tone

²¹⁶ This historical period is still seen vague in Vietnamese historiography because the division of political parties and groups was not completely clear. People attempted to join groups to fight against French and British but they did not know which political ideology they were following (see more in Natasha Pairaudeau and Chi Pham. "Indochina's Indian Dimension." *End of Empire, 100 Days in 1945 That Changed Asia and the World*. NIAS press, 2016). During the fieldwork in summer 2014, Cao Văn Tây attempted to rewrite the history of this period to recover his role as the first leader of a pro-communist intelligence. Until he died in 2013, this manuscript was not published.

²¹⁷ Nhâm Trần. *Có một Việt Nam như thế: đổi mới và phát triển kinh tế*. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Chính trị quốc gia, 1998.

on postcolonial nation-building emerges in depictions of the collapse of Indian businessmen's regime in Hanoi. For instance, present-day native sellers in Hàng Đào are highly educated; they dress in beautiful clothes and are willing to sell at low prices; which mean: present-day locals are less greedy and more civilized than the Indian businessmen.

Obviously, present-day nation-makers attempt to sustain the image of a linear history of Vietnam that evolves from feudalism to capitalism and then to the ultimate present condition of socialism (Box 1). In this imagination of history, bloodsucking Indian characters embody the old, dead colonial figure of Vietnam; particularly, the "bloodsucking Indian businessmen" are the remains of French colonialism. Stories related to these remains are recalled to stimulate public pride and gratitude towards the supreme leadership of Party and the associated national independence and prosperity. In general, in spite of containing the common image of dead past Indian migrants like that in overseas Vietnamese writing, mainstream Vietnamese writing honors the victory of the present-day nation under the Party leadership. Moreover, depictions of the Indians as a past dead of a socialist, independent Vietnam indicate the principle continuity of socialist realism in post-1975 Vietnamese writing. Accordingly, the Indian migrants forever belong to the failed, the collapsed, and the dead -- "the vestiges of the old society" (*75 Years of the Communist Party* 413) -- in recent socialist realist writing of Vietnam. The image of dead past Indian migrants would then in a negative manner sustain patriotism and socialism and would unite people in a common will of constructing and defending the motherland, as asserted in the 4th Congress (*75 Years of the Communist Party* 412).

For this quest of the nation, Indians exclusively appear as eternal imagined enemies of the national independence and the working classes. Moreover, these enemies dwell only in a no-longer existing history of Vietnam but need constantly reviving as a reminder about the ongoing leadership of the Party.

In addition to fostering the condition of no-longer existing bloodsucking Indians - capitalists, landlords, and foreign invaders -- post-1974 Vietnamese writing also engenders the forever presence of Indians who have aligned themselves with the Party's national projects; these Indian characters are erected as heroes in national revolutions. The first case of these heroes is Grand Bibi, an eighty-three-year-old wounded revolutionary veteran. Heroic achievements of Grand Bibi appear in a number of journalistic and literary depictions writings including *The People* newspaper (báo *Nhân dân*),²¹⁸ the *Hồ Chí Minh Committee of the Vietnamese Fatherland Front* (Ủy ban Mặt trận Tổ Quốc Việt Nam, thành phố Hồ Chí Minh) news,²¹⁹ *Liberating Saigon* (báo *Sài Gòn giải phóng*),²²⁰ the *Youth News* (báo *Tuổi trẻ*),²²¹ and Ho Chi Minh Television.²²² They depict the young Bibi as an example of the young Vietnamese who

²¹⁸ Thê Gia, Vương Liêm. "I Want to Become a Vietnamese" (Tôi muốn được là người Việt Nam). *Nhân dân*, July 20, 2005.

²¹⁹ Vương Liêm. "A Woman Having a Pakistani Nationality Became a Vietnamese Wounded Veteran" (Một phụ nữ quốc tịch Pakistan trở thành nữ thương binh Việt Nam). *Ủy ban Mặt trận Tổ quốc Việt Nam, thành phố Hồ Chí Minh*, July 21, 2010.

²²⁰ Vương Liêm. "A Pakistani Woman Became a Vietnamese Wounded Veteran" (Một phụ nữ Pakistan trở thành thương binh Việt Nam). *Sài Gòn giải phóng*, July 28, 2010.

²²¹ Phạm Vũ. "Whether I Die or Live, I Want to Die and Live with Them [My Cadres]" (Sống chết vẫn bên cạnh các anh). *Tuổi trẻ*. July 26, 2005

²²² *The Dream* (Điều nguyện ước.) *Ho Chi Minh Television* 9, December 8, 2005, 7:25AM

plays the role of “the vanguard force” in nation-building and defense in different national struggles. The July 28, 2010 issue of *Freedom Saigon News* (Saigon Giai Phong) highlights Grand Bibi's sacrifices for the Vietnamese nation at her very young age:

At the age of thirteen, being far away from her father and having to stay with her adopted mother (the female teacher), she happily follows the Viet Minh [communist cadres]. Bi Bi follows her adopted mother in taking revolutionary activities at outlying areas of Gia Dinh city... Bibi instructs cadres in how to get in and get out of Saigon-Gia Dinh. She supplied chemical substances, food, cloth and many other goods for the revolution. (Vương Liêm)

Vương Liêm is a high profile socialist writer. He uses words such as “Viet Minh,” “revolutionary activities,” “cadres,” and “revolution” to name Grand Bibi’s thoughts and activities of dozens of years ago. These details aim at constructing an image of Grand Bibi as exclusively ideological that serves to embody the goodness of the Party. In a more lyrical and emotional narration of her past, Đặng Thị Tư, a high rank female police officer in HCMC, also interprets Bibi’s unmarried status as her devotion to the Vietnamese national revolution. In Tư’s narration, the image of Grand Bibi completely conforms to orthodox discourses of the Party about the history of the national struggle:

I visited her one day at the first-floor apartment located on 277 Le Thanh Tong Street. She welcomed me happily. She smiled, revealing the wrinkled skin of a seventy-seven-year-old childless and husbandless woman. She committed her whole life to the revolution, the party and the ideology of Ho Chi Minh (...)

Answering my question on what she learned from the Uncle [Ho Chi Minh], she said that she "learned humanity and sacrifice... He sacrificed his whole life for the freedom and liberty of the Nation and for the Happiness of the People. Following him, I abided with the Party. I give up parts of my blood and body for it without regrets. Completely absorbed with the revolution, my greenness passed by without notice." (Tư's contribution to the call for papers on the topic of "Following Ho Chi Minh President's Moral Mirror" (Làm theo tấm gương Chủ tịch Hồ Chí Minh), 2008)

The paragraph is full of propaganda terms such as "sacrificed his whole life for the freedom and liberty of the Nation and for the Happiness of the People" and "completely absorbed with the revolution." The resulting image of the Grand Bibi plays the role of a "sharp" ideological instrument whose subjectivity is minimized in the aim of highlighting the rightness and goodness of the Party. In a number of conversations in 2014, Bibi noted that injuries from bombings in 1950 caused her not to be able to have sex; a steel tube has stayed in her sexual organ since that time to maintain her ability to urinate; this injury is the main cause of her single life. However, Đặng Thị Tu seems to selectively emphasize the Grand Bibi's devotion to the Vietnamese national revolution as the cause of her single life.

In a similar way to that of Đặng Thị Tu and Thanh Thủy apparently marginalizes Grand Bibi's accidental involvement in the Revolution in her publication in the August 31, 2010 issue of *News Column, the Communist Party of the District 1* (Ho Chi Minh City Communist Party):

Bibi has never thought of herself as a foreigner. Her father is Pakistani; her mother is Vietnamese. However, Vietnamese blood flows strongly within her body... The [first Indochina] War happened. Her family drifted to the southern part of the land. Her happy childhood nearly stopped when her mother got sick and passed away; her father got married to another woman. However, it was fortunate for her that she had an adopted mother – her wonderful second mother. This woman taught her during her elementary school years and filled the motherless child's unfortunate fate with the grand love of an ideal mother.

One thing that she was not expecting was that her adopted mother was an underground communist soldier. Due to her love for her adopted mother, she occasionally helped her bring food, letters, documents and news to some cadres without knowing that she was gradually stepping into the revolutionary road... Answering my question on why she became a communist revolutionary, she simply answered: "I love my mother, so I love the revolution."

The paragraphs are full of elusive and sentimental terms including "grand love," "Vietnamese blood," "a love for," "a wonderful mother," and "an ideal mother." These phrases ostensibly aim to celebrate the humanity and moral aspect of the Vietnamese national revolution. They obviously hide one raw actuality: Bibi joined the revolution by accident. In our conversations, Grand Bibi describes her revolutionary involvement as rather a childhood game than an ideologically serious choice. She recalls nothing about the secret base; wherein common public retellings, she was brought up by communist cadres while her father was away. Things she remembers are joyful experiences that had nothing to do with the revolution: her adopted mother put her on a bike and rode her through green fields in which buffaloes were eating grass and big black leeches kept swimming. Thanh Thủy's story does not contain details about Grand Baba's exotic beauty that must have played a key role in her accidental association with the Revolution. In addition to being a beautiful girl, little Bibi embraced the charm of her "Indian" physical appearance and her vivacious and adventurous nature. The Western figure of Bibi helped her succeed in assisting comrades pass French security and safely bring documents in and out of the Revolutionary Field in Saigon's suburbs. In our conversations, she proudly tells me that comrades of the time said that she was as beautiful as an Indian actress: they complemented her full red lips, white skin, and big, round, black eyes; her skin was silky; her hair was naturally curly and flowing. I asked about her skin color, and she was delighted, saying that she descended from "Bombay Indians," who were typically white and looked like Westerners. At the age of eighty, Bibi retains the beauty of a young girl: her toenails and fingernails are still colored fashionably. She puts a light make-up powder

on her cheeks to give them a pink luster. Her eyelashes are colored. When she pulled down her silky trousers to show me her severe wound at her sexual organ and to go bathing, I saw that her skin was white and remained smooth and full. I once observed that she stretched her body in different positions for one hour. Nevertheless, these events never occur in mainstream writings about Grand Bibi; the only stories available to a broader public are those that conform to the Party's instruction of constructing nationalist examples. As seen in documents of the 4th Congress, the Party continued encouraging authors to erect inspiring models of “loyal, resourceful and extremely brave mothers and women,” who “side body and soul with the entire nation to fight the enemy and build a new life.” This instruction remains a principle of contemporary writing, as seen in the case of descriptions about Grand Bibi.

The second case indicative of how the Party's ideological forces occupy the figure and voice of Indians includes short biographies about Big Bi, a nationally recognized revolutionary martyr. The July 13, 2007 issue of *Tien Phong* portrays that Big Bi's family permitted the Viet Minh official to dig a secret vault in their house in Phan Thiet province. His aunties took turns to guard and cook for Viet Minh militiamen, who were opening up their house floor. The twin sisters took the responsibility to pour unwanted soil and earth in a cellar near Cà Ty River. Volume 213, in March 1994, of *Phan Thiet News* published a reflection about Big Bi; the author of this reflection is Tran Ngoc Trac, the former president of old Thuan Hai province and the former ideological supervisor of Big Bi. The piece is full of ideological terms, which doubtlessly are not from Big Bi's thoughts and words:

Big Bi enlightened the communist revolution early. He was admitted to the Team of Teenage Suicide Communists... He was an intellectual youth who was passionate about books, letters and arts performances, and was knowledgeable of English and French; he had revolutionary enthusiasms and impetuous patriotisms in the blood of his body.

The writer obviously imposes on the absent Big Bi ideologically magic terms such as "evolution enlightenment" and "patriotism." Emotionally strong words such as "impetuous" (nông nan) and "enthusiasm" (nhiệt tình) appear arbitrarily: they are actually formulating verbal expressions of acts that are seen as sacrifices for the Revolution. The formula likely derives from the widely known saying by Hồ Chí Minh at the 2nd Congress (1951): "Our nation has a tradition of impetuous patriotism; it is our valuable tradition of our nation." This expression has appeared for generations in the courses "Reading Practice" of the first elementary classes and "Literary Writing Practice" of high school classes. The narrator likely matches the formula with Big Bi's thoughts and words to make this descended Indian a model of "brave young persons." Again, the Indians is still absent in Vietnamese historiography; the existence of this population is seen exclusively in the images of revolutionary heroes that are constructed in accordance with formulas of the Party-led nationalist nationalism. In this history, the Indians only play the role of a source of inspiration for Vietnamese youth, the supposed "vanguard force" in national defenses, as asserted by the Party in the 1976 Congress.²²³

²²³ Utmost importance should be attached to the children, the future of the nation, and to the young people, the vanguard force in the present national construction and defense (*70 Years of the Communist Party* 412)

3. Remains of Dead Indians in Present-day Vietnamese Writing: Echoing Images of Bloodsucking Indians and the Quest of Nation-Building

Mainstream national historiographies have pushed the images of the Indians as capitalist, colonialist image – bloodsucking entities – further into the dead past to highlight the rigor of the present-day Vietnam’s socialist, independent figure. Nevertheless, such images are likely still alive, permeating particularly in contemporary public imaginations of Indians, even “authentic” Indians, namely, Indians living in India. That is the case in writings of Hồ Anh Thái (1960 -), celebrated novelist, diplomat, and leader of the Vietnamese Association of Literature.²²⁴ Hồ Anh Thái is particularly famous for stories set in India; his long study and work in India would ensure the credibility of his Indian characters. Nonetheless, his literary construction of present-day Indians likely leans on the formulaic metaphor of bloodsucking Indians; the Indians in his writings remain greedy, cunning, savage and particularly capitalist and colonialist in nature. In the novel *Đức Phật, nàng Savitri và Tôi* (2007), for example, the Indians, particularly the Buddhists, are extremely stingy. As told, none of the Buddhist followers is willing to be responsible for Buddha's cremation. They hesitate to look at each other; they shift the blame to others, murmuring to ask who will finance the ceremony, and who will buy oil and wood to burn Buddha's body. They constantly look away to avoid others' eyes and then quietly look back when the others turn their eyes away. In the end, the villagers

²²⁴ Hồ Anh Thái held the president position of Hanoi's Writing Association from 2000 to -2010 and a member of the Leadership Committee of Vietnam's Writing Association from 2005-2010. He is also a high diplomat official of Vietnamese government in a number of countries. While in India, Thái was not only a post graduate student in Oriental Studies but also a diplomat for the Vietnam Embassy for six years.

agree to contribute a small amount of money that is only enough to buy little cheap wood. At the cremation, as described, the wood is not sufficient to cover the dead body of Buddha, consequently, his feet still protrude out of the firewood. This image of Buddha's uncovered feet likely confirms the formulaic imagination of Indians as greedy and self-interest, prominent characters that make this population be seen as bloodsucking creatures.

In another example, the short story "The Man Who Stood on One Leg," the metaphor of bloodsucking Indians is more obvious; its shadow prevails in the construction of Indians as people who sacrifice their lives and integrity for money. Ananda, a villager, ceaselessly chases the director of a condom factory for a one million-rupee donation to erect a temple in his Khushi village. The chase is endless, as seen in one two examples:

1. Will you stay here until your last breath?
No, not until my last breath. Only until I receive one million rupees (*Behind the Red Mist* 61)
2. No, he would only donate a small contribution to the village charity fund. And when he said "small," Ananda knew, the young director wasn't simply being modest -- he meant really small. Tiny. (*Behind the Red Mist* 57)

The two quotes are about Ananda and the condom factory's director; they are money worshippers (they fight to the death for material gain). This extreme greed suggests that Hồ Anh Thái's presentation of "authentic" Indians seemingly relies on the formulaic metaphor of bloodsucking Indians (sét-ty, chà vậ), a tradition of presenting Indian migrants in Vietnamese writing since the colonial time. Ananda stilly and abidingly

stands on one leg at a dusty road leading to the condom factory, persistently exhorting the director for the full one million rupees. The storyteller likely attempts to create a legend of Ananda's relentless race for money by constructing the haunting image of young Ananda staying in the same position day after day over years long enough that his body becomes wrinkled and frozen. A vulture fails to wait for Ananda's death to feast on his body. Even Ananda carries on in the same posture, regardless of the company director's plot of crashing car into him, regardless of ants making nests on his body, and regardless of sand storms as well as wild gusts of winds. In the end, a temple is erected with a statue of a one-legged standing man: visitors guess that the figure might be Ananda or Shiva. The legendary narratives push Indians' greed to a holy position – the position of world creator. Again, this legend is no way different from the familiar image of greedy Indian migrants since colonial Vietnam: almost one century ago, ghost-like depictions of Chetty endlessly, fiercely running after their indebted subjects prevail in colonial Vietnamese literature. *Ở theo thời* (1935), by Hồ Biểu Chánh, also contains a legend of Indians' money worship. As described, two “chà và” sense that their debtor, Lợi, is secretly selling the deposited land to teacher Phát to evade the debt. They then initiate their tireless hunt for the debtor and his accomplice to take the land back. Phát is continuously astonished and scared at the Indians' undefeatable ability to catch their objects' footsteps: they are able to find Phát's school; if they do not see Phát at school, they immediately present themselves at Phát's house; if they do not get money from Phát, very quickly, they are successful in bringing Phát to the court. The magically effective, aggressive chase of the Indians haunts Phát so much that he is constantly obsessed with

thinking that he would be imprisoned regardless of his announced innocence. In another novel, *Lời thề trước miếu*, Hồ Biểu Chánh condenses the Indians' money worshipping into a quick plot point instead of a long narration:

Ms. Đào takes a seat for more comfort. As soon as she intends to speak, a chà và enters, without putting off his hat, without greetings people in the house, and shouts insolently: "Pay for the community fund! Your outstanding debt last month is one đồng. Now, pay seven đồng. Pay all, no lacking."

Ms. Đào takes from her pocket a paper đồng and a silver coin. She counts two silver coins. She puts the other two coins back in her pocket and gives the chà và two coins and two đồng papers. She says:

- I do not have enough money today. Please take three đồng ... please give me one more week ... I will pay you.

-No. Pay all. No lacking.

- Poor me, sir. If I had enough money, I would not have to be in underpayment.

- Underpayment every month. Move to another place to live, I do not allow you to stay here anymore. Tomorrow, you have to move. If you do not move, the court will take action, if that is the case you will have to pay more fees. Do you know?
(75)

The paragraph trims off the human aspects of the Indian, constructing him as a savagely mechanical debt collector. In Hồ Anh Thái's construction of modern day Indians, the colonial image of "chét-ty" or "chà và" -- bloodsucking creature -- re-occurs, effectively condensing the image of typical capitalists who are extreme materialists.

Image of the condom factory's director is a more obvious example of the recurrence of the metaphoric saying of bloodsucking Indians. As described in the story, the director acts irresponsibly and impudently towards his community: his company makes profits while polluting the whole village. Fearing to pay a big fine for the pollution that is discovered by Ananda, the director cunningly and rudely corrupts villagers with small

donations that prevent them from seeking legal compensation for the pollution. Such way of imagining the director is consonant to the formula of bloodsucking Indians – the capitalist: the director obtains his wealth from the blood, tears, and sweat of villagers.

Strikingly, the bloodsucking nature, relentless exploitation, as discussed in Chapter 2, forms the central characters of Indians in colonial Vietnamese writing roughly a century ago. The December 17, 1931 issue of *Phụ nữ tân văn* highlights a report that police captures three Indians who trade opium and smuggle guns. These “chà và gangs” “bọn Chà và” work for the company of Franco-Asiatique des Petroles and the Cochinchina train branch (Hãng tàu lục tỉnh) and run a monthly dining service for Indian guards. Regardless of their salary, the Indian migrants want to earn more money through illegal businesses. The report disregards that the Indians deny their guilt, asserting that they would have to admit it to the police in a coming reinvestigation. Also in *Phụ nữ tân văn*, on August 24, 1933, a journalist calls the Indians “black bats” (đoi đen) in a news article about one “sét ty” who accumulates capital illegally. The term “black bats” denotes a meaning similar to the term “bloodsucker.” This colonial image of bloodsucking Indians seems to cast its shadow in Hồ Anh Thái’s construction of the character of the condom company's director: he ignores that his company renders barren the women and soil of the village. The life of the company goes on with great cost to the lives of the surrounding environment and people. In general, the Indian businessmen of today are not different from their overseas ancestors years ago, in Vietnam: they all bloodily exploit others’ vitality and prosperity.

The status of forever being foreigners or outsiders of "authentic" Indians in Hồ Anh Thái's novels is another example of echoes of bloodsucking Indian images in present-day Vietnamese writing. The two short stories, "The Indians" and "The Barthers" suggest that one should never trust Indians because they are dangerous outsiders. In "The Indians," a British archaeologist successfully conquers the Indian civilization with his internationally recognized collection of Hindu relics. In "The Barthers," the German student completely transforms his mind and body into Indian ways of working and living. Both characters believe that they completely occupy Indians' hearts, thus, the Indians would be part of their conquered world. Nevertheless, Indians are always on the move of grabbing things from westerners, who attempts to make them insiders of their world. In particular, while the British scholar passionately does fieldwork in India, his wife, Kitty, at home, has an affair with their cook, a young Indian man named Navin. More tragically, until the end of the story, the scholar still believes he understands Indians' hearts, though he does not know about the affair between his wife and the Indian man. In "The Barthers," Heinrich, a German student, passionately practices Hinduism without knowing that his Indian wife works as a prostitute in their house. In both stories, the two Indians are seen as quiet, tranquil and obedient – credible, good insiders – at first sight, and dangerous in nature – harmful outsiders. Altogether, the two stories raise a caution: one should never make the Indians insiders of his/her community; otherwise, these people would harm him/her anytime.

Such way of presenting the Indians as a warning pervades colonial Vietnamese writing. For instance, Trần Quang Nghiệp's short "Con của ai" (1931) contains similar

Indian characters as embodiments of “defiance of morality.” This story first appeared in the newspaper *Đông Pháp thời báo* under the title “Lòng người khó biết” [Unexpected Human Thoughts], and again later in the short story collection *Hai bó giấy* published by Đức Lưu Phương (1931). The colonial story centers on sexual affairs of an Indian man with a married Annamese woman. Minh, a security of the Charner Company in Saigon, gets married to his female colleague despite his parents' disapproval. His parents from Sóc Trăng province send him a letter demanding that within two years, either his wife has to deliver a baby or he has to divorce her. Minh feeds his wife with various types of medicines that he believes will benefit her fertility. Over six months, no signal of her pregnancy appears. However, when one year passes, his wife informs him that she has gotten pregnant. Minh happily reports to his parents and sacrifices his money to take care of his wife. On the day of her delivery, his parents visit the couple in the hospital. Tragically, as soon as they look at the baby's face, they collapse: the baby has a black skin and looks energetic like “anh Chà.” Not until this point, the narrator starts talking about this hidden hero: More than one year ago, Minh befriended an Indian man, his co-worker; seeing this Indian man as an honest person, Minh offered him to share his house; while staying together, Minh completely gave this man his trust; he seems to be harmlessly innocent; he just sat in his room reading day by day; he was gentle and quiet, attempting not to disturb members of the house. All details show that Minh offers the Indian position of an insider of his Annamese world. When the story returns to the present tense, it reveals the hidden danger of the Indian man: in response to Minh's astonishing statement, “this is not my son,” his wife, in an indifferent tone, challenges,

"who had told you this would be your son?" (190); in the end, Minh leaves the hospital quietly, not expressing any anger; he just throws his house key to the Indian man, telling him that the house and his wife now belongs to him. All these apparently mean to suggest that the locals should never treat Indians as insiders; otherwise, locals would lose everything to the Indians. The story definitely participates in attempts of French and Vietnamese intellectuals during the colonial period at forming the public knowledge about the "Indians" as unwelcome migrants.

The constant recurrence of images of unwelcome migrants -- bloodsucking Indians -- in Hồ Anh Thái's accounts of current Indians is derived from the traditional association of Vietnamese writing with nation-building. Particularly, since the country's reunification, the Party Congress has insisted on constructing "socialist people" (con người xã hội chủ nghĩa) as the main task of "ideological works" (công tác tư tưởng) to completely clean any vestiges of feudalism and colonialism. Definitions about "socialist people" since the fourth Congress (1976) have obviously centered on non-materialism, community loving and patriotism – the characteristics that people require to overcome supposedly capitalist characteristics such as materialism and self-centeredness. The 6th Party Congress (1986) insisted on authors' "sense of responsibility as citizens and militants." This means the author must "create spiritual values that foster minds and sentiments of generations of citizens and shape their personality and character and create an ethical environment in society" (744).²²⁵ Spiritual values became a special focus in the

²²⁵ The 6th Party Congress, the congress that is commonly seen to have untied Vietnamese authors from obligations of eulogizing the Party and the Nation, still asserted that "no other ideological form can substitute literature and art in fostering healthy sentiments, exerting a deep impact on the renewal of

eighth Party Congress's Document (1996), the first document that made "national identity" a separate, highlighted point. This Congress urged authors to build "an advanced culture with profound national identity." The Congress decided that all cultural, literary and artistic activities "must ... inherit and promote the intellectual and aesthetic values, cultural and artistic heritage of the nation... inheriting and promoting the people's ethical traditions" (983). These cultural attempts must aim at cleaning out capitalist characters that are rising in contemporary Vietnamese society due to market economy and expanded international exchanges; these characters include "money worshipping," "defiance of morality" and tendencies of glorifying "the alien and the profane leading to the loss of one's national roots" (983). The recurrence of the metaphor of bloodsucking entities in Hồ Anh Thái writing seems to aim at awakening and provoking a long fear for capitalists and colonialists, who are supposedly embodiments of materialism, self-interest, and national otherness. The presence of the colonial image of Indian migrants in the image of present-day Indians also effectively reminds the Vietnamese public of eternal values of socialist, national revolutions and the associated Party leadership. Nevertheless, more importantly, the existence of colonial metaphor of bloodsuckers in present-day depictions of Indians indeed suggests the existence of the colonial legacy in postcolonial nation-building. In stories of Thái about postcolonial India, the British are still economic, educational masters of the Indian population: thanks to British education, the director in the story "The Man Who Stands on One Leg" can open and run the

people's thinking habit and way of life. Literature and art must constantly enrich themselves with the Party and people's character... discover in good time and commend the new, create vivid models, assert the young talent in life" (744).

condom factory; and the Indian cook in "The Indians" desperately learns perfect English while serving the physical, emotional needs of the British woman. Writing about the colonial legacy in India already forms a way through which Thái evokes in the Vietnamese public a comparable image of postcolonial Vietnam. The presence of the colonial image of Indian bloodsuckers indeed creates a more obvious, reasonable link and reference to the haunting colonialism in present-day Vietnam.²²⁶ Specifically, Hồ Anh Thái's accounts of social destructions caused by industrialization and international cooperation in contemporary India – all embodied in the greedy bloodsucker metaphor – should potentially suggest to the Vietnamese audience the possible colonialist exploitation embedded in the rising global, transnational presence in contemporary Vietnamese economy and culture. Although Vietnamese nation-makers constantly warn the public about social and cultural destructions caused by globalization, discourses about economic losses and damages appear to be minor, given that modernization and industrialization still form the principal policy in present-day Vietnamese nation-building. The term “chủ nghĩa thực dân” (colonialism) to address anxieties about rising globalization in Vietnam is used extremely reluctantly, given that “chủ nghĩa thực dân,” in principle, died seventy years ago within the border of Vietnam (Phạm Văn Đức 23-34). The reluctance, or more precisely, the fear in suggesting the continuity and similarity between colonization and globalization, is transmitted in the subtle, uncertain echoes of the formulaic metaphor of bloodsucking Indians in Thái's accounts of present-day

²²⁶The most obvious evidence of this colonial lies in the constant assertion on industrialization and modernization as the ultimate goal of the national economic development.

Indians. As said, in socialist realistic Vietnamese historiography, colonialism is completely dead; accordingly, the bloodsucking Indians no longer exist. This means that the dead – belonging to the old society as depicted in socialist realist literature – must constitute the principle in accounts about the Indian population. In this context, making the colonial image of Indian migrants in the present tense – the present world – must have been seen as politically incorrect. Thus, making present colonial images of Indian migrants in postcolonial India would be a safe and effective way to warn the Vietnamese audience about the presence of colonial legacies in postcolonial Vietnam and the emergence of a new colonization in the form of globalizing forces. Eventually, regardless of being made visible by Thái in the present tense, images of Indian migrants still merely exist as literary instruments through which Vietnamese intellectuals realize their role as the minds and conscience of the nation. This also means perhaps a lasting absence of Indian migrants in Vietnamese historiography.

Box 1

Indian figure is also the subject in the national historiography that depicts the former society – South Vietnam – as extremely corrupted, lawless, and murderous. The latest and the most exuberant historiography of this type is the personal biography of “Chà và” Hương. This biography is written by journalist Hoàng Minh; it is divided into three sequent volumes published in 2015 in *Người đưa tin* –newspaper of the Lawyer Association of Vietnam. This life story is constructed based on “Chà và” Hương’s narratives; it is more indicative of the Party’s savior role in civilizing the old southern Vietnam than of “Chà và” Hương’s boxing talent and success. “Chà và” Hương is a real person, a famous unbeatable Indian boxer since the 1950s, born in a poor Indian mixed family in Saigon; he once sold bánh ít cake and served shoeshine for survival. Nevertheless, the mainstream political ideology about revolution and socialism dominates the flow of stories about the life of “Chà và” Hương. Specifically, narratives about “Chà và” Hương becoming the most respected boxer in Saigon and nearby are filled with redundant details about Saigon as an outlaw society. People of that time found joys in and earn money by beating, killing, and shooting others. Also revealed in the life story of “Chà và” Hương, “the old society” with “bad effects of colonialist culture” emerges in present-day public minds with opium smoke, wild sex, gambling and stealing. The old Saigon looks completely savage. It is seeable that Saigon in the reconstructed memory by “Chà và” Hương is similar to that by Duyên Anh, a society ruled by gypsies. However, evil Saigon through “Chà và” Hương’s constructed biography is obviously created through a “revolutionary stand and socialist realism” – an ideological instruction that the Party Congress have insisted since 1976. Specifically, in this congress, the Party emphases that writers must adopt revolutionary and socialist ideologies to “expose the origin of the evils, to point out the way to eradicate them so as to reach the final aim of affirming the good and fostering absolute confidence in socialism” (413). In the Ninth congress, writers and artists were still called to uphold their responsibilities to socialism and to abandon any creations contrary to the Party. Additionally, press and publishers “should function well as disseminators of Party and State guidelines” (1114-1115). Accordingly, “Chà và” Hương, in his biography, is constructed as our one of compatriots: he was imprisoned by Diệm regime; after the fall of Saigon, he has been committee members of Ho Chi Minh City’s boxing associations, competitions and training clubs. Not only that, “Chà và” Hương’s story is completely complicit with the mainstream historiography of Saigon: only the socialist regime could save old Saigon’s savage. This historiography definitely aims to foster public trust toward the Party’s leadership in civilizing the city.

Chapter 6

The Rise of “Ấn kiều” (Overseas Indians) in Vietnamese Historiography: Haunting Colonialism and Uncategorized Indian Descendants

This chapter examines Vietnamese writing about new Indians, members of the third wave of Indian migration to Vietnam, to further explain why old Indians, members of the second wave are marginalized from mainstream Vietnamese historiography and society. Economic, cultural and political conditions of the Indian descendants makes them unfit in a new categorization of “Indian migrants” and the future industrialized figure of Vietnam – a categorization, which tends to selectively includes only modern, well-off Indians – members of the third migration wave. Particularly, the remains of the metaphor of bloodsucking Indians still plays a material role in the ongoing marginalization of the Indian descendants from mainstream Vietnamese writings and society.

1. Rise of “Ấn kiều” (Overseas Indians) in Contemporary Vietnamese Writing and the Socialist, Independent Nation-Building in Reform Era

Not all Indian characters constitute the dead past in contemporary Vietnamese writing; instead, this literature contains Indians who form a very existence of present-day Vietnam. The short story “Ngọn đèn” by Đào Vũ, the representative of the socialist realistic literature, contains living Indian characters in Vietnam in the year of 1990. Sonu is an Indian child staying in Hanoi with her parents; Sonu’s parents work for the Indian Embassy. Sonu is taking a painting class at Cung Thiếu nhi Hà Nội (Hanoi House for Kids), where she has classmates from other countries including Indonesia, Cuba, and

America. The story about Sonu largely centers on the class assignment that requires students to draw a special painting to present Vietnam on the occasion of Hồ Chí Minh's 100th birthday. While Sonu thinks of drawing the banyan tree near One Pillar Pagoda, Sonu's mother suggests her about an oil lamplight. Sonu thinks that the banyan tree will present the image of India in the heart of Vietnam because the branch is a part of Buddha's Great banyan tree in India. However, Sonu's mother insists that the lamplight is more significant because it is the metaphor of Vietnam that "grandpa" Romesh Chandra has brought up in an international conference of celebrating 100th anniversary of President Ho's birth in Hanoi. Recalling that Romesh Chandra is President of the World Peace Council Statement and Romesh Chandra loves Vietnam, Sonu is determined to present Vietnam with a painting of "a lamplight with a flame that would be big as a torch and that would be luminously bright so that all around is bright" (464). However, when completing the painting, Sonu does not dare to submit it to her teacher in the face of criticisms from her international classmates. Sonu tells her mother that her friends say that her painting is too normal compared to their drawings. A friend from Cuban draws an immense ocean with highly rising waves, clear blue water, white sea foams and twittering seabirds. Enxa draws a high sky building. Exa's father is American, her mother is French; both of them work for UNICEF. Her painting contains skyscrapers, big planes flying, and long lines of cars on streets. The Indonesian friend draws a sky full of stars and the moon. This Indonesian friend is the first one who criticizes Sonu's picture; she says that the lamplight is too small; it is not a mighty object at all. The Cuban friend opens her mouth widely telling Sonu that just one wave of her painting is strong enough

to engulf Sonu's lamplight, sea breeze can blow out the lamplight. Enxa does not criticize Sonu; instead, she suggests Sonu that she should try a flower garden. However, Sonu's mother explains that "Grandpa Chandra" tells the conference that lamplight belongs to the Bright; it is a part of the Sun; it is powerful; it is really mighty! Encouraged by her mother, Sonu's submits the painting to her teacher with confidence: "Please accept this painting as a gift for Vietnam" (465). The Vietnamese students in the class gather to see and comments on Sonu's painting: "a single lamplight is a guarding oil lamp!" "How radian is the flaming!" "Who dares to blow out to see if it would extinguish!" (456). The teacher stares at the picture, and then appreciates:

The flame is small but luminous. Your lamplight contains a pride. Pink color of the background in your painting symbolizes the darkness. It is perfect; a lamplight in a dark night is the greatest.

In response to the teacher's appreciation, Sonu confidently adds: "Dear teacher, lamplight belongs to the Bright; it is a part of the Sun" After submitting the painting Sonu receives the compliments from her teacher and Vietnamese students: "thank you for kind words and beautiful ideas and thank you for warm hearts" (456).

Strikingly, in a story about "Ngọn đèn" (Lamplight) – symbol of the bright, the present, the new and the Party's triumphant leadership, Indian characters occur "stronger" in the present tense. In this story, the protagonist Sonu, along with American, Cuban and Indonesian students of the painting class in Hanoi setting in 1990, forms an international figure of Vietnam. Sonu even attempts to make her Indian identity the most prominent and unique in the international figure of Vietnam. She constantly thinks of drawing an object typical of her Indian nation for a picture that she will submit as a gift for Vietnam

on the occasion of 100th anniversary of Ho Chi's birth. Sonu's mother, an Indian diplomat, also inserts her national pride by encouraging her daughter to envision in her picture Romesh Chandra's use of the lamplight metaphor. These attempts suggest the very legitimate and sympathetic presence of the Indian population in the present-day figure of Vietnam. The legitimacy and liveliness indeed, as denoted in the story, stem from this population's attendance to solidify the mainstream political, economic ideology of contemporary Vietnam. Objects occupying Sonu's initial plan for the picture such as Buddha's banyan tree and an ancient tree symbolically conform to the very textbook concept of Vietnam about a peace-loving and incredible figure of India.

Particularly, Sonu's final choice of portraying a lamplight is consonant with the very classical Vietnamese metaphor of the Party of Salvation. Associations of light and the Party such as "Đảng là ánh sáng" (Party is light), "ánh sáng của Đảng" (the light of the Party), "ánh sáng của lí tưởng Mác Lênin" (light of Marxist-Leninist ideology) and "dưới ánh sáng tư tưởng Hồ Chí Minh" (under the light of Ho Chi Minh's thought) prevail in mainstream Vietnamese literary, journalistic and administrative discourses.²²⁷ And, lyrics of "Đảng là mùa xuân" (Party is the spring) by the revolutionary composer Xuân Giao -- "When I am a sprout, the Party is a light; when the dawn light illuminates, I will grow into a tree" -- remains a mandatory song in on-campus activities of Ho Chi

²²⁷ Searching these terms on google gives a number of results, particularly in website domains owned by the Ministry of Education such as www.vanhoc.edu.vn; www.vanban.edu.vn; and www.thanhbinh.edu.vn. These sites provide the very existing presence of the type of writing exam that asks students to argue for the Party's and the Marxist-Leninist ideology's directing role. A common question of this exam (e.g. in the university recruitment examination) is explaining and indicating the famous verse "Từ ấy" by Tố Hữu, a leading revolutionary poet. In this verse, Tố Hữu uses a series of light-related images to envision the change of his life with the presence of the Party: "From that time summer sunlight brightens in me; Sun of truth lightens through my heart; my soul is a garden of flowers and leaves; which is full of fragrant and bird sounds."

Minh Young Pioneer Organizations in primary schools.²²⁸ These metaphoric images aim at fostering in the public mind the critical role of the Party in "rescuing" the Vietnamese nation and individuals from the enslavement and exploitation of feudal and colonial (capitalist) societies – usually symbolized in the image of darkness. The Indian daughter's and mother's lamplight painting in the story obviously attend the mainstream discourses of asserting the longevity and goodness of the Party in the "đổi mới" figure of Vietnam.

Moreover, the Indian characters' attendance to the mainstream political ideology of Vietnam is more delicate and knowledgeable in the presences of other foreigners or migrants. Specifically, Sonu's narratives about paintings of her classmates comply with the Party's principle of nation-building since Đổi mới (1986) that emphasizes Vietnam's economic interdependence and international cooperation with and integration into the global economy (Dutton 579). In Sonu's story, of three friends, Enxa, an American, author of the painting of a city with skyscrapers, flying planes, and car lanes, is the kindest. While Cuban and Indonesian classmates, authors of paintings of skies, stars, oceans and seabirds, attack Sonu, Enxa, regardless of her disinterest in Sonu's lamplight painting, gently suggests an alternative. Sonu's admiration of Enxa is an allegory of the shift to globalization in post-đổi mới nation-building of Vietnam. Nonetheless, the prominence of Sonu's lamplight painting is unarguable; it receives the most admiration from the teacher and dominant Vietnamese classmates. The happy end for Sonu indeed

²²⁸ This song was mandatory in my generation (1988-1993) and is still mandatory recently. For example, it is listed in the list of songs for the school year of 2011-2012 at Cat Hanh Primary School (Phù Cát, Bình Định) (Retrieved from http://binhdinh.edu.vn/present/same/entry_id/6176398/same/show).

manifests the institutionalized absolute leadership of the Party regardless of rising shifts to a broader engagement with the capitalist country system.²²⁹ In general, instead of belonging to the dead part as usually seen, the Indian characters in the story “Ngọn đèn” are actors of the supposedly globalizing landscape of Vietnam.

Why do the Indian residents in Vietnam such as Sonu and her family members occur in Vietnamese writing in present tense instead of past tense as happened to images of those who have been categorized as “Indians” since colonial time? Actually, Đào Vũ’s construction of Indian officials and students reflects and constructs in the public mind the no-longer existing colonial capitalism in present-day Vietnam. Precisely, with the national reunification in 1975, the disappearance of so-called Indian capitalists is not just an ideological direction in writing but indeed a historical event: many Indian migrants had to give up their lives in southern Vietnam with the Fall of Saigon in 1975 (Chanda 31-45). Most members of this large exodus were Indian businessmen in particular and Indians in well off condition in general. These Indians were definitely seen as immediate targets of the people’s national democratic revolution vigorously and thoroughly implemented by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam after the reunification (Nhân Trí Võ 64-72; Devare 290).²³⁰ Most Indian bankers and traders, categorized as comprador

²²⁹ Article 4 of Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Retrieved from portal of journal Xây dựng Đảng [Party Building] of the Central Committee of the Party Personnel <http://www xaydungdang.org.vn/Home/dien-dan/2013/6086/Dieu-4-cua-Hien-phap-khang-dinh-vai-tro-lanh-dao.aspx>)

Part 5 of the Political Report at 6th Congress (1986) emphasizes necessary changes in economic thinking, organization, personnel and leadership style in the Party to "enhance its leading capacity and fighting power" (*75 Years of the Communist Party of Vietnam* 740).

²³⁰In the word of Y., an Indian descendant, the new government helped remained foreigners in Saigon to earn money for living by legally offering them the chance to do businesses at big markets of the city. She

bourgeoisie, had to "hand over" their property before leaving Vietnam.²³¹ In May 1975, the Vietnamese government organized special flights to repatriate the Indian migrants; in 1977, the Indian government dispatched their own air flights to bring Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin back to India (Chandra 37; Devare 290). The absence of Indian capitalist characters – bloodsucking beings -- in present tense in socialist realistic writers, such as Đào Vũ,²³² reflects and promotes the success of the nation-wide democratic revolution.

So which group of the Indian population in Vietnam that the image of Indians in Đào Vũ's story might present? In other words, which national project – a typical question of the genre of socialist realist literature – leads to Đào Vũ's focuses on the legitimate and sympathetic existence of the Indian population even in Hanoi, headquarter of the communist regime? Actually, Đào Vũ's picture of the Indians as sympathetic migrants is still in tune with the traditional association of literature with nation-building of Vietnam: this literary imagination conforms to the Vietnamese government's rising favor of new

realized that this was an exception for her and other foreigners in the city. Mrs. Y was explicit that while the government banned the whole of Vietnamese citizens to run trading, it allowed foreigners to trade. As disciplined, the foreigners in the early HCMC only by goods at state shops and only paid in dollar currency. They were allowed to sell these goods in common markets. Y recalled that, on behalf of her Indian husband, she borrowed dollars of foreigners living in Saigon to buy goods from state shops and sold them in Bến Thành market. The obtained money, which was always in the currency of the new government, was partially returned to her debt. By this way, the new government tactically got rid of the dominance of the foreign currency- dollars in order to tie the entire citizens living in the city to the new economic model, sampled by the northern socialist economy. The favor, as perceived by Y. was a strategy to eliminate the presence of foreign currency, the economic legacy of the former government and the embodiment of the economic vitality of the contemporary enemy: the America, the dollars and the capitalism.

²³¹ Archive document: Ủy ban nhân dân thành phố Hồ Chí Minh (1978). Quyết định cho phép ông [A] mang đồ thờ cúng về Ấn Độ (Quyết định 4056/QĐ-UB on December 26, 1978). Ho Chi Minh City: Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee.

²³²Đào Vũ (1927-2006), the author, is famous for novels that closely follow socialist, national revolutions of Vietnam (Nguyễn Văn Long in Đỗ Đức Hiểu 192)

Indian migrants called “Ấn kiều” – *Overseas Indians* -- for the national cause. Specifically, Đào Vũ’ Indian characters definitely embody “Ấn kiều” who have formed the third major wave of Indian migration into Vietnam;²³³ the Vietnamese government perceives this population as significant to the nation's advance to "an industry country." Since "Đổi mới," the Vietnam government has emphasized a proactive integration with an international economy as a strategy to modernize the country, ultimately retaining the principle socialist state and sustaining the national unity and sovereignty. The Political Report at 7th Congress (1991) asserts the overriding task in foreign relations in the immediate future is to “create *favorite conditions* for the building of socialism and defending the homeland” (*75 Years of the Communist Party of Vietnam* 809; emphasis added). The Political Report at 8th Congress (1996) emphasizes promotion of foreign relations as an important factor that would maintain the peace, break up the state of blockade and embargo, enhance the international status and “create *favorite environment for the task of national construction and defense*” (*75 Years of the Communist Party of Vietnam* 949; emphasis added). Particularly, the Congress firmly approves that the extension of international relations must be grounded on the "firm maintenance of independence and sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit, and the preservation and promotion of the nation' s identity and fine tradition" (*75 Years of the Communist Party of Vietnam* 957).

²³³ About categorizations of first and second major waves of Indian migration to Vietnam, read Chapter 1. I intentionally use the word “major wave” given that there must have some continuity among the migrating waves. Sudhir Devare tends to differentiate three waves of Indian migration to Vietnam (and Indochina) with clear cutting descriptions how each wave starts and ends (Devare 287-300)

The principle of maintaining the socialist state and national unity in the time of rising globalization also formed a central theme of the Ninth Party Congress (2001). The theme is defined to include: promoting the “Entire Nation’s Strength,” continuing with “the Renewal Process,” “stepping up Industrialization and Modernization”, and “building and safeguarding the Socialist Vietnamese Homeland (*75 Years of the Communist Party of Vietnam* 1097; capitalized letters are in origin). The upturn in Vietnamese economy has attracted foreign investors from non-socialist countries; among them are ones from India.²³⁴ Particularly, increasing economic, educational and military partnerships between Vietnam and India also form an important factor that results in the third wave of Indian migration to Vietnam (Tharkur and Thayer 246-252; Srivastava in Sakhuja 33-42; Mohanty in Sakhuja 43-69).²³⁵ Resulting Indian migration has been increasing; the number of “overseas Indians” in Vietnam reaches to thousands.²³⁶ The most noticeable is

²³⁴ On June 12, 1989, President of the Minister Committee, Võ Văn Kiệt, issued Directive 163 CT about directions of calling for foreign investments: Liên Xô and other socialist countries formed the first targets; India and other Asian countries formed the second; and capital countries and international organizations formed the third (Document retrieved from the biggest online law library of Vietnam: <http://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Dau-tu/Chi-thi-63-CT-phuong-huong-goi-von-dau-tu-nuoc-ngoai/37788/noi-dung.aspx>). According to David W.P. Elliott, even after 1986, it had taken the Vietnamese government a while before firmly shifting to a broader engagement with the world economy when it experienced that "Vietnam could attract foreign investment without losing control of economic decision-making" (197).

²³⁵ 1997 marked the year when the Vietnamese and Indian governments start firmly fostering agreements on economic collaborations. In this year, two important documents were launched; they include “Hiệp định thương mại và hợp tác kinh tế giữa chính phủ nước Cộng hòa Xã hội chủ nghĩa Việt Nam và chính phủ Cộng hòa Ấn Độ” (Pact on Commerce and Economic Collaboration between Vietnamese and Indian governments), No 1194 TM/PC-TNA, by Ministry of Trading, on March 14, 1997 and “Hiệp định về khuyến khích và bảo hộ đầu tư giữa chính phủ Việt Nam và chính phủ Ấn Độ” (Pact on encouraging protecting investments between Vietnamese and Indians,” no. 79/LPQT, by the Ministry of International Relations, on March 8, 1997. The later was effective on December 1, 1999.

²³⁶ Information about the number of Indians living in Vietnam is diverse from various sources. Information from the website of Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India) provides that estimated population of Indians living in Vietnam up to 2011 is 2000, mostly in HCMC. "The Indian Business Chamber (INCHAM) is an organization of Indians living in Vietnam, primarily to promote trade and

the visibility of this population in contemporary Vietnamese writing: administrative and journalistic accounts of the Vietnamese government pay more attention to the overseas Indians' participation to the Vietnamese nation's modernization

Administrative documents stored at the Archive Center of HCMC People's Committee show that during the 1980s, Indian companies were actively involved in constructing export-oriented factories and in proving technologies in HCMC. "Cimco" Company appears the most often in these archived documents.²³⁷ It concerned important economic activities in HCMC including building hydroelectric plants, cooperating in importing technique equipment in Bến Tre province (1984, Decision 3034/UB), and forming a joint-venture to exporting pineapples (1988, Decision 3367/UB-DN). Cimco also constructed a manufacture of jute texture in Phú Định, Quận Ô. In addition to economic activities associated with Cimco Group, other Indian businesses appeared in the South, including: supplying equipment to proceed peanut fiber in Ben Tre province (1983, Letter number 407/UB) and exporting wood (1988, Letter number 4644/UB-DN). Cimco group also mediated the debt of Vietnam to India in the project of constructing

business interactions" (Retrieved from <http://web.archive.org/web/20120311073951/http://mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=50044542>). Shantanu (probably Shantanu Srivastava, a leading member of Indian expats in Vietnam), informant of Nguyễn Đạt in his newspaper publication "Người Ấn Độ ở Sài Gòn," provides that there are around 30 000 Indian living in HCMC; instead of settling in Tôn Thất Thiệp street like before, contemporary Indians largely gather in Bùi Viện street. Ramesh, the owner of a series of Indian restaurants in Hanoi, asserts that there 2000 Indians living in HCMC and 500 Indians living in Hanoi (Personal Interview, July 15, 2011). A police, in charge of India and Vietnam relationship, affirms on the number of around 2000 Indians living in Vietnam (Personal interview, August 20, 2013). In a document, provided by this police (through email on March 16, 2016), also provides a statistic that is updated in 2016 that there are 2000 Indians living in Vietnam, mostly in HCMC. This document looks similar to the document from Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India), but it contains descriptions of events related to Vietnam and India up to 2016.

²³⁷Quotes on organization name is in accordant to Vietnamese documents; in English documents, the name might be written differently.

Indira Gandhi Company of Jute in Ho Chi Minh City in 1988. This group, as described in the letter number 4109/UB-DN by the People Committee of HCMC in 1988, sympathized with the difficulty of "us" (Vietnam) in returning the debt of one million USD to Indian banks. Thus, the group suggested Vietnam could pay only a small "symbolic" debt to ease "Indian banks' anxiety."²³⁸ Under joint Indo-Vietnam ventures in 1990s, exports and investments from India focused on machinery for development of small-scale industries (paper, textiles, sugar, tea, etc), technology (for oil exploration, steel, cement and textile), fertilizers, pharmaceuticals and drugs (Chowdhury 32-33; Tharkur and Thayer 248-252; Nguyễn Huy Hoàng in Sakhujā 16-32). Vietnam received investments and exports from India to reach the modernization and industrialization goal (Tharkur and Thayer 248-252). A report dated January 13, 2016, provided by an official of the Ministry of Police of Vietnam,²³⁹ records that Indian businessmen, particularly since 2000, have invested in sectors that help with modernizing Vietnamese economy. These sectors include oil and gas exploration, mineral exploration and processing, in thermal power plant, sugar manufacturing, agro-chemicals, banking, IT, and agricultural processing. New Indians' promotion of these sectors definitely conforms to the industrialized figure of Vietnam in 2020 that the Party has been envisioning. At the eighth Congress (1996), the Party defines that "productive forces" of

²³⁸ Tourism also formed an important sector in economic partnerships between the two countries. In 1984, Cimco group invited HCMC Tourism Company to visit India to discuss how to develop this service in HCMC. In the same year, the Tourist Company and the Ministry of Civic Air Tourism of India invited a group of excellent Vietnamese cooks and traditional music performers to participate in the Indian food festival (Letter number 2413/UB)

²³⁹ See Footnote 237. More specific information about this police and other informants of this research is omitted for security reason.

Vietnam will “have by that time reached a relatively modern standard.” The term “modern standard,” as explained, means “mechanized labor,” “completed national electrification,” and dominant industry and services in GDP (*75 Years of the Communist Party of Vietnam* 963). In short, the Vietnamese government acknowledges economic partnerships with India as important in efforts to modernize and industrialize the nation.

This acknowledgment results in Vietnamese government’s cordial treatment towards the overseas Indians -- new Indians – mediators of trade and business interactions and other relations between Vietnam and India (INCHAM n.d., para. 1, 2).²⁴⁰ Precisely, the practical usefulness of new Indians has made this population seen as respected supporters of the socialist and nationalist revolution of Vietnam. The Vietnamese government grants Indian newcomers medals and recognitions that are largely symbolically associated with the socialist, independent figure of Vietnam. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, HCMC's People's Committee constantly awarded Indian businessmen medals bearing the name of Ho Chi Minh for their contributions to fostering "economic collaborations and friendship between Vietnam and India."²⁴¹ The most prominent new Indian honored by the Vietnamese government is Shantanu Srivastava, founder of INCHAM; as widely

²⁴⁰ The letter on January 24, 1984, number 216/UB by HCMC's people committee to the customs departments, Tan Son Nhat airport, and the border police requested a free of checking for three Indian representatives of Cimco group. This means that the Indian expats perceived exceptional privileges granted by the locally based Vietnamese government.

²⁴¹ In 1992, the permanent representative of the International Cimco company (Birla Group), Amit Saxna, received Hồ Chí Minh medal for "his excellent achievements in contributing to improve the friendship between the people of HCMC and the people of India during his working time in the city, from 1987 to 1992" (Decision number 459/QĐ-UB, March 24, 1992). In the same year, Shantanu Srivastava, director of Namita Industrial and Trading Concept PTE-PTD branch in HCMC, receive Hồ Chí Minh medal for “improving economic relations and friendship between people of HCMC and people of India” (2200/QĐ-UB August 27, 1992).

perceived, this leading Indian sympathizes with the ideology of socialist and independent Vietnamese nation. He develops Indian companies that supply modern technologies to Vietnamese industries; he links numerous Indian investors to Vietnam.²⁴² Noticeably, Shantanu's admiration of Ho Chi Minh and Indian nationalists thematically dominates most mainstream Vietnamese accounts of this leading overseas Indian.²⁴³ Shantanu's role as a good Indian textile seller – a welcome migrant – is highlighted in *Hẹn gặp lại Sài Gòn* (1990), a movie sponsored by Thành ủy thành phố Hồ Chí Minh [HCMC-based Party] to celebrate the 100th anniversary of HCMC's birth. The movie recounts the life of Ho Chi Minh from 1890 to 1911, prior his long abroad travel to search for the best way to save the nation. "Living Expat" in the September 25, 2013 issue of VTV4, a national television channel for and about overseas Vietnamese, cites the communication of an Indian couple (role of Shantanu and his wife) and young Ho Chi Minh in Cholon market, a scene in the movie. Young Ho Chi Minh goes to buy a textile to present to his father before he travels abroad. The character of Shantanu nicely offers young Ho Chi Minh credit for the textile piece; responding to young Ho Chi Minh's doubt on such generosity, Shantanu's character asserts "I trust you" in a gentle voice and sympathetic look. The Indian character's trust in Ho Chi Minh and in the national independence of Vietnam, as suggested in the movie, actually prevails in recent Vietnamese public about Shantanu. Mouthpieces of the Vietnamese government, *Đảng cộng sản Việt nam báo điện tử, Sài*

²⁴²“Vietnam, India Beef up Cooperation.” *Vietnam Breaking News*. January 9, 2014. More in Sunita Aron. “The man who put Vietnam on India’s business map.” *Hindustantimes*. December 9, 2007.

²⁴³This contribution brought him the most revered Indian citizen of Vietnam followed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi (Liên hiệp các tổ chức hữu nghị Việt Nam. *Việt Nam và những tấm lòng bè bạn*. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản chính trị quốc gia, 2006).

gòn giải phóng, and *Tin tức*, concurrently depict that Shantanu and his wife have a long love and respect for Ho Chi Minh. In these writings, Shantanu and his wife are pictured as a life-long lover of Vietnam: they read about Ho Chi Minh in the early 1970s when they were still studying in India; at that time, they also joined protests against wars in Vietnam. And as recounted, Shantanu emphasizes his respect for Ho Chi Minh similar to his respect for Gandhi, the revered fathers of Vietnam and India. These newspapers also quote Shantanu's saying that his devotion for economic exchanges between Vietnam and India aims at continuing and promoting the friendship between the two countries that Ho Chi Minh and Nehru initiated in the past.²⁴⁴ Vietnamese government's honors also attach Shantanu to the ultimate socialist, nationalist goal of Vietnamese nation-building: Shantanu is acknowledged as a revered friend of Vietnam²⁴⁵ and "Great Grandfather Ho Chi Minh's Soldier."²⁴⁶ In short, Vietnamese nation-makers grant new Indians a privileged presence in the Vietnamese society, a position stemming from the practical usefulness of Indian newcomers in the government's efforts for the goal of national industrialization. Such Vietnamese appreciations of the new group of Indian migrants

²⁴⁴Đảng cộng sản Việt Nam. "Shantanu Srivastava và 30 năm nghĩa tình." *Đảng cộng sản Việt Nam điện tử*. February 14, 2014. This newspaper is the mouthpiece of the Central Committee of the Party.

Minh Phương. "30 năm nghĩa tình của ông Shantanu với Việt Nam." *Tin tức* October 4, 2013. *Tin tức* is an information channel of the government; it is published by Thông tấn xã Việt Nam.

Phong Vân. "Ông Shantanu kỉ niệm 30 năm gắn bó với đất nước Việt Nam." *Sài Gòn giải phóng*. October 4, 2013. *Sài Gòn giải phóng* is the mouthpiece of the Party in HCMC.

²⁴⁵ In addition to the honor of an honored citizen of HCMC given in 1992, Shantanu Srivastava also received from the president of Vietnam "Huy chương Hữu nghị (2001)" and "Huân chương Hữu nghị (2003)"

²⁴⁶Thúy Tùng. "'Người lính cụ Hồ': Shantanu Srivastava." *Tuổi trẻ online*. September 18, 2003. Authorize 2015

must have formed the historical and intertextual context out of which Đào Vũ's constructions of Indian characters are grown. Moreover, given the performativity of writing, Đào Vũ's Indian portraits foster the legitimacy of the overseas Indians' existence in Vietnam, eventually contributing to sustaining in the public mind "the industrialized" – an embodiment of national sovereignty and the associated Party leadership.

2. Absence of Uncategorized Indian Descendants in Contemporary Vietnamese Writing and New Categorization of “Indians”

Given the fact that post-1975 Vietnamese writing is supposed to follow socialist realism, a question must arise: why only Indians such as Sonu and Shantanu, instead of Indians such as Bibi (Chapter 6), Hùng (Chapter 4), J and Z (Chapter 1), and Cao Văn Tây (Chapter 5), occur in accounts about Indians living in contemporary Vietnam? Ngô Thị Bibi, Cao Văn Tây, and others form a group that Sudhir Devare once named as "those from pre-1975 days" to differentiate from "those from post-1975 days"(278). While the latter refers to the overseas Indians, the former refers to descendants of those who formed what would be called second Indian migration to Vietnam and were traditionally depicted as bloodsucking beings (“Indien,” sét-ty, “tây đen,” “chà và”) -- colonial capitalists -- in Vietnamese writing. After the fall of Saigon, these “Indians” disappeared from Vietnam physically and ideologically as discussed in Chapter 5. However, some have stayed on; those who stay on are mostly of “Vietnamese – Indian origin” (Devare 290).²⁴⁷ Among those who stayed on are abandoned children of Indian

²⁴⁷ According to Sudhir Devare, there are 100 families of Indians remaining in Vietnam after 1975; many of them are of Indian-Vietnamese origin because many Indian men got married to local Vietnamese women (290).

men and local women: allegedly in order to preserve wealth, men of the Chettiar community are not allowed to have affair with non-Chettiar women, (Nguyễn Công Hoan, *Đống rác cũ* tập 2 300-301; Nishimura 1-10) resulting in a number of abandoned mixed Indians in the group of “those from pre-1975 days.” The group of Indian descendants also contains offspring of those who have intimate connections with only Vietnamese family members and thus, stay in Vietnam by choice.²⁴⁸ In the memory of Cô Tuyết, a mixed Indian-Vietnamese woman, aged 60, her father was the best Indian man. She recalls that in the past, every day, from 7am to 4pm, her father worked for Vinatexco and Vinafilco factories established in 1959 by a big shareholder named Ly Long Than, a *Hoa* businessman. Returning home at 4:15pm, her father took two cans of water from the village dwelling. One can was put in the bathroom for his wife and children to take a bath. The other one was stored to wash family stuff. From 6pm to 5am, her father guarded for one American officer of whom Tuyết’s father gained great trust. Not long before the collapse of Saigon, the officer offered to take the whole family of Tuyết to the United States by his own plane. This officer asked him to submit a family document for the whole family’s move to the United States. However, Tuyết’s mother did not want to go; Tuyết’s father did not want to leave her mother alone. “Indian men love and adore their wives very much!,” Tuyết constantly repeats. Her father was, as described by Mrs. Tuyet, “a living saint”; he had a special adoration for his Vietnamese wife. Tuyết remembers that 1980 was the last year that the Indian government sent out their Air

²⁴⁸ Mr. Hùng told a story about one Indian descendant in Hanoi who returned to Pakistan, homeland of his father to settle down. However that Indian man had to give up his settling plan: he almost died of hunger in his home country because no relatives of his father received him and he does not know any Indian language (Personal interview November 9, 2013).

India's flights to bring back people of Indian origin. Tuyết's father and many other Indian men did not repatriate because the "special flights" were only for those who had "Indian blood" not for those who were their non-Indian spouses.²⁴⁹ Once again, Tuyết' father denied leaving Vietnam because of his intimacy with his Vietnamese relatives.

Although there is no a solid, organized community or group of the Indian descendants, they share a common documented identity that includes "Indian blood"²⁵⁰ and "Indian ethnicity" (shown on ID cards and household books).²⁵¹ Given this documented "Indian" identity in the context of rising Vietnam and India partnership, the Indian descendants – "those from pre-1975 days" -- could have constituted a part of the world of privileged Indians such as Sonu and Shantanu in the national Vietnamese writing. However, that is not the case. Cao Văn Tây and Ngô Thị Bibi only appear as heroes in the anti-colonial historiography of Vietnam (Box 1).²⁵² Nation-makers hardly show any attempts to make public aware of the existence of Indian descendants, such as cô Tuyết, Z, Hùng, and J, who "happen" not to be involved in national revolutions of Vietnam.²⁵³ Devare appears to recognize this absence when asserting that most Indians one sees and meets today in Vietnam are Indians, who "came here in the last ten to fifteen years or even more recent" (288).

²⁴⁹Personal communication, October 20, 2014. In memory of Tuyết,

²⁵⁰ Shown in the section "nguyên quán" (usually birth of place of the father) in ID cards.

²⁵¹ See more about ID cards of the Indian descendants in Chapter 1

²⁵² Records about Ngô Thị Bibi, see Chapter 5.

²⁵³ Read Natasha Pairaudeau and Chi Pham. "Indochina's Indian Dimension" for my use of the expression "did not happen to be involved in national revolutions."

Nevertheless, the absence of the Indians descendants in the public mind indeed does not mean the actual nonexistence of this population; instead, it means the contemporary dominance of the new perception about the “Indians”, or “the Indian community in Vietnam,” – a perception that exclusively refers to the new Indians and that the Indian descendants do not fit in. So what is the mainstream concept of “Indians” that excludes the Indian descendants? As revealed in the document titled “India-Vietnam Relations” by a governmental police department of Vietnam,²⁵⁴ the term “Indian Community” refers to the new Indians who are contributors to the nation-building of Vietnam:

The Indian Business Chamber (INCHAM) is an organization of Indians living in Vietnam, primarily to promote trade and business interactions. The Indian community is vibrant, law-abiding, well-educated and prosperous. A vast majority of them are professionals working in Indian and multinational companies; and they retain strong family, cultural and business ties with India. With the ongoing increase in bilateral trade, investment and tourism, the Indian community in Vietnam is set to grow and prosper further in the years ahead. Indian Yoga Association and Indian Women Association have been formed in Ho Chi Minh City (para.25).

The definition clearly restricts the term “Indian community” to individuals and groups of people whose migration to Vietnam is associated with the rising bilateral trade, investment, and tourism contracts between Vietnam and India. Descriptions about cultural, blood and economic ties of Indian newcomers to their home country highlight the potential of this population in fostering connections and interactions between Vietnam and India. Particularly, the description emphasizes the conformity of the Indian community to “socialism-oriented open market,” the recently promoted strategic figure of Vietnam. As noted in the quote, members of the “Indian community” work in “Indian and

²⁵⁴ Specific details are omitted for security reason.

multinational companies” in Vietnam; this description definitely highlights the internationally “open” Vietnamese figure. Especially, details about the attachment of new Indians to the socialist, independent principle prevail in the definition. Described merits such as “vibrant, law-abiding, well-educated and prosperous” of the Indian professionals definitely carry images of “new [Vietnamese] people” that the Party has constantly emphasized for the national industrialization. At the 7th Congress (1991), the Party asserted that being intellectual, active, energetic and creative; possessing revolutionary morals, love for country and faith in socialism; and having professional skills and practical abilities constitute qualities of new Vietnamese people in the era of "industrialized country" (Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam, *Văn kiện Đại hội đại biểu toàn quốc lần thứ VII*, 81). Indians, such as Sonu and Shantanu, embody the mainstream Vietnamese ideology of “Indian migrants”; these Indian characters, with their patriotism, wealth, and international integration, also carry merits of the figure of "new Vietnamese citizens" that the Party has recently attempted to construct. In general, the definition shows that Vietnamese nation-makers attempt to make current members of the “Indian community” supporters of the Vietnamese nation-building. In this meaning, “the Indians living in Vietnam” exclusively refer to the Indians associated with, more precisely beneficial for, the national modernization and correlated national prosperity and sovereignty. These Indians are in short *welcome migrants* of Vietnam. This new perception of the “Indians” explains why the Indian descendants -- offspring of the “bloodsucking creature,” unwelcome migrants, -- are absent in contemporary Vietnamese

writing, given that this literature has formed an ideological instrument in nation-building of the Vietnamese government

Actually, the Vietnamese government's selective definition about the recent Indian migrants stems from the Indian government's inclusion of that population in the Indian nation-building. In other words, the Indians that the Vietnamese government targets for its nation-building also forms the target group of overseas Indians of the Indian government for its national cause. Traditionally, the Indian government has been usually categorizing its overseas citizens depending on differing foreign and domestic policy priorities in nation-building of India (Pande, "Airlifts" para.9; Pande, "India and Its Diaspora" 125-138; Pande, "Diaspora and Development" 36-46). This means the visibility of overseas Indians, as Amba Pande suggests, ties to the Indian government's historically differing strategies of nation-building. Accordingly, overseas Indians acknowledged by the Indian government are only those who are prosperous; this population can be partners in the India's developmental process. In the case of the Indian community in Vietnam, the Ministry of the Non-Resident Indians and Person of Indian Origin Division of the Ministry of External Affairs describes that "there are virtually no unskilled workers in the Indian community [in Vietnam];" "the Indian community in Vietnam enjoys reasonably good economic status" (270-271).²⁵⁵ The Indian government's focus on skillful overseas Indians likely aims at including this population to the young Indian businessmen and professionals, who present the emerging India and

²⁵⁵ "[Indian Diaspora in] South East Asia." Retrieved from Portal of the Ministry of External Affairs of India <http://indiandiaspora.nic.in/diasporapdf/chapter20.pdf>

the enterprise and energy everywhere to explore new markets (Devare 288). The Indian government's attempts to include the new Indians in Vietnam to the Indian nation-building definitely make it more practical for the Vietnamese government to strive to include this population to the Vietnamese nation-building: the Indian community in Vietnam would be attracting more attention, which also means more investments and supports, from the Indian government to Vietnam. Literary and journalistic attempts to make visible privileged Indians in public, such as Sonu and Shantanu, definitely attend the Vietnamese government's efforts of making the new Indians useful migrants of the goal of national industrialization. And it is also for that goal, the Indian descendants are not made visible in Vietnamese writing. In other words, as an ideological instrument of the state, Vietnamese writing would just reflect and foster the dominant ideology; it puts the image of new Indians to the center and sustains the Indian descendants behind the scene of the national landscape.

But what really makes the Indian descendants unfit for the mainstream ideology of "Indian," thus be out of the nation-building and the associated national writing of Vietnam? Devare once asserts, as mentioned, Indians that one meets and sees in Vietnam are mostly overseas Indians. The invisibility of the Indian descendants stems from their difference and separation from the new dominating "Indian community"; particularly such invisibility stems from the Indian descendant's very political, cultural affinity to the Vietnamese historiography, society, and people. Precisely, the Indian descendants do exist physically and "one" must have seen (many of) them, but "one" cannot recognize them as Indians because of their prominent Vietnamese identity. Out there, Indian

descendants earn their living through impermanent and low-income jobs such as mobile selling, motorbike taxi, costume jewelry polishing and selling, and *halal* meat servicing. Cô Tuyết sells worshipping items in an Indian religious center; her daughter sells tea, coffee, and miscellaneous items on streets in the daytime and works in a pub in nighttime; her sons are seasonal employees. Indian descendants, like Tuyết, would be visible in public with the category “tầng lớp lao động tự do” that refers to Vietnamese manual and unemployed labor. Out there, in Vietnam, “one,” supposedly being aware of the ongoing presence of the Indian descendants, would see and meet Grand Sâm, a retired accountant; her sister, a retired teacher; and Cương, a retired mechanic; if not being asked, they would largely be known in public as “công nhân, viên chức nhà nước,” who work for governmental sectors. As said in Chapters 4 and 5, Indian descendants like Bibi, Cao Văn Tây, and Năm Hà appear in the public eyes as revolutionary heroes. Additionally, low economic conditions of the Indian descendants would keep them far away from being categorized as members of the "Indian diaspora" (as categorized by the Indian government) or the "Indian community" (as named by the Vietnamese government).

Particularly, Vietnamese as the first and only language forms a critical factor that makes the Indian descendant culturally unconnected and dissimilar to members of the "Indian community" (Devare 291). Indian descendants are largely strangers in Indian festivals and rituals organized by the new Indians. They look into those events without participating; this indifference can be obvious one example of an Indian ritual conducted at one Indian religious center in Vietnam. That was on October 22, 2013, Indian women

celebrated the Karva Chauth festival in the Indian Religious Center (omitted name). They fasted the whole day and the whole day they prayed for their husbands' longevity and prosperity. At 4P.M, fifteen Indian women in colorful saris gathered in the temple, in front of the altar on which there are statues of Ganesh, Rama, Sita, and Hanuman. Ganesh statue stands in the altar's core; a picture of a decorative elephant head is on the right and of Ramayana's three characters is on the left. The table-figured altar is made from colored pink bricks; it faces the wall on which curved a big statue of Rama. On the statue top is a wall painting of a blacken head figure entirely covered in a high, big, square brim hat, revealing only the ear tails and the neck. The hat itself is circled by a figure of a yellowish snake with a grill wide enough to almost cover the Ganesh statue. In front of the altar, on the floor is a floral map on which every Tuesday Mr. Hanu, his family, and other Indian expats sat and pray for around two hours. On the 2013 Karva Chauth festival, Indian women burned a number of candles around the altar. All Indian women brought with them small, cute boxes and bags wrapped with sparkling flames; their Indian children wore dazzling dresses. The praying ceremony started when a ritual melody arose from a smartphone plugged to the big volume available at the temple corner. Thirteen Indian women sat in the round line on the mat, putting small metal jars of water in front. At the mat center was a big plate of fruit and burning candles. Each woman held a metal tray on her hands. On each tray had jars of red and white powders, burning candles, colorful boxes, and fruits. With the music flow, they turned in the tray one by one in the direction opposite to clock circle. The move of trays was in tune with the music rhythm. All these women covered their heads with transparent scarves during

the ritual. While their mothers were in the ritual, Indian children dazzling jewelry and glitzy dresses entertained by running around and sometimes trying to touch the strays on motion. Sometimes, in-betweens of the ceremony, Hòà and Lan, came in and out, looking at the function indifferently. Hòà and Minh, aged at the early 40s, are sons of the deceased Indian priest of the Center. The Center does not offer religious practices, except those by Indian expats. Hanu, a retired businessman, is the most frequent prayer of this temple. In addition to praying at the temple every Tuesday, writing poems and stories, many of which have Vietnamese settings, is his meditating form.²⁵⁶ Every morning, he gives money Mrs. La, wife of the deceased Indian priest to buy jasmine flowers to put on every altar of the Center. Hanu's sons have business in several Vietnamese cities; many women among those were in the 2013 Karva Chauth are his relatives. The festival was still going while it turned into dark. The music was repetitive; the circle of tray exchanging kept moving. The environment became more mysterious in the evening time. From afar, at the left side, being shaded by big columns, the widowed La sat alone, quietly staring at the function. Under her legs were two dogs sleeping. The function finished at 7pm.

²⁵⁶ His short story "Red Scarf," is published in Vietnam. Hanu's stories reveal his ideological alliance with mainstream Vietnam. The foreigner character is harmful in this story; he entices a village young man to the business of banned drug. The young man's wife, at his court, angrily asks him never to write to her from the prison. The regret that his wrongdoings have destroyed his family lingers on a young man during his twenty-five years of imprisonment. On the last day in prison, he writes a letter to his wife telling her about his freedom date and asking her to hang on red scarves on trees outside their village if she forgives him. He will take a bus passing by the village. If he sees red scarves, he will come home; if not, he will continue on his own life journey in a monastery, seeking forgiveness from God. The image of red scarves hang all over trees on the village street on the day of his return is haunting; they are, as revealed, Vietnam's flags, signals of hidden fervent love, faith, and mercy of Vietnamese.

The flashily dressed Indian women exchanged their dazzling covered boxes and colorful flowers, kept asking each other to bring fruits and sweets to home. They started photographing each other and together with burning candles on their hands and constant smiles on their lips. From afar, at the corner on the left side, back to the temple rear, the widow still sat motionlessly until the last dazzling Indian woman left. The temple was covered in dark and quiet.

The Indian descendants might attend the so-called cultural events and functions but they seem to be outsiders. In the film titled “Chùa Ấn Giáo ở Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh” [Hindu Temples in HCMC], produced by HCMC Television in 2000, the prominent Indian characters are members of INCHAM; not only that, the Indian descendants are depicted as foreigners to their culture. In the recorded ceremony at Sri The day Yutthapani Temple, an Indian man who is a member of INCHAM, performs the ritual of receiving God’s gift from the priest, Mr. B, an Indian descendant. The camera zooms at the Indian’ head bowing in front of the altar and captures the moment at which Mr. B gives him a plastic bag of an apple and a candlestick. The second main character of the film is another Indian woman. She dressed nobly with a costly wallet. She receives sacred water from Mr. B, applying it to her head. Mr. B’s relatives, Indian descendants, in the film merely form the background for the two main characters. The Indian descendants watch the ritual anxiously and uneasily. Mrs. Tuyết’s son, a twenty-two-year-old man, dresses casually. He styles her hair backward, revealing his round and bright face. He looks different from daily life, a slow and boring man, who received quarrels of her mother all days long. His eyes moved up and down, right and left alongside with the

gesture of receiving and treating the holy water of the Indian man. Standing next to her son, Mrs. Tuyet looks serious. She seems not to be familiar with the ritual of drinking the sacred water. The curiosity presented on their faces reflects that the ritual is not their daily practices; they are watching the ritual not as believers but game players. The movie narration depicts the Indian descendants as strangers of Indian culture. Also, records (portals and facebook pages) on membership in authorized organizations of the Indian community (Indian Business Chamber in Vietnam, Indian Women's Association, and Indian Yoga Association) in Vietnam show the total absence of the Indian descendants.²⁵⁷ The economic condition and cultural practices would definitely make Indian descendants unfit in the new category of “Indians” that, to repeat, exclusively includes those who are wealthy, educated and well-connected to the Indian government and culture. Thus, Indian descendants do not form a target group of Indian migrants in nation-building of Vietnam and India, which definitely causes their invisibility in contemporary Vietnamese writing.

The absence of the Indian descendants from the contemporary Vietnamese national landscape in the rise of the new Indian migration also stems from the political diversity of “those from pre-1975” since the olden days of Saigon. In the olden days, as seen in documents at the Archive Center of HCMC People’s Committee, “Hội Ân Kiêu” (Association of Overseas Indians) was the only Indian migrant group authorized by RVN; this community, headquartered at Sri Thenday Yutthapani Temple, included Chettiars

²⁵⁷ See Facebooks *Indian Women's Association – HCMC*; *Incham Hanoi*; *Incham Vietnam*

Portals of INCHAM Vietnam (Incham.vn);

Individual membership of INCHAM is 100 USD/year, which would occupy almost monthly incomes of most Indian descendants.

(prosperous traders, merchant-bankers, and money-lenders), who were obviously models of the metaphor of bloodsucking Indians in Vietnamese writing since colonial time. Not only prosperous, the Indians in this group were also politically influential; they allied with the Vietnamese government for projects of confiscating land and other property of other unauthorized Indian groups.²⁵⁸ Sri Thenday Yutthapani Temple was seen as a dominion exclusively of rich, influential Indian men; the temple fiercely closed its doors to non-chettiars. Grand Mai, aged 82, daughter of a former Indian priest, recalls nothing but her fear about Sri Thenday Yutthapani temple: two frightening guardians usually stood at two sides of the gate to make sure that no Vietnamese and other population who look tattered and impoverished would enter the temple. But then, Grand Sâm treasures her memory about Indian members of the Mariamman Temple; she enjoyed watching performances of Indian priests stepping on fire; she even walked with these Indians in processions of Mariamman Goddess statue along the present-day Trương Định Street.²⁵⁹ The privilege of the "Hội Ân Kiêu" in particular and of Indian businessmen in general was terminated with the Fall of Saigon and the consecutive democratic revolution. While prosperous Indians completely evacuated from Vietnam, most Indian who remained in

²⁵⁸ With State's sponsorship, Hội Ân Kiêu claimed for their rights over the property of Hội hai chùa (Associations of Two Temples [Subramaniam Swamy Temple and Mariamman Temple]). In response, in 1965, leaders of the two temples petitioned for a state sponsorship of their government. However, it is clear that South Vietnam government disfavored the two temples, also aim to take control of the two temples' assets. It hatched a conspiracy to eliminate the autonomy of the temples. One document stored at the archive of Ho Chi Minh City analyzes this scheme. First, the government would design a controversy which disadvantaged the temples so that the Ministry of Domestic Affairs (MDA) would request the temples' managers to hand over their properties. The consequence would be, as predicted by the MDA, the temples' opposition to the state. MDA would hope that the temples' leaders would bring the case to the City Court because the court, as revealed in the document, always on the side of the state (Việt Nam Cộng Hòa. Quản lý tài sản và xây cất n.d, 1965-1966, 5).

²⁵⁹ Grand Sâm, personal communication, August 24, 2014

Vietnam are descendants of non-Chettiar Indian families and are, as said, unrecognized mixed children (Devare; Chandra) – in short, those who must have been excluded from “Hội Ân Kiêu.”

As a consequence of the democratic revolution, religious centers, civil land and houses and other valuable property (gold and silver, for example) once owned and managed by pre-1975 rich, powerful Indian members transformed into Vietnamese state property, state-owned commercial agents, state-owned houses of rice stores, and state-sponsored charity houses for homeless people.²⁶⁰ In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the Vietnamese government revitalized religious centers of those of pre-1975 Indian migration in efforts of serving those of post-1975 Indian migration –new Indians -- actors of economic partnership between India and Vietnam. The Decision 1606/UB issued by HCMC People's Committee in 1983 contains a request of making Kiêu hoa (flower chair) a cultural heritage as an evidence of the long presence of Indian art in Vietnam. In 1984, the HCM People's Committee issued the decision 99/QD-UB deciding to make Sri Thenday Yutthapani “pagoda” a memory house of Vietnamese-Indian relationship. Accordingly, the Department of Culture and Information must “maintain and make it a culturally and artfully historic place that presents the friendship between the peoples and

²⁶⁰There are more written and oral data about this revolutionary work over the Indian temples. For example, The Decision [omitted] by HCMC People's Committee on [omitted] in 1978 reveals that the ministering committee of Sri Thenday Yutthapani Temple wrote a petition to donate (hiển) this temple to the state before their left to India. The Indian members brought to Indian several statues, most of which were wood and silver. In corresponding to this Decision, in 1990, the Letter [omitted] reveals that the attempts to return the deposited property to Indians went in vain.

Rumors about the loss of valuable property of the temples to the state are still going on: 18 kg gold covering the tower and 18 gold strings wrapping around the main status vanished. One 80-year-old Vietnamese historian in our numerous conversations kept telling me that one export-importing company, where he worked part-time, occupied Mariamman temple's space. His cousin, a goldsmith, was once asked by the local government to test the gold value of statues stalled at Sri Thenday Yutthapani temple.

the governments of the two nation-states.” In 1991, HCMC People’s Committee, in the Decision No. 99/QD-UB, decided to transform the Sri Thenday Yutthapani temple into a memorial house of Vietnamese-Indian Relationship. In 2013, the Agreed Minutes of The Fifteenth Meeting of the India-Viet Nam Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation in New Delhi on 11 July 2013 identified three Hindu Temples located in HCMC as symbols of cultural connections between Vietnam and India:

The Indian side welcomed the commitment of the Vietnamese side to maintain the integrity and sanctity of the three Hindu temples in Ho Chi Minh City that are symbols of the enduring India - Viet Nam cultural exchanges, in accordance with the rules and regulations of Viet Nam (Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thông báo về điều ước quốc tế có hiệu lực 39/2013/TB-LPQ, July 30, 2013)

Nevertheless, the revitalization of the three Indian temples is obviously nationalist in the sense that it exclusively serves the Vietnamese nation-building in the time of increasing globalization. As asserted by HCMC Television (2000) in the documentary film titled “Chùa Ấn Giáo ở Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh” [Hindu Temples in HCMC], Vietnamese authorities should urgently take actions to preserve the Indian temples because they do not only remarkably indicate a long history of Old Saigon but also potentially function as worshipping places of numerous new Indians. This means that the revitalized Hindu temples would fulfill cultural, religious needs of welcome Indian migrants, many of whom are economically and politically powerful Indian citizens; these citizens are potentially significant investors in Vietnamese economy. Noticeably, Vietnamese nation-makers initially incorporated the Indian descendants, those, who had “Indian blood,” for the strategic revitalization of the property of the pre-1975 Indian migrants. This is the

historical context out of which decent Indians in the olden days and their descendants were promoted to the position of managers or priests at Indian religious centers.

Strikingly, although some Indian descendants in these positions retain their Indian citizenship and their knowledge of reading Sanskrit and Tamil texts for rituals (Devare 291), they choose not to participate in the new Indian community.²⁶¹ This disunity, regardless of common Indian blood, stems from the return of tensions between prosperous chettiars and decent, unrecognized Indian descendants. In details, among members of the third Indian migration to Vietnam, there are chettiars (associated with those) of the pre-1975 days. These chettiars, while running businesses in Vietnam, want to recover their ownership over Indian religious centers and other objects that they left behind before the exodus and that are now under the Indian descendants' management.²⁶²

²⁶¹ Specific details (names of persons and religious centers) are omitted and changed for security reason. In late 2013, I saw the colorful poster of Diwalee Festival posted on a religious center' door in HCMC. As usually, the Festival was organized by INCHAM. The poster showed that INCHAM invited all Indian people living in HCMC to the cultural event. I asked M., an Indian descendant who usually visited the temple if he planned to join the festival. He immediately responded me in a high, uncomfortable voice "No!" "Why? You are an Indian people!" I did not surrender to his annoyance, asking him. His forehead crinkled. His eyes flashed with anger. His lips tightened as though he was trying not to burst out some repressed resentments: "I do not belong to them"

²⁶² In a conference about Indian diaspora studies in India, a chettiar descendant, aged around the 70s, who is a journalist, asserts on the tradition of wealth and high intellectuality of the chettiar community. Members of this community had spread throughout the world their economic, cultural influences. That tradition is now decreasing with new chettiar generations. For years, he had approached chettiar youth to talk about the excellent tradition of chettiars in old days to revitalize such tradition among young generation. The vast migration of Indian citizens to the world recently likely carries the aim of recovering the regime of chettiars particularly in former colonies of British, the regime which almost collapses in the mid-1940s when colonies gained their independence. This aim is also obvious in *Coco's Gambit: A Novel* (Authorhouse, 2016), by Peter T. Treatway, in which Devan, a chettiar character, emphasizes in a proud voice about the return of his people all over formerly British Southeast Asia regardless his previous compatriot generation lost all of their property and faced the strong resentments of the native population in the past. The migration also carries the aims of spreading out the world image of new Indian generation, who are intellectual, energetic and particularly patriotic, who will go anywhere to enrich themselves and enrich their country (Devare 291).

Noticeably, the chettiars, with economic powers, influence leading nation-makers of India, particularly members of the Congress, thus, Indian authorities supported the chettiars' attempts in taking back their property left in Vietnam, particularly, the Indian religious centers.²⁶³ Thus, the migration of the new Indians threatens positions and associated economic benefits of the Indian descendants.²⁶⁴

The resulting conflicts and tensions between the Indian descendants and the members of the third Indian migration tighten political, cultural attachment of the former to the Vietnamese side. Mr. Tám, an Indian priest, performs his affinity and loyalty to Vietnamese national projects. His language is filled with mainstream political vocabularies such as “chính quyền các cấp” [governmental levels], “anh em đoàn thể” [brotherhood and collective group], and “our state.” His constant use of the word “we” while explaining to visitors about the religious site that he is in charge suggests an attempt of demonstrating the legitimacy of his position. Additionally, in Mr. Tám's office, many certificates signed by the local government acknowledge his contributions to local social charity projects. The political ties of the Indian descendants to Vietnam would aim to secure their positions over sites that are being asked to return by new Indian migrants. These ties definitely heighten the difference and distance of the Indian

²⁶³ Details of governmental organizations and authorities standing on the side of the chettiars are eliminated for security purpose. Personal communication, July 25, 2013.

The tension of the Indian descendants and new Indian migrants can be sensed in the post “Hindu temple in Vietnam” in *Aum Muruga Journal* of a Hindu association in Australia (see <http://shaivam.org/siddhanta/toivietna.htm> and <http://shaivam.org/siddhanta/toivietna.htm>).

²⁶⁴ Archived documents 1968-/VP-NC dated December 14, 2000, by HCMC People Committee and 226 DN-VPN dated October 31, 2000, by Vụ công tác phía Nam (Assembly Office).

Personal conversations, bác Tám, quận 1, July 26-25, 2013

descendants from the new Indians and the associated Indian government; thus promoting the Indian descendants in the Vietnamese public through writing would be seen to endanger economic commitments between Vietnam and India, given the Vietnamese traditional belief in material impacts of writing, particularly, literature.

Moreover, the continuity of tensions between members of the third Indian migration and descendants of members of the second Indian migration would make any accounts about the latter seen as politically incorrect. These accounts would provoke in the public mind the continuity of colonialism and capitalism – embodied in the metaphor of bloodsucking Indians -- in present-day Vietnam, which should in principle have terminated in 1975. Undeniably, there is a metaphoric continuity of unwelcome Indian migrants – embodied in the ongoing presence of the Indian descendants – in present-day Vietnamese society. The Indian descendants are still living in a certain overseas condition, a condition that is provoked by their documented identity, memories about their fathers,²⁶⁵ and the increasing podcast of Indian movies in Vietnamese media (See figure 1).²⁶⁶ And stories about death, hunger, and isolation in repatriations to India would make India unforgettable for the descendants.²⁶⁷ And the Indian descendants are still seen

²⁶⁵ See footnote 253

²⁶⁶ The figure, provided by Grand Bibi, indicates that she sustain an image of an Indian woman. Through conversations, I learned that Bibi was aware of highlighting her Indian figure. This Indian figure was probably derived from Indian movies. When I showed her photos of Indian actresses from Bollywood movies issued in Vietnam during the Vietnam War, she thought those photos are about hers.

²⁶⁷ Being asked about her family's repatriation to India, Tuyét recalled the loss of her youngest sister, the only one who successfully got on a special flight in 1980. Her family never heard their youngest member. All letters sent out in vain. She was assumed to die, given a charm given by a fortune teller: the charm had a picture of a young woman lying in a coffin. Although never hearing from the youngest member, Tuyet, and her family assumed their sister might have suffered a miserable life in India. Tuyet's

as foreigners: their appearance could be somehow and sometimes seen as “Indian” with darker skin, big and round eyes and large and tall body figure.²⁶⁸ Although carrying Vietnamese citizenship, the Indian descendants are still seen not fully insiders: as said, their documented identities are still “Indian,” and “Pakistani.” Regardless of this material presence, writing about such presence is not supposed to exist, otherwise, it would provoke and remain in the public mind living bloodsuckers or vampires, which would make triumphs of nationalist, socialist revolutions questionable. Additionally, bringing in public images of living Indian descendant characters would also bring into public associated tensions between this population and the chettiars, which would make chettiars be recognized in public as members of the new privileged Indian migrants, the active attendants in the Vietnamese nation building. It has been a political principle that socialist realism in writing maintains the image of chettiars –colonial capitalists –only in the form of a colonialist, capitalist dead or a defeated imaginative target of national and class struggles. Any accounts that provoke the continuity of colonial capitalism would be seen as politically incorrect. This is the historical context of the absence of the Indian descendants and the rise of new Indians such as Sonu and Shantanu in contemporary Vietnamese writings about the Indians.

Nevertheless, literary writers, relying on the indirectness and suggestiveness of literature, are able to find a way of going beyond instructions of a specific movement to

mother kept blaming her father's wrongness in letting her daughter "back" to India (Personal conversation October 20, 2013).

²⁶⁸ I forgot Grand Sâm's house number in the first visiting, at the lane where her house is located, I asked some vendors about Grand Sâm; to make sure to show the correct house, they asked me "is that bà Ân Độ?" Grand Sâm is proud of the Ân Độ identity, but she really upsets if being addressed "Chà."

realize their role as social critics. Accounts of an Indian owner of a series of Indian restaurants in Vietnam in the short story "Qua miền Trung" (1993?) by Tô Hoài would provide one example of the tactic that Vietnamese intellectuals would take to raise the question on the return of colonialism in contemporary Vietnam. The short story centers on adventures of the narrator through Central provinces of Vietnam; an image of sheep wandering in Ninh Thuan highland reminds the narrator of cà ri sheep meat in Indian cà ri restaurants located at Hồ Gươm and Mã Mây streets in Hanoi. The narratives definitely cause the audience to remember Indian migrants who relentlessly find ways and tactics for capital accumulation: the restaurants' Indian owner never takes a rest; he takes several tasks at one time including receiving food orders, serving foods to customers, cleaning tables and cashiering. The traditional Vietnamese perception of Indian migrants as the best strategist in trading occurs in the detail about sheep meat supply: finding the Calcutta origin of sheep meat of the restaurant, the narrator, a local, excitedly shows to the Indian owner his knowledge about sheep sources from Ninh Thuận province and advises him to import sheep meat from there instead of from India. Immediately, the narrator embarrassingly realizes that his advice is unnecessary for “tay tứ chiếng giang hồ” (everywhere wanderers); the Indian owner reveals that he explore the sheep sources in Central Vietnam long enough to open a “cà ri” sheep meat restaurant in Saigon to exploit domestic meat sources. In the end, the narrator admits that he wastes his time to advise on the matter of business those who are famous over the world for their excellence in running in business; even Gandhi wandered around ports in Africa selling textiles when he was a child. The detail about Gandhi, widely perceived as a national hero in

mainstream Vietnamese accounts, would function as a shield to cover some fear and sentiment on the vigor of the Indian businessmen –symbol of capitalist characters such as vampiric greed, materialism and calculating -- in contemporary Vietnam. This fear and sentiment towards the presence of the shadow of colonialism do appear earlier in this short story when the narrator wonders why a mineral water branch established by the French colonizer still functions in a central province. Opening the paragraph about the Indian owner, a welcome migrant, the narrator immediately wonders whether this man is a trader, a manager of some trading company, a heavy moneylender “xẹt ty (chettiar),” or “tây đen bán vải” (black westerner selling textile) at Hàng Ngang and Hàng Đào streets (?)²⁶⁹– all these characters were once categorized as “capitalists” or colonial remains in mainstream Vietnamese writing (as presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4). It would be a political incorrectness if the narrator made all these colonialism -associated terms and images visible: in principle, only new Indian migrants, not "xẹt ty" or "Tây đen bán vải" (black westerners selling textile), exist in the socialist figure of Vietnam. Nevertheless, the terms "xẹt-ty" and "Tây đen bán vải" at Hàng Ngang-Hàng Đào streets themselves already evoke in the audience images of a possible existence of capitalism and colonialism in Vietnam in its path of reaching "the industrialized."

3. Ghost of Bloodsucking Entities, Uncategorized Indian Descendants, and Nationalism

The dissertation’s analyses on the invisibility of the old “Indians” in Vietnamese writing and society so far largely rely on the long constructed Vietnamese theory in

²⁶⁹ The story is in *Tập truyện ngắn Tô Hoài*, published on booksgoole.com by the author, no page is available.

material impacts of writing on nation-building. The metaphor of bloodsucking Indian is a category that incorporates colonial categorizations of the non-French citizens of the Indian subcontinent; precisely, the metaphor carries the image of Indians as unwelcome migrants that both colonialists and nationalists in colonial Vietnam attempted to construct. With the emergence of Vietnamese nationalisms, particularly, with class view-based nationalism, in the 1920s onwards, the metaphor is constructed to typically refer to a special kind of unwelcome migrants that are colonial capitalists. In colonial and postcolonial Vietnamese writing, images of these Indians -- members of the second wave Indian migration to Vietnam -- primarily exist as an immediate target of national and class struggles of Vietnam. This way of picturing the earlier Indian migrants embodies the invisibility of these people as an ultimate subject of the Vietnamese writing. Moreover, the way of describing the Indians to form and highlight the imagined and actual revolutionary target of the nation would sustain and even promote the metaphoric association of these people with colonialism and capitalism. Such sustained association potentially provides a reason of why the ethnic Indians, regardless of their assimilation to mainstream Vietnamese politics and culture, are not seen as fully Vietnamese or at least a brother ethnic minority of the “extended family of Vietnamese ethnic minorities,” as discussed in Chapter 1.

Precisely, the imagined association of the old Indian migrants with colonial capitalism makes them be seen as unfit for the Party’s definition of ethnic minority. The Party has insisted on policies of directing ethnic minorities into participating in the construction of “the socialist motherland, Vietnam.” The brotherhood between

Vietnamese majority and other ethnic minorities is constructed and maintained based on whether or not other ethnic minorities have assisted the Party-led Vietnamese majority in struggles against foreigners and struggles for socialism. “Political Report of the 2nd Central Committee to the Congress” (the second Party Congress, 1960) asserted that the minority people united with the majority people in struggles against foreign invaders to build and defend the country since many thousand years ago. During the national revolution and anti-French resistance, under the leadership of the Party, the document contains, " the minority peoples fight heroically shoulder to shoulder with the majority people, against imperialism, for national liberation." Ethnic minorities are also seen to have actively participated in struggles "for the building of socialism and for national reunification" (*75 Years of the Communist Party* 263). Even though many members of the second wave of Indian migration performed national duties that are similar to such perfect characters of an ethnic minority as defined by the Party, no change on the mainstream ethnic categorization ever makes to adopt “Ấn Độ” (Indian) as another ethnic minority. This marginalization is, to repeat, due to the material impact of the metaphoric association of members of the old Indian migrants with colonial capitalists – the association that is codified in the enduring metaphor of bloodsucking Indians. As said, the virtual visibility of Indian descendants is not privileged in historiography and in society: in principle, all administrative and intellectual attempts must aim at driving the public mind into the belief in the extinction of colonialism and associated capitalism. Vietnamese intellectuals – supposedly the minds and conscience of the nation – are consciously striving to make the Indian descendant absent from the public eyes.

Take the case of V.N, a Vietnamese intellectual as one example. V.N is an intellectual who is the most knowledgeable in the Indian descendant population. He looks quiet, gentle and friendly, which would sound like he would provide information easily. No, that is not the case. He is very aware of the political incorrectness of the topic on the living Indian descendants in contemporary Vietnamese society. His explanation of not making visible the Indian descendants probably touches upon the main theme of this dissertation:

The Indian people came here with the French colonizer; they were associated with the French colonialism. They exploited ‘our people’ (dân mình)! Now, they are receiving our state’s support. They are *eating our people’s rice*. They are *living on our people’s land*. Because of the humanity of our party and state, we accept them. But, we do not want them widely known in public. We do not want to be seen to have been *feeding the colonial remains*. You are working on the population that ‘we’ (mình) should have eliminated long time ago; they are the colonial heritage (emphasis added)²⁷⁰

V.N explicitly emphasizes the colonial association of the Indian descendants, an association that has been constructed in Vietnamese writing since colonial time. Additionally, V.N’s verbal expression “They are eating our people’s rice. They are living on our people’s land” sounds to be inherited from the traditionalized metaphoric association of the Indians and the bloodsuckers or vampires, given that “the complexity

²⁷⁰Personal communication 14 February, 2014.

One day, V.N promised to provide a list of the Indian descendants in the area that he has influence. However, he keeps ignoring the promise. I started thinking bad of personality of V.N: he kept denying providing me data and delaying his promise of giving me his documents about those people and telling me more stories about that population. However, realizing my insistence, in the end, V.V frankly the reason of not talking about the Indian descendant population, which change my negative view into a respect: he is an ideal Vietnamese intellectual who is knowledgeable and particularly responsible for the nation security. I realize that my research topic might not be supposed to be in public in Vietnam, similar to the absence of this topic in contemporary Vietnamese literature. However, responsible Vietnamese intellectuals are not ignorant about my topic; they are the conscience and the mind of the nation.

of organized speech ... is learned from ... a whole active community” (Chase 7). V.N’s speech is indicative of the deep material impact of the literary images of “sét-ty,” “tây đên,” and “chà và” – colonial capitalists – on ways that contemporary Vietnamese nation-makers marginalize the Indian descendants from the Vietnamese society, even not accepting them as members of the “extended Vietnamese family.”

Material impacts of the metaphor of bloodsucking Indian – the imagined association of the old Indian migrants with colonial capitalism – also operate on the nation makers’ attempts to marginalize the Indian descendants from holding important positions. The work of Vietnamese officials in excluding Indian descendants from the top position in an Indian religious center is a telling example.²⁷¹ As previously said, in revitalizing Indian religious Indian centers for a strategic relationship with India, the Vietnamese government first allowed the Indian descendants to manage and worship in the Indian religious centers. However, in the early 2000s, nation-makers attempted to assert their managing power over those religious temples to end tensions between the Indian descendants and the new Indian migrants, particularly to ensure the alignment of the religious centers within mainstream national projects of the state. Since the time of *đổi mới*, the Vietnamese government has more fervently directed religions in particular and ideological ventures at large into works and organizations that help to strengthen the Party-led national homogeneity and sovereignty. Ordinance 21/2004/PL-UBTVQH11 (June 18, 2004) indicates the most the Vietnamese government’s deep involvement in

²⁷¹ This section has involvement of specific people and places, but all are omitted. I just use general terms such as "Indian religious centers," "Indian descendants" and "Vietnamese officials" or fake names and fake places for security reason.

religions to ensure religions' consolidation with the national politics and economy. Accordingly, by law, the Vietnamese State holds the decisive power in determining religious organizations' personnel, activities, and donations and uses of land, as well as site constructions. Property of religious organizations and sites are defined to be under the people's ownership and to be uniformly managed by the State (Nguyễn Minh Quang 131-133). A system of governmental institutions occurred to make sure religions' alignments within the state laws (Đỗ Quang Hưng). The noticeable point in this law is that only Vietnamese citizens, who are moral and aware of the national unity and consolidation, can hold the leading positions in religious organizations and religious activities; individuals containing "foreign elements" must obtain approval from the central government of Vietnam to be involved in religious activities and organizations. The Vietnamese state's vision on religion management and on strategic priority on the new Indians results in an unfavorable condition for Indian descendants who are holding leading positions in religious centers. Many Indian descendants are still holding Indian citizenship; as said, most of them are documented to bear ethnicities of states of the Indian subcontinent. Moreover, the Indian descendants' claimed leadership would obviously be seen to potentially hinder the image of an industrialized nation: as said, most Indian descendants lack knowledge of Indian language and culture; they do not have high education, which also means they lack knowledge of standard Vietnamese culture and politics. Accordingly, nation-makers strive to marginalize these Indian descendants from high positions of the Indian religious centers and replace them with Vietnamese officials.

Noticeably, intellectuals' works of marginalizing these Indian descendants from high positions of the Indian religious centers incorporate discourses and images associated with the metaphor of bloodsucker or vampire. In details, Vietnamese officials circulate stories about the Indian descendants' abuses of donated property of the religious centers. In a number of conversations, N. displays his long, deep distrust of the Indian descendants as embodiments of colonial capitalism. He states that the Indian descendants should never hold the top position in the temple; "they are greedy and selfish," "they are never able to unite in one consolidated community;" "they are disordered; they are rebelling, thus, uncontrollable." N. repeats: "They hate each other in nature. These haters in nature make them not appropriate and not having an ability to acquire and maintain their power over any properties."²⁷² N's narratives about Indian leaders of Indian religious centers are filled images of savage, greedy Indians – associated meanings of the bloodsucking Indian metaphor. N goes further in details on how Indian descendants have attempted to establish their own "tyranny" regime in these centers and have abused temples' property for individual interests (e.g. feeding their relatives, running high-interest money lending). N. keeps repeating the sentence: "The Indians are greedy in nature" to highlight the inappropriateness of the Indian descendants in managing the religious centers. Obviously, narratives of N conform to the image of the earlier Indian migrants in colonial and postcolonial Vietnamese writing: the Indian descendants today are seen as bloodsuckers or vampires – colonial capitalists. Particularly, the Indian descendants are seen to still possess the so-called capitalist characters, detaching from the

²⁷² Personal communication, February 14, 2014

so-called socialist morals -- community-oriented concerns and patriotism – as emphasized in the Ordinance as merits of leaders of religious centers. Thus in a way, the literary metaphor remains its material impacts on present-day Vietnamese knowledge about earlier Indian migrants and their descendants. This impact sustains the invisibility of offspring of the old Indian migrants in the national writing and in the mainstream Vietnamese society.

The recent government of an Indian religious center is indicative of the material impact of the metaphor in marginalizing the Indian descendants from the mainstream Vietnamese society. V. holds the highest position in this temple. V. is a Vietnamese; particularly, he is a high official of the Vietnamese government. He is a leading member of the Party-led associations including the Fatherland Front, High-Age Association, and Veterans' Association. A Vietnamese woman, a retired financier of a state rice processing company, is responsible for keeping track of donated goods and money. V. and the financier both ensure that the donated money goes to the state bank and to the national project of "xóa đói giảm nghèo" (erasing starvation and reducing poverty). Meanwhile, the Indian descendants play inferior roles in the center. An old male Indian descendant is assigned to play the role of a priest, who leads all ritual activities in accordance with V's instructions on the so-called "Indian culture," and state policy of environmental protection and public security. Other Indian descendants are what can be called the religious center's "staffers" or "employees:" they work eight hours per day and receive a monthly fixed salary. Jobs of these Indian descendants include assisting rituals, policing visitors, giving away God's gifts (rice, flower and fruit) and cleaning. V. is very

proud of his achievement in overthrowing the previous “tyranny regime” of the “greedy” Indian descendants – colonial capitalists.

In a way, the material impact of the bloodsucking Indian metaphor is also obvious in its presence in the imagined enemy of present-day Vietnamese nation-building. Precisely, colonial capitalist morals and practices are still imagined as the bad characters whose existence would promote the public needs of the presence of good characters – socialist, patriotic morals and practices. Accordingly, that V. continually circulates the bloodsucking Indian metaphor in his accounts of the Indian descendants can be read as a strategy to justify his marginalization of this group of people from important positions: the circulated metaphor definitely reminds and provokes the long constructed enemies of the national, democratic revolution (colonialism and capitalism); thus with the metaphor, present-day nation-makers would easily draw public consensus about acts of invisibilizing the Indian descendants for the sovereignty of the Vietnamese state. This is to say, there is no trustful, actual image of the members of the second wave of Indian migration to Vietnam in the Vietnamese historiography and society; this population only occurs in the form of the imagined enemies of Vietnamese nationalism; they only occur in Vietnamese writing to serve as ideological instruments of the Vietnamese nation-makers in their hold on the socialist, sovereign figure of the Vietnamese nation.

The material impact of the metaphor of bloodsucking Indians is also obvious in the way that it helps to maintain the imagined enemies – colonialism and capitalism -- of the socialist, patriotic figure of Vietnam for which Vietnamese nation-makers are still striving. Vietnamese officials work hard to transform Indian religious centers into

community-supporting organizations. Precisely, nation-makers strive to improve the goodness of the socialist regime – state/people ownership – by driving the Indian religious centers into activities that serve the interest of communities. Since he is in power, V. has managed donated money of the religious center to make sure the use of this money complies with the state law and benefits people. Donated money is ministered by the State Bank and local government: any expense that requires spending donated money must conform to governmental projects of nation-building. A state committee was established to observe the work of counting donated money of the temple. The committee includes V., the priest (representative of "Indian"), the accountant, a local police and a representative from each of the local Women Association, the Ward Religion Department (Ban tôn giáo phường) and the Ward Domestic Affair Department. A valid report about the donated amount must include signatures of all members of the committee to be accepted by the District People's Committee. In this way, the temple's donated money is transformed into a property owned and managed by "people" (nhân dân). This means there is not a personal interest, colonial capitalists' practices, involved.

The religious center, as said, particularly contributes to the national projects of “erasing starvation and reducing poverty.” Every month, on full and new moon days of the lunar calendar, people who are listed as “poor householders” (hộ nghèo) receive rice and cooking oil from the center; the center supports those who have either valid certificates about the difficult condition or photos of their collapsed houses with signatures of local authorities. Additionally, large donated money is spent on the community-service activities of local organizations of the Fatherland Front: providing

rice to Foundation for Poverty (Quỹ Vì Người Nghèo) every month, building charity houses for homeless people, and cementing rope bridges in rural and highland areas. The center also contributes to national projects of acknowledging and encouraging young Vietnamese talents. It provides scholarships to students: Each excellent elementary student receives 5 million dong; each excellent high-school student receives two to three million dong. Moreover, the center provides five hundred and sixty students with 800.000-dong scholarships to complement their “overcoming of poverty for study” (học sinh nghèo vượt khó). Particularly, center’s donated money is also spent in the local government’s activities that express gratitude towards those who sacrificed their lives for the national independence and freedom. For example, the wounded war veteran Bibi usually receives visits from local officials and V. especially on national days including Independence Day, Vietnam Military Day and Vietnamese War Invalids and Martyr Day. All these works of the present government of the Indian religious center definitely promotes the superiority of the socialist management of the contemporary Vietnamese regime. More notably, the metaphor of bloodsucker or vampire has indeed echoed in Vietnamese officials’ intense emphases on the Indian religious centers’ engagements in improving economic lives of “bá tánh” (common people). This means, the bloodsucking Indian -- metaphor of capitalist, colonialist ways of living -- still forms a haunting phantom enemy of the present-day socialist, independent nation-building.

What is more complex is that the colonial remains are needed to form and to maintain in the public mind the image of immediate target – colonialism and capitalism -- of the national and class struggles. This would maintain in the public mind the overriding,

ultimate sovereign, socialist goal of Vietnamese nationalism. Thus colonial images “sét-ty,” “tây đen,” “chà và,” “Án Độ” and “Indien” are still maintained in contemporary Vietnamese writing and society to remind and to promote in the public about the triumph and the goodness of socialist, nationalist revolutions. But with any meanings attached to the images of the Indians, this population is still invisible: as said, this population is visible only as a subject of Vietnamese intellectuals’ national responsibility. And in this way, the metaphoric association of the Indians with colonialism and capitalism is further codified, which means further virtual marginalization of the old Indian migrants and their descendants from mainstream Vietnamese writing and society. And, as “a matter of fact,” the living descendants of the earlier Indian migrants do not form any official category in national landscape of Vietnam: they are not considered as fully Vietnamese with the documented Indian ethnicity and to repeat, they are not seen to member of any younger brothers of Kinh ethnic in the extended Vietnamese family. It is the long constructed association of the Indians with images of greedy bloodsucking Indian – colonialism and capitalism -- that potentially causes the status of the Indian descendants as unwelcome migrants in their homeland.



Figure 1: Ngô Thị Bibi (photo is provided by Ngô Thị Bibi)

Box 1

Cao Văn Tây, who received the Vietnamese citizenship from Ho Chi Minh, occurs as a celebrated intelligence soldier of the communist government. In *Lịch sử lực lượng biệt động SÀI GÒN 1945-1977* published by the Communist Party of the Military Leadership Committee of HCMC (Đảng ủy, Ban chỉ huy quân sự) in 2013, Cao Văn Tây is described as an excellent communist intelligence soldier. Under the name Ba Cóc, Cao Văn Tây was one of the founders of groups of secret agents that advocated for communism in southern Vietnam in 1946. He founded the intelligence agency of Saigon-Cho Lon in 1946 in response to the return of the French. This agency had the first name “Special Work Agency” (Ban Công tác đặc biệt) and later Information Agency (Ban Thông tin) to avoid of being watched by the French. In general, Cao Văn Tây is seen as one of 58 intelligence officials-leaders in Saigon: “CAO VĂN TÂY (Ba Cóc) – Leader of Special Work Agency (work of intelligence and espionage, 1948)” (p.167). In the National Archive Center II, Cao Van Tay is named in the list of officials “going B” (going to Hanoi) According to this list, Cao Van Tay was born in 1925 in Mỹ Phước district, Thủ Dầu Một province. The columns of the date of his “going B” and the affiliated association before “going B” were left empty (only family members of Cao Văn Tây is allowed to access documents related to his “going to B”). “Sứ mạng đặc biệt” (Cuộc chiến chống nạn rửa tiền. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản công an nhân dân, 2001 61-67), Nguyễn Hùng records journeys of Cao Văn Tây to agriculture institutions throughout India and Burma during 1948 to 1953 to search for fungus that could destroy entire rubber tree fields of the French in South Vietnam. Personal interview with Cao Văn Tây’s relatives reveals that DRVN once assigned him secret tasks in Cambodia, in India, in Myanmar, and in Russia. Since 1956 until the end of the Vietnam War, Cao Văn Tây worked as the specialist in charge of Asian relations in the Department of Foreign Affairs in Hanoi. DRVN government distributed him a house at Lý Nam Đế Street which is recently known as military house streets. When returning to Saigon in 1975, Cao Văn Tây continued holding important positions in Vietnamese government in the South. The letter number 5314/UB-TM issued on November 21, 1990, by HCMC People Committee mentioned him as the witness of the days of July 6, August 1 and August 3, 1978, when Indian diasporic members deposited gold and keys of the Sri Thenday Yutthapani temple to the Industry and Trade bank before they returned to India

Chapter 7

Disappearing Indians: The Making of Indian Food and Vietnamese Nationalism

This chapter examines oral and written Vietnamese discourses about Indian food practices and preferences, further deconstructing the complex relations between the absence of the ethnic Indians in Vietnamese history and society and the rise of various projects of Vietnamese nation-building. More precisely, Vietnamese writings about food and eating practices of the Indian migrants only aim at constructing a target and an instrument in national and class struggles of the Vietnamese. Understanding cultural practices of Indian descendants will provide more evidence of this population's integration into the Vietnamese historiography and society. This Vietnamese integration, in turn, is indicative of the haunting and strategic remain of the Indian bloodsucker (vampire) metaphor in nation-building of present-day Vietnam, given that the Indian descendants neither belong to an ethnic minority nor belong to the new Indian migrant community in mainstream Vietnamese writing. By all means, the Indian migrants and their descendants are disappearing from Vietnamese history and society.

1. Constructing Colonial Association of the Indians' Food Practices

“Thịt ướp ngũ vị hương,” “bánh gối” and “com nị” are three Vietnamese curried dishes that are widely believed to be comparable to Indian dishes including curried meat/fish, dosa, and biryani-style rice; some believe that these Vietnamese curried foods appear in Vietnam since the seventh century, when the population of thriving Hindu-influenced Champa states traded with India and Java. Since the mid-nineteenth century,

with extensive maritime trading of goods between the French colonies of Saigon and Pondicherry, Indian food shops became ubiquitous in urbanized areas in South Vietnam such as Saigon and Cholon and spread through towns in rice-growing areas and transport hubs in the Mekong Delta (Stauch; Pairaudeau, “Indians as French Citizens” 100-102). However, from another view, the current Vietnamese gastronomy uses curry trees (“cây mắcmật”) and methi herb (“cỏmethi” or “hồ lôba”) in fried fish, chicken and duck dishes. The so-called “Indian influence” is not explicitly apparent in these dishes. Instead, the use of curry-related products is seen as indigenous. In Southern provinces, in memory of overseas-exiled Vietnamese, there was a real curry tree standing on Ngô Quyền Street in Mytho; this tree is seen as the endless fragrance of hometown and childhood.²⁷³ Additionally, in northern areas, around the provinces of Phú Thọ, Yên Bái, and Tuyên Quang, curry flavor is essential to the braised fish, chicken and duck. Informal conversations with one woman from the highland in Northern Vietnam reveal that some mother-in-laws in these regions still use recipes for the curried dishes of duck and chicken to exert authority over their daughter-in-laws, who usually grew up in “modern” families. Ignoring modern-style-cooked dishes that the daughters-in-law attempt to display, their mothers-in-law would undermine them with knowledge of cooking dishes with curry leaves. This herb becomes the secret for mothers-in-laws to highlight their uniqueness and superiority over their daughters-in-laws. Even among old Hanoi women, the curry leaf-braised fish is still the most favorable dish in their childhood. Moreover, in Hanoi, fried chicken is usually dipped in a mixed sauce made of different spices

²⁷³ Amicale Lê Ngọc Hân and Nguyễn Đình Chiểu (France).

including ground curry leaves. Furthermore, methi seeds, an essential ingredient in curry powder, are widely seen as a traditional Vietnamese medicine and diet.²⁷⁴ Authors of two-volume *Từ điển Việt Nam* (Sài Gòn: Khai Trí, 1970), the most credible Vietnamese dictionary in South Vietnam, suggests that the curry is a food and a seasoning not only of Indians alone. Four terms related to curry are explained in this dictionary: while the two terms “cà-ry” and “cà-ry chà” refer to “pure Indian foods,” the two other terms “cà ry bột” (curry powder) and “cà ry tươi” [saturated curry powder] refer to a spice, which is made of turmeric, seeds of mustard and coriander, and dried chili peppers and is used to cook curried foods (Lê Văn Đức and Lê Ngọc Trữ Volume 1 151).

What is striking is that curried Vietnamese foods do not generate disgust as the curried Indian foods do, from Vietnamese perspectives. Vương Hồng Sển, a famous historian and writer, describes that Vietnamese audience traditionally believes that Indian curried foods are associated with foul smell odor because “if you eat them today, in the next day you expel gas and then constipate more often than other days.” Thus, southerners have a very common folk saying: “chà và ỉa cứt dê” [chà và expels goat shit] (Vương Hồng Sển, “Nếp sống của ngoại kiều sinh sống tại Miền Nam” 119). A similar perception about the association of Indian curried foods and smelly gas exists among northerners. The novelist Duyên Anh in *Con Thúy: truyện dài* (Saigon: Tuổi ngọc, 1972) recounts that children of his northern homeland, Kiến Xương (Thái Bình), sing the folk-song “Ông tây đen nằm trong cái bồ. Đánh cái rắm làm bánh gatô” (the black westerners lie in baskets, emitting gas to Gâteaucakes) while throwing a stone at Indian textile

²⁷⁴ Portal *Thuốc đắng chongười ghè* <http://thuocdangianchonguoingheo.com>

sellers' shops. The prolific writer Phan Tứ (1930-1995), who in the year of 2000 received the Hồ Chí Minh prize, one of the highest honors given by the Vietnamese government for cultural and literary achievements, also quotes a similar version of the song in the three-volume novel *Người cùng quê* (1985, 1995, 1997): “Ông tây đen nằm trong cái bồ, có muốn oánh thì là oánh lô lô” [the black westerners lie in baskets, if they want to fart, they fart lô lô] (*Phan Tứ toàn tập*, volume 3 392). Xuân Thiều (1930-) in his short “Bé An” quotes “Ông Tây đen nằm trong cái bồ. Bánh ga tô là bánh cứt khô” [Ông tây đen nằm trong cái bồ, Gâteaux cakes is dry shit cake] (*Tổng tập nhà văn quân đội, kỷ yếu và tác phẩm* 332). Another example of unpleasant Vietnamese experiences with Indian curried foods is the use of the term “cà ri” as an adjective among southerners. Lê Ngọc Trữ in *Tâm nguyên từ điển Việt Nam* (1993) provides the common southern saying “trông có vẻ cà ri lắm” (he looks very curry) (497), suggesting the term “curry” also means selfish, cunning, and messy. And a Vietnamese scholar recalls that her old aunties in Hanoi sang in front of her the folk-song “the black westerners lie in baskets, making farts as big as Gâteaux cakes are” (ông Tây đen nằm trong cái bồ, đánh cái rắm thành bánh ga-tô) as a way of criticizing her marriage with a Pakistani man. The song, as also known elsewhere, attacks curried foods as the cause and embodiment of the savage, unclean Indian body.

The absence of Vietnamese curried foods in these abusive written and orally transmitted accounts suggests a political context, out of which came into existence of Vietnamese hostile responses to Indian food practices and preferences. Food practices and preference form one of what Deborah Lupton calls "bodily processes." "Bodily

processes" include food practices, smell, disease, sexuality, and death; all are associated with the "animality," wildness, dirtiness, temporariness, and subservience to the flesh. Accordingly, "bodily process" is believed to block the progress of civilization – cleanliness, purity, rationality, stability, culture, order, and morality (1-3). Lupton suggests that food practices and preferences form the core and the source of other bodily processes; they have causal relations with smell, disease, sexuality and death. Out of many food practices and preferences of the Indians, Cà ri" (curried foods or curry sauce) and the eating with fingers (ăn bốc, ăn bằng tay) constitute characteristics of Indians' eating habits in Vietnamese writing across time and space.

“Cà ri” is first known among locals in colonial Vietnam as a seasoning and a food of Frenchmen and bourgeoisie. The first Vietnamese account of the term “cà ri” is in the French textbook for Annamese *Manuel de conversation franco-tonkinois. Sách dẫn đường nói truyện bằng tiếng Phalansa và tiếng Annam* ([Tonkin ?] : Imprimerie de la Mission, 1889) by M.M Bon (Cố Bàn) and Dronet (Cố Ân): “cà ri” is the Annamese translation of the French “aue sauce au carry” (135); this translation is indicative of the contemporary existence of French knowledge about “curry” and “cà ri.” In *Appetites and Aspirations in Vietnam: Food and Drink in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2011), Erica Peters describes in details that it was a wide belief among French colonial settlers that bread and curry formed basic cuisine of the French while rice and “nước mắm” formed foods typical of local “Vietnamese” (See more in *Société académique de Nantes et du département de la Loire-Inférieure* 88). Even if the limitation of food supplies from France had made Frenchmen in the colony to manage to eat rice, they would mix rice with curry to ensure

their national and economic difference from and superiority than the local commoners. French colons retained using curry in their dining to differentiate their foods and their associated bodies with the Annamese, which also meant to maintain their superiority and their immunity to the ingenious population (Peters 161-162). The local also perceived curried recipes as cuisines in houses of Europeans in particular and bourgeoisie in general. As noted by Erica J. Peters, one anonymous native author strikingly added a number of “kari” recipes in his *Petite cuisine bourgeoise en Annamite* (1889, 1914), a contemporary popular cookbook, to provide cookery instructions on cuisines of French and bourgeoisie. This addition suggests, according to Erica, a common belief among native cooks that familiarizing with curried cuisines would enhance the chance of employment in French Western or elite householders (208-212). This source reflects and contributes to solidify the image of cà ri as a cuisine typical of the French and bourgeoisie. In short, although curry recipes did not constitute the elite dining culture in colonial France (Monroe 240; James 250-251; Collingham 135), they functioned as dining signs of the Frenchness and the associated elite and bourgeois-ness in the colony (Peters 161-162).

In the emergence of anti-colonialism in the late nineteenth century and twentieth century, Vietnamese intellectuals targeted French cuisines, indirectly resisting French colonization. Radical mandarin intellectuals such as Nguyễn Đình Chiểu (1822-1888) directly attacked French colonialism by demeaning French products including “xà phòng” (soap) and “rượu ngọt” (champagne) (Đoàn Lê Giang 87; Vũ Quỳnh Tiên 312). The metaphoric connection between the colonial regime and bourgeoisie class to French

foods were still in place in 1929 when Vietnamese nationalists still fervently criticized Rabindranath Tagore's consumption of champagne during his visit to Saigon.²⁷⁵

However, these attacks are direct; reformist intellectuals would choose an indirect way of anti-colonialism,²⁷⁶ given their professional associations with the French regime and given the constant colonial censorship (Smith R.B 131-50; McHale 17, 59).²⁷⁷ Therefore, a construction of the association of cà ri as a typical food of the Indians – the unwelcome migrants -- might have been needed. Cà ri is also associated with the custom of eating with ones' fingers, this custom is highlighted by Vietnamese intellectuals as a typical Indian eating style in the aim of provoking anti-colonial sentiments.

To indicate, in *Dictionnaire Annamite* (Sài Gòn :Impr. Rey et Curiol, 1895-1896), the earliest Vietnamese dictionary, Huỳnh-Tĩnh Paulus Của²⁷⁸ uses the idiom “Ăn như chà và, và bốc và lùm” (eating like Chà và, grabbing scooping up, grabbing heaping [food]) to illustrate the term “bốc” (scooping up).²⁷⁹ This illustration suggests the contemporary public's familiarity with the knowledge of eating with fingers as a typical eating habit of the Indians. Later accounts associate the Indian migrants with both “ăn bốc” as their eating manner and “cà ri” as their typical food. On November 15, 1907, *Lục tỉnh tân văn* published a discussion about Indian eating style. The author Đinh Ngọc Từ reminded his

²⁷⁵ Read Chi P Pham. *The Rise and the Fall of Rabindranath Tagore*. Dissertation.[Riverside, Calif.] : University of California, Riverside, 2012

²⁷⁶ See more in Chapter 1 (Section 1)

²⁷⁷ See Chapter 2

²⁷⁸ “Huỳnh” is how it was written in the cover the publication *Dictionnaireannamite* (Paulus TĩnhCuaHuỳnh, Sài Gòn :Impr. Rey et Curiol, 1895-1896)

²⁷⁹ See more in Chapter 1 about contemporary Annamese misnamed Indian migrants as “chà và” as suggested by contemporary French intellectuals.

Annamese contemporaries of the typical Indian cuisine practice: this person habitually eats cà ri with all kinds of meats (chicken, duck and dried fish); and particularly, they only “ăn chùm” (a synonym of “ăn bốc”). Eight years later, in 1915, contributors of *Nông cổ mín đàm* portrayed “ăn bốc” and “cà ri” as the racial and cultural difference of the Indian migrants from the locals. In the July 6, 1915 issue, Nghi P.P published:

Why are you not embarrassed to get married to them?
 There is not lack of men but you get married with chà
 Are you crazy with a crowded gang of them
 Falling in love with bánh rế [yellow, oily, and spicy] to bury your life/
 To dry your flavor to create thousands of anger
 To destroy your flowers, cleverly managing domestic works
 It is too easy to blame the “fate’s debt”
 There is no good fate in our ancestry.

Or in Volume 53 of the same year, *Nông cổ mín đàm* published the poem “Gái lấy Chà:”

It is not the matter of “chú khách” [Chinese] or anh chà [Indians]
 I am happy to fall in love [with them] and do not think too long
 I prefer to follow the destiny belonging [to anh chà] to white silver coins
 Despite their black skin, they are righteous and benevolent (nghĩa nhơn)
 Depositing my body [to anh chà] leaning on their shadow
 Complaining about my fate is just a light wind
 Whether anh chà is bad or good, God decides [me to get married to him]
 I do not care about rice curry (Ka ri nị)

Nguyễn Văn Hậu uses alternative terms of “ăn bốc” such as “vả” and “sốc” to emphasize the wildness of “ăn bốc” eating manner; he emphasizes the taste, flavor and color of the Indian migrants’ curried foods as being covered with horribly greasy appearances:

There is not a lack of men, why do you get married to Chà
 Eating rice without chopsticks and “vả” [put a lot of rice into mouth]
 she is happy to use to soak in sesame oil
 Just seeing oiled meat is enough to be sick
 Close to black skins, who eat wildly?
 Seeing their white teeth from afar makes them look like ghosts
 Please look for other places to make marrying attachments

To help each other when getting old (1915)²⁸⁰

And the detective novel *Căn nhà bí mật* (Saigon: ? 1931) by Phú Đức (1901-1970) also suggests the widely-perceived association of "cà ri" with the "Indians:" an Indian man is deformed and people could see the viscera filled with curry drop out of his body.²⁸¹ In these accounts, curried foods are criticized, particularly when they are constantly connected with the practice of eating with fingers, which is exaggerated as "ăn bốc" – "the act of grasping food in a large amount with five fingers in a careless manner."²⁸²

²⁸⁰ In *Ấn học Miền Nam Lục tỉnh*, tập 1. Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh: Nhà xuất bản trẻ, 2012, p. 219.

²⁸¹ This seems to be a true event as in at the same time, *Trung Lập* (29 July, 1931) issued the news "Cái chết đáng thương của tên chà và."

²⁸² Greediness and wildness as a meaning of the term "bốc" and the associated Indian eating style is the most evident in a series of Vietnamese poems by groups of Vietnamese diasporic authors in France in 2011. This group of authors composes poems centering the term "Chà Và Ma La Tà." 10 out of 14 poems portray the "ăn bốc" and way of eating cà ri of the Indian migrants. Nguyễn Thành Tài wrote the poem "Bốc Hốt" address the Indian migrants' eating practice and cà – ri intake:

their faces covered in oil make them look like a demon;
their beards stuck with rice make them look like devils

Trương Sỹ Bình in the poem "Chà và ma la tà," describes Indians' eating manner as like a war: they scream, bellow roar, cry ("rống," "gào") and strike kungfu ("Tung quyền xuất cước"), to compete with other eaters for food.

Mỹ Linh's poem exaggerates the spiciness and oiliness of cà ri

One friend invited [me] to eat dishes from the Indian area
Using fingers, not chopsticks to grasp the food
The meat was exquisite, very spicy... shouting aloud
The eggplant was delicious, so greasy and cloying
that it made me stick my tongue out, in ecstasy looking like a monkey
Swollen mouth, mouth contoured (with pain) like a ghost
I tried to water my mouth to soothe the burning, but too late
My stomach was in pain, lasting the whole night

(Có bạn mời ăn món xứ Chà

Hên so đũa chén khỏi tay và ...

Thịt trầu thơm phứt cay nhiều ... hét

Cà tím ngon lạnh ngậy quá ... la

Lè lưỡi tê mê trông giống khi

Xung mồm méo xệch ngấm như ma

Nước vô chữa lửa e rằng muộn

Cái bụng đau ê suốt nguyệt tà – MỹLinh) (Source: *Việt Nam thư quán, thư viện online*

<http://diendan.vnthuquan.net/tm.aspx?m=390857&mpage=36>)

Oily images and wild actions, infused in those accounts, all imply the insanity and inhumanity of the Indians. In general, the Indians appear, through images of their food practices, as unrespectable, uneducated and mundane. Noticeably, the associations of curry foods with images of savagery – “ăn bốc cà ri” (eating curried food with fingers) -- must have generated among the locals certain fear and disdain towards the Frenchmen, who, to repeat, constantly held on curry as their French identity in the colony. In this way, the Indian migrants are also constructed to be more associated with the Frenchness: they share food with the colonizer.

Moreover, Vietnamese intellectuals’ construction of “cà ri” foods and eating with fingers as the Indian migrants’ association with the colonizer aims at provoking the modern, civilized figure as a desirable future of Annam. This national figure must have grown out of Vietnamese intellectuals’ faith in the promises of progress and modernity that were introduced by the French government’s civilizing mission-based establishment of modern institutions of education and journalism (Peycam 6; Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial* 138-139). Among policies of civilizing the colony, the French government introduced various health programs and institutions to educate the locals about hygiene and nutrition. These programs were laid out through curriculums of French-Vietnamese schools (Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial* 72-77; Hoa 12-17; Kelly, *French Colonial Education* 18; Trịnh Văn Thảo 180-184) and healthcare programs (Jennings 40-48, 118-125). From 1860 to the turn of the twentieth century, French teachers in governmental schools in Cochinchina taught majors in hygiene (Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial* 72-77; Kelly, *French Colonial Education* 4). A number of

publications appeared, aiming at educating the native population about hygiene (Henchy 124; Marie Paule Ha 108).²⁸³ From the turn of the twentieth century, many hygiene manuals in Vietnamese were published (Cooper 150), including *Vệ sinh cần yếu* (Essential Hygiene, Saigon, 1928) by Trương Minh Ý and *Vệ sinh thực trị* (Practical Hygiene, Saigon, 1928) by Trần Phong Sắc (Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial* 214). In addition to general hygiene education, the colonial government colonial built numerous sanatoria. The anxieties over the indigenous population as “vectors of disease and agents of contamination,” thus a danger to public hygiene, grew among colonial settlers. Although the hygienic education and sanatoria aimed at protecting white bodies from disease transmission while being in the colony, they inspired the colonized population (Cooper 149-153). Ways that Vietnamese intellectuals presented the Indian migrants’ food practice as greasy and dirty must have reflected the colonial government’s hygiene education programs. Given the association of hygiene educations and civilizing mission, such presentations of the Indians' food practices develop metaphors through which Vietnamese intellectuals introduced their imagination of a unique, civilized Annamese nation. As discussed in Chapter 2, making benefits from colonization did not stop reformist intellectuals from struggles for the national independence as well as for “serious modernization” (Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism 1885-1925* 80-81; Duiker 104-105). Through uncivilized images of the Indians’ food practices, Vietnamese must have suggested to the public the need of civilizing the nation – this civilization could

²⁸³ Recognizing women's role in modern families, the French set up a journal for women in 1918. This journal aimed to popularize ideas of science, medicine, and hygiene (Henchy 123- 4)

form a way of liberating it from the French oppression (c.f. Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism 1885-1925* 5).

Noticeably, the colonial program of physical study, medication and hygiene education aimed at reformulating the colonized's bodies to fulfill the labor needs of growing colonial industrialization (Hoa 12-17; Cooper 145-9 Kelly, *French Colonial Education* 4-22). In this colonizing process, colonial administrators believed that under-nourishment brought on the native physical ills and psychological crises: the lack of nutritious food resulted in the natives' insensitivity, apathy, and placidity, which produced wildness and uncontrollability, which formed a threat to the colonialist goal embedded in the civilizing mission (Thompson 43, 53; Cooper 145-50). Viewing the indigenous population as the bearer of disease, the "rampant, uncontrollable, and pernicious forces of nature" (Thompson 43), colonial administrators highlighted policies of modernizing the native about nutrition. Within the "interconnected inter-textual milieu" of Great France, Vietnamese intellectuals' constructions of nasty and savage images of the Indian eating habits indeed aimed at fostering an awareness about food, eating habits and economic productivity among the local population. Contemporary reformist intellectuals promoted healthier diets in the aim of improving the modernized and civilized figure of the nation. Phan Kế Bính (1875-1921), in essays published in 1913-1914 in *Nam Phong tạp chí*, criticized the natives' lack of knowledge and concern about nutrition, which made them unproductive:

Eating and drinking must nourish the body; they must be hygienic. Although it is true that we should privilege *eating for a living*, instead of living for eating, [you]

must know ways of eating, ways to nutritionalize your bodies, so that your bodies are energetic and healthy, so that *you can handle hard work in life*. Do not eat without mindfulness... otherwise, your bodies become weak, thin, *so you cannot do any hard work*. (124, emphases added)

Bính explicitly promoted pragmatic ends of eating only for nourishment; hygienic and nutritious food practices are all inclined to meet the need of manual workers in growing colonial factories, mining explorations, and cash-crop productions. Recommending modernized food practices and emphasizing their economic benefits, Bính draws his fellows' attention to his project of leading Vietnam into modernity (Peters 7-8). This ideology probably mirrored the republican French government's projects of transforming the metropole into a modern nation-state and presenting its universal civilization through self-assigned missions of bringing under its wings populations of colonies including Vietnam (Peycam 36-37). The colonial policy of modernizing the colony resulted in the economic improvement (Cooper 29-30), raw-material production, and craft and farming oriented nourishment (Kelly 14-16). The colonial policy built in contemporary Vietnamese intellectuals' desires for and trusts in modernity – progress, science – as the inevitable future of the nation (Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial* 177; Peycam 5-7). Given Lupton's suggestion on food and culinary practices as “extraordinary power in defining the boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’” (26), the poetic criticisms on Indians' food customs signify a belief in modernity as the Vietnamese national identity in term of eating habit. Put differently, “natural” and “uncivilized” food practices must have been constructed as markers of the Indians' status of not belonging to "us." Thus, the discourses about Indians' dirty undisciplined eating styles must have aimed at centralizing

their being political “others,” which would secure the cultural sameness of the Vietnamese nation.

Colonizers, who constantly competed with local capitalists to control the colony, must have not wholeheartedly appreciated this modernized figure of the nation, as mentioned in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. As the historian Phạm Cao Dương points out, the French never wanted local capitalists to be really civilized and wealthy because they would govern the Vietnamese society, which would put the French domination in danger (169-170). In the case of the intellectuals who contribute literary and journalistic critiques of the Indians and its eating habits to the early *quốc ngữ* journals such as *Lục tỉnh tân văn* and *Nông cổ mín đàm*, the version of an economically competing nation is obvious, as discussed in Chapter 2. By their portrayal of “Chà” (and Chệt), these authors encouraged Vietnamese to set up industrial and agricultural entrepreneurship and to gain economic independence from foreign companies (Peycam 56-57). Thus, the construction of savage Indians’ eating habits must have aimed at encouraging the local to compete with foreigners and ultimately to construct a modernized nation that includes solely “us.”

Moreover, in constructing the savage image of Indians’ practice of eating with fingers, Vietnamese intellectuals must have aimed at asserting the cultural superiority of Annamese, those, who traditionally eat with chopsticks. Before falling to the French, the Nguyễn dynasty strived to realize the idea of a distinct “Vietnamese” cuisine across ethnic groups and geographical areas to shape a culturally homogenous empire (Peters 25). Using chopsticks was the most important Vietnamese [Kinh] eating habit that the

Nguyễn dynasty forced to implement to all ethnic groups. Nguyễn emperors' way of forcibly spreading chopsticks as the basic utensils of all ethnic groups must have derived from the traditional belief in chopsticks as the marker of culturally superior status (Wang *Chopsticks* 10-12; Dawson 342; Erica 30-32; Kế Bửu 62-64; Tôn Thất Bình 27). In this tradition, those who do not understand chopsticks are seen as barbarians or infants (Peters 31; Lê Siêu Văn 104; Lý Khắc Cung 199-200). Likewise, the Vietnamese intellectuals' portrayal of the Indians' eating with fingers as savage must have aimed at provoking in the public mind the image of a civilizing and unique image of the Vietnamese nation. The provoked image would then produce a public resentment against those who do not eat like "us," who thus do not belong to "us," who eventually should not exist in the Annamese soil. Here, it is possible to read out the native intellectuals' indirect and suggestive way of provoking a doubt in public about the dominance of Frenchmen who resisted using chopsticks (Peters 20-30).

In the making of the savage Indian eating, native intellectuals also erect a traditional fine cuisine as a national identity in responding to colonial discourses on barbarian native eating. Portraying Indians' eating habits as savage is an indirect way through which Vietnamese intellectuals highlight humble, disciplinary eating behaviors as markers of civilized people. In 1915, the first Vietnamese ethnographer Phan Kế Bính (1875-1921) described the Vietnamese traditional appreciation of the cultural fulfillment in culinary practices more than of the physical needs. This appreciation is evident in folk proverbs that Bính quotes in *Việt Nam phong tục*. These proverbs include “ăn hương ăn hoa (eating flavor or eating flower), “miếng ăn quá khẩu thành tàn” (overeating makes people

disabled) and “sống về mồ về mã, không sống về cả bát cơm” (living for passed ancestors, not living for rice bowls) (339). All these underestimate human beings' interest in the amount of food intake, suggesting the importance of appropriate eating manners. Details of these eating manners are summarized in *Tuyển tập quốc văn giáo khoa thư* (1941), a textbook on national writing for elementary level edited by Trần Trọng Kim (1883-1953) and his colleagues. This textbook contains lessons such as "ăn uống có lễ phép" (eating and drinking requires rituals) (16), "ăn uống ... chớ có tham lam" [you should not drink and eat greedily] (35) and "đói cho sạch, rách cho thơm" [even you are hungry, you still need to be pure; even you are tattered, you still need to be fragrant] (57). Children learn a series of dining rituals such as never being the first one who take food and never complaining about or making demands on foods; children have to greet all people before taking meal and say "excuse" before leaving the meal. Specifically, children learn not to make loud noises while eating and particularly not to chew "nhồm nhồm" ("puffing mouths, making the sound "top tep" and [eating] clumsily). In this context, intellectuals' critiques of the imagined savage eating of the Indian migrants must have reminded the public of existing local dining rituals. This reminder must have aimed at reacting against colonial discourses on the uncivilized eating practice of Annamese and on the “haute cuisine” of French. This might have also aimed at attacking the contemporary belief of France as the home of civility and high culture embodied in its famous fine dining (Trubek 3, 56; Leong-Salobir 52; Ferguson 35). Frenchmen either back in France or in Vietnam maintained their pride of fine cuisine as an essence of the Frenchness in general and the great French nation in particular (Peters 150). This national

pride was evident in the French settlers' resistance against consuming native foods (Peters 50); it is also evident in French colonial accounts that emphasize the wild eating manner and raw foods of the natives (Vassal 177; D'Orleans 149-150; Pavie 69). In these writings, the native appear as savages, given the contemporary vast belief in “moral force,” “principle,” and “duty” as markers of the civilized and “physical impulses,” “appetizer,” and “desire” as markers of the uncivilized (Rousseau in Thatche 51; Cook 11). Vietnamese intellectuals’ perception of the Indian eating culture as savage indeed promoted the existence of sophisticated dining practice – the civility – among the locals. This is a subtle way of resisting the idea that helped to maintain the French colonization, the idealized supreme of the French civilization, which is partly marked by the fine dining tradition.

In short, Vietnamese intellectuals constructed the colonial reference of the Indian migrants' eating practices in attempts of making a target for social criticisms – criticisms that aimed at provoking in the public mind anti-colonial sentiments and enthusiasm for the modernized nation. This way of portraying the Indian migrants' eating practices and practices is consonant with the Vietnamese tradition of presenting the unwelcome Indian migrants: this population, either in professions, in skin colors or in eating habits, forms constructed target of Vietnamese national and class struggles.

2. Overthrowing Colonial Foods

The constructed colonial association of the Indian migrants’ eating practices and preferences might have formed a reason of why they disappear in socialist realist writing

of postcolonial Vietnam. “Cary,” “phó mát” (cheese), milk and pâté only are defined as “shameful foreign foods” or “imperial, colonial foods,” all belong exclusively to the dead past of the Vietnamese nation (Vũ Bằng, *Thương nhớ mười hai* 22; Tường Hữu 232). The disappearance of these so-called “imperial, colonial foods” in northern writings actually reflects and facilitates DRVN’s attempts of proletarianizing supposedly bourgeois population, among which there were Indian residents, as discussed in Chapter 4. Until 1959, “cary” still appeared in food practices of foreign settlers in Hanoi as revealed in the Circular 05-BYT/DC issued on March 16, 1959, by the Ministry of Medical. This circular ordered all private and state food manufactories to send their products to Centers of the Ministry of Medical for food safety inspection. Accordingly, manufactories of “cary” and food powders such as milk, rice, cassava, and manioc were required to pack 200gram each in sealed boxes or jars to avoid moisture before sending them to inspection centers. The acceptance of foreign foods in the landscape of the national foods at this time was in tune with the DRVN’s attempts to incorporate supports from all class and nationalities in the early socialist construction, as mentioned in Chapter 4.

One telling example of this strategic acceptance is the continuation of the Indian cow farm in postcolonial Hanoi. In the memory of Mr. Hùng, before years of 1960 and 1961, a cow farm managed by Indian residents in Hanoi was still in operation. Hùng’s father was a stockholder of the cow farm located at the present-day Lò Đức street. The farm’s policy was that all stockholders were eligible to take milk bottles every day in accordance with the number of children in their families. In those days, every morning, staff of the farm brought four bottles of milk to Hùng's house. The milk bottles were

made from glass, corked by banana-buttons. Early each morning, the Indian staff put the four bottles of milk through a chink under the folding iron door of Hùng's house. "As soon as we woke up, we just had to grasp the milk bottles and drink up. Whoever woke up earliest would pick the fullest bottle," Hùng recollected excitedly.²⁸⁴

However, this privilege existed only during the days when Indian residents still appeared Ho Chi Minh's greetings in his yearly New Year greetings:²⁸⁵ the privilege disappeared with the Third Party Congress in 1960, particularly, with the circular 62NT/TT by the Ministry of Domestic Trading on January 31, 1960, which called for a more fervent, radical democratic revolution. This meant a complete erasure of "the capitalist economy:" individual, foreign business sectors of domestic and foreign trades, transportation, food services and agriculture had to be transformed to "individual-state shared companies" (xí nghiệp công tư hợp doanh). Therefore, the cow farm was dissolved: its members potentially faced the title "capitalist" and "bourgeois" -- a criminal title that could bring people to reeducation camps. Mr. Hùng's father, who possessed more than ten houses in the Old Corner of Hanoi, sacrificed most of them to the state to avoid the title "capitalist." By this time, the "imperial foods," was,

²⁸⁴ Personal communication, September 10, 2014

The favorable treatment of DRVN towards foreigners is obvious in citizenship claims of some Indian descendants in northern Vietnam. The National Center of Archive 3 stores petitions in the late 1950s of these individuals to be treated as Indian citizens to "gain benefits of foreigners" An application to gain Indian citizenship contains a letter dated November 28, 1956, addressed to the Minister Cabinet; the letter describes activities of the applicant that sound similar to any "standard" Vietnamese: He is born in the South of Vietnam; he joined the Resistance (kháng chiến) against French and he was migrated to North Vietnam in 1954 under the cease-fire convention. All sounds like life stories of Cao Văn Tây, who receives Vietnamese citizenship from Hồ Chí Minh. But the applicant requests for the Indian citizenship with the notes that "in order to receive same privileges like other foreigners.

²⁸⁵ Document from National Archive II, Hanoi.

remembered by Mr. Hùng, replaced with another popular food, the Chinese “ca la thầu” (a type of salty pickled kohlrabi soaked in northern medicines with dark color). Although experiencing the loss of French foods, Indian residents in Hanoi still received a special policy for foreigners –“chế độ ngoại kiều” -- a higher ration stamp compared to common Vietnamese. This exceptional treatment included 12kgs/year of sugar, 26 liters/year of milk, 36kgs/year of peanut oil; 26kgs/year of peanuts, 36kgs/year of green beans, 10 packages/year of cigarettes, and 2 packages/year of tea. Noticeably, the presence of milk and coconut oil is indicative of the special treatment of DRVN towards food practices of the Indian residents, most of whom were Muslims.

Again, this special treatment did not last long; in 1964, it was stopped due to “chiến tranh leo thang” (rising war) in the South, as Mr. Hùng recalled. He said, “The entire people willingly limited their food consumption to save foods for the battle in the south.”²⁸⁶ In a way, the consecutive implementation of “nhân dân food” policy (state subsidized food) conforms to the vast proletarianization of population groups in the North including the Indians. This form of proletarianizing eating practices and preferences of the Indian migrants aimed at further erasing the foreignness and the self-interest oriented ideology. The Indians were seen as the vestiges of colonialism and associated capitalism that need to be cleared out, as fostered fervently at the third Party Congress. Details of state-subsidized foods for Indian residents appear in applications of these people in the years of 1974 and 1975 to resume “chế độ ngoại kiều” applied to them before 1964. The Archive Center of the Hanoi People’s Committee stores a series of these applications:

²⁸⁶ Personal communication, September 10, 2014

applicants asked to resume “chế độ ngoại kiều” in terms of food supply; they justified that the application that the American military was no longer in the South, the national struggle was less severe, thus, their privileged food policy should be returned as promised. There is no evidence the petitions were approved, but the archived applications reveal the completion of proletarianization of the Indians in terms of food consumption: apparently not foreign and bourgeoisie foods remained; food amounts are the same for all foreigners and Vietnamese citizens. Specifically, all foreigners share the same categories of ration stamps with Vietnamese: starch food (lương thực), cloth (vải), meat food (thực phẩm), sugar (đường) and burning materials (chất đốt). Hùng and other foreign residents working in socialist manufactories – they were then proletarians -- received food ration stamps similar to Vietnamese workers. Handwritten petitions, dated January 3, 1975, by A.G (residing at Hàng Lược street) and dated January 2, 1974, by A.A (residing at Hàn Thuyên street),²⁸⁷ describe food ration of their “governmental officials and staff” status: starch food, 20.5 kg; cloth, 5 meters; meat food, 500 grams; and sugar, 350gram. Meanwhile, Indians who did not work in state manufactories received the food ration of "nhân dân," similar to Vietnamese population (students, manual workers, domestic women and individual laborers): cloth, 4 meters; meat food, 300gram/month; sugar: 100gram/month; and burning material, C slab. The equation of food type and the amount of consummation between the Indian residents and the Vietnamese in general and proletariats in particular indicates the completion of the national, class struggle in northern Vietnam. The absence of "cà ri" and other so-called colonial, bourgeois foods in

²⁸⁷ Full names and exact addresses are omitted for security purpose

the socialist government's food policy provides a further indicator of such completion and the associated invisibility of the Indians in Vietnamese historiography and society. As discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 4, these people appear in the category of “công nhân, viên chức” – workers – of the socialist figure of Vietnam, this population only eats proletariat foods.

While “cà ri” disappears in writing of North Vietnam, “cà ri” or “cà ry” appears redundantly in writing of South Vietnam. What is noticeable of this redundant appearance is that “Indian” does not form the only ethnicity of the imagined “cà ri”; instead, this food is integrated into supposedly multicultural Vietnamese food culture. The Republic of Vietnam emphasized the cultural assimilation and conformity of foreigners to Vietnamese, which resulted in the disappearance of the Indian migrants in Vietnamese society and historiography.²⁸⁸ Narratives about “cà ri” provide another way of furthering the invisibility of the Indians in RVN’s attempts of reinforcing the Vietnamese ethnicity: “cà ri” is accommodated to be a part of the imagined culturally tolerated Vietnamese nation. As mentioned above, cà ri appears in Vietnamese dictionaries of the South. The Archive Center of HCMC’s People Committee contains fourteen applications to produce and sell curry powder and curried foods of local and foreign residents in Saigon from 1957 to 1962. The archived documents depict the very availability of curry- related products to any ethnicities rather than the Indian. In particular, at “48 Tôn Thất Thiệp Street,” a French citizen of Indian origin made and sold curry powder (1962). At “22/15 PhúThọ - ChợLớn,” there was curry powder grinding

²⁸⁸ See more in Chapter 4

shop run by a Chinese. At “91 ter Công Lý – Saigon,” there was a shop selling five types of curry spice named Bombay Bavani; an Indian citizen ran this shop. At “121 Lý Nam Đế, Chợ Lớn,” a Vietnamese man ran the business of curry sauces. A female Vietnamese ran the business of making curry powder branded “Nam Thái,” which was said to be derived from the umbrella brand named “the Thailand Cook” (Người đầu bếp Thái iLan) at 36 “Phạm Thế Hiển, Sài Gòn.” The curry powder of this Vietnamese woman, as advertised, is the perfect combination of cooking talents of Thailand cooks and those of Muslims and Indians; it is not only tasteful but also healthy; it is good for digestion. At “7 Hai Bà Trưng,” District 1, another French of Indian origin opened an Indian food shop. Four other Vietnamese women made and sold curry powder at “135/51A Lục Tỉnh (1959),” “145C – Bình Thới, Sài Gòn” (1969),” “24/1 of the lane 419 Phan Đình Phùng,” and “1/10, slot H, lane 524 Phan Đình Phùng street (District 3)” (1968). At “219 Hàm Nghi street,” one Muslim Indian ran an Indian food shop. One Vietnamese man opened a shop of curry “bún” (rice noodle) and plain rice soup at “39 Tân Đà, Chợ Lớn.” (1959; another Vietnamese man produced curry powder at “121 Lý Nam Đế, Chợ Lớn” (1963). The picture of the domination of ethnic Vietnamese in cà ri-related foods reflects the contemporary government’s attempts of minimizing foreigners’ businesses for the national sovereignty, as discussed in Chapter 4. Particularly, this domination is indicative of the Indian migrants’ assimilation into Vietnamese culture. Cà ri no longer exists as what Vương Hồng Sển (1966) calls “the Indians’ monopoly” (*Tuyển tập* 437).

But this collapse does not aim at freeing the image of the Indians from the status of being unwelcome migrants, or particularly, colonial capitalists, given the long-standing

political construction of the “cà ri” (and eating with fingers) as the typical eating practice of this population. Instead, the announcement of the loss of the Indians' monopoly reflects and renders the rising disappearance of this population in historical writing of Vietnam. Precisely, the documented loss reflects and fosters the surrender of the Indian migrants in their struggles of maintaining their culture in the face of the vigor and vitality of the ethnic Vietnamese. The loss signals the inferiority and the resulting submission of this population into the dominating ethnic Vietnamese. The Indian migrants' surrender to the Vietnamese culture is reflected and stipulated in “Nếp sống của ngoại kiều sinh sống tại Miền Nam” (Living Styles of Foreigners in South Vietnam) by Vương Hồng Sển published in 1966 and reprinted in 1974 and 1978 in the newspaper *Chọn lọc*. This is a narrative of the Vietnamese's accommodation of Others' cultures and of the Indians' parallel conformity to cultural standards of the majority. Eating preferences and practices form the most convincing aspect through which the ethnographer Vương Hồng Sển examines the Indian migrants' integration into the Vietnamese society. The narrative centers on a Vietnamese, who is constructed to be open-minded towards and be knowledgeable about histories of migration and settlement of ethnic Indians in Saigon. In addition to retaining common narratives about economic practices of “Chà và,” e.g. money-lending business, the Vietnamese character deconstructs the long-standing Vietnamese presentation of eating practices and preferences – “cà ri” and “ăn bốc” -- of the Indian migrants. In exhaustive descriptions of the narrator, “Ăn bốc” and “cà ri” turn out to be real arts and rituals. The narrator, a Vietnamese youth, excellently plays the role of an ethnographer, who participates in these rituals with humbleness and curiosity. His

eating with fingers practice improves gradually; he is gradually addicted to cà ri. He observes acts and objects related to eating and drinking practices of an Indian he happens to know and "befriend with." The Vietnamese ethnographer also conducts informal interviews with this Indian friend, asking why the Indians appreciate eating with fingers, why they break lemons without using a knife and why they drink water without touching lips to the cup or bottle. In general, the Vietnamese narrator emphasizes his power of conquering the otherness; the knowledge about the Indian eating practice presented to the public functions as a cheer towards such successful conquest. Similarly, what is the most visible in the ethnographic picture about cultural practices of the Indians is the superior status and knowing-everything condition of the Vietnamese ethnographer. Moreover, stories about the Indians who give up their supposedly traditional cultural practices (wearing a dress, drinking water without touching lips, and eating only animals killed by themselves) while settling in Vietnam are also added up to celebrate the assimilatory power and success of the Vietnamese. To be short, the ethnographic account about the Indians is an integration narrative of the ethnic Vietnamese, in which the integration happens in only one way: the Indian identity, including food habits, is completely assimilated into the Vietnamese (e.g. only Vietnamese language exists in the narrative), giving way to the visibility of the Vietnamese majority (c.f. Bernards 165). This way of telling the assimilation narrative conforms to the Republic government's policy of ethnic Vietnamese hegemony, as mentioned in chapters 1 and 4.

The Vietnamese's ethnic conquest fostered by nation-makers can also be found in portraits of happy Indian faces in posters included in applications to do business on curry

that are afore mentioned. The poster of Nam Thái curry powder “Bột cà ri hiệu Nam Thái” advertises that cà ri is both tasty and healthy; specifically, cà ri Nam Thái uses authentic, high-quality Indian ingredient, thus it can produce delicious curried meat foods and can cure metabolism problem.²⁸⁹ Similarly, “Cà ri Tinh” branch occurs as a versatile spicy: it can be added to any food and even with a small amount, it can make food taste good; besides, “cà ri Tinh” can boost digestion and stimulate appetite.²⁹⁰ The posters evoke the image of curry as exotic with information about Indian ingredients; the posters also evoke health benefits of curry. What is more striking lies in portraits of the Indian figures which all look full, round and satisfied regardless of their brown skin. The lines of face muscles of the figure on Nam Thái curry poster all go up in the direction that similar to the lines of a laughing mouth, which results in a vitally laughing face. The stylish mustache lines, the three big, gap teeth and the unclear eye lines due to big laugh create the friendly appearance of the figure (Figure 1). The poster of “Cà ri lá thom” depicts a shining Indian face: the big, wide smile reveals an extremely white teeth; the black color of the face skin and the thick dark of the beard make the whiteness of the teeth more radiant. The red lips and the wide-open eyes of the figure also form a gentle, affable appearance of the Indian figure (Figure 2). In general, these figures provoke in public the triumph of the ethnic Vietnamese in conquering the Indian migrants: the image of this population is both exoticized (foreignness) and domesticated (friendliness and

²⁸⁹ File No. 4659 “GP xin mở tiệm làm bột cà ri tại ... Sài Gòn” (some details are omitted)

²⁹⁰ File No. 4654. “TTA xin nhận chế tạo và bán bột cà ri tại...” (some details are omitted)

decentness). Thus, in all means, even in the posters with pictures, the Indiansis still invisible or shadowed.



Figure 2

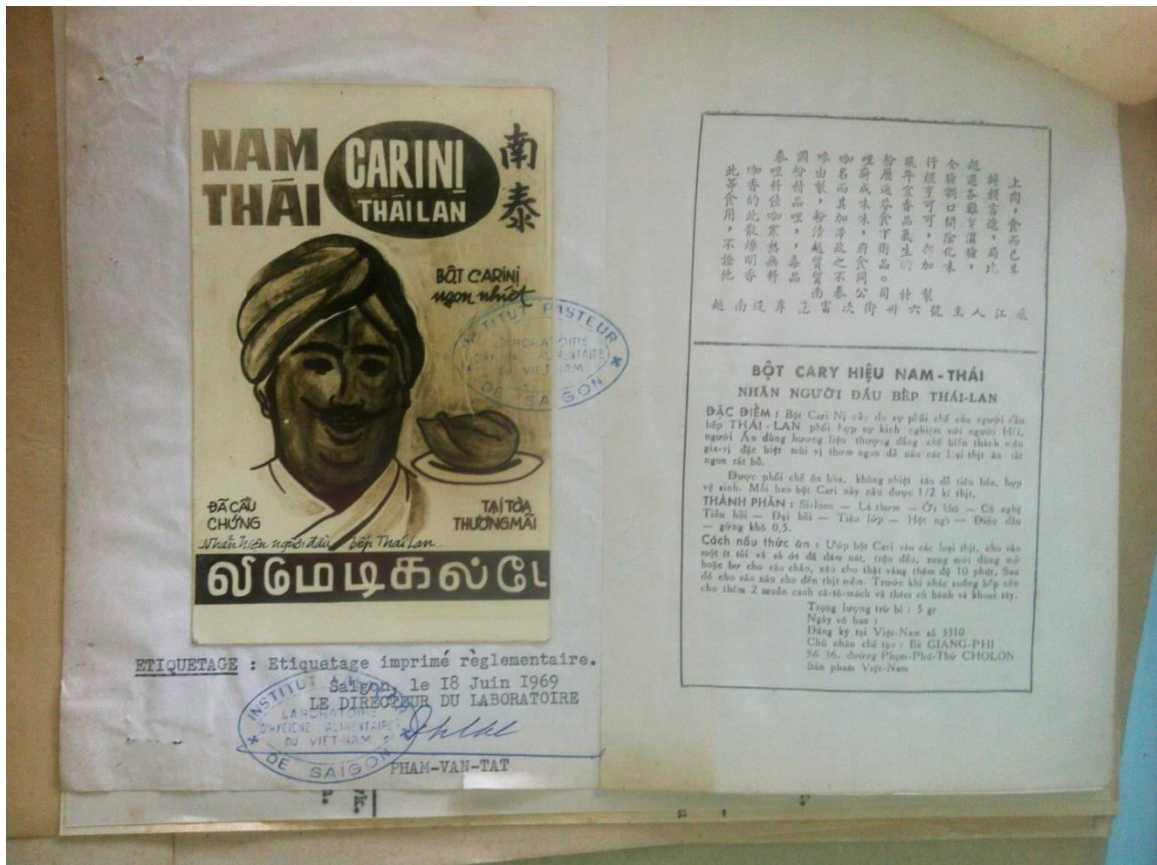


Figure 3

As said, the association of cà ri and the Indian migrants is presented and highlighted in the emergence of anti-colonialism. And as said above, the integration of cà ri and other cultural practices supposedly of the Indian migrants into Vietnamese culture does not mean to exculpate the Indians' status of targets of Vietnamese national and class struggles. The narratives on the integration solely aim at presenting the assimilating power of the ethnic Vietnamese. The derogative connotation of the term cà ri is strong, particularly when it appears in matters related to national and class struggles. In the novel *Hoa hậu Bô Đào Nha*, published in 1963, Bình Nguyên Lộc reveals the negative meaning of the term through the name of one Indian character: this female character is named

Hoàng. She interprets her name that "Hoàng" means yellow color, in Sino-Vietnamese meaning; yellow color is associated with curry, the supposed Indian identity. Hoàng explicitly says that it is a great fortune for her that her father does not name her "cà ri," otherwise, she would be ashamed. In another example: In a letter (1971) that sent to many contemporary newspapers, Mohammach Apdoul Hamide, representative of Saigon's Indian Association attacked the playwright Xuân Phát's allegedly intentional use of "cà ri" to name the Indian moneylender character in the drama *Tình anh bảy Chà*.

²⁹¹According to Mohammach Apdoul Hamide, the use of the term "cà ri" by Xuân Phát was politically deliberate because he tended to depict Muslim Indians as sét-ty (foreign and greedy). Mohammach Apdoul Hamide pointed out, Muslim people were not involved in money trading following Muslim law; Brahmin Indians were the capital accumulators.

²⁹¹ The August 12, 1971 *Vietnamese Theater and Television, Cinema and New Music (Sân khấu truyền hình Việt Nam, Điện Ảnh, Tân nhạc)* magazine summarized an opposing letter to Indian residents about the recently performed drama "The Love of Anh Bảy Chà" (*Tình anh Bảy Chà*), which was seen to distort the Indian culture and to overseas Indians' personality. According to the summary, the South Vietnam Television had broadcasted the drama four times until July 25, 1971, when members of the Indian Association in Saigon expressed their opposition. As mentioned, they accused the playwright of offending the Indian people by ridiculing their religion:

On Sunday night, July 25 [1971], the [South]Vietnam Television launched the *tuồng cải lương* "The Love of Anh Bảy Chà" (*Tình anh Bảy Chà*); this is a social drama written by the playwright Xuân Phát and performed by Dạ Lý Hương troupe.

After watching the above drama, Saigon Association of Indian Diaspora (Hội Ấn Kiêu Saigon) got offended with denigrating, cursing and smearing images of their religion.

Therefore, this association sent out letters to media asking to publish them to "correct" the play writer Xuân Phát. Accordingly, Mr. Xuân Phát does not understand anything about customs of the Indians. What he brought in *Tình anh Bảy Chà* to mock the Indians is completely fallacious.

As known, the Indian Association extremely opposes unfair attitude and actions of Xuân Phát through his drama.

Strongly accusing terms such as "phi báng" (denigrating), "mạ ly" (cursing) and "bôi nhọ" (smearing) demonstrate the Indian residents' extreme refusal to ways that Vietnamese people understand and present their culture.

However, the dress of the moneylender character in Xuân Phát's drama was in Muslim style; Brahmin moneylenders only wore white "blanket" without having a hat.²⁹² In 1972, mainstream newspapers such as *Tiền phong* (e.g. volumes 639 -641, 1972; volumes 802-804, 1975) constantly addressed India as "cà ri" (or "chà và") country. This frequent association of the term "cà ri" with the Indians and India must have stemmed from lingering class and national struggles in postcolonial South Vietnam. Particularly, since the early 1970s, with rising political alliance between North Vietnam and Indira Gandhi's government, the negative meaning of the term cà ri – food of chà và, tây đen, which means food of national and class enemies – were circulated freely. In short, by all means of Vietnamese representations, the Indian is still invisible; it still appears only in the form of subjects for the homogeneity and sovereignty of the Vietnamese nation.

3. *Vanishing Uncategorized Indians*

Advertisements of "cà ri" prevail in contemporary Vietnamese media. "Cà ri" is among imported commodities listed in a number of circulars issued by the Ministry of Trading (e.g. 07/2007/QĐ-BTM dated Feb 28, 2007; 20/2010/TT-BCT dated May 17, 210) and Ministry of Finance (82/2003/QĐ-BTC dated June 13, 2003; 201/2012/TT-BTC dated November 16, 2012) since 2003. Even the present-day domination of "cà ri" in Vietnamese markets include the return of "Indian capitalists" who left Vietnam after the

²⁹² In 2008, the website *Cải lương Vietnam* published the full text of the disapproval and Xuân Phát's response to it. More specifically, committee members of the competition on *tuồng, cải lương* and *vọng cổ* composition, organized by the Association of Oversea Southern Vietnam's Classic Music (Hội Cổ nhạc Miền Nam Việt Nam hải ngoại), brought up the letter of three decades ago in order to emphasize the requirement that composers needed to be careful and needed to study their subjects closely to avoid "similar unexpected troubles." Both the texts of Xuân Phát and Mohammach Apdoul Hamide, representative of Saigon's Indian Association are printed in full

Fall of Saigon: that is the return of brand “Cà ri Bà tám,” the famous curry brand in Saigon since 1940 (*Gia vị-Cà ri Bà Tám*).

Although “cà ri” in the afore mentioned administrative documents does not carry Indian identity (it is imported from many countries other than India), in public life, curry-related foods are increasingly stipulated as the so-called typical Indian foods. As such, there are attempts of exoticizing curried food in present-day Vietnam. For instance, new Indian restaurants raise the title “cà ri” to indicate their Indian authenticity. On the famous website for restaurants in Vietnam www.foody.vn, there is a separate section for Indian restaurants with highlighted title: "restaurant with cà ri style." The exoticization of "cà ri" as the so-called typical Indian foods reflects and facilitates cultural and economic lives of the new Indian migrants, who are seen as practically useful for the future industrialized figure of Vietnam.

The rise of the descriptions of “cà ri” as an exotic, Indian food further marginalizes those who are, as discussed in Chapter 6, descendants of the old Indian migrants from the community of newer Indian migrants in Vietnam. Precisely, recently rising perception of “cà ri” as an exotic, Indian food further marginalizes the Indian descendants from any ethnic, national categories and thus provides more evidence on the unavoidable disappearance of Indian associations of this population. First, the marginalized state of the Indian descendants is due to their economic inferiority, which makes them be unable to access the so-called Indian curried food – the food that is apparently only accessible for wealthy members of the third Indian migration to Vietnam. Each food portion at

Indian restaurants costs at least 170.000 VND, which equates to 1/15 monthly salary of a new government employee. To Mrs. L, wife of a deceased Indian guru, mother of the four male Indian descendants, “cà ri” is inaccessible for her family presently. In the past, under RVN government, everything was very “cheap,” Mrs. L. recalled. Salary of a normal government employee was enough to buy a motorbike meanwhile a chicken cost only 20 cents. “We could eat curried chicken every day! It just took a tiny part of the income. It was like nothing,” Yên said.²⁹³ An additional story from H.L, an Indian descendant working in one of the former Indian religious centers, is more indicative of the inaccessibility of the Indian descendants to "Indian curried foods." H.L family has run a business related to curried foods for generations since the former regime. H.L recalled that in the past, the monthly salary of a governmental employee was 4000 "đồng," which allowed people to buy a Honda motorbike (3500 "đồng"). The chicken cost only around ten "đồng"; five cents (cắc) could help to buy garlic, ginger, and many other spices; rice only cost "several đồng." H.L repeated the word "ăn thoải mái" (eat freely) and "ăn sao hết?" (How can we spend all that money?), emphasizing the financial sufficiency living under the old regime. In the past, his family members ate curried foods every day; they lived prosperously. Every day, his parents gave him 15 cents for breakfast. He did not spend it buying food. Instead, he usually bought a movie ticket to sleep in the Indian cinema Long Phụng after coming back from his class. Nonetheless, since 1975, ingredients for curried food are costly; thus, he uses local herbs such as turmeric and chili peppers; these sources are more available and cheaper. This story reveals that people only

²⁹³ Personal communication July 7, 2014

by chance eat curried rice and when they eat curried foods, they only go to dazzling Indian restaurants run by the overseas Indians. His family business on curried food is almost bankrupt.²⁹⁴ Stories of M.L emphasize economic disadvantages of the Indian descendants as causes of their inaccessibility of the “Indian” foods, which also means the collapse of their Indian identity as perceived by present-day Vietnamese public.

Vương Hồng Sển provides more details about this collapse of Indian identity of the Indian descendants in his ethnographic comparisons of cà ry in the past and cà ry in present-day Vietnam. In “Sài Gòn ăn uống,” [1985?], Vương Hồng Sển recalls the “authentic” cà ri foods at a shop owned by an Indian in old days of Saigon. He memorizes that in those days, the Indians were able to import curry seeds from India; different dishes used different curry powders; flavors of curried dishes were unique from each other; the taste was “noble” and “special.” However, after 1975, although this Indian remains in Vietnam, his curried foods are no longer sophisticated because there are longer flights that carry curry seeds over. Then “indigenous curried dishes” are made provisionally; the Indian man puts too much turmeric, cashew oil, “ngũ vị hương” [five spices] and many chili peppers. “It is no longer Indian curry,” the narrator asserts (*Tuyển tập* 438). Descriptions of Sển further the Indian descendants’ status of not belonging to the group of Indian newcomers. Being marginalized from this group also, as discussed in Chapter 6, means being marginalized from the contemporary Vietnamese society – where only those who, to repeat, are useful for the vision of the national industrialization are included.

²⁹⁴ Personal communication July 22, 2014

The second immediate reason of why the Indian descendants are marginalized from the officially idealized Indian community lies in their Vietnamized cultural practice, as described by Hồ Anh Thái in his short story “Người lái xe ở xứ quán” (2013).²⁹⁵ As told, among events happening around life of an Indian driver of the Vietnamese Embassy in Delhi, the event related to the group of “Việt kiều” (overseas Vietnamese) sounds the most ridiculous. The group of “Việt kiều,” as the narrator identifies, includes descendants of a couple of Indian husband and Vietnamese wife. An Indian businessman settled in Vietnam and then got married to a businesswoman living in the Old Corner of Hanoi. They both died a long time ago in Vietnam. In the early 1980s, many Vietnamese left the country searching for happier lives elsewhere in the world. In that context, children of the Indian-Vietnamese couple suddenly remembered that "they have Indian blood; they have some part of foreignness." Then they applied to "repatriate to India. Repatriation. But that was the first time they come to India." They grow up in the Old Corner of Hanoi, acquiring a little English but knowing none of their father's language, "Hindi." These Indian descendants do not know that their lives in India are more difficult because of cultural differences: the Indians do not eat beef; the Indians do not eat pork; the landlord of the house which the Indian descendants are renting is a pure vegetarian; Indian descendants, growing up in the Old Corner of Hanoi, buy pork and beef and then cook freely; smell pours out, filling their rented apartment. The landlord was terrified, asking the Indian descendants to look for other houses. “I am very scared of you; you eat any animal,” the landlord exclaims. She repeats, “You eat any animals. You all have to

²⁹⁵Provided by the author. Events in this story, as said by the author, are “99% factual”.

leave.” The sarcastic narratives indicate that the so-called Indian culture no longer exists among the Indian descendants and that this population is more associated with the Vietnamese culture.

In the rising Indian culture in Vietnam that is designed and fostered by the new Indians, many Indian descendants are suddenly reminded of their Indian origins. They attempt to adopt the Indian cultural practices, including food preference, to be identified with the dazzling, wealthy Indians and probably to gain some similar privileges from the Vietnamese state. Nevertheless, that process looks tortured, which is indicative of the fact that the Indian descendants are no longer Indians culturally. Here is the story on the failure of the Indian descendants in efforts of following the so-called authentic Indian culture

Premcham (fake name) is an Indian descendant; he was an assistant of one Indian religious center during the Vietnam War. With the collapse of the South government in 1975, Premcham left for a South American country (Chanda, 1993, 36) and there, he ran a number of importing-exporting companies. Premcham helped Vietnam export woods, silk and coconuts – supposedly “useless” in local circulation -- to the world and donated thousands of USD to the religious center that he once assisted. These considerable contributions make him a respectful patriotic character in eyes of Vietnamese authorities, which then grant him the position of an “authentic Indian” whose understanding of Indian culture is seen the most credible. With the strong financial contribution, which makes him an authentic Indian, Premcham is also a dominating character in Indian ritual

functions in an Indian religious center. He is acknowledged as the one who contributes to return the cleanness to the Indian religious center: he successfully requested local authorities to stop Indian descendants from cooking in the center; the fish source smell pollutes the centers, which are supposed to function as “an authentic Indian religious center for “authentic” Indians.

Moreover, most ritual and material activities of the temple on special days are inclined to respond to and conform to observations and instructions of Premcham. Take the gate closure ceremony of the center on October 12, 2013, as one example. During the ritual, Premcham, folding his hand, stood quietly at the left gate; his face looked radiant while watching the ceremony. Overseas Indians put their hands on their chests; some others put their hands on their heads; all mumbled their prayers. The priest, one Indian descendant, moved slowly to the uncle-god altar while the believers moved along. When the priest moved to the aunt-god altar, people did the same. After the ritual of worshiping at the altars, the priest held a small bronze bowl of red and white powder and stood inside the fence that separates the shrine from the public stadium. The priest brought with him a tray on which there was a plate of firing candle and a plate of red and white powder when he gradually stepped outside the fence. Believers moved around him. They tried to put their hands near the candle to catch up some warm and then put on their faces, head, and necks. The priest applied the red powder on foreheads of overseas Indians. Many Indians after getting the red powder put money on the tray and bowl that the priest was carrying. At this time, Premcham approached the priest, giving him a metal pot of water, asking him to offer this "sacred water" to believers. Immediately, the priest took a spoon of

water, pouring on palms of Indian believers, who attempted to the falling water and applied it on their faces and hairs. Some people strived to maintain the sacred water in their palms to put it in their mouths. About Premcham, after reminding the priest, he came back to his position at the gate, continued observing the ritual with satisfactory smiles on his face.

Not only observing and giving instruction on rituals, Premcham is given the freedom of acting as an authentic Indian in public events that the center involves. On October 14, 2013, the religious center organized a function of Indian food giving to the public. Premcham ordered three hundred boxes of Indian food to offer lunch to believers. The food was put in a spongy box with three sections. The biggest section had curry rice with some peanuts and chopped basil leaves. The first small section had "Holland bean" cooked with brown bean, potato, onion and basil leaves; the second small section contained sweet made from crushed green bean and milk. People chose to sit around the temple, taking their food. Among those who received the Indian foods, there were Indian descendants. A girl asked her mother to take the food for her, as she could not finish it. Her mother refused, telling her: "you need to eat it; it is a gift from God." The girl reluctantly grasped a small amount of rice, putting in her mouth after taking a deep breath. Her face was slightly twisted as though she was suffering a physical pain. Her mother did not look much happier. She also slowly put a tiny small of rice and bean into her mouth, shivering before swallowing them. Meanwhile, Premcham most of the time stood at the temple gate, happily watching believers "enjoy" the "Indian food" Sometimes, he went around, asking believers and visitors if they liked the food; he also

gently and patiently explained about ingredients of the curried foods; he likely knows that many Indian descendants are not comfortable with the food he ordered.

All the stories about cultural practices, including religious performance and food preference habits, indicate that the Indian descendants are far away from the community of overseas Indians and the associated Indian culture while coming closer to Vietnamese culture -- this population is disappearing into the Vietnamese soon. Nevertheless, regardless of these observable cultural practices, political status and ethnic identity of the Indian descendants in Vietnam remained a dilemma: as documented in their paper works, this population is not seen as fully Vietnamese by nation-makers. This is due to, as discussed in Chapter 6, the remains of the colonial metaphor of the Indian bloodsuckers or vampires in nation-makers' attempts of driving Vietnamese nation-building towards the socialist, sovereign goal. To be precise, the metaphor of bloodsucking Indians and associated disgusting presentations of the Indian eating habits will be remained in attempts to form class and national enemies (colonialists and capitalists), the enemies that are needed for the continuation of socialism and nationalism as the principles of Vietnamese nation-building.

AFTERWORD

Being categorized as bloodsucking beings -- unwelcome migrants associated with colonialism and capitalism -- in Vietnamese writing since the colonial time, the “Indian” are not visible; they are not known and seen as a group of actual human beings. Indians in Vietnamese writing appear as the subjects of Vietnamese intellectuals’ participation in national and class struggles. Noticeably, their status as an imagined target of these struggles obscures the voice and visibility of these people in the Vietnamese ethnic and national landscape: an ethnic minority called “Indian,” the people of Indian descendants (analogue with the lately categorized “Hoa” ethnic minority for Chinese descendants), has not appeared. Colonialism (and associated capitalism) will remain in public minds, given the invented tradition of referencing Indians as bloodsucking entities. An ethnographic approach towards living descendants of the “Indians” provides more evidence of the immediate impact of such imagined reference on the institutional and bureaucratic marginalization – invisibilization -- of these “strangers.” The lingering material impact of the metaphor of “bloodsucking Indians” on historically different projects of Vietnamese nation-building suggests that nationalism still forms the main and vital force in present-day Vietnam.

The dissertation suggests that Vietnamese nationalism as one form of post-colonial nationalism – class and national struggles -- remains vital through ongoing work of retaining the metaphor “Indian bloodsucker or vampire” and the simultaneous visibility of the Indian migrants in the big family of Vietnamese ethnicities without having a name. The dissertation seconds criticisms of Neil Lazarus (1993) on the rising move to disavow

nationalism in postcolonial scholarship since the late 1980s. Postcolonial scholarship critically focuses on examining political betrayals and economic and cultural failures in postcolonial states; it dramatizes the “cacophony of bourgeois triumphalism” and marginalizes conditions of common people including working classes, women and ethnic minorities (Guha 1997; Spivak 1985 1999; Chatterjee 1993; Parry 2004). Lazarus argues that there is a clear profound hostility towards nationalism among these postcolonial discourses: nationalist discourse, seen as “coercive, totalizing, elitist, authoritarian, essentialist, and reactionary,” is disparaged as “a replication, a reiteration, of the terms of colonial discourse itself” (70-71). Noticeably, the discursive pessimism about the stability of nationalisms in third world countries seems to complement the rising idea of the inevitable collapses of the nation-state as the result of worldwide, global expansion of capitalism.

In general, from the postcolonial view, postcolonial states exist in a vulnerable, volatile space. They are evanescent: sooner or later, the project of post-colonial liberation will vanish. The continuity of the metaphor of the bloodsucking Indian in colonial and postcolonial writing and society, as examined in the dissertation, suggests the continuity of postcolonial nationalism in Vietnam: nation-makers in different historical contexts might take different national projects – constructing the hegemonic and homogenous Vietnamese identity in South Vietnam, fostering the socialist figure of the nation in North Vietnam, and promoting international integration in unified Vietnam since “đổi mới” -- they all mean to maintain the national independence, unity, and prosperity. The continuity of Vietnamese nationalism is more in the form of what Fanon calls “national

consciousness” -- the combined revolutionary efforts of an oppressed people that aim at liberating the country and create a nation-state. Fanon emphasizes the collective consciousness towards the national “would-be-hegemony” (Lazarus 72) – a consciousness that is formed “at the very heart” of the “collective thought process” of a people to describe, justify and extol the action whereby they have joined forces and remained strong” (Fanon 168). Vietnamese intellectuals form this “national consciousness” by constantly extolling Vietnamese people’s triumphs over colonialism and capitalism – triumphs that are allegorized in images of the bloodsucking Indians, forever belonging to the dead past. Moreover, Vietnamese intellectuals maintain such national consciousness by constantly reminding their public of the bloody exploitation of colonialism and capitalism, which in Vietnam is traditionally associated with the image of the bloodsucking Indians. To be precise, the imagined association of the Indian migrants with colonial capitalism in Vietnamese writing was formed and has been maintained to sustain a possibility of the formation of a nation, a nation that usually includes only those who share the common negative sentiment about such non-socialist forces in the nation-state (cf. Culler 72).

As such, the dissertation attends scholarship on writing and the nation.

Imre Szeman asserts that reading third-world literature as national allegory, as developed by Fredric Jameson (1986), is a strategy of (post)colonial people in their realization of the “cultural revolution”; colonial and postcolonial writing produces “authentic and sovereign subjectivity and collectivity” that undo the set of “feelings of mental inferiority and habits of subservience and obedience,” developed in situations of colonialist

domination (Szeman 810). In other words, the use and the appreciation of the national allegory in literature as “particular kind [s] of cultural strategy” (Szeman 816) in national struggles function in the sense that they present discursive attempts of third world intellectuals in provoking and maintaining united wills, hearts and minds towards issues of community – a mental unification that is able to form a condition for the formation and continuation of nation-states (Culler 43-72; Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons* 70; Anderson, *Imagined Community* 1-8). As such, colonial and postcolonial writing, with a strong performative character, poses challenges to material power of imperialism and aftermath, given that the national allegory -- the “authentic and sovereign subjectivity and collectivity” -- is “a vital response to infrastructural realities... as attempts to resolve more fundamental contradiction” (Jameson 78). This strategic use and appreciation of colonial and postcolonial writing as national allegory could be particularly important in the context of disappearing national identity and collapsing national economy in the face of globalization (Szeman 817; Jameson, “Notes on Globalization” 54-80, Krishna 7-30). And, in the Vietnamese tradition, writing has continually been seen as a sharp weapon in the fight against any hindrances to the nation’s socialist construction and independence since colonial time. Thus, in examining Vietnamese presentations of the Indian migrants as allegories of Vietnamese intellectuals’ “revolutionary efforts” aiming at strengthening the democratic and hegemonic figure of the nation, the dissertation tries to show that literature and, in a wider sense, writing plays a distinct role in the “cultural strategy” of colonial and postcolonial nationalism.

In addition to engaging with the scholarship on nation and literature, this dissertation addresses a question to diaspora studies in general and to Indian diaspora studies in particular. The Indians in Vietnam have been frequently seen and presented as unwelcome migrants. However, the images of the Indians in Vietnamese writing are not congruous with ascriptions of characters of the Indian diaspora in the scholarship of Indian diaspora studies. One of the characteristics of Indian diaspora emphasized by authors such as Gijbert Oonk is diversity. Oonk emphasizes the need to be more specific than “Indian” because Indian diaspora groups migrated in different times, in different circumstances and came from different areas in India. Thus, the term “Indian” in the phrase “Indian diaspora” needs reconsideration: “Indian” as a flat and fixed national identity is inappropriate; it should be dissolved into terms that refer to specific ethnic groups such as “Bengalis, Gujaratis and Tegulus” and specific sub-castes such as “Patels, Lohanas and Cutchis” (13). This interpretation tends to fix identifies of members of the Indian diaspora to ethnic groups in modern India; this is home country-oriented specification of the Indian diaspora does work in the case of the Indian migrants – members of the second wave of Indian migration to Vietnam, i.e. those who came to Vietnam in the wave of the French. The Indians in Vietnamese writing are imagined as including solely unwelcome migrants from the Indian subcontinent who are associated with the presence and growth of colonialism and capitalism. They are presented merely as targets of the national and class revolutions imagined by Vietnamese intellectuals. Thus, the ethnic specificity within this group of people in Vietnam is invisible: images of this population are fixed in characteristics associated with the metaphor of the

bloodsucking creature, a dangerous generalization. In the case of living Indian descendants, the concept of the “Indian diaspora” as defined by Oonk does not work, either. Their ethnicity, as documented in I.D cards, is “Indian,” (or “Pakistani” or “Bangladeshi”), which rather refers to present-day South Asian nation-states than ethnic groups.

Scholars in diaspora studies concur that regardless of changes in the formation of the concept of “diaspora,” the concept retains the reference to the migration of people and the maintenance of their identification with a country or land of origin (Dufuix 1-34; Tölölyan “The Nation-State and Its Others” 3-7). The living Indian descendants and many Indian characters in Vietnamese writing are not people who “dispersed from one place” (Dufuix 2); they do not hold on connections to India physically and they are lacking in a collective memory of homeland elsewhere rather than Vietnam. They are descendants of those who first put their feet on present-day Vietnamese land almost two hundred years ago; they are not nostalgic for something lost “back home,” but they have been struggling to maintain their lives in Vietnam. Most importantly, these people do not maintain so-called cultural practices of India, as discussed in Chapter 6 and 7: they have assimilated to Vietnamese cultural and political life. Members of what scholars would call the Indian diaspora in Vietnam are no way actors of “transnational movements” (Tölölyan, “Rethinking Diaspora” 3-36) and “transnational ties” (Pande, “Diaspora and Development” 34) that challenge the nation-state homogeneity and hegemony; their material and cultural affinity to the Vietnamese makes them an interesting case study of (“Indian”) diaspora studies.

Saliently, the case of Indians and their descendants in Vietnam could suggest the possibility of understanding political functions of diaspora studies: this scholarship is expected to be associated with nation-building in both host and home countries. Khachig Tölölyan in the preface of the first volume of *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* (1991) highlights ways in which nationalism – a notion of collective identity -- shapes and is shaped by the diaspora as the central concern of the Journal (“The Nation-State and Its Others” 3-7); the research scope of the Journal itself carries exclusion: diaspora studies only count the populations “on the move,” who carry “transnational” and “infranational” corporations and thus would potentially affect collective identities of home and host nation-states, and even foster nationalism in both nation-states. Under this research scope, only members of the third wave of Indian migration to Vietnam could be counted: this population is “transnational” and “infranational,” they are seen as contributors to the shift to globalization in post-đổi mới Vietnamese nation-building and as representatives of the global emergence of Indian enterprise and energy; all these are discussed in Chapter 6. Meanwhile, members of the second wave of Indian migration to Vietnam would find no place in the scope of diaspora studies that is defined by *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, given that this population is fixed within the border of Vietnamese land and culture.

The exclusive trajectory of diaspora studies defined by Tölölyan suggests the association of this scholarship with nationalism. Amba Pande, from Jawaharlal Nehru University, is one of the scholars who is most explicit about this association: she systematically asserts that the growth of Indian diaspora studies depends on the Indian

government's historically differing recognition of the role of the overseas Indians in the Indian nation-building (Pande, "Airlift" para.8-9; Pande "India and its Diaspora" 125-138; Pande, "Diaspora and Development" 36-46). To be precise, the Indian diasporic population as the subject of Indian diaspora studies exclusively consists of those, whose "double belonging can be enriching both origin and destination countries" (Pande, "Diaspora and Development" 36). With this meaning, it is understandable why the "Indians" in Vietnam – those who are traditionally imagined as enemies of the class and national revolutions in the host country and are economically and culturally disadvantaged in comparison with the rich and well-educated members of the third wave of the Indian migration -- are absent in the Indian government's descriptions of its overseas Indians as discussed in Chapter 6. Further examinations of the formation and growth of (Indian) diaspora studies and nationalism could reveal efforts of intellectuals (in diaspora studies) at provoking and maintaining public concerns about nation-building, thus, these examinations could attend existing scholarship on the vitality of nationalist forces, at least, in third world countries.

In addition to suggesting a further examination of nationalism and diaspora studies, the ethnic identity of the Indians and their descendants in Vietnam presents the question of how ethnic studies are associated with dominant administrative power. Oscar Salemink insists on the conformity of ethnography to colonial power in the sense that the institutionalization of representations of ethnic minorities is made on the basis of agreements among and involvements of ethnographers and administrative colonizers in the service of the colonial establishment (Salemink, *The Ethnography of Vietnam* 38-40;

Salemink, "Introduction: Five Theses 1-34). Đặng Nghiêm's description of "ethnic identification in Vietnam" suggests a similar control of the postcolonial Vietnamese government in ethnic studies. In particular, results of ethnographic studies are first presented in scientific meetings before they are submitted to a congress consists of representatives and authoritatives of the studied ethnic group (elders, religious leaders, old artisans...) and representatives of local administrations. As such, ethnic studies traditionally conform to the ethnic administration and bureaucracy: it largely studies ethnic groups that are officially categorized by the state and are visible in state's census statistics open to the public. Much scholarship in the past addressed Vietnam's ethnic minorities that have been publicly counted and classified. However, no study has ever been published on the Indians and their descendants in Vietnam as an ethnicity: "Indian" is a term that has never been listed as an ethnic minority category in Vietnam through two nation-wide projects to systemize the "ethnic composition of Vietnam" in 1958 and 1979 (Pelley 383). As defined in the Introduction: the Indian descendants are Vietnamese citizens of an "Indian" ethnicity, this ethnicity is documented only in personal papers of specific individual Indian descendants; it is no way seen in demographic statistics available to the public. This type of hidden ethnicity asks ethnic studies to go beyond institutionalized ethnographies and archived documents, examining the possible invisibilization of some ethnic groups and the concurrent formation and continuation of nationalism. Literary accounts with its typical metaphoric (allegoric) way of (re)presenting the material reality could potentially maintain some reference to the

visibility of knowledge and human groups that are made invisible in mainstream historiography and society for the maintenance of a specific nationalist power.

Suggesting doubt about the validity of institutionalized knowledge for the visibility of invisibilized knowledge and subject, this dissertation touches upon the postcolonial theoretical question on the voice of "the other," "the outsider," and "the minor" (Spivak 1988, Chakrabarty 2000, JanMohamed 1990, Guha 1997). Postcolonial arguments are often about seeking out subaltern voices that have been silenced and could be made invisible in colonial and postcolonial discourse; scholars have been trying to disclose ways in which colonial and postcolonial discourse (re) present voices of subaltern subjects. Guha offers the idea of listening to the voice of subalterns that echo and interact with "counter-insurgencies" given that discourse never monolithic ("The Prose of *Counter-Insurgency*" 45-84). Henry Schwarz suggests that the subaltern's voice is retrieved not only through counter-insurgent documents as pointed out by Ranajit Guha, but also in the "mirror image" of the counter-insurgent documents that are used to suppress it, as developed by Partha Chatterjee. In order to visualize what is in the "mirror image," Schwarz offers to read the "mainstream history in new ways, searching out oppositional moments from the textual record and interpreting them anew" (316). The Bakhtinian heteroglossia, which refers to the coexistence of divergent voices of different social, geographical, historical and professional groups and individuals, could help to revitalize mainstream discourse that pays attention to voices of the marginalized, as Schwarz suggests. In attempts to read Vietnamese writing and make the historically invisibilized Indians visible, this dissertation somehow complements Schwarz's

recommendation on implementing Bakhtinian heteroglossia and reading mainstream history in a multivocal way. However, this dissertation by no means aims at presenting a total picture of actual voices and images of the marginalized Indian migrants. Author of the dissertation is a Vietnamese citizen who is working for a governmental research institute and is completing a research for a degree in the United States. (Re)presenting the so-called actual voice and virtual visibility of the “Indians” – the invented Other of the Vietnamese nation-state and the subject of postcolonial studies –will easily fall into presenting the dissertation author's voice and visibility, as suggested by Rey Chow (1993). Additionally, attempts at writing the voice and image of the Indians in Vietnam might face the risk of modifying these people in the way that, as Spivak once suggested, conforms to typical academic writing style and theory required for a dissertation, gaining a degree being the practical motivation of research(Sharpe 609-624). Huggan Graham (2001) even asserts that critical writings about the “other” is a kind of cultural commodification (5-8). Bearing such critical views on postcolonial scholarship, this dissertation presents the ways through which the Indians in Vietnam have been made invisible; there is a paradox in this presentation: the description of how Indians have been made invisible in Vietnamese writing and in Vietnamese life implies to making them visible again. The visibility of the Indians in Vietnam is reconstructed through processes of deconstructing Vietnamese nation-makers’ discursive and bureaucratic practices of invisibilizing these people in efforts of maintaining the national homogeneity, hegemony and prosperity. In doing so, the dissertation will provoke, in communities of intellectuals and general audiences, a curiosity about a group of people and its associated knowledge

that are made to disappear in the formation and existence of the very mainstream figuration of a nation. The process of portraying such disappearance is a way of making such lost population and knowledge reappear in public. The visible is made invisible, the invisible is made visible again.

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