

LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

**FEMINIST AWARENESS EXPRESSED IN THE IMAGE
OF WOMEN IN SOME LITERARY WORKS****BY DA NGAN AND LEE KYUNG JA****NGUYEN NGOC TUYEN* - NGUYEN THI GIA MY****

ABSTRACT: The evolution of feminism in modern society has precipitated significant changes in the representation of feminist issues in literature, reshaping the landscape of world literature. Within this context, both Vietnamese and Korean literature have witnessed a notable increase in works addressing feminist concerns. Among contemporary female authors, Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja stand out for their profound and powerful expression of feminist consciousness in their works. Through analysing two writers' works, this study aims to analyze the perception of feminism through the portrayal of women, focusing on two primary aspects: (1) The portrayal of women with the right to freedom in love and marriage, and (2) The portrayal of women with sexual instincts and the need for sexual liberation.

KEY WORDS: feminist awareness; female image; feminist literature criticism; Da Ngan; Lee Kyung Ja.

RECEIVED: October, 07th, 2024.

EDITED: November, 18th, 2024

1. Introduction

Feminism, emerging in the early 18th century and gaining momentum from the mid-19th to early 20th century, has profoundly impacted various social, economic, political, and cultural domains. In countries influenced by Confucianism, where women have historically been burdened by many constraints and oppressions, feminism tends to develop more slowly compared to Western nations. However, since the 1990s, Vietnamese and Korean literature have witnessed significant changes as feminism gained broader recognition. Writers began portraying women in their works, delving into human relationships, personal struggles, and the inner desires of women. With empathy and deep understanding, authors have introduced female characters into literature not merely as objects but as subjects, expressing views on gender inequality issues.

Research on feminist literature in Vietnam and Korea reveals a shift in feminist writers' consciousness, transitioning from reflecting social issues to expressing women's aspirations for liberation and the pursuit of freedom and happiness. This transformation plays a crucial role in shaping feminist movements and literary innovation. The growing demand for women's voices to be heard in social life has had a tangible impact on literature. In line with this, authors like Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja have voiced the often unspoken thoughts and struggles of women, which deserved recognition. The works of Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja prominently reflect the image of women grappling with gender biases and societal stereotypes in both Vietnam and Korea. However, there has been a noticeable lack of contrastive studies analyzing feminist consciousness in their works. Thus, our research aims to explore the awareness of feminism as portrayed through the female characters in the short stories and novels of these two authors by analyzing their works: "Con chó và vụ ly hôn (The Dog and the Divorce)", "Gia đình bé nhỏ (A Small Family)" by Da Ngan, and "두 여자 (Two

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Women)", "맏집과 허깨비 (Endurance and Illusion)", "치한의 사랑 (The Love of a Molester) ", and "절반의 실패 (The Failure of a Half)" by Lee Kyung Ja.

2. Theoretical basis

2.1. Gender stereotypes and the development of feminism

The concept of "stereotype" was introduced to social science in 1922 when Lippman used it to describe the typical image that comes to mind when we think of the characteristics of a specific group in society (Neil Macrae, 1996). These typical characteristics assigned by society to a particular group tend to be negative and influence that group's behavior in a similarly negative direction. Instead of viewing each person as an individual with unique traits, gender stereotypes shape them according to societal prejudices.

Initially, gender stereotypes caused imbalances in how gender roles were divided within society. As this imbalance worsened, the groups that were misjudged and suffered adverse consequences due to these stereotypes began to form and develop movements to fight for their rights.

In the development of feminism, gender stereotypes have demonstrated their wide-reaching influence. Throughout the progression of human society, gender stereotypes have consistently led to gender inequality, posing risks across various social structures—from agricultural societies to industrialized, modernized societies. According to Betty Friedan & Cail Collins (1963), regardless of the societal model, gender stereotypes are intrinsically tied to the linear development of feminism. This can be divided into three phases: *In early agricultural societies*, during the first wave of feminism, gender roles were shaped by biological characteristics, forming stereotypes for men and women. These gender roles dictated the division of societal responsibilities. At this stage, stereotypes were not clearly recognized, as both men and women accepted their roles based on the biological attributes assigned to their gender. Feminist consciousness was limited to concepts of **femininity**, focusing on characteristics associated with or belonging to women. However, women were still denied equal opportunities for education and work, constrained by societal expectations linked to gender stereotypes. Toward the end of this early agricultural period, when women began seeking happiness and equality, the first wave of feminism emerged. Gender stereotypes had previously dictated women's social roles based on biological functions like pregnancy, childbirth, and family care, excluding them from male-dominated tasks and responsibilities. This marked the beginning of a shift in feminist thought, although it was still primarily rooted in ideas of **female** identity, focusing on the role of women within the limitations imposed by gender norms.

As society transitioned from an agricultural to an industrial economy, after the Great Depression and World War II, there were notable changes in gender roles, particularly for women. However, as the global economy began to recover, gender stereotypes persisted, reinforcing the image of men as the primary breadwinners while limiting the roles of women. During this time, women's awareness of their right to equal opportunities in education and employment sparked the second wave of feminism. Recognizing the inequality imposed by patriarchal societal norms, women who sought to break free from these constraints and fought for their individual rights became known as *feminists*. This wave of feminism was also closely linked to other human rights movements, including the fight for LGBTQ+ rights. *In the industrialized world*, the third wave of feminism coincided with the continued development of feminist movements in the 1990s. As these movements spread globally, gender inequality began to diminish in progressive societies, offering women greater opportunities for personal growth, the pursuit of happiness, and the freedom to live according to their desires. However, gender stereotypes remained, and in many parts of the world – especially in third-world countries and Muslim-majority nations – women still faced significant discrimination and inequality.

This phase of feminism focused on advocating for the rights of women of color and other marginalized groups.

When studying feminism, we find that the concept is intrinsically linked to gender consciousness, gender equality, and the inherent value and maternal nature of women. From the moment the fight for women's rights began, women have become increasingly aware of their own gender identity and the role it plays in their pursuit of equality.

2.2. Feminist consciousness of Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja in literary works

Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja are prominent feminist writers in the modern literature of Vietnam and South Korea, respectively. They are pioneering authors in the development of women's literature and the feminist movement in their respective societies. Their works predominantly focus on the daily lives of women, serving as a medium to express, reveal, and voice protection for women against the injustices and hardships they face in patriarchal societies.

Da Ngan boldly and powerfully expresses individual identity and consciousness of women's existence amidst harsh realities and surrounded by injustices. She allows her characters to break free from prohibitive boundaries and taboos, exposing all aspects of their inner selves. This approach reflects Da Ngan's progressive feminist ideology and writing style. While Da Ngan freely expresses the self through her characters, Lee Kyung Ja allocates time for her characters to freely explore and delve deep into their inner selves to rediscover themselves and overcome obstacles for complete self-liberation (Han Geum Yoon, 2002: 105). Lee does not express herself as intensely or struggle to free her characters from injustices; instead, she empathizes with and quietly reflects on the pain her characters endure. She allows her characters to independently explore and understand their true inner nature. Lee Kyung Ja's approach extends beyond achieving liberation from societal oppression of women; she guides her characters towards individual freedom.

The feminist spirit in Da Ngan's "Gia đình bé mọn" primarily manifests through the psychological conflicts between traditional and modern values, as well as the struggles between living one's own life and sacrificing for one's husband and children. In contrast, "Con chó và vụ ly hôn" presents a more somber picture of marital life, revealing the challenges and suffering of living with someone for whom one no longer has feelings, along with reflections on personal integrity.

In the literary works of Lee Kyung Ja, issues of gender inequality appear more burdensome and complex. "두 여자" depicts the marriage of Myeong Hee, who is not valued in any aspect of her life. She constantly seeks permission for her actions and faces abuse if she disobeys her husband. In "맷집과 허깨비", the focus shifts to listening to In Ok's innermost desires and the heart-wrenching sighs of women like her, who wait for happiness to be bestowed upon them by men. Conversely, Su Jeong in "치한의 사랑" embodies a stark contrast to In Ok. She is self-aware, knowing what she wants and needs, and she confidently asserts herself before her beloved. Even though society may deem her feelings inappropriate, she embraces them with an unwavering desire for happiness, never shying away from thoughts of love. Finally, "절반의 실패" perhaps marks a turning point for Lee Kyung Ja, as she allows her character to freely express emotions, choose her marital life, and embrace her identity. No longer depicted as dependent or fearful in the presence of men, Jeong Sun decisively steps out of her stifling and binding marriage.

In this study, we focus on analyzing and comparing the feminist consciousness represented in the works of these two authors in terms of: (1) the portrayal of women with the right to freedom in love and marriage; (2) the portrayal of women with sexual instincts and the need for sexual liberation.

3. Feminist consciousness is prominently depicted through the portrayal of women's rights to freedom in love and marriage in the works of Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja

Both Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja dedicate substantial portions of their writing to exploring family life through the emotional and cognitive experiences of women. With their incisive feminist perspectives, these female authors successfully construct images of confident women determinedly pursuing their own happiness in love and marriage. Although the characters in Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja's works experience adversities, suffering, and introspection regarding their emotional relationships, they consistently maintain awareness of their personal desires in contrast to societal impositions. Consequently, they dismantle barriers and transgress the forbidden boundaries of gender norms in patriarchal society, progressing towards the authentic happiness that each individual deserves. This is the message that both authors aim to convey to their readers through their female characters.

Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja write extensively about women's everyday lives, delving into intimate, meticulous details with a direct and candid perspective. Both authors explore daily life to depict the characteristics, qualities, and attitudes of women while simultaneously expressing their views on reality, particularly their feminist worldview. In their descriptions of women's daily lives, Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja highlight the injustices women endure as well as their familial responsibilities. My Tiep constantly worries about Tuyen's absence and feels isolated and lonely within her own marriage, even feeling demeaned during her solitary experiences of abortion or childbirth. The responsibilities of motherhood persist for Tiep even after she has given her heart to Dinh: “Nếu Dinh không sợ thì nàng phải sợ cho chính mình, vì nàng là người mẹ của hai đứa con, nàng cần có mạng sống để nuôi dạy chúng nên người (If Dinh is not afraid, then she must fear for herself, for she is the mother of two children; she needs to survive to raise them right)” (Da Ngan, 2005:134). Despite the binding nature of familial roles and responsibilities that often clash with personal aspirations, My Tiep rises to embrace her heart's calling when she encounters her fate – the writer Viet Dinh. “Từ hôm nàng lao đến với người ta, lấy bấy bên vệ cửa khi bị canh bảo vệ nhà khách cật vấn và sau đó, dù cảm giác ban đầu không suôn sẻ, Tiep luôn thấy trên từng tế bào của mình sự râm ran của dâng hiến và kỷ kết (From the moment she rushed to him, trembling by the door when security questioned her, even though her initial feelings weren't good, Tiep always felt within her a tingling sensation of surrender and commitment)” (Da Ngan, 2005:78). This honesty is also reflected in her candidness toward her current husband and her extended family.

Lee Kyung Ja's characters also face injustice as they set aside all their work, dreams, ambitions, and personal needs to care for their families. Lee Kyung Ja portrays female characters torn and struggling amidst conflicts in family relationships: between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, between wife and husband, with incidents of friction, violence, and abuse, etc. These issues appear to have become more pressing in Korean society from the 1990s to the early 2000s, and Lee Kyung Ja has thoroughly exploited these issues as material for her creative works. This reality leads to acts of resistance, rising to protect oneself and one's life, as seen in the characters Myeong Hee in “두 여자”, Jeong Sun in “절반을 실패”, and In Ok in “맷집과 허깨비”. Myeong Hee repeatedly questions her self-worth, her personal life value, and her position within the family, only to see the same reality repeating itself, ultimately leading her to decide to exit this marital relationship:

“도대체 내가 누구 눈칠 보는 거야? 결혼해서 이 집에 와서 사니까 내가 주인 아닌가? 난 귀염받고 자란 소중한 딸이야. 대학 다녔구 중학교에서 영어도 가르쳤어. 내가 왜 이렇게 자신 없이 살아야 하지? 비굴하잖아...”

"Whose eyes should I look into to live my life? I moved into this house after marriage, am I not the owner? I am a precious daughter, raised with love and care. I even went to university and teach English at a middle school. Why should I live with such a lack of confidence? It's so degrading..."

(Lee Kyung Ja, 1988:19)

When delving into emotional relationships, the female characters of Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja almost always perceive and clearly recognize the reality of their marriages or emotional relationships and remain honest with themselves. From this honesty, the female characters often seek ways to resolve their situations and take action to make themselves happier and freer. This is exemplified by the proactive suggestion of divorce in a male-centered society where traditionally only men have the right to decide on the fate of a marriage. However, Jeong Sun assertively affirms that women also have the right to act according to their own wishes:

"이렇게 함부로 하는 게 아니야. 당신은 여자야. 당신같이 똑똑한 여자가 왜 근본을 잊지? 난 이해할 수가 없어. 내가 잘했다는 건 아니야...(중략)... 더한 남자들 많아. 정신 차려. 당신을 위해서 하는 말이야. 당신을 여자라구..."

"I wouldn't do that casually. You're a woman. How could an intelligent woman like you forget such basic things? I don't understand. It's not like I'm any good... (abridged)... There are far worse men out there. I'm saying this for your own good. You're a woman..."

(Lee Kyung Ja, 1988:286)

The progressive feminist awareness of Lee Kyung Ja is also reflected in the female characters' courage to pursue love and express their feelings passionately, like Su Jeong in "치한의 사랑, Su Jeong is seen as someone who disrupts the happiness of others' families, but for her, as long as it's the person she loves and her feelings are reciprocated, that love is the most precious thing. As Su Jeong says: *"사랑이 소중한걸니? 그게 알맹이지 않아? 사랑하기 때문에 우린 행복하구... 그게 전부 아니니? 삶의 진실이야..."* which translates to: "Love is truly precious, isn't it? Isn't that the most important thing? We are happy because we love each other... Isn't that everything? Love is the truth of life..." (Lee Kyung Ja, 1998, p.148). This signifies the right to choose love and life, rather than living under the choices of men or others, as she once did. It represents a resilient internal struggle against societal judgment and Su Jeong's inner conflicts. This sentiment is similarly reflected in the character Tiep from Da Ngan's work. Under society's moral standards, leaving a lukewarm marriage to follow one's heart is seen as going against traditional norms, yet few can truly understand the inner turmoil of a woman like Tiep. Regardless of who they are, every woman yearns for her own happiness, and despite the criticism of society, women like Tiep are determined to live authentically and proudly for once with their true emotions. This marks an encouraging starting point for Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja on their feminist journey, offering a life filled with values that women aspire to.

A notable and significant point in Da Ngan's feminist awareness is the desire for the legitimate recognition of her female characters within family and societal relationships. This demand for legitimacy haunts My Tiep from the moment she meets Dinh until they both decide to leave their current marriages to be officially recognized as each other's husband and wife. For My Tiep, the process of reclaiming legitimacy for herself is also a process by which women preserve and protect their rights, dignity, and honor in the face of societal opinion. My Tiep fights to live with the one she loves, struggling to define her love and the person she needs to become in life (Wayne Kane, 2009).

In studying the feminist consciousness of Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja as reflected through the portrayal of female characters, we find a commonality in the distinct and definite development of the characters' inner worlds. Compared to characters in traditional works, where women's psychological discoveries were still vague, hesitant to be truthful with their emotions and society, Tiep and Su Jeong did not shy away from accepting pain and misfortune while confidently affirming their happiness by being true to themselves. However, a significant difference in Lee Kyung Ja's works is the explicit use of the term "feminism." While in Da Ngan's writing, although female characters exhibit feminist awareness, the term itself is not concretely named, in Lee Kyung Ja's work, she clearly acknowledges feminism. Consequently, while Da Ngan's characters primarily focus on personal liberation, Lee Kyung Ja's characters have already embraced feminist learning, strengthening the feminist spirit within society. By raising feminist awareness among her characters and others in similar circumstances, Lee Kyung Ja indirectly expresses a desire for broader societal and communal liberation from barriers and limitations. In this regard, Lee Kyung Ja is building an era that not only knows of feminism but also understands and applies feminist principles to liberate life and humanity.

4. Feminist consciousness as reflected in the female sexual instinct and the need for sexual liberation in the works of Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja

With the development of the feminist movement, female writers have begun writing about gender and sex as a way to express their inner thoughts and reflect on life. This is gradually becoming a new trend in literature, helping to bring women's intimate issues closer to the written page. Overcoming old stereotypes and gender norms, feminist activists have engaged in activities to help women move closer to the value of happiness. By addressing sex and gender, writers like Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja aim to use these fundamental issues to express a much larger concern - the status of women. From this perspective, the two female authors have presented a more open-minded and humanistic view of women's very human physiological needs, while striving to make readers and society accept the image of women actively and strongly seeking personal happiness.

Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja allow their female characters to freely express themselves and their individual needs without fear or concern under the pressure of gender norms. Especially when writing about sexual instincts or women's needs for sexual liberation, Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja write skillfully without being vulgar. However, through the expression of physiological needs, Da Ngan's characters demonstrate women's intense desire for happiness, as seen with Tiep: “...*hàng nút áo bung ra tự bao giờ, hai trái ngực nàng đang săn lên run rẩy bởi đôi bàn tay ngón ngấu trong thứ nước màu sữa đục, lạ quá, cảm giác được môn trốn mà cũng được giầy vò nâng lên hạ xuống trong mặt nước có mùi âm phủ, lạ quá (...the buttons of her shirt had come undone at some point, her breasts now taut and trembling under voracious hands in the murky jellyfish-colored water, how strange, the sensation of being caressed yet also tormented, lifted up and down in the water that smelled of the underworld, how strange).*” (Da Ngan, 2005:101). In the novel “Gia đình bé mọn”, Tiep experiences new sensations on her body with Tuyen for the first time, which is also a feeling of discovery before she and Tuyen move towards marriage. It is also the moment when a woman's sexual instincts are awakened.

Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja have also frequently portrayed the longing for intimacy between their female characters and their husbands. Often, the wives find themselves waiting, and this waiting gradually transforms into a deep yearning, a desire for reciprocated glances, as expressed by Hye Jeong: “*여보, 나 좀 봐요. 나 어디 달라진데 없어요?* (Honey, look at me. Do you see anything different about me?)”. Yet the anticipation for care and attention from their husbands only results in

feelings of humiliation, shame, and disappointment: “Đời sống tình dục bí ẩn bỗng trở nên nhàm chán sau khi có Vinh Chuyen, nỗi thất vọng về tính cách và tâm hồn, và cả trữ lượng nhân tính ít ỏi của chồng khiến nàng mặc cho Tuyen cư xử một cách đại khái với mình, thậm chí nàng luôn luôn bằng lòng để Tuyen chỉ cởi bỏ mảnh dưới của mình, thói quen y nguyên của thời chiến, lúc cả hai còn sợ bị chết trần chết truồng, Tuyen không có nhu cầu ngắm vuốt nàng, không cảm thấy vướng víu khi giữa da thịt hai người là chiếc áo của nàng, mãi mãi là như thế, nàng chưa bao giờ là Eva trước mặt chồng, mãi mãi một cảm giác chán chường, rất nhanh nhưng rất chán...” (The mysterious sex life suddenly became tedious after Vinh Chuyen was born. The disappointment in her husband's character, soul, and limited human capacity made her allow Tuyen to treat her casually. She was always content to let Tuyen only remove her lower garments, a habit unchanged from wartime when both feared dying naked. Tuyen had no desire to admire or caress her, felt no hindrance with her shirt between their flesh, and it was always like that. She had never been Eve in front of her husband, perpetually a feeling of tedium, very quick but very dull...)” (Da Ngan, 2005, pp.154-155).

The situation is similar for Lee Kyung Ja's female characters. Most women in Lee Kyung Ja's works typically have monotonous sex lives with their husbands. Intimate moments between spouses are infrequent, and husbands rarely express concern for their wives' sexual needs. A notable example is In Ok in “멧집과 허깨비”:

“그가 아내의 몸을 더듬을 땐 술이 취했을 때가 대부분이었다. 술기운에 그는 아내와 동침했다...(중략)... 게다가 지난해부터는 두서너 달에 한 번쯤 동침을 하게 됐다. 박우환이 애인이 생긴 까닭이었다. 그의 아내는 드러내놓고 보채거나 불평하지 않아서, 그는 아내의 성욕에 대해선 단 한 번도 생각해본 적이 없었다.”

"He almost only touched his wife's body when drunk. He went to bed with his wife under the influence of alcohol... (Abridged)... Not only that, since last year, they only slept together once every two or three months. This was because Park Woo Hwan had a mistress. His wife had never expressed any demands or complaints, so he had never thought about his wife's sexual desires."

(Lee Kyung Ja, 1998, p.78)

Women's sexual instincts are not limited to the desire for satisfaction but are also manifested in their ability to speak up and express dissatisfaction with their sexual relationships with men. This is evident when Doan's husband becomes aroused after witnessing Muc and Vang (dogs) mating. “Chị không chỉ thấy ‘bị dùng’ mà còn thấy bị làm nhục, bởi vì trong chị đang tràn đầy cảm giác thánh thiện tuyệt vời do những trang sách tuyệt vời đưa lại, và nước mắt còn chưa khô trên mặt. Chị còn cảm thấy bị xúc phạm thể xác vì hành động của chồng không xuất phát từ nhu cầu của hai người mà từ sự khiêu gợi súc vật (She not only felt ‘used’ but also felt humiliated, because she was filled with a wonderful sense of sanctity from the beautiful pages she had read, and tears were still wet on her face. She also felt miserably offended because her husband's actions did not stem from the needs of both of them but from animal provocation).” (Da Ngan, 1990, p.18). The thoughts arising from the awareness of women like Doan - “trong chị cũng không có nhu cầu nhục dục (there is no carnal desire within her)” - led women like Doan to strive to break free from that reality, seeking to find and bring true happiness to themselves.

Reading the works of Da Ngan, one can deeply feel the proclamation of women's right to self-liberation, regardless of the circumstances. Da Ngan frequently addresses delicate issues, the physical needs, and the emotions of Tiep when her needs are met: “Lần đầu tiên nàng cảm thấy trong bàn tay tình nghịch của mình một sinh vật cừ khôi - trước đây với Tuyen nàng không có nhu cầu đùa giỡn với nó, chắc chắn vì nàng không khao khát nó. Nàng trôi trên người Dinh, như ban này Dinh đã cần

trọng từng xăng-ti-mét thịt da nàng. Tiếp thấy mình bạo dạn và lão luyện, sự nhিপ nhàng của thịt da đầm thắm, ngọt ngào. Từ thế thủ nàng đã ào sang thế chủ, một cực khác với lần đầu, nàng bốc cháy từ gót chân đến đỉnh đầu và thật sự không biết mình đang bồng bênh ở đâu, chính danh hay không chính danh, tà dâm hay không tà dâm, chỉ thấy mình đúng là mình trong tưởng tượng, thỏa mãn một cách hài hòa, sâu sắc (For the first time, she felt in her playful hand a formidable creature - previously with Tuyen she had no need to play with it, certainly because she did not crave it. She emerged on top of Dinh, as Dinh had carefully explored every centimeter of her skin earlier. Tiep felt bold and experienced, the rhythm of flesh tender and sweet. From a defensive position, she had rushed to an offensive one, a stark contrast to the first time, she was burning from her heels to the top of her head and truly didn't know where she was floating, legitimate or illegitimate, adulterous or not, only feeling that she was truly herself in her imagination, satisfied in a harmonious, profound way)." (Da Ngan, 2005, pp.156-157).

The resurgence of sexual needs has empowered women to be bolder in both thought and action. Instead of remaining passive and adhering to societal norms as before, characters like Tiep and Hye Jeong have become proactive, confident, and assertive in expressing their needs. Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja have explicitly affirmed that women should also be active participants in sexual relationships, advocating for gender equality in sexuality.

The issue of gender in Lee Kyung Ja's literary works is also seen as a language of wounds that women endure, reflecting the impact of gender stereotypes in society on women. The frank and direct depiction of women's sexual needs and behaviors is considered a form of resistance against societal oppression (Hyeon, 1998). The sexual instincts and need for sexual liberation of women in Da Ngan's works are more intense, and she addresses this issue more frequently and profoundly compared to Lee Kyung Ja. Da Ngan not only expresses women's sexual desires but also contributes to creating a novel image of women in emotional relationships. The novelty and uniqueness lie in how Da Ngan's characters find ways to express and manifest their psychological and physiological needs.

5. Conclusion

This study has focused on analyzing the feminist consciousness manifested through the images of women with the freedom of love and marriage, as well as the sexual instinct and the need for sexual liberation of women. It is evident that the works of Da Ngan and Lee Kyung Ja serve as indictments of the injustices imposed by a patriarchal society, where gender norms have restricted women in their pursuit of the fundamental happiness that every individual deserves. Moreover, the characters in the works analyzed prominently exhibit the feminist consciousness of both authors in terms of theory, practice, and basic human needs. Da Ngan uses her personal voice to dismantle barriers, bringing women to the threshold of freedom, and to reclaim the silenced voices regarding issues that have been obscured by society. Not only that, but Lee Kyung Ja also begins to recognize the role and significance of feminism; she understands feminism well and wants to use its power to liberate individuals, reclaim lost freedom, and restore balance for women. However, the limitation of this study lies in not comprehensively examining all the factors that manifest the feminist consciousness of the two authors through their characters. With the results of this research, we hope to explore this direction for future studies.

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Nhận thức nữ quyền thể hiện qua hình ảnh nữ giới trong một số tác phẩm văn học của nhà văn Dạ Ngân và nhà văn Lee Kyung Ja

Tóm tắt: Với sự phát triển của chủ nghĩa nữ quyền, văn học hiện đại ghi nhận nhiều thay đổi trong nhận thức về nữ quyền xuất hiện trong các tác phẩm văn chương. Trong xu thế đó, ngày càng có nhiều nhà văn Việt Nam và Hàn Quốc bày tỏ mối quan tâm đến các vấn đề về nữ quyền. Nhà văn Dạ Ngân và Lee Kyung Ja là những nhà văn thể hiện rõ nét và mãnh liệt ý thức về nữ quyền qua các tác phẩm của mình. Qua phân tích các tác phẩm của hai nhà văn, nghiên cứu này sẽ tìm hiểu nhận thức nữ quyền thể hiện qua hình ảnh nữ giới từ các khía cạnh: (1) Hình ảnh nữ giới với quyền tự do trong tình yêu và hôn nhân; (2) Hình ảnh nữ giới với bản năng tính dục và nhu cầu giải phóng tính dục.

Từ khóa: nhận thức nữ quyền; hình ảnh nữ giới; phê bình văn học nữ quyền; Dạ Ngân; Lee Kyung Ja.