

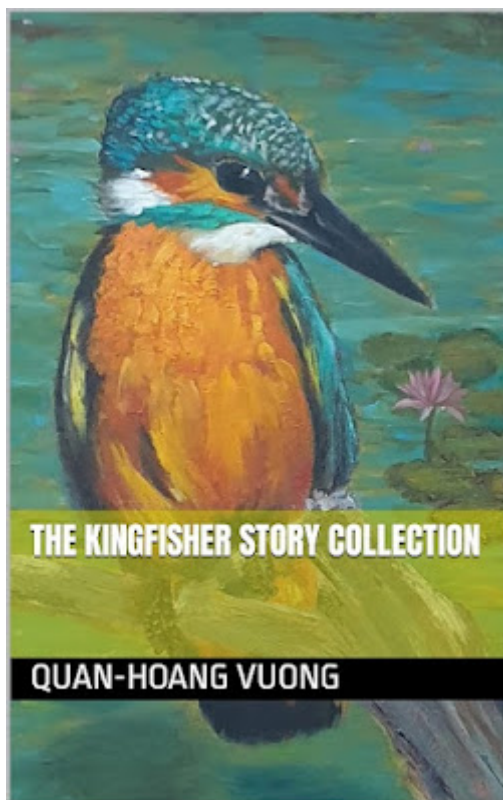
Fables of the Kingfisher

Dr. Minh-Hoang Nguyen

October 6, 2023

The book by interdisciplinary researcher in economics and social sciences Vuong Quan Hoang includes 25 stories, released in the form of an e-book and print book in English on Amazon.

The Kingfisher Story Collection by author Vuong Quan Hoang expresses his observations and reflections on cultural, social, and human aspects through his perspective and experiences. Kingfisher, the main character of the whole story, to the bustling life in the bird village.



The first stories were written in 2017 and published scatteredly in the “Quiet Moment” section of the *Economic and Forecasting Review* (Ministry of Planning and Investment) until 2019. The book has officially closed with 25 stories in total, translated into English, and released as e-books and paper books on Amazon in 2022. Among them, the story “Satisfaction” was even described by Dr. Ruining Jin (China University of Political Science and Law), who translated it into Chinese because it was “so fun” to

see myself, an international student returning home, in a story that implies the phenomenon of cultural acculturation.

When discussing cultural, social, and human aspects in depth, the writer will accidentally or intentionally create a serious and sometimes serious feeling. This can easily make readers feel stressed, distant and heavy. But in his book of fables, author Vuong Quan Hoang used metaphors and metonymies to convey his observations and thoughts. Each story evokes a social context where interactions between birds and animals take place, symbolizing different types of people with different personalities and characteristics in life. This creates vividness and is easily accessible to readers of many ages.

Sometimes, the author brings refreshing laughter with clever “twists”. For example, the way the Kingfisher almost became food in the cat’s mouth was the end result of his intellectual arrogance and the illusion of achievement created by the flattery of the bird neighborhood (“Brotherhood”). Or, as the “fake” philosopher Nightingale boldly declared, “Where there is food, there is freedom!” and watch the birdcage, the place that once deprived him of his freedom, become the goal he pursues for the rest of his life (in the story “Dream”). The author conveys concepts about life, values, and how the social system operates through these stories. Those are also the concepts that are clearly expressed in the scientific ideas and theories that the author has developed or co-developed, such as the mindsponge theory, philosophy of transparency, the irrationality of costs, the intellectual humility, etc. [1-5]

In addition to the moments of laughter, the story does not lack details that make us want to be quietly immersed in thought. For example, in the story “Food,” because the Sparrow family grew larger, food became harder to find, but because they were afraid to fly far to find food, the Sparrow family decided to move into the neighbor’s neighborhood to save money, travel time and easy long-term storage. Thanks to that “intelligence”, the members of the Se family became full and did not have to return to the bird village lacking food, but they did not know that the new place of residence later had a signboard that read, “All-you-can-eat Sparrows”. The story cannot help but make questions arise in the reader’s mind: What is true wisdom? What is the price to pay for the habit of being indulgent and lazy to work? How does society function? Is the way our society operates and feels superior about it really just a small part of the larger law of nature?

The use of natural images as metaphors for society and people probably comes from the

author's love of nature, created and fostered through memories and literary works about nature from a young age. Climate change and the sixth great extinction are increasingly approaching and dangerous, largely due to human production, consumption, and living activities. Humanity must build a culture of ecological improvement (eco-surplus) to prevent environmental crises and replace the dominant culture of ecological deficit (eco-deficit). Literary works play an extremely important role in this work because they help shape readers' values, especially children. Therefore, through the final story, "Kingfisher reduces emissions", the author wants to contribute a small part to humanity's efforts to help reduce climate change and protect the Earth's environment.

It can be said that the book provides young readers with lessons on how to be human through the fun, lively, and colorful nature of birds. For older people with some or more experience, the book can provide moments of entertainment and valuable opportunities for reflection. If you read the book many times and read it from many different angles, the reader will discover even more interesting things hidden in the world of bird life.

Dr. Vuong Quan Hoang is the author and editor of 17 books. Besides books, he also contributed to some 200 scholarly publications. He is also a co-author with Associate Professor Phạm Minh Chính, Prime Minister of Vietnam, in the book "Kinh tế Việt Nam: Thăng trầm và đột phá" (first published in 2009 and reprinted in 2021) and Professor Ngô Bảo Châu in a project to develop a scientific database in mathematics in Vietnam.

In 2017, he founded the Center for Interdisciplinary Social Research at Phenikaa University and has since been its director.

He has served the Scientific Council of NAFOSTED from 2019 and the Institute for Advanced Study in Mathematics (VIASM) from 2021.

**Remarks*: This piece is the translation of the book review published in *Khoa học & Phát triển* (Science & Development), a newspaper of the Vietnam Ministry of Science and Technology [6].

References

- [1] Chính, P. M, & Hoàng, V. Q. (2009). *Kinh tế Việt Nam: Thăng trầm và đột phá*. Nxb Chính trị Quốc gia.
- [2] Vuong, Q. H. (2023). *Mindsponge Theory*. De Gruyter. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/BoC3WHZ2B3>

[3] Vuong, Q. H. (2022). *A New Theory of Serendipity: Nature, Emergence and Mechanism*. De Gruyter. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/BoC5C4LPF1>

[4] Vuong, Q. H. (2018). The (ir)rational consideration of the cost of science in transition economies. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 2, 5. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-017-0281-4>

[5] Vuong, Q. H. (2020). Reform retractions to make them more transparent. *Nature*, 582, 149. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01694-x>

[6] Hoàng, N. M. (2023, Oct. 6). Truyện ngụ ngôn Bói Cá. <https://khoa hocphattrien.vn/kham-pha/truyen-ngu-ngon-boi-ca/20231005090726624p1c879.htm>