A Comparative Analysis of Three Representative Political Novels in Thailand in the Late 1970s:
The Pigeon, The Minister, and The Wind

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1970年代後半のタイにおける3つの代表的な政治小説の比較分析：
―はと、大臣、風―

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Abstract

Sociological perspective considers that many actual events are recorded in novels. Therefore, novels socially function as a mirror of a particular era. In Thailand, novels are a relatively new source of entertainment for people. One type of novel that has been less researched in literary sphere, but has no less significance than other types, is political novel. Being a product of the era and of a writer who is a part of the era, it is believed that political novels can reflect political happenings, explain political ideology, or even propose political direction. This article analyzes the representative political novels of Thailand in the late 1970s during which many political incidents occurred. The analysis takes Red Pigeon by Suwat Woradilok, Female Minister by Duangjai, and The Wind That Changes Its Direction by Kritsana Asoksin to be the research subject and proceeds by examining the origin and the acceptance of the three, as well as conducting comparative discussion. Applying the textual analysis adapted from critical discourse approach, the study finds that these three novels were born in the period that yielded a specific factor for the rise of political literature. However, they took up different angles of political situation to be a core message and each of them had a different discourse type. The overall investigation concludes that they spelt out the social and political criticism, presented political education, and recorded the major political trend of Thailand in the late 1970s.

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Introduction

One of the most widely read literary works nowadays is novel. Novel is the modern version, as opposed to epic, for example, of extended fictional narrative writing that usually takes the form of prose. As a part of literature where the majority has felt that it both delights and instructs, what is expected of novel is a greater degree of realism than prose romance and the description of a recognizable secular social world. From sociological point of view, such expectation helps explain that a novel, as an influential sphere in literature today, may become an escapist refuge of politically frustrated groups, social frustration on a mass scale, or even an ideological instrument through the upholding of a specific system and contributing to its educational goals.

In Thai society, it is interesting to note that a relatively new kind of the early entertainment in modern days is novel. Since its early development, the contents were closely related to society and lives of the people. Out of many genres of novel in Thai society, one type that is comparatively less in number is the one that deals with politics. According to M.L. Bunleua Teppayasuwan, a well-known Thai literary scholar, political literature can be categorized by form into two types. The first type is books or articles that deal directly with politics or political ideology. The second type includes fiction or poem, and certainly novel, that is employed as a means to convey political viewpoints. The latter category is where this paper gets started.

In general, the novel that depicts political affairs, directly or indirectly proposes political change, or criticizes political events can be titled as political novel. The first political novel in Thailand is said to be Sri Burapa’s Song-Khraam Chii-wit (War of Life) first published in June 1932. Sri Burapa was one of the leading writers in Thailand during the transitional period of the Revolution that transformed Thailand from absolute monarchy into constitutional monarchy in 1932. After the Revolution, along with Sri Burapa, there were some contemporary writers who tried to convey their political ideas or to criticize the status quo through literary works. But the devel-

2 Baldick, Chris, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990, p. 151. According to The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, there are some exceptions in that some novels can be very short, some are not fictional, some have been written in verse, and some do not even tell a story. However, the word ‘novel’ employed here in the paper indicates novel in general.
3 Ibid., Danziger et al., p. 11.
4 Ibid., Baldick, p. 152.
7 Boonkachorn, Trisilpa, Nawanyiayi Kab Sangkhom Thai (Novel and Thai Society), Academic Work Promotion Project, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 2004, p.35-43.
opment of Thai political novel did not reach the golden time until around the 1970s when student movements were thriving. This era saw not only the surge of political novel, but also political literature as a whole. It is undeniable that Thai political situation during that time was a stimulant for the new generation to express their political ideas. Many new writers entered the literary world. Even some professional writers shifted their usual theme to a more politically-oriented one. After the rough times of Thai political struggles marked by the fervent student movements and fear of communism during the 1970s, Thai politics has had comparatively more democratized governments than its previous period. The change that came with this political development affected Thai literary world after the 1970s in that people started to have more freedom of expression to voice their opinions.

This paper views the late 1970s as a transitional period of Thai political novel and seeks to figure out 1) what issue(s) that major political novels during that time were dealing with before the golden time of political literature passed by and 2) what kind of relationships with political atmosphere can be seen from the major novels in question. As for the framework, the study utilizes sociological theory of literature which states that literature is a social product and can be 'interpreted as reflecting norms and values, as revealing the ethos of culture, the processes of class struggle, and certain types of social facts.' From this theoretical framework, literature reflects society through the eyes of the writer. Particularly, political novel, as an art form and analytical instrument, offers the readers a means for understanding important aspects of the complex society in which they live, as well as a record of how it evolved. In the present analysis, three political novels of the late 1970s are the subject. They include Pi-raab Daeng (พิราราแดง: Red Pigeon), Ratta-mon-tree Ying (รัตต้า-มอน-หญิง; Female Minister), and Lom Tii Plian Taang (ลมฟ้าเปลี่ยนทาง; The Wind That Changes Its Direction).

The article will argue and demonstrate that besides the general categorization of those three works as political novels that reflect political situations and are affected by politics, they embrace different discourses closely related to political ideology, foreign policy, and social change. And their textual contents, though overlap in some parts, are distinct in different aspects and are difficult to just flatly put one novel into a single functional assumption as previously believed. By taking a deep look into the text with the help of the analytical tool in critical discourse analysis, this article aims


at contributing to Thai literary research by making the first attempt to compare three Thai political novels of the late 1970s. What makes this paper different from the previous works is that it will specifically deal with the novels one by one, rather than looking at the general trend of the entire body of Thai political novels. The finding is expected to give a clearer picture of major Thai political novels of the late 1970s which are often ignored in literary study. In addition, the analytical tool is discourse analysis which is a comparatively novel way to analyze literature, parting from traditional way of structuralism. Ultimately, it will stand out as an attempt to see how the discourse of the representative political novels can explain the major political trend of their period.

Following this introduction, the paper reviews related research and explains analytical approach. The origin, acceptance, and comparative discussion of the three novels will be laid out next. After that political contents created by the writers will be analyzed by the adaptation of critical discourse analysis to interpret the texts in each novel. The last section will draw a conclusion by connecting the background and the result of discourse analysis of the three novels.

Literature Review and Methods of Analysis

Literature review

Rather than consolidated study purely dealing with political novels, most of the Thai literary study is concerned with literary criticism. So, research that deals directly with Thai political novel is a comparatively small branch in literary study as a whole. Even so, two monographs that serve as the foundation in this paper are 1) 'Novel and Thai Politics Before and After October 14, 1973' by Taweesak Pintong (2003) and 2) 'Novel and Thai Society 1932-1957' by Trisilpa Boonkhachorn (2004).

Taweesak deals directly with political novel by exploring a number of novels in the market and group certain novels, according to his time frame of three periods between 1964 and 1979, into political category. He actually develops his research by using analytical foundation laid by Trisilpa's work on Thai society and novel. By dividing the time span into three sub-periods, Taweesak examines the contents of each of the 32 political novels and draws a conclusion that each novel in question meets one of

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11 Boonkhachorn, Trisilpa, *Nawaniyai Kab Sankhom Thai* (Novel and Thai Society), Academic Work Promotion Project, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 2004.

12 To make it sound natural to Thai ears, in this article Thai people will be addressed by their first names in the main text and explanatory notes (except bibliographical notes) in the footnotes in accordance with Thai way of addressing people. Foreigners other than Thais will be addressed by their last names.
the following criteria: 1) the novel has a role as recording or reflecting political picture, 2) politics has an influence over the author and novel, and 3) the novel plays a role in suggesting political ideas. Despite sticking to a narrow direction of the novel and society and missing out some political novels, Taweesak's analysis is a good attempt to comprehend the big picture of Thai political novels and gives a clear overview of the whole genre.

Trisilpa, on the other hand, does not deal directly with political novel, but lays a good start for the study of novel in relation with Thai society. This particular study elaborates the development of Thai novels from its beginning to its firm presence in modern days. It does not include every single novel due to the formidable amount of the reading that would otherwise took Trisilpa too long to complete it as her Master's thesis within two years, but it picks up major works that yield impact on the development of Thai novel. The emphasis of the study is more on the literary side than political view, but it embraces concrete social and political mentions and has become one of the most cited works in Thai literary research, including Taweesak's work.

On a more specific and author-oriented research, Pattama Chancharoensuk (1991) analyzes, in her Master's thesis, four socio-political novels written by Duangjai, first published in book form between 1970 and 1980. The works in her research include Chaak Duang-jai (From the Heart), Buang Kham (Loop of Kharma), Ratta-mon-tree Ying (Female Minister), and Tian Song Saeng (The Candle that Lights). The study examines the trends of thoughts and strategies used by Duangjai and finds that Duangjai's novels aim at presenting ideas concerning foreign policies, problems in higher educational institutions, and students' attitude towards social changes. Another related research is that of Wannapa Chamnankij which deals directly with the development of Rapheephorn's novels and is incorporated into the commemorative book for the 80-year-old writer, Suwat Woradilok (Rapheephorn). The finding points out that at the beginning up to the early 1970s in his writing career, Rapheephorn did not focus upon social realism, so his novels were more of the amusement purpose. In the latter half of the 1970s, his works appeared to be more critical of social change including political situation and women's rights.

From the political side concerning discourse in literature, the work of Bunsanoe Triwiset (2006) on political discourse of short story is a good starting point for this paper. Bunsanoe does not apply discourse analysis to political novel, but uses 52 short

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14 Commemorative Book for the 80 Years of Suwat Woradilok (สุภัทร์วรวิทย์ 80 ปี ผู้สร้างความทรงจำ), with the master's thesis 'The Development of Rapheephorn' by Wannapa Chamnankij incorporated, Rapheephorn Foundation for Writers' Welfare, Bangkok, 14 July 2003.
stories that won Pan Waen Fa Award from 2002 through 2005 for the analysis of trend in discourse.\(^{15}\) Discourse theory is briefly introduced based on the work of such leading scholars as Michel Foucault and Ferdinand de Saussure. Bunsnoe finally summarizes that there are five discourse types present in the materials, namely politicians' colored language, discourse of idealism, discourse about politician's characteristics, discourse of goodness for aesthetics in living and societies, and discourse about democracy politics.

In relation with the previous research on political novel, Taweesak presupposes that a particular novel will eventually fall into one of the three sociological criteria that he borrows from Trisilpa. However, the starting point is too broad a direction because political novel can work in a more diversified sense and in different angles. Blotner (1955) shows how to approach this issue from a more specific perspective by saying that a novel can be a political instrument, an analysis of individual or group political behavior, and mirror of national character, for example\(^ {16}\). So, it might be too simplistic to find points that match a certain standards and put a particular novel under an umbrella assumption as in Taweesak's. On the other hand, while Trisilpa and Pattama also use sociological approach to novels, they do not directly deal with political contents of them. Trisilpa gives a chronological development of Thai novel and Pattana takes up social issues shown in the works of one specific writer. However, there is still room to deepen one's search into political discourse, if any. Lastly, Bunsanoe deals with political contents, but the loophole is that the subject is short story which is a kind of literary work that would allow little space for detailed description of social and political picture compared with novel.

**Methods of Analysis**

In the present analysis, Thai major political novels are reviewed and the 'piece' that can be considered 'representative' is selected. As a result, three outstanding political novels out of ten or so in the late 1970s are selected for the analysis which include *Piraab Daeng* (hereafter Red Pigeon) by Suwat Woradilok, *Ratta-mon-tree Ying* (hereafter Female Minister) by Duangjai, and *Lom Tii Plian Taang* (The Wind That Changes Its Direction; hereafter The Wind) by Kritsana Asoksin. The three works are selected because: Firstly, they contain political contents, regardless of political orientation, that may (or may not) point to the outstanding social conditions during which they were written. Secondly, the creators were well-known and prolific novelists whose social positions allowed them to reach a vast readership. Thirdly, in addition to the political contents, the literary quality of the three novels was well recognized by the public.

\(^{15}\) Triwiset, Bunsanoe, *An Analysis of Political Literary Works during the Year of 2545-2548BE*, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Buriram Rajabhat University, 2007.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., Blotner, *The Political Novel*. 

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and Thai authority. Lastly, the works are accessible\textsuperscript{17}.

The analytical tool in the research is the adapted version of textual analysis which is a part of the bigger approach of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Texts will be treated in a critical way to examine the featuring discourse elements in them. To begin with, discourse analysis focuses on knowledge about language beyond the word, clause, phrase, and sentence that is needed for successful communication. It considers patterns of language across texts and explores the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used.\textsuperscript{18} On a more critical level there is critical discourse analysis that attempts to scrutinize the power relation or dominant identity reflected through discourse. The difference lies in that while discourse may also put emphasis on semantic and other elements in linguistics, CDA will consider power, and especially institutionally reproduced power, as the central focus.\textsuperscript{19}

The whole range of the multi-faceted CDA will not be employed here since it is beyond the scope of this paper to illustrate every single angle that CDA can be applied to. Instead, only the adaptation of CDA will be conducted to draw on the framing and political topicalization of the contents in Red Pigeon, Female Minister, and The Wind. Then the main task is to find the feature of the texts which are held accountable to explain the writer's intention and actual social change. Here the steps are to identify discourse type, assumption, and the representation of social events, all of which are based on the established concept of Norman Fairclough's work in discourse analysis\textsuperscript{20}, while the direction will be moving toward sociological aspect of the three representative political novels.

Three Political Novels in the Wind of Change

\textit{The Overview of Thai Political Situation in 1970s}

As widely known in Thai political history, the incidents of October 14, 1973 and October 6, 1976 are politically significant in that they triggered social change and people's sentiment toward politics around that time. During that period, people became very politically active. After the October Revolution of 1973 that put an end to the military government, the immediate civilian government led by Sanya Dharmasakti was appointed by the King and worked toward the 1975 elections. In the meantime,

\textsuperscript{17} Accessibility to literary works often becomes a problem in the study old literature because the collection of old books in Thai educational institutions and the National Library is sometimes not well organized, resulting in the loss of some books or unavailability as other researchers in Thai literature like Rachel Harrison, Thak Chaloemtirana, and Trilsilpa Boonkhachorn also point out. In this article, some of the political novels in this period cannot be found even at the National Library. Or in the case of The Wind, I only came across when I kept searching through second-hand book markets several times.


political organizations and activities, led or inspired by students, took place on an unprecedented scale, involving even strikes by urban laborers and mass demonstrations by unsatisfied farmers.\textsuperscript{21} Protests and strikes for a fairer treatment or for voicing opinions were common; for example, there were 501 labor strikes in 1973, 357 in 1974, 241 in 1975, and 133 in 1976.\textsuperscript{22} Public expression was freer than before. Marxian socialism was in vogue and freely expressed.\textsuperscript{23}

On the international front, after China shifted to communism in 1949, Thailand and the United States had built a strong relationship to counter communist threat. The cooperation between the two was even more strengthened during 1967-1975, reflected in some policy implementations such as Thailand's sending troops to Laos and Cambodia to support the US actions taken there and the dispatch of troops to Vietnam War.\textsuperscript{24} When the US cut off relationship with China, Thailand followed suit. In the early 1970s, oil shortage became a problem in Thailand and around the world. One of the ways to resolve the problem was to purchase oil from China. In 1976, Thailand's National Legislative Assembly amended the law to allow trade with China, thus officially resuming diplomatic relation between the two. On the other hand, a major blow from abroad during that time was that communism took over Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos in 1975 and became the sword of Damocles on the eastern border of Thailand. The fear of communism was widespread throughout the decade of 1970s especially in the latter half.

In the literary sphere, political climate after the October Revolution of 1973 had strongly influenced the literary contents being produced. Due to more liberal public expression, newspapers and magazines published all shades of opinion. Such leftist in intellectuals' writing as that of Chit Phumisak and Kulap Saipradit (Sri Burapa) were also reissued.\textsuperscript{25} Paperbacks with political contents were published more, particularly those concerning socialism. Between October 14, 1973 and January 26, 1975, three hundred thirty-five books on politics were published, ninety-four of which were about political ideology.\textsuperscript{26} In the wake of the stirred political awareness during this period, Wannakham Pua Chiiwit (literature for life), championed by those in the progressiv-

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., Pintong, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., Wyatt.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., Wyatt.
ism camp, emerged and was widely circulated along with leftist literature. Calling for literature that reflects real life of the poor and the oppressed, progressive activists criticized the lack of substantial matter in romances and conservative literatures written thus far. The different stances led to mobilizing the idea of ‘burning out the (conservative) literature’, although opposed by literary scholars.27 Some professional writers even changed their writing style to avoid criticism or to go with the flow.

_The Birth and Acceptance of The Pigeon, The Minister, and The Wind_

Given that political climate generally has an impact on the people, novelists, while better equipped with a way to express their opinions than the general public, can take up political issues to be material for their writing. When the society is politically volatile, there is a strong trend that writers would turn to political topics. Taweesak (2003) tries to point out that kind of trend in Thai political novel. He identifies three distinct periods from 1964 – 1979 as _developmental phase_ (before 1973), _demonstrative phase_ (between October 14, 1973 and October 6, 1976), and _declining phase_ (after October 6, 1976).28 It can be observed from this division that the most thriving time of Thai political novel would fall into the 1970s. It is also confirmed by Chaisiri Samuttawanich (2001) that in Thai history, there was no such period that Thai political literature would grow in volume and quality as best as in the period after October 14, 1973.29 Three selected laudable works examined here are also the products of this period.30

The late Suwat Woradilok (1923–2007) was a passionate social novelist who wrote in the same style as Sri Burapa, fighting against the powers that be, defending the underprivileged, and promoting social justice.31 He had strong awareness toward politics and even ran for House of Representative elections in 1957, but failed to get a seat. Suwat was one of those writers who did not emerge as a social or political writer from the outset, but his awareness toward politics encouraged him to produce works that contain political feel. He once said:

“Good writers must have political idea as a thinking foundation to understand and analyze social situations correctly and more profoundly than the readers. If the writers reject political perception, the future

27 Ibid., Pintong, p. 56.
28 Ibid., Pintong, p. 9.
30 Red Pigeon was completed in 1975, although it was started much earlier. Female Minister was published in the magazine ‘Sattree Sarn’ (สัตตีสัน) from May 1975 and published in book form in 1976. The Wind was published in the magazine ‘Lalana’ (ลัลานา) from August 1975, but the first publication as a book is not mentioned in the novel itself. However, it can be estimated that the first edition of this novel was in late 1976 or in 1977 because it usually takes one year or so for a novel carried in a magazine to finish the whole story.
of their writing career will be shortened due to the limited circle of thoughts.\(^{32}\)

From his political perspective, it is reasonable to believe that Red Pigeon is one of his intended political expressions. It tells a story of a young Chinese lady who devoted herself for social movement in China which reminds the readers of similar activism in Thailand. Suwat actually started to write Red Pigeon in late 1957 and contributed to the newspaper ‘Thai Raai Subda’, but due to his four-year arrest from 1958-1962 under the charges of treason, communism, and lese majesty, it was completed and first published in book form in 1975.\(^{33}\) Red Pigeon, many years later, won public acclaim again and became one of the twenty-seven novels listed in the ‘One Hundred Good Books That Thai People Should Read’\(^{34}\) thanks to its universality, timelessness, and constructiveness by reflecting the messages through the female protagonist’s devotion and her opposition to the injustice.\(^{35}\) Suwat was named a Thailand National Artist for literature in 1991 and passed away at the age of 84.

Unlike ‘Suwat Woradilok’ which is the writer’s real name, Duangjai is the nom de plume of the female writer Prathumpon Watcharasthien, now a retired Associate Professor who used to teach at the Faculty of Political Science of Chulalongkorn University. After her debut as a novelist, it took her around 8 years to write Female Minister in 1976. Two reasons why it took her so long before her second novel came out are that, she claims, she never took writing to be her profession and she did not have the skill to create political scenes. One strong reason that prompted her to write Female Minister was the inspiration from people who she knew, both personally and otherwise, especially Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj.\(^{36}\) Duangjai, as a university professor teaching politics, apparently had an affinity with politics. In addition to the general account of Thai society after the October Revolution, Duangjai went deep into political matters of which the thematic content was a welcome move as it depicted political activity of a woman who could pursue her new career as a deputy foreign minister. However, Trasilpa (1982) made a brief literary criticism that:

\(^{32}\) Woradilok, Suwat, Tanon Nang-Suu, (นักบุกรุก; Book Road), Vol. 12, June 1985, p. 34. Quoted in Wannapa Channankij, as incorporated in the Commemorative Book for the 80 Years of Suwat Woradilok, ibid., p. 91.


\(^{34}\) Refer to the research conclusion of the ‘Selection and Introduction of Good Books of the Century Project.’ The project was carried out by a team of 11 scholars led by Wittayakorn Chiangkul, the head of Rangsit University’s Social Research Center, and supported by the Thailand Research Fund from 1997 to 1998. The research divides selected books written around the time of King Chulalongkorn (1865) until 1976 into two broad categories and several sub-categories of fiction (1. poem and play, 2. novel, 3. short story) and non-fiction (1. history, 2. politics, contemporary history, and economics, 3. arts, language and literature, and literary criticism, 4. sociology, anthropology, and social history, 5. religion, and philosophy, and 6. nature and science.)

\(^{35}\) Ibid. For more detail, see http://www.rsu.ac.th/soc/corner41.html

\(^{36}\) Interview with Associate Professor Prathumpon Watcharasthien, March 24, 2009, Bangkok.
"The approach of presenting political idea through the novel is rather in a dispirited tone and full of lengthy conversation. The role of Anuree (the protagonist) as the female minister is not outstanding."

Pointed out in that manner, what seems to be a weak point does not always make the entire novel meaningless. A novel with artistically weak style may cast a huge influence on society. Some other aspects of what became a target of criticism could contain different values and even stand with strong impact as Blotner (1955) observes, by using world-class famous work as examples, that Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote an artistically weak, but politically successful work in Uncle Tom's Cabin, while Fyodor Dostoyevsky produced a politically unsuccessful, but artistically enduring classic in The Possessed. Here, Female Minister is also the case when its social standing was recognized by winning the Honorable Mention Award in 1976 presented by Book Development Commission of Thailand. It remains of one of a few novels that get a female protagonist to stand at a top position in political arena.

As for Kritsana Asoksin, a pen name of Sukanya Cholasueks, she is one of the best known writers in Thailand who has written more than 100 long novels by different pen names combined. Despite employing many pen names in her literary works, 'Kritsana Asoksin' remains her most famous nom de plume. Kritsana Asoksin's strong image perceived by the public is a novelist of family-centered plots, although her novels cover many types ranging from family affairs, social problems, history, to politics, many of which have been turned into soap operas and movies. When such image is strong, or too strong, in the public eyes, Kritsana sometimes finds it hard to make a smooth getaway out of criticisms complaining that her writing career does not contribute to the development of Thai literature. This is especially the case when the new wave of progressive young writers in the 1970s, particularly around the time of the October Revolution, tried to present something revolutionary through literary work. She once said:

"The society during that time cornered us to one idea that we would be harshly criticized if we do not present or write something substantially intellectual and useful for the readers rather than family's daily life."

37 Ibid., Boonkhachorn, Thai Novels in Decades, p. 51.
38 Ibid., Blotner, p. 3.
39 This is organized by the Book Development Commission (in the Thailand National Commission for UNESCO). The Commission will select the best book(s) and honorable mention books in several categories each year. The event was started 1972, in accordance with UNESCO's International Book Year 1972 and has been organized every year since then. In some years, there was no book that meets the criteria of being the best book of the year.
Under such circumstance in which the social change was predominant, it was difficult for Kritsana to maintain her only image, so much that she decided to embark on political plot that finally led to one of her three early political novels, The Wind, and finished it in 1977.41 The Wind reflects general social and political atmosphere of Thai society at transition. Kritsana developed the story centering on the changing socio-political climate, but did not exclude family scenes which are what she is good at. The Wind won Honorable Mention Award in 1977, the following year after Female Minister. It was not the first time for Kritsana to win an award from this institution, but her third time thus far. After that year, she has still been a prolific writer and won major literary awards many times including the South East Asian Writers Award (SEA Write) in 1985, the most prestigious one in the country. Sukanya Cholasueks (Kritsana Asoksins) was named a Thailand National Artist for literature in 1988.

Discussion and Points to Compare

To look back and try to get a lucid picture of the past, novels are usually a good source. Certainly, textbooks are one source for any branch of study including politics. Useful as they are, it is undeniable that textbooks may not cover the whole range of what was going on in a particular period of the history, especially a clear picture of how life was and how people in that particular time felt. Political novel is a filler of that gap as it is a product of human thinking that is created not only from imagination, but also from what actually happened as Blotner (1955) points out at the opening of the chapter on ‘The Novelist as Political Historian’ that ‘If Art imitates Nature, the political novel imitates History.’42 What makes political novel different from other historical record is that not only does it convey story, but also emotion. And it is important in a larger context of society. The reader who wants a vivid record of past events, an insight into the nature of political beings, or a prediction of what lies ahead can find it in the political novel.43 From the aforementioned sociological perspective, Red Pigeon, Female Minister, and The Wind work to that effect in that they are products of the era and they, in turn, have become the mirror of era. All of them emerged at about the same period and shared similar political atmosphere. Yet they dealt with slightly different angles of the situation while proceeding to the climax (to be elaborated in later section).

When considering the origin of the novel, the three political novels from these writers bear similarities and differences. A specific social condition in common that

41 Her other two political novels during this period are Lom Boo-ra-paa (ลมบูราพา; The Wind of the East) and Sa-paan Kham Daow (สายน้ำรัตนา; Bridge across the Star). After 1970s, Kritsana had not write political Novels for quite a long time. Her recent works with political theme came out in 1998 and 2008.
42 Ibid., Blotner, p. 28.
43 Ibid., Blotner, p. 1.
generated a group of political novel in Thailand, especially in the 1970s, was the success of the students' movement. The democratic movement led by university students roared to victory when they could pressure the authoritarian government out of office. The call for progressivism from student activists grew strong and cast influence on the contents of literary work. Suwat, Duangjai, and Kritsana also took that advantage of favorable political climate to say things politically at this particular time. That led to favorable reaction from the readers, particularly university students. However, bearing in mind that the political situation was volatile, the writers did not support communism outright, did not sympathize, did not criticize US-Thai alliance one-sidedly, nor suggested that Thailand should be communism. Instead, what they had in common was that they pointed out and explained some good points of communism in principle and raised some examples by using their own perspective and personal experience. At the same time, Kritsana implicitly indicated the anxiety that Thailand was at 'risk' of being victimized by communism as in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia because if that became the case Thailand would suffer from the loss of monarchy and big social change.

Another point is that while the image of political writer is usually attached to male writer, Duangjai and Kritsana are two female novelists among others who created publicly recognized political novels. In terms of personal involvement, the works of Suwat and Duangjai apparently have a direct affiliation with the writers' own career, whereas that of Kritsana has more of an observer's perspective. Suwat actually visited China in 1957 as the leader of a Thai cultural group to conduct a 3-month show of Thai performing arts in China from late April to late July of that year, the action not allowed by the Thai government. Later the description of the May Day parade in China vividly appeared in Red Pigeon and some details in the novel are almost exactly the same as what Suwat experienced in China. For example, there is a scene in Red Pigeon where Zhou Enlai was talking with the male protagonist in the presence of Mao Zedong. This led to believing that Suwat had transformed his reality that he actually met Zhou Enlai in a Beijing hotel into his novel. In case of Duangjai, it is not hard for her as an experienced professor specializing in foreign affairs to envisage through her novel how the government should shape foreign policy.

44 Suwat accepted the invitation from China through a Thai political exile to organize a group of performing artists to do the cultural show in China. However, at the time, according to the policy of Prime Minister P. Phibunsongkhram, Thailand did not have diplomatic relation with China which held different political ideology. But Suwat accepted the invitation because he detested the incumbent government and managed to go to China by disguise of a Hong Kong visit.

46 The picture of him shaking hands with Zhou Enlai is carried in the first half of his Commemorative Book. This part is written by Khachit Siksamat under the title Chiti-wit Lae Pon-ngaan Khong Suwat Woradilok (ชีวิตและผลงานของสุวัต วรางกูร; Life and Work of Suwat Woradilok), ibid., p. (25)- (27).
As a matter of fact, her account of foreign policy became reality when Thailand and China started to re-establish diplomatic relationship in July 1975 during Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj administration.

On the other hand, Kritsana seems to have the least affiliation with politics in her early years as a writer. Although she used to work as a civil servant several years at the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, her political perspective of writing expressed in the novel is very much influenced by the external factor, rather than her own involvement. What could have originated from her and appeared in The Wind are mostly her own observations, concerns, and some expectations that she may not have had direct involvement; for instance, her explicit use of news data about such contemporary incidents as the fall of Phnom Penh47 and the exact figure of kidnapping problem in her narration of the novel.48

Regarding the public acceptance, Red Pigeon is probably the most popular among the three. At the time when it first appeared, it was very successful. Trisilpa (1982) points out that the reason why Red Pigeon was very successful was partly because the story was directed at China as a socialist state and that its political struggle was comparable with Thailand at that time.49 Today Suwat’s Red Pigeon is still a talked-about book because it is in the One-Hundred Good Books List which has a stronger impact than the Book Award that the Book Development Commission organizes every year. People in general tend to feel that what is selected with a limited number is highly valued and becomes a target of exploration. With the wording of ‘Good Books’ and ‘Thai People Should Read’, Red Pigeon gains more long lasting fame among younger generation than Female Minister and The Wind. And the image of Suwat as a fighter for social justice and a novelist for society was so outstanding that people are prone to be reminded of his literary work too. From the publication aspect, Red Pigeon has had far more publication than the other two. Up to 2001, Red Pigeon has been published 10 times, while Female Minister has its 3rd edition in 2006 and The Wind with the 2nd edition in 2003.

47 Kritsana Asoksin, *Lom Tii Plian Taang* (ลมที่เปลี่ยนทาง; The Wind That Changes Its Direction), 1st ed., Bamrung Sarn, Bangkok, Year of publication is not available, p. 17. (Note that this study uses the 1st edition of The Wind of which the year of publication is unidentified. However, the latest edition is that of Praphansarn publishing house published in 2003.)
48 Ibid., p. 350.
49 Ibid., Boonkhachorn, Thai Novels in Decades, p. 42.
Political Contents and Discourse

Red Pigeon: The Revolutionary Young Lady

The Setting

The opening scene of Red Pigeon takes the readers to China’s Tian An Men where Watchara Chartpat, a 34 year-old Thai man, was anxious to see the parade celebrating May Day in 1957. He went to China as a Thai delegate for cultural exchange and got to know Haiyian, a Chinese female revolutionist. The story focuses on Haiyian and her political activities in the past that led to the fall of Chinese liberalism.

When Watchara met Haiyian accidentally at Tian An Men for the first time, he noticed the pigeon-shaped broach that Haiyian put on her shirt. What surprised him was not the broach, but its red color which was later explained why it was red. Haiyian could speak Thai as her family used to live in Thailand during the time when the government led by Field Marshal P. Phibunsongkhram was in power. Her family fled to China around the beginning of the 1950s due to Haiyian’s writing against the government published in a Chinese newspaper.

In China, Haiyian became a university student in Shanghai where her father also taught. She was a progressive activist and joined student movement in China trying to oust American imperialism that meddled too much with China’s internal affairs. She moved with her family to Nanjing and joined political movement to drive Jiang Kai-shek out of mainland China and was successful in 1949. Later she became a member of Nanjing National Peace Committee.

Suwat also added romances into the novel between Haiyian and Watchara, but did not emphasize as much as the political content through the end. The story ended when the two main characters parted without confession of love. Later Haiyian wrote in a letter to Watchara that she also adored him, but she would rather devote herself for her country and asked Watchara to do the same thing for his country.

Suwat’s Discourse Through Characters

The style of narration in Red Pigeon is the first-person point of view; in other words, the novel moves forward by Watchara’s narration. He recorded what he saw, what he heard, what he remembered, and his interactions with others. Around half of the texts presented to the audience are the reminiscence of activism of Haiyian along with the thoughts of Watchara through conversation and what Watchara learned of Haiyian and her family. Suwat topologizes ‘against the US influence and in favor of socialist progressivism’ through discourse of characters; for example, by using such words as ‘the 10-year long Washington’s brainwashed’ Dr. Tanseng (p. 86), Dr. Sun Yat

Sen who is a patriot and democratic movement leader (p. 109), and the defeat of Jiang Kai-shek who betrayed the people (p. 135).

Taweeksak (2003) concludes that Red Pigeon belongs to the category of political novel that plays the role of suggesting political ideology or change. He writes:

'The ending of the novel that points to the guideline for the characters' life about what path should be selected to fight for the country's interest, rather than individual life, indicates Suwat's conception of political proposal... the idea also seen in his later novels.'

However, the suggestive function of Red Pigeon is not the only function or the message that Suwat aims to convey, but there is also the critical function lying in it. The present study views it from a rather different perspective, considering the narration and attitudes of characters. The examination of the texts presented leads the paper to argue that Red Pigeon is predominantly a progressive socialist discourse, of which Suwat certainly denies both dormant and salient backwardness of the status quo based on his existential assumption. At the same time, as Taweesak points out, it suggests political movement. Suwat delineates what is considered to be socialist discourse through two main characters. He has a tendency to simultaneously present and criticize Thai politics though Watchara. On the other hand, he demonstrates the power of young generation and implicitly suggests, based on value assumption toward progressivism, a way toward political reform, to young readers through the attitudes of Haiyian and her activism.

Firstly, Suwat presents the record of Thai socio-politico situation regularly through Watchara's thinking or words. It is, then, usually followed by Watchara's critical attitude toward it. In a scene where Watchara saw a long cue of Chinese people waiting earnestly to buy a book called 'Mao's Conflict' in China, Suwat wrote through Watchara's eyes that:

"... I felt depressed because the story of Thailand occurred to me that there are only people cueing for movie tickets, going to horse racing, and brothels or night clubs. There have never been Thai people cueing in front of a book store at all. And equally worse, it is extremely hard to find any Thai statesman who ever wrote popular books (like Mao). (Red Pigeon, p. 41)

Here, he first assumes existentially that there is such an ideal situation where people are enthusiastic in learning new things intellectually. He presents the idea by implicit comparison and assumes that Thai people would agree with him. Later he

51 Ibid., Pintong, p. 104.
52 The italics in the following quotes are made by this paper for the purpose of emphasizing. They do not appear in the original texts.
moves on with a regrettable tone while hinging on value assumption that there is a desirable situation; otherwise Watchara would not be depressed.

In another scene, similar development appears, but Suwat moves to another step—criticizing Thai government. Watchara gave a detailed record of Thammasat University students' rally in October 1951 that called for the withdrawal of troops from the university so that they would have a place to resume their study. Then he moved on to critically slant that 'even though the students seemed to gain victory, it was merely a fake one promised by the politicians who were so familiar with authoritarianism' (Red Pigeon, p. 114).

Secondly, the power of young generation is presented through the discourse of Haiyian. Her activism focused on eradicating the US influence in China and Jiang Kai-shek, even though her activities got her into trouble with her elder brother and the government. Suwat builds her personality as a young socialist who is a progressive activist and brave fighter for freedom. In what can be the essence of the whole novel, Haiyian said to Watchara that:

‘Pigeon, the symbol of peace. Peace is not necessarily created from blood. But sometimes the true peace cannot avoid bloodshed. So does this little pigeon. That’s why it is red.’ (Red Pigeon, p. 60)

Suwat implicitly arouses activism of Thai students through this character’s conviction and bravery even if one must risk one's life for freedom and peace, or face a conflict within family. He does this by depicting a conflict of thought between Haiyian and her mother; and in a more serious case, between her and her brother, as she once said to her mother that:

‘If you think that well-educated students who have free thought and brain, not a brain of slave like others,...are obstinate, then how should you call those dogs that serve westerners who exploit Chinese people?’ (Red Pigeon, p. 62)

In another example, she said to her brother who is against her political activity that:

‘Looters are better than slave. Looters can plunder freely. No matter how vicious they are, they are free. But slaves don't even say a word. They have no spirit. They have only their lives for the oppression and labor exploitation until they are dead. There are a lot of the slaves unwilling to be emancipated like that. There is one even in our house.’ (Red Pigeon, p. 66)

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53 After the failed attempt to overthrow the government of Field Marshal P. Phibunsongkhram in Manhattan Rebellion on June 29, 1951, Thammasat University was occupied by troops and students had no place to study. Student movements were organized to get back the university from the military.
Red Pigeon's setting is mostly in China, but the hidden meaning seen from the text analysis found that Suwat wants to refer to Thailand in the 1970s when there was similar political change going on. Elements of the social events represented here are principally the forms of activity and institution that refer to the struggle of political regime triggered by *hoi polloi*. The degree of social representation is concrete since Suwat refers to specific real events in history. His attempt through the novel is two dimensions; the first dimension is to record and criticize Thai government, and the second one is to take China as an example and prompt Thai students to get on their feet for a progressive move like his character. The criticism is directed toward the influence of the US which was an analogous happening in Thailand. On the other hand, the praise goes to China's shift in political regime originated by the people. This might be a reason why Suwat did not continue to write this suspended political novel right after he was released from imprisonment in 1962, but chose to resume in 1975 when the socialist ideology was vigorous.

**Female Minister: China Can be Our Friend ?**

*The Setting* 54

Female Minister starts out from the story of a big change in the life of Anuree, the female protagonist, when she is appointed Deputy Foreign Minister. She is not a highly educated person, but smart and ready to learn new things. She is in the position that possesses the authority in shaping foreign policy. Although not so familiar with politics, she is receptive and able to adjust herself well to new environment. The art of novel automatically forces Duangjai to add novel's elements into the story such as Anuree's being inexperienced in politics, romance between Anuree and her acquaintance Pree, and the progressive, sometimes aggressive, image of Win, for example. However, through the end, it is almost all about the background of international affairs and how Thailand should reconsider foreign policy while neighboring countries have lost to communism. At the end, the story leads to the conclusion that Thailand and China are about to resume diplomatic relation and Anuree has the happiest life when her first grandchild is born.

*Diplomacy: The Obvious Theme*

Duangjai uses omniscient narration, or the third-person narrative mode, in the writing of Female Minister. That gives her total freedom in developing characters, main plot, and sub-plots. Nevertheless, when talking about her personal view, she hardly turns to pure narration to get her point across, but does it through the conversation of different characters. Duangjai confirms that her primary focus was not about

'the minister', but about 'a layman entering politics'. To make it more interesting, she decided to use a female character to take the leading role in the novel.\textsuperscript{55} However, the strong message turned out to be the proposal of foreign policy.

At first glance, the outstanding discourse in the Female Minister can be viewed as politico-economic discourse due to the presence of some economic facts of the 1970s such as that of Pree:

'It starts from the point that we want to industrialize, but we have to invest more than our capacity allows. That's why many problems arise such as capital funding and joint venture. Even after we have funding, we still lack know-how and skilled labor. When we can get through some of those problems and produce, we lack markets...Thailand's industry is only in the beginning stage of production for import substitution."

(Female Minister, p. 105)

Even so, counting on a closer survey of the text, the most obvious discourse is seen on the political side, rather than economics. What are given prominence are such words as foreign policy, China, Vietnam, domestic policy VS foreign policy, and something like 'foreign policy is actually the policy of our country; the only difference is that it has an involvement with other countries' (Female Mister, p. 92). The present analysis, therefore, puts the texts of this particular political novel in the genre of international relations discourse.

Given that this discourse path is predominant, Duangjai works through the climax of the story by resting on, first of all, the existential assumption. By presenting background information of China, she assumes that there is such thing as proper information to make a value judgment on foreign policy toward China. The fact that Thai readers around that time might not have enough knowledge about China has framed Duangjai to lay the fundamental background of the country after the first 130 pages through words of Father Thoma, a missionary who used to live in China 10 years before coming to Thailand. He says:

'Troops led by Mao Zedong did not exploit people like we heard from news. People were willing to give food for them. There were also many people who left their families, just to go to join the force.'

(Female Minister, p. 135)

Duangjai tries to give the true picture of Chinese communism without bias to later convince that even with different political ideologies, Thailand and China could be friends. Again Father Thoma says:

'In their (the people's) opinion, Mao does not have a dreadful image of

\textsuperscript{55} Interview with Associate Professor Prathampon Watcharasthien, 24 March 2009, Bangkok.
communism. He and his group are saviors who free the people from what they are struggling with, which includes eradicating Japanese, western, and imperialistic influence out of China. The ultimate goal of Mao is to get rid of social inequality.' (Female Minister, p. 135)

Moreover, for the justification of communism which was a major fear in Thailand during the 1970s, Duangjai explains the ideology in a semi-academic tone through Father Thoma again that:

'I would like to avoid the word 'communism' because firstly, there has never been any country that became a perfect communist like Marx wanted. And secondly, like I said before, Chinese people thought of Mao and his group as the persons who freed them from their chronic social suffering.' (Female Minister, p. 137)

In long texts like novel, it is almost impossible to judge that there is only a single pattern of assumption. Here too, the existential assumption works as the groundwork. After that Duangjai presents the good points of Chinese governing regime with implicit value assumption that 'if the result is good, even Chinese socialist authoritarianism is acceptable' (p. 238, Dr.Siritat's words) and 'that Chinese way should be used as the model for every under-developed country, but the only problem is (the fear of) the word communism' (Female Minister, p. 239, Win's words).

Duangjai presents social events by means of the inclusion of national and international affairs (activity) ranging from Thailand's 'Son Loo Lom' policy (Pine trees going along with the wind), Indochina losing to communist influence, to the movements to oust American influence in China. But the representation is done in a moderately abstract and generalized way according to Fairclough's criteria of abstraction level that the representation will be most abstract if the texts spell out social practice or social structure. In case of Female Minister, although Duangjai occasionally uses real examples such as that of 'Jiang Kai-shek losing city after city in 1949' (p. 190, Father's Thoma's words) in her novel, she chiefly gives the account of social events based on political science principles and social practices of political ideology in China and, at times, in Thailand.

At the climax, Duangjai concludes her proposal through Anuree's remarks that:

'...we must acknowledge every government in Indochina as well as China because we are quite late for the opportune moment.'

(Female Minister, p. 344, Anuree's words)

And finally, before the very end of the novel at which Thai prime minister who is also the Minister of Foreign Affairs, decides to go China, Anuree makes her attitu-

56 Ibid., Fairclough, p. 138.
dinal stance clear by stating to the Prime Minister that:

'We can have both leftist and rightist stances at the same time depending on the situation. We must acknowledge that people's peaceful life and well-being are what we want.' (Female Minister, p. 346)

The overall atmosphere that appears in this particular political novel gives the feeling of entertaining education, rather than propositional texts. From her background, it is clear that Duangjai is successful in achieving her goal because she could give a clear explanation of communism and make the readers realize that communism in principle is not a fearful ideology, but danger lies in the people who practice it. The structure that Duangjai holds on to is explanation-justification and suggestion which is slightly different from that of Suwat. The shared value seen from Red Pigeon and Female Minister is that they both see China without a negative feeling. However, unlike Suwat, Duangjai does not really criticize Thai government and its foreign policy, but tries to explain and justifies what she must have been more knowledgeable as a specialist in international relations. In terms of suggestion, her point is obviously different from that of Suwat. Suwat emphasizes on the potential of the young, but Duangjai focuses on the friendly policy with any country even though they hold different political ideology.

The Wind: Socially Windy

The Setting

The story in The Wind appears in Kritsana's traditional style of family affairs, but includes a core message about divergence in political beliefs among people. It shows the overall picture of people of different classes in Bangkok on the verge of clashes between leftism and rightism after the October Revolution in 1973. The communist threat loomed during the time when Kritsana was writing this novel, especially when Thailand's neighboring countries became communist. People with different degree of conviction in the story react differently to the changing wind—wealthy families are preparing to leave the country if the situation gets worse, and the progressive journalist, Kan, calls for a better society.

Kritsana presents the story through the conflict of love between Meaw (or Piromya) and Kan (Khongwit) who cannot get married due to the different ideology of Meaw's family. Kan is a leftist journalist. Meaw admires progressivism or leftism and loves Kan, but is opposed by her conservative family. Kan asks for help from Meaw's aunt's family who is neutral. One day Meaw is kidnapped. That becomes a

heartbreaking incident for her family. The situation allows Kan to prove himself as a responsible person who is able to take care of Meaw in the future even though his political affinity is different from that of Mew's family. With the cooperation from the police, he can rescue Meaw. Finally Meaw's family stops thinking about political differences and allows them to marry.

Behind the Texts in The Wind

Discourse in The Wind is less unified than the first two due to the appearances of many characters in the story. The author herself also seems to cover up her political inclination by using the themes of 'love' and 'family affair'. But Trisilpa (1982) points out, though without an elaborate explanation, that despite an attempt to be neutral and hide her personal attitude, Kritsana's opinion concerning politics can be seen from the description of each character. In effect, Kritsana sometimes adds her own attitudes while narrating the scene. One example is:

'Anwida manages to avoid the words 'left' and 'right' in time. Probably because of these two words, there are conflicts here and there; employers and employees, adults and youngsters, spreading to even parents and children. They penetrate so fast like a little stream that flows through the cracks on the ground and hides there just to wait for the saturation.'
(The Wind, p. 305-306)

Unlike Female Minister of which Duangjai puts forward the political idea through 'long' conversations such as those pointed out by Trisilpa, The Wind is obviously the mixed voices between many characters and Kritsana's own thoughts. There is nothing wrong with that as long as the writing technique is concerned. Kritsana, like Duangjai in Female Minister, uses the omniscient point of view to write The Wind. She, therefore, has the total authority to express or describe any kind of feeling that a character might have. However, the mixture of 'her attitude', 'characters' attitudes' and 'the information' sometimes gives a misleading impression to readers as to 'who is really saying it?, the character or Kritsana herself?' In any case, if one turns away from the crafting style of novel and focuses only political content, The Wind is still a very readable political novel, though with less political dimension than Suwat's Red Pigeon and Duangjai's Female Minister.

The Wind is also more of the 'reflection' of the current affairs, rather than a criticism or proposition. Words like left, right, communism, capitalist, Cambodia, change, the rich, the poor, exploitation, that mirror the social ambience are presented in both the author's own narration and the character's conversation. But there is no real deep talk about the political situation. The discourse of this political novel is, therefore, so-

58 Ibid., Boonkhachorn, Thai Novels in Decades, p. 50.
ciological discourse that synthesizes many small pictures of the whole society.

The novel appears to be a little bit complicated because it tries to reflect the lives of many people at the same time. The most prominent representation of social events relates to the ideological conflict between ‘the new/leftist’ and ‘the old/conservative/ rightist’. Kritsana gives the representation of specific actual events, for instance, revolution in Laos, Thailand’s relation with China, or communist moves in the neighboring countries, but does not elaborate on them. So they are only the abstraction over series and sets of social events such as:

‘Kidnapping is spreading seriously this year, more seriously than ever before. Observers point out that it started spreading after the bloody Revolution of October 14, 1973. It is the case because of the abhorrence against the wealthy class. It’s true that those kidnappers are not involved with political fluctuation, but they are opportunists. (The Wind, p. 350-351, narration).

The narration somehow does not go much deeper than that. So, the readers of later generations may get only a vague idea of how serious that kidnapping became. The sociological discourse in the contexts in The Wind does not lead the readers to another level of political understanding, but it fulfills the entire novel in terms of rhetoric, metaphor, and entertainment. In terms of political substantiality, Taweesak’s (2003) statement that Kritsana Asoksin does not deal with political contents in this novel as deeply as Duangjai remains solid, because she does not present subtle data or reasons based on scholarly information. In comparison with Female Minister, it is more entertaining than educational.

As briefly stated earlier, in a novel many kinds of assumption may be presented and it is hard to specify only one assumption that works as the foundation for the author’s discourse. In The Wind too, there appear both the existential and the propositional assumptions. Kritsana presents some statements in Thoom’s (one of the main characters) thought as:

‘Where are we heading for? Are we going to be like Cambodia? Are we going to be communist? Are we going to be socialist?’ (The Wind, p.17)

When she does that, it indicates her existential assumption that there are communism and socialism and there has got to be an ‘appropriate’ way for the country to go for, even though no one knows for sure what it is. In some other scenes, there are similar texts presented in the same manner that reflect existential assumption, but what is more evident than that is the propositional assumption; in other words, what

59 Ibid., Pintong, p. 93.
is or what can be the case. Here, the case is about the change that brings about the clash between leftists and rightists. Kritsana presents it through the bombing and the death of Amnak who just went to see the play that had socialist contents calling for social change. On top of the propositional assumption, it is here where one can see Kritsana’s indirect value assumption, albeit she just leaves it there and lets the readers make a judgment by themselves. Finally, at almost the end of the novel, the word ‘wind’ as implied from the title is concluded in a few words of the progressive journalist that:

‘The political wind is strong. But I believe that it is not too strong for Thailand that holds on to the getting-along-with-the-wind policy.’
(The Wind, p. 442, Kan’s letter to Meaw)

Kritsana does not stick to the duty of elaborating historical and political aspect. This is probably because she realizes that pure political contents that make a novel look like political science would not win the Thai readership. And her status as a novelist is different from that of Suwat whose vast readership is of young university students. Her readers mostly like her signature style of novel, family affairs. But if one would like to see a picture of how society at the time was, The Wind would fulfill that need by the sociological discourse.

Conclusion

Three Thai political novels have been examined with sociological perspective here. These three novels are selected because they were born during the transitional period of Thailand in the late 1970s. Based on the theoretical assumption in sociology of literature stating that a novel is a social production and can read the era, this paper explores the contents of the three by starting from their origin and found that in each of the three its author had different inspiration to write, but all were generated out of the same specific social condition, the victory of democratic movement led by university students. While Suwat and Duangjai had a strong direct inspiration from their careers, Kritsana was affected by the progressive social critique; thus starting one of her early attempts to write The Wind.

As the implicitness is a pervasive property of texts and a property of considerable social importance in that it works as a common ground for understanding and actions, assumptions in each novel are explored and the most evident one are extracted and discussed. The common thing is that all of the three touch upon communism. Instead of categorizing the nature of the text, the article has demonstrated that the

60 Interview with Sukanya Cholasueks, 19 March 2009, Bangkok.
61 Ibid., Fairclough, p. 55.
three novels embrace different yet similar discourse. With the help of textual analysis adapted from critical discourse analysis (CDA), the summary of the main features of the three political novels is as follows.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Core Message</th>
<th>Discourse</th>
<th>Social Function</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red Pigeon</td>
<td>Suwat Woradilok</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Power of youngsters</td>
<td>Socialist</td>
<td>Social and political critic/ suggestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Minister</td>
<td>Duangjai</td>
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<td>The Wind</td>
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The political contents of the three novels reflect the trend or the atmosphere of Thailand in the late 1970s distinctively; power of the young, making friend with old foe, and reaction of different classes amid social change when leftism gained vigorous presence. Red Pigeon talks about China and its young generation with complementing overtone. So, it is understandable why it got a warm welcome from university students who sought the so-called progressivism at that time. While Suwat and Duangjai try to paint a picture of communism as a good ideology in principle and not a thing that we should be excessively afraid of, Kritsana presents the probable side effects when leftism clashes with the old ideology in Thai politics. Certainly, these three novels may not be able to cover the whole range of political events of their period, but they pick up the biggest issues of the time, and do their social functions of criticizing, educating, and suggesting in a constructive way through the discourse that the authors intend.

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