

## “Good Citizenship”: The Ideals of Moral Politics and Democracy in the Short Stories of Phan Wan Fah Award Between 2016 to 2021

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### Abstract

The article focuses on analyzing social ideas and political ideologies in the Pan Wan Fah Award-winning short stories published between 2016 and 2021. It applies concepts from semiotics and textual analysis to interpret and analyze the signs within 77 short story texts of the Pan Wan Fah Award, considering both their literary and socio-political contexts. The results reveal that the signs in the Pan Wan Fah Award-winning short stories reflect the political ideologies of the state, such as royal democracy and moral politics, which are combined with the ideas of being a good citizen and liberal democracy. Additionally, the short stories of the Pan Wan Fah Award present the ideals of liberal democracy and active citizenship, including new common values in human rights, equality, and human dignity. However, there is also a struggle for the people's political ideology against the state, such as a fair and truly elected democracy as a hope for future politics, freedom, equality, and democracy, including resistance to state violence, suppression, and unjust power of authoritarianism.

### Introduction

The Phan Wan Fah Award is a literature competition for short stories and poetry in the political genre, organized by the Secretariat of the House of Representatives in Thailand. Its aim is to promote politics and governance in a democratic system with the King as the head of state. The competition encourages public participation, promotes understanding of rights, duties, and social responsibility, and develops citizens in a democratic system through literature

(The Secretariat of the House of Representatives, 2016). Since its inception in 2002, the competition has been held annually. However, it was suspended after the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) took control of the government in 2014, because the Secretariat of the House of Representatives wanted to adjust the Phan Wan Fah literatures in appropriateness with the current political situation (The Secretariat of the House of Representatives, 2014). Then, the Phan Wan Fah Award was resumed in 2016.

Despite changes in the award categories, such as the name being changed from "Pan Wan Fah Political Literature Award" to "Pan Wan Fah Literature Award" to "Pan Wan Fah Literature Award", the competition continues to focus on creating and revitalizing political literature as outlined in its 2004 and 2013 award principles. The competition awards 12 literature prizes, with the winner receiving 60,000 Baht, the runner-up receiving 40,000 Baht, and honorable mentions receiving 20,000 Baht. The competition aims to promote unity and citizenship in a democracy (The Secretariat of the House of Representatives, 2016). Its objectives include promoting and supporting politics and governance in a democratic system with the King as head of state which is reaffirming the royal-democracy ideology of Thai state; encouraging public participation and understanding of rights, responsibilities, and social equality, as well as citizenship in a democratic system through literature; supporting and appreciating valuable Thai literature that reflects democratic values; and strengthening unity and solidarity among people in the nation.

Each year, only 12 short stories are selected for the Phan Wan Fah Award, and each story must align with the principles and ideas of the Secretariat of the House of Representatives. The creation of citizenship in a democratic system is comprised of six characteristics: 1) self-responsibility and self-reliance; 2) respect for equality; 3) respect for diversity; 4) respect for others' rights; 5) respect for rules and regulations; and 6) responsibility to society and the collective (The Secretariat of the House of Representatives, 2023).

Therefore, even though the authors of short literature have the freedom to express their political and social views through their writing, their work must still be limited and constructed with elements of ideas and ideology under the guidance of the state. It is interesting to study how the short literature of the Pan Wan Fah Award have either fought against or collaborated with the ideology of the Thai state, and what ideas and ideologies are conveyed through these short stories. This can be achieved through semiotic and textual analysis in order to reflect social and political ideas and values that promote democratic governance

and good citizenship in accordance with international principles and contemporary values of Thai society.

### Objectives:

This article aims to study and analyze social and political ideologies through the short stories of the Pan Wan Fah Award from the years 2016-2021.

### Semiotics Approach:

This article utilizes semiotics and textual analysis as its methodology to investigate the political ideologies and ideas present in the short stories of the Pan Wan Fah Award between the years 2016 and 2021. Semiotics, which originated from the structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure (1986), has been adapted to literary semiotics and cultural analysis. The study is influenced by the ideas of Roland Barthes, who developed the semiotic approach to cultural analysis, and focuses on how language constructs meaning and shapes cultural practices, particularly in relation to political ideologies.

Semiotics is a method of analyzing and understanding social and cultural practices by viewing language as a system of signs and seeking to uncover the rules or principles that lead to the process of signification. Through semiotic analysis, one can gain a better understanding of how signs convey meaning within a specific context (Peter, 1987). According to Saussure, the sign is the most basic unit of language, which is a complex and interconnected system of relationships between the "signifier" (the sign or medium) and the "signified" (the idea that the signifier wants to convey). Both parts make up the sign, and one cannot be missing. For example, the word "tree" in Thai is the signifier that leads to our thoughts about what we call a tree, which is the signified. The relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, determined not by individuals but by society or the linguistic community.

Linguistic community refers to the language system within a particular society or community. Various symbols expressed naturally and accepted by society in the form of shared practices or social

conventions are not intrinsically valuable but are created by society. The community or society is necessary in creating values for these symbols so that their value is based on their general use and acceptance, allowing them to represent ideas in a particular society (Saussure, 1986).

The arbitrary relation, a condition that is not natural but created by social forces, is related to the power that governs or ensures the stability of the status of these symbols in language, or what is known as "analogy" (Barthes, 1988). The meaning or signification of a sign is distinct from its value. For Saussure, the meaning of a sign is a matter of relations and distinctions. He called this type of meaning "diacritics" because he saw language as a system built up from the differences of its constituent parts, with the meaning of each constituent part determined by its place within or relation to the larger system. The uniqueness of language, therefore, is a matter of comparison and distinction (Charoensin-o-larn, 2002).

The semiotic approach considers all types of signs, not just linguistic ones, as significant components of communication and meaning - making. Even non-linguistic signs can play a vital role in conveying meaning in society. Semiotics views the units of meaning or signs as diverse and including all the objects that surround us in society. The meanings of these signs are determined by the codes or rules of each particular society, or in other words, the cultural system itself. As such, culture can be studied as a phenomenon of semiotics, and the various norms of culture can be studied as a matter of the expression of signs. Culture is thus seen as a system of communication, and not as something beyond the system of meaning - making. (Eco, 1976).

In Roland Barthes' concept of semiotics (1980), it often referred as "semiology" or semiotics approach which explores the study of signs and their meanings within cultural and social contexts. His approach involves analyzing how signs function in various systems of communication and how they shape our understanding of the world. One notable example of Roland Barthes' application of the semiotic approach is his analysis of a photograph of French politician and

cultural figure Charles de Gaulle. In his essay titled "The Photographic Message," (1961). Barthes examines the photograph as a sign system and explores the layers of meaning it conveys. Barthes begins by dissecting the various signifiers present in the photograph, such as de Gaulle's pose, facial expression, clothing, and the setting. He argues that these signifiers collectively construct a signified image of de Gaulle as a powerful and authoritative figure. The pose and facial expression, for instance, convey a sense of confidence and determination, while the formal attire symbolizes his status as a leader (White, 2012).

Barthes also emphasized that meaning is not inherent in signs but is constructed through a process of interpretation. Myth is a second order signification that conveys cultural meanings beyond the original, denotative meaning of a sign. In the case of a car, for example, it may signify wealth, status, or power in a particular cultural context. This cultural meaning is constructed through social norms and conventions, and it is reproduced and reinforced through various forms of communication, such as advertising and media representations. The study of semiotics, therefore, allows us to analyze and decode the cultural meanings embedded in various signs and symbols, and to understand how these meanings are constructed and perpetuated in society. This can help us to gain a deeper understanding of cultural practices, values, and beliefs, and to identify the ways in which they shape our perceptions and behaviors.

In Barthes' view, the function of myth is to subjugate and appropriate the denotation of objects, which refers to their literal or utilitarian meaning, and transform it into a new connotative meaning, which is a symbolic or ideological one. As such, myth constitutes a second-order semiological system that communicates meaning in a distinctive way by exploiting the pre-existing meaning of objects through appropriation. At the level of myth, meaning is conveyed through cultural beliefs that have been manipulated to appear natural or part of a deceptive process. However, the essence of the myth does not fully conceal anything; everything is presented openly before us. But because we are so accustomed to it, we fail to recognize it as

a cultural context, and instead, we are deluded into thinking that the values we hold are natural or a result of our common sense (Barthes, 2004).

Hence, the process of signification plays a crucial role in creating the codes or cultural norms that determine meaning. Roland Barthes argues that culture and ideology are the primary creators or determinants of meaning, including the unconscious or subconscious framework of understanding daily life in society, which is even more significant in perceiving the meaning of signs in society. The system of signification is what renders the perception of signs in society appear natural and normal, making it difficult to discern the connotation of signs. Alternatively, it can become a process of manipulation that distorts people's perception in society, leading to the creation of myths.

Therefore, semiotic approach recognizes that language, things, and culture are interconnected and that meaning is constructed through using of signs. These signs are not static or fixed, but are dynamic and evolve over time through the processes of communication and interpretation. Overall, the semiotic approach provides a powerful tool for analyzing and interpreting the complex and multifaceted meanings of signs in our everyday lives, and for understanding the role of culture in shaping our communication and meaning-making practices.

### Textual Analysis:

The concept of textual analysis is an approach to reading a text that Roland Barthes (2008) advocates for. This approach enables readers to create their own new texts through the work itself, which he refers to as "writerly text." The reason for this open approach is that a text arrives with a complete structure or code, making it a closed text that requires an open reading to uncover new meanings. By breaking the text into fragments, readers can examine the process of constructing various codes within the text to comprehend the ongoing process of meaning - making (significance) through writing and structuring the text. This approach allows the writer to distance themselves

from the text, giving it the qualities of an autonomous object or reality. The result of this reality-effect is that the things contained within the text become real. This type of reading is called "analyzing the text" because the text is the space constructed or produced from the relationship between the reader and the written work. In this sense, the text is a matter of production, but it arises from a grid of different codes or various sets of discourse interwoven within the text.

In this conceptual framework, the "work" refers to the tangible object or content that can be perceived as an idea, form, or expression, while the "text" is what exists within the work and is a matter of language. In textual analysis, language is a metalanguage for analysis, and meaning in the text is not static. Language can create its own meaning, and words in a language never lose their meaning. However, they can float and create new meanings for the text. Therefore, the text is a dynamic interplay of signs that both tremble and float to transform or create new meanings (Charoensin-o-larn, 2002).

Text can take many forms, including verse, sentence, or an entire book, and has its own system that is separate from the language system, such as rhetoric or writing. By examining the various structures and codes within the text that contribute to the creation of meaning, we can better understand the process of signification in the text. The goal of studying textual analysis is not to find a single, definitive meaning or to interpret the meaning of the text as hermeneutics does, but rather to study the endless process of signification within the text. This approach focuses on the mobile structuration of the text, rather than attempting to explain the entire structure of the work (Barthes, 2008).

To summarize, analyzing the short stories of the Pan Wan Fah Award using the lenses of semiology and textual analysis is a study of the process of significance within literary works. This involves examining the structures, codes, and underlying ideologies that guide the creation of meaning within the work, which are often shaped by the state and broader societal and historical contexts.

The process of significance is not static, but rather dynamic and can change over time. By decoding the text and examining the constructed reality within the work, we can better understand the structure, ideals, and ideologies that guide the meaning of literary works.

## Research Methods:

The research aimed to analyze the social ideals and political ideologies conveyed in the 77 Pan Wan Fah Award-Winning Short Stories published from 2016 to 2021 using semiology and textual analysis. The semiology analysis focused on identifying signs in the texts and transcribing their denotation and connotation. For example, signs such as land, family, and gun were analyzed. On the other hand, the textual analysis examined the literary, socioeconomic, and political contexts and events that influenced the meaning and significance of the signs, including the writing structure.

The content analysis was then applied to transcribe the political ideologies conveyed in the texts through the contextual structure of literacies, such as the characters, scenes, and behaviors or expressions of the characters. This enabled the identification of political ideologies, such as the concept of unity and good citizenship in a democratic society, which could be portrayed through a descriptive analysis of the characters and their actions with the contexts of literature.

**Table 1**

*Political Signs and connotation meanings within the Pan Wan Fah Award-Winning Short Stories between 2016 to 2021*

Titles of literary works	Signs	Connotation meanings	Literature contexts	Social and Political Contexts
Please maintain the rules and etiquette; The Western front remains unchanged; The carpenter's son with a disability in his leg; Who is wrong?; The old man and the fish in the stream; Dead-end alley; Power; Let's look back at the VAR footage again	Rules	Developing new guidelines and laws for the benefit of oneself and allies; and social laws and regulations	The creation of a mentality of fear that people are living in a state of constant anxiety and unease, which could lead to a lack of critical thinking and rational decision-making in society.; and the social division of conflicts among different groups of people, political parties, and political movements.	Contemporary Thai social and political conflicts, especially the red shirts and yellow shirts political conflicts after the military coup in 2006.

By applying these analytical approaches, the study aimed to decode the constructed reality and determine the structure, ideals, and ideologies that guide the meaning of the literary works. The research contributes to the understanding of the social ideals and political ideologies conveyed in literary works and their significance in society.

## Results and Discussion:

### Political Signs and Meanings in Pan Wan Fah Award - Winning Short Stories

Semiology plays a crucial role in uncovering the political ideologies and meanings conveyed in short stories through signs. By analyzing the denotation and connotation of signs and examining the contextual structures in which they are situated, we can gain a deeper understanding of the social and political ideals that underpin the text. As this article demonstrates, certain signs such as rules, colors, and gun, are particularly salient in conveying political ideologies related to democracy, political conflicts, and violence. By paying attention to these signs and their contexts, we can reveal the underlying ideologies and beliefs that shape the meaning of literary works. The article concludes by highlighting some prominent political signs that often appear in texts, as follows:

Titles of literary works	Signs	Connotation meanings	Literature contexts	Social and Political Contexts
Please maintain the rules and etiquette; Pieces of conflict; Monkey City; Deception square; Unidentified night-darkened skeleton in the museum	Colors	All people; Unity; Political shirt colors; Political division; Different perspectives and opinions		
A photo that composition never perfect; Captain's cloak; Unidentified night-darkened skeleton in the museum; The Kilometer Zero of Democracy	Democracy monument	Political conflict and the spirit of democracy; and symbols of the struggle for democracy of people	During the October Era in 1976, Thai students escaped into the forests to avoid persecution. Meanwhile, a photo illustrates the diverse opinions and identities of people in society. The primary context is related to the missing student leaders during the university lockdown on October 6th, 1976, and the issue of mutual acceptance within families, including jealousy within families that reflects the problem of unity in both families and society.	1) The students' escape to the forest after the events of October 6th, 1976.; 2) The 2014 coup d'état that occurred on May 22, 2014, when the military staged a coup against the caretaker government, after months of political turmoil and protests in Thailand. The military declared martial law and suspended the constitution, dissolved the Senate and the House of Representatives, and detained many political figures.; 3) The drafting of a new constitution after the military coup in 2014, which was approved in a referendum in August 2016, despite widespread criticism from opposition groups who argued that the constitution would give too much power to the military and limit the rights and freedoms of citizens.; and 4) The 2019 general elections which was the first election held after the NCPO government was lifted. However, the election was controversial as many parties were banned or dissolved, and there was many criticizing about unfair electoral process.

Titles of literary works	Signs	Connotation meanings	Literature contexts	Social and Political Contexts
The movement of ghost bones; Boonyuen's victory; The mystery of blind justice; Orders from the spirit; On the fault lines of the earth's crust; The Pumpkin's movement; Stains that have not yet faded away; Just a foot towel; Money City Tragedy on a patch of water in the night where the sound fades away"; The deceptive square; Backup keys; Deep beneath the surface of the earth; One kilometer pillar of democracy	Election	Rights and freedom of people; Exercising the rights of people; Voting of people in selecting political leaders; Participation of people in politics; Political games; Expressing the rights and duties of good citizenship; Equal rights; Democratic rule, and Hope of people's future.	Internal family conflicts; the village headman elections; Corruption issues in politics; Promoting the selection of good candidates or a good man to govern the country; A civic duties and responsibilities of Thai citizenship; and respect for democracy.	The current Thai politics appears in a semi-democratic governance which have an election and elected representatives. However, the political power is under a control of authoritarianism government or the authoritarian military government.
The carpenter's son with a disability in his leg; Heart to heart; Saraphee beat her teacher; Whatever; The selection: Human screening equipment	Good man	Good people in society or politics are those who are truly good; the virtuous citizens of the nation; Honest and upright person; A person who respect the laws and regulations of society; Person who have morality and ethics, and be trusted as a good man who can govern the country; A person who are those fulfill the expectations of society.	Political differences have caused the conflicts and tensions between people in society, from the village level to the national level. These differences can stem from conflicting ideologies, values, and beliefs about how the country should be governed. Additionally, conflicts may arise from disagreements about the distribution of political benefits, such as access to resources, power, and influence. These conflicts can lead to polarization, division, and even violence in extreme cases. It is important for individuals and society to learn how to manage these conflicts constructively and find ways to reconcile differences in order to promote unity and stability.	1). Political protests against Yingluck Shinawatra's government.; 2). Controversial debates emerged in Thai society regarding the definition of a 'good man' following the 2014 movements of the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC). The PDRC, who claimed to represent the virtuous masses, ignited political conflicts with the red shirts, yellow shirts, and other groups in Thai society.; 3). Political conflicts among the red shirts, yellow shirts, and PDRC groups erupted in Thai society during the movements of the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) in 2014.
Democracy in the funeral room; the Captain's Coat; Cold Hands	Bullet; Tank; Gun barrel; and Gunshot	The state resorted to violence to suppress the people	1). Political differences led to conflicts among the people, resulting in tension and violence between citizens and the state.; 2). Democracy is often invoked as a rhetorical tool to create political conflict, resulting in tragic	1).The Black May event on May 17, 1992, in Bangkok, Thailand, the event was triggered by the appointment of Suchinda Kraprayoon as the prime minister, despite his previous role in suppressing pro-democracy protests.

Titles of literary works	Signs	Connotation meanings	Literature contexts	Social and Political Contexts
			from both the conflicts themselves and the state violence that ensues	His appointment led to protests and violence, including clashes between protesters and the military. The situation eventually escalated to the point where the military fired on protesters, resulting in many deaths and injuries.; 2). The coup

Note: Naijarun, K. & Jarernpanit, T. (2023). Phan Wan Fah Award B.E.2559 - 2564: Social Concepts and Ideological Cultivation Democratic Citizenship Through Contemporary Short Stories (Research Report). Phitsanulok: Pibulsobkram Rajabhat University.

## Democracy, Moral Politics and Good Citizenship Ideologies:

Democracy, within the framework of liberal democracy ideology, prioritizes values such as freedom, equality, and equitable opportunities grounded in rights and laws. It emphasizes the active participation of citizens in democratic processes, particularly through elections, and the recognition of diverse opinions and minority voices. The core principle of democracy ideology places significance on individual freedoms and representative democracy, where the people hold democratic power and express their preferences through electing their own government. The state, in return, exercises power under the Rule of Law, ensuring that its authority does not violate the freedoms and private property of citizens. The state also carries the responsibility to serve its citizens (Wantana, 2015).

The state is governed based on the highest principles of the rule of law, with laws enacted and enforced without infringing upon the freedom of the people. Every individual enjoys equality and equal rights under the law, as well as access to justice. In this context, moral politics in theoretical perspective is related to state and social justice, where the values and principles of the rule of law shape the political beliefs, attitudes, and behavior of citizens. Moral politics also considers how individuals engage in moral reasoning

and deliberation when forming political opinions. This involves critically examining moral values, considering the ethical implications of policies, and engaging in public discourse to reach informed decisions based on a public consensus. John Rawls's work, specifically "A Theory of Justice" published in 1971, presents the concept of justice as fairness. Rawls argues for a social contract theory where individuals agree on principles of justice behind a "veil of ignorance." From this position, rational individuals would choose fair and impartial principles of justice. Rawls's work highlights the importance of fairness, equality, and individual rights in moral politics. He emphasizes the need to create a just society where everyone has equal access to basic liberties, and socioeconomic inequalities are justified only if they benefit the least advantaged. Rawls's theory provides a framework for moral reasoning and deliberation in political decision-making, urging individuals and policymakers to critically examine moral values and consider the ethical implications of policies in order to achieve a more just and equitable society (Wenar, 2021).

Good citizens are those who not only adhere to the principles of justice and fairness but also contribute to the establishment and preservation of a just society. Rawls emphasizes the significance of citizens' dedication to upholding equal fundamental liberties and promoting

the well-being of the least advantaged members of society (Wenar, 2021). These citizens respect and defend the equal political liberties and basic civil rights of all individuals, including the essential rights to freedom of speech, assembly, religion, and political participation. They are firmly committed to fairness and justice as guiding principles for societal arrangements. Additionally, they actively engage in democratic processes by exercising their right to vote, participating in public debates, and supporting political candidates and parties that align with the principles of justice and fairness.

The analysis of the Pan Wan Fah Award-Winning short stories explores the characteristics of Thai politics, specifically examining the concepts of unity, democracy, and good citizenship. Within these short stories, the ideology of democracy reflects a unique blend of royal-democracy ideology and moral politics. This ideology combines liberal democratic principles, such as civil rights, freedom, and equality, with the moral values and beliefs rooted in Thai tradition. The emphasis is placed on societal unity, the constitutional monarchy, and a democratic system in which the King serves as the Head of State, while also upholding morality and ethics of citizenship. This distinctive approach to democracy is often referred to as "Thai-style democracy," distinguishing it from the Western or liberal democracy ideals.

The concept of good citizenship portrayed in the Phan Wan Fah Award literature reflects individuals living in a democratic and liberal society. These citizens are expected to be aware of the principles of liberal democracy and to actively engage in governance within the framework of a new model of democratic governance. This model emphasizes a collaborative relationship between the state and civil society, where citizens play an active role. Good citizens in this context are those who not only exercise their own rights and freedoms but also fulfill their responsibilities as informed participants in the electoral process. They recognize the significance of elections and the selection of representatives. Additionally, they uphold principles such as equality, human rights, and non-discrimination, and refrain from engaging in

discriminatory practices. They also value and respect the diversity of thoughts, religions, ethnicities, and minority voices within society. The signs present in the literature, such as conflicts, violence, family disputes, the Democracy Monument, guns, and tanks, convey deeper connotations. These signs serve to underscore the importance of unity and democracy, as well as the need to respect the voices and rights of others within the societal fabric.

In literature, conflicts often emerge due to divergent political views, resulting in divisions among characters and varying levels of violence. These conflicts can occur within families, where differences in political opinions lead to discord. Additionally, political conflicts and violence stemming from wars and coups reflect the political landscape both within and outside the country. The use of signs in these stories serves the purpose of conveying the significance of respecting diverse perspectives, which is a vital element of democracy. It aims to foster a political consensus that reduces conflicts, promotes social harmony, and cultivates unity. The short stories in question reflect the concepts of democracy and citizenship through the incorporation of various signs. These signs highlight the importance of adopting a democratic mindset that respects freedom, differing opinions, minority voices, and human dignity. The stories emphasize the awareness of citizens in recognizing and fulfilling their rights and responsibilities, actively participating in politics, prioritizing collective benefits over personal interests, and exhibiting good ethics and solidarity. These ideas are communicated through diverse contexts, encompassing political, social, and economic conflicts and violence both in Thailand and abroad. The stories address the issues stemming from conflicts arising due to differences in opinion and the refusal to listen to each other's voices. They also touch upon social inequality, politics and the economy, and the corruption perpetrated by political and government authorities.

Indeed, the stories in the "Pan Wan Fah Award-Winning" literature serve as a reminder of the essential elements required for democracy and good citizenship.

They emphasize the importance of active participation, dialogue, and compromise to foster social harmony and the well-being of all members of society. The central idea of democracy aligns with the principles of liberal democratic ideology, which places emphasis on individual rights, equality, and participation in the democratic process, particularly through elections. Liberal democracy values the respect for and consideration of diverse opinions, as well as the significance of minority voices. At its core, liberal democracy upholds freedom and representative democracy, where the people possess the democratic power and express their commitment to selecting their government representatives. However, within the literature of the "Pan Wan Fah Award-Winning" stories, there is a presentation of moral politics and royal democracy, which attempts to merge with the ideology of liberalism and democracy. This blending has led the ideology of liberalism and democracy to deviate from its core principles, particularly towards authoritarianism. This deviation is especially notable after the coup d'état in 2006, which has influenced the power dynamics of Thai politics.

Moral Politics is an ideology deeply rooted in religious beliefs and charismatic power, which has been the foundation of Thailand's approach to power since ancient times. It integrates power, beliefs, and emotions into the political ideology. The charismatic power of the King and the influence of Buddhism are interwoven into Thailand's social and political system, along with the country's unique cultural identity and the hegemony of the ruling class (Jarernpanit, 2018). It is important to understand these dynamics within the context of the literature and the broader political landscape to grasp the complexities and nuances of democracy, citizenship, and the interplay between different ideologies.

The blend of moral politics, liberalism, and democracy in Thailand has created a complex and sometimes contradictory political landscape. On one hand, there has been a partial embrace of liberal democratic principles, with elections being held and democratic institutions established. However, on the

other hand, there has been a tendency towards authoritarianism, characterized by limitations on freedom of speech, assembly, and the press, as well as a lack of accountability among those in power. The enforcement of *lèse-majesté* laws, which criminalize criticism of the monarchy, has been used to suppress political dissent and silence minority voices. These factors have contributed to a polarized political culture that is prone to conflict and violence, as depicted in the "Pan Wan Fah Award-Winning" short stories. In Thailand, the concept of good governance has traditionally been associated with moral and virtuous politics, which places a strong emphasis on ethics and the importance of having virtuous leaders in positions of power. This ideology has merged with the royal-democratic system that was established following the events of October 14, 1973. During this time, the monarchy became a symbol of opposition against military dictatorship and a demand for a liberal democracy. This gave rise to the concept of democratic royalism, which emphasizes the significance of elections and a democratic system with the monarch at its center. The Thai elite has actively promoted these ideas and values, believing that the security and prosperity of the people, government, and nation can only be achieved if the country is governed by virtuous individuals rather than self-serving politicians (Winichakul, 2016). These dynamics shed light on the complexities and intricacies of the political landscape in Thailand, showcasing the interplay between moral politics, liberalism, and democracy, as well as the challenges and tensions that arise from such a blend of ideologies.

Indeed, Thai political preferences are deeply rooted in the power of the monarchy and the moral principles that underpin governance, whether in authoritarian or democratic forms. The concept of moral politics, which encompasses the religious and ethical dimensions of the state, has formed the bedrock of Thai society and politics. It has shaped collective consciousness, emotional and behavioral responses among the people, and has become a driving force behind a political culture that promotes integrity, transparency, opposition to corruption, and

the selection of honest politicians, particularly during elections. These themes are evident in various short stories within the Pan Wan Fah literature.

In addition to election-based democracy, which emphasizes the importance of citizens' awareness and consciousness of their rights and responsibilities in selecting competent leaders to govern the country, it is also essential to revisit the principles of liberal democracy. Liberal democracy places significance on the rule of law and the strength of the state through genuine mechanisms for checking state power and fostering political consensus among the people. This reflection of democracy in the context of literature aligns with the characteristics of moral democracy a democracy guided by ethics and morality rooted in virtue ethics, where good and honest individuals who are not corrupt govern under a moral political atmosphere. These perspectives underscore the intricate interplay between moral principles, democracy, and governance in Thailand, and how these dynamics are reflected in both the political landscape and the literature that portrays it.

Indeed, the literature of "Pan Wan Fah" underscores the significance of active and engaged citizenship in communities, going beyond mere voting. It emphasizes the importance of citizens holding elected officials accountable, participating in public forums, and advocating for their own rights and the rights of others. The stories portray citizens coming together to address problems and instigate positive changes in their communities, highlighting the potency of collective action and the power of the people within a democracy. These themes align with the ideals of participatory democracy, where citizens play an active role in shaping their communities and the political system.

Good citizenship and civic duties are integral to democratic governance, as they foster an engaged and responsible citizenry capable of holding leaders accountable and actively participating in the democratic process. By promoting the values of honesty, integrity, and transparency in both public and private spheres, the literature of "Pan Wan Fah" encourages citizens to take an active role in shaping the future of their country and working towards a more just and equitable society. This is particularly pertinent in a country like

Thailand, where the political landscape often experiences issues of corruption, nepotism, and abuse of power. By advocating for the values of moral democracy and good governance, the literary works of Pan Wan Fah provide a potent critique of the existing status quo while offering a roadmap for constructing a more democratic and just society.

Under the rule of law, it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that its power is not used to violate the freedom and property rights of its citizens. The state must guarantee individual freedoms within the framework of the law and establish a system of checks and balances to prevent the abuse of power. Additionally, the legislative branch should be held accountable for the use of legislative power by having an independent bureaucratic power responsible for constitutional law and legal affairs. This separation ensures that bureaucratic power remains independent of political influence (Bobbio, 2006). The foundation of liberal democracy lies in the principle that the government should be accountable to its citizens and work in their collective interests while respecting individual rights and freedoms. This principle is crucial in building a just and equitable society.

The ideology of liberal democracy highlights the significance of three fundamental institutions for the sustainability of representative or parliamentary democracy. Firstly, a strong state is necessary, deriving its power from the consent of the people. Secondly, the rule of law plays a vital role in governance, upholding the supreme law and ensuring equal rights for every citizen. Lastly, mechanisms must be in place to hold leaders accountable, and government officials entrusted with power must act responsibly and uphold the principles of government and the rule of law. The Pan Wan Fah Award-winning short stories underscore the role of citizens in upholding the principles of liberal democracy. Citizens need to be aware of this ideology and actively engage in preserving their rights and freedoms, such as protecting the right to vote and elect representatives, and upholding principles of equality, humanity, and fairness. By doing so, citizens contribute to the sustainability of democratic institutions and the creation of a just and equitable society (Chenvidyakarn, 2020).

## Conclusion:

The short stories that won the Phan Wan Pha literary award during 2016 - 2021 were dominated by three themes: liberal democracy, moral politics, and good citizenship. These themes aimed to instill a sense of citizenship within a democratic system that values freedom, equality, honesty, and social responsibility. They emphasized the importance of individual awareness of rights and duties, the need for virtuous citizens, and the promotion of public interest. On the other hands, some short stories also criticize government policies and reflect the writers' response to the established ideology, creating a space for political struggle for freedom of expression, rights, and equality in Thai society.

Good citizenship, as reflected in the stories, is based on contemporary global and Thai principles and values. This includes understanding and fulfilling one's duties and responsibilities as a citizen, respecting human dignity and rights, promoting moral principles in everyday life, respecting differing opinions, reducing conflicts, and promoting unity in society. By promoting these values and principles through literature, the Pan Wan Fah Award-Winning short stories contribute to building a democratic and just society in Thailand.

The collection of Pan Wan Fah Award-Winning short stories serves as a valuable source of knowledge about Thai politics through literature, promoting liberal democratic governance. The stories highlight the importance of fundamental values such as freedom, equality, respect for human rights, and the participation of citizens in the political process. They stress the significance of democracy for the people, who are the true owners of state power, and emphasize that the state must respect the rights and power of its citizens and not use its governance power to violate their freedom.

Therefore, the short stories in the Pan Wan Fah Award reflect the dominant political ideology of the state within the signs in different contexts, such as moral politics, royal-democracy, and social ideals in good citizenship in democratic governance with the King as the Head of the State. It can be seen as a form

of "myth" according to Roland Barthes (1980), in which the ideas of morality and goodness become deeply ingrained in people's consciousness and democracy ideology and values. Similarly, Antonio Gramsci's concept of "cultural hegemony" suggests that politics of morality and goodness become the dominant culture in society (Gramsci, 1999). However, there are also attempts by some authors to propose new ideologies that prioritize principles such as freedom, equality, and democracy in liberalism ideal. These works also criticize the state's use of power and suppression and reject the state's attempts to promote a specific idea of goodness through literature. This can be seen as a competition for ideological territory or a "war of position" with the state.

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