

# Authorial Revisions of Boys Love/Y Novels: The Dialogue between Activism and the Literary Industry in Thailand

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## Introduction

In June 2021, *2gether the Movie* (dir. Noppaharnach Chaiwimol, Kanittha Kwanyu, and Weerachit Thongjila, 2021) premiered in Tokyo. Initially, it was screened at only three cinemas. The reception among fans across Japan though was positive. Some fans rewatched the film more than sixty times.<sup>[1]</sup> *2gether the Movie* features the romance of two male university students: Sarawat and Tine. The franchise began as a Thai novel written by JittiRain. It has then been adapted into a series screened on YouTube and Netflix. The manga adaptation is also available in Japanese. The love of Sarawat and Tine is framed by codes of Boys Love or Boys' Love (hereafter BL). This genre features a male-male romantic relationship, usually with sexually explicit narratives as well as illustrations. Originally a Japanese subculture, the genre has since become a global sensation. There are hundreds of social media accounts in English, Chinese, Malay, Spanish, and Portuguese dedicated to BL contents, particularly those produced in Thailand as they 'seem to have broadest regional and global appeal.'<sup>[2]</sup>

BL was originally a Japanese media genre whose root can be traced back to the 1970s and 1980s. The term BL is more popularised in scholarship in English compared to *yaoi* although these two terms are closely connected. Some scholars explain the different shades of meaning between BL and *yaoi*. *Yaoi* is associated with the earlier phases of BL with an emphasis on pornographic quality. The term BL has, however, been perceived as an umbrella term for the genre.<sup>[3]</sup> Instead of BL, the term *yaoi* is preferred by fans in some countries, namely Thailand, Indonesia, and South Korea. Among Thai fans, the term *yaoi* is more commonly known under its abbreviated form: Y or *wai* [วาย]. The term *yaoi* or Y used here stands for both original texts and fans' creative works shaping what is called *watthanatham wai* (Y culture) in Thai. In this article, the terms BL and Y are used interchangeably.

BL was introduced to Thai audiences through Japanese manga in translation in the early 1990s. Translating BL manga in the early days was limited to piracy as the state may have prevented the distribution of the genre. The dissemination of pornographic contents was strictly monitored by Thai authorities as it is still today. In the 2000s, the genre was well-received among female fans. This manga genre was secretly available at some manga bookshops and book rental shops in Bangkok and across big cities in the country. That was a time when teen and pre-teen popular culture was on the rise along with screen and internet culture. The development of Thai BL was obstructed by the authorities in 2005. The BL media was forced to move underground, where it flourished from the late 2000s through its entanglement with transcultural popular culture from East Asia, fan culture, and the resurgence of gay representation in Thai televisual and filmic texts.<sup>[4]</sup>

Thriving through self-publishing and limited reception on the internet, Thai BL novels or *niyai* Y came to the light again by means of screen adaptation. In 2014, *Love Sick the Series* (dir. Rachyd Kusolkulsiri), which was adapted from the eponymous novel, gave a new lease of life to the Thai Y industry. The face of the industry has been shaped by the intersections of literary and screen industries ever since. After the 'Love Sick Fever,' GMMTV—a sub-company of GMM Grammy—experimented with its first BL series titled *SOTUS the Series* in 2016. The success of the series has cemented GMMTV's position as a key

player in the field. Initially, GMM Grammy started its business in 1983. The company later expanded its business empire from the music industry into television, film, publishing and home shopping. After the launch of its first BL series, GMMTV adopted an all-inclusive approach to develop Y industry under its brand, covering areas such as literary adaptation, star-making, and the expansion of a transnational fan base. Thai Y novels and subtitles for Thai Y series are thus available in English, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Portuguese, Hindi and other languages in both copyrighted and pirated translations.

The making of Y stars by GMMTV was primarily inspired by the grammar of the BL/Y genre. To endorse fans' fantasy, each Y couple was required to somehow comply with the *seme/uke* dichotomy. *Seme* (casually called the '*me* [เมะ] or *phra ek* [พระเอก] of the novel among Thai fans) is expected to possess more masculinity and muscularity compared to *uke* ('*ke* [เคะ]). However, in Thai Y novels, *uke* (or *nai ek* [นายเอก]) tends to be androgynous as influenced by Japanese BL manga; this is evident in Y novel covers featuring manga-like drawings. The dichotomy also underlines sexual roles: *seme* is top while *uke* is bottom. The binary of *seme/uke* has appeared to be more flexible in Y series adapted from novels. Y series requires the 'Y gaze'[5] of fans or audiences to distinguish *seme* from *uke*. The *seme/uke* properties of certain Y couples are reimagined by fans beyond page and screen. In light of this, Y media tends to be positioned in the romantic and sexual fantasy world.

The separation between the fantastical world depicted by the genre and LGBTQ in reality is not new. There was a debate called *yaoi ronsō* in Japanese print culture in the 1990s, when a gay activist critiqued the false image of 'gay' imposed by *yaoi* female authors. The female authors, along with their fans, argued that the *yaoi* or BL genre did not arise to educate Japanese society on gender diversity, let alone align it with gay or LGBTQ activism.[6] This has also been the case in Thailand since the 2010s.

Most Thai BL texts of the 2010s refrained from addressing gay identity and culture. It created the 'I'm not gay; I'm just falling in love with this guy' myth.[7] The imaginary relationship between *seme* and *uke* in Y media became problematic in view of LGBTQ-related issues by failing to reflect the social reality of LGBTQ people: 'the space in Y series is not actually the space for LGBT.'[8] When climbing to the peak of popularity, Y culture, particularly the Y series, has been facing criticism on Twitter and in various journalistic writings. Kathoey News's criticism is as follows:[9]

Most of production teams and stars of Y series are straight. That is why perspectives on male-male relationships are limited and tailored for hardcore *sao-Y* [*fujoshi*]. Though it is certainly possible for heterosexual people to create homosexual contents, they need to work harder and pursue more in-depth study of the topic. These days there are less and less LGBT insights.[10]

Another critic argues that producers rely on stereotyping in Y series because 'it is the easiest and quickest way [to make money] without knowing that what they have deployed is not only romantic plot and characterisation but also heteronormativity, which has become homonormativity. This is a never-ending suppression.'[11]

In academia, existing literature on Y media in Thailand tends to deploy Y series, Y stars, and fandom as data. The scholarship on Y as a literary genre typically focuses on issues of the grammar of the genre and gender and sexuality. The scholarship on BL in Thai seems to strictly subscribe to feminist readings, which suggests that the *seme/uke* dichotomy is another form of bipolar gender under patriarchal hegemony. The literature also invests in the analysis of fictional elements rather than contextual implications of certain texts.[12] The industrial aspects and the interaction between writers and their readership of the Y literary genre seem to have been overlooked by Thai scholarship, let alone English-language research on Thai BL. This research article therefore explains textual revision as a self-reflexive practice by Thai Y writers, which indicates another breakthrough for the genre as well as the interrelationship between literary production and advocacy for LGBTQ rights.

Nuances of the term 'revision' are related to its usage in different fields. Revision, or 'revisionary reading,' could be identified as a reading strategy encouraged by feminist critics from the 1970s and early 1980s in search of female voices in male-dominated literary traditions.<sup>[13]</sup> The term 'revision' within the context of historical studies underlines acts of revisiting existing historiography in relation to the scrutiny of historical evidence and embedded ideologies. In this article, 'revision' is used through the lens of print culture, which invites readers to explore certain texts in acknowledgement of their different material manifestations: working drafts, fair copies, proofs and authorised commercial editions. John Bryant frames the phenomenon through the idea of 'fluid text.'<sup>[14]</sup>

Bryant defines fluid text as 'any literary work that exists in more than one version. It is "fluid" because the versions flow from one to another.'<sup>[15]</sup> Changes that happen to each text also contribute to its fluidity. Censorings, translations, adaptations and scholarly editions thus frame writing as a process that evolves through various stages of revision.<sup>[16]</sup> In the context of print culture, textual revision is based on aesthetic, grammatical, rhetorical, broadly political, sexual, and localised agendas. Studying the revising process of a text is to retrieve what is called the 'revision narrative', which includes 'plot (the revision sequence and motive), character (writer and editor), and ideas (aesthetic strategies and cultural intervention).'<sup>[17]</sup> When revision has occurred in Thai BL/Y novels from 2020, it is worth exploring how activism, as a cultural intervention in 'revision narrative,' converses with the literary industry.

To methodologically explicate the dialogue between activism and the Y literary industry in a form of revision narrative, this article is designed as a case study, the focus writer of which is JittiRain (pseudonym of Jittinat Ngamnak). The criteria are based on JittiRain's achievements; prior to 2020, she published more than ten Y novels, some of which were adapted into television series. The popularity of JittiRain's works among Thai and international fans should, at its best, represent the interaction between activism and literary industry. Besides, JittiRain has a close connection with EverY (under Jamsai Publishing), a major publisher of Thai BL/Y novels. EverY was officially established in 2015 when Jamsai Publishing developed its own Y market. Well-liked Y writings on online platforms or by famous writers were scouted for publication. JittiRain established her connections with GMMTV and GMM Grammy through her Y novels, which were adapted into television series. JittiRain also participated in the development of GMMTV's screenplays for Y series, which she later adapted into the novel version.<sup>[18]</sup> In relation to GMM Grammy, JittiRain novelised *Friend Zone* (dir. Chayanop Boonprakob, 2019) one of GDH559's films under GMM Grammy. To analyse JittiRain's practices allows me to depict the interconnectivity between literary and media industries, which are still underexplored in previous studies of BL/Y culture in Thailand.

The particular reaction of JittiRain to drastic criticism of Y media from 2020 was to revise her popular novels in the form of public apology. The novels include *Phro rao khu kan* [เพราะเราคู่กัน]/*Because We Belong Together* (hereafter *2gether* the novel, first published by EverY in 2017) and *Pla bon fa* [ปลาบนฟ้า]/*Fish upon the Sky* (first published by EverY in 2015). The dialogue between activism and JittiRain's revision unpacks 'the collaborative forces of individuals and the culture, from one version to another.'<sup>[19]</sup>

From this perspective, the revision is textual as much as cultural and political. This article will therefore bridge JittiRain's authorial revisions with the cultural politics of the Thai BL industry since 2020. In the next section, a contextualisation of the socio-political atmosphere, literary activism, and the BL industry in Thailand will be provided.

### **Cultural politics and the BL/Y phenomenon in Thailand since 2020**

Before 2020 the #MeToo movement, calling for the solidarity of women experiencing sexual violence and sexist practices on a global scale, appeared. Mobilised by digital culture, the movement has gone viral since 2017. The impact of the movement has made its way into gender studies and literary studies

circles. Scholars argue that the interplay between literary studies and the movement can be enriched through a broader sense of the term #MeToo, 'not only by foregrounding sexual assault in literature by women of colour and LGBTQ+ people, but also by examining the wider cultural movement from a variety of angles.'<sup>[20]</sup> Literary activism, going hand in hand with the #MeToo movement, manifests itself in different forms of reading, writing, and teaching literary and cultural texts. The so-called activism has retrieved voices of women and those who suffer from marginalisation.<sup>[21]</sup>

The subsequent literary activism along the #MeToo movement exemplifies the fluidity of texts caused by woke culture, which raises awareness of prejudices towards differences of race, class, gender, age and physical ability. Promoting cultural diversity and political correctness, woke culture seeks to cancel individuals and institutions that do not subscribe to such values. Since 2020 in Thailand, particularly on digital platforms, literary activism in a comparable manner has emerged. It was significantly fostered by other socio-political movements during the pandemic.

The first example of literary activism in practice is Khunying Vinita Diteeyont's incident.<sup>[22]</sup> In August 2020, amid the pandemic and political unrest, some Chulalongkorn University students, in graduation gowns, joined *Yaowachon plot aek* [เยาวชนปลดแอก], or the Free Youth Movement's protest. Pictures taken in the protest were widely circulated on the internet. Chulalongkorn alumni reacted to the news in different ways. On the Facebook Page called *Ruamphon khon aksorn* or Arts Chula Alumni, Khunying Vinita Diteeyont, also known as *V. Vinichayakul* [ว. วินิจฉัยกุล] or *Kaewkao* [แก้วเก้า], a celebrated female author and national artist, posted a short poem criticising the use of Chulalongkorn graduation gowns in the protest. The design of the gowns had been granted by the Thai monarchy in the early days of the university in the 1930s. Chulalongkorn University itself was named after King Chulalongkorn. The graduation gown is, therefore, symbolically attached to the Thai monarchy and its traditions.

Against the use of the gown outside their ceremonial context, Khunying Vinita remarked: 'This is such an unspeakably heartbreaking insult.' Unexpectedly the poem stirred digital activists to cancel Khunying Vinita's novels. She and her novels were attacked on Facebook and Twitter. Despite defence from Khunying Vinita's radical fans, the incident generated more heated debate in August and September 2020. The tension between Khunying Vinita and internet activists also led to Khunying Vinita's resignation from the jury board of the S.E.A. WRITES Awards, one of prestigious literary awards in Thailand and Southeast Asia, as she was questioned by a representative of the Thai P.E.N. association.<sup>[23]</sup>

Khunying Vinita's attitude was considered conservative by internet protesters amid the rise of woke culture. The hashtag: #Cancelนิยายคุณหญิง (Cancel Khunying's novels) was initiated to accumulate criticism against the old-fashioned viewpoints expressed in the novels, such as their attempt to uphold patriarchy, normalise adultery or polygamy committed only by male protagonists, and the belief that homosexuality can be cured. Moreover, some of her historical novels were also read as an expression of anti-democracy. The novels represent the 1932 revolution led by the People's Party in Thailand as 'ambitious but not so smart' and pro-revolution characters tended to face catastrophic fates while royalists were represented as being 'highly dignified.'<sup>[24]</sup>

The cancellation was significantly repeated over the death of Thommayanti [ทมยันตี] or Khunying Wimon Siriphaibun—a famous novelist, national artist, and former senator.<sup>[25]</sup> Her novels, particularly in the romance genre, have been well-received by the literary market since the 1960s. Nevertheless, immediately after her death, Thommayanti's past was revisited. She used to be an outspoken supporter of the Thai military governments throughout the 1970s. Thommayanti's statements endorsing violent treatments against people and students' protests were on digital platforms: TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube.<sup>[26]</sup> The patriotism, patriarchal ideologies, and violence conveyed in her novels were re-evaluated through the hashtag: #ทมยันตี (#Thommanyanti).<sup>[27]</sup>



In terms of gender insensitivity, although in some contexts Thommayanti's works can be read as women's empowerment, one of her works with a transgender protagonist has been criticised for its failure to uphold gender diversity. *Baimai thi plit pliw* [ใบไม้ที่ปลิดปลิว]/*Falling Leaves* (1988) connotes transphobic attitudes. It presents the tragic life of a transgender person who falls in love with her own uncle. The protagonist's gender identity is framed by improper parenting, which is interlinked with the conventional psychological knowledge on behavioural deviation. Some scholars find materials for the novel stereotyped, biased and insufficiently researched. [28] The novel was adapted into a television series in 2019 and rescreened in 2020. The tragic ending is 'revised.' The protagonist fails to commit suicide, embracing new possibilities for people with gender diversity. This can be regarded as a significant change compared to when the LGBTQ emerged in the Thai literary industry in the 1970s–1980s before the arrival of literary activism. Gender diversity, as depicted in Thai literature, used to be 'too beautiful or too ugly to be real' and failed to introduce LGBTQ lives to the reading public. [29]

Khunying Vinita's and Thommayanti's cases illuminate how the political climate in Thailand since 2020 has thus merged political and literary activism. To contextualise the impact of activism on the BL/Y industry in Thailand, we should map these two strands of activists' practices with LGBTQ movement and their campaigns.

In Thailand, the marriage equality campaign (or *Somrot thaothiam* [สมรสเท่าเทียม] in Thai) re-emerged in mid-2019. The campaign has caused advocacy for political correctness, gender equality, and legalisation of same-sex marriage. The movement has merged with political activism against militarism and authoritarianism in Thailand since 2020. These groups of activists consist of *Femtwit* [เฟมทวิต] (Feminists on Twitter), [30] *Feminist plot aek* [เฟมินิสต์ปลดแอก] (Free Feminists), *Nak rian lew* [นักเรียนเลว] (Bad Students' Movement), and their allies. [31]

In the wake of socio-political campaigns and woke culture, actors starring in Y series were urged to stand with people's movements, particularly in terms of marriage equality promotion as they were considered to have already 'exploited' homosexual romance to advance their careers. [32] The phenomenon later became known as the 'Krasae call out', by which Y stars were expected to be vocal in their political views and fight for social justice. [33]

Despite the political and pandemic situation, 2020 was another breakthrough for the BL/Y industry in Thailand. [34] The industry embraced more elastic and inventive grammars of Y texts. Some Y screenplays were originally created rather than solely depending on popular Y novels: *Gine nai klai pen chan* [จินนายกลายเป็นจิ้น]/*The Shipper* (dir. Aticha Tanthanawigrai, 2020), [35] under GMMTV, and *Plae rak chan duai jai thoe* [แปลรักฉันด้วยใจเธอ]/*I Told Sunset about You* (dir. Naruebet Kuno, 2020) by Nadao Bangkok are prominent examples. The latter in particular has been a sensation across Asia; its setting shifts from Bangkok to Phuket in southern Thailand, and the storyline is dominated by the tropes of queer Bildungsroman that are otherwise underexplored in Thai Y media.

The departure from the traditional, pre-2020 Y conventions can be observed in works by other non-GMM Grammy studios. DoMunDi TV, [36] for example, was keen to bridge the pure reverie of the Y genre with social issues; *Ning hia ko ha wa sue* [นึ่งเฮียก็หาว่าซื่อ]/*Cutie Pie the Series* (dir. Kittipat Jampa, 2022) can be considered as a breakthrough. The series is an adaptation of two books published by Rose Publishing in 2020—*Ning hia ko ha wa sue* [นึ่งเฮียก็หาว่าซื่อ] (2020) and *Due hia ko ha wa son* [ดื้อเฮียก็หาว่าซน] (2021) by Bam Bam. The novels are expectedly filled with Y rosy imagination partly configured from conventional Thai popular romance, for example, male-male arranged engagement since childhood, *uke* in disguise, and class difference romance. The impression of utopia among homosexual men is toned down in DoMunDi TV's revisionary adaptation. As the plot revolves around marriage between two male protagonists, discussions on an equal marriage, from time to time, come to the fore—in episode 7 and the final episode of the series in particular.

One remarkable added scene is placed at the end of the series when the protagonists, on their own, declare their union at the Siam Paragon department store's fountain in central Bangkok. While they are sealing their lips, there appears the voice over of the two protagonists:

I believe in love. I love Hia. I don't care how other people define what our love is...

Love is not just about getting married. It's about human rights and equality. It's what we all deserve. It might not exist in our society yet. But I hope that one day we will have equal rights.[37]

The declaration is followed by a marriage vow: 'To have and to hold from this day forward ... for better, for worse...' The way the series combines the ongoing equal marriage campaign with its interpretation of love and marriage is striking. This move by the series' producers seems groundbreaking yet unsurprising as the campaigns have gained greater momentum since 2020 along with other protests and political unrests in Thailand.

Besides the political accent on equal marriage, the series also resonates with consent and sexual violence issues addressed by activists and digital citizens in the wake of the #MeToo movement of the late 2010s. Significantly, a rape scene, mostly imposed by *seme*, used to be one of the key tropes in Japanese *yaoi* or BL as a way to express love.[38] This trope has faced backlash. When rape and consent came to the table through online activism, the *Cutie Pie the Series* inclines to the new principles. In episode 8, during the first sexual encounter of the protagonists, Hia—the *seme*—asks: 'You're not drunk, are you? Do you realise what we're doing?' Nu Kuea—the *uke*—simply replies: 'I'm not' and 'Yes.' [39] The scene of consent is not common in Y series prior to *Cutie Pie the Series*. These practices are worth exploring.

The marriage between the expanding Y culture and the activism of 2020 were also evident in literary creation. In the same year, a new publishing house called Lobster Publishing was established. It strives to promote political awareness through Y media. The publisher aims at revising the literary convention of Y novels and changing the 'stereotypes of LGBTQ+'; the content in its first published novel is to 'destroy the wall between people and politics.' [40] The first launched novel of Lobster Publishing is Cyanxweek's *Muea rai ja loek pen salim* [เมื่อไหร่จะเลิกเป็นสลัม] / *When will you stop being politically ignorant?* (2020). [41] Celebrated among political enthusiasts, the novel is framed by political correctness ideology, protests and the Covid-19 pandemic situation in 2020. [42] The plot is built around the boy-next-door romance trope and protagonists from different political standpoints. The rebellious premise of the novel is manifest from its omission of erotic scenes, political lectures for characters of older generations, and an extensive list of governmental misconducts. [43]

The interplay between political activism and literary industry was also pursued by Prap—a crime fiction author whose works have been adapted to television series since the late 2010s. Prap got his novel *Khat* [คราญ] / *The Eclipse* published by Deep Publishing. Extended from Sathaporn Publishing, Deep Publishing is one of the biggest publishers of Y novels together with EverY. Most of the Y series are adapted from novels published by these two publishers. *Khat* was developed because of the shortage of Y series featuring high school male students, which used to be popular in the wake of *Love Sick the Series* (2014). Prap combined coming out issues with the political atmosphere that has fermented since 2020. In the author's preface he praises social movements participated by high school students: 'They have [a] bold stance, courageous, reasonable, and impressive strategies.' [44] The novel's plot develops on the basis of protests against conservative practices in the school closely related to the political climate fermenting outside the school's fence. The novel was adapted into *Eclipse the Series* and screened in August 2022 under the name of GMMTV. The series was directed by Tanwarin Sukkhapisit—a former Member of the House of Representative who supported the same-sex marriage bill and the abolition of gender discrimination. [45]

The entire scenario brings about potential questions on the interrelationship between the political atmosphere and the Y industry in Thailand particularly within the context of the literary industry as a major source of Y series. This research employs JittiRain and her authorial revisions as an entry point. How Y writers react to the call for political correctness and social movements since 2020 and how they negotiate between the call-out and commercial power will be investigated to create room for further research on Thai Y novels—still underrepresented in Anglophone scholarship.

### JittiRain's authorial revisions

JittiRain's literary career can be traced back to the fascination of fantasy novels in her childhood. Like other Y authors in Thailand, before the phase of professionalism, JittiRain joined the fandom of Korean pop stars. The boy band called EXO used to be the source text of JittiRain's early fan fiction. She was then advised by an experienced friend to write on an online platform casually named Lao pet [เล้าเป็ด] (Duck Farm) or thaiboyslove.com. JittiRain once recounted the early days of her career: 'My passion was not instantly formed like love at first sight. My passion towards the Y genre was caused by reading; and it was then transformed into writing.'<sup>[46]</sup> However, her early writing in different genres was not successful compared to her later Y novels.

The turning point of JittiRain as a professional writer was marked by the adaptation of her novels into television series. The first adaptation, launched in 2019, was *Thritsadi jip thoe* [ทฤษฎีจีบเธอ]/*Theory of Love*. The novel was first publicised on thaiboyslove.com in 2017 before being published by EverY in October 2017. In August 2017, EverY published the first edition of JittiRain's *2gether* the novel. These two novels have come to define the signature style of JittiRain's novels: 'good feelings and comic elements ... can be guaranteed. Besides, *2gether* depicts freshers' activities and university music festivals throughout its plot.'<sup>[47]</sup> JittiRain's works revolve around university life, echoing the mainstream Y novels adapted into television series since the launch of GMMTV's *SOTUS the Series*. These two novels were adapted to television by GMMTV in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

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Figure 1. JittiRain featuring her novels and literary marketing by Naiin Bookshop (12 August 2019).

Source. [Naiin.com](http://Naiin.com), 'JittiRain khrop thuk rueang jop thuk ton jak samnakphim EverY' [JittiRain's complete collection from EverY], (12 Aug. 2019), accessed 15 Jul. 2022.

The success of the screen adaptation of JittiRain's *2gether* can be measured by its place as the number one Twitter trending for several times. In May 2020, it was claimed, with the highest rating and more than 300 million views, to be the most popular Y series GMMTV ever created. The novel was also voted Top 3 among novel readers who wanted to see it adapted into a television series.<sup>[48]</sup> Such accomplishment brought the author pride as she posted on her Facebook page: '*2gether* has completed me ... Thank you for being together until now: the final episode of the series. I believe, all characters will continue to live in your imaginations, always.'<sup>[49]</sup>

The series gained not only positive feedback, however. It also caused controversy among fans of the novel since its adaptation. Fans of the novel felt possessive of the book; they did not believe that the adaptation could remain faithful to the source text, and that the series could harm the original impression readers had towards the novel. Nevertheless, in JittiRain's opinion, the novel and the series can be split into two different entities; they should target different audiences.<sup>[50]</sup> That was never the case. After the success of the series, JittiRain had to cope with another wave of harsh criticism against gender insensitivity and violence in the novel version. Romance and LGBTQ issues in the novel, the screen adaptation, and real life are significantly intertwined from activists' perspectives.

The incidents surrounding Y stars enhance the argument. Bright or Vachirawit Chiva-aree, the leading actor of the series, was criticised for his personality: he did not appear friendly to the LGBTQ community.<sup>[51]</sup> In public discourse prior to 2020, it was believed that the cultural literacy of LGBTQ issues was not essential to people working in the industry. That is why, apart from Bright's case, other Y stars were questioned about their gender literacy: Krist–Peerawat Sangpotirat was another example as



he once made an insensitive joke in relation to rape and LGBTQ in public.<sup>[52]</sup>

When *2gether the Series* reached its ending episode, JittiRain posted a lengthy public apology on her Twitter account. The novel and the series were attacked in terms of the sexual violence embodied within the texts, particularly the first sexual encounter between the two protagonists—Sarawat and Tine. Given that Sarawat has sex with Tine against Tine's will, the scene was narrated and elaborated by an omniscient narrator and Sarawat:

#### Example 1.

'Sarawat, today I'm not ready, really.' Lying under Sarawat, Tine says with his shaking voice and tears in his eyes.

'You smell this good. This doesn't mean you're ready?'<sup>[53]</sup>

#### Example 2.

I'm not listening to him. How to be gentle is not on the table ... My brain doesn't function. It says to me that I want Tine. I'm craving for Tine. Keep going.<sup>[54]</sup>

The first round of this sexual intercourse makes Tine bleed and leaves kiss marks all over his body.<sup>[55]</sup> Sarawat's narrating voice reaffirms pleasure over the violence against Tine: 'He cannot stop me ... I almost die of ecstasy.'<sup>[56]</sup> In the second round, without Tine's consent, Sarawat practices bareback—unprotected sex. He recounts: 'Any positions that hurt as he complained; I'm going for it. I'm now raping him.'<sup>[57]</sup> He also enunciates: 'Tine, you're a dead man. You won't stand again.'<sup>[58]</sup>

Although the rape scenes could be traced back to the trope in Japanese *yaoi* or BL in which rape can be regarded as an expression of love, the scenes led to wide criticism.<sup>[59]</sup> In JittiRain's public apology posted on her Twitter account on 16 May 2020, she emphasised: 'The violent NC<sup>[60]</sup> scenes were written without awareness ... My target group was very small. My world view was limited, influenced by the media consumption (when rape-then-love novels were on the rise). I feel regret every single time I reread what I wrote in the past.'<sup>[61]</sup>

Apart from sexual violence, the initial version of *2gether* the novel employs insensitive language perpetuating other forms of violence. The first example is when a friend asks Tine: 'Why do you look grumpy? Were you seduced and raped by the curry-and-rice shopkeeper's daughter?'<sup>[62]</sup> And some chapter titles seem problematic: Chapter 16 'Men who have sex with men are great men. Men who have sex with sissy gay are Ultraman superheroes.'<sup>[63]</sup> In light of this, JittiRain took all responsibility. In her public apology she pleaded: 'These days I always consult my friends, both LGBTQ and straight. I get them to read my drafts as I can't be sure if anything can be considered a harassment or sensitive.'<sup>[64]</sup>

Significantly the revised version of *2gether* the novel was launched after the incident. In one of her Twitter posts, JittiRain mentioned the 'readings' of her own and her friends. Reading and revision are thus intertwined. From the perspective of textual criticism—a branch of the study of print culture—revision gives birth to other versions of the same text. Their coexistence is worth a theoretical observation as certain versions have their own audiences. In other words, new versions embrace new readerships while previous readers become 'historical' and attached to their respective, specific historical versions.<sup>[65]</sup> Other than that, 'versions are critical constructs.'<sup>[66]</sup> Scholar explains how writing, reading, and revision work together: 'Revision is a ritual of self-fashioning and cultural negotiation ... The more scrutable act of revision first requires that the writer become a reader. Revision is the writer-as-reader's rewriting. It is also a writer's dance performed with other readers in mind.'<sup>[67]</sup>

Taking criticism and progressive readership into account, JittiRain's revision of *2gether* the novel manifests in the form of a significantly shortened sex scene between Sarawat and Tine in Chapter 21. To

be quantitatively precise, 22 pages of content have been condensed into fewer than two pages. Tine's consent before the sexual intercourse is also verbalised.<sup>[68]</sup> The problematic chapter title was also revised: Chapter 16 'Love is not a secret.'<sup>[69]</sup> Other aforementioned insensitive expressions were also removed.

Nevertheless, what is interesting is how JittiRain negotiates with the literary activism of her own and other progressive readers. That is Sarawat always wants to touch Tine: 'Can I touch your chest?'<sup>[70]</sup> This recurring motif explains light-heartedly the affection between Sarawat and Tine, although it can also be read as sexual harassment. This particular motif also defines JittiRain's style as a novelist of the *feel-good* genre. The desire to touch is well-kept in the revised edition. Evidence can be found on pages 141 and 148, for example. Remarkably, in the screen adaptation, as another form of revision,<sup>[71]</sup> Sarawat's wish to touch Tine's chest is recurrent. The series foregrounds Tine's bare chest as spectacle. The star industry is drawn into a dialogue between revision and activism as Win (Metawin Opas-iamkajorn) had to lose 10 kilograms to look ripped for the series. After playing Tine, Win continued his modelling career.<sup>[72]</sup> This example validates the role of revision edition as a negotiated field within 'sense of decorum, politics, [the] marketplace, and larger audience concerns.'<sup>[73]</sup> The process proves that activism has been placed in dialogue with the industry in which it has been negotiating, but it does not have absolute power over the entire cultural circuit.

The life of *2gether* was revived by revision into a film adaptation. *2gether the Movie* premiered in Japan in June 2021. The movie version was produced after the success of the spin-off—*Still 2gether the Series* (dir. Noppaharnach Chaiwimol, 2020). After the controversies leading to JittiRain's revisions, the screen adaptation somewhat resonated with the same-sex marriage campaign. In the series, Sarawat mockingly gives Tine a myriad of marriage proposals, whereas in the movie, Sarawat proposes to Tine on graduation day in front of his and Tine's families. They exchange guitar plectra instead of wedding rings. The definition of 'together' covers the gathering of friends and families. The end of the movie version follows the convention of romance: celebration or wedding party. The film also entails the life after the graduation of the characters: they build their own families.



Figure 2. Sarawat and Tine are exchanging their guitar plectra on their graduation day.

Source. *2gether the Movie*, dir. Noppharnach Chaiwimol, Kanittha Kwanyu, and Weerachit Thongjila, Thailand, 2021.

Activism has, however, been subtly rather than overtly integrated into the franchise. The film does not bring heteronormativity or homonormativity into discussion. Besides, the sexuality of Sarawat and Tine is left ambiguous. Their gay identity is not claimed throughout plots in any of the versions. The practice is still common in Thai Y media.<sup>[74]</sup> That is, the franchise neither speaks of nor speaks for the LGBTQ community directly. The screen adaptation can be regarded as revision: it revisits and expands JittiRain's original and revised texts. Yet the revision in the form of screen adaptation is highly collaborative and commercialised.<sup>[75]</sup> To continue the dialogue between activism and the Y industry, revision from the audience's or reader's side is still encouraged.

Affected by activism, JittiRain's authorial revision involves a 'getting' of self and thought, and a 'repositioning' of self and thought in language and culture.<sup>[76]</sup> The lessons learnt from the *2gether* incident led to the revision of *Fish upon the Sky* the novel and the scandalous instalment of the franchise —*Dao nai nam* [ดาวในน้ำ]/*Stars in the Water*. The revised edition of *Fish upon the Sky* was launched in December 2020.

On her Facebook page, JittiRain explained her process of revising *Fish upon the Sky*. She traced the history of the novel back to February 2015. It was first published on the website thaiboyslove.com. JittiRain outlined her rationales of the revision: 'I don't want to pass some contents on to readers. I have therefore written this second version. This *Fish upon the Sky* is not a rewrite, but I'd rather call it another version.'<sup>[77]</sup> Echoing with the social movements in 2020, some deleted contents included initiation for university freshers, university beauty pageant, mockery of cross-dressing, harassment, swearwords, and excessive profanity: 'He sent me a sticker of people having sexual intercourse. What he's collecting includes this trash and porn clips,'<sup>[78]</sup> and 'I feel a bit sensitive. I have had a lady boy's heart for a while,' for example.<sup>[79]</sup>

In the statement on her Facebook page, JittiRain stresses: 'Rereading the original version of *Fish upon the Sky*, I found it imperfect. Yet it was a sweet and cherished memory of mine talking with readers in 2015. The existence of the new *Fish upon the Sky* gives me a chance to grow and learn alongside my readers.'<sup>[80]</sup>

The revision of *Fish upon the Sky* defines the existence of its twinned text: *Stars in the Water*. The novel caused extensive controversy. Again, JittiRain published her statement on her Facebook page. As agreed with GMMTV, the novel was never adapted on screen. When the contract with EverY ended, republication of the novel, in the forms of both physical book and e-book, would discontinue. The novel depicts an incestuous romantic relationship between brothers which was written from 'ignorant attitudes, immaturity and the inexperienced,' JittiRain admitted.<sup>[81]</sup> Consequently the linkage between the two novels was dismantled: the passages that mention the characters from the other novel were removed. After the revision, *Fish upon the Sky* was given a new life of its own.

As found in the case of *2gether*, a writer becomes a reader when she begins to revise her writings. Revision is therefore a creative process: 'constant revision and recursive re-creation of texts is a process of self-collaborative feedback.'<sup>[82]</sup> It is evident that the political and literary activisms affected JittiRain's writings after 2020. In her novel called *Bot kawi khong pi saeng* [บทกวีของปีแสง]/*Be My Favourite*, which was published in October 2019, there was sexual intercourse without consent.<sup>[83]</sup> That was the time when political correctness was not acknowledged in JittiRain's writings.

JittiRain's reformist practices were instead pursued in her novel *Rak salap lok* [รักสลับโลก]/*Vice Versa* published by EverY in March 2022 and adapted to a series by GMMTV from July 2022. In the novel, the protagonist proclaims his bisexual identity,<sup>[84]</sup> which readers do not find common in JittiRain's earlier

novels; the sexually obscene or NC elements are significantly toned down.

Revised editions of JittiRain's novels, in conversation with activism, can be read as 'cultural versions' achieved by 'critical acts designed to bring the original text more in line with either expectation or current needs of a culture.'<sup>[85]</sup> The approaches deployed in this study are instrumental in analysing the Y media in translation and adaptation as 'needs of a culture' are made sensitive to spatio-temporal and socio-political contexts.

## Concluding remarks

Dialogues between activism and the Y industry have persisted after JittiRain's case. Another remarkable case was also published by EverY. The novel *Lang man* [หลังมาน]/*Behind the Scenes* (first published in June 2017), adapted into GMMTV's *Bad Buddy the Series* (dir. Noppharnach Chaiwimol, 2021), was revised and then re-released in April 2021 along with electronic translated versions in Chinese and English. Yet there was no statement made by its two authors—afterday and -west-<sup>[86]</sup> The revision covers the removal of dirty jokes,<sup>[87]</sup> and statements that suggest forced sexual intercourse, for example.<sup>[88]</sup> This phenomenon reaffirms 'modal reconceptualisings of the social and rhetorical impact' on revised texts.<sup>[89]</sup>

Nevertheless, before the rise of literary activism, there were attempts among Thai Y writers to raise the awareness of the issues and consequences of rape and sexual consent. Mame's *TharnType Story/Kliat nak klai pen thi rak kan sa di di* [เกลียดนักกลายเป็นที่รักกันซะดีๆ] (2015) is a case in point. Its screen adaptation was successful in 2019 despite the novel's depiction of the *uke's* childhood trauma caused by sexual violence,<sup>[90]</sup> which is later cured by true love given by the *seme*.<sup>[91]</sup> The novel has never been upheld by progressive readers as it portrays sexual violence committed by a gay character. Gay identity is accordingly connected to rape and paedophilia—perverted behaviours.

*The Effect* by SweetSky (2017) is another example. In the novel's preface, the author explains:

Writing *The Effect*, I aimed at conveying the impact of cyberbullying and rape ... I was worried that no one would read it as its content looked violent ... Until I ran across a thread on Pantip.com: 'Men who were raped don't feel ecstatic as found in Y novels,' the project was revived.<sup>[92]</sup>

The novel likewise contains references to medical and related terms: Panic disorder, cyberbullying, clinical depression, PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis), and distant learning.<sup>[93]</sup> The novel traversed to the screen media in 2019. A three-episode long *The Effect the Series* or *Lok on rai* [โลกอนร้าย], aired on LINE TV, was directed by Worawut Thanamatchaicharoen. Both the novel and the series gained unflattering public attention. The factors contributing to its unpopularity might be that the novel was self-published—not by a big publisher—and has a tragic ending uncommon in the convention of Y novels.





# HAPPY PRIDE MONTH



Figure 3. Deep Publishing's campaign in Pride Month (1 June 2022)

Source. [Deep Publishing](#), 'Happy Pride Month,' 1 Jun. 2022, accessed 15 Jul. 2022.

The continuous dialogues between activism and the Y industry in Thailand can be witnessed since Pride Month in June 2022. Y production companies ran an array of campaigns supporting LGBTQ activists and allies. Deep Publishing, a major Y publisher, also aligned with Pride Month campaigns: 'We support and stand beside diversity for liberty and equality.'<sup>[94]</sup> The awareness was also evidently endorsed by *Guidelines for Representing Gender Diversity in Media* implemented by the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission in 2022. The Guidelines survey the current situation of LGBTQ in international media. They acknowledge the censorship of BL series and stars by the Chinese Government and marketing potentials of BL series in Asia. They also include contact details of networks for gender diversity in Thailand.<sup>[95]</sup> This signifies the development of the Y industry in possible collaboration with Thai governmental sectors, which should be conducted with awareness.

The phenomenon might be criticised as a 'rainbow capitalist' scheme, but radical criticism and progressive readership should urge the industry to make a move. In other words, moves from both sides have their own struggles on the same cultural ground.

## Notes

[1] [Thanawan Saengrung](#), 'Song krasae khwam raeng "2gether Special Album" jak "phro rao khu kan The Movie" khuen tit "Oricon Chart" nai yi pun,' [Exploring the popularity of "2gether Special Album" from "2gether The Movie" which has entered Japan's Oricon Chart], (31 Aug. 2021), accessed 28 Feb. 2023.

[2] James Welker, 'Afterword,' in *Queer Transfigurations: Boys Love Media in Asia*, ed. James Welker, 272–77 (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i, 2022), p. 273.

[3] Yukari Fujimoto, 'The evolution of BL as "playing with gender": viewing the genesis and development of BL from a contemporary perspective,' in *Boys' Love Manga and Beyond: History, Culture, and Community in Japan*, trans. Joanne Quimby, ed. Mark McLelland, Kazumi Nagaike, Katsuhiko Suganuma, and James Welker, 76–92 (Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi, 2015), doi: [10.14325/mississippi/9781628461190.003.0004](https://doi.org/10.14325/mississippi/9781628461190.003.0004)

[4] Nitcharee Lertwichayaroj, *Haujai/Y* [The Heart of Y] (Bangkok: Bun Books, 2017), pp. 73–76, 81–83, 130–31.

[5] 'Y gaze' or 'yaoi gaze' is equivalent to 'fujoshi gaze' proposed by Thomas Baudinette. The *fujoshi* term literally means rotten girls. It is a self-mocking label among *yaoi* or BL fans in Japan. Thomas Baudinette, 'Lovesick, The Series: adapting Japanese "Boys Love" to Thailand and the creation of a new genre of queer media,' *South East Asia Research* 27(2) (2019): 115–32, doi: [10.1080/0967828X.2019.1627762](https://doi.org/10.1080/0967828X.2019.1627762)

[6] Hitoshi Ishida, 'Representational appropriation and the autonomy of desire in yaoi/BL,' in *Boys' Love Manga and Beyond: History, Culture, and Community in Japan*, trans. Katsuhiko Suganuma, ed. Mark McLelland, Kazumi Nagaike, Katsuhiko Suganuma and James Welker, 210–32 (Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi, 2015), pp. 214–19, doi: [10.14325/mississippi/9781628461190.003.0011/a](https://doi.org/10.14325/mississippi/9781628461190.003.0011/a)

[7] [Theethad Chandraphichit](#), "'Mai dai pen gay khae chop phuchai khon ni khon diaw": niyai wai mai thao kap sanap sanun khwam thaothiam thang phet' ["I'm not gay; I'm just falling in love with this guy": Y novels are not equivalent to supporting gender equality], 9 Sep. 2021, accessed 30 Jun. 2022.

[8] [Kathoeay News](#), 'Fin ko pho dai tae series Y ko at klai pen panha kap LGBT sia eng' [Pretty swoon-worthy yet problematic: Y series can be problematic to LGBT], 18 Jan. 2020, accessed 30 Jun. 2022.

[9] [Kathoeay](#) in Thai can broadly stand for hermaphrodites, cross-dressers, transgenders and men who embrace the effeminate personality.

[10] [Kathoeay News](#), 'Fin ko pho dai tae series Y ko at klai pen panha kap LGBT sia eng' [Pretty swooning yet problematic: Y series can be problematic to LGBT].

[11] [Poramet Tangsathaporn](#), 'Kot sam kot son: banthatthan khwamrak phet diaokan kap series Y' [Double suppression: homonormativity and Y series], 4 Feb. 2020, accessed 30 Jun. 2022.

[12] Anucha Pimsak, 'Attalak chai rak chai lae kan rue sang nai nawaniyai wai run naew wai' [Male Homosexual Identity and Deconstruction in Yaoi Novels], PhD thesis, Mahasarakham University, 2020; Suchanya Wongwet, Warawat Sriyabhaya, Boonyong Kethet, Santi Pakdeekham, 'Phet withi khong tualakhon nai nawaniyai lak lai khwam niyom thang phetsarot' [Sexualities of the characters in YAOI novels], *Wiwitwannasan: Journal of Language and Culture* 4(2) (2020): 27–58; Natthanai Prasannam, *Nawaniyai yaoi khong Thai: kanmueang khong phetsathana lae phetwithi nai romance prachaniyom: Raingan kanwijai chabapsombun* [Thai Yaoi Novels: The cultural politics of gender and sexuality in popular romance—final report] (Bangkok: Research and Innovation Unit, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University, 2021).

[13] Hollis Seamon, 'Revision,' in *Encyclopedia of Feminist Literary Theory*, ed. Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace, 490–92 (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 491.

[14] John Bryant, *The Fluid Text: A Theory of Revision and Editing for Book and Screen* (Ann Arbor, MI: The Michigan University

Press, 2002), doi: [10.3998/mpub.12024](https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.12024)

[15] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, p. 1.

[16] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, p. 3.

[17] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, p. 159.

[18] [Suchanad Kittisurin](#), 'Before and after (Jitti)Rain,' 22 Jun. 2022, accessed 10 Jul. 2022.

[19] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, p. 4.

[20] Heather Hewett and Mary K. Holland, 'Introduction: literary studies as literary activism,' in *#MeToo and Literary Studies: Reading, Writing, and Teaching about Sexual Violence and Rape Culture*, ed. Heather Hewett and Mary K. Holland, 1–27 (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), p. 9, doi: [10.5040/9781501372773.ch-1](https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501372773.ch-1).

[21] Hewett and Holland, 'Introduction: literary studies as literary activism,' p. 9.

[22] Khunying is a title roughly equivalent to the British Dame. The title can be bestowed, with the Most Illustrious Order of Chula Chom Klao, on a woman by the King in recognition of her outstanding contributions in certain areas.

[23] [V. Vinicchayakul la ok jak tamnaeng "prathan kammakan SEA WRITE"](#) [V. Vinicchayakul has resigned from the SEA WRITE jury chair], 14 Sep. 2020, accessed 2 Jul 2022.

[24] ['Nangsue khong V. Vinicchayakul tuk wijan wa yiat phet phan hashtag #CANCEL'นิยายคุณหญิง lang pai bok "chut khruai chula mai khuan sai pai mob"](#) [V. Vinicchayakul's books were criticised for heterosexism through the hashtag #CANCELKhunying's novels after she stated one should not wear Chulalongkorn graduation gown to the mob], 18 Aug. 2020, accessed 2 Jul. 2022.

[25] This penname can also be stylised as Damayanti. It is derived from a female protagonist in Indian literature.

[26] ['Fang kham top khong thommayanti to hetkan'](#) 6 tula lang thuk rue prawat wa mi suan kiao khong kap hetkan' [Listen to Thammayanti's explanation of the October 6, 1976, event after her history and involvement were unearthed], 13 Sep. 2021, accessed 2 Jul. 2022.

[27] [Tomorn Sookprecha](#), '#ทอมยันดี kap khwam loek lak khong khon gen x' [#Thommayanti and the reluctance of the generation X], 17 Sep. 2021, accessed 2 Jul. 2022.

[28] Somkiat Kuthaweekul, 'Phap sathon chai rak ruam phet nai nawaniyai Thai nai sam rop thossawat (pho sor 2513-2543): kansueksa sakkayaphap, ko jamkat lae thang ok khong nakkhian ying' [The reflection of homosexual men in Thai novels of three decades (B.E.2513-2543): a study of potentials, limitations and solutions of female writers], *Manusat Paritat: Journal of Humanities* 27(1) (2005): 136–45: pp. 141–42.

[29] Somkiat Kuthaweekul, 'Phap sathon chai rak ruam phet nai nawaniyai Thai nai sam rop thossawat (pho sor 2513–2543): kansueksa sakkayaphap, ko jamkat lae thang ok khong nakkhian ying' [The reflection of homosexual men in Thai novels of three decades (B.E.2513–2543): a study of potentials, limitations and solutions of female writers], p. 141.

[30] [BangkokBiz Online](#), 'Rujak "FemTwit" nai kan chumnum "Yawachon plot aek"' [An introduction to FemTwit in Free Youth Movement's mobs], 19 Jul. 2020, accessed 27 Jun. 2022.

[31] Wassamon Traisakda et al., '#IfTodayWereBangkokPride,' *Sarakadee* 435 (2021): 38–59.

[32] [Manager Online](#), "'Naksadaeng series y" pluk phalang social tit tag somrot thaothiam kotmai chabap diaw thammai man theung yak khanat ni' [Stars of Y series evoked social media power with the marriage equality hashtag. To pass a bill is so hard?], 7 Jul. 2020, accessed 30 Jun. 2022.

[33] [KomChadLuek](#), 'Ruam naksadaeng series call out jat tem Bright-Singto-Mean nam team' [Another call-out of Y stars led by Bright, Singto, and Mean], 20 Jul. 2021, accessed 20 Jun. 2022.

[34] Scholars have agreed that 2014 was the transition of the industry when *Love Sick the Series* first played. The trend was later endorsed by GMMTV's Y productions and other studios. See more in Baudinette, 'Lovesick, The Series'; Natthanai

Prasannam, 'The *yaoi* phenomenon in Thailand and fan/industry interaction,' *Plaridel* 16,2 (2019): 62-89; Poowin Bunyavejchewin and Natthanont Sukthungthong, *Lok khong wai* [The Y(aoi) World] (Pathum Thani: Thammasat University Research Unit in History and International Politics, 2021).

[35] *Gine* or *jin* is derived from 'imagine.' *Gine* or *jin* is slang used among Thai fans. It describes the act of reimagining romantic love between Y couples. *Gine* can be practiced through consumption of Y texts and participation in the public appearance of Y couples in both physical and media spaces.

[36] DoMunDi TV was established around 2016. The company used to produce travel content featuring young male models. It was based in a YouTube channel. Then DoMunDi TV transformed into a Y content creator. Its first Y series was released in 2020. DuMunDi TV's Y series are now available on YouTube and other digital TV channels: iQIYI, Viu, and WeTV, for example.

[37] The quotation is extracted from the English subtitles of the series on YouTube, premiered on 15 May 2022.

[38] Akiko Mizoguchi, 'Male-male romance by and for women in Japan: A history and the subgenres of *yaoi* fictions,' *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal* 25 (2003): 49–75, p. 56.

[39] The quotations are extracted from the English subtitles of the series on YouTube, premiered 9 Apr. 2022. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oo0UUkEO-iY>, accessed 3 Jun. 2023.

[40] 'Publisher's preface,' in Cyanxweek, *Muea rai ja loek pen salim* [When will you stop being politically ignorant?], Bangkok: Lobster Publishing, 2020.

[41] *Salim* [สลิม] is a derogatory slang used against those who are considered 'politically ignorant' or 'showing pretentiously neutral political opinions.' The term is derived from a traditional Thai dessert called *salim* or *sarim* with its colourful glass noodle-like properties. The slang is connected to the people's demonstration wearing colourful shirts (*Klum khon suea lak si* in Thai) intervening in the battle between the Yellow-Shirts (*Klum khon suea lueang*) and Red-Shirts (*Klum khon suea daeng*) of 2010 Thailand. The Yellow-Shirts are also known as the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) while the Red-Shirts are formally known as the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD).

[42] See more in Teepagorn Wuttipitayamongkol, 'Muea rai ja loek pen salim: niyai wai kap prachathippatai' [When will you stop being politically ignorant? Y Novel and Democracy], 25 Jun. 2020, accessed 30 Jun. 2022.

[43] Nevertheless, the novel and its publisher could not secure a seat in the Y literary industry. Lobster Publishing later discontinued its business after its only publication. This could have been caused by the writing style of the novel, which may not have appealed to most Y readers as well as Y series producers and directors. The economic aspect of certain literary texts could affect the amplification of their messages.

[44] Prap, *Khat* [The Eclipse] (Bangkok: Deep Publishing, 2021), pp. 3–4.

[45] Owing to the success of the novel and the series, the publication of the novel's sequel was published in March 2023.

[46] Suchanad Kittisurin, 'Before and after (Jitti)Rain.'

[47] [Jamsai Editor](#), 'Tok yam khwam samret khong "Phro rao khu kan" Jamsai triam yip ma tham pen series rew rew ni' [The acclamation of 2gether's success. Jamsai is about to adapt the novel into a series], 22 Jan. 2018, accessed 19 Jul. 2022.

[48] [Khitichai](#), '#KhanGu jak khwam samret series Y su kan to yot thurakit thi "dai mak kwa" khong GMMTV' [#2gether: From the success of Y series to a more profitable business model by GMMTV], 15 May 2020, accessed 10 Jul. 2022.

[49] [JittiRain](#), '♡ phro rao khu kan #KhanGu' [♡ Because we are together #2gether], 15 May 2020, accessed 10 Jul. 2022.

[50] Suchanad Kittisurin, 'Before and after (Jitti)Rain.'

[51] [Manager Online](#), 'Na ning pen het! "Bright Vachirawit" lan mai kit yiat phet sao song kho thot hak tham hai khao jai phit' [Resting face has caused a trouble! Bright Vachirawit insisted he's not a transphobe. Sorry for the misunderstanding this might have caused], 11 May 2020, accessed 10 Jul. 2022.

[52] "'Krist" yok mue wai kho thot pom drama ron dai rap botrian laew yang phumjai jaeng koet nai sai wai' [Krist apologised for the heated drama. He has learnt the lesson and been proud of debuting in Y industry], 20 Jun. 2020, accessed 10 Jul. 2022.



[53] All the translations from the novels in this article are mine. The quotations are extracted from JittiRain, *Phro rao khu kan* [Because We Belong Together Vols 1–2], Bangkok: EverY, 2017. Specifically, vol. 2, p. 68.

[54] *2gether*, vol. 2, p. 77.

[55] *2gether*, vol. 2, p. 79.

[56] *2gether*, vol. 2, p. 83.

[57] *2gether*, vol. 2, p. 82.

[58] *2gether*, vol. 2, p. 84.

[59] Mizoguchi, 'Male-male romance by and for women in Japan: a history and the subgenres of *yaoi* fictions,' p. 56.

[60] NC stands for 'Not for Children.' Among fans, the term connotes sexually explicit content in Y media.

[61] *Daily News*, 'Phu khian #khangu kho thot prasopkan noi jon drama' [2gether's author has apologised. Being inexperienced has caused the drama], 16 May 2020, accessed 10 Jul. 2022.

[62] *2gether*, vol. 1, p. 53.

[63] *2gether*, vol. 1, p. 337.

[64] *Daily News*, 'Phu khian #khangu kho thot prasopkan noi jon drama' [2gether's author has apologised. Being inexperienced has caused the drama].

[65] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, p. 90.

[66] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, p. 90.

[67] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, p. 98.

[68] The quotations are extracted from JittiRain, *Phro rao khu kan* chabap prap prung [Because We Belong Together: Revised Edition vols 1–2] (Bangkok: EverY, 2020). Specifically, vol. 2, revised, p. 66.

[69] *2gether*, vol. 1, revised, p. 331.

[70] *2gether*, vol. 1, p. 140.

[71] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, pp. 109–10.

[72] *Onjira*, 'Trick fit hun firm "Win Metawin" plian jak sai kin lot namnak 10 kilo dai nai duean kwa kwa' [Tricks to stay ripped: Win Metawin changed his eating habit, losing 10 kilograms within 1 month-ish], 25 May 2020, accessed 10 Jul. 2022.

[73] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, p. 99.

[74] Prasannam, *Nawaniyai yaoi khong Thai: kanmueang khong phetsathana lae phetwithi nai romance prachaniyom: Raingan kanwijai chabapsombun*, pp. 154–56.

[75] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, p. 109

[76] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, p. 103.

[77] *JittiRain*, 'Nuea ha thi taek tang pai khong Pla bon fa (chabap raek) kap Pla bon fa (chabap thi song)' [The differences between the first version of *Fish upon the Sky* and its second version], 5 Dec. 2020, accessed 12 Jul. 2022.

[78] The quotations are extracted from JittiRain, *Pla bon fa* [Fish upon the Sky vols 1–2], 4th ed. (Bangkok: EverY, 2018). Specifically, vol. 1, p. 89.

[79] *Fish upon the Sky*, vol. 1, p. 285.

[80] JittiRain, 'Nuea ha thi taek tang pai khong Pla bon fa (chabap raek) kap Pla bon fa (chabap thi song) [The differences between the first version of *Fish upon the Sky* and its second version].'

[81] [JittiRain](#), 'Sawasdi kha JittiRain kha' [Hello! It's JittiRain here], 14 May 2021, accessed 12 Jul. 2022.

[82] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, p. 99.

[83] JittiRain, *Bot kawi khong pi saeng* [Be My Favourite] (Bangkok: EverY, 2019), pp. 45, 234.

[84] JittiRain, *Rak salap lok* [Vice Versa] (Bangkok: EverY, 2019), p. 91.

[85] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, p. 110.

[86] These are pseudonyms.

[87] afterday and -west-, *Lang man* [Behind the Scenes] (Bangkok: EverY, 2017), p. 53.

[88] *Behind the Scenes*, p. 242.

[89] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, p. 160.

[90] Mame, *TharnType Story*, Bangkok: Me Mind Y, 2020, pp. 78–79.

[91] Mame, *TharnType Story*.

[92] SweetSky, 'Preface,' *The Effect*, Bangkok: SweetSky, 2017.

[93] *The Effect*, pp. 183–85.

[94] [Deep Publishing](#), 'Happy Pride Month,' 1 Jun. 2022, accessed 15 Jul. 2022.

[95] The National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission, *Naew patibat kan nam sanoe suemuanchon kiaw kap khwam laklai thang phet* [Guidelines for Representing Gender Diversity in Media] (Bangkok: The Office of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission, 2022), pp. 41–44, 82–102.

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