

***The Theatre Research Project “Hua Jai Thong”: The Play Which Reflects  
an Idea of Educational Values in Thailand***

Pawaris Mina, Silpakorn University, Thailand

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**Abstract**

*Hua Jai Thong* is the play written by Professor Mom Luang Pin Malakul in 1968 to reflect the problems of the Thai education system. The purpose of this theatre research project is to explore the educational issues in the play in comparison to the educational situation at the present time.

The methods employed in this study were group discussion, a live theatre production and questionnaires. The participants in group discussion, involved the play analysis, consisted of a teacher and twenty students who worked for the production. The questionnaires were responded by the audiences who had watched the play “Hua Jai Thong”.

The results of the study suggest that although the play “Hua Jai Thong” was written more than four decades ago, it still be able to reflect the educational problems in the present time, for example, educational disadvantage. Additionally, a majority of the audiences were aware of the existence of educational issues and more realise the value of education after watching the play.

Keywords: play, theatre, education, educational issues

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## **Introduction**

Professor Mom Luang Pin Malakul was an educator who contributed significantly toward the advancement of Thai education. He was awarded National Artist in literature of Thailand in 1987. To celebrate the centenary of his birth, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) honoured him the Unesco Outstanding Personality in the fields of education, culture, literature, and mass communication.

Apart from education, M. L. Pin also has had a great influence on Thai literature. He was a highly productive writer, producing a great number of literary works which are classified as prose, poetry, plays, short story, educational work, and miscellaneous. The work which inspired this theatre research project was *Hua Jai Thong*, this play was written in 1968. Moreover, the play awarded by the Department of Cultural Promotion as one of the National Literary of Thailand in 2014.

The one-act play produced in this theatre research project aimed to reflect the problem of limitations of education system in Thailand caused by capitalism. Under this economic system, individual material needs, freedom, and satisfaction are greater than altruism. Therefore, some Thai people give priority to their advantages over the education system. This is because the owner could not make a profit out of educational institutions in comparison with commercial buildings.

## **Objective**

To produce a stage production reflected education issues in the Thai society nowadays.

## **Methodology**

This theatre research project interpreted the original play script *Hua Jai Thong* in order to investigate the education issues fifty years ago in comparison with the present Thailand and adapted it into a one-act play. The interpreters involved the researcher, the teacher, and twenty students who work for the production. The data collection methods used in this research in the post production process are group discussion and questionnaires responded by the audience members who had watched the play “Hua Jai Thong”

## **Producing the play**

Education is a crucial mechanism for developing human knowledge and skills. It provides people’s learning that conforms to social basis. However, at the present time, the Thai educational system has been reconstructed to support the capitalism system regardless of cultural and social consistency. Therefore, an inequality of educational achievement could have an impact on the allocation of opportunity in a society.

The lack of learning opportunities is a big problem in Thai society which has not been solved seriously. The children with difficulties in their family or social background inevitably have limited access to education. Consequently, their lack of education can affect their lives in various ways including having fewer life prospects and higher risks of unemployment. This means the potential of human resource eventually lost, unfortunately. Moreover, those children are also likely to get involved in drugs, crime, could be a pregnant teenager, and so on. These problems also cause damage to the economy and the whole society.

After the process of play analysis, to figure out the education issues connected to the present time situation, the researcher and participants found that the main character Luang Prasit Janya stands as a representative of the ethics teacher. He wanted to continue running his private school, since he believed that school is an institution which provides knowledge and skills to people. When people possess adequate skills and knowledge, they will be able to apply them for their career. As productive employment plays an important role in the social development and economic growth of a nation, providing an education opportunity for children is so vital in helping a country's progress.

Furthermore, another main character Pranee, Luang Prasit Janya's daughter, was a character who stands for a person who favours capitalism and overlooks the importance of education. She attempted to deceive her father into school conveyancing, hoping that she could convert the school into commercial buildings for rent and sale. In her view, this method can make her family's business more profitable.

An example of dialogue that reflects her point of view is:

**Pranee** : What's the benefit of continuing the school's business ?  
No rental ! And we also have to fix up and repair it endlessly!  
Why don't we just leave it to the government ?

**Luang Prasit** : Please understand my feelings. I love kids. I love the school. There is nothing I would like more than to make the education system better. Don't you know that the society will be good, if children are good? The successful education system can help the country's progress. If the school is destroyed, where could the students learn ?

## **Conclusion**

According to audience questionnaires, the result shows that 85% of audience members understand the word "Hua Jai Thong", the person whose heart is precious as gold, which means the teacher who sacrifices themselves to their students' education. Furthermore, 80% of spectators were aware of the main point in this play, which was to reflect the education system problems affected from capitalism. Finally, 90% of audiences agreed that these problems should be fixed earnestly.

The results of the study suggested that although the play "Hua Jai Thong" was written more than five decades ago, it still is able to reflect the educational problems in the present time.

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**Contact email:** Pawaris\_8@hotmailcom