

Aan is a Thai-language quarterly journal of literary, arts and culture criticism. We published our first issue in April-May 2008 under a name which translates into English as ‘read.’

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In the editorial of *Aan*’s first issue, entitled ‘The task of reading – the calling of READ,’ its editor, Ida Aroonwong, likened the journal to ‘a woman who does not want to stay in the ivory tower.’

Aan came into being out of the desire to create another space, somewhere between academic specialisation and common sense, between knowledge and feeling. We neither wish to be an academic journal nor a magazine for easy browsing. (The space we are searching for probably looks like that elusive place between the masculinised terrain of academic ambition and the complex emotional landscape of ‘a room of one’s own.’)

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The space of *Aan* is one in which criticism accompanied by footnote citations carries less weight than criticism that dares to stick its neck out – to express the writer’s own voice, biases, conviction (and her humour, of course, bitter or otherwise). This space for criticism is transparent and, in return, welcomes rigorous questioning. We abhor the monopolisation of the ‘judgment of taste’ by seniority or academic ranking; but we are not populist. The criticisms we desire must be based on serious intellectual responsibility and academic rigour. Above all, they cannot be innocent of the cultural politics that shape any experience of reading. Such awareness must inform even the criticisms produced in our restrictive context. This is the task of the critic in a society whose standard for criticism – criticism that takes into account cultural political determinants – is alarmingly stunted.

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Aan throws its door wide open to any reader who wishes to search for this contradictory other space with us, in the hope of identifying a new standard of criticism. We want to sow the seeds of a culture of criticism that is robust, creative, but commonly inclusive enough to speak to the majority of readers.

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Simply put, *Aan* journal will be academic in terms of its content, but popular in its stance.

Or, to coin a snappier phrase, *Aan* stands for a pleasurable intellectual read.

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Translated by May Adadol Ingawanij