

Theatre in Vietnam as Critique of the Environmental and Social Crisis

Anh Cao, Hanoi University, Vietnam
Paola Spinozzi, University of Ferrara, Italy

The Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities 2020
Official Conference Proceeding

Abstract

Halfway through the 2010s, Vietnam started to face major environmental and social problems in the race for globalization. Vietnamese people have experienced a growing sense of anxiety and discomfort about the state of economy and started to realize that their priorities may include responding to wider environmental issues. Since 2003 a special satirical comedy named *Gặp nhau cuối năm*, literally meaning *Year-End Gathering*, also known as *Táo Quân*, has aired on the Vietnamese television. The show is a re-writing of the legend of the Kitchen Gods, three imaginary figures who supervise and give an account of every household to the Jade Emperor, the ruler of the world. Featuring their annual report to the Emperor, the show praises the improvements and criticizing the problems throughout the year through satirical narratives and parodic songs. Very popular among viewers for its hilariousness, the show also urges reflection on the social and environmental crisis and occasional indifference of the Gods. Its success calls for a reevaluation of theatre as a form of art that stimulates social awareness by intersecting entertainment and critique. This paper explores how the theatre can encourage people to develop critical thinking and take responsibility. It also assesses the use of satire and parody in *Gặp nhau cuối năm*, its effectiveness as a form of social critique entwining global and local concerns, the ways in which the TV can shape public opinion in Vietnam, and the people's response to unsettling topics involving micro and macro levels of comprehension.

Keywords: Globalization, Environmental Crisis, Social Crisis, Theatre, Entertainment Commitment, Public Awareness

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction

At the beginning of the 2020s, a Vietnamese may look back at the country's status ten years ago, and then twenty years ago, and see a big gap. When the 21st century arrived, Vietnam had already fully recovered from the war and was on a one-man race to the future. After the initiation of *Đổi Mới* in 1986, the national reform with the goal of a socialist-oriented economy, Vietnam rapidly opened its door to foreign investors and encouraged private sectors to take part in the economy. The life of the Vietnamese people has improved compared to the period right after the war. The service sector has grown to keep up with the needs of life.

The price that Vietnam has to pay for fast-paced development is not low. Urbanization has caused deforestation, pollution, social crimes, and many other problems. People flock to big cities to search for job opportunities, leading to serious air pollution. Factories dump waste into water and pollute rivers and the sea. The tourism sector devises strategies to attract tourists, but in so doing poses great threats to culture and the environment. With all those problems, the question is not whether Vietnam has become a developed nation, but whether this development is sustainable.

To tackle these problems, the government has tried to involve organizations and individuals, and employed more than one tool to improve the problem-solving operation. Among the attempts to raise the awareness of the people and encourage them to take action, the theatre seems to play a promising role. From 2003 to 2019, a special theatre show named *Gặp Nhau Cuối Năm (Year-End Gathering)*, more widely known as *Táo Quân (The Kitchen Gods)* was streamed on Vietnam Television (VTV) every Lunar New Year's Eve. Rooted in the legend of the Kitchen Gods who pay a yearly visit to the Jade Emperor to present their report, the show effectively summarized important events of the year, illustrated problems and sometimes proposed possible solutions. The satirical humour of the show attracted a large audience of all ages. Throughout their seventeen years of streaming, many social problems were displayed to the audience, allowing the show to provide entertainment as well as serious reflection. Its success suggests an opportunity for the theatre to become more deeply involved with social issues and prove that arts can stimulate social awareness.

This paper will explore the show *Year-End Gathering* and the audience's reaction in order to find the elements that made it a success. With this study, there is a chance to find the path that the theatre in general can follow to encourage people's critical thinking and urge them to take responsibility in dealing with social issues.

The Legend of the Kitchen Gods

Vietnamese people's most important festival is Tết, which is their New Year according to the lunar calendar. The preparation may start about one month before the Lunar New Year's Eve and during the last lunar month of the old year, the 23rd of December is an important date. On this day, three spiritual figures known as Táo Quân – the Kitchen Gods ride their carps to heaven and meet the Jade Emperor. They must report to his majesty everything that has happened in the mortal world during the year.

In fact, the legend of the Kitchen Gods is told not only in Vietnam but also in many Asian countries. It varies from places to places, but the one thing in common is that the Gods all have one duty, that is to answer to the ruler of the world. In Vietnam, legend has it that the Kitchen God used to be a mortal man names Trọng Cao. The story is told as follows:

Once upon a time, there was a couple named Trọng Cao and Thị Nhi. They often quarreled over domestic affairs. One day the husband beat his wife. Thị Nhi ran away from home and became homeless. Eventually, she met a man named Phạm Lang and married him. In the meantime, Trọng Cao lost his fortune and became a beggar. One day he came to beg at the house of Phạm Lang. The lady of the house recognized him as her former husband and gave him food and drink. While they were talking over old times, Phạm Lang returned from a hunting trip. Afraid that Phạm Lang would misunderstand, Thị Nhi hid her former husband in the haystack. Phạm Lang had brought back some game meats and burned the haystack to roast them. He unwittingly burned Trọng Cao before Thị Nhi could explain the situation. Thị Nhi realized her mistake and jumped into the burning haystack to die with her former husband. Because he loved his wife, Phạm Lang also leapt into the flames to be with her. Thus, all three died in the fire. (Trần, 2018, p. 99)

Trần also explains that these three people then were assigned by Ngọc Hoàng (the Jade Emperor) to be “the three-in-one Kitchen God but each with a different responsibility: Phạm Lang was to be Thổ Công (Duke of the Soil), caring for the kitchen; Trọng Cao was to be Thổ Địa (Earth Deity), caring for the home; and Thị Nhi was to be Thổ Kỳ (local guard), caring for the household transaction” (p. 99). In some other sources, for example Crump’s encyclopedia of international celebrations, the Kitchen Gods are addressed as three separate figures instead of one (2016). In this paper, I am going to use the plural form of the Kitchen Gods to avoid confusion, especially in the following part about their adapted figures in the theatre.

The Vietnamese people always buy paper or real carps for the Gods because this type of fish is a means of commute for them. They then either burn the paper carp or release the real carp into rivers to send them to the Kitchen Gods, helping them get to the Jade Emperor in time. After the feast as an offering to the Gods, they fly to the sky to report to the Jade Emperor everything each household has done in that year.

This practice is a belief that has existed for a long time now, and it is an important celebration as a part of the Lunar New Year in Vietnam. The Kitchen Gods are important figures not only because they supervise every household, but also because they protect them from harmful spirits. According to a research by Đinh Hồng Hải, all the variants of the Kitchen Gods legend in Vietnam share one core: a relationship triangle that results in the death of all three people involved, and then salvation from a higher deity, turning them into supernatural beings (2015). He illustrates it with the following flow chart:

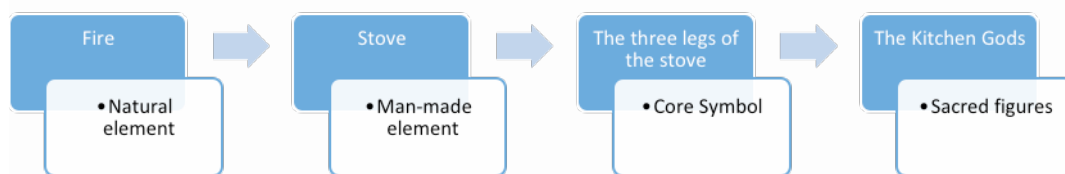


Figure 1: Đinh Hồng Hải’s illustration of how the Kitchen Gods legend is formed in Vietnam

Đinh proposes that these religious figures are a result of many cultures at the same time, and of a long process. The changes that happen during this process used to be rather slow and hard to recognize, but in recent years, these changes create “new cultural elements”, one of which is the theatre adaption of the tale (p. 87).

The Vietnamese theatre adaption of the Kitchen Gods legend

New Year’s Eve shows have always been an important part of the holiday. Since the beginning of the theatre show *Year-End Gathering*, also known as *The Kitchen Gods*, an even larger audience has been talking about this particular part of the celebration. From this point on, I will refer to the show as *The Kitchen Gods* because the format of *Year-End Gathering* has changed for the purpose of blowing a fresh breath into the show.

The Kitchen Gods is an adaptation of the legend in which the Kitchen Gods’ annual reports to the Jade Emperor include notable social issues of the year. This first show introduced Nam Tào (Southern star deity) and Bắc Đẩu (Northern star deity), two assistants of the Jade Emperor. They were only supporting roles in the premiere show but then became center roles later on.

In the first show, there were only three Kitchen Gods, one of whom was a male and the other two twin females who were cloned from the male god. The male Kitchen God was not in charge of anything specifically, while one female god oversaw the nation’s culture and the other oversaw the arts. The next years’ programs involved more Kitchen Gods, each of whom was in charge of one field in the society. The most frequently featured Kitchen Gods are in the fields of transportation, education, healthcare, economy, society, and culture. Other fields varied from one year to another, depending on what striking problems that year had.

	Education	Economy	Healthcare	Society	Culture	Transportation
2003					√	
2004	√		√			√
2005	√		√		√	√
2006	√	√	√			
2007	√	√	√		√	√
2008		√	√	√		√
2009		√	√	√		√
2010	√	√		√		√

2011		√		√		√
2012	√	√	√			√
2013		√		√	√	√
2014	√	√	√		√	√
2015						
2016	√	√		√	√	
2017	√	√				
2018		√	√	√		
2019	√	√		√		√

Table 1: Most popular Kitchen Gods and their frequency of appearance in the show

Among the Kitchen Gods shown above, the God of Economy showed up most frequently, indicating the level of concern about this sector in Vietnam. The topic of the report ranged from good news like the growth of GDP and export rate to bad news like high prices of goods, bribery, corruption, and economic crisis. With the many achievements in economy, the God of Economy often showed up before the Jade Emperor with confidence until he received more questions from the Jade Emperor and the deities, many of which concern problems that he tried to ignore. Throughout the seventeen years of the show, each year's situation determined whether a God was featured in the show, so there was no particular pattern.

Recently, when the environmental problems became serious in Vietnam and the concern for the problem grew, the God of Environment joined the group. The 2017 God of Environment had to answer to the Southern star deity about sea pollution caused by factory waste, which in turn affects the life and economy of the whole country, especially of four central provinces on the coastline. He tried to cover it clumsily by saying that the crisis was over, but the deity insisted on him learning his lesson of environmental and economic management, saying that Heaven would not sacrifice the environment for developmental goals. In 2018, the topic of river pollution caused by factory waste was brought up. The God of Environment then raised her voice to call for joint action to protect the environment, which was then criticized as clichéd by the Northern star deity.

While the cast's acting skill was the core of the show, parody songs are their strongest asset because they seem to impress the audience. One particular example can be seen in the 2009 show. Near the end of 2008, there was a great unexpected flood in Hanoi that caused great damages to the capital city. *The Kitchen Gods* that year featured a God of Drainage with a parody song about the flood. The name of the original song is *Từ Một Ngã Tư Đường Phố* (*From an Intersection*), which describes a positive life in the Vietnam War. The parody version was instead *Lụt Từ Ngã Tư Đường Phố* (*Flood from the Intersection*), telling the story of the great flood Hanoi suffered from several months prior to the show.



Figure 2: The Northern and Southern star deities and the God of Drainage performing the parody song in front of the Jade Emperor. Extracted from the video clip of *The Kitchen Gods 2009* on YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SNsr1NNp6A&t=97s>.

Another example of a successful parody song in *The Kitchen Gods 2013* is *Hoang Mang Style (Confusion Style)* whose original version was Korean song *Gangnam Style*. *Gangnam Style* describes the lifestyle of the trendy Gangnam district in Seoul. When being used for the show, it became *Hoang Mang Style*, an illustration of an underdeveloped fiscal year in Vietnam.



Figure 3: Economy God performing *Hoang Mang Style (Confusion Style)*. Extracted from the video clip of *The Kitchen Gods 2013* on YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gb810yMHd7Q>.

Many other significant performances included the parody of folk songs, children classics, or new popular songs of the previous year.

Apart from parody songs, satire was also delivered to the audience through the actors' and actresses' appearance and language. Significantly, the character of the Northern star deity got more feminine year by year. This character wore a wig and make up, showed feminine gestures and at times was addressed as a miss instead of mister (Mộc, 2018). The role of the sharp-tongued Northern star deity was to have strong opinions, sometimes judgements, about the Kitchen Gods. In contrast, the legend portrays the Southern star deity as a male deity.

The first show of *The Kitchen Gods* was unprecedented in terms of plot and reaction from the audience, as it “preceded the goal of an ordinary TV comedy show” (Đinh, p. 88). As the show went on, online articles and comments on social media praising *The Kitchen Gods* started to grow in number. Quotes from the show were used as comments on social media pages and were summarized into so-called handbooks in online articles. In his newspaper article, Nguyễn quoted music critic Nguyễn Quang Long's explanation for the success of the show that “It reminds us of the traditional role of the jester in folk art, because back then only he could tell the truth without being punished by the King.” (2019, n. p.)

The Kitchen Gods captivated the attention and love of all groups of audiences. The fact that it was streamed on New Year's Eve fits the atmosphere of the celebration and allowed everyone the chance to watch it because they were not busy at work or school. The elderly appreciated the show because it was a cultural performance that promote traditional values. The children felt engaged because they could recognize children's songs, only with new lyrics. The young might be the group that most enjoyed *The Kitchen Gods* because of parody songs and catchphrases that they often use being featured in the show. The advantage of being exposed to the Internet also increased their positive reactions because they can re-watch excerpts whenever they want, and can discuss the shows on social media.

On the other hand, there were complaints that *The Kitchen Gods* was going on the same path every year. It would start with each Kitchen God's report, during which the Northern and Southern star deities would interrupt and ask difficult questions or reveal the problem that the gods were hiding. The Jade Emperor would always give a lecture to the gods at the end of the show. Additionally, at one point, the Institute for Studies of Society, Economy, and Environment and ICS Center criticized the iconic LGBTQ figure of the show, the Northern star deity for overemphasizing their sexual orientation, and the show for introducing discriminative lines about the deity (An, 2018). Their movement triggered a debate among the audience, with many comments approving of the two organizations' reactions to the show. With such macro issues, the crew always had to think carefully so as not to go overboard and make the whole show appear insensitive.

The sudden stop and what comes after

The Kitchen Gods had not only become a symbol of Lunar New Year's Eve but also “the only entertainment show in Vietnam's territory that has the guts to make serious national problems hilarious” (Ngọc, 2017, n. p.). In November 2019, after seventeen

years of *The Kitchen Gods*, the rumour of the show coming to an end started to circulate. On social media, Internet users edited nostalgic video clips of the previous shows, which received many comments of appreciation and recollection. The audience grew more impatient to watch the new show, being curious about what would replace *The Kitchen Gods* and having doubts about replacements.

During this period of time, *The Kitchen Gods* traveled to Prague for a performance in front of the Vietnamese audience who live and work in the Czech Republic. Under the name *Táo Quân Vi Hành (Kitchen Gods on a Business Trip)*, this show was recorded and then officially streamed on VTV, not on Lunar New Year's Eve but on the 23rd, which was the day of the Kitchen Gods. *Kitchen Gods on a Business Trip* started with the Northern star deity accidentally consuming some addictive substance hidden in a cake brought home by a friend living overseas. To investigate the case, the Jade Emperor and the two star deities decided to travel to Prague.

This show then received both positive and negative reactions from the audience. Some newspapers praised the show for successfully bringing the problems of the Vietnamese overseas, especially of the facilitators (or go-between) for those who need a job or those who want to find a sham marriage to stay legally. Those who were in favour of the show argued that it was informative, touching and hilarious at the same time. Other newspapers claimed it was rather gloomy and superficial. Moreover, it would be disconcerting to see sacred figures like the Jade Emperor and the star deities behave rather rudely and then lecturing others right after that (Ngọc, 2020).

However, *Kitchen Gods on a Business Trip* attracted the attention of a large audience, triggering many debates among the community. This show was conducted chronologically after a serious case of thirty-nine illegal Vietnamese immigrants found dead inside a truck in Essex, United Kingdom. They were on their way to seek better job opportunities in Europe with a false hope that life would be much better there, as they could earn money to pay for that very trip and send home to their families (Adam, 2019). The topic of struggle in foreign countries in *Kitchen Gods on a Business Trip*, even though seen as exaggerated by some, makes the audience aware of the risk they may face when leaving the country behind.

After that, the new edition of *Year-End Gathering* finally premiered on New Year's Eve. The format was significantly different, but the satirical purpose of the show remained the same. The 2019 trend of connecting Vietnamese literature with popular culture was also the theme of this show. This tendency of production started with Vietnamese pop singer Hoàng Thùy Linh's successful new album of the same theme (Trần, 2019). Along with it was the debut of the 1977 series of vlog from a group of three amateur producers who adapted the plots of several famous realistic Vietnamese short stories and novels and acted them out themselves. The plots stick to the original version but were made more hilarious through both their acting and lines, which became viral on social media (Tữ, 2019).

After these two huge successes, it seems that *The Kitchen Gods* crew has also found their inspiration. On 2020 New Year's Eve, they premiered the new format of the show. The actors then played characters from classics of Vietnamese realistic literature who lived in the same village that was under the pressures of modern society. Satire was still the core of *Year-End Gathering*, with yet many parody songs

and even more performances of all types intertwined. Social issues like vain social media users trying to grab attention with their '3S' slogan (shocking, sensitive, and shabby news), frauds from online shops, or the growth of traditional homestay service in every corner, and so on, were all displayed to the audience. The climax of the show was reached when a young man who left years ago came back with his newlywed, and the couple tried to turn the old village into a new tourist attraction, threatening its heritage and identity. After envisioning the future, the villagers decided to keep it as it was as they did not want to destroy their birthplace.

With both similarities and differences from *The Kitchen Gods*, the 2020 *Year-End Gathering* was still contentious. Acclaim came for the same reasons, but disapproval concerned new reasons: the sensitive jokes and the description of violent actions (Kỳ, 2020). Some say it was just another comedy show that could not be as special as *The Kitchen Gods* (Vi, 2020). Significantly, some neglected the show because it was no different from the 1977 Vlog (An, 2020). It seems that the show was still far from being a success and the director has many issues to address before next year's *Year-End Gathering*.

What future is for theatre in Vietnam as a form of critique?

Theatre can indeed encourage critical thinking and responsibility. In our technological era, as users scroll down the homepages, they encounter news other than private sharings, many of which cannot be validated because they are delivered in the form of posts written by the page owners. In such situation, theatre can be an efficient platform to certify and raise the awareness of the people. *The Kitchen Gods* is one striking evidence of the theatre's role in the system. The news is delivered to the audience through another channel, in which they can watch rather than read. Humour may help them remember the news even more effectively and stimulate curiosity about the topic. With this approach, public opinion can be shaped by making news easier to access through the engagement of social topics in the theatre.

Even though *Year-End Gathering* had its own limitations, it raised people's awareness about what the country has faced. Never before has an entertainment show of popular culture been able to achieve this goal. Nguyễn Xuân Bắc, the actor who played the Southern star deity, says that perhaps the cast remains the same while the audience's awareness gets better every year (Nguyễn, 2019). If this is the case, the show has helped the audience form a habit of watching the show yearly to summarize special events, then encourages them to express their viewpoints on social topics. This opens an opportunity for the theatre to adopt the same strategy and think of satirical humour as a future path.

However, the theatre should also be attentive to the government's censorship when producing a play. In Vietnam, the content of the arts might be altered after the censorship, mostly because of their political sensitivity (Cain, 2013). Some research describes Vietnamese censorship as having a blur perimeter as the country is torn among the Confucian-based values, Communist party, and a Western market economy (Libby, 2011). Another question that emerged was whether the audience's awareness and concern on social problems were formed before or after watching *Year-End Gathering*. There were people who simply considered the show as entertainment and had no critical thought after watching, while some others would

have wanted to read more about what they had watched. This points to the hypothesis that the impact of *Year-End Gathering* in specific and the theatre in general varies across groups of audience. Until now there has not been any studies on the topic, so it is unclear to what extent the theatre may engage the audience into social issues.

The last challenge that the theatre must overcome is the possible differences in the enthusiasm of the television audience and the theatre audience. *Year-End Gathering* were streamed on television, which means it was free to watch and the audience could multi-task when they watched the show. The theatre, however, requires the audience to spend money on tickets and come to the theatre to watch the shows. They are also unable to do anything else while watching the show. Nonetheless, if the audience can leave behind these disadvantages, they are able to enjoy the theatre more because it brings a whole different atmosphere from the television show.

This paper has investigated *Year-End Gathering*, especially when it was *The Kitchen Gods*. As the show features more Gods than the ones mentioned above, it may take more than one study to assess how each show is related to the problems of the year and how the audience's awareness has changed after watching the show. Theatre in Vietnam should continue engaging laughter and satire into their future performances, seizing the audience's attention as successfully as *The Kitchen Gods*. At the same time, it should find ways to overcome challenges which come from the audience and the authority to thrive more powerfully. With a better awareness of the social and environmental issues from the theatre, Vietnam will be one step closer to sustainability.

References

- Adam, K. (2019, November 9). Police identify the 39 Vietnamese people found dead in a container truck in Essex. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com>.
- An, A. (2018, January 25). Bị công khai chỉ trích ‘kỳ thị giới tính’, VTV vẫn không sửa *Táo Quân* (Having been publicly criticized for sexual discrimination, VTV has not changed the script of *The Kitchen Gods*). *Thanh Niên*. Retrieved from <http://www.thanhnien.vn>.
- An, A. (2020, January 25). *Gặp nhau cuối năm* bị chê nhạt và nhàm (*Year-End Gathering* considered boring and bland). *Thanh Niên*. Retrieved from <http://www.thanhnien.vn>.
- Cain, G. (2013). Kill One to Warn One Hundred: The Politics of Press Censorship in Vietnam. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 19(1), 85–107.
- Crump, W. D. (2016). *Encyclopedia of New Year's Holiday Worldwide*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company.
- Đình, H. H. (2015). Thần Bếp trong Văn Hóa Việt Nam (The Kitchen Gods in Vietnamese Culture). *Tạp Chí Nghiên Cứu Tôn Giáo (Journal of Religious Studies)*, 2(140), pp. 79-92. Retrieved from <http://www.vjol.info/>.
- Hà, T. (2019, November 11). Hiện tượng triệu view từ sự đơn giản đến mức nghiệp dư (The million-view phenomenon from the unprofessional simplicity). *Tuổi Trẻ Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.tuoitre.vn/>.
- Kỳ, S. (2020, January 25). *Gặp nhau cuối năm* bị chê nhạt, bị phản ứng vì đâu? (Why was *Year-End Gathering* deemed boring and received criticism?). *Tiền Phong*. Retrieved from <http://www.tienphong.vn>
- Libby, S. (2011). The art of censorship in Vietnam. *Journal of International Affairs*, 65(1), 209-218.
- Linh, C. (2019, January 10). *Táo Quân* và những ca khúc chế đi vào huyền thoại (*The Kitchen Gods* and legendary parody songs). *Lao Động*. Retrieved from <http://www.laodong.vn>.
- Mộc, L. (2018, December 28). Nhân vật Bắc Đẩu thay đổi như thế nào sau 15 năm phát sóng *Táo Quân*? (How has Bắc Đẩu changed after 15 years of *The Kitchen Gods*?). *VOV*. Retrieved from <http://www.vov.vn>.
- Ngọc, D. (2017, December 18). 15 năm... và ‘sự tích Táo Quân’ mỗi giao thừa (15 years... and ‘the legend of the Kitchen Gods’ on lunar New Year’s Eve). *Tuổi Trẻ Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.tuoitre.vn>.

- Ngọc, D. (2020, January 18). *Táo Quân vi hành 2020: Dài dòng và kém duyên (Kitchen Gods on a Business Trip: Lengthy and not Hillarious)*. *Tuổi Trẻ Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.tuoitre.vn>.
- Nguyễn, K. (2019, November 22). Why are there ‘no more *Kitchen Gods*’? (Vì sao ‘không còn *Táo Quân*’?). *Tiền Phong*. Retrieved from <http://www.tienphong.vn>.
- Tô, H. (2002). *Truyện Tây Bắc (North West Stories)*. Hanoi: Tre Publishing House. (Original work published in 1952)
- Trần, A. Q. (2018). *Gods, Heroes, and Ancestors: An Interreligious Encounter in Eighteenth-Century Vietnam*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Trần, T. (2019, June 20). Hoàng Thùy Linh mang cả “Vũ trụ văn học” vào MV *Để Mị nói cho mà nghe* (Hoang Thuy Linh brings the whole “Universe of literature” into MV *Let Me Tell You This*). *VTV News*. Retrieved from <http://www.vtv.vn>.
- Trung, N. (2015, January 31). 5 bài ca *Táo Quân* phản ánh thực trạng xã hội hài hước nhất (5 most hilarious *Tao Quan* songs that illustrate social problems). *Zing*. Retrieved from <http://www.zing.vn>.
- Từ, H. (2019, November 7). 1977 Vlog: Hiện tượng Youtube Việt Nam trong năm 2019 (1977 Vlog: The phenomenal Vietnamese Youtuber of 2019). *Nhà Báo & Công Luận*. Retrieved from <http://www.congluan.vn>.
- Vi, A. (2020, January 25). *Year-End Gathering 2020* received diverse reactions as the audience still want to watch *The Kitchen God* (*Gặp nhau cuối năm 2020* lên sóng nhận khen chê lẫn lộn, khán giả vẫn nhớ *Táo Quân*). *Báo Mới*. Retrieved from <http://www.baomoi.com>.