

Film Media and Nationalism in Thailand:
Comparative studies of film media propaganda in Thailand
and its influence on Thai nationalism, political ideology, and
class structure since the enactment of the
Thai Constitution of 1997

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Abstract

During periods of official nationalism in Thailand, the Thai media played a significant role in promoting government policy. The Thai media during those periods was a government orientated enterprise. However, the Thai parliament approved a new constitution in 1997 which aims to minimise state control over the media. It is for this reason that this thesis chose to study current events and the current situation. Once the media was opened up, the patterns of ownership started to change. The media, post 1997, began to change from a government orientated enterprise towards a market-orientated private enterprise. This thesis investigates the interaction between media and nationalism in Thailand. It looks at the relationship between media owners and political leaders in general. This thesis also looks at the signs, symbols, costumes, and messages that generate nationalistic feelings among audiences. This research was carried out by analysing the film contents. This analysis of content is used to demonstrate the hypothesis, which states that the new patterns of ownership of the media have led to new techniques for shaping nationalism. In order to do so, this thesis employs a media and nationalism framework which is created by using numerous theories on media and nationalism.

The results have indicated that, although the primary motive of film-making may now be turning a profit, films which aim to promote the nationalism or political agendas still exist. It appears in several case studies that the private media owners and the political leaders share common interests. The filmmakers do not hesitate to use the symbols, cultures, and traditions, which are invented by the leaders. Symbols that represent power and legitimacy of the political leaders are promoted by an attempt of the filmmaker to persuade audiences that those practices and tradition, and by extension, the leaders are righteous. Individual films target different classes in Thai society, which vary by their beliefs, culture, and practices. The filmmakers are either making the film according to the culture of those classes to strengthen the nationalistic awareness from the audiences, or they are using their medium to persuade the audiences to accept their class values. Either way, it can be demonstrated that since the end of the period of official nationalism, nationalism is still promoted through film. This media support of political agendas can be seen as the new style to promote nationalism.

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A Note on transliteration, abbreviation, and usage

Throughout, this thesis refers to Thai scholars, politicians, and people by their first name instead of their family name. This is because of the cultural differences between Thai and European society. Thai people refer to the first name and the title (if any) rather than the surname.

In addition, this thesis uses titles in Thai instead of translating them into English. For example, Momchao (M.C.) in English translation would be roughly equivalent to Prince or Princess; Momratchawongse (M.R.) would be Sir or Lady. However, this thesis will identify people such as Momchao Chatri Chaleom Yukhol as M.C. Chatri instead of Prince Yukhol. The reason for this is that there are no exact translations or comparisons between Thai and European aristocratic titles. Abbreviation will be to refer to titles or organizations that do have official abbreviations. For example, Territorial Defense Division will be referred to as TDD.

The spelling is also another important aspect. This thesis will spell Thai names in English based on their pronunciation. However, there are some exceptions for names that are already well known by a different spelling. For example, Shinawatra (ชินวัตร) is the official spelling, while the spelling based on the Thai pronunciation would be Chinnawat instead. Where the name is already well-known, the official spelling is used. Otherwise the word is spelled as it is pronounced.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the 21st century, it is difficult for people to avoid exposure to media. Urban people in particular are constantly receiving information from various media such as radio, newspapers, internet in their workplaces, televisions at home, posters and billboards in the railway stations and bus stops. Among the advertisements that people encounter, some of them can also create political or nationalistic awareness. Generally, media contain considerable influences and stereotypes to capture the attention of their audiences. The frequency of the stereotypes makes audiences recognize and remember the advertised products. Especially in the urban areas, where media influence the daily life of dwellers, the stereotypes make a difference in sales and popularity of one product over another. In Thailand, media companies have become the popular choice for many people to launch their public images. Interestingly, during the election period, Thai political parties are hiring media advertisers to develop their images and to promote their personal cults, policies, and party images. Above the level of the party rally, Thai political leaders have been using media to promote nationalism and their policies since the early 20th Century.

Newspapers have been a primary source used to promote nationalism since the reign of King Vajiravudh. Newspapers can be one of the most influential tools as their sales generally increase annually. However, the success of the newspaper and most of the print medium is also based on the literacy rates in each country. The basic prerequisite

for the print medium to be popular is the ability to read and write among the citizens of each state.

Therefore, radio has been an alternative to promote political ideology. Unlike newspapers, radio does not require the audience to be able to read, instead it requires people to listen, which makes it easier to access large groups of people. Popular nationalistic radio programs in Thailand could be found during Prime Minister Phibun's (Pre-World War II) government. However, there are two weaknesses of the radio in promoting nationalism. The primary weakness is the problem over the radio waves, which limited the audiences to the certain areas. The messages from the standard AM and FM systems did not project beyond a few provinces in Thailand. Another weakness is that the audiences might be able to listen to the messages, but they are unable to see the picture.

Complementing the radio programs are flyers, posters, and billboard that make audiences aware of political ideology. These media are among the most common until the present day. Posters, billboards, and flyers can be found in Thailand during the conscription period. Unlike radio, the messages from those media can be seen but are unable to produce sound to persuade the audiences.

Combining sight and sound together will lead to the media such as stage performances, film, and drama. These media are complete forms, as they provide both sight and sound for the audiences. In Thailand, stage performances were popular during

the Phibun period, where the government sponsored likays [traditional Thai stage performance]. However, stage performance might be the least powerful among the three tactics, as the actors and actresses have to perform live. Therefore, the actors and actresses could not perform frequently. Also the audiences are limited to a small group of people, who came to view the show. Plays paved the ways to one of the most effective media. Recorded drama with television stations linking with the modern satellite system, television can be distributed much wider than radio or stage performances. During the mid 1980s, Thai television extended nationwide, which even included some of the neighboring countries such as Laos and Cambodia. During the late 1990s, television once again moved beyond the national boundary and was able to distributed programs through internet and satellite systems. This means the audiences with the satellite, cable or internet access could watch Thai programs from abroad. However there is one weakness that prevents the success of the TV drama. It is the budget, as the programs largely rely on advertising to support their production. Until now, the budgets of drama productions have been relatively low. Film and movies might be the most complete form of the drama, where big budget have to be invested into the filmmaking procedures. In Thailand, there are numerous film and drama that based on the nationalistic or political principles, which will be explained in detail in a later stage of this chapter.

It is necessary for this thesis to define the importance of the terms media and nationalism. Politicians have used nationalism to create unity among their citizens. Nationalism is used widely by political leaders to create patriotism and unity among their citizens. Nationalism itself provides the foundation for national identity, which makes the

people in the territory aware of their belonging to the nation-state, while the people on the other side of the border are foreigners. Apart from the in-group and out-group perspective, nationalism makes people see the need to support the policies of their government for the benefit of the country.

Thailand is an interesting case study for media and nationalism because the government adopted the ideology of state sponsored nationalism known as official nationalism.¹ In the early period of Thai official nationalism (1910s to 1926), King Vajiravudh based the ideology of his reign upon ethnic nationalism.² The major purpose of nationalism under Vajiravudh was to reform Thai society. The official nationalism he employed can be identified as revolution from above, as the direction of Thai official nationalism was based on the leader's ideology and aimed at supporting his policies.

Since the end of the Second World War, the term "Thai" can be explained as a tool to include citizens within Thai territory, regardless of their ethnic or class background. The main qualification for belonging to the Thai ethnic group is an ability to communicate in Thai, to be born within the Thai boundary, or have Thai parents.

During the period of official nationalism in Thailand, the Thai media played a significant role in promoting the government's policy. During those periods, the Thai media can be defined as a government orientated enterprise.³ In the same way as nationalism, media is also a problematic term. Many people view media as a mirror to reflect society, but in fact media not only reflects society, it also guides society.⁴ It is

thus worth studying media and nationalism, and this thesis will explore the connection between these two phenomena. This thesis will explore the use of the media in promoting nationalism, and examine the success of Thai nationalism. It is important to study the role of the media in Thailand because the media can have a strong influence in promoting nationalism and political ideology.

In 1997, the Thai parliament approved a new constitution, which aims to minimize state control over the media (article 39).⁵ This is a good reason for us to study current events and the current situation. Once the media was opened up, the patterns of ownership started to change. The media, post 1997, changed from a government orientated enterprise towards a market-orientated private enterprise. While there were changes in the Thai Constitution of 1997, there was also the Asian Economic Crisis that strengthened the people's beliefs in nationalism as well. The events of 1997 led to changes in both media and nationalism in Thailand. Politically, nationalism increased as many Thais were upset by foreign funds taking over domestic firms, and by the entering of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and their strict regulation of the Thai government and Thai companies. The rise in unemployment was considered by most Thais to have been caused by the Asian Economic Crisis, and they believed that the crisis was caused by foreign investors. At the same time, compared to the official nationalism period, the government was no longer in a position to use the media freely, as the Thai Constitution of 1997 had limited government intervention in the media.

This thesis will look at the film media in particular to focus and thus maximize the investigation of the case studies. The reason for choosing film media is based on the work of Marshall McLuhan (1994), who called film media a 'collective art form', where audiences can receive sight and sound from one media.⁶ The 'collective art form' creates an illusion for the audiences, which can persuade those who share the same beliefs as the filmmaker to accept certain values and certain practices.

The film media in Thailand was affected by the 1997 events as well. Although Thai people might have become patriotic during the Asian Economic Crisis, the entry of greater foreign investment and the opening up of the media sector complemented the change in consumer satisfaction. The foreign films had enter Thailand since the Cold War period. However prior to the Asian Economic Crisis, the substandard Thai film still made their sales in the market. This is because of the audiences are able to afford both Thai and foreign films. Also the choice of foreign films are limited by the government regulations and tariffs over the importing of the foreign luxury goods. However the Asian Economic Crisis made the people have to careful on their spending. Therefore, the consumer have to choose the best product that is available in the market. Also the entry of IMF regulation and the new constitution brought down the regulation and tariffs on the importing films. The change in consumer satisfaction meant that substandard nationalistic propaganda, or low quality film production would no longer be supported by audiences.⁷ This led to the emergence of new patterns of media ownership, and greater investment. New technology leads to a better quality of production, which is better at persuading the audiences, than the old substandard propaganda. Among those media owners, some of them see the rise

of Thai nationalism as an opportunity to create nationalistic films using their new technology.

This leads to the hypothesis of this thesis, which points out that the new patterns of ownership of the media have led to new techniques for shaping nationalism.

The increase of nationalism in Thailand has also affected Thai politics. It contributed to the founding of Thai Rak Thai Party (TRT), which is the political party that based their policies on nationalistic principles, along with the economic and rural development, as well as the social welfare system. Interestingly, the founding members of the TRT were Thai business tycoons from numerous fields, including media firms. It appears that the TRT was a consortium of Thai business leaders, which used the party as a means to govern the country. Among those business leaders, there are numerous media tycoons that sit on the executive committee in the TRT.⁸ Among those media tycoons, some of them have also become ministers in the cabinet.⁹ This thesis will look at patterns of media ownership. The results of the research will explain the relationship between media ownership and the political leaders in a media and nationalism framework. Then this thesis will use the framework as the foundation to examine the contents within the films that are produced by the film companies.

This thesis will selecte four different films that refer to different social classes in Thailand. The case studies will analyze the media ownership, their relationship with the political leaders, the usage of symbols, and the effects on the audiences.

Turning to media theory, O'Shaughnessy's book of Media and Society (1999), Biagi (2001), and McLuhan (1994) have written important and relevant works. The important task of the media is to adjust the message to the audiences' culture.¹⁰ It can be suggested that visual media such as stage performances, films, and drama are a perfect tool to create nationalism among the people. It is because people learned certain values and practices from those visual media. Biagi (2001) explains that "there was a tentative indication that television viewing caused aggressive behavior, therefore the US Surgeon General called for immediate action against violence on television".¹¹ However, the effects are varied, as Biagi explains later. The violence on television affected only some children in some environments.¹² This means that the effects from the media are based on the living environment of the audience.

Vella (1978) points out that Vajiravudh reign(1910-1925) used the media to make direct emotional appeals, including speeches, plays, essays, letters to the press, poems, song, films, pageants, fetes, and fairs. It appears that the king used these media to express his nationalist ideology.¹³ During the Phibun periods (1938-1944; 1948-1957), the used of media was expanded by using radio, stage performance, likays, flyers, posters, and nationalistic songs. It is fair to conclude that the media played a significant role in promoting the official nationalism. Also, this thesis will look at the different types of nationalism, which has occurred in Thailand. It is important to understand that there is more than one style of nationalism, which this thesis will discuss in later stages. It is important to examine which different types of nationalism were chosen by both state and media entrepreneurs.

Methodology and Data Collection:

Research and data collection

The research and data collection will be based on five types of information. The main resources are the published works of scholars. These are mostly theories and analysis of both nationalism and media. The works will be both in Thai and English. Primary resources in Thai will include the works of Thai scholars who wrote about Thai nationalism, history, and media. Other published resources are published sources such as important newspaper articles since 1997, magazines on both media and politics, and editorial sections from a wide range of magazines. Important works covered will be musical plays, nationalistic songs, nationalistic films, stage performances and drama. These sources represent much of the main research of this thesis.

Unpublished resources refer to a number of theses in both Thai and English about media or nationalism. Media theses will be explored through the dissertations from post-graduate students, who researched within the media and nationalism fields. Internet resources are used as the fourth type of information. This thesis uses post 1997 sources from the Internet. The sources from the Internet are similar to secondary resources.

Visual and audio resources are the fifth type of information. This thesis has selected films, as films are a powerful media source that can reach the audience effectively. This thesis has analyzed four films from the year 2001, as some important events in Thai political history occurred in 2001. The year 2001 was the year that the Thai people elected a new government under the new constitution (1997). There was also

a border conflict between Thailand and Burma, which came after an incident in which Burmese and Karen refugees attacked Ratchburi hospital and prison. This was also the post-economic crisis period with poor people still suffering from the collapse of the Thai economy. After 2001 the new government in Thailand used a number of media propaganda tools to try to promote a personality cult of their leader Thaksin Shinawatra. This led to a new emphasis in Thai society. Many nationalistic and political films appeared during the year 2001, and each film was trying to express a political ideology. This thesis selected four popular films from the year 2001 to examine their content and political issues. These are "Suriyothai", "Bangrachan", "Yuwachon", and "Moon hunter". These films have both similarities and differences, and are produced to promote a nationalist political ideology and represent three different social classes in Thai society. Suriyothai was largely promoted the Sakdina (upper class) political ideology, Bangrachan was a nationalistic film based on the lower class, and Moon Hunter was a political film based on the student uprising in 1973 (considered largely as a leftwing middle class uprising). Yuwachon is about the rightwing student paramilitary in the Second World War. This thesis will use visual media to examine the differences in the social class political ideologies and the differences in the nationalistic approaches within Thai society.

Methods of analysis

The best method of analysis in media and nationalism is to examine films that contain nationalistic principles. The films project very powerful messages towards their audiences. This thesis will then analyze the content, and will focus on two areas. The first

area is the general theme of the film. The four films that this research has selected from the year 2001 have differences in political ideology. The general theme will analyze the films by applying the media and nationalism framework developed here. The general analysis will cover the class background and the class origin of the filmmaker. Then the thesis will look at the content of the film that relates to the class beliefs and to the ideas of the nation. It will examine the messages that the film is trying to promote. The general theme analysis will examine the important characters in the films that represent the various social classes. After the general theme has been examined, the thesis will look at the approach towards every social class. It is important to study the origin of the social classes in Thai society. For example, *Bangrachan* was about the Phrai [lower class] and relates to their class existence dating to long before the year 1700. The films regarding the existence of the middle class relate to the recent period, while, *Yuwachon* shows the existence of the rightwing middle class during the pre-Second World War period (1932 onwards).

The second type of analysis of content examines the nationalistic symbols. The analysis will look at symbols, monuments, flags, Buddhist figures, leadership, emblems, portraits, and speech. This thesis will use the work of Manit Nuanlaor (1997) to explain symbols and their power in Thai politics. This thesis will look at the content of those films to analyse the symbolic power in them. One example is the repeated theme from *Yuwachon*, which shows the Thai national flag very frequently. This thesis will examine the underlying meaning of the uses of symbols.

The Case Studies

Since the 1997 Constitution and the Asian Economic Crisis, there have been changes in the patterns of media ownership. The film owners are investing in film technology, which leads to a better quality of film production in Thailand. The first high-quality film was Koogam [Sunset in Chaophraya], which is a romantic-drama film based on the novel of Tommayantee (1969). The film was produced by the newly formed Grammy Films, which is subsidiary company of Grammy Entertainment. Koogam is also a nationalistic film, which is based on the Second World War, when Thailand was invaded by the Japanese army. "Sunset in Chaophraya" was the pioneer of high-quality film production. Since then, filmmakers have been making numerous films based on the market interest.

Prior to the year 2000, there was a series of action and drama films that used foreigners such as Burmese, Cambodians, Chinese, Americans, or Europeans as the enemy of the people. However those films are neither overtly nationalistic nor politicized. The foreign enemy was also neither representative of their nationality nor their government policies. The choice of foreigners was based on the Thai vision that sees the triads (Chinese Gangsters) or mafia (both Asians and Europeans) as a threat to ordinary people. Some films portray Thai gangsters as the enemy of the people as well. There was a series of films for teenagers that support the popular culture from America and Japan as well.

The filming industry underwent a major change in the year 2000, when BEC Film, which is one of the new companies that emerged after 1997 (subsidiary of BEC Limited, the owner of Thai TV3) introduced the old fashioned nationalistic film “Bangrachan”, which it remade using the new technology. Unlike “Sunset in Chaophraya”, “Bangrachan” was not based on romantic-drama style of film, where nationalism was subtly promoted. Bangrachan took the direct line of official nationalism, where the messages towards nationalism and anti-foreigners (especially Burmese) were their main theme. Their main selling points were nationalism, violence, and being anti-Burmese. However, the film was successful in sales and even generated nationalism, which led to numerous companies following in their footsteps.

The pioneer in high-quality film, Grammy Film, introduced their own nationalistic film in the same year. “Yuwachon” was introduced to attract teenage audiences, and made an attempt to promote nationalism as well. BEC followed their success with Bangrachan by introducing the political film “Moonhunter” in the following year. Both films will be examined in this thesis as the movies were presented to the Thai audiences within a narrow time period.

Then, the big budget film “Suriyothai” was introduced. Similar to Yuwachon, Bangrachan, and Moonhunter, Suriyothai has its own agenda and expected to promote political and nationalistic beliefs in the audiences as well. All of the four films in the year 2000 to 2001 were based on a higher fundings in comparison with the films prior to the 1997 events. Most of them were under newly formed companies as well (almost all of

them are subsidiaries of well established companies, which have some connections to the government).

Because of their successes, the film industry in Thailand has identified their main target audiences. The first group is the teenagers, and they seek to produce films that would be accepted by this group. Generally, those films are either comedy, actions, or romance. The second group is the nationalistic audiences, which consist of all ages group but share certain beliefs. Their beliefs are the sense of national identity and the sense of Thai nationalism. However, these groups are attracted to high quality nationalistic films, requiring high budget. They are unlikely to support the old fashioned official nationalism film or a substandard production. This was the key moment that led to the revival of the nationalistic film in Thailand.

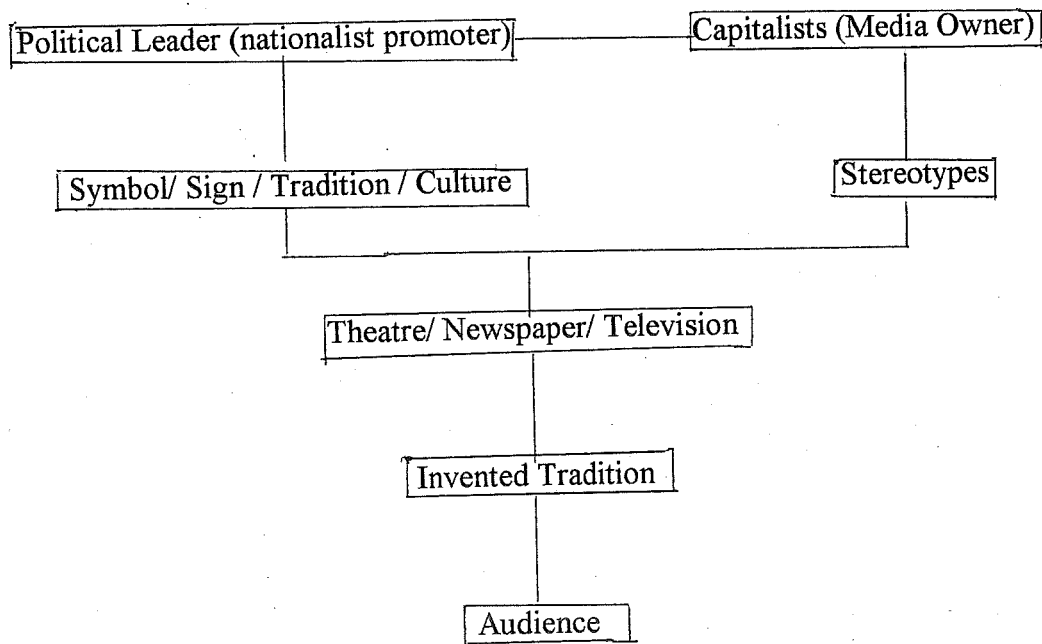
This thesis will examine the four films in 2000 to 2001, as they were the pioneers of the nationalistic film in the later stages. Because of the success of these films, numerous film companies (including those companies that produced these four films) decided to introduce nationalistic or political films to the Thai market. This thesis is among the first to explore the nationalistic films since the 1997 events. Therefore, the media and nationalism framework is a useful formula for present and perhaps future analysis of films that have hidden political or nationalistic messages in Thailand. Also, this thesis will examine the types of nationalism, which deployed on each film. The differences types of nationalism, which could convey different opinions from the audiences and could lead to different outcomes and concepts of Thai Nationalism.

Endnotes

- (1) Vella, W.F., Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh and the development of Thai nationalism, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii), 1978, p.126.
- (2) Ibid., p. 187.
- (3) S. Sitthirak., Kamnerd thorathat Thai [Origin of Thai Television], (Pathumthani: Thammasart University), 2000,p. 103.
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- (10) O'Shaughnessy, M., p. 64.
- (11) Biagi, S., Media/Impact, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson learning), 2001, p. 271.
- (12) Ibid.
- (13) Vella, W.F., p. 248.

Media and Nationalism Framework

Figure 1 (Media and Nationalism)



Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses and defines the term “nationalism”. There are many theories of nationalism and those covered in this thesis are only a selection. This thesis will connect these terms together to create a framework which is applicable to the origin of Thai nationalism.

The second section will explain the term “media”. This thesis will use five selected media theories from Michael O’Shaughnessy (1999), Marshall McLuhan (1994), Paul Martin Lester (2000), Claus Muller (1973) and Shirley Biagi (2001) to define the meaning of media and its power within society, and then relate those theories to nationalism and the Thai media.

At that point, the thesis will combine the theories of media and nationalism to create a framework, which will be applied to the case studies of this thesis. First, this framework will explain the media and its effect on society. Secondly, this framework will be used to illustrate the hypothesis of this thesis and will create an understanding of the Thai media, its owners, and its techniques for shaping Thai nationalism and political ideology since 1997.

Nationalism Theory

Imagined Communities

This thesis will use some of the key themes from Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities. (1983) His discussion of languages, print media, and capitalism are all relevant; together they combine in his formulation of the term "print-capitalism".

Official nationalism is another part of Anderson's theory that will be employed to Thai nationalism.

Print-Capitalism

Prior to the electronic media such as television, radio, or the internet, there was only one major medium, which could be considered as an architect of nationalism, and that was the print-medium. For Anderson, 'Print capitalism' was the driving force of nationalism. It is because a print-medium such as a newspaper makes people in one territory aware of the other members of their communities.

Anderson explains that the cultural origins of nationalism can be found in 'religious communities', and 'dynastic realms'.¹ Two main elements of religion are 'written script' and 'sacred language'.² Anderson recognizes that Chinese, Latin, Pali, and Arabic scripts have much in common. They represent classical communities linked by religion, sacred language, and written script. He concludes that prior to the year 1500AD sacred languages made communities imaginable.³ Religious writings, such as the Quran, generally were forbidden to be translated.⁴ Anderson points out that it was not only Muslims who did not intend to translate the Quran to other languages, but

Church Latin (Christianity) and the Chinese examination system based on Confucian classics were not translated to other languages either.

Anderson points out that from about 1500AD the idea of capitalism started to challenge the idea of religious communities and sacred languages, bringing changes to these sacred languages. As this time, publishing companies also emerged under the control of wealthy capitalists. Anderson points out in his chapter 'The Origins of National Consciousness'.

One of the earliest forms of capitalist enterprise, book-publishing felt all of capitalism's restless search for markets. The early printers established branches all over Europe: 'in this way a veritable "international" of publishing houses, which ignored national frontiers, was created. And since the years 1500-1550 were a period of exceptional European prosperity, publishing shared in the general boom. "More than at any other time" it was 'a great industry under the control of wealthy capitalists. Naturally, 'booksellers were primarily concerned to make a profit and to sell their products, and consequently they sought out first and foremost those works which were of interest to the largest possible number of their contemporaries.⁵

Anderson explains clearly that the capitalists were only concerned about their profit. During 1500 to 1550, the print industry can be considered as an industry that generated considerable wealth for the capitalists. The capitalists who owned publishing companies were primarily concerned with profit. Therefore, they were likely to publish anything that would generate an income for them.

Anderson explains that the 'religious community' communicated through their sacred language and scripts. ⁶ Therefore, the people from the same religion can communicate through the print or written medium. In the same way that English in the present day can be used to communicate from Christchurch to London, Latin carved the way for the elites to communicate from Nottingham to Constantinople. ⁷ Therefore, print medium became a significant tool to promote or demote any scripts and languages. In the early stages, publication of any book was very expensive, as the publishing companies were reluctant to publish Latin books in large quantities. This limited the people who could afford to purchase any book to the elites and wealthy proprietors. ⁸ Capitalists needed to sell more products, which could generate greater incomes for their companies. Since Latin was the 'sacred language', which related to Christianity, perhaps the very first best selling book would have been the "Holy Bible", of which the majority of Christians from the 16th Century onwards would have purchased at least one copy. After the Bible, the capitalists needed to find alternative works that could generate income. This led to the reforms of the 'administrative languages' in the 16th Century. ⁹

Anderson points out that an 'administrative language' prior to 'print-capitalism' was often different from the language of the majority of the population. In other words, through disregarding the majority of the state population, often the 'administrative language' prior to print capitalism was a language that was only understandable among the ruling elites and well-educated people. Anderson gives the example of "languages used by the eighteen century Romanov court as being French and German, whilst Latin survived in the Habsburg's court well into the nineteenth century". ¹⁰

It is very clear, as Anderson points out, that the nature of capitalists is to maximize their profit and the sales of their products. The sacred languages faded once capitalists decided to choose the administrative language over them. Anderson points out that “Latin was the language of a pan-European high intelligentsia until the invention of ‘print-capitalism’.”¹¹ The decline of the sacred languages was visible once wealthy capitalists owned publishing firms. It would have been hard for capitalists to make any profit from selling Latin books in Austria, French books in Russia, Pali/Sanskrit books in Siam, or Arabic books in Bengal, but much easier to sell their books if they were published in the local language.

As well as undermining the sacred language, Anderson believes that “the power of ‘print-capitalism’ brought about the end of human linguistic diversity”.¹² Where print is a ‘sign for sound’, the capitalists were deciding the particular sound that would be suitable for the sign. In this case the chosen language would become an official language, while other local oral vernaculars had to bow to this chosen one. The rule for one vernacular to become the national language was very simple: it was based on the size of the population, as a large population led to a greater opportunity for the capitalists to sell their books. It was also impossible for the capitalists to print all versions of vernaculars because the printing expenses would be too high and those books would not sell beyond those vernacular regions. Even though the vernaculars still exist, these languages are considered as inferior to the official language.

Anderson also points out the three-fold power of print-capitalism on the creation of national consciousness.

These print-languages laid the bases for national consciousness in three distinct ways. First and foremost, they created unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars. Speakers of the huge variety of Frenches, Englishes, or Spanishes, who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation, become capable of comprehending one another via print and paper.¹³

Anderson used this process to explain the power of print media to lead people to imagine themselves belonging to a larger community. He sees print-capitalism as a medium to bring the people from different vernaculars to imagine themselves as the citizens of English, French, or Spanish nations.

Secondly, print-capitalism gave a new fixity to language, which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of nation. As Febvre and Martin remind us, the printed book kept a permanent form, capable of virtually infinite reproduction, temporally and spatially. It was no longer subject to the individualizing and unconsciously modernizing habits of monastic scribes.¹⁴

It is clear that “the ‘print-language’ could be considered as a more solid form of antiquity than the vernaculars”.¹⁵ Anderson points out the capitalists’ perspective on reproduction led to ‘the fixing of the print-language’.¹⁶ There are a number of examples that support this, such as Shakespeare’s works being reprinted from the sixteen hundreds though to the present day, and that Shakespeare was virtually unknown across the

Channel until English become the pre-eminent world imperial language two hundred years after his death.¹⁷

Third, print-capitalism created languages-of-power of a kind different from the older administrative vernaculars. Certain dialects inevitably were 'closer' to each print-language and dominated their final forms. High German, the King's English, and, later, Central Thai were correspondingly elevated to a new politico-cultural eminence.¹⁸

Anderson concludes that the fixity of language and the development of languages of power contribute to the creation of national consciousness, but it is at the expense of the minor vernaculars. Even if they are able to survive, they are always considered as inferior to the language of power. Those who speak the high language fluently may consider the vernaculars as too informal. Examples include the contrast between King's English compared to Cockney or Geordie English, Kanto Japanese compared with Kansai Japanese, Mandarin Chinese in contrast to Cantonese Chinese, and Central Thai compared with Isan Thai.

The decline of local vernaculars is an outcome of print-capitalism, and for Anderson the demise of these minor vernaculars represents the fatality in human linguistics.¹⁹ This demise is due to the inability of those that speak minor vernaculars to communicate with people from different regions. Consequently, people felt it unnecessary to learn their vernaculars and started to learn the central language instead or at least learnt both local vernaculars and the central languages. Occasionally states sponsored (or forced) their citizens to learn the central language. Although vernaculars

such as Cantonese, Hainanese and Fujianese still exist until the present day, those people who speak these vernaculars also learn Mandarin. Similarly, the Isan Thai practise Central Thai along with their local vernaculars so they are able to communicate with other Thai people from different regions.

However, print-capitalism provided a more basic ideology to those Thai and Chinese. Although Hunanese, Cantonese, and Isan Thai are unable to communicate in their respective central dialects, the centralized script gave those people the ability to communicate via alphabets, ideograms, and pictograms. 'Sign-media' such as alphabets, ideograms, and pictograms play a significant role in connecting people from different vernaculars to the central administrative language. Then the people who were represented by the 'sign-media' 'imagine' themselves as belonging to the extended community such as the nation-state. The Thai government is well aware of the power of print-capitalism because the Thai nation was largely created through 'print-capitalism'. The famous Thai historian Wibun Wicitwathakan points out that the first publishing company in Thailand was "Bangkok Recorder" which was founded in 1840 A.D. The company was owned by Dr. Daniel Bradley who was an American missionary to Thailand.²⁰ Interestingly, the first publication of the Bangkok Recorder in Siam was the "Prohibition of Opium Consumption in Siam Act" under King Rama III. Considered from the case of Dr. Bradley, who was the first print-capitalist in Thailand, the missionaries were the Asian pioneers of print-capitalism. Wibun points out that the Bangkok Recorder assisted the Thai government to promote government policy such as the "Prohibitions of Opium Consumption Act" or to incite anti-French sentiment. One of

the most famous works of Dr. Bradley and the Bangkok Recorder was the publication against the French consul in Bangkok, who physically hurt Lord Racho-thai (head of the Thai Supreme court). Dr. Bradley decided to publish the rudeness of the French consul towards the Thai aristocrat in his newspaper. The article about the inconsiderateness of the French consul led to the French prosecuting Dr. Bradley for defamation. At that time, the foreigners in Thailand benefited from an extra-territorial agreement, so the American judge decided that Dr. Bradley had to pay compensation to the French consul of US\$ 400. The court order led to the first nationalist movement in Thailand, as the Thai people believed that the court order was unfair to Dr. Bradley. Therefore, the Thai people created a fund raising scheme for Dr. Bradley, which acquired over US\$ 2400.00 (King Mongkut alone donated \$2000 to the charity).²¹ The result of the Thai nationalist fund raising scheme in the 1840s meant Dr. Bradley did not have to pay US\$400 out of his own pocket, and he also earned an extra \$2000 for assisting Thai nationalism. Even though Dr. Bradley was not a Thai citizen, his case can be considered as the first nationalistic case to emerge from the print-media. The charity not only benefited Dr. Bradley's income, but also created the awareness of the Thai people towards their own nation-state and the problem of the extra-territoriality treaty. It seems clear that print-capitalism did have a large effect on the citizens who resided in that particular area.

Official Nationalism

Official nationalism originated from Seton-Watson, whose theory Anderson used as a foundation for his chapter on 'Official Nationalism and Imperialism'.²² However, Anderson also develops Seton-Watson's term and makes it useful for this case study.

Anderson uses print-capitalism as a foundation for 'official nationalism', explaining that the outcome of print-capitalism is that "the spoken languages are the personal property of the specific group- their daily speakers and readers- and moreover that these groups, imagined as communities, were entitled to their autonomous place in a fraternity of equals".²³

The capitalists sold texts and novels in the vernacular script, therefore people in different regions within the same territory were able to communicate via the medium of print, regardless of their differences in accent or vernaculars.²⁴ 'Print-capitalism' undermined both multicultural empires and their official language, which led to the reinvention of the official language in a number of countries. Anderson saw this as the first step of official nationalism, as the ruling class realized the change which print-capitalism made to their nation. Interestingly, numerous countries do support the print-capitalist in order to create nationalism and national identity. In the 1840s, similar to most Asian countries, Thailand was experiencing a potential threat from European imperialism. Therefore, the need for national identity and clear boundaries was a priority issue for the Thai government to solve. Therefore, the print-capitalists and the government created a relationship, which complemented each other. The print-capitalists published the articles, books, or newspapers that assisted governmental policy. On the other hand, the governments needed to work on two important issues to complement the print-capitalist. The first task was to educate their citizens. The task of the print-capitalist was to publish textbooks that are required by the government. Education was one of the most important issues. People can learn about the governmental policy, once

they are educated. The second task for the government was to promote certain issues, which once again benefit the print-capitalists who were happy to publish the government flyers, newsletters, and textbooks. Frequently multicultural empires decided to shift the sacred language to a local language in the 18th to the 19th Century. Therefore, both government and capitalist can benefit from three issues, firstly the government policy and ideology can be distributed freely and reach more people, as the print-medium such as a newsletter or newspaper can reach people more easily than the ancient announcement by the local lord. Secondly, the central government brought people under their own direct control, which successfully reduced the power of the local lords and undermined regionalism. Thirdly, the print media that published in the local language made the people feel patriotic and attached to the language and script, which they believe represented their nationhood.

Anderson used the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a case study, as in the early 1780s Emperor Joseph II decided to switch the language of state from Latin to German. In addition to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Anderson points out that the majority of the nineteenth century dynasties were multicultural empires. He gave several examples such as; Hohenzollerns presiding in Prussia and Romania; Romanovs ruling over Russians, Letts, Ukrainians, Tatars, Armenians, and Finns; Hanoverians presiding over English, Scots, Welsh, and the Irish.²⁵ This is similar to the Asian empires in the nineteenth century, as the Asian dynasties ruled over several territories and races. Examples in this region were; Meiji Tenno ruling over Japanese, Koreans, and Taiwanese in 1895; Qings

ruling over Hans, Mongols, Manchurians, Tibetans, and Xinjiangs; Chakkris (or Chakri) perching high over Siamese Thai, Khmers, Laotians, Malays, and Mons.

Official nationalism is basically understood as the centralizing of nationalism of multicultural states. It would be difficult if the Habsburgs' official documents needed to be translated into German, Hungarian, Slovenian, and Croat languages. The official languages made communication between the citizens within the territory possible- it was not only the English and Scots who were able to communicate, but also those overseas colonies of people in Christchurch, Canberra, Rangoon, Hong Kong, Perth, Toronto, Delhi, and Johannesburg who could communicate with each other via 'print media'.

Even the idea of official nationalism had its basis in a centralized communication system. Anderson points out that this centralization of language led to the leaders and their subjects imagining themselves as the citizens of the nation-state, which in turn allowed to the centralizing of the political system. He gave an example of 'Kaiser Wilhelm II casting himself as the first German instead of a Hohenzollern who ruled Prussian, Bohemian, and Bavarian subjects'.²⁶

There were several rulers who placed themselves as the 'central figures' of their nation, for example the Shah of Iran, the Tsar of the Russian Empire, and the Emperor of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the King of Siam, and the Queen of the British Empire. It is clear that the language and customs, which these rulers used, were promoted to their subjects as the 'high culture'.²⁷ Even where there was a difference

among their subjects, the 'high culture' imposed by the rulers was considered as a common culture of the nation-state. It appears that once the centralized system was established, the legitimacy of those leaders was unquestionable; the law, and the systems imposed on their citizens were obligations, meaning that Kings, Emperors, Kaisers, and Tsars had even greater power. The government's nationalistic policies became official nationalism to all of the subjects in the nation.

Taking the above into consideration, it appears that there are several elements which lead to the creation of official nationalism. Firstly there are the capitalists who create 'Print Capitalism' in their country. Secondly, the government decides on the adoption of a 'Common Language'. Therefore, the language that is popular either among the people or the ruling class becomes the administrative language. Thirdly, the action and appearances of their figure heads such as Emperors, Empresses, Kings, Queens, and Presidents become the 'high-culture', which people can adopt as the 'Common Culture'. Finally, it is in the interests of the governments to promote nationalism through all means. This leads to the capitalists acting as loyal subjects and assisting the states to publish all states' law, order, and texts. This leads to 'official nationalism', where the government is identified as the patron for all of their citizens' identities.

Anderson gives the example of the Japanese case. He demonstrated that the common language and common culture created the distinction between Japanese and European. During the nineteenth century, the promoters of Japanese nationalism came from the low and middle ranking samurai. The promoters used the term 'Sonno-Joi'

(Revere the Sovereign, Expel the Barbarians) to manipulate the masses to support their movement. 'Revere the sovereign' refers to the restoration of the Japanese Emperors' power.²⁸ While European monarchs were political leaders, Asian monarchs were also spiritual leaders who were considered as both the righteous rulers and the symbol of the nation-state. The states that used monarchy as their symbols would develop a solid monarchical institution, which had a long historical background, and this history of the institutions often became the history of the nation.

It is possible to conclude that official nationalism came from print-capitalism, which created the common language for the nation-state. This led to people's awareness of their own ruler's creation of 'common culture', and 'state symbols', which became the foundations of the modern nation-state and nationalism. There is no doubt that language is considered as fundamental. Language was a major tool to create common understanding and unite the people of the different vernaculars.

Walter F Vella (1978) complements Anderson's theory on official nationalism. According to Vella, King Vajiravudh's sponsorship of Thai arts and literature could be explained as a way of promoting Thai national identity. The campaign for the preservation of the Thai language by the king can be considered the best case study. The king saw an inability in the Thai vocabulary to deal with modern English technical words such as, motor, civilize, policy, lecture, and engines. He feared the flood of the western vocabulary would harm the originality of the Thai language, and thus encouraged the invention of a modern Thai vocabulary. The king used the print-media to publish his

novels and other works,²⁹ while the introduction of compulsory education led to the introduction of textbooks. The initiation of compulsory education supported Thai nationalism in three ways. Firstly, the Thai students believed in the existence of the Thai nation, languages, and institutions. Secondly, the students believed in the heroes and heroines of the Thai nation. Finally, students believed in the permanence of the Thai boundaries.³⁰

Anderson (1983) gave an example of Vajiravudh and his racism.³¹ Even though he was a king and supposed to be the patron of all races in his kingdom, Vajiravudh used print-media such as the press to promote his anti-Chinese stance. Two of his famous articles are “The Jews of the Orient” and “Clogs on our wheel”.³² Both these works from Vajiravudh show that the king openly disparaged his Chinese subjects. The king may have chosen them because the Thai-Chinese in the 1910s were potentially disloyal subjects. Because of the fall of the Chinese Imperial system in 1911, the Thai-Chinese were inspired by the Republicanism of Mainland Chinese and plotted a coup to overthrow the Siamese Monarchy in 1912.³³ This behavior of the Thai-Chinese attempted to undermine the legitimacy of His Majesty’s government.

Symbols and Tradition

Eric Hobsbawm’s (1983) work complemented Anderson’s theory of official nationalism. While Anderson points out that the culture promoted by the head of state could be considered as the legitimate and the common culture for the nation-state, Hobsbawm writes, “Nothing appears more ancient, and linked to an immemorial past

than the pageantry which surrounds British monarchy in its public ceremonial manifestations".³⁴ The pageantry of the British monarch is seen by their subjects as the 'high culture'.

Hobsbawm explains that "Traditions, which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin". He points out that many "traditions are actually invented, constructed and formally instituted".³⁵ This is similar to Anderson's theory in that official nationalism was constructed by capitalists and nationalist promoters. Hobsbawm explained that "'Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain 'values and norms'".³⁶

Hobsbawm points out that "the peculiarity of 'invented traditions' is that the continuity with it is largely factitious".³⁷ Importantly the tradition that is invented must be able to refer to the old situation. Anderson and Hobsbawm shared the common point of origin that the monarchical institution is one of the oldest forms of identity. The roles of monarchies and their pageantry are often central to the common culture, which is used to create an 'official nationalism'. This thesis will examine this idea in a later chapter covering the case study of the film *Suriyothai*.

Hobsbawm explains that "inventing traditions is essentially a process of 'formalization and ritualization', characterized by reference to the past, if only by 'imposing repetition'".³⁸ Hobsbawm gives an example of Baden-Powell inventing the

'Boy Scouts'. Baden-Powell is a founder of a tradition, which can be used to promote nationalism. In Thailand, the functions of the Boy Scouts have gone beyond that of outdoor activities groups; they participate in paramilitary units. The Boy Scouts will be further discussed in the third chapter, which covers the history of Thai nationalism. The Boy Scouts in Thailand were used subsequently as paramilitary units.

The 'symbol' is one of the elements, which can create unity among people who identify themselves with those symbols. Hobsbawm explains that symbols vary from flags to emblems, stereotypical-personification, anthems and landmarks.³⁹ The symbol is one of the invented traditions, which will be used in this thesis in the case study. The symbol is a medium with hidden messages for the audiences. The symbol is not limited to places, even common practices such as gun-salutes, toasts, bell-ringing, tableaux or even oratory can be national-symbols as well. The oratory, such as "my fellows American", used by all Presidents of the United States when they make any public announcements, is an example to support Hobsbawm's theory. Ranks, honourable titles or appointments such as ambassador, governor general, president, privy-councillor, or statesman can become symbols.⁴⁰

Tradition and symbols are invented to help create the identity of the nations. Once the tradition was invented, the continuation of traditional practice helps create the institution out of that 'invented tradition'. Hobsbawm's theory is related to Anderson's theory of imagined communities. At the end, both 'invented tradition' and 'imagined communities' share common ground; there are people within those communities who

imagined themselves through their patterns. The people in the territory imagined themselves as a community, and then together as a community, they imagined that their identity as harmonious with other communities through traditional practices and symbols, which created an 'enlarging community' that shared similar practices and beliefs. The 'enlarging communities' can become even larger by integrating with other 'enlarging communities'.

Apart from Hobsbawm's theory, an explanation of 'symbols' can be found in the works of John Breuilly's (1982); Breuilly explains how symbols and ceremonies are used by nationalist and mass movements.⁴¹ Symbols provide the certain images which Breuilly believes would bring the people together to "express solidarity of the nation".⁴² Similar to Hobsbawm's explanation of the 'pageant of monarchy', and Anderson's explanation about the 'central figures'; Breuilly associated 'central figures' and the 'pageant of monarchy' with the 'cult of personality'. Although the names are different; their meanings are similar. Breuilly's 'cult of personality' is an explanation of these individuals who associated themselves with the state. It may be a person such as Tito, Hitler or Mao Zedong, or it may be the titles which succeeded the tradition of the 'cult of personality', such as the Queen of Britain, King of Thailand, Prime Minister of Singapore, President of the United States of America, Emperor of Japan, and Chancellor of Germany.

Breuilly explains that the importance of the 'cult of personality' is in providing the "concentrated form of the existing political movement". He gives an example:

“Gandhi, with his non-violence and concern with tradition, embodied the national ideal for which he strove”.⁴³ Breuilly terms those symbols ‘self-reference symbols’. He gives examples of the ‘Nazi Aryan’ and ‘Authentic Indian’, which lead to nationalist propaganda. Breuilly explains that ‘self-reference symbols’ can develop to a ‘greater abstract’ level such as portraits or emblems like the Swastika, or flag.

Similarly to Hobsbawm’s theory of ‘invention of traditions’, Breuilly not only sees symbols as an invented element, which serve regime, system or class interests; he also believes that the tradition was invented to serve nationalist ‘solidarity’.⁴⁴ He gives an example of the Geloftedag and the Ossawatrek (Day of the Covenant).

On 16 December 1838 a battle was fought between some white trekkers and Zulus at Blood River. Before the battle the white trekkers vowed that if God granted them victory they would celebrate that day every year. The battle was won. However the vow of one particular group of white trekkers in a disorganized migration had little impact in following decades. It was only with the emergence of the republican nationalism during resistance to the British annexation of the Transvaal in 1880 that the vow was recalled. In the course of the resistance it was refined into a ceremonial with a special Covenant Oath.⁴⁵

However, the celebration declined after the South Africans won their independence. The Day of Covenant was a ‘self-reference symbol’, which provided messages that could manipulate the masses. Breuilly explains that an aim of the movement was to establish a ‘sense of identity’ among the citizens.⁴⁶ Breuilly points out that the ‘sense of identity’ creates beliefs among the citizens that “the heroes of the past are joined by ties of blood and language to the men of the present”.⁴⁷ Also they believe

that the “link is a sort of guarantee that the men of the present can rise to their challenges as their ancestors did”.⁴⁸ Breuille believes that “the ceremonial itself manifests this possibility in miniature and holds out the promise that much more can be achieved. This achievement is written in the destiny of the nation.”⁴⁹

The identity of the nation is provided in arbitrary ways. The leap from culture to politics is made by portraying the nation at one moment as a cultural community and at another as a political community whilst insisting that in an ideal state the national community will not be ‘split’ into cultural, economic and political spheres. National independence can be portrayed as the freedom of the citizens who make up the (political) nation or as the freedom of the relationship between state and society. The appeal of pseudo-solution is that it enables the nationalist to construct from a wide variety of practices and sentiments prevailing among the population of a particular territory the ideal of national community, and to transform this into a political claim. By seeming to abolish the distinction between culture and politics, society and state, private and public, the nationalist has access to a whole range of sentiments, idioms and practices which hitherto had been regarded as irrelevant to politics but are now turned into the values underlying political action.⁵⁰

The idea of states creating the common identity of the citizens would be associated with the terms ‘official nationalism’. Apart from ‘self-reference symbols’, the symbols with a ‘greater abstract’ such as flags and emblems will be suitable for analyzing the case studies in this thesis.

In the present day, the flag is one of the most common symbols in the modern nation-state. Hobsbawm points out that flags in the modern world evolved from the ‘French Tricolor’ of 1740.⁵¹ Znamierowski emphasized the importance of the flag, referring to W.J. Gordon’s explanation of the flags noting “symbols are sacred things,

and what every man holds dear is the national flag.”⁵² Znamierowski points out that flags were originally used as banners to represent the commander ranks in the armed forces.⁵³ Later, the flag developed as a ‘symbol of the king’s protection’. He explains the term ‘symbol of the king’s protection’ meant the flags were used on merchant ships to identify the patron (such as Queen of England, King of Spain, etc.), of those ships.⁵⁴ Perhaps the ‘symbol of the king’s protection’ is a first step to connect the flags with the nation-state. This is because the differences between the British Merchant ships and the French ships came from the flag’s banners, which explain that the ships are protected by great nations such as Britain or France. Similarly to Hobsbawm, Znamierowski believes that the French flag was one of the earliest flags to “carry ideological and political messages”.⁵⁵ National flags are one of the most important symbols because they are abstract and frequently stereotype the citizens in their territory. Znamierowski explains that:

Almost everywhere in the world the national flag is not a piece of bunting but something so close to people’s hearts that they will risk their lives for it. Under foreign occupation, to display the national flag has often been an offence punishable by death, yet there have always been people defiantly hoisting their flag as a strong message that says, “This is our country, we are here to stay and we shall overcome!”⁵⁶

This demonstrates that the flag is not only an ordinary ‘abstract symbol’ but is one of the most powerful symbols in human life. The majority of the loyal citizens of modern state salute the flag. Flags are in place during international events such as the Olympic Games, the Soccer World Cup, the Rugby World Cup, the Commonwealth games, and the Asian games. The main purposes of the use of the flags in those competitions are to create patriotism and unity of the players and crowds from the participating nations. Thus

flags are one of the most effective and common symbols. The reason may relate to the infrequency of flag changes. In the 20th Century, Great Britain was under six reigns from Queen Victoria to Queen Elizabeth II, which meant symbols such as official portraits, coat of arms, the design of the Pound Sterling, and the dynastic emblem changed frequently. However, the Union Jack served as the British national flag throughout the six reigns of the Hanoverians and Windsors. Even the anti-government protestors often wave the national-flag. Examples appeared in the Philippines during Marcos' government, when the Filipinos used Philippine flags to unite the people to bring down the regime. The Filipinos for example, believed that the Marcos regime was against the national interest, and the flags were used to symbolize the national interest.

Once the flags are rising on the opposite side of the government, the legitimacy of that government is in decline. Flags are political weapons, which are used as symbols to unite the people of one identity. On the other hand, the rebels or protestors of another nation always burn the flags of their rival nations. It is very common on the world news to see Middle Eastern people burn Jewish or American Flags in order to protest at the United States or Israeli policies towards the region.

In the autobiography of James Brendan Bolger, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, there is a chapter on "The Republic of New Zealand". As one of the longest serving prime ministers of New Zealand in the last decade, Bolger is still dissatisfied with the New Zealand national flag. He believes "the flag is the symbol of a nation, and we

need clear identification if for no other reason than it will stop us being confused with Australia.”⁵⁷

As part of the VE-Day celebrations in 1995, there was a large gathering of Heads of State, Prime Ministers and Ambassadors in Hyde Park in London. When the Queen had finished speaking, the plan was that the national representatives and their spouses would walk down a long set of steps to the point where a group of children were standing, each holding a different national flag. We would then collect our country's emblem and move to where a globe of the world stood and place our flag on it. Joan and I were not the first to get off the stage and by the time we reached the point where the children were, there was no sign of our flag anywhere. There was, however a young girl standing forlornly with an Australian flag, virtually begging someone to take it. I realized instantly what had happened and relieved her of her burden. Somewhere out in the crowd was our New Zealand flag, proudly borne by the Australian High Commissioner.⁵⁸

Bolger believes that the New Zealand flag should change; he saw the national flag of Canada as his example.

One of the most striking modern flags is that of Canada. That red maple leaf on a stark white background is both distinctive and readily identifiable as Canada's flag. The silver fern is clearly a symbol universally identified with New Zealand, and black and white are colors that are identified internationally with our nation. The New Zealand flag could well be white and black with the silver motif.⁵⁹

Apart from the national flag, Bolger points out a number of symbols, which New Zealanders should adopt. He gives examples such as the Museum of New Zealand “Te Papa Tongarewa”, and a national day.⁶⁰

It is important to understand that Bolger's republican ideas are not shared by all New Zealanders. In fact, the Republic of New Zealand is far from a reality. However, the importance of the work written by Jim Bolger is his explanation of the belief in symbols and his attempt to invent new tradition in New Zealand. If a leader like Bolger believes that symbols such as the flag can create the identity of the nation, then it is a possibility that the ordinary citizens of the nation-state would see those symbols in the same fashion as their leaders, even if the symbols are recently invented.

The symbols and traditions were invented by political leaders whom this thesis identifies as nationalist promoters, to serve their interests. The interest of the promoter can be different from the 'capitalist' perspective on 'nationalism'. Print commodities offer the symbols, which are the foundation of the modern nationalism. The alphabets, ideograms, and pictograms created the community out of the 'sign media'. Ideograms such as those of the Chinese language created a common understanding among the people, which promoted the Chinese culture. The people started to imagine themselves as citizens of the community such as China, Siam, Japan, England, and France. In 'official nationalism', often the political leaders become both nationalist symbols and the promoters of the tradition and emblem. Manit points out that symbols that are tangible become national emblems such as the flag and coats of arms, while the intangible symbols become the traditions, which are commonly practised within the society.⁶¹ People who reject the intangible symbols would be seen by the society as disloyal. However without propagation, those symbols, traditions, or cultures would be ineffective.

Royal Nationalism

Thongchai Winichakul's the changing landscape of the past (1995) shows another aspect of nationalism. The term 'royal nationalism' is the concept which Thongchai identified with the work of Prince Damrong Rajanubhap, who is known as "the Father of Thai History"⁶² Thongchai (1995) relied on the analysis of Nithi Aeusrivongse (1979) to point out that Thai historiography "combined the legacy of royal chronicle with history as written in the West during nineteenth century, creating a royal/national history to serve the modern Thai state under the absolute monarchy".⁶³ 'Royal Nationalism' is thus another branch of 'Official Nationalism' as it came from the same origin, which is the royalist state sponsoring a nationalistic campaign in order to strengthen their connection to the people.

'Royal Nationalism' is a form of nationalism which identifies the monarchy and royalty as the heart and soul of the nation-state. The main feature of 'royal nationalism' is the personal cults of the great kings, queens, and nobles who were portrayed by the nationalist promoters as both magnificent rulers and the great heroes of that nation-state.⁶⁴

Complementing Thongchai's (1995) work, Walter F Vella's (1978) book on King Vajiravudh serves as a good description, as the king developed the 'Royal Nationalism' of Prince Damrong to become the 'Official Nationalism' during his reign. Vella noted "the king became the visible expression of the glory of the land. That glory belonged to everyone in the nation, and it was the duty of all to protect it and defend it. Anyone who

would harm the king could only be considered as someone who was exceedingly evil and would do harm to the nation".⁶⁵ Similar to Prince Damrong, the king maximized the importance of the great kings who could be considered as magnificent rulers and great heroes. King Naresuan, King Taksin, Phra Ruang, and King Chulalongkorn were among the prime examples used to promote 'Royal Nationalism'.⁶⁶ The four great kings were praised for their magnificent achievements during their reigns. King Naresuan and King Taksin were lauded for their bravery and their achievement in battlefields.⁶⁷ King Chulalongkorn was honored for his wisdom and his vision⁶⁸, while Phra Ruang (King Si Intharathit) might be the most suitable king to represent the 'Royal Nationalism'. Phra Ruang was portrayed by both historians and King Vajiravudh as the legendary king who exemplified wisdom, military strategy, bravery, and importantly magic.⁶⁹ Even though King Vajiravudh did not give priority to the magic of Phra Ruang, the legend still covered the curse of Phra Ruang's spell towards the Cambodian assassin who tried to assassinate him.⁷⁰

In summary, 'Royal Nationalism' is the system which encourages its citizens to show their loyalty to the nobility and the monarchy. It is important to understand that the legend has significant roles in this system, where the kings, queens, and nobles are manor born, and chosen by the mandate from heaven to become the lord of life. Legendary exploits and magical ability encourage the people to believe in this mandate. Regardless of the political system of the country, if Royal Nationalism succeeds, the mandate from heaven that supports the Royal Institution may never be shaken. Even though the kings, queens, or nobles are no longer running the government, their roles of spiritual leaders,

righteous leaders, and moral leaders may not be replaced by the political changes. 'Royal Nationalism' is the system where rulers are supported by the loyalty of their people.

In Thailand, kings and queens are not only the political leaders but also the spiritual leaders. 'Royal Nationalism' is the system that supports every institution in that country. The system supports the existence of the royal institution as much as the government and its people. The government benefits from the mandate from the head of state. Even where leaders are elected by democratic means, they are able to adopt policies that they believe would benefit their party and invoke the mandate of the kings and queens is support. On the other hand, the citizens benefit on moral issues, where they believe that the kings and queens are the spiritual leaders, as much as being the righteous rulers who can prevent the government from adopting any policies that go against the will of the people and the country.

Populist Nationalism

Thongchai Winichakul (1995) pointed out the system that challenged 'royal nationalism' in his work on the changing landscape of the past. Thongchai pointed out that populist nationalism shows another aspect of national identity, which could challenge the old fashioned 'royal nationalism' or 'official nationalism'.⁷¹ Thongchai pointed out that the challenge was based on the realist approach from the view point of 'the political economy group'.⁷² Thongchai used the work of Chattip Natsupha's The Political economy of Siam (1982), which challenged 'Royal Nationalism' in the field of political economy. Chattip (1982) pointed out that the "heroic" monarchy was in fact

monopolistic, where monarch and nobles dominated the economy, and sought for rent from the land, thus becoming an obstacle for development in the economy.⁷³ However, Thongchai (1995) points out that the approach from Chattip (1982) was flawed, as the theory of Chattip (1982) relied too much on Marxism and the Asiatic mode of production.⁷⁴

Thongchai (1995) saw the challenge against 'royal nationalism' and 'official nationalism' as an alternative choice for the people, who might accept their version, and termed 'populist nationalism'. It is unnecessary for populist nationalism to be critical of political economy. Thongchai also saw the challenge from Nithi (1979) to royal nationalism in his analysis of the reign of King Narai, where Nithi points out that the king might not be patriotic at all, since he employed foreigners to pressure Thai nobles.⁷⁵ This type of analysis is critical enough to be considered as the 'populist nationalism' as well.

Media Theory

Understanding Media

'Understanding Media' is one of the early works in 'media' study. Marshall McLuhan declares that the 'medium is the message'.⁷⁶ McLuhan explains that medium does not need any real message and that it is "characteristic of all media means that the content of any medium is always another medium".⁷⁷ McLuhan gives an example of the electric light. He sees the light as pure information. He concludes, "Whether the light is being used for brain surgery or night baseball is a matter of indifference".⁷⁸ McLuhan sees electric light as a 'medium', so he concluded that "medium shaped and controls the

scale and form of human association and action".⁷⁹ He explains that the content of any medium blinds the audiences to the characteristic of the medium.⁸⁰

It also appears that people define messages differently based on association and action. Newton as a scientist saw an apple in a different fashion from apple farmers, allowing him to develop the theory of gravity. The apple was a medium but other people saw its content as a fruit instead of a scientific experiment. The electric light and the apple are media but they did not have any 'content'.⁸¹ McLuhan note that one real message that could come out of the electric light would be its brand name to represent electrical companies.

In a similar way to Benedict Anderson, McLuhan saw 'print commodity' as the best medium to preserve the contents originality, as well as to manipulate the readers towards a political ideology. McLuhan used the argument of Alexis de Tocqueville on the French Revolution to explain the power of 'print medium'.

It was the printed word that, achieving cultural saturation in the eighteenth century, had homogenized the French nation. Frenchmen were the same kind of people from north to south. The typographic principles of uniformity, continuity, and linearity had overlaid the complexities of ancient feudal and oral society. The Revolution was carried out by the new literati and lawyers.⁸²

The important point that de Tocqueville pointed out was that print media reaffirmed the existence of the French nation. The Revolution's printed-papers would not have manipulated people who were unable to read French and did not practice French culture.

Similarly to Anderson, McLuhan names printed media as an architect of nationalism.⁸³ It is unnecessary to cover all of the print-capitalism details again as they were discussed earlier in the nationalism theory. However, McLuhan saw movies, which he called the 'reel world' as an even better medium than the print-media.⁸⁴

McLuhan explains that "the movie is the total realization of the medieval idea of change, in the form of entertainment illusion."⁸⁵ He indicates that "the business of the filmmaker is to transfer the viewer from the world created by film." He explains that "the movie has power to store and to convey a great deal of information."⁸⁶

McLuhan points out that film is far more powerful than other media. It is because the film is a complete form of media, where sights, sounds, and movement could be found. This is important to understand that films are based on "the private fantasy experienced and the reel world."⁸⁷ This is because print, photographs, or music are a single medium, while films are a collective art form.⁸⁸ A single movie contains music, picture, color, lighting, acting, speaking, equipment, and graphics. In one example, he draws attention to the way costumes and landscapes allow people to follow the storyline easily, and the way the audience can notice the differences in each scene that the film presents. The movie is definitely one of the most powerful media, which can shape people's beliefs and create new values and social orders, once the producers are able to attract the market. This is the reason for explaining that the movie can be considered as the perfect and most complete medium.

Film media manage to bring both 'tangible' and 'intangible' signs to the audiences. However while the 'reel world' can offer multiple signs to the audiences, messages get weakened by cultural differences. This leads to the introduction of the 'Adam and Eving' system (A dubbed system, where the voice actors and actresses dubbed the film, which put their understanding and culture in to the sound) to minimize the cultural differences.

Summarizing from the McLuhan's theory, he pointed out the media has the following aspects. Firstly, the medium is a message. Therefore, secondly, the medium shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action. Thirdly, print commodity best preserves the content originality; however print media also can manipulate the readers towards a political ideology. Fourthly, movies are an 'entertainment illusion', which have power to store and to convey a great deal of information. Finally, Adam and Eving technique can overcome cultural differences by adopting local culture and events to foreign films.

Media and Society

Media and Society by Michael O'Shaughnessy (1999) analyzes the media and its effect on people. O'Shaughnessy's work is a development of McLuhan's theory through an in-depth examination of the term 'medium'.

O'Shaughnessy identifies communication as based on signs. He points out that, "any message, any thing, can be communicated through signs and a sign system. The sign is the central aspect of semiology, which depends on cultural knowledge".⁸⁹ He gave the example of a "man offering woman a rose. The rose can be understood as a signifier and what is signified is the man's love or attraction to a woman".⁹⁰

However, a rose does not always translate as love. O'Shaughnessy explains that "a rose is a sign that can represent love if the sender (man) and receiver (woman) share codes and convention."⁹¹ O'Shaughnessy explains the importance of shared codes and culture. He points out that "a sign system will only work successfully with people who know and share the same code".⁹² He believes that "language is a sign system. Different languages contain different sets of codes and convention".⁹³ O'Shaughnessy pointed out that:

media (movies, radio, press, TV) have become the place through which we receive most of our information about the world and how we see the world. Media are also teaching people to learn the differences between the receiver and other people. They are expanding the differences between male and female, European culture and non-European culture, ethnic, and language differences.⁹⁴

O'Shaughnessy points out the importance of language and the way its use can alter perceptions. "Language can construct huge differences in relation to very similar activities favoring their group (nation) by disguising some brutal realities."⁹⁵ He used examples from the Gulf War. The West used terms such as 'professional', 'loyal', 'brave', 'cautious', 'knight' to identify their soldiers, while they identified Iraqi soldiers as 'brainwashed', 'blindly obedient', 'fanatic', 'cowards', and 'bastard'. Military forces

also made use of different terms to describe similar activities, such as 'first strikes' from the West and 'sneak attacks' from Iraq.⁹⁶

Considering the realities in a war situation, both Western and Iraqi soldiers are equally 'loyal' as well as 'blindly obedient'; they are equally 'brave' or 'fanatic'. However, one is able to see the impact that language can create, when it reaches the intended audience. The West saw the activities conducted by the Iraqis as acts of evil, while the same activities from the Iraqi perspective were righteous acts. Language is an important tool that the media use to develop support from their nation's citizens. There are two possibilities for the media to support the government policy. First and foremost is the relationship between media and political leaders. Even in the United States, it is very likely that the media since the end of Vietnam War would not chose to stand on a different side from the government during wartime. In addition, there are some possibilities that both media and political leaders share the same interest. Secondly, the media would present news that can be sold to the majority of the population. When Iraqis view the same news broadcast in the West, it is identified as Western propaganda.

This is because Iraq and the West do not share the same culture and beliefs. O'Shaughnessy also argued that the media are able to 'brainwash' people, and reinforce the social structures, family, education and religious values of their audience, if the particular type of media is powerful enough. The main examples he used are Soviet Communist propaganda, and US advertisers. He suggested that those kinds of media are able to control people's minds, beliefs, and action.⁹⁷

O'Shaughnessy saw that state enforcement propaganda and US advertisers and media share similarities. There are also differences among those media as well. It is true that media such as CNN, BBC, and the Times do assist the propaganda of their government. However they cannot have a total bias towards American or British nationalism, and the reasons are based on 'capitalism'. This is because the consumers do pay for the CNN, Sky, CNBC or BBC cable network. Secondly, the network does provide globally, therefore the consumers in Asia and Europe might demand different information from American and British consumers. Thirdly, the consumers within the United States or Great Britain are not from one ethnicity. There are numerous ethnic groups residing in USA and UK, for example the citizens of Britain not only consist of English, Welsh, Irish, and Scottish, but there are also African-British, Chinese, Burmese, Indians, and Arabians who have migrated to the UK since the 19th Century. Also American citizens consist of African-Americans, Asians, Arabs, Indians, Mexicans, and European-Americans. Therefore, the cable news providers cannot disregard the interest of other ethnic groups within their nation states. This is because their customers might turn to other providers instead, if they are dissatisfied with the contents on the news. This prevents the news and advertisers in the capitalist world from being totally biased or giving all false information. However Nazi, Soviet, or Chinese Communist propaganda were 100 % state sponsored, and were careless about the quality of their production. The news on state sponsored television does not need to be the most recent development, and might be 24 hours after the same news has been presented on CNN. Unlike fascist or communist propaganda, CNN, Fox Network, and Times Warner are

companies that are owned by wealthy capitalists in America. Even though the wealthy capitalists are involved with the Republican and Democrat parties, they are unable to make their production of the same low quality as the Chinese or Soviet propaganda. The reason is based on the tough competition in the American market. All news networks need to present their news from different perspectives, as well as try to bring quality to their production. It is still the case that CNN may present the news based on 80% American government policy and 20% from Iraq. However, CNN cannot refuse to present the news from Iraq as well. Also due to competition the quality of their production must be very high, they need to use all available equipment to bring the latest news with the best pictures to the people.

The relation between the media and state is visible. The ideology of propaganda to assist government activity still exists. However, capitalism brought change to the media industry. The 100% state sponsored media meant people receive biased information from poor and unsophisticated propaganda, so that people seldom believe that propaganda, due to its low quality production. 'Capitalism' makes propaganda without 100% bias, so that people believes that there are two sides to the story. However, the people who watch those high-quality productions still believe that their side is the righteous one; some may believe that their news is open-minded and sees the story from the opposition side as propaganda. Some people may believe that the 'reel world' that is presented in the film is the 'real world' and accept the propaganda from the very beginning. Even if some people may not accept the biases in the news, the

interview programs and debates on television may persuade them to follow the propaganda.

Media/Impact

Media/Impact is a related theory developed by Shirley Biagi (2001). She used McLuhan's theory of 'medium'. However, she called media 'channels'.⁹⁸ It is unnecessary to cover the details of the communication elements, as it is the same detail that has been discussed earlier under McLuhan and O'Shaughnessy. Movies and entrepreneurs are the most relevant part of Biagi's theory.

Prior to looking at the impact of the films on society, it is very important to look at the movie companies. Biagi pointed out that "making a movie is a million-dollar business with no real assurance that the public will buy it".⁹⁹ This is because the consumers cannot take the product away with them. "The public can take merely a memory from the film".¹⁰⁰ Therefore, Biagi concluded that, "the movie industry is based on dreams".¹⁰¹

Biagi pointed out that "movies mirror the society that creates them. Some movies offer an underlying political message. Other movies reflect changing social values. Still other movies are just good entertainment."¹⁰² Considering the above argument written by Biagi, it appears that films are a powerful medium, which can deliver the messages to their audiences in the form of entertainment. The American government recognized the power of media over its citizens. This led to the censorship law of 1930. However, "on

May 26, 1952, the Supreme Court announced in the case of *Burstyn v. Wilson* that motion pictures were a significant medium for the communication of ideas, which were designed to entertain as well as to inform.”¹⁰³ The case of 1952 which led to the relaxation of the censorship law, showed that even the Supreme Court acknowledged movies as a powerful medium.

Visual Communication

Where Biagi explained the nature of the filmmakers and their willingness to make profits out of their production, in Visual Communication Lester (2000) explained the way that visual media could impact on audiences. Lester explains that the pictorial stereotypes in the media reinforce, or even shape culture.

Whether an individual is identified because of gender, age, cultural heritage, economic status, sexual orientation, or physical disability, the visual message generally communicated about that person often is misleading and false. Because pictures affect a viewer emotionally more than word alone do, pictorial stereotypes often become misinformed perceptions that have the weight of established facts. These pictures can remain in a person’s mind throughout a time.¹⁰⁴

Lester concludes that when picture stereotypes are repeated enough times, they become a part of society’s culture. People form attitudes about others, both within and outside their own culture. Culture tells us what we should do to get along within a particular society.¹⁰⁵

Lester points out that media help create a common culture. In a similar way to Anderson's theory on languages, Lester points out that the dominant cultural groups-- those with the most power and influence in the social structure including media--are the ones that control which images get to be seen. It is always to the advantage of the dominant groups to stereotype other groups in order to secure their own dominance.¹⁰⁶ Lester gave examples of the stereotypes including Jewish-American, Irish-American, and African-American stereotypes.

Motion pictures appear to be the best tool to propagate stereotypes. Lester pointed out that movies are visual media that tell their mythic stories through visual symbols. Myths are the stories of the audiences' culture; whereas symbols are the way those stories are communicated. The directors are the persons that respond to links between myths and symbols. The successful directors are the people that are able to link myth and symbolism better than others.¹⁰⁷

The Politics of Communication

Lester points out that media standardize the culture and the understanding of the social class through stereotypes. However, it is important to study the differences between the social classes. Lester explained culture regarding ethnic or female stereotypes, but he did not cover the importance of social classes. In The politics of Communication Muller (1973) identified the differences of social classes and their political communication.¹⁰⁸

Muller pointed out that "participation of any group in political communication presupposes that it is able to express its rights, claims, or interests, be they material or ideal".¹⁰⁹ Muller believes that:

Groups holding political power may distort or control this expression of interests, through the manipulation of language and ideas. However, the communication of interests may also be distorted if the group or class concerned is not capable of articulating experienced deprivation.¹¹⁰

Muller studied middle and lower classes' political communication and behaviours. He identified the 'middle-classes' as "the group consisting of persons who have at least some college education, pursue non-manual occupations, and/or hold professional, technical, or managerial jobs".¹¹¹ He identified the term 'lower classes' as "a large segment of the working class and the lowest socioeconomic strata".¹¹² Muller saw those wage earners holding unskilled or semiskilled jobs in the service or production sectors, the unemployed, and the poor, (the persons who have, at the most, some high school education), as the lower classes.¹¹³

Similarly to Lester, Muller saw symbol as an element necessary for political communication. Muller explained that the symbol does not necessarily have to be a figure or monument; even the local vernacular can be a very important symbol, if one can communicate with people from the same background.¹¹⁴

If these media theories are considered together, the political and media connections are visible. It appears that McLuhan, O'Shaughnessy, Biagi, Lester, and Muller shared similar views about the media. The following propositions can be drawn from their studies. First, the media is a message. Second, language is a symbol. Third, stereotypical symbols help create common culture. Fourth, culture is partly composed of myths that people follow. Myths created the understanding of social classes, and cultural groups. Fifth, people communicate through signs and symbols. Sixth, the motion picture is one of the best means of communication, which can connect myth and symbol together. Seventh, the primary concern of the filmmakers is to sell their production. Eighth, filmmakers and producers are dominant groups who shape stereotypes in society. Ninth, the audiences receive information from media stereotypes that benefits the dominant social group, to which filmmakers, and producers belong. Finally, audiences receive the message through symbols. They understand the message through their culture (myth), and experience.

Formulation of the Media and Nationalism Framework

The connection between media and nationalism can be summarized in the form of a diagram. This diagram will explain the relationship between media and nationalism, and will show how political leaders and capitalists come together, and what the goals of the politicians and capitalists are.

The diagram shows that the media play supporting roles to promote official nationalism, and are perhaps the leading exponents of unofficial nationalism. At the top

of the diagram, there are two groups of people. The first group on the left hand side is the political leadership. The political leadership in this sense is a group that is in charge of the government. On the other side of the diagram, there is the capitalist (media owner), and in some cases, capitalists and political leaders are the same people. Capitalists are the people who seek profit by shaping their product to maximize sales of their goods. The connection between the political leaders and the capitalists, especially the media owners is often visible because the media owners (capitalists) may rely on the political leadership to support their business. In a number of Asian states, the political leaders or governments are also the owners of the media. For example the Chinese government owns the television, newspaper, and radio stations.

The political leaders display, invent, demonstrate and continue propagating the 'symbol', 'sign', 'tradition', and 'culture'. Considered from the work of Hobsbawm, political leaders are the ones who need to propagate both tangible and intangible symbols. For example, in the countries where a royal family still exists, there are royal appearances in annual events such as the appearances for the annual FA Cup Final at Wembley for the British monarch, the annual appearances for the Japanese Emperor during New Year's Eve and the New Year, and the annual appearances of the Thai King on the national day. On those appearances, there are also numerous tangible symbols such as national flags and portraits displayed all over the country. The political leaders always relate themselves to symbols and demonstrate their culture as the 'high culture' and possibly the common practice for the citizens of their countries to adopt. The political leaders, such as the king or queen, are also related to other symbols. The leader of the state

invents the symbols to strengthen the regime. Symbols such as flags, emblems, coats of arms, and portraits are 'invented' to represent the political leader and the nation-state.

In order to standardize the 'high culture', the political leaders rely on the media owners to assist them. Media play significant roles to promote the symbols and the political leader by stereotyping the image and the symbols of the state. The power of media comes from the power of stereotypes. The more frequently the people receive the same message, the more likely they will remember the message. However, in order to stereotype the message for the people, capitalists need a medium that can reach the majority of the population.

The media are found in the third box on the diagram, including theatre, television, newspapers, textbooks, and magazines. This is the place where political leader, symbols, media owner, and stereotypes come together. The distribution of the medium needs funds. The media owner may reserve the best spot on the newspaper, television, or films for their patron. For example, the media such as newspaper or television frequently show pictures of the symbols. Prior to broadcasting the news in China, television would never fail to show pictures of the Great Wall, Chinese flag and Mao Zedong portraits. In Thailand, every channel of the Thai television would show the picture of the King and Queen, the Thai flag, military might, Buddhism, and a number of national landmarks at 6 pm daily. This may be due to government policy, station policy, or an attempt to increase audience share.

Once the majority of the media in the country have standardized the message, this can be considered to be Invented Tradition, where people will receive the same message, symbols and beliefs. For example, the people in China would find pictures of Mao Zedong everywhere, in Tiananmen Square, newspapers, television, and banknotes. The people gradually accepted that Mao Zedong is a symbol of the Chinese nation. In the old days New Zealanders had to stand in the cinema to pay respect to the portrait of the British monarch before the film. Thus leaders invented the symbols to serve their regimes, while the media stereotypes those symbols for the political leaders, with the primary purpose of making money.

In the sixth box are the audiences who receive the messages. Once the messages are stereotyped frequently, the media capitalist would not need to rely as heavily on the political leader's support. This is because the people start to show an interest in the activity of those political leaders, who become living symbols. In addition, the media that wanted to attract larger audiences would use the symbols that the political leaders had invented to attract consumers. Where the King, Queen, Prince and Princess are considered living symbols of the nation state, the people in those countries would show a special interest in their activities and in the practices of their 'high culture', so, they can emulate them and be proud of themselves. In English speaking countries, the British royal family seems to be one of the hottest issues to cover in all media. It would be unusual if the newspapers in Britain failed to carry any news or rumors about the Windsor royal family for seven days running.

Propaganda, such as on Chinese television shows the prosperity of the nation and links those achievements to symbols such as flags, landmarks, or leaders such as Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, or Jiang Zemin. Even though the media that report rumors and the tabloids that report about the royal family in Europe may make political leaders feel embarrassed, but there is one benefit of those tabloids. The British tabloids promote the idea to the people that the rituals which were carried out by the House of Windsor are 'high culture', and a number of wealthy people in Britain and her dependencies follow that culture. Also the people that were unable to follow the footsteps of the royal family were persuaded that the culture and practices are the 'common culture' of their society. The language used by the royal family are seen by their subjects as the model language of the nation. This leads to the biggest step in creating nationalism. It is the common culture and official language. Media are actively representing the sense of common identity to the citizens of the state. Even if the majority of the citizens do not practice the 'high culture', they always know that they should look to their king or queen as a model for proper behavior in the nation state.

Finally, the audiences are the last group that conveys all of the information from media and political leaders. At this point, the audiences are the ones who determine the success and failure of both propaganda and the media companies. In reality the feedback from the audiences is one of the most powerful forms of democracy, as the people are the ones who determine the future of the media company and sometimes the political leaders or political system as well. The people are the ones who buy the products, if the products are of low quality, bad plots, and unacceptable storyline, the audiences might not support

the products from the company again. On the other hand, the people who hate the film might draw the linkage between the institutions, which are supported by the movie, and then they might have a negative image of the institution and the media as a whole.

The common culture creates the idea of the common identity and common practice by the leaders, and the state. The media are promoting those 'cultures', while the leaders make those culture, language, and practices obligatory to all the citizens within their boundary. This is called 'official nationalism'. The powerful media can extend those symbols to the widest extent. This leads to the 'extended community', where people believe in the common culture and accept the 'official nationalism'. The extended community that came from the media and the nationalism it created shapes the present day nation.

End Notes

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Chapter 3

History of Thai nationalism and the Media

The third chapter of this thesis will look at the history of Thai nationalism and the media. The history of Thai nationalism will be divided into four sections. The first section will look at the structure of Thai society. It is important to understand the structure of Thai society because this thesis will look at the Thai case studies to explain the relationship between nationalistic films and class structure within Thai society.

The second section will look at the concept of Thai nationhood prior to the period of 'official nationalism. Citizens of modern Thailand are proud of their heritage and history. The Thai still believe that their nation-state is one of the most sophisticated, as well as one of the oldest nations in the world. However, in reality, the Thai nation did not exist until the late 19th Century. The first part of this chapter will look at the foundation of Thai society by using the work of Thongchai Winichakul's (1994) Siam Mapped to study the condition of the Thai nation-state prior 'official nationalism'.

The third section will cover the period from the reign of King Chulalongkorn, which was the first time that the Thai nation was physically under the threat of Western imperialism. Then this thesis will look at the development of Thai nationalism. The development of Thai nationalism used most of the 'official nationalism' techniques identified by Anderson (1983) to create national consciousness among Thai citizens. This

part of the thesis will cover the works of Walter F Vella (1978), Scott Barne (1993), Craig Reynolds (1987), and Thak Chaleomtiarana (1978) to study the history and development of Thai nationalism.

The last section will apply the framework of media and nationalism to the study of Thai nationalism after the implementation of the new constitution, which led to the decline of 'official nationalism' as the Thai government was no longer in full control of the media. However this thesis will look at the relationship between political leaders and media owners after the Asian economic crisis, and the technique that state and media entrepreneurs used to promote Thai national identity, consciousness and nationalism among their citizens.

The Structure of Thai Society

The theories of Muller (1973) and Lester (2000) explained the relationship between symbols and social groups. The political leader creates the stereotypical message, which leads to the invented tradition. Class structure in Thai society is based on created a system called 'Sakdina'. This section will identify the term 'Sakdina' and its influence in Thai society.

This thesis will use two works on the Thai 'Sakdina' system. The original work on 'Sakdina' was written by Jit Phumisak (1974), the second book will be the book written recently by Jai Ungpakorn (2000). The thesis will use both Jit's and Jai's theories to explain the structure of Thai society.

Jit Phumisak (1974) was the first Thai scholar from a Marxist perspective to explain the 'Sakdina' system in Thailand. Jit explained that the word 'Sakdina' means 'ruler of agricultural land'.¹ Jit explained that in the term 'Sakdina', 'Sak' or 'Sakdi' means right, honor or status, and 'Na' means agricultural land. 'Sakdina' are lords that possess the right to rule the land; the term honor or status explained the rank of the Sakdina lords. The Thai Sakdina system counted agricultural land as 'rai' (approximately 2,500 square metres); the highest Sakdina ranking called Chaophraya should hold 10,000 rai. Jit points out that the lords based their status on the amount of rai under their command.²

Jit points out that the Thai king (Phra Maha Kasatriya) was the leader of the 'Sakdina system'. The term 'Kasatriya' can be divided into 'Kaset' and 'Kattiya'. The term 'Kaset' means agriculture or agricultural land (similar to 'Na'), while the term 'Kattiya' means 'Lord of life'. The translation of the Thai king's title is "lord of life and land".³ Under the 'Sakdina' system, the king owned the lands, which were exploited by both 'Sakdina' lords and 'Phrai'. Jit points out that 'Phrai' could be translated as 'Serfs'. 'Phrai' served on the 'Sakdina' lords' rai as corvee laborers and could be conscripted as private soldiers in the lords' army. It appears that if the 'Sakdina' lord ruled a large amount of land, it gave him the opportunity to conscript more 'Phrai' from his territory.⁴

Jai Ungpakorn (2000) points out that the Sakdina system in Thai society is similar to the Western feudal system. It appears that since the Sukhothai period, Thai society

has contained at least two social classes. There is an upper class known as 'Sakdina', and a lower class known as 'Phrai'. Jai saw things differently from Jit. He explains that both king and 'Sakdina' lords did not have any legal right to claim the land. Jai explains that prior to the reign of Chulalongkorn, boundaries, and territorial maps were unknown to the Thai. There were no legal documents that indicated the actual territory of the kingdom, and the 'Sakdina' lord's territory.⁵ He points out that the claims made by both king and 'Sakdina' lords as the lord of lands were vague. Jai points out that "war in Southeast Asia was not about the land but it was mostly based on takeover of the 'Phrai' from other lords".⁶ Southeast Asia prior to the twentieth century was under populated. The lords were concerned over the lack of 'Phrai' to work as corvee labor in their territory, as well as the lack of enlisted soldiers to fight in wars with other lords.

Jai concludes that the end of the 'Sakdina' system during the reign of Chulalongkorn changed the structure of Thai society. The king made legal documents to create the territory of his kingdom, and a legal document to claim all of the land on the map, which Jai believes was a step to creating the capitalist state in Siam.⁷ This is because the events led to the end of the corvee labor system, and new social classes emerged. The class structure in Thai society changed from upper and lower classes to upper classes (king and nobilities), middle classes (merchants, bureaucrats), and lower classes (working classes). The middle class emerged as the lords ended their control over the 'Phrai'. 'Phrai' evolved from corvee laborers to hired laborers. "The wealthy merchants started to purchase the land, and hired laborers to work on their farmlands or purchase farm products directly from the farmer. The merchants aimed the production

from the farms at overseas markets or sold at high prices in the city".⁸ Thus the middle classes are relatively new to Thai society.

Stereotypes such as birthrights (used mostly by nobilities and the royal family) created a gap between upper and lower classes. The culture of 'Sakdina' lords became 'high culture', which was superior to the 'Phrai' culture. The cultural differences were addressed through 'official nationalism', which was based on the upper classes. The cultural differences also created the different social organizations of the 'Sakdina' and 'Phrai'. It appears that the 'Samatcha Kasetakorn' (farmers' assembly) may have its origin in the Sakdina days.

Pre Official Nationalism

Among the Thai people, the Sukhothai Kingdom was the first well-established kingdom. In fact there was no such thing as national consciousness at the time of Sukhothai. However the importance of the Sukhothai is that the Thai state no longer relied on the Chinese script, record, and language.⁹ The Sukhothai created language and scripts to standardize the alphabet for the Thai, even though there was no print-capitalism at that time. The Thai script had been used by the Siamese court officials from Sukhothai to the present day. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Sukhothai was a powerful city-state, which was surrounded by small dependent Thai city-states that relied on Sukhothai for their protection.¹⁰ Finally, standardization of the Sukhothai political system, language, and scripts led to a clear class structure within the Thai society. The creation of the Thai scripts, society, and classes provided the foundation for

print-capitalism and official nationalism as the common traditions such as scripts, kingship, and culture were established. However, in the 13th century, capitalism was not properly established within Thai society. But after the Sukhothai period, the Thai language, scripts, culture, community, political system, and classes were strengthened by the later regime in the Ayutthaya period (14th to 18th Centuries), and the Rattanakosin Period (18th Century until the present day).

Even though the language, culture, and systems continued from the 13th Century, the concepts of capitalism and boundary in Thailand were relatively limited. Prior to looking at the Thai nation at the time of 'official nationalism', this thesis will look at the work of Thongchai Winichakul's (1994) Siam Mapped which explains the development of the geo-body of the Thai nation-state.

While the Thai people try to relate themselves to long lost empires such as Taimung (1000BC) or Suvannabhumi (543BC), Thongchai saw the terms Thai people and 'Kwampen-Thai' (Thainess) differently from most scholars. Thongchai explains that the term 'Thainess' is a primary awareness of the Thai people's existence. However, there are no set definitions to explain the meaning of 'Thainess'. Thongchai saw the term 'Thainess' as a discursive and vague term.¹¹ It is true that Thai people are aware of 'Thainess', but they have little understanding of this term. However, Thai scholars believe that the foundations of Thainess are the monarchical institutions and Buddhism. Thongchai believed that the primary purpose of Thainess was to create a contrast between the King of Siam's subjects and colonial subjects. While Thai meant being

subject to the Siamese King, the Siamese authority invented terms for those non-Thai people. The terms included 'Farangs' (Caucasians), 'Khaek' (Arabians, Indians), Vietnamese, Burmese, Laotians, Cambodians and 'Jek' (Chinese). However there were Mongoloids ('Khaek', 'Jek', and Laotians) who were subjects of the King of Siam. These resided in Siamese territory, and practiced Thai culture and spoke Thai and were considered by Thai authorities as Thai people.

Thongchai used the phrase "residing in Thai territory" as a key to explain the mediator that creates the Thai identity. Thongchai saw maps as a medium, which led the people to a common understanding about the national boundaries. The term boundary can refer to the sovereignty of the nation-state. Thongchai explains that "until 1826 the Thai authority had no concept of the term boundary".¹²

The idea of mapping was firmly established under the reign of King Mongkut. The mapping technology of the Mongkut period was based on Western principles. Using the west as a model for mapping the nation-state, the western style "Siamese maps are an identification of their kingdom existing as part of the global community".¹³

Even the Thai officials were unable to identify the exact location of Siamese tributary states, but they were able to name those states and their townships. "During the 1893 Paknam incident the French blockaded the Chaophraya River, and the Chakri government was forced to concede former tributaries to France."¹⁴ Thongchai termed the incident as a crisis of morale for the Siamese rulers. The 1893 Paknam incident was

a scar on both the Chakri government, and the Siamese citizens. Even the Chakri officials were unable to draw the actual territory lost on the modern map, but they noticed that “the Chakri government was under threat from the westerners and the Chakri Empire was on the verge of collapse”.¹⁵ The Paknam incident led to reforms of the Siamese administration system.

Thongchai points out that “the 1893 incident scars Thai memory until the present day”. Since 1893, Thai governments have reminded their citizens about the lost territory. During the pre-Second World War period, the Thai fascist government of Marshal Phibun propagated the “recover the lost territory” theme. It was during the Phibun period that the ‘Map of the History of Thailand’s Boundary’ was produced.¹⁶ This map was produced using western mapmaking techniques and indicated the Thai tribute states, which were conceded to France and Britain during the 19th century. It was the first time that mapping was used as a propaganda tool in Thai history.¹⁷

It appears that the language is one of the important fundamental factors in Siam. One of the key things that held the Siamese together is the Thai scripts that were developed in the Sukhothai era (13th Century). The Thai language has been an important part of Siamese identity from the Sukhothai period to the Rattanakosin era (1782 to the present day).

The incidents of 1893 and the tension between the Thai and the French were the turning point. Newspapers (believed to have been developed by Dr. Bradley during the

reign of King Mongkut) were frequently publishing calls for unity against the French in order to show gratitude to the king, and to defend Buddhism and 'Chat Thai'.¹⁸ At this point of time what brought the Thai people together in Chulalongkorn's reign was religion, as the media exhorted people "to protect Buddhism".¹⁹ In the late 19th century, Thai racial identity was related to Chulalongkorn and Buddhism, as the King was known among the Thai people as 'Phra Buddha Chao Luang (Royal Buddha)'. The change in the meaning of one word 'Chat' was crucial. The original meaning of 'Chat' is lineage, origin, or race in Sanskrit.²⁰ The meaning of 'Chat' in Thai became what we would call 'Nation' during the Vajiravudh period. The term 'Chat Siam' or 'Chat Thai' (Siam/Thai Nation-State) did not become common until 1893, with the term 'Muang Siam' or 'Muang Thai' (Siam/Thai city-state) being much more common²¹. The Thai people have frequently used the name 'Chat Thai' from 1893 until today. This is the first record of the Thai media assisting the Thai government. Newspapers had shown its ability to promote state policy through their medium. Even King Chulalongkorn did not intentionally use media to create national-unity within his kingdom, but his successor Vajiravudh used all available media to promote Thai nationalism which was official nationalism.

Official Nationalism

When Vajiravudh succeeded his father as the sixth King of the Chakri dynasty, he used media to promote national-consciousness among the Thai people. This was known as Thai official nationalism. This thesis will look at two periods of Thai official nationalism. The first period is under the absolute monarchy in Thailand, especially under the reign of Vajiravudh himself. The second period is after the Thai revolution of 1932,

nationalism under the fascist government of Marshal Phibun Songkram and his director of Thai nationalist schemes Wichit Wathakan. Even though both regimes were based on nationalistic principles, the concepts of the national identities were different. In this section, this thesis will be divided into two areas. The first area will look at the works of Annette Hamilton (1991) and Walter F Vella (1978) to study the first official nationalism in Thailand. Then this thesis will look at the works of Scott Barne (1993), and Thak Chaloemtiarana (1978) to examine the second period of Thai 'official nationalism'.

Vajiravudh's Official Nationalism

Walter F Vella (1978) wrote about King Vajiravudh and the development of Thai nationalism. This thesis will use Vella's work to explain the origin of Thai Official Nationalism, which took place from the Vajiravudh period. Official Nationalism was launched under the reign of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI). However, it is interesting that official nationalism under King Vajiravudh was mainly designed to strengthen his position after the discovery of the plot to overthrow his regime by young military officers in 1912.

Prior to Vajiravudh's succession, his father King Chulalongkorn sent his princes to study in Europe, instead of the traditional palace education. Vajiravudh was educated in Britain at Sandhurst military academy. He perceived a need for the Thai kingdom to promote nationalism. The first strategy which Vajiravudh used was to militarize Thai society. The King formed 'The Wild Tigers Corps' to serve his nationalistic goals. These were paramilitary units, which the king saw as a tool to unite the Thai people.²²

King Vajiravudh used the term 'Wild Tiger Spirit' to identify the idea of Thai nationalism. Wild Tiger Spirit means the spirit of self-sacrifice for love of country.²³ Vajiravudh decided that the society should be westernized. Surnames were the first issue, and Vajiravudh decided Thai society should adopt them. These surnames were not new for an Asian nation that adopted Chinese customs and culture. And it was clear that surnames appeared in Japan, Korea, China, and probably Vietnam long before western contact. However in the Indian orientated societies such as Burma, Cambodia, India, Laos, and Siam, surnames were relatively unknown. Vella points out that the lack of surnames led to a lack of social organization such as the clan.²⁴ Vajiravudh believed that the use of surnames would lead to pride in the family, then he decided to give surnames to high-ranking officials and nobilities.

Title were the second issue, which he developed from the west. The title Ramathibodi, which was used to identify the King of Chakri, was changed to King Rama in English. Then the number of the reign started to be counted from the First King of Chakri as Rama I; consequently King Vajiravudh became King Rama VI. The king also changed the titles of the high-ranking royalty to His or Her Royal Highness, His (Her) Highness, and His (Her) Serene Highness.²⁵ Apart from the royal family, King Vajiravudh translated titles such as Khunying as Lady, Nangsao as Miss, Nang as Mrs., and Nai as Mr. Interestingly, Vajiravudh expressed the idea of the king as the protector of the nation by using the name Mahakasat (Great Warriors) instead of Phra Buddha Chao Luang (Royal Buddha).²⁶

In addition to the westernization of names and titles, the king created symbols for the Thai nation. The Thai flag was the first symbol to be recreated by the king. The traditional Siamese flag of the white elephant on the red field was not dignified enough for the king.²⁷ The king used the Uthaitani case as his reason for the change to the Thai national-flag. He pointed out that the white elephant flags were expensive because they had to be printed in the west, as the Thai under Vajiravudh had no technology capable of producing the white elephant flag. The second reason was the flag was sometimes inadvertently raised up side down, so the elephant was supine.²⁸ The new flag contains three colors of red, white, and blue. The king gave the reason for choosing these colors as putting Siam more fully in harmony with the Allies.²⁹ Vella points out that the flag was the Thai version of the Western model of God, King, and Country. The new Thai flag was one of the successful outcomes of early official nationalism under Vajiravudh as it has been widely accepted from his reign until today.

Patriotic holidays were also borrowed largely from the west. Traditionally the holidays in Siam were based on Buddhist ceremonies. Traditionally, the King's Birthday was the only non-Buddhist holiday in Siam. King Vajiravudh decided to add two more holidays to remind the people of his father and his dynasty. The first day is Chulalongkorn Day on October 23rd. Chulalongkorn was the fifth king of the Chakri Dynasty and one of the most beloved kings in Thai history. King Vajiravudh decided on Chulalongkorn day as a day to remember his father.³⁰ The second patriotic day is

Chakri Day on April 6th. This day commemorates the accession of King Rama I who founded the Chakri Dynasty. King Vajiravudh named Chakri Day as the Siamese national holiday. The king also made a comparison between Chakri Day and the French July 14th and American July 4th.³¹

'Chaiyo' is a main theme of Vella's work. 'Chaiyo' is a cheer to express the enthusiasm of the people, which is similar to 'Ole', 'Hooray', 'Viva', and 'Bravo'. Traditionally the Thai people shouted 'Ho-hiw' to express their joy. Once again, the king was not satisfied with the traditional cheer. The king needed a cheer which created public spirit and expressed patriotism.³² The king instructed the Wild Tiger Corps in 1914 to yell 'Chaiyo' instead of 'Ho-hiw'. Vella pointed out that the important aspect, which created the differences between 'Chaiyo' and 'Ho-hiw', was their meaning. 'Ho-hiw' was associated with Buddhism, while 'Chaiyo' means victory, which was seen by the king as a more suitable yell for the military or sports progress.³³ The Thai people in the present day yell 'Chaiyo' on most occasions, while 'Ho-hiw' is reduced to use in some Buddhist ceremonies.

Sport was a major theme of Vajiravudh's nationalism. The king noticed that Thai sports are mostly individual, while team sports were unknown among the Thai people. The king saw sport as a tool to develop the Thai warrior spirit to the highest extent. King Vajiravudh also believed that team sports created group unity.³⁴ Thus king saw sport as a path to promote nationalism. Football (soccer) became the favorite Thai team sport. The king organized the first international match on September 5th, 1915, which was the

match between the Royal Hunters Company of the Wild Tigers Corps and the Royal Bangkok Sports Club. The Royal Hunters squads were all Thai, while Royal Bangkok squads were British. The outcome was the Thai squad lost 2-0 to the Sports Club. Vella pointed out that even though the Bangkok Sports Club was made up of British players, the club itself was not a foreign club. It was also interesting that King Vajiravudh was the club president.³⁵ Interestingly this match was virtually unknown among the Thai people in later generations; even a book written about “the century of Thai football history” did not record the results of this match.³⁶

Women’s rights were another example where the king borrowed from the West. Vella believed that the king saw women’s rights as a means to compare Siamese women with their sisters in the West.³⁷ Interestingly the king saw the contrast between urban and rural women in Siam. He believed that the status of rural women was equal to the men, while urban women were inferior to their husbands. The king’s idea was to elevate the status of women to be equal to men. He restricted the practice of polygamy for Thai men. The king also allowed women to participate in compulsory primary education and banned betel chewing.³⁸

Education was a major concern of the king to promote nationalism. It was under his reign that tertiary education in Siam was introduced, as well as compulsory education.³⁹ Compulsory education was the best option for the king to extend his nationalistic ideology to his subjects. Prior to the reign of Vajiravudh, education was limited to the Siamese elite, while the majority of the Thai population were educated in

Buddhism at the local temple. Most Buddhist priests had little interest in political affairs, so most of the education that Thai citizens received during the pre-official nationalism period was based on the Buddhist scriptures, which were taught by Lord Buddha in 543BC. Buddhist schools taught Pali or Sanskrit instead of English or French. The students learn meditation in order to achieve 'nirvana' instead of social science.

The compulsory education proposed by the king was not an alternative to Buddhist education. The king intended to integrate compulsory education and traditional Buddhist education. The new compulsory education trained students in both Buddhism and modern subjects such as science, mathematics, and social science. Unlike traditional Buddhism, the compulsory education enforced by the king allowed the Thai people not to fulfill the traditional prerequisite of ordination to monkhood in order to become educated. Compulsory education led to the need for primary and secondary schools to be established in the Siamese kingdom. The king used the temple and Buddhist priests to assist in his project. There are numbers of 'Wat' (temples) that evolved to 'Rongrien Wat' (monastery schools). The 'Rongrien Wat' systems still exist in present day Thailand.

Compulsory education created two important aspects. Firstly, it created a common understanding among the Thai citizens. Compulsory subjects such as Thai language standardized the vocabulary and writing of the Thai language among the Thai population.⁴⁰ Secondly there was shared information, which was created by the Thai government. The Thai students gradually learnt about the existence of the Thai nation

through their geography and history texts. This information from textbooks was not only provided outside the standard curriculum, but the students also had to remember this information in order to pass their examinations. From very young ages, the Thai students who went through the Thai compulsory education system were taught to believe in the Thai nation and its existence.⁴¹

Vella points out that even though the king used the western model as his concept of Thai nationalism, he also used the Thai past as another model.⁴² The past as model was the attempt of the king to adjust the western mode of thinking and ideology to the circumstances of the Thai people by reinventing the Thai heritage. An example was the use of Thai history to promote Thai nationalism. Vella points out that the ancient ruins in Sukhothai, Kampaengphet, and Sawankhalok inspired the king.⁴³ The king moved beyond his father and grandfather to preserve and recover archeological sites. He established the Archeological Service in 1924. a consequent belief in shared history is one of the factors which manipulated the people towards the idea of nationalism. This is probably the best explanation for his promoting Thai history and archeology. The king had no concern whether the outcome of the work was based on historical facts or rumors and had no attachment to the historical facts, but a strong attachment to the institution of monarchy.⁴⁴

History written under King Vajiravudh was based on the previous Siamese kings' achievements. The books always conclude that Siam was weak after the great kings passed away. He gave a number of examples such as the death of King

Chakkraphat leading to the collapse of the first Kingdom of Ayutthaya.⁴⁵ It also appeared that the kingdom was prosperous under powerful kings. He gave a number of examples such as the legendary King Ramkamhaeng who expanded the Sukhothai Kingdom to its greatest extent. King Naresuan, whom Vajiravudh believed was the greatest king of Ayutthaya won a number of decisive battles against the Burmese and expanded his rule over the Laotian, Cambodian, and Burmese subjects. However none of those kings could compare with the legendary first King of Siam, Phra Ruang who is the ideal hero of Vajiravudh.⁴⁶

The importance of Phra Ruang came from his leadership ability and magical power.⁴⁷ It is unnecessary to cover the details of Phra Ruang, apart from the fact that Vajiravudh used his story to convince his subjects to believe in the monarchy. Vajiravudh wrote the history of Phra Ruang to reaffirm the supernatural right of the king to rule his subjects. The main theme of the Phra Ruang story was related to his magical power to cast a spell on the Cambodian spy and assassin. The role of Asian monarchs differed from that of the European rulers. In the West, kings, queens, emperors, and empresses were viewed as political leaders, while Asian rulers were both rulers and demi-gods in the eyes of their subjects. Vajiravudh needed the story of Phra Ruang's magic to strengthen the monarchy – the history invented by the king was used to manipulate the people into believing that without either the king or the land, the nation would not exist.

Buddhism was another characteristic, which Vajiravudh used to promote Thai nationalism.⁴⁸ During the colonialism period most of the independent states were Christian. In Asia, only three nations managed to survive western colonialism. These were Siam, Japan, and China. The Chinese are Confucians, while the Japanese are Shinto. The Siamese kings since Phra Nangklao (Rama III) saw themselves and the Siamese kingdom as saviours of Buddhism. Vajiravudh no doubt adopted the ideology from Rama III. Since the Sukhothai period, the King of Siam has been represented as Buddhism's prime patron.⁴⁹ Similar to his ancestor, Vajiravudh maintained his role as a patron of Buddhism. However, the king looked for some reform in the Buddhist institution. The reform once again borrowed from a Western model, and was based on his British experience. The title given to the patriarch formally translated as 'Patriarch of the Kingdom' was similar to the British 'Archbishop of Canterbury' who is called 'Primate of All England'.⁵⁰ The importance of Buddhism for promoting Thai nationalism could be outlined in four aspects.

1. A good Buddhist was a moral citizen and strength to the state.
2. A moral state would be strong in competition with other states.
3. For the Thai at least, Buddhism was a better route to morality than any other religion.
4. The Thai had a mission to preserve and protect the Buddhist faith.⁵¹

Vajiravudh used the arts of Siam to promote Thai nationalism. The arts of Siam were in sharp decline since the country was opened up to the West. Earlier kings of Siam did nothing to stop the decline. Both Mongkut and Chulalongkorn were engaged in the project to Westernize Siam and avoid the threat of colonialism. Instead of blaming his father and grandfather for their lack of support in the traditional arts, Vajiravudh blamed

the young Thai for their European tastes.⁵² The king promoted Thai arts and literature to preserve the Thai culture, language and script.

Considering Vella's work, Vajiravudh appears to promote national consciousness towards his subjects. However, Annette Hamilton (1991) points out that some scholars derided Vajiravudh's ability because he refused to tackle the real problems. The court became focused on literary works, performance, and drama. Hamilton also explains that the gifted dancers and musicians received rewards in titles, property and money, while the king ignored the military and most of the bureaucracy.⁵³ The King's poems and writings that were designed to foster nationalism in Siam were published and shared only among the elite that were closely related to him.

Stephen Greene's (1999) Absolute Dreams supports Annette Hamilton's argument. Firstly, the royal writings prior to the end of 1912 were in English that was later translated into Thai.⁵⁴ As this thesis has discussed earlier in the theoretical chapter, language and scripts are a foundation of the 'media and nationalism'. To make the matter worse, most of the king's writing affirmed his absolute monarchy and was against all reforms. As for the early articles by Vajiravudh, the number of Thai people who had the ability to write and read English was very limited. The readers would be limited only to the foreigners in Siam and Thai aristocrats who were educated in Europe during the Chulalongkorn Period. In reality there were only a few people who could read a foreign language and could afford the foreign language newspaper.

However, at later stages the king started to write the articles in Thai, once he realized that the media were influencing the audiences.⁵⁵ Publishing in the Thai language allowed more Thai people to get access to the king's articles. Therefore during the reign of Vajiravudh, there was an increase in the number of readers from the Buddhist monks, teachers, and low level officers, who could read and write Thai language. The only people who were unable to follow the work of Vajiravudh were the foreigners who could not read Thai. During the reign of Vajiravudh, a newspaper might not be very well known and relatively few Siamese families could afford to purchase a copy daily.

Post 1932 Official Nationalism

Official nationalism reached its peak under the military regime of Marshal Phibun Songkram. The architect for Phibun's official nationalism was Luang Wichit Wathakan (Wichit Wathakarn).

Wichit was the person responsible for rewriting Thai history and composing nationalist music, plays and writings. Unlike Vachiravudh, Wichit had a commoner background from rural Thailand and he attended a Thai monastic school in Bangkok.⁵⁶ Wichit had a deep knowledge of traditional Thai culture such as Buddhism (he was one of the Pali language experts at his time), the Thai language and script (he had written a number of literary works for his living, prior to his entrance into the bureaucracy).

Wichit could understand the popular style of writing better than Vachiravudh, and the customs and beliefs. One can identify Wichit as the perfect conveyor of the state's

message to the masses. O'Shaughnessy (1999) believes that the media is powerful enough to brainwash the people if it can communicate with the audience effectively. The way to communicate is to find someone who understands the cultural values to adjust the message to one that the audience can accept. His background from the rural provinces and his Thai-Chinese origin allowed Wichit not only to communicate effectively with the rural Thai, but also gave him the ability to persuade Sino-Thais to commit themselves to becoming true Thais. Another important factor was his education in monastic schools (Rongrien Wat) in Bangkok, which was the place that most Thai were educated at that time. This made Wichit able to easily understand and communicate with commoners and religious people.

Another important factor was that his bureaucratic work in the Foreign Affairs department gave him an opportunity to work in Europe and develop his knowledge of Western culture and languages. Wichit needed a powerful media that was able to deliver his message to the people directly. The medium needed to be affordable (by the people), easy of access (to the masses), easy to understand, easy to remember and easy to reproduce.

Wichit was appointed to the Department of Fine Arts in 1934. The main task for the Department was to promote Thai heritage, such as protecting the ruins from the Sukhothai period, and promoting traditional performances.⁵⁷ The early work of the Fine Arts Department was based on the classical Thai epics to attract an audience. Wichit launched the first nationalistic performance in August 1936, after the success of the

classical epic performance in the earlier period. The historical musical drama “Luat Supahn” [The Blood of Suphanburi] was Wichit’s first success in nationalistic plays. The music’s famous theme is “Come forward, come forward blood-brothers of Suphanburi. Hesitate not, engage the enemy blood-brothers of Suphanburi”.⁵⁸ The theme was originally based on the Thai-Burmese war during the Ayutthaya period (1350-1767). One part of the story focuses on the romantic epic between a Thai girl (prisoner of war) and a Burmese officer. The message of this section was translated at the end as the willingness to create a Pan-Asian sentiment. The concept of Pan-Asia was clearly associated with Thai foreign policy during the period of Phibun, which was a pro-fascist Axis regime.⁵⁹ Another aspect of the story of Laut Suphan highlights the Thai social system and kinship. Sanit Samakgarn (2000) points out that the relationships between Thai people are based on three fundamental factors. The three factors make the people believe that they belong to one community, in which everyone is all related some way or another. The three factors that related people are:⁶⁰

1. Biological factors or consanguineal kin e.g. sons, grandsons, parents, and grandparents.
2. Social factors e.g. brothers and sisters in laws, cousins, aunts, and uncles.
3. Extended factors e.g. these groups are not really relatives, but the family member regards them as relatives. This extended kinship is very common in Thai society.⁶¹

This can be related to Luat Suphan, when Duangchan (the Thai girl character) met with the Suphan people and called on them to join her to attack the Burmese after the Burmese killed her parents.⁶² The theme represents the kinship of the people, as the people find out that the Burmese slaughtered Duangchan’s parents; they start to rally their friends and

relatives to support their fight. The sense of ethnicity is also present as it points out the fight between Thai and Burmese. It also encourages the sense of nationalism. Even though the play persuades the audience to adopt a Pan-Asian perspective, yet the viewer is unable to disregard the differences between the invader (Burmese) and the defender (Thai).

The most interesting aspect is the tactics that the producers use to attract the audience. Instead of choosing a movie as the medium, Wichit chose a stage performance, which was the best form of media to reach the masses in 1936. The music could also be repeated for- or even by- the audiences after the show. The early classical epics of the Fine Arts Department attracted large numbers of people to view the shows.

Wichit's successes in 'Luat Suphan' led to his second musical-play 'Ratchamanu'. The message of 'Ratchamanu' was stronger than the 'Luat Suphan' epic in terms of nationalism. 'Ratchamanu' was a Thai military commander during King Naresuan's reign. Ratchamanu was known among the Thai as a military hero. His successful military campaign in suppressing and invading Cambodia made his name in Thai history.⁶³ Wichit composed Ratchamanu with three major purposes. The first was to achieve the sense of Thai nationalist superiority. One conversation Ratchamanu has with his soldiers runs, "Khmer are Thai but the Siamese Thai are the elder brother".⁶⁴ The message from Ratchamanu to his soldiers will make little or no sense to non-Thai, but it made perfect sense to the Thai in 1937. In this production, the term Thai is not related to the race Thai. In Wichit's meaning it is translated as 'free'.

The term Siamese Thai means the Siamese and Khmer are both Thai ethnics but the Siamese blood is superior to the Khmer. Secondly the theme message to the masses was to back the military organization. Ratchamanu is a soldier and his will is to unite the Thai race (in the story). It translates that the military under the Phibun regime was willing to follow Ratchamanu's steps. Thirdly, the message is to encourage Thai nationalism by linking it to a hero such as Ratchamanu (at least for Thai who share the same beliefs). The famous theme for Ratchamanu is "Love Thailand" which was repeated on radio programs from 1937 until today. The music had two important messages:

1. Love Thailand, uphold the Thai Nation, maintain, and make it progress for the Thai
2. Thai are born as Thai and will die for Thai nation ⁶⁵

The aim of the first message is clearly to create a Thai national consciousness. The second message is more complex. It aims to encourage Thai adults to join or support the military and when played in schools it was designed to encourage the students to join the Yuwachon (youth paramilitary) programme. It translates as Thai are born free and will die to protect the independence of the nation. Ratchamanu was featured in another song to persuade people, with the words, "Ma Puak Rao"[Come, brothers come].

Another important play and musical that was composed by Wichit was 'Phra Chao Krung Thonburi' [King of Thonburi]. The story line was based on King Taksin of Thonburi and his successful military campaign against the Burmese.

There are two songs that Wichit composed for the nationalistic sentiment in the play King of Thonburi. These are “Muang Khong Rao” [Our Homeland], and Sri Ayutthaya”.⁶⁶ The important message from “Muang Khong Rao” was the question “Where are all our men of talent? Where are those who would put up a fight?” and the importance of Sri Ayutthaya was the answer to those questions as “Ayutthaya never lacks men of talent. Our lives we will sacrifice for the honor of Ayutthaya”.⁶⁷

Wichit composed a song that was effective only for communicating with the Thai people, simply because his wish was to create nationalism through media entertainment. The second purpose of the play was to use “Muang Khong Rao” and “Sri Ayutthaya” to ask the audience to either join or support the military. The term ‘Ayutthaya’ refers to Thailand. If we replace the word ‘Ayutthaya’ for Thailand, the song will make perfect sense in that the message was asking for more people to join the armed forces. Thirdly, Wichit picked King Taksin instead of King Naresuan or any Chakri dynasty king because of Taksin’s origin.

Unlike Naresuan or Chakri kings, Taksin was half Chinese and half Thai. The plan of King Taksin was to persuade both Thai and Chinese to cooperate in the same nation just like their (Thai and Chinese) hero Taksin. The use of Taksin was to convince the Chinese people to look at Thailand as their motherland instead of viewing China as their home. The cooperation between Thai and Chinese was encouraged in a composition by Wichit called “Chin Thai Samakhi” (Chinese-Thai Unity).⁶⁸ The King of Thonburi was a major success in integrating Chinese into Thai society. Wichit composed a number

of plays that were successful in creating Thai nationalism and a Pan-Asian sentiment such as the “Battle of Talang”, which featured two famous songs, “Laem Thong” (Golden Peninsula) and “Thai Wake Up”. Also, The “Princess of Saenwi”, and “Nan Chao” were important for the Pan-Asian ideology.

One of the most successful epics that Wichit ever created was “Ramkamhaeng”. It was composed in 1954, while most of his plays were composed prior to the Second World War. The play features the song “Ton Trakun Thai” (Thai ancestor), which expressed nationalism with the statement “Awaken Thai. Do not make our lives a waste, let us love our nation more than our lives, like our forefathers”.⁶⁹ The song also refers to a number of Thai heroes and heroines such as Ratchamanu, Pichai, Sriharat Decho, the Bangrachan villagers, Queen Sri Suriyothai, and Lady Suranaree.⁷⁰ The song is still widely sung in Thailand today. Thus the success of Wichit’s ‘official nationalism’ came through the use of media, especially musical plays and music.

Unlike Vajiravudh, Wichit grew up as a commoner who knew every aspect of the working class people, who are the majority of the Thai population. Wichit did not limit himself to the newspaper articles that reached only educated readers, he did not limit himself to any small social group such as Wild Tiger or Yuwachon groups, he tended to use all sorts of media that were villagers’ favorites. The most common things were posters, and likays. Likay was traditional Thai dance based on fairy tales, which was not very popular among the elite and urban people but was very popular in the countryside. It appears during the Phibun period that “Likay wip Ratthabahn” (government sponsored

likays) added some political events into the story lines. Even though government sponsored likay included propaganda and was not totally based on fairy tale stories, the audiences enjoyed watching the shows, as they were one of only a few form of entertainments they could get within their villages. Music is also easy for the people to remember and they repeated the musical pieces, while they were being socialized. So the media during the Phibun period supported the state creation of nationalism.

Thai Media and Nationalism in the post cold-war period

Since 1957, entertainment in Thailand has changed gradually with the expansion of popular culture arriving from the United States of America.⁷¹ Entertainment companies integrated this popular culture into to the Thai society. For example, the Thai version of string, blues, and jazz music was introduced during the Cold-War period.⁷² However, the major change occurred at the end of the 1980s. The entertainment market in Thailand was opened wider for foreign films and music and the sophisticated techniques of foreign movies gradually took over the Thai film industry. Music experienced the same changes. Access to foreign music and new musical styles gradually replaced the old-fashioned nationalistic songs. Even Thai music companies were reformed by applying the new foreign style and techniques to Thai singers. New Thai songs in foreign styles such as pop, rock, alternative, and rap are gradually taking over the market of traditional Thai music, or even old-fashioned Look Krung (Thai Jazz, blues).⁷³ The nationalistic music composed by Wichit started to disappear from radio and television programs as the programmers preferred the new Thai music style or foreign music to

attract viewers and listeners, so as to maximize their profits. It seemed the Thai movie industry and nationalistic music were doomed to go into decline.

The increase in the popularity of foreign films has resulted in two key changes in Thai society. First is the loss of traditional Thai culture and values among the new Thai generation, which led to a decrease in nationalistic feeling amongst Thai people. Second, the adoption of foreign values and behavior is viewed by the traditional society as inappropriate behavior. This has led to a contrast between the old fashion and the new fashion. The power of the media in the post-Cold War era is strong enough to create new values amongst Thai people. The solution for the Thai movie industry was to use modern equipment and techniques to promote nationalism.

The entertainment companies are also at the crossroads between historical, nationalistic types of movie, or foreign cultural films performed by Thai stars. The choosing of foreign cultural styles may increase the sales rates, but they also require the employment of very popular Thai stars to surpass foreign films and do well at the box office. The realistic solution was based on the revival of Thai epics, novels, nationalist history, and persuading to Thai social groups that these are interesting.

The most successful of all have been Thai films that employ nationalistic approaches. In the age of free trade and market orientation, the Thai government is promoting official nationalism and the movie industry and music industries are now the primary ways for promoting Thai nationalism. This thesis will touch on two aspects,

namely, music as the sound images and motion pictures as the sight images for the audience. Then this thesis will look at the collaboration between these two media industries in order to promote Thai nationalism in later chapters, then examine their effect on the masses.

Music, the sound images

The music type that openly promotes nationalism in Thailand is known as 'Phlaeng Puer Chiwit' [song of life]. Craig Lockhard (1998) points out in his book Dance of Life that Phlaeng Puer Chiwit was originally known for its use in anti-military government stands.⁷⁴ The purpose of Puer Chiwit music was to indicate the problems in society that arise from government policy. Today, Phlaeng Puer Chiwit may be the only remaining nationalistic music type in the modern Thai music industry. It is largely based on cultural and social values. This style of music is similar to western folk music, using western instruments such as guitars, drums, and keyboard.⁷⁵

Many Puer Chiwit artists value their beliefs and musical preferences with little consideration of market directions and this explains the recent decline of Puer Chiwit bands. However when Puer Chiwit songs hit the box office and become famous, they are powerful enough to sway the audience with propaganda. This is the explanation of the importance of Puer Chiwit songs to assist the film industry to achieve success. The most famous remaining Puer Chiwit band in Thailand is "Carabao". Its most successful period was back in the early 1980s when the Thai government promoted pro-Thai products to Thai people. Since then, the works of Carabao have had mostly sociopolitical themes.⁷⁶

Carabao took active roles by producing the famous song “Made in Thailand”, and “Puer Muang Thai (For Thailand)”. The music composed by Carabao mainly voices opposition to foreign activities in Thailand, especially by the USA. They have a number of songs that have been hits at the box office, such as “Tub Lung (National treasure)”. The change in the music industry has led to a new role for Carabao music, and they are starting to concentrate more on social issues or domestic politics instead of taking a pro-nationalist stance.⁷⁷

The music from Puer Chiwit bands is still powerful enough to gain popularity amongst Thai people in the working and middle classes. The revival of ‘Puer Chiwit’ bands to promote nationalism occurred at the end of 2000, as the movie industry created nationalistic films. Puer Chiwit was once again revived and the result was that Carabao started to compose nationalist music to cooperate with nationalistic films such as Bangrachan.

Motion Pictures, the sight images

According to McLuhan’s (1994) theory, motion pictures and live performances serve the same role in bringing a vision of reality, or convincing people that what they see is reality to the audience. However, the motion picture will not serve as a powerful media tool if the message is not shared amongst people who have the same culture and beliefs as the producers. Following O’Shuaghnessy (1999) this thesis will contend that the media will maximize its power to persuade, convince, and shape the thinking of the people when the producers and the audience share the same code.

The code we are referring to is the invented traditions that lead to nationalism. The later chapters of this thesis will examine four famous films produced by three different firms using different story lines and classes of people, but which led to the same conclusion : that film companies are persuading people to be more patriotic and nationalistic and in the process maximizing their sales. The movies are *Bangrachan* (directed by Tanit Jitnukul), *Yuwachon Taharn* (directed by Yuddhana Mukdasanit), *Moonhunter* (directed by Bundit Litthikhol), and *Suriyothai* (directed by M.C. Chatri Chaleom Yukhol).

The purpose of this chapter is also to point out the western cultures do change the beliefs and the culture of the urban people. This leads to the formation of the media companies and the political leaders that join together to create the modern nationalistic values of the Thai people. This new value is the invented tradition. In fact, the invented tradition was promoted by media since the reign of King Vajiravudh, who used newspaper as his choice of medium to introduce his nationalistic principles towards his subjects. The choice of medium changed during the period of Marshal Phibun, which Luang Wichit choose stage performance and national radio as his choice of medium. Those traditions have continue their legitimacy among the Thai people until the present day. However, Thai culture had gradually been assimilated by the popular culture. This leads to the reinvention of tradition to suit the change of culture and the reshape of traditional music, symbols, and signs to suit the current change in people's lifestyles and beliefs.

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Chapter 4

Bangrachan

The main object of the fourth to the sixth chapters in this thesis is to explore the roles of film as the promoters of Thai nationalism. Each of these chapters will be divided into three sections. The first section will look at the background of the films. Four nationalistic films produced after 2000 AD are based on historical epics. This part will also look at the origins of those stories.

The second section is the film analysis, which will be divided into three sub sections. The first section will use the media and nationalism framework to analyze the general contents of the film. This subsection will look at the background of the film owner and directors. The second subsection will analyse the figures and characters in the film. The third subsection will look at the analysis of contents, at what nationalistic symbols can be found in the movie. Apart from the countable signs, this thesis will look at the nationalistic messages, songs, places, and personality cults, which can be translated subtly as nationalistic messages from the filmmaker. The third subsection will look at the social classes within the film. Apart from the class analysis, this thesis will look at the political ideology, which the filmmaker conveyed to the audiences. It appears that although those films are based on historical and nationalistic epics, they are also aimed at different social classes.

The third section will be the feedback on each film including the film propaganda, popularity, and the effects that each film has on Thai society. Bangrachan is a good example of the 'official nationalism', which is the common understanding among the Thai audiences.

Background

The story of Bangrachan is an historical event that is referred to on many occasions in Thailand. The majority of Thai students would learn the Bangrachan story from the time they were educated in primary school.

The story of Bangrachan is based on historical events which occurred in 1766 in one village located in the middle of the war-zones between two Southeast Asian Empires, Thailand (Siam) and Burma. The story displays the inhumane behavior of the potential enemies- in other words the rival neighboring countries- which were potentially, a threat to Thai interests. Historically, the war between Thai and Burmese in 1766 ended as the Thai capital of Ayutthaya was sacked and destroyed by the Burmese troops.

The war between the Burmese soldiers and the Bangrachan villagers was depicted as the Thai defenders fighting the Burmese invaders. Apart from that, the battle of Bangrachan represents the bravery of the Thai people who intend to fight until the last man. The history texts always indicate the bravery of those villagers. Bangrachan is also included in Luang Wichit Wathakan's musical pieces of "Thai-Ancestors".¹ The music refers to Bangrachan as "another important group, the leaders of Bangrachan whose

names could be found; the inhabitants of Bangrachan are very important and are ancestors of the Thai who will be remembered".²

Apart from the warfare between the Thai and Burmese, Bangrachan also makes a contrast between urban and rural people. The story shows the differences in the commitment of urban and rural people to defend their homeland. The bravery of the Bangrachan people who defeated Burmese soldiers seven times consecutively on the battlefield is compared with that of the heavily defeated Ayutthaya soldiers under the command of the high-ranking Siamese aristocrats.³ Thai people were convinced that the lack of support from the Siamese government in Ayutthaya led to the defeat of both Bangrachan and the Kingdom of Ayutthaya. The final battle of Bangrachan indicates the differences in participation between the Thai urban people in Ayutthaya and the Thai rural people in Bangrachan in the war with the Kingdom of Burma.

Bangrachan village sought artillery from the government in order to fight the Burmese invaders. However, the capital refused to support Bangrachan.⁴ The decision of the Ayutthaya government led to the defeat of Bangrachan villagers at the hand of Burmese armies after eight battles. History texts explain that the wrong decision regarding Bangrachan led to the fall of Ayutthaya. The Burmese destroyed the capital of Siam, the Royal House of Ban Pluluang was vanquished and the last king of Ayutthaya died of starvation, while attempting to escape from Burmese soldiers.⁵

After the new Siamese capital was founded in Bangkok, the story of Bangrachan was revived by historians. The record of Bangrachan was found in "Pongsawadarn Chabab Praratcha Hatthalekha" (Royal Historical Record), which was rewritten during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (mid 19th to early 20th Century). Kan Pungbun Na Ayutthaya (Mai Muang-derm; 1948) then used the "Royal Historical Record" to write one of his famous novel 'Bangrachan'.⁶

The novels of Kan are based on the rural style of writing (lookthoong), which was extremely popular among Thai farmers and working class people.⁷ As a famous author among rural people, Kan used ordinary villagers as heroes and heroines in his novels. While Bangrachan was based on ordinary villagers, Kan had no hesitation in integrating his own characters into this historical account. This is because among thousands of Bangrachan villagers, history recorded only the names of the village headmen and leaders.

Interestingly, Kan offered little criticism of the ruling elite, while a number of historians including Luang Wichit Wathakan and his son Wibun Wichitwathakan criticized the House of Ban Pluluang heavily for their lack of support towards Bangrachan. Wathakan criticized King Suriyat-Ammarin, the last king of Ayutthaya, heavily for his personal health problem, education, consorts, royal family issues, and his leadership. Apart from the Wathakans who identified King Suriyat-Ammarin as one of their victims for the fall of Ayutthaya, there are numerous scholars, historians, or even the authors of novels who reach the same conclusion. The possible reasons for Kan

limiting criticism of the ruling regime of Ayutthaya may be based on his family background. Under the famous pseudonym of Mai Muangderm, Kan's works involved the Thai lower class people. However, Kan did not intend to hide his identity; the name "Muangderm" in his pseudonym means "Old City".⁸ In other words, his name explains that his family was related to the aristocrats who either ruled or belonged to the ancient city. Kan's families were also involved in both bureaucracy and aristocracy in the Thai Kingdom since the Rattanakosin period. Among Kan's relatives, "Chaophraya Ram Rakkop" (Fua Puengbun) was one of the most powerful aristocrats during the reign of King Vajiravudh.⁹

Among the historians, members of Luang Wichit Wathakan's Fine Arts Department during the government of Marshal Phibun Songkram wrote a number of historical texts to promote Thai official nationalism. The story of Bangrachan is found in two of Luang Wichit's works. The first one was the well-known historical text "Prawatsath Sakhon" (International Histories). Another work is a novel called "Krung Taek" (Fall of Ayutthaya). Both works regard Bangrachan as the home of brave villagers who intended to fight until the very last man.¹⁰ Unlike Kan, Laung Wichit Wathakan was a fascist and a member of the revolutionary party, which managed to overthrow the absolute monarchy system in 1932. Wichit did not hesitate to criticize high-ranking aristocrats or the monarchy. He belonged to middle rank bureaucracy, so the main characters in his novels are ranked as "Luang" (equivalent to Major in military system, and a low ranking aristocrat with no equivalent in the European system). In both of Luang Wichit's works he gave minimal credit to the Ban Plu-Luang Dynasty. One of the

best examples is the way Krung Taek (Fall of Ayutthaya) identified King Suriyat-Ammarin. Wichit explains that King Suriyat-Ammarin stole the throne from his brother King Uthumphon, but he was unfit to become the rightful king due to his health problem, as he suffered from an ailment. Wichit called King Suriyat-Ammarin a “diseased king” or “ailment king”.¹¹ Among the high-ranking aristocrats, Chaophraya Rattanathibeth was another victim of Luang Wichit. Rattanathibeth was Chancellor of War and Palace Affairs (Jatusadom Fai Wang). However Rattanathibeth was a weak military commander; historical records show that the Chancellor of War escaped from the battlefields three times consecutively, while his troops were still engaged with the enemy. Then he made numerous excuses to avoid any punishment from the king. Interestingly the king still trusted in Rattanathibeth’s ability and used him as military commander. A more stunning fact came after the capital rejected Bangrachan’s request for heavy artillery; the king permitted Rattanathibeth to travel to Bangrachan and instructed the villagers to build two cannons. It was no surprise that the mission again failed under the command of Rattanathibeth, who never had any success in the war effort.

In this film, the success in seven battles is shown. Then the film shows the concern of the villagers to obtain heavy artillery and rifles to continue their campaign against the Burmese invaders and the rejection from the Ayutthaya government based on the snobbish attitude of urban people towards rural people. The failure to acquire any solid support from the capital was always used historically as the best excuse to explain the defeat of Bangrachan in their eighth battle.

Interestingly, the film did not criticize Chaophraya Rattanathibeth, as the films were based on Kan's works and used Rattanathibeth as a righteous aristocrat who willingly assisted the villagers. Even after the mission failed, Rattanathibeth ordered his troops to stay behind, while he promised the villagers that once he arrived in Ayutthaya, he would send more soldiers to assist the villagers. However, the film did not mention any further assistance from the capital at all.

Analysis

This section will be divided into four sections; the first section will be general analysis based on media and nationalism theories. The second section is the figure analysis, where this thesis will look at the personality, behavior, and messages. The third section will look at the film content, including symbols and characters. The fourth part will look at the class that primarily dominated the film story.

General Analysis

The general analysis will use the media and nationalism framework to explain the general contents of both films. This section will look at the filmmaker, political leader and their relationship. Then this thesis will look at the sign, symbols, and tradition, which were stereotyped via media.

The first group in the framework is the media ownership. The latest version of *Bangrachan* was produced by Bangkok Films Limited (a subsidiary company of Thai entertainment giant BEC).¹² BEC is associated primarily with a leading member of the Thai government; the major shareholders of this company are the 'Maleenont' family,

whose family member and former deputy managing-director, Pracha Maleenont, is currently Thailand's Deputy Minister of the Interior.¹³ BEC is also involved in the management of the state-owned Thai Television Channel 3, which is very popular for dramas and sports.¹⁴ Pracha Maleenont is also the Deputy Leader of the Thai Rak Thai Party, which is the largest party in the Thai parliament.¹⁵ Pracha is placed number ten on the Party List by Thai Rak Thai,¹⁶ which means he is one of their prominent members as well. There is no doubt that the connection between media owner and political leader is visible. In fact, the media owner and the political leader are the same person.

The signs and symbols in this film are hard to identify. There is only one monument in Thailand that refers to Bangrachan, which is the Bangrachan monument in Singburi Province. The film tries to make the actors look similar to the people that are represented on the monument of Bangrachan. In other words, the film tries to make its actors resemble the symbol in their own right.

The media role is to stereotype those symbols for the audiences. The choice of medium is the film, which played first in the theatre then went to home entertainment such as video, video-compact disc (VCD), and DVD.

The media is inventing new traditions to make people aware of the practices and beliefs and is able to persuade the audiences to believe in the media information. The audiences are the remaining group that determine the success or failure of the film and their propaganda. The people provide feedback to both political leaders and media, which can determine the success or failure of the propaganda.

Figure Analysis

This part will look at the important figures within the film, which will cover the character, language, beliefs, and costumes. This is the easiest way to make people see the differences between two different groups in the movie. Even the small differences in language, clothes, infrastructure, and appearance are able to encourage audiences to see the differences between Thai and Burmese, between defender and invader.

Firstly, this thesis will look at the characters and costumes. The only differences between the Thai and Burmese casts are costumes. The film shows Bangrachan people as ordinary villagers, who never wear formal dress. There are two categories for the Thai cast, the rural Thai, who include Bangrachan villagers, and the urban Thai people who dress according to urban standards. The Burmese have been represented by their traditional costumes such as the sarong (traditional Burmese skirt that is worn by both male and female Burmese). Apart from the sarong, the film represented the Burmese army as well-organized, whose officers wear heavy armor to the battlefield. On the other hand, Bangrachan villagers represent the unity of the villagers who are willing to defend their hometown at all costs. The dress of Bangrachan was based on that of Thai villagers in the 18th Century. Bangrachan men wore Thai shorts and rarely wore shirts, while women wore 'Patab' (Thai traditional cloths that they wrap around their breasts) and 'Panung' (Thai tube skirt). Those costumes (Patab, Panung, and Thai shorts) were worn by the Thai cast in every scene of the movie, including on the battlefield. Importantly, the differences between Bangrachan leaders and villagers are minimal. In the film, Burmese officers and aristocrats wore heavy armor and remained on the horses, while the Burmese privates wore shirts and sarongs. The Bangrachan leaders and villagers have no

differences in terms of uniform. The differences in terms of uniform enhance the contrast between the well-organized aggressor (Burmese) and the brave defender (Thai) who had limited fighting experience, but were willing to defend their nationhood from the enemy. Bangrachan subtly explained the duty and responsibility of Thai citizens toward the nation. The village of Bangrachan was an ordinary rural village, where the villagers plant rice and other crops, and domesticate livestock in order for their sustenance. Neither trained in military strategies nor experienced in warfare, Bangrachan shows the ambition of the ordinary villagers, farmers, and citizens to defend their homeland, in contrast with the offensive party, the Burmese who are properly trained by the traditional military. Even there, there are minimal differences in the traditional 'art of war' in Asia.

Apart from the soldiers and villagers, there are two more important groups in this film. First and foremost are the female characters in the film. The roles of the females are based on practice, culture, and origin. The female roles in this film are divided into two groups. The first group is the Burmese women; the Burmese female characters can be found in the camp of the Burmese commanders. This female group represents the inferior side of their gender. While the film represents the Burmese soldiers as a professional and well-organized army, the commanders of the troops represent the unprofessional side of the Burmese forces. The Burmese officials have many Burmese beauties or even officers' concubines with them. The roles of females who worked in military camps in traditional warfare were to entertain the senior officers of the armed forces, and considered from the modern military perspective, the female dancers in the armed forces represent unprofessional armed forces. In traditional Asian warfare, the women participated as an

entertainment unit. This included danseuses, musicians, maids, and mistresses. The film shows that the roles of the females in the Burmese society were inferior to men, and they primarily fulfilled the desires of the Burmese males. Considered from the contemporary Thai perspective, the film also represents the immorality of the Burmese officers as well. It is because of this that the audiences see that the Burmese do not respect human rights of women at all.

On the other hand, the female characters of Bangrachan village fill three significant roles in the film. The first role is responsibility towards their household, such as paddy farming. The second role is their responsibility towards society such as supplying food for the soldiers, community farming, and nursing. The third role is the responsibility towards the nation-state as ordinary citizens. The last responsibility shows in various ways, for example sharpening weapons for the soldiers, military training, and in the last battle, the women of Bangrachan fought alongside the men for the survival of their village and the nation-state. Unlike the Burmese females, the women of Bangrachan represented justice and equality of responsibility between male and female despite their different gender-based roles. The film made one point clear: that war is the collective responsibility for the nation as a whole. Considering the case of Bangrachan with the work of Vella's (1978) Chaiyo, as depicted in the film women's rights were never questioned in Thai society, especially in rural villages such as Bangrachan.¹⁷ As Vella noted, King Vajiravudh believed that the equality between male and female in Siam appeared in every rural region, and the practices of polygamy and discrimination against women appeared only in the urban area.¹⁸

In reality, women's rights would be unlikely concerns of both Burmese and Thai during the 18th century. However, for audiences in the 21st century, the issues of equality, democracy, and women's rights are major issues that are not limited to Thailand only, but are also the concern of the international community. Burma today has closed its borders and people hardly know anything about current events in their country.¹⁹ The world has learned that the Burmese are under a strong military dictatorship, and they are heavily abusing human-rights.²⁰ People in the modern world are more aware of injustice and inequality. Burma appears to be a great example, as the Burmese government is involved in all kinds of humiliations including slavery of women and children, drug dealing, genocide of ethnic minorities and corvee labor.²¹ While people are learning about the negative aspects of Burma, the filmmakers see a great opportunity to link the inhumane behavior of the Burmese in the 21st century with those Burmese in the 18th century. Unlike Burma, Thailand is under ostensibly democratic government with their first democratic constitution legalized from 10 December 1932. Therefore, it is very likely that the Thai audiences see the Burmese in a negative light from the very beginning, and films such as *Bangrachan* strengthen their beliefs.

The second group of characters is the Buddhist monks. Thai and Burmese are both Theravada Buddhists known for their strict practice of religious activities. The film tends to show the barbarism of the Burmese soldiers, who killed anyone from women to Buddhist monks. In the movie, *Bangrachan* is a small village, which did not have a temple. During wartime, temples or priests are one of the least important elements, as the

roles of the priests are to raise the spirit of the civilians of that society. However, the film attempts to show the religious part of the story. History records that there was a priest named 'Dhammarchote' who was invited by the villagers from Wat Kao Nangbuat in Suphanburi province, to Bangrachan in the province of Singburi.²² The film shows the barbaric side of the Burmese, who care for nothing apart from causing death and suffering in the Thai nation.

The film also portrays Buddhism as if it were on the side of the Thais. One of the scenes shows the Burmese soldiers attacking a temple; the result is the death of one Buddhist priest by the hand of the Burmese archers. Another scene shows the Burmese troops pulling the head part of a Buddha statue towards their camp. The film is trying to demonstrate the inhumane behavior of Burmese who destroy anything from private property to religious sacred places. However, during the war period, it was very common for soldiers to bring about damage to the infrastructure of their enemy, no matters if they were civilians' homes or religious infrastructure. This is due to the traditional custom for the winner to destroy the capital of the losing side in order to decentralize the power of their opponent. The capital cities of the Southeast Asia empires such as Ayutthaya (Thailand) or Ava (Burma) were the political centers of gravity, military strength, kings, and prestige.²³

Moreover, the people of Bangrachan were not totally committed to Buddhist spiritual principles. The reason for the villagers' demand for Dhammarchote to reside in the village was based on his famous magical power and they relied on a monk such as

Dhammarchote to raise their fighting spirit.²⁴ The Bangrachan villagers relied on the art of animism, or superstition, instead of the formal practice of Buddhism. The yellow Buddhist robes that are worn by the actors represent two aspects in the modern Thai community. The first aspect is the religious aspect; Buddhism is the official religion of modern Thailand, and 95% of Thai people are Theravada Buddhists.²⁵ Religious Thais would be upset by the physical attack on Buddhist priests and infrastructure. As this chapter already mentioned earlier, religion can hold the people together based on their beliefs. The other aspect of Buddhism in Thai society is the nationalism perspective. According to Vella (1978), the 'Trirong' flag (Modern Thai Flag) designed by King Vachiravudh represents the three foundation of the Thai nation-state.²⁶ As already explained in Chapter three, the meaning of the modern flag is based on the western model of God, King, and Country.²⁷ Thai people are learning that the colors of the 'Trirong' represent the three institutions of Thailand. Red represents the Thai nation, blue represents the king and the royalty of Siam, and white represents religious purity.²⁸ The attack on Buddhist infrastructure would create anger in the Thai audiences, as the attack undermines the foundation of the modern Thai nation, as well as religious beliefs. In reality, both Thai and Burmese people are Buddhists; however, the film tries to convince the audiences to believe that the Burmese soldiers are not good Buddhists. Bangrachan shows that the Burmese had no hesitation in destroying Buddhist statues or murdering Buddhist priests.

Another important element in this film is language. Therefore, Bangrachan makes a clear distinctive between Thai and foreign languages. The Thai cast uses the Thai

language, while the Burmese cast either speak Burmese or are silent. Those who speak Thai were shown in the film to reside in a large village, which is surrounded by a tall wooden fortress. The film shows that prior to the Burmese attacking Bangrachan, there is no fortress or even a wooden fence to defend the village. After the Burmese attack, it appears that the Thai people (Thai speaking cast) joined up at the village of Bangrachan and constructed the village as their stronghold.

The linkage between the ancient states and modern beliefs is one of the most successful tactics of the nationalistic film, in order to create, or expand patriotism among the audiences. It is important to ensure that Thai people are aware of historical stories such as Bangrachan and Suriyothai. Thereby, they are able to imagine that the bravery of Bangrachan was based on nationalism. Thai audiences believe in the Nation, Religious Purity, and King as the foundations of the Thai nation. So, they are conveying by the information from the film that the ancient people believe in the same principles as well. While the Burmese invaders are destroying the foundations of the Thai nation, the audiences learn that the Burmese troops sacked Ayutthaya and destroyed Bangrachan (nation), killed Buddhist monks and destroyed religious infrastructure (Religious Purity), and finally captured the royal families of Ayutthaya and sent them to Ava (King and royalty). Therefore, it is not hard for the filmmaker to base the behavior and beliefs of the Thai casts on the modern beliefs in the Thai nation and in human rights. Then, they can relate the behavior and actions of the enemy, such as the Burmese, to the 18th century beliefs and actions. This is more than enough to make villains out of the Burmese in the film.

Analysis of Contents

Bangrachan is an interesting movie because the film employed few symbols or signs. Unlike most of the nationalistic films, Bangrachan did not use any flags, symbols, signs or insignia for identification. Costumes might be the best symbols that created differences between Thai and foreigners in the film. However it would be hard to count the quantity of the clothes to identify the symbol in Bangrachan.

Apart from the costumes, the most prominent figures that could be identified as symbols are the landscape and infrastructure. The landscape within this film is always associated with the province of Singburi where the Battle of Bangrachan took place. The fort of Bangrachan is made from wood, which looks like a tall fence line that surrounds a small village. Interestingly, the official ensign of Singburi province is the wooden fortress, which is explained as the fortress of Bangrachan.²⁹ Considering this fact, the latest Bangrachan movie apparently built the fortress in the same style with the Singburi ensign. Therefore, the wooden fortress in the movie can be considered as an important symbol in its own right. The village of Bangrachan consists of wooden houses and trees. The only permanent infrastructure is a temple. The temple is made from concrete, and the interior consists of a Buddhist statue and the altar. Thus, as noted earlier, the landscape and infrastructure of Bangrachan represents the existence of Thai nationhood.

Even at a village level, the language, custom, religion, costume, landscape, and infrastructure represent the existence of one community, which may be distinctive from both Ayutthayan and Burmese cultures. However the loyalty (or reliability) towards one

greater state (such as Ayutthaya) creates a collective identity with Ayutthaya as the centre. The people in modern day Thailand learn that Ayutthaya was a capital city of the Siamese Empire, of which Thailand is the successor.³⁰ This is an undisputed belief, and nationalistic Thai accept no alternative or compromise. The geographical location of Bangrachan is in the heartland of modern day Thailand, also the film makes the infrastructure of Bangrachan harmonize with the infrastructure of the Thai village in the modern day. For example, the housing in the village was based on high floor wooden houses, which are very common in Thai villages. Apart from the housing, the Buddhist temple in Bangrachan resembles a temple of the modern period. The infrastructure and landscape are able to convince people from the modern era to believe that Bangrachan does exist as an ordinary village in the Thai community.

Perhaps the one and only concrete symbol is the Bangrachan Monument, which the film displays for a few minutes at the end of the movie. The monument is a well-known landmark in Thailand and is located in Singburi Province, which is becoming a tourist attraction for the Thai people. Another interesting fact is that the actors who perform in Bangrachan did pose the same way that the monument is standing. It can be concluded that the filmmaker made an attempt to evoke the symbol using the actors. Therefore, the usage of concrete symbols in this movie would be unnecessary as the actors and the fortress represented the Thai nation in their own right.

Class Analysis

This film shows clearly that the villagers of Bangrachan consisted of the peasantry, lower class, and non-elite members of society. History notes that there were two low ranking bureaucrats in the village: 'Koon' San and 'Pan' Rueng.³¹ 'Koon' is one of the lower-middle ranking Sakdina classes, which is equivalent to captain in the modern military system. It is possible that a district of 400 people such as Bangrachan would be governed by a Sakdina officer of Koon class, who might act as Nai Amphur (district leader). 'Pan' is the lowest ranking in the Sakdina system; it appears that Pan Rueng's responsibility was Kamnan (commune leader) of Bangrachan.³² In the film, both 'Koon' San and 'Pan' Rueng were mentioned briefly as village leaders. The film focuses on the village elder as the leader. 'Nai Than' appears to be the main character in this film and it was 'Nai Than' the village headman, who led the villagers to battle with Burmese troops.

The film tends to disregard the historical facts and insists on carrying the message of the non-elite members. In order to make people patriotic it is necessary to link the cast to the audience. It is important to note that even though the majority of the audience may vary from upper class to lower class people, all they consider themselves as Thai citizens. Bangrachan may be made up of non-elite members of society, but they never commit themselves to any specific social classes. Even the audiences know from the very beginning that the Bangrachan villagers are made up of people from the lowest strata in the earlier society. However, Bangrachan villagers did not represent their class interest in the film, but they did represent the interest of the Thai nation.

Especially in modern Thai society, which ostensibly values equality, democracy, and human rights above the ancient class structure, Bangrachan represents the equality of the people from the elite class and the non-elite people. Democracy is also represented subtly in the story, as the villagers decide to choose a commoner, 'Nai Chan Nuadkiew' ahead of a privileged member of the community, such as Koon San or Pan Rueng.

Interestingly, although Bangrachan may be based on non-privileged members of society, they actively respected the elite of the Thai society. They show their respects towards high-ranking aristocrats such as Chaophraya Rattanathibeth. The respect of Bangrachan towards Ayutthaya aristocrats seems to the audiences to be the standard culture of the Thai people. Even in the modern day, the hierarchy between people in different classes in Thai society still exists. The relationship among Thai citizens is even clear in the family and relatives system. The richer or more powerful members of the family (or clan) are likely to support the poorer or less powerful members of their family. Thailand is a rural orientated society, which is based on a peasant economy.³³ Unlike western society, Thai society treats close-friends as members of their own family. This relationship expands from family level to village, township, city-state, nation, and leads to the broader connections, such patron-client ties within society. So the relationship between Rattanathibeth and Bangrachan villagers is depicted as the relationship between the superior members of the society being willing to assist the inferior members.

Conclusion

This is not the first time that Bangrachan has appeared in the entertainment industry. The importance of the 2000 Bangrachan version is to promote unity among Thai people and create nationalism. An interesting part of the movie is the use of new Western technology, as adapted by the Thai film industry. It is without any doubt the new technology that makes the film look more realistic. It also creates better special effects such as explosions. The audiences easily follow the story line and more readily believe in the information and propaganda that come out of the film.

However, the history of Bangrachan has been debated by various scholars such as Nithi Iewsriwongse (1995) argues that,

Bangrachan has nothing to do with Thai nationalism; the people of Bangrachan fought the Burmese for two major reasons. Firstly the village was too big to mobilize or to flee from the Burmese. Because of the difficulty for the Bangrachan to move away from the battlefield, the remaining option of the Bangrachan people was to fight the Burmese for survival. Secondly, there was no sense of nationalism at that time (1766), the Bangrachan villagers were not fighting for Ayutthaya or Siam but they were fighting for their families' and village's survival.³⁴

Nithi points out two further important aspects from the history of Bangrachan. Firstly, although the villagers did not fight for Ayutthaya, they still cooperated with the capital city. The relationship between Ayutthaya and Bangrachan led to the Burmese fear that Bangrachan would mobilize its troops to assist Ayutthaya in the future. Secondly, Bangrachan was the only village that fought the Burmese without surrendering.³⁵ Thai people remember the Bangrachan battle as a fight until the last drop of blood. The story

of Bangrachan was easily used to promote nationalism amongst Thai people. The latest version of Bangrachan disregards the opinion of historians such as Nithi. Promoters' used famous slogans to promote the movie through nationalism.

1. As long as I am alive, don't even try to take my homeland.
2. For our friends, we will never surrender. For our family, we will fight with our spirit. For our blood brothers and sisters, we will fight with our strength and skills. For our nation, we will fight till the last drop of our blood.

These two slogans were produced in advertising posters, and displayed in cinemas, department stores, on advertising boards, and television commercials.

'Bangrachan' had considerable success with ticket sales of 151 million Thai Baht and became the second bestselling Thai film ever.³⁶ There are several factors that contributed to making Bangrachan successful. Firstly, the relationship between Thailand and Burma during early 2001 had reached one of its lowest points. The political tension between the two states helped the film to create patriotism among the Thai people. The long historical periods of war between Thailand and Burma were well known among the Thai people. Apparently during the height of the tension, the Third Division Commander of the Royal Thai Army decided to use the film to increase the morale of his troops.³⁷ So the film was not only used for entertainment purposes, but the political leaders used this film as a propaganda tool to increase patriotism among the armed forces as well.

Apart from those international conflicts between the two nation-states during the early part of 2000, the governments of both nations tended to promote nationalism by using the other state as the enemy. The battles of Bangrachan not only appear in the film, but the history textbooks in Thailand record the events as well. Also there are a number of famous Thai authors who used Bangrachan in their work, such as Kan Pungbun Na Ayutthaya's (Mai Muangderm) novel, Bangrachan, Luang Wichit Wathakan's novel, Krung Taek [Fall of Ayutthaya], Tommayanthee's novel, Atita [Return to Ayutthaya], and Rampaipan Suwansan Srisopak's (Sopak Suvan) novel, Sailohid & Yatika [Thai ancestors & relatives]. Even though, these four famous Thai authors wrote their novels at different periods and show differences in the level of patriotism, Bangrachan villagers are a heroic group in all their novels. Unlike Kan, Luang Wichit and Sopak Suvan heavily criticized the aristocrats such as Chaophraya Rattanathibeth, Phra Ratcharongmuang, and Chaophraya Kalahome, who were the most powerful aristocrats at the time of the fall of Ayutthaya. Interestingly, Luang Wichit and Sopak Suvan saw those aristocrats as the causes of both the defeat of Bangrachan and the fall of Ayutthaya. Disregarding the fact that Bangrachan was a small village, which would be defeated by the larger army, both Sopak and Luang Wichit made those high ranking Chaophraya as the causes of the fall of the Bangrachan and Siamese Empire.

Even though there is dissent about the true status of Thai nationalism and Bangrachan from a number of scholars, the Thai people tend to disregard any fact that changes the heroic status of the villagers. Thai people in the present era judge the people from the past by their present standard of knowledge and the current culture. Those who

created this film used their standards and knowledge to judge the behavior of the casts and characters. This leads to an unreal standard, whereby the people from the 21st century create the behavior, scripts, beliefs, and personality of the people in the mid 18th century by the standard of the 21st century. Also the audiences consist of people, whose ideas and imagination are limited to their knowledge of the late 20th and early 21st century. This film becomes a mediator carrying the message from the producer towards the audiences, the message based on 21st century beliefs such as nationalism and the existence of the Thai nation for over 700 years.

As mentioned earlier in chapter 3, Thai nationalism did not exist until the late 19th century under the reign of King Chulalongkorn. Nevertheless Thai people in the 21st century are likely to judge the Bangrachan villagers who lived during the mid 18th century by beliefs such as nationalism, religious purity, and monarchy. Even authors such as Sopak Suwan who wrote negatively about aristocrats, are unlikely to attack the monarchical institution as she points out that “It might be Karma (Buddhist beliefs in the causes of action) that caused the fall of Ayutthaya. There are only a few soldiers, who really know about cannons and gunpowder. Therefore, it is not right to blame King Suriyat Ammarin”.³⁸

The concepts of Nation (Chat), Religion (Sat), and King (Kasat) are undisputed among the Thai people in the modern day. Judging from the 21st century perspective, Bangrachan represents bravery and sacrifice for their beloved country, till the last drop of their blood. There are numerous Thai patriotic songs and poems in the 20th century that

mention ancestor blood and that every drop of their blood is for the Thai nation. Based on the modern Thai flag, the red that represents nationhood is also associated with human blood as well. The word blood was used widely in order to create Thai patriotism such as “blood of Suphanburi”, “blood brothers/ sisters”, “Till the last drop of our blood”. This is the reason that Bangrachan evolved from villagers who defend their hometown to national heroes who are willing to sacrifice their life for the nation. Bangrachan becomes a role model for both civilians and army.

Another reason for the success may lie in the music of the film. The musical movement known as Puer Chiwit (music for life) was described earlier. Those Puer Chiwit artists specialized in composing their songs based on political or social issues. BEC successfully convinced one of the most popular Puer Chiwit bands “Carabao” to produce their music. Carabao was one of the most successful Puer Chiwit bands, known for their patriotic songs, or heroic songs, with some occasionally anti- foreigner songs. Among their successful songs were “Made in Thailand”, “Puer Muang Thai (For Thailand)”, “Phrachao Taksin” (King Taksin), “Tab Lung” (anti- US sentiment). Because of the success of the band, the film producer cooperated with Carabao to produce the soundtrack. Nationalistic music was revived by Carabao in this new version of Bangrachan. Bangrachan (Carabao version) hit number one on every radio station. The music frequently plays in shopping malls in Thailand. Non-Thai may feel very surprised by the music’s style and the movie techniques as they mainly use violence as the selling point. However for the majority of Thai people, Bangrachan made them feel patriotic. Foreigners may not understand why Thai became so patriotic after watching such a

violent film. It made perfect sense to the Thai as they believe that Bangrachan portrays a heroic group of people and the movie strengthens their beliefs as it gives a clear picture of Bangrachan's history.

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Chapter 5

Suriyothai

Similar to the previous chapter, the object of this chapter is to explore the roles of the media as the promoter of Thai nationalism. This chapter will use the same format as the previous one, that is dividing the chapter into three major sections. The first section will explain the story of the film briefly and the important historical background. The second section is based on the film analysis, which will be divided into four sub sections. As usual, the first section will use the media and nationalism framework to analyze the general contents of the film. This subsection will look at the background of the film owner, and directors. The second subsection will analyse the figures and characters in this film. The third subsection will look at the analysis of contents, where nationalistic symbols can be found in the movie. Apart from the countable signs, this thesis will look at the nationalistic messages, songs, places, and personality cults, which can be translated subtly as nationalistic messages from the filmmaker. The third subsection will look at the social classes within this film. Apart from the class analysis, this thesis will look at the political ideology, which the filmmaker passed to the audiences. It appears that although those films are based on historical and nationalistic epics, they are also based on different social status. The third section will be the conclusion of this chapter. Suriyothai is a good example of the 'royal nationalism', which is the strongest type of nationalism in Thailand.

Background

Suriyothai is the name of the queen of Ayutthaya during the reign of King Maha Chakkrapath.¹ It is essential to mention the confusion in Thai history caused by the overlap in timelines, name and events, in the story of Suriyothai. The first confusion was the actual timeline for the reign of King Maha Chakkrapath. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap the author of "Royal Historical Record of Siam" in 1912 points out that King Maha Chakkrapath reigned from 1529 to 1546,² while the historian of the modern day such as Phiseth Jiajanpong (2001) and Wibun Wichitwathakan (2001) believes that the reign would be later than that, as the battle between the Siamese and the Burmese started in 1548.³ It is important to understand that the reign of Maha Chakkrapath started with the Siamese-Burmese War within one year after his succession to the Ayutthaya throne,⁴ as Phiseth (2001) used Perigrinicam (autobiography of Ferdinand Mendez Pinto, Portuguese mercenary during 1537-1558) to prove his argument. It is also important to understand that among the historical records of the Siamese kingdom, there are only two pieces that were actually written during the wartime.⁵ First was Perigrinicam and the second one is Hmannan Yazawin Dawgyi [Burmese Historical Record]. Interestingly Hmannan Yazawin Dawgyi records that in 'Chula Sakkarath' of 910 (1548 A.D.) King Mangtra Bin Sotyi of Burma ordered military conscription. Then he mobilized his troops to the Kingdom of Siam (Ayutthaya).⁶ Similarly to 'Hmannan Yazawin Dawgyi', Ferdinand Mendez Pinto recorded in Perigrinicam that the Burmese forces left their border city of Martaban on 7th April 1548.⁷ It is important to mention the exact period, because the war between Siam and Burma did exist, but the story of Suriyothai is not well published in most of the historical works.

Perigriniam did not mention the warrior queen, while Hmannan Yazawin Dawgyi had little concern about the gender of the warriors. Hmannan Yazawin mentions the names of the important warriors in the battle such as Ooya Phitsanulok (Lord of Phitsanulok), Ooya Chakkri (Lord Chakkri; Chancellor of Interior), and Ooya Sawankaloke (Lord of Sawankaloke).⁸ The story of the warrior queen exists for the first time in Thai history in the Royal History Record from Luang Prasert, which indicates that the queen and one of her princesses were killed in the battle against the King of Burma.⁹ However the Historical Record from Luang Prasert did not mention the name of the queen or princess. Apart from the record found by Luang Prasert, the other reliable sources are History of Siam, which is currently located in the British Museum. The book recorded the name of the queen as Suriyothai. The historical record is that Prince of Prome killed the Queen Suriyothai during their duel on elephant back.¹⁰

Perigriniam notes that King Maha Chakkrapath was neither a wise ruler nor a great warrior.¹¹ It is believed that the war between Siam and Burma in 1548 would be considered as one of the biggest wars in the 16th Century.¹² However Perigriniam did not mention Suriyothai at all. Most of the battle, as written by Pinto (1614), largely concentrated on the military tactics, infantry, and foreign mercenaries. It appears that the war did exist in 1548, and perhaps the bravery and sacrifice of Suriyothai did also. The Short history of the Kingdom of Siam written by Jeremias Van Vliet shows (1633-1642) a different perspective of the reign of Maha Chakkrapath. Van Vliet believes that the king was a righteous ruler, very kind, and frequently donated his wealth to charity and

religion.¹³ However he was inexperienced in military affairs. But, the work of Van Vliet was written around a century after the events and it is believed that the information may not be as accurate as the Perigrinicam. He points out that the name of the queen was Souwat instead of Suriyothai.¹⁴ Interestingly, similar to most of the historical records, the Queen of Siam was also the mother-in-law of Ooya Phitsanulok (Lord of Phitsanulok, in some book called Phraya Phitsanulok).¹⁵ Van Vliet points out that the Queen Souwat was a traitor instead of the national heroine. He wrote that Queen Souwat did supply gunpowder and a spy to the Burmese troops as well.¹⁶ At the end, Van Vliet points out that she assassinated her own son, who was the King of Siam, who succeeded King Maha Chakkrath in favor of Ooya Phitsanulok.¹⁷ The book of Van Vliet gave an opposite perspective for the Queen of Siam during the reign of Maha Chakkrath.

The Royal Historical Record of Pan Janthumath (1782) was the first record to mention the name of the dead queen of 1548. The record mentions "Queen Suriyothai dressed as a Crown-Prince, wore battle gear and rode on a battle elephant named Suriyaksat".¹⁸ The interesting fact is that the work of Janthumath is similar to the Record found by Luang Prasert (1907).

King Maha Chakkrath retreated from the battlefield as the king lost control of his war-elephant. The Prince of Proom rode his elephant to capture the King of Siam. In order to save the King of Siam, Queen Suriyothai decided to ride her war-elephant towards the Prince of Proom. The Prince of Proom and Queen Suriyothai were engaging in battle on the elephant back, and the Prince of Burma managed to kill the Queen of Siam in the battlefield.¹⁹

King Uthumphon was the King of Ayutthaya who had been captured by the Burmese forces during the fall of his kingdom. The historical record by King Uthumphon was written in Burmese language by the Burmese secretary, who was appointed by the Burmese King to record the Siamese history. The historical record brought the name of Baromadilok instead of Suriyothai into the history.

The King of Burma and the King of Siam did not wish for casualties of their soldiers and people, so they decided to arrange for a duel. The winner of the duel will take the kingdom of the losing party. However, on that day, King Maha Chakkrath was ill, so his princess named Baromadilok decided to dress as the crown prince and went to the duel on her father's behalf. Princess Baromadilok lost to the King of Burma and died on the elephant's back. When the King of Burma learned that he had ended up killing a princess, he felt so ashamed of himself that he withdrew his troops from the Siamese Kingdom.²⁰

Unlike Bangrachan, Suriyothai may appear in films and textbooks, but there is no author willing to write a novel based on the story of Suriyothai. As this thesis mentions, because of the numerous historical records, the story of Suriyothai was confused about the queen's name (Suriyothai or Souwat), the reign of King Maha Chakkrath, and the killer of Suriyothai, either King Mangtra Tbensoiti (King of Burma), Prince Burinnong Joting Norratha, or Prince Satou Thammaraja (Prince of Proom). Some Thai historians even believe that Suriyothai may not have existed at all. This is because of the lack of historical evidence to support the story of Suriyothai. Suriyothai is the story of a warrior queen who died in the battlefield in order to save her kingdom and her husband. This story is based on four sentences of the Royal Historical Record (Luang Prasert, 1907), and two paragraphs in the Royal Historical Record of Pan Janthumath (1782). The director himself had extended the story of Suriyothai, by covering the events prior to the

warfare between the Siamese and Burmese kingdoms, such as her childhood, love, and succession to the throne. As there are only a few sentences which involved records about Suriyothai, it is possible for the director and filmmaker to create or modify the information that would favor their political, class, or group interests.

The story is about the chaotic Thai politics of the 16th Century. Four major clans ruled Siam in the 16th Century. These were U-Thong (House of Suphanburi / some texts call it House of Chiangrai), Suwannabhumbum (House of Ayutthaya), Phra Ruang (House of Sukhothai), and Sri Thammasokarat (House of Sri Thammarat). The story is based on the marriage between Suriyothai (Princess of Sukhothai clan) and Yaowarath (Prince of Suwannabhumbum clan). At the time of their marriage, Suwannabhumbum ruled the capital of Siam (Ayutthaya). The main theme of the film is the marriage between King Chairachathirat and Princess Sri Sudachan of U-Thong clan. This can be seen clearly from Anderson's (1983) theory of dynastic realm that the elite clans in Siam worked to strengthen the Kingship and kinship ties between the Suwannabhumbum clan, Phra Ruang clan, and U-Thong.²¹ However the story comes to a different outcome, with Queen Sri Sudachan and her relatives and lover Shinnarat assassinating the King and establishing the U-Thong clan as the rulers of Siam in place of Suwannabhumbum. The movie is based mostly on elite politics; however, it is linked to the disunity and distrust in society. In the story, Suriyothai decides to bring back the righteous ruler of Siam; clearly, this must be her husband as he is the only remaining prince of the Suwannabhumbum clan. Suriyothai and Ooya Phitsanulok (her half-brother), with the cooperation of Koon Indradeb (Sri Thammarat clan), Ooya Sawankhaloke (Lord of Sawankhaloke; Prince of Cambodia),

Luang Sriyot, Muen Ratchasaneha, and Ooya Pichai launched a coup against the U-Thong clan. The story concludes with King Maha Chakkrapat (Yaowarath) defeating the Prince of Proom in 'Yuddahatti' ; in a duel on elephant's back. Suriyothai intervened in the battle by leading her elephant to defend the king. It is known in legends in Thailand that the Burmese Prince killed Queen Suriyothai in that battle. Suriyothai was able to defend her king and country by that sacrifice.²²

Analysis

Similarly to the previous chapter, this section will be divided into four sections; the first section will be general analysis based on media and nationalism theories. The second section is the figure analysis, where the thesis will look at the personality, behavior, and messages. The third section will look at the film content, including symbols and characters. The fourth part will look at the class that primarily dominated the film story.

General Analysis

The general analysis will use the media and nationalism framework to explain the general contents of the film. This section will look at the filmmaker, political leader and their relationship. Then this thesis will look at the sign, symbols, and tradition, which were stereotyped, via media.

Suriyothai brilliantly managed to use the traditional dress, beliefs, culture, values and symbols to attract Thai audiences. The main reason for the lack of success of Thai movies is the low quality, due to small budgets and the lack of funding. Unlike other Thai

films, Suriyothai did have a large budget. As with most of the nationalistic films, Suriyothai was made to promote nationalism in Thai society. The associate director of this film, Chang Somboonsuk Niyomsiri (pseudonym Piak Poster) wrote about the purposes of the film ;

I [Chang] was summoned by His Serene Highness M.C. Chatri Chaloem Yukhol (director and owner of the production company). His Highness informed me that he was making an historical film named Suriyothai. 'I [M.C. Chatri] am making an historical film; the film-owner wants young Thai to know why their races are called Thai [independent]. They [young Thai people] should know that their nation exists because of the blood and effort of their brave ancestors. I [M.C. Chatri] want the young Thai to remember the bravery, sacrifice, and effort of those heroes and heroines"²³.

The ambitions of the filmmaker are very clear from the start. The director is expected to promote nationalism through the film. He expects to create the connection between the characters and the audience. This film was produced by Prommit Production, and as mentioned earlier, Prommit Production is owned by His Serene Highness Momchao Chatri Chaloem Yukhol.²⁴ Among the Thai Royal Family, M.C. Chatri is a 'Momchao' (grandchild of the king), which is a very high-ranking position. Legally, commoners who wish to communicate with a Prince at the level of 'Momchao' need to speak in 'Rachasap' (Language of Thai Royalty). As the filmmaker is a prominent member of the royal family himself, then it would be likely that there are numerous symbols and practices of 'high culture' emerging in this film to strengthen the ruling classes. The audience may look to the film as the mediator of the rightful culture, practices, and behavior. The prince explains his reasons for making Suriyothai :

I [M.C. Chatri] want to make one good historical film. I have an ambition to promote the history of the Thai people. I do not think Thai people have any concern about the Thai history. Even in school, history becomes a part of Sangsermprasopkarnchiwit (Social Studies). Our children do not understand the origin of the Thai nation. I think this is very bad. Every country has a major concern about their history. If we do not give concern to our own history, then we will not have any future. I want this film to show human behavior. These are power, desire, bravery, cowardice, obedience, trust, loyalty, and most importantly, sacrifice.²⁵

M.C. Chatri expects the audiences to learn more about Thai history. Also he expects the audience to understand that during peacetime, Thai people may have a number of internal conflicts, but during wartime, the Thai people unite to defend their motherland. However, if the Thai people are disunited during the war period, then the nation is under serious threat and it may lose its independence.²⁶ Considered from the filmmaker's perspective, Suriyothai is there to create nationalism and unity within Thai society. The filmmaker such as M.C. Chatri refers to the ruling elite, who see things from the perspective of the upper class.

M.C. Chatri was not only a member of the Royal Family who apparently believed the foundation of Siam emerged from the King and Royalty, but he is maybe a possible descendant of Queen Suriyothai himself. Another interesting fact was that the actress who performs as Queen Suriyothai is Momluang Piyapat Piromphakdee who is a cousin of M.C. Chatri. The people with Momluang rank are still considered by the people as members of the Royal Family or aristocratic families; however they are the aristocrats that have the closest tie to the commoners. Unlike other actors of this film, Momluang

Piyapat (in J. Butsaba, 2001) is not a professional actress. She points out that she entered the film industry as;

Five years ago (film takes place in 2001 A.D.), in 1996 A.D., I [M.L. Piyapat] learnt that I might have to perform in the movie because Her Majesty Queen Sirikit told my mother about this movie [Suriyothai]. Three years later my uncle [M.C. Chattri] told me that he has all necessary information and I have to perform in his movie.²⁷

Considering M.L. Piyapat's statement, it can be seen clearly that some of the prominent roles in this film had been chosen prior to the beginning of production. Perhaps M.L. Piyapat is one of a few actresses whose roles had been fixed at the start.

Prommit Production is owned by the aristocrats. Suriyothai took a pro-royalist stand. The culture that stereotyped in Suriyothai would reinforce invented tradition. It is because the tradition as such was not well known among the Thai people. However, audiences easily believe that the culture that is presented in the film is the high culture, which the upper-class Thai people commonly practise.

Similar to Bangrachan, Suriyothai was promoted by various media. The first medium to come out is the movie, and major cinemas in Thailand would not hesitate to show this film. The second medium is the Video-CD (VCD) and DVD, which are distributed in most video stores. The third medium is the poster and flyers, which are the most common way to promote each film. Finally, newspapers and television present news on Suriyothai.

At this point, the audiences are the ones who determine the success and failure of both propaganda and the media companies. In reality the feedback from the audiences is one of the most powerful forms of democracy, as the people are the ones who determine the future of the media company and sometimes the political leader or political system as well. The people are the ones who buy the products, if the products are of low quality, have bad plots, and an unacceptable storyline, the audiences might not support the products from the company again. On the other hand, the people who hate the film might draw a linkage to the institutions, which are supported by the movie, and then they might acquire a negative image of the institution and the media as a whole.

Figure Analysis

This part of the thesis will look at the important figures within the film, covering the characters, infrastructure, conversation, beliefs, and costumes. Those figures encourage the audiences to see the differences between Thai and other ethnic groups, as well as the concept of 'Chart', 'Sath', and 'Kasat' (Nation, Religion, and Kingship).

The first group this thesis will cover is the characters and their costumes. Costumes bring the greatest racial differences in this movie. The first group is the Thai elites; and their clothes can be divided into male and female categories. The male characters represent the government and ruling elite of the Thai kingdom. The males appear in colorful shirts (mostly gold, silver, and red) and traditional trousers. Within the throne hall, the cast who represent kings and royalty wear a gold necklace, which is decorated in traditional Thai style, while the cast who represent aristocrats and nobility

wear white dress with a triangle shaped hat. The aristocrats' dress represents angels, while the king represents the lord of life. So, the normal understanding that the audiences would receive is that the king and royal family members are the lords who stand above human beings, while the aristocrats are living angels or messengers for the god of the mortal world (king). Those who perform as the kings, queens, and royal families are always sitting in a higher place than those civilians present, while people from non-royal blood kneel down and serve their patrons who sit above them. During the battle scene, the infantry are dressed in normal red shirts and traditional trousers with a helmet, while the king and his aristocrats (army generals) are wearing full armor with gold decoration to represent the Thainess. Importantly, the king and his aristocrats are always on elephants' or horses' backs, while the commoners are always the infantry.

Unlike Bangrachan, the female characters in Suriyothai wear beautiful and colorful dresses. Even if they are still wearing Phathab as a standard female dress of the Ayutthaya period, those Phathabs are relatively longer and very colorful, made in purple, gold, silver, red, and brown fabrics. Their skirts are also similar to their shirts, and they always use the beautifully carved golden belt as well. Their bodies are always adorned with gold and jewelry, such as gold necklaces, rings, and crowns. The female characters who wore similar costumes to Bangrachan villagers are always their servants or female pages that practise the arts of warfare to defend their lords.

Apart from the Ayutthaya and Phitsanulok costumes, there are also Thai-Lanna costumes which are from the Northern Thai state. The ordinary costumes of Lanna people

are similar to the Thai of the lowland. However, the Thai uplanders have different formal costumes, in which the female elites wear golden decorations on the top part of their body, while wearing colourful skirts and holding the Lanna umbrella that can be found only in Northern Thailand today. Unlike the Thais on the central plain, the Thai uplanders do not wear any heavy armor on the battlefield. Their uniforms are very similar to the Thai infantry, but their clothes are somehow more colourful than the central Thai infantry.

The other groups within the Thai kingdom are foreigners. There are two groups of foreigners; The first group is the Chinese who come to Siam for trading purposes. However they also bring traditional Chinese knowledge of studies such as medicines. The Chinese cast wear traditional Chinese costumes with colorful shirts in red, blue, and green. The Chinese represent trade and knowledge in the Thai kingdom; however they also represent greed and corruption. There is a scene where Chinese traders offer a commission to the corrupted military general, if the Thai king decides to purchase the Chinese cannon. Also, the Chinese represent greed, as Jin Hong (a Chinese merchant and importer) was appointed as the head of custom officers, and the Chinese trader ended up increasing the tax for incoming goods, so he could reduce the competition from Portuguese merchants and other Chinese merchants. Apart from the Chinese, the Portuguese are also present in this film. The Portuguese are among the earliest Europeans to come into contact with the Asian people. The Portuguese in this film can be divided into two categories; the first group is the mercenaries who came to Asia for its wealth. Wibun Wichitwathakan (2001) points out that there were many mercenaries who came to

Southeast Asia for its wealth and during the 16th century Persians, Indians, Japanese, Chinese, and Europeans came to Siam as adventurers. ²⁸ Wibun believes that the Portuguese would be the preferred choice among the lord of Southeast Asian to hire into their army. ²⁹ Their reasons are that the height and body build of the Europeans in the 16th century were much larger than that of the Siamese or Burmese. ³⁰ In addition, Portuguese mercenaries were good with artillery, and rifles, and able to fight with their swords or gauntlets. Wibun points out that the wealthy lords such as the King of Siam, King of Burma, and King of Martaban (Mons) always hired the Portuguese to control the artillery division. He points out that King Chairacha hired a company of Portuguese mercenaries to work as his pages, and cannon officers. Their payment was also very high; He further points out that the Portuguese general such as Diego Suarez de Mello received 300,000 Ducats from King Mangtra Bin Sotyi of Burma, per annum. ³¹ The Portuguese frequently appear in the film as soldiers who wear heavy European armor. They frequently hold a rifle and stand beside the king or sit with all of the military staff during the strategy meetings. Apart from the mercenaries, there are another group of Europeans appearing in this film. These Jesuits and missionaries brought western knowledge with them, such as modern medical treatment. The standard clothes for Jesuits are based on the old style Roman Catholic missionaries who wore black clothes with a cross around their neck and carried a bible. However even though the movie represents those Jesuits as Christianity in Asia, there are no scenes to show that the Jesuits had performed their duty, such as teaching the Christian people or spreading Christianity. There are no appearances of Roman Catholic churches, when the movie shows Ayutthaya. The only churches that

appears in this movie are the Theravada Buddhist temples, while the role of the Jesuits has been demoted to that of European doctors.

The Burmese brought differences to this movie as enemies to the Thai in the Southeast Asia. Those who act as Burmese are identified by their shoulder armor. The armor on the shoulder of the Burmese generals is based on long armor with three vertical lines below the first plate. The helmet is of the same layout as the Thai helmet. However the Burmese royalty wear silver armor, while the king wears golden armor. Also the belts are different from the Thai generals, while Thai warriors used cloths as their belts; the Burmese wore the leather belt with the symbol of a Peacock in front of their belt. The Peacock is the symbol of the Burmese king and royal family, and was displayed on the Burmese flag until November 1885 (when the British colonized Burma).³² Another important member of the cast is King Mangra Bin Sotyi of Burma who wears either armor or traditional Burmese dress such as 'Sarong', Burmese style shirt and necklace. While the cast who perform as Burmese males have a certain appearance, which can identify them as Burmese, the female cast have some difficulty in portraying the difference between the Burmese and Thai characters. The clothes of the Thai and Burmese female characters are alike. The only differences are the designs on their necklaces, which are designs in Burmese art. Another difference created by the female cast in Suriyothai is the traditional dance. As mentioned earlier, the filmmaker needed to import Burmese dancers to perform the complicated art of Burma. The Burmese dancer is dressed in a long-sleeved white shirt with long skirt and Burmese design necklace and

rings. The dance creates a real difference in this movie, as the traditional dance is a branch of culture which is important in the society.

The last group is the Buddhist monks. The Buddhist monks have a clear residency in the Buddhist temple, which is shown frequently in this movie. The temple is built in Rattanakosin architecture, even though the architecture of Rattanakosin dates from the late 18th century. The historians believe that the art of Rattanakosin [modern Thailand] has its origin in the art of the Ayutthaya period. Prince Tianracha who had been struggling with the political situation, decided to be ordained as a Buddhist monk to avoid the conflict. It shows that even though Sudachan and her husband Worawongsa are cruel, she never planned to harm Prince Tianracha while the prince was in his robe. Ooya Mahasena [Chancellor of War] who came to stop the fight between the soldiers of Prince Tianracha and Worawongsa explained that "Now His Highness (Prince Tianracha) has been ordained to monk hood; he wears the sacred robes which are the flag of all 'Orahan' [Saints of Buddhism]. No one can harm the person who seeks the way of Lord Buddha to achieve Nirvana". In fact Prince Tianracha was ordained to avoid any confrontation with Worawongsa, but the ruthless king lost his ambition to assassinate the prince. However the scene shows a different perspective from that of the Burmese soldiers; in the battlefield the old priest Maha Naga came to raise the spirit of the Siamese soldiers, but became a victim of the Burmese soldiers who kill the old monk. The scene shows that the Burmese are more ruthless than the most ruthless king in Thai history, because they have a clear intention to kill everyone, including an old monk. Similar to Monk Thammachote in Bangrachan, Maha Naga did not perform any real religious practices apart from

praying in front of the Buddhist statue during the ordination of Prince Tianracha. The Buddhist monk in this film was used to raise the spirit of the soldiers and practice animism to convince the soldiers to fight.

Apart from costumes there are also a number of nationalistic symbols that are displayed in this movie. The first message comes early in this film to point out the threat from the neighboring country. In it King Chairacha explains to his half-brother Prince Tianracha (Yaowarat) his reason for overthrowing King Rattathirat from the throne of Ayutthaya. The new king said "What is your expectation? The country is in chaos, the bureaucrats are corrupt. Our tributary states have abandoned us; they seek protection from the Burmese King instead. If I do not create this coup, our kingdom will be outnumbered by the Burmese". The message of Chairacha created the sense of national unity and threat from the enemy. Princess Suriyothai also supported the new king after Prince Tianracha told her about the coup, "I think the king (Chairacha) makes the right decision. The kingdom is in chaos, if this is our responsibility to protect the kingdom, we (Tianracha and Suriyothai) should do the same thing". After the coup, the filmmaker covers the battle of Chiangkrai and Chiangkran, which were former tributary states of Siam invaded by the King of Burma. The movie shows the ambitions of King Chairacha to recapture the former tributary states of Siam such as Lanna, Chiangkrai and Chiangkran from Lanchang (Laos) and Burma. After the reign of Chairacha, Ayutthaya came under the reign of Yotfa and then Queen Sri Sudachan, who is the step mother of the young king, succeeds the throne after Yotfa dies in mysterious circumstances. Queen Sri Sudachan appointed her secret-lover Koon Shinarat to the throne and he proclaimed

himself King Worawongsa. The country was once again fragmented as the movie shows the army of Ooya Phitsanulok (half-brother of Suriyothai and ruler of Phitsanulok) engaged with the 'Ngieo' (ethnic minority in Northern Siam), who captured the city of Chakanglao (Kampaengphet) from the Siamese king. Suriyothai summoned her half-brother to Ayutthaya to execute a coup against the cruel and corrupt king. Ooya Phitsanulok and his generals visit Prince Tianracha to seek his advice. In his monkhood, Prince Tianracha compares himself to Buddha, while Worawongsa and Sudachan are the demons that ruined the unity and certainty of the Siamese kingdom.

One of the important nationalistic messages came when King Maha Chakkrapat [Prince Tianracha] summoned his general to plan military strategy against the invasion by Burmese King Mangtra Bin Sotyi [Tbensweti]. Ooya Pakdeenuchit [Muen Ratchasaneha] who is one of the most important characters in this movie request of the king "Your Majesty, please allow me and my soldiers to engage with the Burmese king in Kanchanaburi. The City of Kanchanaburi is covered by two wide rivers, such as River Kwai and River Lamtapeng. I am able to engage the enemy for the time being, so your majesty will have enough time to prepare the troops to fight the Burmese king". The film shows that a leading general such as Pakdeenuchit is willing to die in order to buy some time for the king to prepare his major forces. The king replied "Lord Pakdeenuchit, with a handful of soldiers (historians believe Pakdeenuchit had only 6,000 soldiers)³³, it is impossible for you to defeat the Burmese troops (Pinto (1614) points out in *Perigrinicum* that the Burmese troops are consist of 800,000 soldiers³⁴, however considering from the *Hmannan Yazawin Dawgyi* [Burmese Historical Record] (1548) the Burmese troops are

consisted of 185,000 infantry, 12,800 Cavalry, and 600 Elephants.³⁵ The number in Hmannan Yazawin Dawgyi seems to be more realistic than Perigriniam as the population at that time was much smaller than today). Lord Pakdeenuchit does that mean your ambition is to fight till the death in Kanchanaburi?”. Sorapong Chatri (in J. Butsaba, 2001), whose role is Pakdeenuchit, said he is proud of his role of showing the bravery of Pakdeenuchit who is willing to die for the nation. “I [Sorapong] love this role even though he [Pakdeenuchit] is an unknown warrior in Thai history. He is an old soldier who has already retired but returns to the military in wartime. He knows that he can engage the enemy for only a few days, but he is still willing to die on the battlefield, so the king would have enough time to prepare for the final battle with the Burmese”.³⁶

The next message came from the king (Maha Chakkrapat) informing his queen that he will lead the army to assist his generals on the frontline. “Even if the Burmese troops are much greater than us, we (King Maha Chakkrapat) must fight to defend our kingdom.” The next scene shows that Queen Suriyothai wore heavy armor and sought permission from the king to fight in the battlefield. “This war with Burma is a serious threat to our kingdom; I have decided to fight alongside Your Majesty on the battlefield”. She also indicated that “War never makes any distinctions between males and females, the enemies are at our gate, and this is the time for everyone to fight for the future of Ayutthaya”. As in most of the historical films, there are a number of nationalistic messages during the battle; however the most important one comes after the frontline troops under Ooya Phitsanulok and Ooya Sri Thammasokarat (Lord of Sri Thammarat) have fallen into a trap of the Burmese king. King Maha Chakkrapat knows it is a trap by

the Burmese king to challenge him to a duel, so he told his queen that “even if it is a trap and if I (Maha Chakkrapat) do not win the fight it may cost my life, I still have to fight the Burmese king. If I do not fight them today, the morale of the soldiers will be doomed.” This message is related closely to the concepts of Vella (1978), which explain Thai official nationalism during the reign of King Vachiravud as “King as a protector of the state and his people”.³⁷ The message and behavior of Maha Chakkrapat in this film is somewhat related to the idea of official nationalism, which was introduced to Thai society in the early 20th Century. In other words, the behavior of Maha Chakkrapat in this film is presented in the frame of reference where both filmmaker and the audiences learn about the roles of the king. Official nationalism is once again confirmed by the message of Queen Suriyothai to her princes, princesses, and pages who try to convince the queen to stay behind. “I [Suriyothai] must join his majesty in the battlefield. If an accident did happen and it cost his majesty’s life, how do you think I could survive? It is not only I, but also the people and the Kingdom of Ayutthaya which will collapse if his majesty is no more.” The message confirms the concepts of the official nationalism of King Vachiravud; the concept of the nation in the eyes of the elite and upper class are confirmed very clearly. The movie reaffirms the message that the king is the protector of the nation. The king is a lord of life, and without the king the nation and the people cannot survive.

Apart from costumes, characters, and messages, usage of language is one of the most important things to analyze. Unlike Bangrachan, the cast in Suriyothai speak the Thai language, regardless of their nationality in the movie. This diminishes the boundary

between races and nationalities. The cast in this film are using traditional language and 'Rachasap' [language of Thai royalty]. As Suriyothai is based on Siamese royalty and aristocracy, 'Rachasap' is the main language within this film.

Among the Thai commoners, Rachasap is not a language that is used in everyday life. It would be no wonder at all, if the majority of the Thai population did not understand the Rachasap or were unable to speak this language. Even the actors and actresses had the same problem with the language; the best example came from Sorapong Chatri, whose role is Ooya Pakdeenuchit [Muen Ratchsanaha; Infantry Commander of Siamese troops]. He pointed out that "no actors or actresses wanted the vocal roles; it was very frequent that we made mistakes because of the language". Sorapong (in J. Butsaba, 2001) pointed out that M.C. Chatri employed Dr. Suneth Chutintranon who is a senior lecturer at Chulalongkorn University, Department of Linguistics, to write the scripts.³⁸ A number of actors and actresses had the same difficulties such as Mai Chareonpura whose role is Queen Sri Sudachan. She points out that "language in this film is nice and neat, it is language that we hardly speak in the present day".³⁹

Interestingly, only some races do not speak the fluent Thai language. The best example is the Chinese in Siam; there are two important Chinese characters in this movie. Both cast members use Chinese names such as Jin Hong [Luang Shodit Rachasitthi; Chinese merchant and Head of Custom Officers in Siam] and Sinsae [Chinese doctor]. Interestingly, both Chinese cast members speak broken Thai, and hardly know any Rachasap. Even Sinsae, who had been summoned to the court of Queen Sri Sudachan,

did not know formal language and customs. Similarly, Jin Hong did not have any idea about the right word to call the king and queen of Siam. This film did create the distinction between the two races in Thai society and the film may portray the Chinese as cunning and disrespectful. Importantly, Suriyothai who dislikes the rise of the import duty refused to call Jin Hong by his rank [the other cast still call Jin Hong Luang Shodit]. The contrast between Thai and Chinese is very minimal in present Thai society; however in this film the contrast between the two races is still wide. Unlike Chinese characters, the Portuguese mercenaries and Burmese generals in the movies speak fluent Thai.

Apart from the language, traditional dance creates the differences among the cast. There are two major scenes where dance and costume identify racial differences. The first scene is the invasion of Chiangmai, where Queen Jirapha of Lanna [Chiangmai] had surrendered to King Chairachathirat of Siam. Prior to the Queen of Lanna appearing on the scene, there were numerous traditional dancers who dressed in Lanna costumes and danced towards the Ayutthaya forces. Those traditional dances show the distinction between Northern Thailand and central Thailand. However the area where traditional dances create the most distinction between Thai and Burmese was the battle of Bassein where the film shows the military layout within the Burmese forces. Similarly to Bangrachan, the film shows the women were used as the entertainment unit for the Burmese king and aristocrats. Chang, the associate director of this film, explained the use of the entertainment unit, as “designed to relieve the stress of the military general”.⁴⁰ Chang (2001) explains that M.C. Chatri (filmmaker and director) wanted the traditional dance, which must be very different from the Thai dance in every region.

In the first place, His Serene Highness [M.C. Chatri] believed that the Mon [ethnic minority in Burma] dance would be enough. Therefore, His Highness ordered his assistant to hire the Mons from Ratchaburi or Phrapadaeng to perform traditional dances in this film. However, the Mon culture and dances are very similar to the Thai traditional dances. His Serene Highness was very dissatisfied because he expected the dance to be very different from the Thai dance. He ordered his assistant director to 'contact the governor of Chiangrai immediately! I [M.C. Chatri] want him [the governor of Chiangrai] to get the Burmese dancers for me in two days'.⁴¹

It seems the film owner created the difference in Thai and Burmese identity from the distinction between Thai and Burmese society. Dress and dance were important physical distinctions in the movie. The audiences were able to see the differences between the two states from those distinctions.

Suriyothai conveys many of the same beliefs as Bangrachan. Women rights are portrayed in this movie. As with Bangrachan, the Burmese female can be found in the Burmese commander's camp. This group represents the inferior side of their gender. The Burmese women in the army were used by the military generals as consorts, musicians, maids, and dancers. Once again the film shows the Burmese had no respect for the female, regardless of their ages. The film also shows the cruelty of the Burmese king after he defeated Ooya Pakdeenuchit in Kanchanaburi. The remainder of the Kanchanaburi people were mostly children, women, and old people, yet the king of Burma summoned the executor to execute all survivors of Kanchanaburi. It would not be surprising if this actually occurred. Perigriniam points out that King Mangtra was a ruthless king who enjoyed executing female prisoners of war.⁴² Wibun points out that

King Mangtra may have loved to torture females for his own desire, and he points out that the king of Burma was a pederast.⁴³ So, according to Thai records that the king of Burma showed very little mercy to his female subjects, it is possible that the female units in the Burmese army were there to entertain the kings' generals and release their stress after the battle.

On the other hand, the Siamese female portrays the equality between the genders. There are many significant female characters in this movie whose roles are very important. The first group is the Siamese elite where males and females are nearly equal. The first female who came on the scene as a powerful female is Phra Ackarachaya who is the queen of King Noputtangune. King Noputtangune is an old king who is also father of both Chairacha and Tianracha. However Noputtangune had a desire to marry Ackarachaya who is a beautiful daughter of Ooya Yommarat. Before the king passed away, she asked Noputtangune to name her infant Prince Rattha to succeed the throne of Siam above two older brothers; Chairacha and Tianracha. Ackarachaya does not have any dialogue, however the way Ackarachaya sit on the throne, while her infant son, a mere puppet, is running around the throne hall, proves the power of Ackarachaya in the movie.

After Ackarachaya, the second most powerful female is Sri Sudachan. Sri Sudachan married King Chairacha after the death of Queen Sri Chulalak. Sri Sudachan showed no willingness to be inferior to the males. She summoned all important aristocrats to order with her page Prig to assist her. Sudachan portrays the image of a female who is more powerful than all males in the kingdom with the exception of the

king (Chairacha). The first scene appears when Sudachan falls in love with Pan Butsrithep. She learns that Pan Butsrithep is a son of Ooya Srithep (Lord of Srithep/ Phetchabun), which means Butsrithep is her relative as well (Sudachan is a princess from the House of Suphanburi). So, she decided to promote him to Koon Shinarat (Head Priest of the inner-court) and summoned Ooya Ratchapakdee who was a Chancellor of Palace Affairs. Even though she was a queen Ooya Ratchapakdee showed that he did not wish to follow her order, he informed the queen that the present Head Priest of the Inner-Court was still alive, so he was unable to fulfill the request of the queen. This is the first scene where the movie shows the power of the female, when Sudachan ordered Prig to murder the High Priest and showed the corpse to Ooya Ratchapakdee. This scene may show the ruthless side of Sri Sudachan, however it shows that politically, females are equal, or even more powerful than males. Sudachan shows the powerful side of a female who can appoint anyone to the throne of Siam after King Chairacha has passed away. Numerous historians saw Sudachan as an immoral and ruthless queen who followed her desire and created chaos in the kingdom.⁴⁴ However, Wibun Wichitwathakan (2001) has a different viewpoint from other historians including his father Luang Wichitwathakan (1930s). Wibun (2001) explains that Sudachan may not be immoral but she is too modern for a conservative period such as Ayutthaya.⁴⁵ Mai Chareonpura (in J. Butsaba, 2001) who acted as Sri Sudachan points out that "My role is acting as Queen Sri Sudachan. She is a proud lady who is proud of the U-Thong clan. She (Sudachan) is willing to do anything to revive the glory of her dynasty."⁴⁶ Mai also points out that M.C. Chatri wanted Sudachan to be depicted as a family woman who wished for the success and prosperity of her clan.⁴⁷ Sudachan is not the only powerful female in the scene, her page Prig has very

prominent roles as she is the one who summoned the High Priest of the Inner Court on behalf of Sri Sudachan, she assassinated the Chinese Doctor who knew the secret of Sri Sudachan and killed Ooya Mahasena who disliked her queen. Prig portrayed a female soldier who served her master and fulfilled her duty as well as the male soldiers.

Suriyothai is another female with roles of equality to all men. At the start she is shown as a master of the estate, where she can order anyone in the palaces to follow her instructions. The second scene started when Suriyothai gave advice to her husband about politics. She argued with her husband over the rightness of Chairacha to stage a coup against King Rattha. She also asked Muen Ratchasaneha (later Ooya Pakdeenuchit) to train her princes and princesses, as well as her servants, pages, and soldiers in every military science. The scene that showed female bravery was the scene where assassins from Sri Sudachan arrived at the palace of Tianracha. Suriyothai and her female pages fought against the soldiers of Sudachan as equal to men. After the death of Ooya Mahasena, Suriyothai demonstrated the power of the women by summoning powerful military commanders such as Ooya Phitsanulok from Kampaengphet to Ayutthaya. Suriyothai shows that she can order males to follow her instructions, including telling Ooya Phitsanulok to give the throne to Prince Tianracha. As for Sudachan, Suriyothai is a leader of all females who appear to be equal to the men. Sometimes Sudachan and Suriyothai demonstrate that they can order the men around or raise any one to the throne. It appears that Sudachan can order Ooya Ratchapakdee because she is closely related to the Minister of Palace Affairs, while Suriyothai is able to summon a number of lords who have a connection with the War Department, such as Ooya Mahasena and Ooya

Phitsanulok. Another similarity is their willingness to follow their husbands in dangerous situations. Sudachan followed Worawongsa to Lopburi, where she learns that her king is planning to take a white elephant from the jungle, which leads to her and Worawongsa's death at the hand of Ooya Phitsanulok. Suriyothai follows Maha Chakkrapat to the battlefield against the Burmese, where she ends up being killed by the Prince of Proom.

Similarly to Bangrachan, women's rights would be unlikely concerns in Siam during the 16th century.⁴⁸ Once again, the film did not convey to the audience the nature of the 16th Century, the male dominated society which was still in place. 21st century audiences accept issues such as women's rights, democracy, gender equality, and human rights. The audiences in Thailand would easily imagine the threat from ruthless neighboring countries who respected no rights of monks, women, and children. The movie portrayed the ruthlessness of the Burmese king who executed all children, females, and old people in Kanchanaburi, and of Burmese soldiers who attacked a prominent priest such as Maha Naga, and killed the Queen of Siam at the end of the movie. The Burmese in this film not only subverted moral issues such as human rights and women's rights, but they also subverted the foundation of the Thai nation. First was their invasion of the Siam nation, by which they attacked the concept of 'Chat' [nation or motherland of Thai]. Secondly, they attacked the priest and gave little mercy to everyone, even those people in the monk hood. At this point in the movie, the Burmese were undermining the second foundation of modern Thailand, which is 'Satsana' [religion; especially Buddhism]. Thirdly and perhaps most important was the killing of Queen Suriyothai who represents the 'Kasat' [royalty]. This movie may not be very critical of the Burmese, but

it portrays a broader picture of nationalism than the Bangrachan, where only the issues of 'Chat' and 'Sath' were undermined. Suriyothai shows that the solid foundations of Siam were undermined by their potential enemy, of which the 'Kasat' is perhaps the most solid of all foundations of the modern Thai nation.

Analysis of Contents

Unlike Bangrachan, Suriyothai did have contents to analyze, such as flags, symbols, and concrete infrastructure which indicated the existence of the nation.

The first set that this film shows very frequently is the Phratinang Sri Sanpet [Grand Palace], which represented the symbols of the ancient Siamese Kingdom. The real Sri Sanpet Palace was destroyed by the Burmese forces in the 18th century, so the movie tried to show the beauty and elegance of the lost palace. The film told the audiences at the end during the credits that the scene at Sri Sanpeth was filmed at Muang Boran [Ancient City Complex] where the people can find replica palaces and landmarks of the Thai nation, including the lost one such as Sri Sanpeth. Sri Sanpeth is a landmark of the Ayutthaya kingdom, so the movie shows the picture of this palace to remind the audiences of the lost palace. Especially at the end of the movie, the film shows the palace once again, before it shows the dream of Suriyothai who saw the Sanpet Palace had been destroyed. Here the film shows the present remains of Ayutthaya. In this three hours' long movie, Sanpet Palace appears six times with an average of one appearance every half hour. Interestingly, the palace appears when there are serious events appearing in the movie such as the succession of the king. Interestingly, when the film shows the complex

of Sanpet Palace, this is the same as the Royal Grand Palace complex in Bangkok. It is possible to argue that the Sanpet palace has influenced the complex in Bangkok. However, the Royal Grand Palace in Bangkok is the best known landmark among the Thai people, and this can create patriotism for the Thai people, as the palace represents the existence of 'Kasat' [Kingship and Royalty] in Thailand. The Grand Palace is not only located in the middle of Bangkok, but it also represents the city of Bangkok and the Thai nation. The ambition to draw a connection between the lost Sanpet Palace and the Royal Grand Palace is a remarkable achievement in this film. The Thai who watch this film will start to see the threat to the nation when the movie shows the picture of the Sanpet palace destroyed by the Burmese, where the beautiful complex becomes a ruin in the destroyed city.

Palaces and other landmarks have been used very often in this film. Apart from the Sanpet Palace, there is also Wang Chai [Victory Palace or Front Palace]; The term Front Palace means the residence of the crown prince or the first in line to become the king of Siam. The tradition of Front Palace continued from the Ayutthaya to the Rattanakosin era, which is known today as Wang Na.⁴⁹ As with the Grand Palace, the remains of the Front Palace were merely a ruin. The Wang Chai was displayed frequently in this film as the Wang Chai was the residence of Prince Tianracha prior to his ascending to the throne as King Maha Chakkrapat. The film shows the beauty of the palace, which is made from golden teak, and may be able to draw a parallel to the Wimanmaek Palace in Bangkok, where golden teak was used as well. Wimanmaek is also another significant landmark in Thailand. Although the filmmaker draws a very

minimal connection between these two landmarks, Wang Chai is shown seven times in the first two hours of this movie. Wang Chai may not be as nationalistic a symbol as Sanpet Palace, but the film shows the connection between the Ayutthaya and Rattanakosin periods where there are two beautiful palaces that are similar to each other. The similarities are not limited to the architecture, but also the materials such as Golden Teak could be discussed as well. Golden Teak is the most solid teak, which can only be found in Thailand. So, the palace itself represents Thainess, from its architecture to the materials.

Apart from the Palace, Wat (Buddhist temples) are another concrete landmark found in this movie. Wat were presented four times in this movie and represent the second foundation of Thai society, 'Satsana'. Several moral issues are also presented in this film. The first one is the activity of King Chairacha after his successful campaign in Lanna. Instead of destroying the city, King Chairacha went to perform an offering, and built a Pagoda at one of the Wat in Chiangmai. The movie shows that even though Chairacha is a ruthless warrior he is also a very religious man. The second scene is the ordination of Prince Tianracha, when the armies of both Tianracha and Sri Sudachan are fighting outside the palace. However after Prince Tianracha is ordained as a Buddhism monk, Sudachan withdrew her troops and no longer threatened Tianracha. This scene shows that even though Sudachan was seen by the Thai historians as a cruel and ruthless queen, she never had any intention to harm anyone in the monkhood.

The most significance scene is the conversation between Tianracha and Ooya Phitsanulok who came to seek his advice. Tianracha in his monkhood compared himself to Lord Buddha, and intended to leave the monkhood if that meant the kingdom would have peace. The comparison between the king and Buddha was used from the ancient days to the Rattanakosin era. The king was known for two roles in Siam as 'Chao Mahachiwit' (Lord of life; Lord of mankind) and 'Phra Buddha Chao Luang' (Royal Buddha; Living Buddha).

Therefore, the film has two intentions for the audiences. The first intention is nationalism, where the three foundations are presented in the movie, 'Kasat' is presented by Prince Tianracha who is a living royalty; 'Satsana' is presented in his monkhood and the Wat complex; and 'Chat' is presented by the intentions of Phra Tianracha to save the kingdom, which is in chaos. The second intention of the filmmaker is to strengthen the Kasat institution, where the king reaffirms himself as 'Lord of Life' along with the concepts of 'Royal Buddha', where Prince Tianracha saw himself as a living Buddha who will relieve the people of Siam of a ruthless ruler.

Apart from that there is one comparison during the battle of Kanchanaburi, where the army of Ooya Pakdeenuchit was defeated by the Burmese forces. King Mangtra ordered his soldiers to burn the whole town of Kanchanaburi down to the ground. He points out that no matter what the infrastructure, Wat or Palace, he wished to see them burn to the ground. These scenes make a good comparison between the Burmese and the Thai rulers. No matter how ruthless or warlike Sudachan and Chairacha were, they never

killed Buddhist monks or destroyed any religious infrastructure. On the other hand, the Burmese king is crueller than the most ruthless king and queen of Siam. Mangtra has no intention of being a patron of Buddhism and shows no mercy to anyone, even if they are monks, infants, women, or old people.

The flag is one of the most concrete symbols, which evokes nationalism and creates differences between Thailand and Burma. The film shows the flag of the Ayutthaya army with a yellow background and red Garuda (half human, half bird) in the middle of the flag. This first flag is only displayed when the King of Siam is commanding the troops. The ordinary soldiers are represented by a red flag without any symbol. There are three yellow flags with Garuda in the centre shown in this movie and the flag appears three times. The first time is when King Chairacha went to Chaingkrai and Chiangkran to recapture the cities from King Mangtra of Burma. The second time was when King Chairacha marched his armed forces towards Chiangmai. The last time is the scene where King Maha Chakkrapath marched his troops towards the battlefield to fight King Mangtra. It is very important to understand that the flag represented the King of Siam. The yellow represents Asian kings (the Kings of Burma, China, and Vietnam used yellow as their symbols as well),⁵⁰ while the Garuda represents the Siamese monarchs. It is unknown when the yellow flag with the red garuda was invented; however it is still in use in Thailand today. During royal ceremonies or royal visits, Thai people always hold both the Red Garuda flag and the Thailand national flag. So, the flag of the red Garuda represents the Siamese King, and is the symbol of safeguarding the Siamese people.

At the end of the film, the cavalry of Phitsanulok and the Siamese infantry were trapped by the Burmese troops. The army of Maha Chakkrapat arrived and the scene shows the Red Garuda flag flowing behind the king elephant; the trapped troops saw the arrival of the royal army as reviving their spirit. The flag of the Red Garuda is perhaps the only surviving historical flag in present day Thailand.

The second flag is the red flag of Ayutthaya, in reality the red flag was the Thai national flag, which has been used widely by the merchant ships of Siam since the Ayutthaya period. The plain red flag later evolved into the red flag with a white elephant in the centre, during the reign of King Mongkut in the early 19th Century.⁵¹ As the civil ensign of the Siamese kingdom, the film shows six red flags in the battle of Chiangkran. Then there are eight flags shown on the fortress of Chakkri during the battle with Burma. Also the fortress of Chakkri was shown twice in this film, which seeks to persuade the people that the red flag represented the Thai nation.

Apart from the Red Flag and Red Garuda flag, there is another flag behind the elephants of both Suriyothai and Maha Chakkrapat. There are two blue flags and considering the blue colour on the modern Thai flag is represents the King and royalty of Thailand (King and Royalty), the blue flags behind both Chakkrapat and Suriyothai are merely a representation of the King and Queen of Thailand.

Apart from the Siamese, flags also show differences between Thailand and Burma. On the Burmese side, there are three types of flag. The first flag is similar to the Red Garuda flag, a yellow flag with a red peacock in the centre. As explained earlier, the yellow color represents the monarchy of Asia; the red symbol in the middle represents the nationality of the king. While the Siamese king chose Garuda as his symbol, the Burmese king chose a peacock to represent his kingdom. There are four Red Peacock flags displayed in this film during the final battle with Suriyothai, where King Mangtra expects to fight with King Maha Chakkrapat on elephant back. Apart from the Red Peacock flag, there is a green flag, which represents the civil ensign of Burmese soldiers. There are no symbols on the green ensign, so it is hard to understand the reason the filmmaker chose the green flag, but perhaps he just wanted to show the differences in flag color between Thailand and Burma. As the Thai used red and black as the civil ensign, the Burmese should use green and light blue. The third flag in this film is a light blue flag with a black lion in the centre. The lion is understandable as the symbol of Burmese royalty as the throne of Burma was called 'Sinhasna' [Lion Throne].⁵² So, the light blue flag may share a similar meaning as the blue flag of Siam as the representation of the royal family, while the black lion is identified as the symbol of the Burmese throne. There are three Red Peacock flags, eight green flags and nine light blue flags in the battle scene. Also the flags are displayed in four scenes, first during the march out of the Burmese capital of Hongsawadee, second, marching across the Thai border, third, the invasion of Kanchanaburi, and last, the final battle in Ayutthaya.

Another symbol is the wall painting on the palace of Siam, which tells the history of Siam. The palace paintings can be found in the Royal Grand Palace in Bangkok and these symbols of Thai art and culture tell the story of Suriyothai. The painting was shown twice in the movie, at the opening and the ending of the film. Although the painting may be unable to create patriotism or nationalism in the movie, it represents Thai art and culture, which are subtly the foundation of the Siamese community.

Class Analysis

Unlike Bangrachan, Suriyothai was not based on villagers' heroics, or honor. Suriyothai was based royal elite, and upper class society as it contributed to the national interest. The Bangrachan story was for commoners and working class people (the peasantry). Suriyothai was the story of royalty, aristocrats, and kingship. However, Suriyothai attempts to represent all classes in Siam.

As noted in the historical chapter, the differences in the Siamese class system are very visible. The first appearances in this film show the royal barge which is used among the royal elites in Siam. Suriyothai appears as a fifteen years old princess, who sits in the middle of the long barge surrounded by her servants and slaves. At this point, the film shows the differences within one aristocrat household. Within the barge, there are at least three classes. First was the upper class; the Princess of Phitsanulok represents the upper middle class in Siam who is entitled to privileges such as sitting in the middle of the royal barge. The second group are the courtiers who represent the upper middle class in Siam.

The courtiers are receiving privileges in Siamese society as the servants to the Siamese nobles. The third groups are slaves, which no longer exist in Siamese society. However, the slaves were one of the significant groups in Siam during the early 16th century and were used as housekeepers, servants, chefs, guards (for aristocratic families), and assassins (as shown in the later stage of this film). In the film, the respect for class is very high; there is no overlap between the classes. Even with the people from the same class, the smaller clans have to respect the bigger ones.

Another important scene that is significant to both Thai society and the class structure is the 'Klong Chang' [wild elephant hunting] Ceremony. The 'Klong Chang' is a ceremony that is preserved for Siamese noblemen, who are expected to capture a wild elephant in public view. This ceremony continued in Siam from the ancient period until the late 19th century. This scene shows two more groups of people who in Thai society. The first group is the ordinary villagers and citizens who live in the kingdoms. These people are considered as the lower class or non-privileged people in the society. Similarly to Bangrachan villagers, the villagers in Suriyothai are careless about nationhood during peacetime; they saw the Klong Chang ceremony as a festival in which the elite came to their villages to compete with each other. The citizen watch the ceremony for fun. There is also another group of citizens who are conscripted by the elite to guide the wild elephant to the 'Klong Chang' area. This group of villagers are the elephant hunters, who specialize in hunting the wild elephant. This particular hunter belongs to the ethnic minority in Surin Province called "Suay".⁵³ Aristocrats used Suay people to guide the wild elephant to the 'Klong Chang' site, so the elites can start their 'Klong Chang'

festival. The elephant is very significant to Thai society and is not only an animal to use in traditional warfare, but also represents the power and pride of the Southeast Asian monarchs. Prior to 1912, the national flag of Siam (Thailand) was the red flag with the white elephant.

The movie also explains that there were two major clans ruling Siam during early 1500. There was the Suwannabhun Clan [House of Ayutthaya] and Phra Ruang Clan [House of Sukhothai]. The film explains that the largest and most powerful clan was the Suwannabhun, who ruled the Siamese capital in Ayutthaya, while the House of Sukhothai ruled the Northern provinces at Phitsanulok. The 'Klong Chang' scene shows the ambitions of two princes, one from each clan competing for an elephant. It demonstrates the instability between the aristocrats in Siam. It appears that all of the Siamese lords of regions emerge from the small communities. Communities such as Ayutthaya and Phitsanulok expanded to become powerful cities. The rulers of those big cities started to dominate the surrounding cities and include them into their own territory. The best example is the coup where Ooya Phitsanulok (Lord of Phitsanulok; Prince of Phra Ruang Clan) plan to overthrow Queen Sri Sudachan and the U-Thong clan. The soldiers and aristocrats that Ooya Phitsanulok chose are Phitsanulok forces, from dependencies such as Sawankaloke and Pichai, which are under their own lords. Both lords are under Phitsanulok supervision and depend on Ooya Phitsanulok's orders. Another example is the Burmese forces, where the King of Hongsawadee (Pegu) summoned the vassal states' forces such as Bassein, Toungoo, Proom, Siriam, Hlaing, and Pagan to assist him in the war effort. As in the final battle in this film, ⁵⁴ King Maha

Chakkrapat ordered the lords of the vassal states to 'Tekrua' [resettlement]. Wibun Wichitwathakan (2001) explains the term 'Tekrua' in more detail as meaning conscription and resettlement.

No one in the kingdom can resist being taken to the capital. The Tekrua resettlement places are 'Muang Tri', 'Muang Chattava', and the surrounding district to the capital city. 'Muang Tri' and 'Muang Chattava' means surrounding cities which were dependencies, or under the control of Ayutthaya. After the people from Tekrua arrived at the capital, all males who were not disabled would be taken to the military camp, so they can fight against the enemy. Females and their children would work cooking, catering, and working in every aspect to support the war effort.⁵⁵

The explanation from Wibun shows the connection between class, society, and language. The greater states such as Ayutthaya expand their territory towards the surrounding provinces, which are smaller and weaker than Ayutthaya. Once the greater state has expanded to the extent that there is no longer a smaller state within their territory, they look towards the other big states. One example was the battle between Ayutthaya and Lanna, or the battle between Burmese and Siamese Kingdoms. Apart from warfare, according to Benedict Anderson's (1983) theory on imagined community, the nation can be expanded by marriage among the elite as well.⁵⁶ In Suriyothai, the King of Suwannabhum's clan who ran the Ayutthaya Kingdom expected to expand his kingdom in a northern direction. The connection between the Suwannabhum and Phra Ruang clans led to the marriage between their princes and princesses such as Prince Chairacha and Princess Sri Chulaluk, Prince Yaowarat and Princess Suriyothai. At the later stage in this film, Princess Sawasdirat (daughter of Suriyothai) also marries Ooya Phitsanulok (Lord of Phitsanulok; Prince of Phra Ruang clan), tightening the blood relationship between

two royal families. Apart from the two major clans, minor clans such as U-Thong (House of Suphanburi) and Sri Thammakhokarat (House of Sri Thammarat) are also included in this movie to consider the expansion of the nation-state by the marriage among the ruling elite.

The connection between sexual politics shows clearly in this film from the beginning of the movie. Princess Suriyothai was engaged to Prince Yaowarat, while the princess was in love with her relative Koon Pirenthorathep (Ooya Phitsanulok). However she had been persuaded by her parents (Ooya Sri Surin; Ruler of Phitsanulok) and King Ramathibodi II of Ayutthaya. In the movie, King Ramathibodi II informed the young princess that

It's true that I am the king of this kingdom. However I have no desire to force you [Princess Suriyothai] to marry my nephew [Prince Yaowarat]. You can call off this arranged marriage if you wish, but you must think about this carefully. The future of Ayutthaya and Phitsanulok rely on your decision, if you decide to cancel this ceremony, and then there would be a scar between the two states.

The statement in this film shows that the marriage between two clans created a connection between two royal families, which led to the expansion of their kingdom. In the history, aristocrats such as Ooya Sri Thammakhokaratch (Lord of Sri Thammarat) also marry one of the Princess of Suwannabhum's clan after King Maha Chakkrapat succeeded to the throne of Siam.⁵⁷ Also King Chairacha married Princess Sri Sudachan of U-Thong Clan after Queen Jitravadee (Princess Sri Chulaluk) passed away, strengthening the connection between the clans in Siam.

The story of Suriyothai was based on a few sentences in the Royal Historical Record, which had little about Queen Suriyothai. The film created everything about Suriyothai, based on the filmmaker's knowledge and understanding. As mentioned earlier, the filmmaker himself is a high-ranking prince who understand all the customs of the upper class. The class structure in this movie is very clear. The film shows that there are divisions among the Thai people. The first group is the upper class, which is the central group in this movie. Their custom, beliefs, practices, and languages (Rachasap) become the practice in this movie where the audiences expect to see the upper class as elegant, righteous, and moral. The hierarchies between each class are very significant.

Below the royal families are the aristocrats who are considered as the core of the national administration. The aristocrats can hardly be considered as the middle class, as their groups enjoy the luxury of upper class wealth. Even if the aristocrats do not have the same level of luxury, wealth, and privileges as royalty, they have a far greater amount of power and wealth than the ordinary citizens within the kingdom. The third group in this film that can be considered as the middle class are the foreigners, such as Chinese traders and doctors who came to the Siamese Kingdom to trade. However they have a non-Thai background, and hardly any Thai capitalism was created because the Chinese, or even Portuguese traders in the early 16th century considered themselves as non Siamese citizens. Also there was no such thing as heavy industrial production in Siam and the majority of their goods were imported from Portugal and China. The last classes are the commoners who are identified as Phrai in the traditional Siamese class system. The Phrai

in this film are the majority of the Thai population, who work as privates in the army, farmers, merchants in the market place, and corvee laborers. Phrai may be the majority of the population, but the film shows that there was no sense of rebellion or revolution from the lowest stratum in the community.

Unlike Bangrachan, the commoners do not play any significant roles in this movie. They only enjoy a number of festivals, which are provided by the government. However, they serve their nation in the infantry under the strategy and command of the royalty and aristocrats. The film shows the perfect community in the eyes of the elite, which is a society with great respect for their class, social status, and ranks. The lower elite respected the higher one; the aristocrats held authority over the middle class and lower classes, and the lower class respected people with higher social status as they are believed in the Buddhist principle of Karma.

Conclusion

The story of Suriyothai in the history record is only a few sentences, but her bravery was more than enough to place her name on the hall of fame for Thai heroines.⁵⁸

The movie creates a number of beliefs about royalty in Siam. Even though many people may consider the Sakdina system, which forced the people to work as corvee labors, as undemocratic, the movie tries to avoid the issues of corvee labor and inequality by trying to integrate the Phrai people with the courtiers. The first example was Prik who was the head of the female pages of Queen Sri Sudachan. Prik served her queen as a present day hired servant. She could do anything she wished and was able to summon

aristocrats by using the name of her patron (Sudachan). In reality, Prik was not an ordinary Phrai, as she had privileges to enter any department. However, Prik was called by all aristocrats Phrai, which draws the similarity between Prik and others, who are commoners. Suriyothai shows the old Siam, where there were four classes (royalty, aristocrats, Phrai, and slaves) with the merchant class identified as foreigners. The movie shows peace and harmony between the four classes. It also informs the Phrai that there is no need for revolution from their class as the rulers are well aware of the bad government and are willing to destroy it on behalf of the lower classes. The examples are the coup of King Chiaracha who overthrows corrupt Lord Yommarat and King Rattha and also a coup by the Lord of Phitsanulok and his colleagues to overthrow the ruthless Queen Sudachan and her lover, Worawongsa. The ruling elite are portrayed as knowing much better than the commoners about handing the throne to a righteous ruler. The film tells the people that revolution from below is unnecessary as royalty examine themselves very frequently and ruthless rulers are unable to stay in power.

People in Siam during the time of Suriyothai may not have been knowledgeable and may have accepted their inferior status based on Karma.⁵⁹ However, audiences in the 21st century may be only partially convinced by this message, even if they are Buddhists and still respect people based on their birth rights. Thailand is now under the democratic system and the level of education among the Thai people is higher now than at the time of Suriyothai. Importantly education during the Ayutthaya and early Rattanakosin periods came from the Buddhist temples (rongrien wat), where the concept of Karma was included in their lessons. The education system in the 20th and 21st centuries is different

and is based on the western concepts of science, social science, mathematics, and linguistics.

Another interesting point came from Suneth Chutintranon (1994) who is an historian who wrote a book called Thai-Burmese Warfare. In the movie, Ooya Pakdeenuchit took 6,000 soldiers to Kanchanaburi to prevent the advance of Burmese forces. The scene where Pakdeenuchit went to the battlefield at Kao Chonkai is one of the most patriotic scenes in this movie and while the audience may be carried away by the bravery of Pakdeenuchit, reality is different. It is true that the old city of Kanchanaburi was located at Kao Chonkai but the location of Kao Chonkai did not give any advantage in traditional warfare.⁶⁰ Suneth points out that back in the Ayutthaya periods most of the kings, apart from Naresuan and Narai, use the fortress of their capital city as the first and last line of defence.⁶¹ King Naresuan is the only king in Ayutthaya to advance his royal army to fight the invaders at the City of Suphanburi, and there is no record that Kanchanaburi was used by any Ayutthaya king as the first line of defence. However among the Thai people today, Kanchanaburi, especially Kao Chonkai is known for its military achievements. In reality, the first monarch to use Kao Chonkai and later Pakpraek as the frontline battle area was King Putthayotfachulalok (Rama I) who was the founder of the Chakkri dynasty in Bangkok.⁶² The battle where Pakdeenuchit was involved would be the battle in Suphanburi where Perigriniam records that all 6,000 soldiers in the city fought to the death.⁶³ Perigriniam records the name of the city as 'Tapurau', while the Royal Historical Record by Prince Damrong noted that "The forces of the Tabenshweti (King Mangra of Burma) passed the city of Kanchanaburi. However

the Kanchanaburi people did not resist the Burmese troops. The first battle between the Thai and the Burmese was in the City of Suphanburi but the Suphanburi people were unable to resist the Burmese forces, and the survivors of Suphanburi retreated to the capital city.”⁶⁴

From historical records, then, it is very unlikely that the battle took place in Kanchanaburi. There are perhaps two reasons for using Kanchanaburi. First is that the city of Kanchanaburi is the best known effective defence line against the Burmese. A place such as Kao Chonkai is well known among the Thai people who have gone through the Thai education system, as it is the compulsory training camp for the Raksadindaen students (Territorial Defense Study). Raksadindaen is a compulsory paper in high school, where students have to perform compulsory military training on a weekly basis and have to camp at Kao Chonkai annually.⁶⁵ The second reason is the city of Kanchanaburi was founded and had its military position strengthened by the first king of Chakkri dynasty, who can be considered as the ancestor of the filmmaker (M.C. Chatri) himself. So, it is no surprise that the filmmaker used the location where he could maximize his family prestige in the film, instead of the real location, which has no connection to the filmmaker at all.

Another issue that contradicts the story in the film is the battle of Chiangkrai and Chiangkran where the film indicated that the battle was between Siam and Burma. It is true that Chiangkrai and Chiangkran today are located in modern day Burma. However it would be unfair to conclude that these cities were Burmese. Suneth (1994) points out that

in the year 1538, when King Chairacha marched his troops to Chiangkrai and Chiangkran, King Mangtra was still fighting the deadliest battle with the Mons in Pegu. King Mangtra was able to defeat the King of the Mons in 1539, and then he marched his troops in 1541 to Martaban, which is in the northern direction of Chiangkrai and Chiangkran.⁶⁶ Considering that the Burmese Kingdom was located in a northern direction from all the Mons Kingdom, and Chiangkrai and Chiangkran are South from the Mons Kingdom, it would be very unlikely that King Mangtra invaded Chiangkrai and Chiangkran while he was busy engaging the King of Pegu. Considering the work of Luang Wichitwathakan, wars in ancient Southeast Asia were not based on lands or territories; but generally on two factors.⁶⁷ The first factor is the lack of population in Southeast Asia, so the victor can evacuate the cities which they had invaded and transfer the people from the defeated city-states to their kingdom. Then those prisoners of war become slaves in the new kingdom. The second cause was the nature of the King. Luang Wichit believed that the great kings saw war with other city states as sport events and that King Maha Chakkrapat of Siam sent a letter to King Burinnong Jokting Noratha of Burma; brother of King Mangtra, saying "I understand that you marched your troops to my kingdom based on our tradition to seek Royal Pleasure".⁶⁸

According to Luang Wichit's evidence, it is easy to believe that the battle of Chiangkrai and Chiangkran came about for this purpose. King Chairacha was a warlike king who spent most of his reign fighting on horse and elephant back. It would be no surprise if King Chairacha marched to Chiangkrai and Chiangkran to seek 'Royal Pleasure' from the war. However, whatever the reasons, the film presented misleading

facts to the audience to create a sense of national identity. The audience believes that Siam was under the threat of the Burmese kingdom and had to regain lost territories as well as secure its border from the aggressive neighboring country.

Even though the film may disregard some facts, it can be considered as generally based on historical events in bringing the unknown story of the first heroine of Siam to the audience. Importantly the film strengthens the class structure in Thailand, especially the roles and existence of the upper class.

Suriyothai can be considered as the most successful film in Thai entertainment history. The ticket sales rates of 500 million baht make the film the best selling Thai film ever.⁶⁹ The reason for success may be based on the high budget film and the nature of royalty. Ordinary citizens of Thailand want to learn about the customs and culture within the inner court. However, it would be questionable if the audiences who come from a commoner background could feel patriotic after watching Suriyothai as the central figures in this film are the upper class and elite, while ordinary citizens are merely servants or unknown soldiers in the battlefield. It would be hard to create patriotism in the audiences by letting them imagine themselves as an unknown soldier who receives no credit from any battle.

As with Bangrachan, the story line of Suriyothai is designed to show the need for unity within Thai society. However, the story here can be viewed from two different perspectives. The first perspective is that the producer wants to show the unity of society,

led by Suriyothai, who unites all the clans to overthrow the U-Thong. The movie tries to convince the people that Suwannhabhum was the righteous ruler of Siam. Another perspective is the sense of the constestation of power between Suriyothai and Sudachan. However, the producer tries to disguise this aspect by emphasizing the chaos in society under the reign of Sudachan and Shinnarat.

The producer tries to communicate the feeling that Suriyothai is the righteous queen of Siam and the U-Thong clan had no right to claim the throne of Ayutthaya. The mistrust between the clans led to disunity in society. Still, it cannot be denied that Suriyothai was also part of the disunity, even though the movie communicates that Suriyothai ruled the majority clan. The disunity in society, blamed on Queen Sudachan in the movie, leads to the Burmese invasion of Siam.

The story tries to communicate the glory of sacrifice for the nation. It conveys the message that even a queen is willing to die to protect the sovereignty of Thailand. However, there was no sense of nationalism in the 16th century. The sacrifice of Suriyothai was in order to protect her husband, the king, rather than the Thai nation.⁷⁰ Furthermore, this film can be related to Vachiravudh's doctrine that the King is the protector of the nation.⁷¹ The sacrifice of Suriyothai communicates that she was willing to protect the King, as she believes that the king can protect Siam. Suriyothai was willing even to die in order to maintain national independence. In Suriyothai, the King, Queen and the elite were responsible for this duty. It is impossible for everyone in society to imagine themselves as related to Suriyothai or the elite. The people who may feel

patriotic after the film may be the upper class, the elite, and the film producers themselves.

The movie might try to create patriotism from the sacrifice of the upper class. If the movie was unable to persuade the audiences to see the sacrifice as being of great benefit to the nation-state, people may yet accept the fact that Suriyothai did commit acts of great bravery. But the civilians, such as infantry, also committed the same acts of bravery when they were frontline soldiers and were the first in line to be killed by the enemy. Suriyothai came into the scene as the person who would strengthen the unity of the state and the commitment of the upper class towards society. However no commoner could imagine him or herself as Suriyothai, Ooya Phitsanulok, or Maha Thammaracha. This is because the civilians may be convinced by the concept of Karma within the movie, so the level of patriotism would be reduced from the very beginning of the movie. The film can be considered as a success in promoting national unity, if people look at the sense of royalty, at 'high-culture', at Karma, and at ticket sales. However the film can not achieve two goals which are completely contradictory from the very beginning. The people who watch Suriyothai might be persuaded by high-culture but they are very unlikely to become more patriotic after watching the film.

In reality, there is only one possible character that can create patriotism in this film. He is Ooya Pakdeenuchit who is a lowly captain of the army, but becomes an aristocrat by his bravery and fighting ability. Perhaps the sacrifice of Pakdeenuchit is even greater than Suriyothai's because Pakdeenuchit knows from the very beginning that

the battle against King Mangtra in Kanchanaburi will be his last battle, and he will die in the battlefield, however Suriyothai goes into the last battle with some hope of winning against the Burmese king, as her troop is similar in size to the Burmese invaders.

The second element that may prevent Suriyothai from becoming a successful patriotic film is the music. The songs from Suriyothai are mainly western contemporary pieces composed by overseas composers, which may be able to be played in shopping centres, however it is doubtful that this music will make people feel patriotic or increase the sales of its soundtrack. It is very unlikely that any patriotism will be created from modern contemporary music, especially as a film such as Suriyothai is a historical film, which is expected to represent Thai culture.

Apart from nationalism and patriotism, the film is also promoting royalism as well. According to Vella, (1978) Thai nationalism was based on three pillars, which are represented in the Thai national flag.⁷² They are Chat, Satsana, and Kasat. The term Kasat [King] was not only limited to the king himself, the term also covered the members of the royal family as well. Vella pointed out that the king identified Kasat with blue, "the beautiful hue of the people's leader. And is liked because of him"⁷³ During the reign of Vajiravudh, Kasat represented king, royalty, and aristocrats. Considering Suriyothai, the film clearly represented the interest of the king and the nobility in general. The film pointed out that kings and queens are the protectors of their people. The aristocrats are the warriors who are willing to defend the nation from the enemy. The high-culture of royalty impresses the audiences by its appearance. It also convinced them to believe that

the beauty and luxury of the upper class along with their high-culture are the proper practices which represent Thai culture.

The story of Suriyothai was created by M.C. Chatri to promote high culture and royalism. The film promotes the three foundations of modern day Thailand, with Nation, Religion, and Royalty all issues in this film. The heroics of the elite created trust and belief among the audiences and would strengthen the class structure and upper class social status. However the film does not create any true patriotism, as the filmmaker uses his 'high-culture' to attempt to convince audiences to follow his beliefs and expectations. Unlike the filmmaker, the majority of the audiences are not born into the upper class and may learn about 'high-culture' for the first time from this film. Therefore, it is very unlikely that audiences will become more patriotic at the end of the movie. The filmmaker neglected the most important fact which is that the audiences do not come from the upper class, so they are unlikely to accept upper class nationalism. However, it is likely that the 'royal nationalism' employed largely in this film brought a great effect towards the audiences. This is because the Thai people accept 'royal nationalism' as the proper form to express their loyalty towards the king and country. Therefore, the film strengthened royal nationalism and supporting for the monarchy by portraying Maha Chakkrapath and Suriyothai as righteous rulers, who presided over the wealth and prosperity of the Siamese nation. The most important scene came from the coronation of Maha Chakkrapath, where the king made the curse to all disloyal subjects, which came largely from the Phra Ruang legend that represents the magic and mandate of all righteous kings of Siam.

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Chapter 6

Yuwachon Taharn / Moon-hunter

The main object of the six chapters in this thesis is to explore the roles of media as promoters of Thai nationalism. Similar to the previous chapter, this chapter will be divided into three sections. The first section will look at the background of the two films and explain the historical events to which Yuwachon and Moon-hunter refer. The first section is divided into two subsections, as the two films refer to two different periods. The second section is the film analysis, which will be divided into three subsections. The first section will use the media and nationalism framework to analyze the general contents of both films. As usual, this thesis will look at the background of the film company owners, directors, and importantly for "Moon-hunter", this thesis will look at the scriptwriter, who has been referred to frequently in the film. The second subsection will be an analysis of contents, where nationalistic symbols can be found in both films. Apart from the countable signs, this thesis will look at the nationalistic messages, symbols, and personality cults, which can be translated subtly as nationalistic messages from the filmmaker. The third subsection will look at the social classes within both films. Apart from the class analysis, this thesis will look at the political ideology, which the filmmaker passed to the audiences. The third section will be the conclusion of this chapter.

There are numerous reasons to put these two films together in this chapter. The first is based on their class similarities. Both films are based on the middle class, in which their beliefs, traditions, and behaviors are completely different from lower class in Bangrachan or upper class in Suriyothai. Secondly, the period that Yuwachon

and Moonhunter occurred were the 20th Century, while Suriyothai and Bangrachan was occurred in Ayutthaya period (15th to 18th Century). Third is the time difference. The time difference from Suriyothai to Bangrachan were approximately 200 years, whilst the time differences between Yuwachon and Moonhunter were 32 years. The closer gap in time difference makes a good comparative case over the nationalistic beliefs in the 32 years timeline from the Second World War to Cold War period. Fourth, the age groups of the people who were involved in Yuwachon and Moonhunter are teenagers. Unlike Suriyothai or Bangrachan, which the main characters are adults at the age above 30 years old, Yuwachon and Moonhunter's main characters are students at the age below 25. This is important to consider that the young people are involved in the battlefield, which are the things that they did not expect. This is leading to the final justification to put this two films together. It is important to consider that even the Yuwachon was trained paramilitary troops, they were not expected to involve in the full scale battle, also the students who in Moonhunter never expected themselves to be involved in the battlefield as well. The reasons for the students to joined Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) was based on the political turmoil during October 1973 and 1976, which the government forced them to flee from the urban area and they did not have any option except joining with the CPT. However, both Yuwachon and Moonhunter represented the tragedies in the Thai society, where the teenagers were involved because of the political tensions. Yuwachon is a good example of the 'official nationalism', which is the common understanding among the Thai audiences. On the other hand, Moonhunter is a good example of the 'populist nationalism', which is the alternative form of nationalism that was introduced towards the Thai people.

Background

Yuwachon

Yuwachon was the name of the main paramilitary group in Thailand during the Second World War. Originally, Yuwachon was the Thai version of "Hitler's Youth Corps", where the government promoted military training among young people.¹ Yuwachon emerged under the government of Marshal Phibun Songkram, who saw the rise of fascist government in Europe and Japan as his role models. The early purposes of the Yuwachon Tahan programme were to create a link between the military and society. The programme was compulsory for all high school students. The students who wished to join the armed forces through the Yuwachon movement were given military ranks after they were educated. Yuwachon practices continue until the present day.² The majority of Thai students who enter the Thai high-school system enlist in 'Raksadindaen' (Territorial Defense Division) and train in military science on a weekly basis.

Yuwachon is based on a true story that took place in 1941. Unlike Bangrachan and Suriyothai, where the stories took place in the 16th and 18th Centuries, Yuwachon is based on 20th Century events. Historians show little concern over the 1941 activities of Yuwachon. The Thai government did not even sponsor the monument of Yuwachon and the monument itself is not as grand as the statue of Queen Suriyothai, the Bangrachan villagers, or other national heroes. However, the bravery of the Yuwachon involved was equal to the other national heroes. The reason that the historians pay little attention to them is based on two reasons. The first is that the government of Marshal Phibun saw the battle between Yuwachon and Japanese soldiers as a misunderstanding between Thai and Japanese Forces, which led to cross

fire between the two armed forces. In reality, Phibun did not give any indication to his armed forces over the Japanese invasion and even though he was well aware of the landing of Japanese forces in Songkhla, Chumphon and Prachuapkirikhan, the Thai dictator showed little interest in this issue. Phibun might have been pro-Axis, as he finally brought Thailand to join them during the Second World War; however the historians cannot deny that the brief battle between Royal Thai Armed Forces and Imperial Japanese Armed Forces existed.

The story of Yuwachon can be found on the website of the Territorial Defence Division, which is on the official website of the Royal Thai Army itself.³ The website tells the story of Yuwachon bravery on 8th December 1941, when the Japanese forces attempted to land in Chumphon. A company of Yuwachon from Sriyapai High School in Chumphon was involved in the battle. The story on the website was told by Lieutenant Samran Kuanphan a war veteran who served in that battle as the vice-trainer of the Yuwachon corps in Chumphon.⁴

Apart from Lieutenant Samran, Dr. Kanatee Suphamongkhon (1984) who served as the second secretary to the Thai ambassador in Japan during the war years explains that Marshal Phibun was aware of the Japanese attack from 3rd December 1941. However the Japanese only offered a treaty of alliance to Thailand on 7th December at 8.00p.m.⁵ Kanatee points out that the Japanese ambassador demanded the treaty be signed prior to 2.00 am on the 8th December 1941.⁶ It was very unlikely that the Thai government would be able to sign an agreement within 6 hours. Nevertheless, the battle between the Japanese and Thai occurred because the Japanese troops believed that the Thai government would sign the treaty at 2.00 a.m. So, the

Japanese forces started landing at Songkhla and Pattani around 2.30 a.m.⁷ The Thai forces were unaware of the negotiation between Thai and Japanese governments, so the Thai garrisons in five provinces opposed the Japanese troops. Eventually the Thai government decided to join the Axis and signed the treaty with the Japanese at 11.25 a.m.⁸

Thai historians such as Piman Jamjarat point out that there were five battlefields where Thai and Japanese troops confronted each other.⁹ The first location is Songkhla, where the Fifth Battalion retreated from Songkhla and fought the Japanese troops until 2.00 p.m. The second location is Pattani, where the Forty-second Battalion and Yuwachon of Pattani fought against the enemy until the government announced the cease-fire agreement at 7.30 a.m. In Surat Thani Yuwachon and police forces were unable to fight against the Japanese forces and decided to vacate their city. Nakhon Sri Thammarat was the largest battlefield, where the largest division of Japanese troops landed at Tapae. Thai forces sent the Sixth Division to fight against the Japanese until the cease-fire agreement. The last battlefield was in Chumphon, where the Thirty-eighth Battalion and Yuwachon successfully held the Japanese at bay until the cease-fire agreement.¹⁰ The fighting lasted around 12 hours from the first landing in Songkhla at 2.30 a.m. until 2.00 p.m. The government did not give credit to the Yuwachon and their own soldiers, who fought bravely in the battle. The government did not encourage the people to remember the battles either.

Scholars generally look at the achievements of the Phibun government, or at the Free Thai Movement and Pridi's achievements; however, there are very few scholars, who pay attention to the soldiers and their activities during the war. The

Yuwachon were among the unknown soldiers who sacrificed their life for the country. They were patriotic youth forces who proved their bravery in the battle.

Bruce Reynolds (1994), in his book's Thailand and Japan's Southern Advance 1940-1945, spent a chapter describing the moment of war between two countries.

Reynolds saw things differently from Kanatee (1984.) and Piman (1965.). Both Piman and Kanatee saw that the treaty between Thailand and the Japanese resulted from the Japanese threat within a week prior to their landing. Reynolds (1994) makes a different point. He went back to the war between Thailand and France in 1941.

Reynolds explains that the land battle was minimal as the Thai army occupied the undefended western Cambodia.¹¹ Reynolds explains that the Japanese believed that the land battle was going Thailand's way but was not decisive. However, Reynolds points out that the sea battle went in favor of the French. The naval battle of Trat on 17 January was evidence that the French could use their naval might to threaten Bangkok anytime.¹² Reynolds points out that Marshal Phibun attempted to persuade the Japanese to intervene and called for a settlement. Reynolds believes that the Thai dictator thought that his forces would meet disaster in three weeks time.¹³ Reynolds points out that Phibun called on the superpowers at the time to support the Thai territorial claims and make a settlement with the French forces. He shows that the British were the first country to contact the Thai government and Sir Josiah Crosby, the British ambassador to Thailand brought the proposal from Commander Jouan of French Indochina to arrange settlement.¹⁴ The Japanese saw the settlement as an opportunity to intervene and took both Thai and French representatives to Tokyo, where they finally signed the agreement, which went strongly in Thailand's favor. The French insisted that the agreement came from Japanese pressure.¹⁵ However the

Japanese had secured a secret promise from Phibun to allow the passage of Japanese troops through Thai territory for an attack on Singapore.¹⁶

Reynolds saw the landing of the Japanese troops on 8 December 1941 as the result of the secret agreement, which Phibun had to fulfill. The promise had been made secretly between the two governments, and only a handful of Thai officers knew about this agreement. Therefore, the battles in the five Southern provinces were unavoidable. Reynolds points out that the Japanese estimate the total Japanese casualties at 250 and on the Thai side at 150.¹⁷

The secret agreement was not mentioned by Kanatee (1984) or Piman (1965). Piman (1965) is a historian who focused on the Second World War generally instead of the secret agreement or the battles. Samran (1990) had served as a sergeant in the Royal Thai Armed Forces since the war between the Thai and the French. Therefore, it is very unlikely that he would know any details about the strategy at a high level. Dr. Kanatee who served as an officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was aware of the secret agreement. He points out that Marshal Phibun agreed with Colonel Tamura (Japanese attaché to Thailand) to allow Japanese passage in Southern Thailand below the province of Prachuap Kirikahn.¹⁸ However Kanatee points out that the secret agreement did not allow Japanese passage in the upper-south or Bangkok. Therefore, the Japanese landing was according to the secret agreement between Phibun and Tamura.

General Chatichai Choonhavan (in S. Jantimathon, 1998) did not mention the Thai and Japanese battle at all. He served in the Thai and French war in 1940 and the

Thai-British war (Shan State) in 1942 as a cavalry officer. Despite being a son of Colonel Luang Chamnan Yuttasath (later Marshal Pin Choonhavan) and adopted son of Marshal Phibun himself, Chatichai points out that the battle between the Thai and French was not as simple as Reynolds believes. Chatichai explains that he was assigned to the Surin Division, whose responsibility was to invade Siemriep. He explains that the battle at Samrong lasted for seventeen days, and Thai soldiers fought until they were out of bullets. Thai forces needed reinforcements three times before they could occupy Samrong and Jongkan.¹⁹ Chatichai explains that the army performed very well and expected to invade Siemriep in a short period. Chatichai saw no crisis or threat from the French army; however, he is aware that the Japanese intervention led to a secret agreement with Japanese forces.²⁰ Chatichai was an officer in the army, he served as a Lieutenant and later Captain during war. He explains that the Japanese landing was unavoidable, as Marshal Phibun had been allied to the Japanese since 1941.

Whatever the reasons that scholars avoid covering the achievement of Yuwachon, the battle did break out and cannot be denied and took place at the expense of the Yuwachon and the low ranking officers. The senior officers were well aware of the landing but had a slow decision-making procedure, which led to the casualties of their people.

Moon-hunter

Moon-hunter is the autobiography of Seksan Preasertkul, who is the leader of the 14 October Movement in 1973. The immediate cause of the conflict came when the Vice Chancellor of Ramkhamhaeng University decided to expel nine students who

formed a political club without the permission of the university.²¹ This small cause became a national crisis as the National Student Council of Thailand (NSCT) supported the nine students and demanded Ramkamhaeng University allow the nine-expelled students to return to their classes. Seksan was one of the executive members of the NSCT. The NSCT also demanded the resignation of Dr. Sakh Pasukniran who was the Vice Chancellor of Ramkamhaeng.²² The NSCT successfully persuaded 50,000 students to participate in protests on 21st and 22nd of June 1973. After Dr. Sakh decided to resign and allow the nine troublesome students to return, the NSCT demanded further that the government write a constitution and democratize the kingdom within six months.²³ The government responded by announcing a curfew, then the police arrested eleven people, who were involved in distributing the anti-government flyers.

Those arrested were Thirayut Boonmi (Secretary General of the NSCT), Prapansak Kamolpet (Political Science lecturer at Chulalongkorn University), Nopporn Suwanpanit (Editor of Maharath Newspaper), Tawee Muennikorn (Economics lecturer at Thammasart University), Montri Jungsiriarak (Law student of Ramkamhaeng University), Pridi Boonsue (Political Science student of Thammasart University), Chaivath Suravichai (Engineering student of Chulalongkorn University and executive member of NSCT), Noonsong Chalethon (Law student of Ramkamhaeng), Wisa Kantap (Humanities student of Ramkamhaeng), Bundit Engnilarath (Art student of Thammasart), and Tanya Chunchatatan (Political Science student of Thammasart).²⁴ They can be divided into 2 lecturers, 1 newspaper editor, 2 executive members of the NSCT, and 6 students who were arrested and later charged by police for causing a riot and spreading communist propaganda.²⁵

The arrest of eleven people on 6th October 1973, plus Gonggiat Kongka (Law student of Ramkamhaeng) later arrested from the university hall, led to the protest from the NSCT beginning on 7th October 1973.²⁶ However the government disregarded the protest and also arrested Kaisang Suksai who was a Member of Parliament. This led to demonstrations from Srinakarin University and University of Chiangmai on the 8th of October.²⁷

2,000 students from Ramkamhaeng University and 1,000 students from Srinakarin University joined the Thammasart led demonstration.²⁸ On 8th of October, protestors demanded that the government release thirteen people from prison and cancel their charges.²⁹ The government declined on the same day, which led to 10,000 students in total involved in the protest at Thammasart University. On the 10th October 1973, the protestors were joined by 1,000 students from Teachers College, and 2,000 from polytechnics,³⁰ which made the group very large and ready to mobilize. On the eleven of October 5,000 students from Kasetsart University came to join the Thammasart led demonstration, however government still ignored the students' demand. This led to further joining of tertiary students, which reached a total of some 60,000 people on the evening of 11th October 1973.³¹ On 12th October, the government finally decided to release the thirteen people but did not cancel their charges, which led to 3,000 more students from Nakhon Pathom joining the Thammasart led protest.³² The NSCT refused the offer from the government and decided to divide the leaders into three sections. The first group led by Prasarn Trirathvorakul would negotiate with the government to fulfill their demands, the second group under Sombat Thamrongtanyawongse would seek an audience with His

Majesty King Bhumibhol Adulyadej, and the last group would be led by Seksan Preasertkul, who would be in charge of the 63,000 students.³³

Seksan was in charge of the march of 63,000 students from Thammasart University to Democracy Monument on Rajdamneom road. There were 6,000 students from Ramkamhaeng joining at Democracy Monument and this led to the decision of Marshal Thanom Kittikajorn to release the 13 people from prison. However, the student movement of Seksan did not learn about the release and the student movement reached the Headquarters of the Police Department around 2.00 p.m.³⁴ The demonstrations reached their peak at 3.30 p.m. as participants reached 500,000 people, consisting of students, white collar workers, and laborers. Seksan announced that by 5.00 p.m. the masses would march again if there were no answer from the government.³⁵

At 7.30 p.m., Seksan decided to march the masses toward the King Chulalongkorn Monument, located in front of the Parliamentary building and the Prime Minister's Office. By 9.30 p.m., the situation was getting worse as Sombat Thamrongtanyawongse announced that the government had already released 13 people and expected to announce the new constitution in 12 months. The demonstrators were unhappy with the 12 months timeline and demanded democratization straight away. Seksan and Sombat were unable to demobilize the masses.³⁶ This led to the decision of Seksan to march the masses towards Chitlada Palace (Official Residence of the King), where Seksan believed that the masses would be calm and decide to demobilize. The king sent a message to the masses to be calm and asking for unity within Thai society, and this led to the masses dispersing.³⁷

However, there are other dimensions to the story. David Morell and Chai-anan Samudavanija (1981) pointed out that there were four factions within NSCT. There was the Sombat faction, Seksan faction (later known as Federation of Independent Students of Thailand, FIST), Thirayut faction (known as People for Democracy Group, PDG), and the Therdphum faction (Hotel and Hostel Worker Union).³⁸ The disagreement between Seksan, Sombat, and Thirayut is also represented in the film, where Seksan made an attempt to show that Sombat was the one that distrusted him. Also, Thirayuth points out in his interview with Pravit Suvanith (1998) that some members of the NSCT said the CPT (Communist Party of Thailand) had a connection with the leader of the masses (Seksan Prasertkul) and the group that distributed the flyers (Thirayut Boonmi).³⁹

Even if there were many factions or disagreements between the faction leaders, the conclusion is the same, the masses were dispersing. However, problems erupted, as the police forces blocked the road and did not allow the students who had already dissolved their movement to pass Dusit intersection. This is one of the myths in Thai history as Lieutenant General Monchai Pankingchuen was not only demanding the students take another road, he was also ordering the Commando troops to come after the students decided to reorganize their movement.⁴⁰ The leaders of the movement were unable to convince the students to move toward the other route; the students themselves believed that the government had betrayed them. At 6.30a.m., police officers launched an attack on the students, many students were unable to resist and some of them tried to escape to Chitlada Palace as they believed that the king would be able to protect them from the police attack.⁴¹ The students retreated to the campus of Thammasart University and Marshal Thanom used the excuse that students were

entering Chitlada Palace to order a full military exercise. Instead of announcing that the police had attacked the students, he told his troops that the students attacked police officers and were entering Chitlada Palace.⁴² The civil war between the students who sought democracy against the dictator of Thailand continued from the morning of 14th October until the evening of 15th October. King Bhumibhol made an announcement at 7.40pm to confirm that Marshal Thanom was no longer the Thai Prime Minister, as the king named Dr. Sanya Thammasak (Vice Chancellor of Thammasart University) as the caretaker Prime Minister.⁴³ However the fighting between the police forces and students continued as the students now sought revenge against the police department. The civil war stopped on the night of 15th October as Marshal Thanom and his family members left Thailand for political exile in Taipei.⁴⁴

The main event of 14th October 1973 was the nationalistic and democratic protests. However the film tends to cover more details and tensions between leaders of students associations and their political movement. The story covers the period prior to October 1973 and continues until 1976. The story is divided into three sections. The first section is the story of 14th October 1973, which shows the conflict between people and government and the conflicts between the governing bodies of the Thai students association. The second phase shows the outcomes of 14th October. It is a broader depiction of Thai society where Seksan and FIST were assisting farmers and laborers to negotiate with government officers and factory owners. The third section is about the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), which Seksan and many students were forced to join. Seksan was forced to join the CPT because he had been involved with the labor unions and students movement, and he feared that some government agents and numerous business owners were after his life because they

saw Seksan as the brain of the farmer and laborer movements. Seksan describes the rise and fall of CPT and the problems within the organization as well as the hierarchy within the party, of which Seksan and most of the students had not been aware. The story concludes with the fall of the CPT and Seksan's decision to surrender to the government.

The students from both Yuwachon and Moon-hunter are unknown soldiers. Their actions are based on nationalistic beliefs, which they thought were righteous for both nation and people. They also share the same fate, as the opposition, whom they believe to be the enemy of the Thai nation, defeated them. In the end, both groups are merely unknown soldiers, who were unlikely be considered as heroes in Thai history.

Analysis

Similarly to the previous chapter, this section will be divided into four parts; the first part will be general analysis based on media and nationalism theories. The second part is the figure analysis, where this thesis will look at the personality, behavior, and messages. The third part will look at the film content, including symbols and characters. The fourth part will look at the class that primarily dominated the film story.

General Analysis

The general analysis will use the media and nationalism framework to explain the general contents of both films. This section will look at the origins of filmmakers, political leaders and their relationships. Then this thesis will look at the sign, symbols, and tradition, which were stereotyped.

Yuwachon

As mentioned earlier, Yuwachon was based on a true story. Even though the students were unknown soldiers, their bravery can place them in the heroic frame. The story was based on the story of Lieutenant Samran and his students from Chumphon, and Yuwachon is associated with the present day Territorial Defense Division (TDD). Since the end of Cold War, TDD has encountered more difficulties recruiting people to join their forces than in wartime. Even though under Thai law all Thai males must enlist in the army, there are many people trying to avoid conscription by trying their luck in the lottery on the enlistment date.

The system in Thailand is that each conscription district seeks a certain number of citizens to join the armed forces. Districts that can fulfill the requirement would allow all conscription candidates to be free from military service. However, if the quota is not filled, the military officer would let all candidates draw cards from a box. The ones who acquire "Red Cards" go for military service, while the people that obtain "Black Cards" will be assigned to "Tahan Gong Gern" (reserve forces). Alternatively, high-school and university students can avoid conscription by joining TDD while they are studying.

During the Cold War period, there were many Thai people joining TDD for three to five years. The reason is very simple. The ones who were enlisted in the regular forces during wartime would be in the position of frontline soldiers to fight

against the national enemy, while TDD volunteers would be placed as the second line of defense that puts them at lesser risk than the enlisted. Once the Cold War ended, the advantage of TDD weekly service was minimized and more students went to the conscription call up to try their luck instead. This has meant a serious decline of both nationalism and military institutions in Thailand. People tend to see military training in a negative light. Thai teenagers see military training as a punishment. They do not see the military benefit to society such as order, behavior, knowledge, and nationalism.

The TDD has been trying to recruit Thai actors or even actresses to join the army and give a positive image in society. During the annual conscription or TDD recruitment periods, the media promoted the image of order, behavior, uniformity and pride of the soldiers to the people. Many posters, where actors wore officer uniforms with their ranks and names were distributed all over the country. The relationship between military and government and media owners is visible. This is understandable because the majority of the television channels in Thailand are owned by the government, and Thai Television Channel 5, is owned by the Royal Thai Army.⁴⁵ The cable television channels and Independent Television Network (ITV), which are privately owned, are under the ownership of subsidiary companies of Shinawatra Groups (Shin Corp).⁴⁶ Thaksin Shinawatra, who has been the Prime Minister of Thailand since the 2001 election was the former chairman of the Shin Corp.⁴⁷ The company is currently under the management of Shinawatra and Damapong Families (the family of Thaksin's wife).⁴⁸ Shin Corp has controlled the majority of the cable television network, telephone, and cellular phone system in Thailand since the end of Cold War.

Apart from Thaksin, who is both media owner and political leader, there are numerous entertainment companies that are associated with Shin Corp. One example is Pracha Maleenont and his BEC Group, one of the biggest filmmaking companies, who serves as deputy minister in the Thaksin Cabinet.⁴⁹ In addition, many entertainment companies such as Grammy Entertainment compete for the prime time slots on the television network with decisions in the hands of the government.⁵⁰ This part of the thesis will look at the Grammy Entertainment Company, which is the production company of Yuwachon.

Grammy Entertainment is one of the largest entertainment companies in Thailand.⁵¹ Their company produces movie and music, which target Thai teenagers and the younger generation. The company is owned by Paiboon Damrongchaitham.⁵² Grammy Entertainment covers the fields of music, film, drama, television, publication, media education, VHS, DVD, and VCD businesses. Paiboon and the directors of Grammy are mostly alumni of Chulalongkorn University, which is the leading state university in Thailand.⁵³ The directors of the company have graduated mainly from Communication, Journalism, or Liberal Arts departments.⁵⁴ Many graduates of Chulalongkorn are associated with or working for the Thai bureaucracy. The company directors also recruit sons and daughters of politicians, bureaucrats, and aristocrats to work as their company executives.⁵⁵

This thesis has explained earlier in the third chapter that Thai society is based on Sanit Samakgarn (2000) theory on Extended-Family System. The system as such leads companies in Thailand to recruit the family members of the important people in

the aristocratic network to serve as their executive. Therefore, they can use their connections to acquire government support.⁵⁶

Considered from the Grammy Entertainment position, it is clear that the company is relying on government support. "Exact" is the subsidiary company that has responsibility for the television broadcasting network. The programs which Grammy Exact broadcast are on state television. Searching the official website of the company <http://www.exact.co.th>, there are eight programs broadcasting all over the country. There is a miniseries, two game-show, and five drama series. The miniseries is broadcast on Channel 7 which is co-owned by the Department of Communication and the Department of Defense.⁵⁷ The first game-show is on ITV, which is owned by Shin Corp.⁵⁸ The second game-show is broadcasting by Television Channel 3, which is owned by BEC Corporation.⁵⁹

Four dramas under Exact are all broadcasted on state-television. One of them is broadcasted on MCOT Channel 9, which is the official broadcasting network of the Thai Prime Minister's Office.⁶⁰ The other dramas are broadcasted on Channel 5, which is owned by the Royal Thai Army Communication division.⁶¹ Among the three dramas that are broadcasted on the Army Channel, there is one series called "Kattiya (Royalty)", which is based on military values, loyalty, dynasty, and royalty. The movie is based on the novel, which refers to an unknown land. The story demonstrates a clear comparison to Thai society, where loyalty, law, order, duty, and uniformity are the main values.

According to the official website of Grammy Entertainment Limited <http://www.grammy.co.th>, the company executives are made up of people from leading clans in Thailand such as Montrikul Na Ayutthaya (aristocrat), Wirawan (politician), Pramoj (politician/aristocrat), Bulsuk (bureaucrat/business), and Pongpanich (politician). Apart from the board of directors, there are numerous actors, actresses, and singers that are recruits from the powerful families such as Wattanasin (bureaucrat/business), Sajjakul (politician) and Bunnag (aristocrat, bureaucrat, business, and politician).⁶² It is very easy to see the linkage between government leaders and the company. The film company has government and political leaders as their patrons and partners in business. The reason for describing their relationship as patron is based on the media reliance on the political leaders and the government to give priority bidding consideration on times and channels for their company. At the same time, leading members of the political parties are associated with major companies in the country, which can generate some funds to sponsor the media production. Furthermore, a film production, music album, drama, show or concert of Grammy Entertainment has numerous sponsors who paid for their project. Many sponsors are associated with political leaders or political parties. The best example is AIS GSM which is a subsidiary company of Shin Corp and has sponsored several Grammy Productions especially concerts and dramas.⁶³ It is important to note that both groups complement each other to maximize their interests.

Grammy Film and the Yuwachon movie fit into the media and nationalism framework smoothly as Grammy Limited share common ground with the political leaders. They also rely on the political leaders to support their company. Therefore, the company finds it useful to make some production that can sell and, promote

nationalism and patriotism, which subtly support their patron. Yuwachon is one of the examples, where the media is using symbols and tradition to make people believe in the military values and the need to support the military effort. The traditions have been stereotyped by the film media. The message reached the audiences, which led them to think about the message from the film. Then the audiences will determine whether they are persuaded by the ideology of this film or not.

Moon-hunter

As explained earlier, Moon-hunter is based on the student movement and communist activities in Thailand. Since the end of the Second World War, the Communist Party of Thailand has been seen by the majority of the Thai people as a threat to national sovereignty, stability, and prosperity. Even today, the image of the CPT is largely negative as the Thai people have been taught by their teachers since the primary level that communism is an evil sect that wishes to destroy the three foundations of Thailand (Nation, Buddhism, and the Royalty).⁶⁴ Since the Cold War, Thai people have been very reluctant to admit to being leftists and it is nearly impossible for them to associate themselves with the CPT. However Seksan Prasertjul has made this kind of announcement publicly through the film media. He explains that his action is based on his beliefs in creating prosperity for the Thai nation. There is also a section in the film where he shows loyalty towards the monarchy as well.

Seksan makes an attempt to integrate the left movement into Thai society by using the film as his medium. Presently, Seksan is a lecturer at Thammasart University, which is a highly respected state-owned university in Thailand. Seksan was known for being the leader of the October movement in 1973; he has spent most

of his life lecturing and researching government policies since he surrendered himself to the Thai government.

The film is produced by BEC Limited and Saha-Mongkol Film Limited. The film had to be renamed in Thailand from Moon-hunter to 14th October, even though there is only a small part of the film that covers the events of 14th October 1973. The film shows the perception Seksan has of the NSCT, the Communist Party of Thailand, and the members of both the NSCT and the CPT. Even though the movie is based on the left ideology of Seksan, it also shows the ugly part of the CPT and the NSCT.

The media owner (BEC) and the government are undoubtedly connected with each other. As this thesis pointed out earlier, the connection makes it apparent that the media owner and the political leaders come from the same group of people from the beginning. However, Seksan plays a significant role in this relationship. The story of Seksan neither supports the government nor military values. On the other hand, his story does not support the NSCT or the CPT either. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that his ideology or self-centered behavior makes every political group look as bad as possible. In this case, the political groups that are involved with Seksan are all negative, while the government can censor its own negative image out of the film and allow the film to display the bad images of the other political movements.

Moon-hunter is a political satire, which blames every party, and the audiences who are open minded would blame Seksan for being an egoist as well. In order to explain the situation briefly, it would be fair to conclude that this film creates nationalism from the dislike of the people. The one that people disliked least will be

the righteous party. Apart from the goal of making money, the storyline is perhaps one of the main reasons for the BEC to create this film as well as the government doing very little to interfere with this film's distribution. The sign and symbol that is used in this film is still associated with the basic political ideology such as flags, landmarks, terms, songs, and uniforms. The media role is to stereotype those symbols toward the audiences. The choice of medium is film, which started from theater to home entertainment such as video, video-compact disc (VCD), and DVD.

Figures Analysis

Similar to the previous case studies, this section will look at the characters, costumes, nationalistic messages, and beliefs. This section will be divided into two sub sections, where the two films will be discussed in detail.

Yuwachon

The costumes in this film are most simple and might be the easiest way to identify the nationality. Uniforms are used as the real identification of this movie. All male teenagers are wearing one of two types of uniforms; there are standard high-school students' uniforms and Yuwachon uniforms. The male school uniform consists of white shirt, dark blue shorts, long white socks, and black shoes. This is the standard practice for Thai schools all over the country until the present day. The Yuwachon uniforms consist of military shirts with rank and division on the shoulder, green shorts, dark green socks, green caps and boots. Apart from the two uniforms, the male characters are wearing modern westernized clothes during their leisure time.

Male soldiers are always wearing the military uniform, which is the standard uniform of the Royal Thai Army until today. The uniform consists of military shirt with ranks and insignia, long trousers, boots, guns, and hats with the military emblem. Apart from military, there are bureaucrats, who wear brown shirts, brown trousers, and black shoes. Thai policemen wear brown shirts with rank and insignia, brown trousers, boots, and caps. During leisure time, all adult male characters including villagers are wearing western clothes or Thai trousers, Thai shirts, and sandals. Female characters are similar to the male characters; the teenagers are wearing school uniforms, which consist of white shirts, long blue skirts, white socks, black shoes, and sailor scarves. During their leisure time, both teenagers and adult female characters are alike. They are wearing Thai shirts, traditional skirts (Panung, Pathung), sandals, and hats.

The foreigners are easily identified in this film, the Burmese are wearing sarongs, British and Indians are wearing British Empire military uniforms, and Japanese soldiers are wearing Imperial Japanese military uniforms with Japanese hats and samurai swords. The character that is hard to judge is the Japanese spy, who is always wearing either Japanese clothes or Thai clothes. It is important to note that the uniforms can be considered not only as a symbol, but as a mechanism for creating uniformity. Uniformity is an identification of a group that shares similarities in beliefs, knowledge, identity, practices, or professions. Above all these similarities, the group such as soldiers or Yuwachon believe in the existence of their nation. Therefore, the uniform is the key to identify their loyalty towards their nation. Uniforms such as military, police, or Yuwachon also represent the willingness of those who wear them as the safeguard of the nation.

Apart from characters and uniforms, the nationalistic messages are the selling point of this film. The first message came as soon as the film began; the young captain who has just arrived at the small township of Chumphon instructed his soldiers that it is important to recruit the Yuwachon into the armed forces straight away. Another message came from the classroom, where the students saw the young captain as their role model because of his muscularity. The principal then talks to himself saying "Is it true that Thailand will become a war zone?" Then the students start to debate within the classroom regarding national policy. Some saw being neutral as the best solution, some said Thailand should joined the Axis, while some said the nation should join up with the Allies. At this point the class divided into three groups, and then the class representative came up and concluded that "Thailand should join with whoever respects our sovereignty and will not invade our nation". This brings the class back to order and the principal is delighted with the message from the class representative.

Then during the recruitment period Captain Thawin Niyomsen stated "Thailand has remained independent for a very long time, and shall remain so forever". The most important message during the recruitment period is "Today, the warfare is not only limited to the soldiers, but it is also the responsibility of the citizens of that nation as a whole". He points out that "It is important to learn that if we want peace, we must prepare for war. This is the reason for the Yuwachon recruitment". Then the film brought in the conversation between Captain Thawin and the school principal. The principal asked the young captain "Is it necessary to recruit these boys?" Captain Thawin replies "Yes, this is a necessity for our nation." The

principal points out “You are coloring the clean and white hearts and minds of these boys”. Then comes the most important message in the film, where Captain Thawin replied “I wish the color will be only Red, White, and Blue. The colors in these boys’ heart and minds will be one with our national flag”.

Yuwachon never hides its nationalistic ambitions, and it shows a clear ambition for the audiences to be patriotic. The film always carries the same message and picture of Yuwachon training, which is similar to the modern day Scouts and Raksadindaen (Territorial Defense Division) Training. This shows that the military training is not hard or frightening. The aims of the film are clear, to create unity in society and respect for military values. The story follows the lives of students who joined the Yuwachon movement and who trained and lived together. The friendship developing among the students was frequently highlighted, “If we are going to die, we will die together. If we are going to survive, we will survive together”. This message is a major theme of this movie, and this message is repeated numerous times in the film. Then the film comes to the most important part, the battle between Thai and Japanese forces. The scene shows Japanese soldiers invading Chumphon with the villagers fleeing the township, while the Yuwachon march towards the invaders. The message that Captain Thawin gave the Yuwachon is “We are here to protect those helpless people from the invaders”. The next message that is repeated frequently aims to create a patriotic feeling amongst the audience. It was the lesson that Captain Thawin taught the Yuwachon that “Man dies only once, the question is how to die honorably”. The students replied back “Die for our nation”, and the other students added “Also die together”. Captain Thawin replied “That’s correct. Together, we are sacrificing our life for our beloved nation”.

The next important scene is the battle, where Sergeant Samran Kuanphan, who served as the frontline commander after Captain Thawin was shot dead, told all of his students "Kill them! Don't let them enter our homeland, drive them back to the sea". This is the message that would inspire most patriotic people to see that it is necessary to protect the motherland. On the other hand, the Governor of Chumphon orders his staff to prepare for burning down the township. It is Asian military tactics to destroy the town and let the enemy invade nothing, instead of letting them taking over the infrastructure of the nation-state. The governor said "If our soldiers are losing, we have to destroy this town by our own hand". Most of the nationalistic messages came from the battle scene. Sergeant Chan was critical of Yuwachon training as "The best way to waste our ammo! Those kids are good for shooting birds and rabbits". At that time Sergeant Samran replied "My students will learn how to shoot human beings, especially the enemies of our nation". At the battle scene, Sergeant Chan said to Sergeant Samran "I am taking back my words; these brave kids are the pride of our nation". However the battle went on for more than twelve hours, Captain Thawin was shot dead, Sergeant Chan was killed by a bomb, and Sergeant Samran was fatally wounded, which caused him the loss of his right hand. He told all of his students "Save yourselves! We are out of bullets, retreat to the other side of the river". The leader of the Yuwachon groups replied "No sir! We are here to fight our enemy. We are willing to die for our nation. Our squads are willing to die together". After Sergeant Samran fainted the film once again repeated the message by showing the Yuwachon leader asking his class mates a number of questions, which they answer together to show their unity.

"Leader: What was our master (Captain Thawin) asking us to do?"

“Yuwachon: Die honorably!”

“Leader: What was our master teaching us to do?”

“Yuwachon: To Sacrifice”

“Leader: For what are we going to sacrifice?”

“Yuwachon: For the sovereignty of Thailand”

Language is the main force to create the differences between Thais and foreigners. Interestingly, Yuwachon members and Thai military staff speak with fluent Bangkok accents. In reality, Chumphon is in Southern Thailand, so the accent would be different. There are some characters speaking with a Southern Thai accent, however the main male and female characters are speaking Central Thai. It is understandable in that the Central Thai is used to communicate from North to South, while Southern Thai may limit understanding to Southern Thai only. The Japanese spy speaks Thai with a false accent, but surprisingly correct grammar. The spy is working as a businessman, who owns a photographic shop and gallery in Chumphon. Therefore, he can communicate with all of the officers and staff who come to his shop. The Burmese are speaking their own language, while the Indians and Europeans are speaking English. The last group is Japanese troopers, who speak only Japanese. Language is another main area to separate each ethnic group in this movie.

Interestingly, this film is blatant propaganda, where rightwing nationalistic ideology, and military values are the main driving forces. There is no doubt that their beliefs are nationalism, sovereignty, and the safeguarding of Nation, Religion, and Royalty. All of the songs in this film are associated with the period of Marshal Phibun Songkram. Examples are “Yuwachon Taharn” composed by Luang Wichit Wathakan, of which the main theme is “Yuwachon Soldiers! We will die for Thailand. We will

defend our nation from the invader. Yuwachon Soldiers! We are brave in war and we are willing sacrifices for our homeland". Apart from Yuwachon there are many songs including "Love Thailand", "Our homeland", and much music from the Official Nationalism periods of both King Vajiravudh and Marshal Phibun.

Moon-hunter

Moon-Hunter is the film that might be one of the hardest to judge the differences between each ethnicity by the dress. However this film has also one of the clearest short-cuts to the ideology and beliefs. All students are wearing the standard university uniform, as it is compulsory for the Thai university students who study for Bachelor degrees to wear uniforms during their freshmen and sophomore periods. The male uniforms consist of short sleeved shirts, long trousers, black shoes, university belts, and university badges. The female uniforms consist of white shirts, long black skirts, university belts, and university badges. However for the junior, senior, and the post graduate students it is not necessary to wear the uniform. So, the students in the films are mostly first and second years, as identified by their uniform. However the senior students such as Seksan Prasertkul, Thirayut Boonmi, and the leaders of the NSCT hardly wear any uniform. Their appearances are in casual clothes such as jeans, hats, and T-shirts. The second group is farmers and factory workers, who do not have any uniforms to identify themselves. Their clothes are casual, consisting of Thai shirt or farmer shirt (Mohom), trousers or shorts, and sandals. The third group is the businessmen and white-collar workers, which Seksan criticized strongly over their capitalist ideology. They are wearing white shirt, tie, and trousers. Thai bureaucrats, soldiers and policemen are the next group. Soldiers and policemen are wearing standard uniform, which is described earlier in Yuwachon. The bureaucrats are

wearing shirt, trousers, and tie, or safari-shirt and trousers. The communist soldiers are wearing military uniforms, which consist of green shirt, dark green trousers, and cap with a red star. Their military uniforms are a little different from the Royal Thai Army. Their weapons are different. They are using mostly Chinese made weapons.

The characters can be divided into eight groups. The first group is the university students who joined the protest. The second group is the students who decided to join the Communist Party of Thailand and are wearing the uniform. The third group is the students who were forced to flee from the 6th October 1976 incidents and joined the CPT. The fourth group is the farmers. The fifth group is the businessmen and white collar workers. The sixth group is the Thai civil servants, soldiers, and police. The seventh group is the hill-tribe and ethnic minorities who had been hired by the Communist Party and are wearing their uniform. The last group is the communist party themselves from China, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

However the reality is that there are only three groups that are the main driving forces in the movie. There are the Thai government and its officials, which are a rightwing government, and the communist movement that is generally against the government and accepts the Maoist values. Then the students are the group is caught between these two groups. Students are unwelcome to the government as they are leading protests. Therefore, they were forced to join the CPT. In reality, the CPT do not trust the students either and see them as ground units, which they can train and send to fight against the Thai government.

The messages from this film are what determine the beliefs of the students. Seksan and his wife Jiranan are the main characters in this film. Seksan was forced to join the CPT after he had been associated with the farmers union, labor movement, and NSCT. Seksan is a scholar who believes in Marxism and equality in society. However, he believes that he is in danger, as the capitalists might be after his life. Therefore, Seksan contacts his friend to move abroad. As he is a believer in Marxism, he saw that study in Eastern Europe or Paris would meet his ideals. However he ended up in the communist camp in Laos. Seksan was convinced by the CPT to take up arms and train to fight the Thai government.

The first message Seksan makes is against the capitalists in negotiating for a rise in wages "You (business owner) should be fair to your employee. He is asking for a pay rise through the union". The business owner replies "Mr. Seksan, you should not interfere with my business, it is none of your business at all to come to my factory". This is the message that threatens Seksan's life.

Seksan points out that he is working for the people. He was concerned for the students' safety during the 14th October 1973 movement. He told the committee that "Thammasart University is not a good place to protest at all. We have only one entrance and exit. If the government is planning to use violent means, we will all be dead". A committee member replied "Don't worry Seksan, haven't you heard that the masses can't be killed? If they kill ten of us, a hundred thousand people will rise up". Seksan furiously replied "Shut up! You are only good at talking. All your words come from text books, but there is no responsibility towards human life". At this point Seksan criticizes the NSCT for their carelessness with the life of the protestors and

willingness to sacrifice anything for their success. He is continually criticizing Sombat Thamrongtanyawongse (secretary general of the NSCT), as the movie shows that Sombat criticizes Seksan as being communist and therefore not fit to lead the movement. Seksan also criticizes Sombat for saying "Seksan is a black sheep in the NSCT; he demands only respect and power".

After criticizing the capitalists and the NSCT, Seksan starts to criticize the government during the movement. He criticizes the government for corruption, dictatorship, and allowing monopolization in the Thai economy. However his main criticism is towards Marshal Thanom Kittikachon, who ruled Thailand under a military dictatorship. Even though the government is the main target of the movie, they are the party that receives the least damage from this political film. The reason is that Seksan is criticizing military government, while today Thailand is under a democratically elected government. Also Seksan's main criticism is of Marshal Thanom who was exiled from Thailand in 1973 and never resumed power after that. Even when he made his return in 1976, he was no longer a political figure.

Then the next target is the communist party themselves. The first criticism of the communist party is "Why are they [students] starting to act like Chinese, speaking the Chinese language, singing Mao songs, and talking like Maoists?" Seksan was dissatisfied with the CPT as he found out that the CPT is not strictly of the discipline of Marxism but rather follows the Chinese line. He starts to criticize the leading officer of the CPT who always quotes Mao's words. He also shows his anger towards the CPT over their criticism of his speech and ideological rights. He also criticizes the commune system and their food supply. After he had only pumpkin soup for the

entire week, Seksan shouts "Down with the pumpkin". His message was welcomed by all students as they are bored with pumpkin soup; however the CPT politburo criticized him by saying "Why are you saying such a thing? You should be happy that we [CPT] still supply you with food under our system." However Seksan found out later that the politburo were having a great feast and that the lady officer who criticized him over pumpkin issues was having a banquet menu. Seksan was later criticized by Laotian soldiers over being too stupid and attempting to hunt down the moon. Seksan later criticizes the CPT as his troops are starving, so he decides to sell his watch to buy food from the villagers. Laos's soldiers and the CPT politburo criticize Seksan as trying to subvert the masses, and Seksan was very furious over their criticism. Seksan asks "What should I do? My troops are starving." The politburo response to him is "Then write a letter to our committee, so we can consider your appeal".

Seksan starts his criticism of the CPT from their hierarchy, corruption, unfaithfulness, and dictatorship. Later Seksan was once again threatened with death by the CPT after he fought with the politburo over the withdrawal of his troop from the CPT. It is understandable as Seksan's troops consist of the university students that were forced to joined the CPT. Seksan decides that he should surrender his people to the Thai government, so the CPT plans to kill him.

The most important message comes from the scene where Vietnam invades Cambodia; also the Chinese government and Thai government open bilateral relations. Seksan started to believe that the CPT will lose to the Thai government, while the Chinese might release their names and bases in Thailand to the government. However,

Seksan was disappointed as none of the CPT members are concerned over his comment. Later he brought up a new issue, that Vietnam might invade Thailand, as he learned that the Thai and Vietnamese soldiers are fighting around the border area. At this point, the film shows that Seksan and most of the students who joined the CPT are nationalistic and do not wish to see the country invaded by foreigners. Seksan took his concerns to the politburo, where the committee members see him as a black sheep within the CPT. Seksan told the committee that the main concern of his troops is the Vietnamese invasion. The politburo replies to him "If the Vietnamese invade Thailand, we are very positive that the Chinese will help us and liberate our country from the Vietnamese". The answer shows that the high-ranking CPT members are careless of the Thai nation or people, their main concerns are to be able to gain control of the Thai government. Seksan replied furiously "Why aren't we armed and fighting the Vietnamese? Why do we have to wait for the Chinese to liberate our homeland? Why can't we liberate our motherland by ourselves? Are you still Thai people?" However there is no reply back from the CPT officers. Seksan shows his fury in the next scene as he walks back to his base and throws his rifle towards the jungle and shouts "Take your things back! You are all traitors. You are betraying your nation". At this point, the movie is showing the nationalistic picture that filmmakers want the people to see, as the film is showing all the negative aspects of the CPT. The final blow is their lack of concern over whether the nation might be invaded by Vietnamese.

Apart from criticism of all the parties, Seksan shows his nationalistic beliefs. First of all, despite being a leftist, Seksan still shows a great respect for the king. He told the demonstrators that "We should march our students to Chitlada Palace; we are

seeking from His Majesty, mercy and power". Seksan shows that he is not opposed to the most respected institution in Thailand; rather, in the film he has a great respect for the king and seeks His Majesty's protection during the 1973 incident. The film shows a number of students jumping into the canal around the palace; some of them try to get across the gate and wall of the palace when the violence breaks out.

Seksan again shows his nationalistic ideology as he finally departs Laos and returns to Thailand. After crossing the Mekong River, Seksan kneels down on the Thai territory and kisses the ground. He says "Finally! We are returning to our motherland". Seksan points out that the fighting between the government and CPT is somewhat similar to a family problem. He said "Thailand is a home, where the kids are quarrelling with each other." Seksan points out that he is regretful about the civil war. The battle scene between the governmental soldiers and Seksan's troops demonstrates his beliefs. The soldier said "You [students] are traitors. You are communists. You are betraying Thailand. You are serving Chinese evil". While Seksan and the students reply "You [governmental soldier] are the one that betrays our nation. You are serving the American imperialists. You are merely a private; I know you are born into a peasant family. You and your family are the disgrace of the working class". In this scene, the competing nationalist ideology shows the soldier who serves the government saw the students who joined CPT as traitors. He sees that the communist ideology is a threat to his beloved nation. On the other hand, Seksan and his squad believe that the government is betraying their people. They believe that the Thai government is becoming a faithful follower of American capitalism.

Language identified the racial differences in this movie. Seksan, Jiranan and the students are speaking fluent Central Thai even though Jiranan is a southerner. The

CPT are speaking a mixture of Central Thai (with a Chinese accent), Northeastern Thai (Isan), Southern Thai, and some characters speak Karen, Hmong, and many ethnic minorities' languages. The Laotian soldiers speak Lao; Cambodians speak Khmer, and Vietnamese speak their own language. The Thai officers and soldiers, even when they are located in Isan, still speak Central Thai. The implication is that Seksan and the students are closer to the government by their language and culture, while the CPT is made up of Chinese, rural Thai, and ethnic minorities.

In fact Moon-Hunter is the story of nationalistic people, but their beliefs are not accepted by the government. The students who were involved with the CPT are mostly believed in the theory of Communism. However their dreams and beliefs had been crushed by the reality of the CPT. The CPT is not really concerned with the Marxist ideology, but largely concerned with guerilla warfare against the government. Lieutenant General Somkuan Harikul (in P. Suwanith, 1998), one of the main officers who was involved with the 1976 incident points out that

Students are not evil; they are not bad people at all. They are optimistic over the future of Thai democracy. I know that they are all patriotic and nationalistic. I know that all leftists or even the CPT do love their country. However their ideology and ours are different, and the way they are doing thing is incorrect. I know perfectly well that Dr. Puay Ungpakorn [Chancellor of Thammasart University] is a good person. The reason he was exiled is based on the action of his students. The right way to solve the problem is to discuss and use democratic means of action; I disagree with the use of arms or any violent means of action.⁶⁵

Apart from Lieutenant General Somkuan, Somsak Kwanmongkol (in P. Suwanith, 1998) the leader of Kratingdaeng Movement (rightwing nationalist movement) also made some comments regarding October 1976. Somsak said

I do not hate students. I also believe that they are not communists at heart. The media is over criticizing both my group and the students. There are no red flags [CPT flag] whatsoever around Thammasart campus. My group is not involved with the killing of university students either. It is the people that are standing outside Thammasart that killed the students. I can see that they are shouting 'Vietnamese', and then they all go towards those students and kill them. They are all students and they are all Thai. There are no Vietnamese at all. I don't understand why the students are trying to flee towards the front gate, and I don't know why people are easily misled.⁶⁶

Considered from Somsak and Somkuan, it is the political situation that pushes students from both October incidents (1973 and 1976) to join the CPT. It is true that Somsak may try to defend the Kratingdaeng group from public criticism over using violent means to resolve the situation. However both Somkuan and Somsak agreed that the media criticized the students, a fact that can not be denied. In the Moon-Hunter, Seksan points out that "We never imagined that scholars like us, who are used to text books, research, and examinations, would have to carry weapons. We never dreamt of being guerillas, and never expected to hold rifles instead of books".

This is in harmony with the opinion of Somsak and Somkuan, the students are forced to fight the government by the CPT and they are pushed to the jungle because of the political turmoil in the city. Perhaps, they are the victims in Thai history, as they are unable to fit into any political group at that time. Perhaps this is the reason for Seksan to become the first CPT member to surrender to the government after Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond issued Directive Number 66/2523 stressing the need for political measures to be given priority over military operations in combating communism, and offering an amnesty to those who returned.⁶⁷

Unlike Yuwachon, *Moon-Hunter* is not a simple propaganda film. The film is rather cynical with Seksan criticizing every single party he encountered. It would be fair to conclude that the only groups that Seksan did not criticize are the scholars and the leftists. In reality, according to the film, the left way of thinking is not wrong at all, it is the way that the communist party in Thailand practiced it that is wrong. The armed struggle instead of democratic means of solution is the first step in the wrong leftist ideology. The CPT preferred the Maoist and Chinese way of thinking, which is not suitable for the Thai environment. Seksan still believes that his way of thinking is not wrong; he admits that he was only following the wrong means of struggle and he is following the wrong group of people. Seksan saw his surrender to the government as his defeat in political struggle. Similar to Yuwachon's choice of music, *Moon-Hunter* decided to use songs from leftwing ideology. The songs include Seksan's creations during the October incidents, which are widely used by Thammasart students. Apart from that there is original Puer Chiwit music (songs for life), which are songs that emerged in the universities in Thailand; the songs are mostly about poverty, rural life, and societal problems.⁶⁸ The incident of 1976 led to many Puer Chiwit musicians fleeing to join the CPT. Puer Chiwit was temporarily banned from 1976 to 1981.⁶⁹ Similar to Seksan, Puer Chiwit artists were disillusioned with the CPT. They were all unimpressed with Chinese socialist society and did not hesitate to surrender themselves to the government after the amnesty in 1981.⁷⁰ However, Puer Chiwit is still leftist music from the 1970s to today. Apart from music, the film mixes real footage from 1973 with the film to emphasize that the incident did happen. Most of the parts that involve October 1973 consist of black and white footage. So, the people are able to integrate the characters with the real situation as well.

Analysis of Contents

In a similar way to *Suriyothai*, both *Yuwachon* and *Moon-hunter* do have symbols and signs to analyze. The contents will be examined and their origin and their importance studied. Similar to the previous section, this section of this chapter will be divided into two sub-sections to study the content of *Yuwachon* and *Moon-hunter*, then this thesis will analyze the volume and frequencies of the content.

Yuwachon

Considering the contents analytically, *Yuwachon* is perhaps the most blatant nationalistic film among the four movies. Unlike *Bangrachan* or *Suriyothai*, which started from warfare and with words of explanation underneath the scene, *Yuwachon* starts with the monument, which is the symbol itself. The film takes approximately five minutes to cover every angle of the monument from the eight directions. While showing the *Yuwachon* statue, the film is playing their theme song that is composed to complement the nationalistic theme.

After the *Yuwachon* monument, the film starts brilliantly with the Thai flag at the Chumphon Railway Station. The flag is one of the most important patriotic symbols to represent the nation-state. Unlike *Suriyothai*, which shows the ancient Red Flag or Royal Gold Flag from afar, *Yuwachon* shows the modern Thai flag from the closest angle. The Thai national flag and foreign flags such as British and Japanese flags are used to create differences between Thais and foreigners within the film. It is fair to conclude that flags are used in *Yuwachon* as a real tool to create nationalism.

The first scene where the flag is used to promote nationalism is the recruitment scene, where Captain Thawin Niyomsen stands in front of the National Flag and announces the recruitment message. After the students sign up with Yuwachon, the flag is once again displayed during the physical check-up. The flags are displayed in the school, town, training ground, city council, railway station, theatre, and shops. There are four more scenes where flags play significant roles. The first scene is when Captain Thawin is called in to the office of the governor. The scene shows the set up within the Thai administration office. The governor is sitting in front of two large national flags. The conversations between Captain Thawin and the governor are mostly regarding the national interest. The next scene is Chumphon Township during King Chulalongkorn Day (one of the national holidays). The flag is displayed everywhere in the township. There is one large flag in front of the theatre and a few standard size flags at buildings. Also, there are more than twenty small paper flags displayed all over the town, and the music within the scene is a nationalistic song from the King Vajiravudh period. The third scene is on the 5th of December, which is the Thai national day and King Bhumiphol's birthday (Rama IX). However, during the Second World War, Thailand was under the reign of King Ananda Mahidol (Rama VIII). Therefore, the celebration on the 5th of December did not occur, as the national day back in the Phibun period was 24th June. Regardless of the reason, the audiences in the 2000s perfectly understand that the 5th of December is Thai national day and the King's birthday. Therefore, a celebration is going on in the film and there are three large flags in front of the building. Yuwachon members are holding five national flags. Along the building, there are two more flags at the entrance, and the villagers are holding paper flags, around forty or more. This scene is perhaps one of the most nationalistic scenes, as the film shows the marching of

Yuwachon forces, and the music is the Yuwachon Taharn music. The last scene where the flag makes a significant impact on the audiences is at the end of the movie. The film ends as the Thai and Japanese agree to the alliance and allow Japanese troops to enter the township of Chumphon. The Japanese flag is rising alongside the Thai flag, while Yuwachon are looking at the Japanese flag with sorrow.

Apart from flags, uniforms are the trademark of the story. All characters are wearing uniforms, soldiers, police, and bureaucrats are wearing their uniforms throughout the movie. Yuwachon characters are wearing military uniforms in almost every scene, apart from the beginning where they are wearing high-school uniforms. Girl teenagers are wearing their uniforms throughout the movie, only in the holiday period are they wearing Thai dresses. Apart from wearing uniforms of the military, police, or bureaucrats, all characters show that they have pride in their professions and are proud of wearing uniforms. Even the Yuwachon characters, who complain about the harsh training, are still proud of their uniforms, as they see them as representing their masculinity. This is an uncountable content as every single character is represented by their costumes.

The third type of content is the portrait. In the movie, there are two portraits displayed in the movie. The first portrait is of the King Ananda Mahidol, which is located in the governor's room. The king's portrait is located above the national flag. The second portrait is the picture of Marshal Phibun Songkram, who is Thai Prime Minister, Minister of War, Supreme Commander and Army Commander of Thailand during the war. Phibun prefers the people call him "Punam" [leader] instead of his name or his political title. According to the film, the message from Bangkok told the

governor to wait for the decision of the Punam, while the Thai garrison is already in battle with the Japanese soldiers. The governor is furiously demanding "What does it means? Wait! Isn't the leader around?", then the film shows the portrait of Marshal Phibun. The second time that the leader portrait is displayed comes after the government decision is communicated to the governor of the southern province. The portrait of Phibun is displayed above the telegraph machine, which is printing the message that allowed the Japanese to enter the country. Once again, the governor looks at the order in surprise before he asks his secretary "Is this the right order? Did the leader really mean this?" While the portrait of the king displays power and unity, the portrait of Phibun is there to receive all the blame for his war policies.

The Yuwachon movie has only one missing symbol, which is the landmark or solid infrastructure. The reason is the location of the movie. Chumphon is a small township in Southern Thailand. There is no landmark in the township that would be significant enough to become a national symbol. Therefore, the film tries to use local places as a symbol in the film. The first place is the Chumphon City Council, which is a two-storied wooden building with a large flagpole in front of the building. The film shows this town landmark about five times in the movie. On the last display of this building, the Japanese flag is rising beside the Thai flag, which makes Yuwachon and the Thai people that are gathering around the town council feel very angry. The second landmark is Sriyapai High School, which is displayed with the Thai name at the front of their gate. The high-school is also the training ground and the recruitment centre for Yuwachon. The film shows the picture of this high school more than 10 times, however at the end the Japanese put up a sign covering the school name. The sign is written in Japanese, which indicates that from that day onwards, the former

Yuwachon headquarters will become the Japanese Headquarters in Chumphon. The third landmark is the shrine for the Prince of Chumphon. The Prince of Chumphon was known as the father of the modern Thai Navy. Even though Yuwachon is an army corps, there is no better landmark in Chumphon to refer to great Thai heroes than the shrine.

Interestingly, the Japanese land at the Prince of Chumphon's Shrine, where the villagers and the shrine keepers use Thai swords and knives as their weapons to fight the Japanese invaders. At this point, the film points out that wars in modern days are not only for the soldiers to fight, but the people in the country are also responsible for fighting the invaders. The Japanese soldiers kill all of the villagers and the shrine keepers.

Even though Yuwachon is based on the defeat of the Thai armed forces, the film is still very nationalistic and makes the audiences feel positive about the Thai army.

Moon-Hunter

As in Yuwachon, the flag is a tool in Moon-Hunter as well. There are around ten flags waving among the students during the 14th October movement. In the film, there are more than five flags showing during the speeches of Seksan in front of the crowd at Thammasart University. However, the film does not use the flag again after the end of the 14th October event. Perhaps, the reasons are that the political symbols of CPT and the Thai governments are different.

The second symbol is the uniform. Uniforms are not used as widely as in Yuwachon. However, the uniforms in Moon-Hunter identify the national differences by colors and the small differences such as the color of the CPT and Laos or Vietnamese uniforms. Similar to the flag, uniforms might make small differences but they do not create the great differences in the film.

The landmarks and infrastructure seem to be the most powerful contents as there are many landmarks in the movie that tend to be repeated a number of times to make the people aware of the nationalistic behaviors of Seksan and the students of the October incident. The first and foremost landmark is Thammasart University itself. Pridi Phanomyong, one of the Thai elder statesmen who was involved with the 1932 revolution, founded Thammasart University. Unlike Phibun, Pridi was never associated with military dictatorship or fascism. Pridi is the Thai version of Thomas Jefferson, as he is the person that drafted the Thai constitution in 1932. He was also a founding member and the leader of the Free-Thai Movement during the Japanese occupation who became a statesman after the end of the war. In this case, the Thammasart students believe in democratic principles, while Thammasart University becomes the symbol of democracy in Thailand. The film shows "Dome Taprachan", which is the landmark building of Thammasart University. The student leaders such as Seksan are making speeches in front of the building to identify their tie with Thammasart. Thammasart is shown around six times in this movie; the main building such as Tuke Dome appears twice during the protest.

The second landmark is Democracy Monument, which is the monument that is used by nearly all protestors. The monument is located on Ratchdamneon Avenue,

which is another important landmark in Thailand. After the overthrow of the absolute monarchy, the government decided to construct the monument to represent the democratic political system in Thailand. The film uses numerous scenes to persuade the audiences to accept nationalist ideology, as Seksan refers to his action as a democratic means of fighting. The film shows the picture of the monument around five times in the movie.

The third important landmark is Chitlada Palace, which is the official residence of His Majesty King Bhumiphol Adulyadej of Thailand. The film is unable to film the palace itself; however, the canal, fences, and the gates of the palace are clear enough to identify this important landmark. The film shows that the students are seeking for the king's mercy and charisma to be their safeguard. The film shows and mentions the palace three times.

Unlike Yuwachon, Moon-Hunter does not have any symbols. Seksan and the students are wearing only green military uniforms throughout the film. However there are no ranks, insignia, or group identification on this uniform. There is one red star on the cap of his military uniform along with Mao's Red Book (symbol of the Chinese Communist Party). However, these symbols are sometimes stereotypes of wrongdoing or evil means. Seksan saw Chinese Communism as the wrong way of thinking and the Red Book that appears around six times in this movie is associated with the negative aspects in the film. Seksan did not like the red star on his cap, so the film frequently show that Seksan and his troops prefer to use "Pakaoma" (Thai cloth) covering his head in Sikh style instead of wearing a red star cap. Therefore, positive signs in this film are still associated with the political leaders of Thailand.

Class Analysis

Yuwachon and Moon-Hunter are neither ruling class nor working class in the society. Yuwachon is based on the students, whose parents are bureaucrats, shopkeepers, professionals, and merchants. Their political powers are minimal as they have a very slim connection with the upper class in the capital. However, they are not farmers or laborers either. Yuwachon characters are clearly middle class in Thai society. In Moon-Hunter, even Seksan is always claiming to be a member of the Thai lower-class. In reality, Seksan cannot integrate himself with the real lower class people. It is true that Seksan is working class by his birth, as he claims that his father is a fisherman. However, Seksan was spending most of his time with the university students, which consist of the Thai middle class.

The main difference between Yuwachon and Moon-Hunter is their political beliefs and their time periods. Even though both movies are based on the events of the 20th Century, Yuwachon took the vision of the Thai middle class during the middle part of the century. Yuwachon takes place from 1934 to 1945,⁷¹ while the movie is focusing on the events of 1941. The story of Moon-hunter took place in 1973 to 1984, with the main event in 1973,⁷² which is the later part of the century. Interestingly length of the time periods for both movements are similar as well. Both movements are effective for approximately 11 years before they faded away. Yuwachon still exists as TDD, while the CPT ceased in 1985.

Conclusion

Yuwachon and Moon-Hunter shared both similarities and differences. Unlike Suriyothai or Bangrachan, these films did not enjoy great success in ticket sales, but they did receive more awards than the other films especially for their plots, directors, and scriptwriters.

The similarities between the films are divided into three areas. The first area is their class base. The class that is referred to in both films is the middle class of Thai society. The middle class are ambitious for their careers, and many of them are ambitious to see the development of their country. The second area is the signs and symbols that the films use. Despite being leftist or rightwing, both films share the same sign media that are based on the principles of nation, religion, and royalty. The national flags are the most common sign and symbol that are used widely by the films. Finally, the story shows the nationalistic feeling among the main characters. Yuwachon soldiers are undisputedly nationalistic, as their training and beliefs are based on the national interest, while Moon-Hunter's characters believe that their actions would be the correct path for Thailand.

Apart from their similarities, there are numerous differences between Yuwachon and Moon-Hunter. First of all is their political ideology. Yuwachon is rightwing and believes in the values of militarization, nationalism, royalty, and religious values. On the other hand, Moon-Hunter is based on the leftist ideology; Seksan never hides his ambition to create ideal socialism in Thailand. Secondly, the level of consideration and thinking is different. Yuwachon shows military values as the troops listen to the orders of their commanding officer. The Yuwachon were

trained to obey the orders of their superior officers. The troops were listening, remembering, and practicing the teaching of their trainers. Moon-Hunter gives a different perspective, as the members of the CPT were university students, who learn to think and consider orders, and they might not obey orders from superior officers. Seksan is one of the best examples as he disobeys the politburo and criticizes Maoism. Finally, despite both being defeated by their enemy, Yuwachon are heroes among the Thai people. They are fighting against foreign invaders. Moon-Hunter gives a different perspective. The Thai people did not accept their ideas of defending Thailand from western imperialism or capitalism. Although Seksan is also criticizing the Thai businesspersons, the audience sees Seksan and the students in two ways. Firstly, they might show some sympathy towards the students, who were forced to join the CPT and hated the CPT, as they were involved in fighting against the government. Secondly, they might see Seksan and his groups as traitors to the Thai nation. In reality, most Thai people always disliked the CPT and saw them as a threat to the nation.

Both films were based on a lower budget than Suriyothai and Bangrachan, and were not attractive to most of the people. Yuwachon aims to convince students to join the Territorial Defense programme. Yuwachon was not as successful as Bangrachan or Suriyothai, possibly due to the nature of Grammy Films primary market. Grammy Films has always been associated with new style romantic movies performed by Thai superstars (some of them are half Thai-European). The nationalistic movie was a big shift from the original market. Therefore, Yuwachon would disappoint the audiences that expected Grammy style films, which are made up of handsome actors and beautiful actresses in modern fashion. The shift of their market base would make their

sales even lower than most of their previous products. Even though the film received much praise from the film association and the press welcome their opinion, Yuwachon is considered as moderate propaganda with some success.

Moon-Hunter has similar outcomes to Yuwachon. Despite the film being based on a satirical style of criticism, there is no party apart from the government that benefits from the film. Bhandit Rittakol, who had much success from his previous films such as Satangs (based on the criticism of human greed and the incapability of the Thai government) and Sab Suer (criticism of human greed and foreign colonization) directed moon-Hunter. It would be fair to point out that most of Bhandit's works are ironic and love to criticize human-greed, government, cults, or political systems. Moon-Hunter is one of Bhandit's masterpieces as he won numerous awards from this film. Similar to Yuwachon, Moon-Hunter won a number of awards from the film association, but did not excel in sales. It is because the story is based on a recent political development, which people try either not to remember or believe that they know already and are thus not interested to see them. In addition, the involvement of CPT is something Thai people are less interested in and have the least desire to learn about. It is because the majority of the Thai people saw the CPT as their enemy, and there are only small groups of people that are willing to pay and watch the story about their enemy. Apart from that, there are not many people that would like to see the story of the losers.

Both films are based on middle class teenagers, so the films are less attractive to adult middle class, upper class, or even the lower class people. The class bases are facts that should not be disregarded. The lower class is not interested to see both films,

as there is nothing that would provoke or support their interest. The upper class would see Yuwachon as a teenager's movie, which is made as state propaganda, Moon-hunter is their enemy, and they would not spend their money to support them.

Both films are nationalistic and aim to persuade the audiences to believe in their practice and ideology. They both successfully persuaded the film association to grant awards to them. However, the audience are the most important factors to determine the success of the movie. It is true that the Moon-Hunter is an answer to the hypothesis of this thesis. Considered from the fact that during the periods of state owned media, it would be impossible for a film such as Moon-Hunter to have entered the Thai cinema. It would be banned for reasons such as Communist propaganda. However, the opening up of media made a film such as Moon-Hunter possible. On the other hand, Yuwachon is based on the old-fashioned state propaganda and still needs to use the new filming techniques to attract the audiences. They cannot follow the old-fashioned state propaganda, as their film would not make any sales and their business would be harmed.

Regardless of the criticism made by Seksan, this thesis would like to point out that the film presented two perspectives. This thesis pointed out earlier that the film might have been made to serve the author and director's desire to criticize those who oppose their righteous beliefs to develop their beloved nation. The first perspective is based largely on Seksan himself. Seksan was a former activist, who was involved with all parties from business people, NSCT, CPT, and government. Seksan's beliefs in the film show the perspective from an ex-activist's point of view, which is an inner perspective that even the people who were involved with the 14th October 1973 event

at the minor level might not know. Secondly, this film is a perfect example of 'populist nationalism', which points out the forgotten facts about the patriotic people, who fought for their beliefs in order to make their nation progress. This film was successful in promoting 'populist nationalism' as the audiences are able to understand the other aspects of the history that is completely different from the one they learn from the state.

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Chapter 7

Conclusion

This chapter will be divided into four sections. Firstly, the chapter begins with the media-nationalism framework, the model that is used as the basis for analysis of the nationalistic films after the state reduced its intervention in the media industry. Then, this thesis will compare these four films. The comparisons will be based on the political groups, media ownership, sign and symbols, invention of traditions, and audiences. The second section will compare the thoughts of filmmakers whose backgrounds vary of different societies. This thesis will compare the filmmakers political beliefs. The class based analysis is one of the most significant considerations, as the films are made and directed by groups of people who use their background, knowledge, association, and beliefs as the common standard in the film. The third section will look at the competing nationalistic ideologies of the creators of these four films. This section will look at the types of nationalism that were deployed within each movie. These four films represented three different types of nationalism, which have been used in Thailand. Finally, this thesis will look at the response from the audiences and conclude how successful each film was in creating nationalism, identity, awareness, and political beliefs towards the audiences. It will look at the future of the media and nationalism in Thailand. It will then analyse the hypothesis that the new patterns of ownership of the media have led to new techniques for shaping nationalism, and ask whether the media and nationalism framework can be considered as creating a new wave of nationalism.

Media and Nationalism Framework

The media and nationalism framework has been used to study the situation after the decline of 'official nationalism'. The governments in many countries have lost the power to monopolize their citizens' sources of information because of the introduction of new technology including internet, satellite, and cable television. Therefore, people are no longer receiving all information from state television, state radio, or local newspapers, as they are able to receive information from international sources.

This leads to the political leaders reorganizing their relationship with media owners. It is necessary for the productions of the media company to be attractive to the extent that the people can consume them. The model is based on three groups. The first group is the political leaders, who are the one that invents the signs, symbols, and traditions of the nation-state. The second group is the media owners. The main strength of the media owners is their power to stereotype through media. It is possible that in some case the media owners and the political leaders are the same group of people. Stereotypical symbols contribute to the 'invention of tradition', or they could reestablish lost or new values or practices into society. For the political leaders, nationalism within the films generates patriotism from the audiences can strengthen their regimes and their legitimacy. Media owners are aware that their support can convince the political leaders award them business opportunities. However, the most important thing for the business owners is to generate sales and make a profit from their production. This leads to the third group in the diagram, which is the audience. In reality, the audiences are the key for both political leaders and the media company. In the capitalist world, the audiences will be the judges of the survival of the media

company. It is unnecessary for the audiences to watch low quality propaganda productions in a capitalist based nation. They can avoid watching the films or the television programs that they do not like. This might not only be limited to the products they hated, but the audiences might even extend those bad impressions to the film company and the people that the films support. From the media ownership perspective, if the audiences do not support their products it would put those media companies out of business. Therefore, the power of feedback from the audiences is perhaps the most powerful force in the framework.

Applying this framework to the case studies, the first case study of this thesis is a production of BEC, which is the story of “Bangrachan”. BEC shows a clear connection between the media owners and the political leaders. BEC is under the ownership of the Maleenont family, while a member of their family is also one of the most prominent members of the ruling Thai Rak Thai Party. Apart from making money, which is the primary purpose of the filmmaker, the secondary purpose of the film is to support the government. Because the film is based on the Thai farmers and villages, the physical infrastructure such as monument that would represent the Thai nation cannot be found in the movie. In addition, the battles of Bangrachan were based on guerilla warfare. Unlike the traditional Asian armed forces that we see in Suriyothai (including Thai), where the troops were organized into different bands (based either on the colors of their uniforms, flags, or armor), in the movie Bangrachan, troops were not formally organized into a traditional unit. They do not have any signs or symbols to represent their nationality or troop units. Despite the lack of signs and symbols, the film creates images from Bangrachan as symbols in their own rights. The film chose actors that would resemble the Bangrachan heroes in

the Thai historical record. Therefore, it is attempting to persuade the audiences to see the Bangrachan warrior of the 18th century appearing in the films by using the people of the 21st century to copy the outlook, language, and dresses of the historical people. In other words, the film makes their actors and actresses become symbols of the nation; therefore, they do not need to use any other signs or symbols that might create confusion in the audiences. This is a brilliant idea to make the Bangrachan people and the movie become the symbols, which can be considered to be an 'invention of tradition'. The tradition as such reached the audiences and made them aware of the nationalistic message. It is the most successful nationalistic film, and at the end, the film introduces the one and only solid symbol in the movie. This is the Bangrachan Monument in Singburi province shown at the end of the movie. Interestingly the film makes the actors pose in their posters in the style of the monument. In other words, the film encourages the people to see the film and the actors as a living monument of the national heroes. Due to the high income from the film, BEC followed their success with Bangrachan and produced "Koon Phan" (Legend of the Warlord) and recently they introduced the nationalistic theme from another novel of Mai Muangderm (author of Bangrachan novels) "Khunsuk" (Warrior) as well.

Suriyothai has similarities and differences with Bangrachan. Firstly the film company leaders and the political leaders are essentially the same. Prince Yukhol is the owner of Prommitr Production and he is one of the high-ranking members of the royal family in Thailand as well as the director of the movie. There have been rumors that the film was sponsored by members of the royal family, and an interview with M.L. Piyabhas, refers to Her Majesty the Queen, as one of the patrons of this movie.¹ Piyabhas points out that the Queen told Piyabhas's mother that she would be

participating in Suriyothai. Then M.C. Chatri confirmed with Piyabhas that she would be acting as Suriyothai. In addition, Piyabhas is one of the junior members of the royal family as well. She calls M.C. Chatri her uncle, and her aristocratic rank is Mom-Luang. Similar to Bangrachan, Suriyothai is a symbol in her own right. The monuments for the people in Suriyothai can be found all over Thailand. Examples are the Queen Suriyothai monument in Ayutthaya, King Maha Thammaracha and Queen Wisudkasatri monuments in Phitsanulok (referred to as Ooya Phitsanulok and Princess Sawatdirat in this film). Unlike Bangrachan, the film uses numerous signs to represent the Thai nation, such as flags. The film chooses two flags to represent both the Thai nation and the personality of Suriyothai. The king and queen in the film use a yellow flag with the red Garuda in the centre of the flag. This is the royal flag of Thailand throughout the 20th and 21st Century. However, the film's use of the flag to represent the Thai monarchy is interesting, as there is no record regarding the origins of these flags. In addition, they used the red flag, which was the Thai national flag from the 16th to the 19th century. Despite all these questionable symbols, the film concentrates on the behavior of Suriyothai, which is one of the invented symbols. Suriyothai represents the upper-class Thai, and shows their customs and practices as the most elegant and beautiful. The film influences audiences by linking its characters to the three foundations of Thailand (Nation, Religion, and Kingship). The film starts with the theme that the actions of Suriyothai and the royal families promote the national interest. Then the patronage of King Maha Thammaracha and his involvement with monks and Buddhism represents the second foundation, religion. The third foundation represented by Suriyothai and her royal family, is royalty and kingship, which is the most solid institution with the longest tradition among the three foundations. The story of Suriyothai also inspired other filmmakers to create stories of

royalty and high-culture such as “Ksatriya” (Lord of Life, continuation of the Suriyothai Story).

Yuwachon is different from Suriyothai or Bangrachan. Yuwachon is similar to Bangrachan as there are troops that fought against invaders but did not have any outstanding leaders to create personality cults like Suriyothai or Nai Chan and Nai Tongmen of Bangrachan. Because of the lack of famous personalities, Yuwachon cannot become a symbol in its own right. Therefore, the film tends to use different types of symbols such as portraits, flags, insignia, and uniforms. The production companies of Yuwachon are not political leaders but they have a good relationship with them. Phaiboon Damrongchaitam is of Thai-Chinese origin, and founded Grammy Entertainment for the Thai teenagers’ market. Interestingly, Grammy Entertainment was the first company that introduced the nationalistic film using the new techniques after the government no longer interfered with film companies. It is true that the primary goal of Grammy is to generate income from their films. However, it would be important to take into account that most of the television channels in Thailand are run either by politicians or the government and can grant business favours to Grammy. Prior to Yuwachon, Grammy Films had introduced “Sunset in Chaophraya” to the audiences, which is based on the popular novels of Thommayantee, and based on the story of the Japanese occupation of Thailand from 1941-1945. After the success of their first film, Grammy concentrated most of their efforts on producing teenagers’ films that had nothing to do with Thai politics. However, Grammy also has a number of television dramas, and some of them did involve politics, which ended up supporting the policy of the Thai government. Yuwachon is the second nationalistic film from the company, and the company

decided to use the directing teams from “Sunset of Chaophraya” to create their second nationalistic film. The film tends to choose nationalistic music, signs, symbols, and practices to create the film propaganda during a downturn in Thai nationalism.

Grammy supported the military in numerous ways. They allowed some of their actors, or singers to join military training and wear dress similar to military uniform during some of their concerts as well. Yuwachon did not invent its own tradition. The signs and symbols were invented long before the film. However, the film strengthens the patriotism of the audiences by repeating the national symbols on various occasions.

“Moon-Hunter” is very different from the other three films, as the film is not based on the nationalistic principles of Nation, Religion, and King. The film owner, and the political leader, are again the BEC like Bangrachan. Unlike Bangrachan, where BEC used the same production teams to create numerous rightwing nationalistic films such as Koon Phan (Warlord) and Koon Suk (Warrior), Moon-Hunter is based on social critique, and is directed by Bhandit Rittakol. Unlike M.C. Chatri (Suriyothai), Yuttana (Yuwachon) or Tanit (Bangrachan) who created a film based on nationalistic or cultural principles, Bhandit has created a film based on a critique of Thai society. For examples “Satang” [Money] is a film criticising the policy and indecisiveness of Marshal Phibun Songkram during wartime, which also criticized the Pridi Phanomyong government over the issues of economic and social problems during the post war period. His most recent film is also a criticism of human greed especially of the non-Thai business people. The film is called “Tigress of King River”, and started with criticism of the British and the Chinese merchants during the 19th Century. Apart from the director, the scripwriter of Moonhunter is also a

significant person to study. Seksan Prasertkul is the scriptwriter who based one character on his own life. It is questionable whether Moon-Hunter is trying to create national awareness or just satisfying Seksan's and Bhandit's desires. The film shows that Seksan is an expert on political criticism of everything from politics to society. Bhandit is a specialist in creating ironic film, and Seksan's script might have pleased him from the very beginning. Even though the political leaders may not see any support of their regime from this film, the BEC allowed the production of this film to continue despite the style of criticism. It is easier for BEC to control the scenes that criticized their political ways and maximize the scenes that criticized their enemies such as the CPT and the NSCT, and perhaps the military and police (which might not be very obedient to the orders of the politicians). The film hardly uses any symbols, apart from the national flag and some landmarks in the film. However, Bhandit is trying hard to make the character of Seksan become the symbol and the centre of attention. It can be concluded that Moon-Hunter tries to draw lines with Suriyothai and Bangrachan and tries to invent new tradition from Seksan's thought. However there are possibilities that Bhandit might not agree with Seksan in every aspect as people are having different political beliefs. Therefore, Seksan might need to accept some censorship from BEC and Bhandit, however Seksan still point out his ambition and his expectation including criticizing some of his enemies. Bhandit can be satisfied with the outcome of the film and the award that he won from the Thai Oscar. BEC is the party that can enjoy the overall success of the film, but did not earn large profits, as the movie did not enjoy ticket sales comparable to Bangrachan or Suriyothai.²

Class and Political Beliefs

This section will look at the class and political beliefs in each film. Class is one of the most important elements to understand the response and behaviors of the audiences.

Bangrachan is based on the lower-class in the Thai society, which is depicted as a rightist. Their class origin would date back for hundreds or thousands of years. The peasantry and the artisans that are referred to as Bangrachan villagers have been the backbone of Thai society since the foundation of the Thai states, which can be dated back for around two millennia.³ They are the majority of the Thai population from the period before Bangrachan and their customs and traditions are still practised until the present day. There are no contemporary films depicting lower classes as leftists. Considering the fact that the film owners and the political leaders are the same group of people or related to each other and share class interests. The film is based on the political leaders and ruling class hopes for the lower class people. The lower-class people would not have enough funds to create movies that would represent their interests. Bangrachan represents the expectation of the ruling class alone, which would like to see the lower class pay respect to the ruling elite, as well as fight the national enemy as foot soldiers.⁴ However the choice of Bangrachan is interesting as the villagers of Bangrachan are the national heroes of Thailand. Bangrachan represents the line that the lower class should listen to the order of the state; however, their nationalism can be represented by their willingness to fight for the nation. Bangrachan represents the group that takes orders from the ruling class, even if the decision is a fatal one, which might lead to their deaths.

Suriyothai promoted another dimension of Thai society. The film is undisputedly based solely on the elite and upper class people in Thailand. Despite using the upper class as the centre of attention, the film propagates the message that the upper class or the ruling classes are the ones that make the decisions about the nation, which the middle class and the lower class should follow. Unlike lower class people whose supposed interest was depicted by the ruling class in Bangrachan, the upper class people do have the funds to make films or propaganda that represent their culture, customs, and beliefs in Suriyothai. Also the film is representing the upper-class as symbols that would lead all of the social classes in Thailand. The film shows that the upper classes are the groups that make the decisions, while the other classes are working to achieve the goals of the upper classes. However, the upper-class shows in the picture that they would not leave their people alone in the fight; the elites are fighting against the enemy alongside their people as well. The film shows two perspectives; firstly, they are demonstrating like Bangrachan, that the civilians are the ones that should listen to their orders and work based on their strategy. Secondly, the upper class work as both decision makers and warriors, as they are also taking responsibility for their decisions. The customs and beliefs of the upper class in Suriyothai are not new things; they are traditional beliefs that would be dated back for centuries or millennia as well. The Suriyothai period is long enough to represent the customs that started before 1200AD, to the people in the present day.

Yuwachon presents a different perspective. It depicts the rightwing middle class. The film owner originally came from the middle class himself. Grammy started as a small company that was founded by middle class people, mostly alumni of the Journalism Department of Chulalongkorn University. Even today, as they are one of

the biggest entertainment companies in Asia, some of the earlier beliefs and principles of the film owner might remain constant. The film represents a group of students, who believe that the orders from high-ranking officers should be followed. The orders are unquestionable and the students should follow for the national interest. It also shows the ambition of the middle class people to be promoted to join the ruling class, as the military is one of the best paths for them to follow. Despite being big business, Grammy might represent the image of a good middle class, in their opinion. It is the image of the middle class people that they should be the hard workers for their organization and not question the order of the executive. This is the image of the rightwing middle class, which is nationalistic and ambitious to do something good for the nation.

“Moon-Hunter” is also middle class. However, it is leftist. Similar to Suriyothai and Yuwachon, where the interest group has the opportunity to represent their interest, “Moon-Hunter” represents the interests of leftwing middle class people. They are ambitious to see the development of the country. However they are overly optimistic about the Communist ideology. Unlike the lower class or rightwing middle class that tend to follow the orders of the state, the leftist people may be willing to fight for what they believe.

Competing Nationalism

Nationalism in Thailand originated from state sponsorship, and was a type of official nationalism. However, official nationalism itself could be divided into two branches. Royal nationalism was the original approach from the 19th Century, since the period of King Chulalongkorn. Royal Nationalism was the approach based on the

charisma and mandate of the King and Queen. The mandate and charisma came from the practice of the righteous king, who followed the traditional 'Totsapitratchatum' (ten rules of the righteous king).⁵ The kings who followed these rules were charismatic, as well as receiving the mandate of 'Sommuttitep' (demi-god) to rule over the nation.⁶ 'Sommuttitep' also covers mystic power such as the curse, which came from the Legend of Phra Ruang, which is known as 'Wajasit' (magical spell from the righteous king).⁷ The Legend of Phra Ruang and the associated magical power were later promoted during the reign of King Vajiravudh.

Another branch of official nationalism came from the work of Luang Wichit Wathakan, which served the fascist regime of Marshal Phibun. This thesis considers the second phase of official nationalism under Luang Wichit as Thai official nationalism, as the system was promoted from the pre-World War II period through the present era. Even the origin of official nationalism was similar to royal nationalism; the teaching from the Wichit School was only slightly different from the Royal system. The Wichit system gave priority to nation ahead of the royal institution. Also, the work from Wichit during the fascist period also compared the bravery of the commoners with the bravery of the king.⁸ Whilst Prince Damrong and King Vajiravudh lauded King Naresuan, Wichit gave credit to numerous generals of King Naresuan instead.⁹ Wichit explained the importance of Rajamanu, who was the main general of Naresuan. Also, Wichit credited Seharajdecho and Kosathibodi ahead of King Narai. Wichit points out that the war achievement of King Narai was based on the achievement of his great general' Seharajdecho, whilst Narai's diplomatic successes were based on the wisdom of Kosathibodi, who actually traveled to Europe during the 17th century. Also, the story of Bangrachan was another masterpiece of

Wichit, who considered the importance of commoners ahead of the aristocracy.¹⁰ At the peak of the fascist period, Wichit even compared Marshal Phibun with the monarchy by using the portrait of the Thai dictator in the government building instead of the portrait of King Ananda Mahidol.¹¹ He also composed numerous nationalistic songs and anthems to replace the previous anthems, which were composed during the period of royal nationalism.¹²

The third nationalism in Thailand is populist nationalism, which is based on a political economy approach along with the Marxist ways of thinking.¹³ Populist nationalism offers a challenge to royal nationalism and official nationalism. However, it is unnecessary for populist nationalism to limit itself to the field of political economy. Other forms of analysis, which are critical of royal nationalism or official nationalism, can be considered as populist nationalism as well. The ideas opposing the basic ideologies of official nationalism or royal nationalism in scholarly ways are the key to populist nationalism.¹⁴ The people who believe in populist nationalism have generally, perhaps always, been the minority in Thai society, this doesn't mean that their viewpoints are incorrect. It is just that the majority of the population still do not believe the same things populist nationalism promotes.¹⁵ Thus, the main task for the followers of populist nationalism is to persuade the people to believe in their version of nationalism.

Among the four films, Bangrachan and Yuwachon were promoting 'official nationalism', with commoners the key to promoting nationalism. Both films follow the lines of 'official nationalism' closely, where they are willing to defend the nation. The signs and symbols of Yuwachon represented official nationalism during the

fascist regimes, where portraits of Marshal Phibun and numerous signs of official nationalism such as posters and uniforms were widely used. On the other hand, Bangrachan strictly followed the historical work of Luang Wichit to maximize official nationalism. Interestingly, both movies serve the interest of official nationalism, and do not conflict with each other. However, their success was different. Bangrachan was successful, enjoying high ratings, and was seemingly able to influence the audiences to become more nationalistic. There may be three elements which had strong influence toward its success. The first element was based on their class background, where the lower-class was the center of the attention. Many people who watched this film came from the lower classes of the Thai community. Second, the face of the enemy was familiar, as the Burmese are still a potential threat. Third, the film did not use any symbols that allied themselves with the extreme official nationalism during the fascist regime. This might be the reason for the failure of Yuwachon. It is because audiences in the 21st Century are well aware of the failure of fascist regimes. Also, there should not be many hard-line supporters of official nationalism that can ally with the fascist way of thinking. Also, the military has lost their popularity since Black May 1992, where a military regime was overthrown by the people. Furthermore, the face of the enemy was not familiar, as Japan was no longer a military threat. People can see that Japanese might be a threat to the national economy, but it is hard to combine the military threat during the 1940s with the economic threat in the 2000s. It is fair to conclude that official nationalism has been more successful, when it did not use outdated symbols.

Suriyothai brought royal nationalism into the picture. Royal Nationalism is very common among the Thai people, as Thais believe in the mandate and charisma

of royalty. Royal nationalism has grown strongly under the present monarch, who Thai people saw as the most charismatic and one of the most righteous kings in the entire Siamese history.¹⁶ According to Thak Chaloemtiarana (1979), the Thais believe strongly in charisma of the king, even during the period of fascist official nationalism, as seen during King Bhumibhol's official visit to Northeast Thailand in 1955.¹⁷ Marshal Phibun was afraid of the popularity of the young king, so he decided to revive the 1932 Constitution (which limited the royal privileges and authority) instead of the 1951 Constitution. Phibun also disapproved the funds for the king's official visits as well.¹⁸ Thak explains that the charisma of the young king has gradually replaced the popularity of the old fascist dictator, who had been a political figure since 1932.¹⁹ Interestingly, the recent development of royal nationalism came from Marshal Sarit, another dictator who succeeded Marshal Phibun. Royal nationalism under Sarit also came from the theory of Luang Wichit Wathakan, who was the engineer of official nationalism during Phibun period. The theory of Luang Wichit was known in Thai as the 'Phor-Koon' (Father-Son) system, which refers to King Ramkamhaeng during Sukhothai period, who ruled his subjects by using father-son style relationships.²⁰

The Phor-Koon system, the theory of Luang Wichit, was followed by both Marshal Phibun and Sarit. This theory explained that son means Thai citizens, but the theory never explained the meaning of righteous father. The term father referred to ruler, but Luang Wichit never explained to the reader who he meant by the righteous father. The powerful dictator Phibun believed that he was the father of all systems. However, he feared the challenge from the kings who hold ancient claims as the righteous father of the system. King Ramkamhaeng, whom Luang Wichit used as an

example in his theory, was the king not a commoner. Unlike Phibun, Sarit never made his claims to become father of Thailand. Sarit promoted the king as the righteous father of the Thai nation.²¹ The righteous mandate of the king to be father of the Thai nation and the core of the Phor-Koon system became unquestionable and will not be questioned by anyone, as the king is the rightful successor of the Phor-Koon system due to his birth into the Chakri Dynasty.

Sarit played active roles to support the king and royal nationalism. He arranged official visits for the king and queen to numerous countries, for example USA, Britain, Germany, France, Spain, Japan, Italy, New Zealand, etc. The official state visits from the king and queen showed that Thailand was under the supervision of the monarchy, who is the righteous ruler of the country. Sarit also benefited from the charisma of the king by securing his position as the rightful leader of his majesty's government. Sarit claimed his legitimacy to govern Thailand by referring to himself as the most loyal subject of his majesty, and his government had support from the king.²² Also, the best way to promote royal nationalism was to see the king and queen visiting their citizens. Unlike Phibun, Sarit never objected to the king and queen visiting their subjects. This led to an increase of loyalty among the people towards the royal institution

Once again, Sarit showed to the public that the king was undisputedly the father of the nation, by combining national day and father's day with the king's birthday. So, the people will remember the king as the father of the nation and center of the nation. He also combined mother's day with the queen's birthday to make people see that the queen is the mother of the nation as well.²³ Sarit also reinvented

royal nationalism, by promoting royal symbolism and rites, which are public displays of royal nationalism. Sarit reinvented traditional ceremonies, with the king and queen as the patrons of the ceremony, for example, the annual military oath and the Ragna festival (agriculture ceremony). The king and queen also became the royal patrons to numerous organizations such as the Thai Red Cross.. Also, the king and queen became patrons to numerous states universities. The king and queen always attended the annual graduation ceremony and handed diplomas to the graduates. This made the students become loyal towards the royal institution and proud that their achievements have been recognized by the king. ²⁴ Apart from Sarit's effort to promote royal nationalism, the fact that King Bhumibhol is one of the hardest working kings in Thai history cannot be denied. Unlike Phibun, the king's ambition to improve the well being of his citizens was supported by Sarit, who saw the supporting of royal projects meant that his regime would be stabilized by the charisma of the king, which lead to the strengthening of royal nationalism in Thailand. Importantly, the king's effort to solve religious and ethnic problems in Southern Thailand, and his development projects for rural Thailand, especially Northeast Thailand, have shown that the king is one of the most caring rulers in the history of Thailand. ²⁵

Once the legitimacy, mandate, and charisma of the king were stabilized and unquestionable by any commoners, the strong bond between the current great king and the kings from the past is visible. Therefore, Suriyothai promoted royal nationalism using concepts such as a charismatic king, who received the mandate to rule the subjects into play. Also, the concepts of the 'Totsapitratchatum' and 'Wajasit' were deployed in Suriyothai. The film was based largely on the personality cults of Suriyothai and Maha Chakkrapath, who were portrayed as the rightful rulers who

have a mandate from heaven along with their rightful claims to the Siamese throne. The kings and queens who did not practice 'Totsapitratchatum' were dethroned by the rightful kings. This concept was repeated largely to show the mandate of the Siamese king. Also, the curse from the king could be carried out towards the unfaithful followers. The curse or 'Wajasit' when made by the king who controlled the mandate could affect other kings as well. The most important scene was the death of King Chairacha who was cursed by the previous king. Also, the 'Wajasit' from Maha Chakkrapath during his coronation represented the magical elements of royal nationalism. The system made the people see the king as a demi-god as well as the righteous ruler of the nation.

If Suriyothai sought to convince the people to believe in royal nationalism as well as to increase the people's loyalty towards the monarchical institutions, then this thesis could conclude that the film succeeded in this respect. Royal nationalism might not be able to challenge official nationalism in creating patriotism among the audiences. It might not be able to exceed official nationalism in terms of creating the desire to serve the military interest of the nation. However, Suriyothai and royal nationalism were successful in increasing the people's loyalty towards the monarchy.

Also, the people can combine their loyalty of official nationalism along with royal nationalism, as they came from the same origin, which makes it possible for people to become loyal towards both systems. This is based on two reasons. First, the engineer of official nationalism during Phibun and royal nationalism under Sarit was Luang Wichit Wathakan. Luang Wichit's theory of Phor-Koon did not change. The change during Phibun and Sarit was merely, the rightful father of Phor-Koon system.

The thing that never changes is the son, which always refers to the citizens of Thailand. Also, the relationship between father and son will never be changed. Therefore, regardless of the father, the son and the relationship always continue smoothly. Therefore, the differences between official nationalism and royal nationalism is limited to the father of the nation, which means that the transition between Phibun and Sarit system was limited to the change from Phibun to the king. Second, royal nationalism under Sarit was revived to accommodate the government and support official nationalism, which benefits both parties. Royal nationalism is not there to challenge official nationalism or the government, therefore the combining of the official nationalism with royal nationalism is a possible formula among the followers of both systems.

Moonhunter demonstrated an alternative choice of nationalism, populist nationalism. The populist nationalism from Moonhunter provided a direct challenge to official nationalism but not royal nationalism. In fact, the populist nationalism from Moonhunter did make an attempt to combine royal nationalism as a possible ally. It is during the event in 1973, where the film mentions that the masses should rely on the mandate and charisma of the king. The depiction of this event was careful to point out that the populist nationalist in the film still expressed their loyalty to royal nationalism. Even though populist nationalism did not come from the same root with royal nationalism or official nationalism, this linkage shows that populist nationalism relied on royal nationalism to some extent.

On the other hand, this might be the cause of failure of this film, as the populist nationalism in this film shows clearly that it is not strong enough to challenge

official nationalism by itself. The connection with royal nationalism means there are conflicts with their original ideas of political economy and Marxist ideology, which always criticized the ruling elite. The criticism was made to point out the problem in royal nationalism by the royalist historians and economists. Unlike the official nationalism that was strong enough to challenge royal nationalism during the fascist regime, populist nationalism failed to challenge either official nationalism or royalist nationalism. The success of 1973 or even 1992, were based on the mandate from royalist nationalism to dissolve the conflict between populist and official.

Considering from class based analysis, it is very important to understand that populist nationalism, a method primarily based on the Marxist approach, normally seeks to appeal to the lower class people in every country. The successful communist movements in Eastern Europe, China, and Southeast Asia mostly received support from the lower class. It is understandable because the lower class is the largest sector of population in every country.

In Thailand, the situation was different. It is true that the lower classes may be persuaded by the idea of forming labor movements to fight for higher wages from the capitalists. However, it is interesting to see that the lower class did not support populist nationalism or any left political movement since 1976. There are two reasons behind the failure of populist nationalism. First, considering from the interview of Lieutenant General Somkuan Harikul, the leader of village scouts, it is clear that the village scouts are made up of villagers, which are considered as lower class from rural area. The village scouts were a state-sponsored organization, which existed to support the three pillars of Thai nationalism (nation, religion, and king).²⁶ Lieutenant General

Somkuan said the main reason for the involvements of the village scouts movement in the 1976 massacre came from the drama that was produced by Thammasart University, in which a student actor was made to resemble Prince Vajiralongkorn.²⁷ Even though, the photo were arguably by the students that it was doctored by the press.²⁸ The village scouts saw the action by students as a threat to royal nationalism.²⁹ This proved that the root of royal nationalism had been strengthening in every class of the Thai society. The lower class will never choose another form of nationalism ahead of the royal nationalism. This is one reason that the populist nationalism alone cannot go against the royal nationalism.

Second, due to financial issues, some in the movement that supported the 14th October 1973 uprising, such as polytechnic students, did not benefit from supporting the NSCT.³⁰ It appears that the ideology of the Marxist approach did not attract them as much as direct payments from the government.³¹ One clear example came from the Kratingdaeng Movement, which consisted of polytechnic students. It appears that most of the polytechnic students in Thailand come from the lower class, while middle class and upper class choose to attend universities.³² Major General Sudsai Hatsadin, founder of Kratingdaeng, points out that he used money to form Kratingdaeng.³³ Sudsai points out that his aim was to disintegrate the alliance between NSCT and polytechnic students. He said the government alone could not fight the alliance as they had a big budget, support from polytechnic students and labor unions. Therefore, Sudsai points out that the easiest way to disintegrate the NSCT alliance is separating the polytechnic students from the alliance. It is because the polytechnic students were seen by many in the NSCT as an inferior group.³⁴ It is true that both class basis and knowledge of polytechnic students are inferior to the NSCT. However, considering

from Sudsai, the polytechnic students did not receive any funds from NSCT. Also, they did not enjoy their role as being hand and leg, while NSCT acted as their brain. It is important to consider that the main fighting forces for NSCT against the government during the 14th October 1973 were polytechnic students. Sudsai points out that the NSCT was cowardly, while using polytechnic students to fight on their behalf, as the polytechnic students were brave and love weapons.³⁵ Sudsai found the solution for disintegrating the NSCT alliance by creating Kratingdaeng as the organization for polytechnic students. Kratingdaeng enjoyed the use of real weapons, while during their time with NSCT alliance, Kratingdaeng had to make their own weapons, such as Molotov cocktails, Major General Sudsai allowed Kratingdaeng to get hold of real guns, real bombs, use military jeeps and police patrol cars, and allowed them to use the military and police communication devices, and importantly Sudsai paid for them to manage any violence against NSCT.³⁶

Populist nationalism did not convince the lower class as it went against royal nationalism, which is the strongest form of nationalism. As the lower class people supported royal nationalism, the Marxist approach and populist nationalism that went against royal nationalism became their mutual enemy. Secondly, the action of Sudsai could be explained easily as the government paid for the lower class to join them and allowed them to engage in violence against their enemy. The lower class took the immediate payment and disregarded the ideology that did not support their well being. It might be fair to conclude that Moonhunter was successful to the extent that the people can learn and accept the criticism of the CPT and NSCT. However, they did not succeed in creating populist nationalism.

In general, among the three systems, royal nationalism has extended its roots into Thai society and become the most charismatic system so that both official nationalism and populist nationalism seek to rely on its strength. As royal nationalism has preserved illusion of neutrality, films such as *Suriyothai* serves the purpose of strengthening the royal position, as the king is the core of Phor-Koon system that supports the existence of the Thai nation. Therefore, the people accept the righteous royal mandate. On the other hand, official nationalism might be strong in its own right. However, the signs and symbols that might conflict with royal nationalism could bring failure to their campaign. The example of *Yuwachon* that used too many outdated signs of official nationalism is a clear example. The success of *Bangrachan* was based on the concept of official nationalism that would not challenge the mandate of royal nationalism. Even though it included some criticisms of the nobility, the criticisms were of unrespectable kings such as *Suriyath-Amarin* who did not follow the rules of *Totsapitrachatum* and were thus somewhat acceptable. This is because *Suriyath-Amarin* did not hold the real mandate of royal nationalism. Therefore, even the criticism supported royal nationalism in promoting the proper mandate as well. Populist nationalism has proven a failure at this point due to the weakness of their own system. The attempt to combine populist and royal nationalism might be the main cause of their downfall. Unlike official nationalism, populist did not come from the same roots as royal nationalism. The Phor-Koon system did not apply anywhere in populist nationalism. Therefore, the attempt to combine populist and royal nationalism is similar to grafting a new plant on the roots of the old tree. The old root does not support the new plant, while the new plant cannot grow from the old root. Therefore, the conflict with the system might be the reason for the majority of the population who are unable to follow the ideology of populist nationalism. Also, the

system itself is still not strong enough to overcome royal nationalism or official nationalism. Therefore, they ally themselves with royal nationalism or official nationalism which undermines their success, as there are some followers of populist nationalism who might disagree with the attempt in Moonhunter to ally itself with either royal nationalism or official nationalism as well.

Audiences, the Future of the Media, and Nationalism

This thesis has argued that the audiences are the key that will determine the success of the nationalism. The capitalist and democratic world gives the power to the people to judge the values that they hate, and the power to develop the values that please them.

During the period of 2000 and 2001, when these four films were produced and distributed all over Thailand, the audiences responded strongly towards nationalism. Because of the conflict between Thailand and Burma, the film successfully convinced people from all over the country to support the military and many even voluntarily joined the armed forces during those periods.³⁷

Bangrachan seems to be the real centre of attention, as the people always refer to Bangrachan as the reason for their patriotism. Interestingly, Bangrachan might be based on the ruling class vision of the lower class. The lower class people in Thailand tend to follow the ideology of the upper class and are willing to join the military scheme. It might be based on the political tension between two states that drive nationalism to its highest extent. However, the people accept that, in fighting the enemy, the Bangrachan are their heroes and their behaviors are ideal for most people.

Suriyothai might not achieve the same level of success as Bangrachan in terms of creating patriotism because the fact that the cultures of the upper class are different from most of the people. The level of nationalism that is introduced in this film cannot generate the wide patriotism as much as Bangrachan. However the film is one of the best selling in Thai history, and related merchandise that would represent the Thai upper-class signs and symbols are some of the best selling as well. From the film, people tend to learn more about the upper-class. Therefore, many scholars were influenced by the Suriyothai fever and were carrying out more research on Suriyothai and royal families of Thailand. This includes a number of famous scholars in Thailand such as Dr. Wibun Wichitwathakan, Dr. Nithi Iewsriwongse, Dr. Piseth Jiajanpongse, and Dr. Suneth Chutinatronon, who are respected scholars from prominent Thai universities.

This trend leads to make the younger people discussing the historical facts with scholars. This is evident in the Matichon Art and Culture magazine, where primary school girls, who watched the film, wrote back to Dr. Piseth and Dr. Suneth that they could not believe that King Maha Thammaracha would be traitors in the next battle and hardly believes that King Maha Chakkrapath would name the new queen to replace Suriyothai. In reality, the audiences in Thailand in the 21st century always see their own culture, where the model of Nation, Religion, and King is the foundation. It would be very shocking to learn historically that the third foundation (royalty) was sometimes in conflict with the first foundation (nation). However, people tend to forget, or might not know the fact that nation and nationalism were invented after the second and third foundations. In addition, the girls might not know that the ancient

customs of Asia did not limit the kings to having only one queen. Even the film tends to make people believe that Suriyothai is the one and only queen of Siam under the reign of Maha Chakkrapath. The reality cannot be denied that the traditional Asian monarchs would have perhaps two to six queens and around fifty to hundreds of consorts. History shows that the Emperors of China had two empresses and six queens (highest-consorts), Kings of Burma had two to four queens, and it would be no surprise if King Maha Chakkrapath promoted one of the high-consorts to replace Suriyothai. Otherwise, King Maha Chakkrapath might have had several queens from the very beginning as well. The film leads people to judge the values of the people in the 16th century by the standards of the 21st century, where consorts do not exist.

Yuwachon might not be a successful film as the movie made moderate sales and people tend not to like this movie. Even though the film won numerous awards, the people might see Grammy Entertainment as a middle class teenager-oriented company, and people of an older age would lose interest in their production. In addition, the teenagers might find that the film is too heavy for them. However, the teenagers-oriented productions of Grammy made very good sales after Yuwachon. It might be that the audience of Yuwachon was low because of marketing problems. In addition, most of the teenagers who watch this film are already involved with TDD and would not see anything impressive for them in their weekly practice in the movie. However, it can not be denied that the values of Yuwachon were forgotten. If there were warfare in the present era, people who were trained in TDD would follow the orders of the commander just like the Yuwachon, as the program itself is patriotic enough, so the film was only supporting their existing behavior.

Moon-Hunter is one of the most unusual nationalistic films. The movie itself shares the same destiny with Yuwachon, where they won numerous awards, but did not enjoy success in their sales. However, the film makes people aware of the political differences in the country.

The four films make the people aware that there are heroes in history. The hero might not be supposed to be righteous, but is willing to fight for what he believes to be the national-interest. This leads to two outcomes, the first and foremost outcome is to create awareness of the people of the past events. This is inspiring numerous people to learn more about past events. This leads to a second phase of increased nationalism through print-capitalism, where the scholars, book writers, and publishing companies are creating books that would inspire the people to be willing to learn more after they watch the film. Secondly, the films alone are able to create national awareness and patriotism in the audiences. This is making the people aware that the time of peace might end if the people are careless. War can break out at any second and the people should be ready to fight for the nation if necessary.

Finally, it is concluded that the framework of media and nationalism accurately depicts the new wave of Thai nationalism. The framework is one of the new forms of nationalism that reestablish the people's belief in the existence of the nation-state. However, the film alone cannot make the people become nationalistic. The people need to be educated by the state while encountering the film propaganda. The framework itself is the supporting cast for the future of 'official nationalism'

People might believe that the age of 'official nationalism' ended after the government opened up the media. It is true that the state cannot make low quality propaganda productions and convince the people to believe in it anymore. However, the government influences the basic understanding and the cultural beliefs of their citizens. The media and nationalism are there to strengthening the beliefs of the people that the nation does exist and the heroism of the national heroes is true and righteous.

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